

The Close of the Year.

The clock strikes twelve—it is the knell of the departed year—what busy thoughts crowd upon us, what strong emotions swell the heart as slowly falls upon the listening ear the melancholy sound! All now is still, as silent as the grave—as noiseless as the place of sepulchres—all around and every living thing is hushed in dread repose!—All, save the helpless invalid and the lone watcher at the hour of pain, or some sad group of mourning friends gathered beside the bed of death, to whom, for the last time, the soul-thrilling glance of the eye of one long and fondly loved, now as it is about to close forever upon the terrestrial scene—to hear, for the last time, the sweet accents of affection faintly murmured from lips about to be closed in all the rigidity of death—perhaps some little band of pious devotees, united in holy prayer, have congregated to watch the meeting of the years—and some chance who, reckless of these sad and solemn scenes, have laid their serious thoughts aside while bidding the old year adieu, and mirth and revelry do hail the infant year. Are these all that now the midnight vigil sees? No—the pale student solitary sits and reads the midnight oil while poring o'er the annals of ages past—the gambler and the debauchee amid the haunts of vice still linger, unrepentant of this most solemn hour, and all unwilling too of the anxious ones that wait their turn, and, while grief is tugging at their heart-strings and wearing inch by inch their way, watch the long and weary hours to their well-known step. But time doth fail, fare-thee-well, departed year fare-well! The pleasures and joys may ne'er return that have to be laid in oblivion with thee gone down; yet, so long as a thing is Hope, new hopes, as 'Alps do still arise,' and, phoenix-like, upon buried hopes spring up, and so may other lights our path illumine.



CREATURE, who spends its whole time in singing, gaming, prating and gadding, is a creature originally, indeed, of the rational make; who has sunk itself beneath its rank, and may be considered at present as nearly on a par with the monkey-species.—*B. Constant.*



THE necessary qualities for society are—possess, exempt from falsehood; frankness, without rudeness; complaisance, freed from affectation; and, above all, a heart naturally inclined to benevolence.

THE PREDESTINED BACHELOR.

"One woman is fair, yet I am well; another is wise, yet I am well; another virtuous, yet I am well; but 'till all these graces are in one woman, one woman shall not be in my graces."

Much Ado About Nothing.

"If ever a man was cut out for an old bachelor, Doctor Whitherton was!"

This had been reiterated by every individual of woman kind in our village, until it was so nearly realized, that there seemed but faint proof of sagacity in the affirmation, for the gentleman presumed to be thus fated, arrived unwedded at the age of thirty-four or thirty-five, which, if not within the epoch of old bachelorhood, very few ladies under twenty, will allow to be far from its limits.

"Why so?" might have asked some one not so fully initiated into the mysteries of destiny; "the doctor is handsome, affable, amiable and talented; why should he not have a wife? though modest, he is not too bashful to court for one; though not rich, he is well able to maintain one; and though a student, he has domestic qualities in abundance to enjoy the society of a family. Strange that he should be doomed to live an old bachelor!"

"But he seems not to be able to make up his mind to marry;" would have been the answer of one of our gossips; "there was a Miss Gray from the city, who boarded a summer here in town;—an elegant looking girl—I never saw a finer figure on horseback; he gallanted her time after time, and every body thought it would have been a match, yet he allowed her to return without even popping the question."

"And there was a Miss Brown, whom, it was universally believed, he could not help falling in love with," would have been the argument of a second: "a most exquisite singer; all our amateurs agreed that she united the merits of all the *prima donnas* they had ever heard; he used to listen to her by the hour, yet it all ended in nothing."

"And Mrs. Greene, a pretty young widow,"—argument the third; "she would have suited him so well! she had him attending her for months; every body thought more on account of the doctor, than the disease; she had a nice fortune, too, yet he still remained uncaught."

"Ergo, because a handsome, affable, amiable, talented man, of five-and-thirty, had not met with a young lady who rode well, and another who sung well, and a widow who was pretty and rich, without finding a wife, he must live and die an old bachelor! patience!"