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richer plumage than the other, which is the fact. The males are easily distinguished from dull and faded females by their deep, glossy, black coats.

The April of English literature corresponds nearly to our May. In Great Britain, the swallow and the cuckoo arrive in April; with us, their appearance is several weeks later. Our April, at its best, is a bright, laughing face under a hood of snow like the English March, but presenting sharper contrasts, a greater mixture of smiles and tears and icy looks than are known to our ancestral climate. Indeed, winter sometimes retraces his steps in this month, and unburdens himself of the snows that the previous cold has kept back; but we are always sure of a number of radiant, equable days—days that go before the bud, when the sun embraces the earth with fervor and determination. How his beams pour into the woods till the mold under the leaves is warm and emits an odor! The waters glint and sparkle, the birds gather in groups, and even those unwont to sing find a voice. On the streets of the cities, what a flutter, what bright looks and gay colors! I recall one pre-eminent day of this kind last April. I made a note of it in my note-book. The earth seemed suddenly to emerge from a wilderness of clouds and chilliness into one of these blue sunlit spaces. How the voyagers rejoiced! Invalids came forth, old men sauntered down the street, stocks went up, and the political outlook brightened.

Such days bring out the last of the hibernating animals. The woodchuck unrolls and creeps out of his den to see if his clover has started yet. The torpidity leaves the snakes and the turtles, and they come forth and bask in the sun. Nothing so small, nothing so great, that it does not respond to these celestial spring days, and give the pendulum of life a fresh start.

April is also the month of the new furrow. As soon as the frost is gone and the ground settled, the plow is started upon the hill, and at each bout I see its brightened mold-board flash in the sun. Where the last remnants of the snow-drift lingered yesterday the plow breaks the sod to-day. Where the drift was deepest the grass is pressed flat, and there is a deposit of sand and earth blown from the fields to windward. Line upon line the turf is reversed, until there stands out of the neutral landscape a ruddy square visible for miles, or until the breasts of the broad hills glow like the robins.

There is no month oftener on the tongues

of the poets than April. It is the initiative month; it opens the door of the seasons; the interest and expectations of the untried, the untasted lurk in it.

"From you have I been absent in the Spring,"

says Shakspeare in one of his sonnets:

"When proud-pied April, dressed in all his trim
Hath put a spirit of youth in everything,
That heavy Saturn laughed and leaped with him."

The following poem from Tennyson's "In Memoriam," might be headed "April," and serve as descriptive of parts of our season:

"Now fades the last long streak of snow,
Now bourgeons every maze of quick
About the flowering squares, and thick
By ashen roots the violets blow.

"Now rings the woodland loud and long,
The distance takes a lovelier hue,
And drowned in yonder living blue
The lark becomes a sightless song.

"Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,
The flocks are whiter down the vale,
And milkier every milky sail
On winding stream or distant sea;

"Where now the sea-mew pipes, or dives
In yonder greening gleam, and fly
The happy birds, that change their sky
To build and brood; that live their lives

"From land to land; and in my breast
Spring wakens too; and my regret
Becomes an April violet,
And buds and blossoms like the rest."

In the same poem the poet asks:

"Can trouble live with April days?"

yet they are not all jubilant chords that this season awakens. Occasionally there is an undertone of vague longing and sadness, akin to that which one experiences in the fall. Hope for a moment assumes the attitude of memory and stands with reverted look. The haze that in spring as well as in fall sometimes descends and envelops all things, has in it in some way the sentiment of music, of melody, and awakens pensive thoughts. Mrs. Elizabeth Akers Allen, in her "April," has recognized and fully expressed this feeling:

"The strange, sweet days are here again
The happy-mournful days;
The songs which trembled on our lips
Are half complaint, half praise.

"Swing, robin, on the budded sprays,
And sing your blithest tune;—
Help us across these homesick days
Into the joy of June!"