

An Autumn Elegy

By C. W. Dalmon

Now it is fitting, and becomes us all
To think how fast our time of being fades.
The Year puts down his mead-cup, with a sigh,
And kneels, deep in the red and yellow glades,
And tells his beads like one about to die ;
For, when the last leaves fall,
He must away unto a bare, cold cell
In white St. Winter's monastery ; there
To do hard penance for the joys that were,
Until the New Year tolls his passing-bell.

And 'tis in vain to whisper, " Be of cheer,
There is a resurrection after death ;
When Autumn tears will turn to Spring-time rain,
As through the earth the Spirit quickeneth
Toward the old, glad Summer-life again ! "
He will not smile to hear,
But only look more sorrowful, and say,
" How can you mock me if you love me ? No ;
The day draws very nigh when I must go ;
The new will be the new ; I pass away."

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Yet, kneeling with him, still more sad than he,
I saw him once turn round and smile as sweet
As in the happy rose and lily days,
When, from between the stubble of the wheat,
A skylark soared up through the clouds to praise
The sun's eternity.
Hope seemed to flash a moment in his eyes ;
And, knowing him so well, I know he thought—
“ How fair the legend through the ages brought,
That still to live is Death's most sweet surprise ! ”



