

## FALLING LEAVES.



OLD-TINTED in the Autumn sun, the Autumn leaves are glowing,  
Silently falling, one by one, while Autumn winds are blowing;  
More beautiful than in their birth, as Christians are in dying,  
They softly rustle down to earth, while the forest boughs are sighing.

And yet 'tis sad to watch them go, those whisperers of the wood,  
That our own hearts had learnt to know and almost understood,—  
To see them tremulously leap, as, driven by, they pass,  
Like gentle billows o'er the deep of the dark green Autumn grass.

A little while ago 'twas Spring, and we loitered by the way,  
Where the hawthorn bush was minist'ring to the glories of the May;  
And now in the new-furrowed ridge the hawthorn flowers are sleeping,  
And hawthorn leaflets make a bridge where the canker-worm is creeping.

Some on the silent river drift, bound none of us know where;  
Some in a hospitable rift, hide from the frosty air;  
Ah! sad the thought! their many hues now rudely mixed together,  
Were once the care of Summer dews, the pride of sunny weather.

And while the elm-tree's embered store, chestnut and red-brown beech,  
Are writing thus the solemn lore their fading beauties teach,  
Young children, winnowing the leaves, the fallen nuts are seeking,—  
Spring leaves themselves, they little know, what the Autumn leaves are speaking!

They dream not of the dull heart-beat, and the soul-sky overcast,  
That follow memory's restless feet through the dead leaves of the past;  
Nor how fond hope our toil employs, as we seek and seek in vain,  
To winnow from our withered joys one that shall live again.

But, stay—methinks a voice I hear from the amber-gold and brown  
Of the dying leaves, that in the clear, cold air are rustling down;  
Are rustling down while the soft breeze prays, or in recesses dim  
Of the cloistered wood, doth sweetly raise the notes of a parting hymn.

They say those leaves so beautiful, those leaves in death so fair,  
Like us, live ever datiful; like us expire in prayer;  
And then the sun that sees your fall shall be that Father's eye,  
Whose winds of heaven delight to call his children to the sky.

