



CHRISTMAS EVE.

" 'Tis midnight—On the globe dead silence
sits,

And all is silence in the house of sleep:
Save when the hollow gust, that swells by fits
In the dark wood, roars fearfully and deep.
I wake alone to listen and to weep,

To watch my taper, thy pale beacon burn;
And as still Memory does her vigils keep,
To think of days that never can return "

Back in imagination, through the long,
dim vista of years, I wander, and again
I stand beneath some grand and glorious
cathedral; again the chant of the organ
is heard upon the air, and softly, sweetly,
heavenly, resounds the "Gloria in Ex-
celsis Deo," filling these grand old aisles
with richest harmony, echoing through
the vaulted arches, and sending aloft a
glorious hymn of praise to Christ, the
new-born King.

"Speak low! the place is holy to the breath
Of awful harmonies, of whispered prayer;
Tread lightly!—for the sanctity of death
Broods like a voiceless influence on the air,
Stern, yet serene!—a reconciling spell,
Each troubled billow of the soul to quell."

Yes, 't's Christmas Eve! What memo-
ries awaken, what thoughts pass
through the busy brain. Memories
whose skies are tinged with clouds of
both joy and sorrow, and whose horizon
is brightened by the star of hope. The
year has passed, and the bright dreams
we cherished have vanished, the castles
we built have crumbled to earth, the
flowers that bloomed around us in beauty
have faded and withered ere the cold icy
winds of winter blasted their gorgeous
beauty. And the friends we loved, the
friends of our bosom, who but one short
year ago greeted us with a "Merry

Christmas," where are they now? A
voice from the past answers, slumbering
in the silent city of the dead.

Oh yes, what human heart has not
some lost image enshrined within it,
some blighted hope slumbering in its
depths, some withered garland or faded
flower decking the bier of buried love.
Thus, the years come and go, and we jour-
ney onward, through days of clouds and
sunshine, laughter and tears, and our
vain ambitious hearts always seeking
the golden value of happiness. A well
known writer beautifully describes this
feverish agitation of the human soul,
this longing for a something which it
can never find. O, did we but know
when we are happy! Could the restless,
feverish, ambitious heart be still, but for
a moment still, and yield itself without
one farther aspiring throb to its enjoy-
ment—then were I happy—yes, thrice
happy! But no this fluttering strug-
gling and imprisoned spirit beats the
bars of its golden cage—disdains the
silken fetter; it will not close the eye
and fold its wing. As if time were not
swift enough, its swifter thoughts out-
strip his rapid flight, and onward, on-
ward, do they wing their way to distant
mountains, to the fleeting clouds of the
future; and yet I know, that ere long,
weary and way-worn, and disappointed,
they shall return to nestle in the bosom
of the past. We cling to the past with
fondness. In its desert spots, there are
fountains springing, whose waters often
refreshed us through the toilsome jour-
ney of life, and its crushed and faded
garlands send forth a fragrance that will
be borne on the winds of the future, the
many years to come. And this Christ-