

THE
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AND
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WINTER AND ITS ASSOCIATES.

"Thou crownest the year with goodness," said the inspired Psalmist; a sentiment this which recognized the fact that each successive season brought its own evidences of the Creator's love and care. We say not but that winter in other latitudes may pass over more mildly and with less alteration in the face of nature than in our own; and we leave our talented friends Duncan and Mudie to detail the philosophy of these differences, as well as the varied appearances, zoological, botanical, and meteoric, which this season, in the different parts of the earth, exhibits. Our task lies in a different direction. Christianity with us gives the winter a peculiar charm, especially to religious society: our family circles are better comparted together when the daylight closes with, or before, the hour of tea, and the inducements to wander abroad no longer exist. The evening services in the house of God are in general better attended: persons whose occupation or profession required all their hours of daylight in the summer, now take their places in their much-loved chapel or church. The softened gas-light, the comparative stillness of the surrounding world, the consequent seclusion of the sacred place, and the connected and hushed attention of the congregation, are all circumstances to be looked forward to and welcomed; and so favourable are they to the spread of religion, at least in our home-society, that Christians are now in the habit of considering the early and the latter months of the year as seasons of especial grace, and in which we more confidently look for the conversion of sinners, and the establishment of believers in faith and holiness. We take the liberty of reminding our friends, the readers of the *Cottager's Friend*—who are nearly all members of religious families, and we would fain hope religious, or seeking to be so, themselves,—that the winter is an interesting season of duty. The probable coldness of the weather, joined to the darkness of the morning hours, will make rising early a work of severe self-denial; but if self-denial and redeeming time be Christian duties, it will be noble to as-