

not calculated to excite the noblest instincts of our nature, will be entirely done away with. But, there were other amusements peculiar to this holiday season, in which the young chiefly delighted and, we regret to say, these few years past have become totally forgotten. Everything at last must yield to the inexorable law of custom and time.

But chiefly we delighted to recall the associations connected with the domestic circle as well as the out-door amusements of this season in days gone by. With what ecstatic joy we received those tokens of affection and remembrance from kind and loving hearts. They are all forgotten now, and the donors have silently departed; but these things can touch us no more with the joy they once revealed. We are growing old now, and the consciousness of this fact sends at times, a sharp thrill of pain to the heart. The first awakening of this truth is always sudden, and causes sad and mournful reflections. And why should it not be so, when one remembers the past? The thoughtlessness and levity of youth with its romantic visions, loves and hopes, contrast most painfully with the wisdom and experience we have learned in a later school. But the feeling of growing old touches not all alike. Some persons are old in body but young in mind; it is youth's freshness and elasticity of temper, combined with kindly feelings, that they have not lost. To some, the quick sense of physical decay, brings with it a certain feeling of despondency and gloom, that throws a cloud over their happiest hours.

The first appearance of crow's feet round the corners of the eye, or the faint lines of care or sorrow upon the brow, makes many who have been regarded as handsome, saddened and depressed in spirit. And what mournful reflections must that devotee to fashion and pleasure have, who once celebrated for beauty, wanders through the ball room or saloon, with the consciousness of charms lost to her forever, and finding that homage which she was wont to receive, paid to others. And can anything be more painful to witness than the frivolous occupation and vain arts which some employ to preserve their beauty. We ask the reader, do not these things go far to determine and reveal the prominent traits of character? That kindly and beautiful writer, the author of the recollections of a Country Parson, who deals so charitably and leniently with the failings and imperfections of human nature, has written most glowingly upon this theme, and to him do we direct the attention of our readers. Thrice happy is he who still preserves, as the seasons roll round and old age comes on, the freshness and vivacity of feeling, which adorned his childhood.

At this season it is pleasing, in the young, to witness the exuberance of spirit, and flow of emotion which the old evince. It partakes of something of the feeling of their earlier years. How many an old man's heart is gladdened with the recollections of bright spots, oasis, so

to speak in the barren desert of the past, which the festivities of these holidays reveal to his memory. Old age, so often allied with all that is forbidden in manner, grows young again. The heart breaks out in sallies of wit, and with feelings of good humour, mirthfulness and love. Surrounded with the innocent gaiety and confiding looks of childhood, the smiles of friends and relatives, his heart awakens to feelings of deepest joy. He knows what life is, its warp and woof woven of many colours. He remembers too, the visions of its earlier years—the smiles that enchant and the hopes that deceive, and to him the sublime ode of Wordsworth reveals its most hidden meaning—

"The clouds that gather round the setting
Sun do take a sober colouring from
An eye that hath kept watch o'er
Man's mortality!"

In Germany, Christmas and New Year is celebrated with even more joyousness than it is with us. The customs of the people remain the same from year to year, and the winter holidays are associated with the wildest hilarity and jocund mirth. Naturally home loving, the Germans cling with devotion to the institutions and customs of the Fatherland, and though transported by exile to other climes, preserve through every vicissitude of fortune, that intense feeling of patriotism which comforts and sustains them. In this respect they much resemble the Scotch. At the present time, especially in England and America, the march of civilization is rapid, while science, art and letters, are breaking down those barriers and distinctions in Society that tend completely to improve the manners, customs and tastes of the people. In consequence of all this, Christmas and New Year, as days of festivity, mirth and pleasure, is we think, every year becoming less observed. This is an age of deep and earnest purpose, when science and art are making great discoveries and improvements, and, when the whole energies of man seem to be devoted to the accumulation of material wealth.

To this fact, we owe that sceptical and incredulous spirit which seems to characterize the age. It is dominant in religion, art and letters. Men nowadays seem to revere nothing; customs and institutions they scatter to the winds; idols they have none—save that of the colossal mammon. The spirit of veneration seems to have given place to one of doubt, unbelief, and utopian reform, and allying itself with intelligence and wisdom, will, no doubt, do much towards the future amelioration and improvement of the race. But with all our boasted wisdom, it is a strange principle of human nature that, as the years roll on, and old age advances, we are more disposed to ignore the present and to do homage to the past. Nevertheless, those lines of distinctions, which seem to separate the two great classes of the human family, and which, in Politics are known under the names of Whig and Tory, seem to be fast fading into each other, or in other words—completely changing. Men are every year becoming