

mind may be actively and usefully employed. All will agree that there is something inexpressibly soothing in the evening hour, and it seems almost profanation to me to disturb its quiet by other than necessary labour. The sabbath of the day, it brings to the weary repose, to the heart-sick healing,—and welcome is its return to the spirit oppressed by worldly cares, or bowed down with secret anguish. No, no, wisely indeed has the day been appropriated to labour,—but let us spare the quiet evening hour, with its pensive memories, and chastened anticipations, with its dreams of hope and love, and youth, for, in such musings, we

“May think down hours to minutes. Thus the heart
May give a useful lesson to the head,
And Learning wiser grow without his books.”

“You become eloquent on the subject,” was Mrs. Derwent’s smiling reply, “and I suppose I must yield as usual.” Accordingly the lamp was extinguished,—and in pleasant conversation on the past, the present, and the future, an hour passed swiftly away. Those who have been absent for some time from the fondly cherished scenes of home, and have been thrown among strangers,—can bear witness, if they have ever experienced it, how delightful the visit of some near and dear relative, with whom they could converse freely on topics which, to a stranger, would prove uninteresting and meaningless,—and perhaps, amid the many emotions experienced by such an event, there was none to be compared to the pleasure of unburthening the heart, of dwelling on familiar names which were once dear as “household words,” of recalling every trivial circumstance that chequered the pathway of life,—and every era that marked, either with sad or joyous tints, the domestic history of the past. These were the feelings experienced by Emily as the different events that had occurred during her absence, were faithfully related by her aunt, while Edward, luxuriously reclining in an arm-chair that stood by the window, sat, for the most part of the time, attentively listening; stealing, every now and then, a glance at the fair occupant of the footstool,—for Emily was seated on a low ottoman by the side of his mother. We will not positively affirm that Edward had, intentionally, placed his chair in a position in which he could, unobserved best view his cousin’s counte-

nance,—but, certainly, chance had favoured him highly, for the moonbeams, streaming full upon her uplifted face, faithfully revealed every changing expression, while at the same time they lent to it almost unearthly beauty. After all we must make some allowances for Edward, for remember, reader, that Emily had been absent for some time, and it is only a natural feeling that prompts us to gaze on the familiar countenance, and to mark the change that sometimes a very, very short period will effect in the “human face divine.” And now, for the first time, he acknowledged that she was altered since he had seen her last. The girlish sprightliness had been changed for the soft and subdued demeanour of the woman; the voice, whose sweet and earnest tones had dwelt in his memory like the treasured sounds of some familiar strain, had caught, from the heart, a slight pathos which lent it additional power; the placid brow bore traces of deeper thought; the lustrous eyes wore, if we may so express it, a more dreamy look, as if they had been engaged in contemplating the inward movement of the spiritual world, rather than in observing the aspect of the physical,—and the slight depression of the dewy lips told that sorrow, that mighty transformer, had not passed her unheeded.

“Auld Lang Syne, that good old song, I should like to hear you play it,” said Mrs. Derwent to Emily as she re-lighted the lamp, and drew the curtains across the windows. “Do you remember what a favourite it was of mine?”

“I had not forgotten it, believe me, my dear aunt, though I have seldom trusted myself to play it when alone, for it brought back too vividly the past. But to-night I shall indeed be most happy to comply with your wishes.” We had omitted mentioning before that Emily still retained a small cottage piano, the gift of her father; often had its sweet sounds cheered her lonely hours, and now she seated herself at it, happy that she could contribute, in any degree, to the enjoyment of her friends.

“Come, Edward, it is your turn to select now,” said Emily playfully, as after performing some of her aunt’s favourite pieces, she turned to her cousin, who had been a silent though delighted listener to the melodies. Dr. Derwent smiled, and, advancing to the piano, bent over the note-book,—but