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LITERATURE

POETRY.

THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR.

When thy heart was young, and thy mind was gay,
And thou hadst not heard of ill,
And the sun that rose and sat on thy day,
Was genial and lovely still;
When thy youthful temples were wreathed in flowers,
How little to thee was the march of hours!

The autumnal leaf was as gay to thee,
When it floated and fell in the wind,
As the vernal bud and blossom could be,
On the flourishing plant reclined:
For then thou wast reckless and young as they,
And alike to thee was their bloom and decay.

But now perchance, with an altered eye,
Thou beholdest the passing year;
And with sorrow thou vicwest the hours go by,
And the last sad day draw near;
When the Giver shall call for the soul He gave,
And thy clay shall commix with the kindred grave.

And thou watchest perhaps the changeful year,
At times with a pensive sigh;
And the leaves of November all strewn and sear,
Will remind thee that thou must die;
And the season's change, and the year's decline
Speak loud of the changes that must be thine.

And the year that is gone,—as it died away,
Didst thou see it expire unmoved?
Or didst thou not muse on thy own decay,
And farewell to the things beloved;
And feel that its day and its months, for thee,
Were all sunk in eternity's boundless sea?

It is time to think when the days of men,
Thus rapidly hasten on,
And the glass of Time, though it's turned again,
Will too quickly again be run,—
And these are the thoughts which the pensive sage
Will love to revolve in maturer age.

The autumnal blast may despoil the tree,
And scatter its foliage round;
And the drifted snow may a girdle be,
Where the ivy had fondly bound:
But the widowed stem and the leafless spray,
Shall be green again on a sunny day.

Not so with man;—there's a fearful hour
That will blight his joyous bloom;
When his leaf shall be in the whirlwind's power,
And his trunk lie low in the tomb:
And no genial sun, and no glad some spring,
To him a new verdure of life shall bring.

Conversation.

(Continued from our last.)

There are one or two popular fallacies on the subject of conversation which, perhaps, help to make it more difficult than it need be. One of these is the outcry against "talking shop." Of course, for any two or three individuals in the company to insist on making the staple of the conversation something which can only interest themselves personally, and on which others are necessarily either uninformed or indifferent, is simple rudeness and ill-breeding. And although the name given to it assumes this to be a kind of *bourgeois* offence in its origin, it is at least as common in what affects to be very good society indeed. The fashionable "shop" with which some people will persist in boring their neighbours, sometimes with a premeditated malice, because they know that they are speaking in a sort of unknown tongue to those whose habits and interests are quite of a different kind, is a much graver social offence than any commercial or professional discussion could be. It is good, no doubt, for all of us, in the society of others, to throw off for a while the trammels of our working-hours. We should meet, as far as possible, on common ground, and try to recognise a common interest. The more confined and individual our own sphere of action is, the more wholesome it is for ourselves, and the more agreeable for others, that we should at such times step out of its contracted circle into a