

THOUGHTS FOR DECEMBER.

"With his ice, and snow, and rime,
Let bleak winter sternly come,
There is not a sunnier clime
Than the love-lit winter home." WATTS.

"He marks the bounds which winter may not pass,
And blunts his pointed fury; in its case
Russet and rude, folds up the tender germ
Uninjured, with inimitable art;
And, ere one flowery season fades and dies,
Designs the blooming wonders of the next."—ANON.

To no country in the world, perhaps, are the above lines of Watts more applicable, than to America.

In no country of Europe does the winter social circle present more elements for enjoyment; nay, it may be with safety asserted, that no where is the same universal comfort found that marks the social position of American households.

The painter, in his delineation of winter, pictures a lean and bearded old man, shivering before the embers of a smouldering fire; and the sculptor has in a similar manner personified it, by one struggling ineffectually, against the fierce blast, to retain possession of his tattered garment. Had either sculptor or painter been Canadians, their mode of representation would have been of a very different nature. Still it cannot be denied that the characteristics of the month partake, for the most part, of a harsh and monotonous character, although in this, our adopted land, no such severity of rigor prevails, as in the bleak and frozen north, where even the light of the sun disappears. There, no description from mortal pen, not even Lewis in his beautiful tale of "The Spirit of the frozen ocean," can figure the utter desolation.

When we remember these things, and contrast them with the delights which attend the same season here: the beautiful, clear, bright frosty day; the bracing air, which sends the blood coursing more quickly through the veins, and look round the happy domestic circle collected around the cheerful blaze, we may fairly ask in the words of the poet—

Is winter hideous in a garb like this?

'Tis true that we cannot have, at this season, in the open air, the festas of sunny Italy, but still as we look on our cheerful fire places, and our domestic comforts, the thought is suggested that it is precisely to our more severe climate that our domestic happiness is traceable.

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It was in the consciousness of our possessing, to so high an extent, these social blessings that Cowper, in the Task, celebrates the closing year—

Oh! winter, ruler of th' inverted year,
Thy scatter'd hair with sleet-like ashes filled,
Thy breath congealed upon thy lips; thy cheeks
Fringed with a beard made white with other snows
Than those of age, thy forehead wrapped in clouds,
A leaden branch thy sceptre, and thy throne
A sliding car indebted to no wheels,
But urged by storms along its slippery way.
I love thee, all unlovely as thou seem'st,
And dreaded as thou art! Thou hold'st the sun
A prisoner in the yet undawning east,
Short'ning his journey between morn and noon,
And hurrying him, impatient of his stay,
Down to the rosy west; but kindly still
Compensating his loss with added hours
Of social converse, and instructive ease;
And gath'ring, at short notice, in one group
The family dispersed, and fixing thoughts
Not less dispers'd by daylight and its cares,
I crown thee king of infinite delights,
Fireside enjoyments, homeborn happiness,
And all the comforts, that the lowly roof
Of undisturbed retirement, and the hours
Of long uninterrupted evening, knows.

We have endeavoured, in our brief notices, to point out that the minutest work of each month all prove that

"The hand that made us is divine."

We have shewn it in the swelling seed, in early spring, in the bursting bulbs of the same season, and the joyous twittering of the birds perched amongst the still leafless boughs.

Bright summer, with her meads carpeted with flowers, afforded another subject for instruction. The balmy sweetness of the air impregnated with sweet odors was urged as further indications of Divine beneficence.

When "Autumn grey" appeared with its russet tints and teeming abundance, we again shewed the hand of the Almighty in providing such bounteous supplies for our bodily wants, against this, the last season of all, with its snows and ice, and decay.

In all this visible, is everywhere manifest the Invisible, and having thus endeavoured to prove that all seasons are intended to produce good to man, we will close our year's notices with Howitt's beautiful lines:—

ALL SEASONS WELCOME.

Who does not welcome Spring's sweet gentleness,
That, like a friend long waited for in vain,
Comes laughing in and wails away distress,
Sending its joy through spirit and through plain.
Welcome is Summer in its ardent reign;