

SATURDAY EVENING MAGAZINE.

PRICE TWO PENCE.

VOL. I.]

MONTREAL, JANUARY 4, 1833.

[No. 7.]

OH! THOU WHO DRY'ST THE MOURNER'S TEAR!

Oh! Thou who dry'st the mourner's tear!
How dark this world would be,
If, when deceived and wounded here,
We could not fly to Thee!
The friends who in our sunshine live,
When winter comes, are flown;
And he who has but tears to give,
Must weep those tears alone.
But Thou wilt heal that broken heart,
Which, like the plants that throw
Their fragrance from the wounded part,
Breathes sweetness out of woe.

When joy no longer soothes or cheers,
And even the hope that threw
A moment's sparkle o'er our tears,
Is dimm'd and vanish'd too!
Oh! who would bear life's stormy doom,
Did not thy wing of love
Come, brightly wafting through the gloom
Our peace-branch from above?
Then sorrow, touch'd by Thee, grows bright
With more than rapture's ray;
As darkness shows us worlds of light
We never saw by day!

NEW YEAR'S DAY.

The King of Light, Father of aged time,
Hath brought about that day, which is the prime
To the slow gliding months, when every eye
Wears symptoms of a sober jellity;
And every hand is ready to present
Some service in a real compliment.
Whilst some in golden letters write their love,
Some speak affection by a ring or glove,
Or pins and points, (for ev'n the peasant may,
After his ruder fashion, be as gay
As the brisk courtly sir,) and thinks that he
Cannot, without a gross absurdity,
Be this day frugal, and not spare his friend
Some gift, to show his love finds not an end
With the deceased year.

POOLE'S ENG. PARNASSUS.

In the volume of "ELIA," an excellent paper begins with "Every man hath two birth-days: two days, at least, in every year, which set him upon revolving the lapse of time, as it affects his mortal duration. The one is that which, in an especial manner, he termeth his. In the gradual desuetude of old observances, this custom of solemnizing our proper birth-day hath nearly passed away, or is left to children, who reflect nothing at all about the matter, nor understand anything beyond the cake and orange. But the birth of a new year is of an interest too wide to be pretermitted by king or cobbler. No one ever regarded the First of January with indifference. It is that from which all date their time, and count upon what is left. It is the nativity of our common Adam.

"Of all sound of all bells—(bells, the music highest bordering upon heaven)—most solemn and touching is the peal which rings out the old year. I never hear it without a gathering-up of my mind to a concentration of all the images that have been diffused over the past twelvemonth—all I have done or suffered, performed or neglected—in that regretted time. I begin to know its worth, as when a person dies. It takes a personal colour; nor was it a poetical flight in a contemporary, when he exclaimed,

'I saw the skirts of the departing year.'

Ringling out the old and ringing in the new year, with "a mery new year to you!" on new year's day, were greetings that moved sceptred pride, and humble labour, to smiles and kind feelings in former times; and why should they be unfashionable in our own?

The Rev. T. D. Fosbroke, in his valuable "Encyclopedia of Antiquities," adduces various authorities to show that congratulations, presents, and visits were made by the Romans on this day. The origin, he says, is ascribed to Romulus and Tatius, and that the usual presents were figs and dates, covered with leaf-gold, and sent by clients to patrons, accompanied with a piece of money, which was expended to purchase the statues of deities. He mentions an amphora, (a jar,) which still exists, with an inscription denoting that it was a new year's present from the potters to their patroness. He also instances, from Count Caylus, a piece of Roman pottery, with an inscription wishing "a happy new year to you;" another, where a person wishes it to himself and his son; and three medallions, with the laurel leaf, fig, and date; one, of Commodus; another, of Victory; and a third, Janus, standing in a temple, with an inscription, wishing a happy new year to the emperor. New year's gifts were continued under the Roman emperors until they were prohibited by Claudius. Yet, in the early ages of the church the Christian emperors received them; nor did they wholly cease, although condemned by ecclesiastical councils on account of the pagan ceremonies at their presentation.

Honest old Latimer, instead of presenting Henry VIII. with a purse of gold, as was customary, for a new year's gift, put into the king's hand a New Testament, with a leaf conspicuously doubled down at Hebrews xiii. 4, which, on reference, will be found to have been worthy of all acceptance, though not, perhaps, well accepted. Dr. Drake is of opinion that the wardrobe and jewellery of Queen Elizabeth were principally supported by these annual contributions on new year's day. He cites lists of the new year's gifts presented to her, from the original rolls published in her Progresses by Mr. Nichols; and from these it appears that the greatest part, if not all, the peers and princesses of the realm, all the bishops, the chief officers of state, and several of the Queen's household servants, even down to her apothecaries, master-cook, serjeant of the pastry, &c., gave new year's gifts to her majesty; consisting, in general, either of a sum of money, or jewels, trinkets, wearing apparel, &c. The largest sum given by any of the temporal lords was £20; but the Archbishop of Canterbury gave £40, the Archbishop of York £30, and the other spiritual lords £20 and £10; many of the temporal lords and great officers, and most of