

October Anniversary.



A DOMESTIC ANNIVERSARY.

THE FIRST FIRE OF THE SEASON.

The lighting of the first fire for the season is one of the annual events of the domestic circle; the evenings shorten in and a sort of general chilliness becomes very perceptible, but there is a wish to prolong the very appearance of summer as long as possible, so there is a delay in ordering in the coals; but delay avails nothing—the sky becomes more and more Novemberish, and though it is only October by the almanack, yet it is voted winter by general consent, or rather general feeling, and the scene our artist has sketched is the result, we hope multiplied through thousands of happy households. The “old folks” tell us that they remember when the good people of the city never made themselves comfortable till “Lord Mayor’s day”—that great civic event—however cold the weather might be before the 9th of November. How they must have envied the cooks of the Guildhall Banquet, though in all the pride of self-denial they were above the weakness of confessing it! Perhaps Winter was tardier in his arrival in those days, and only sent a wholesome kind of “fine bracing air” till a day or two before the important 9th, when he would commission a smart frost to harden the roads for the procession, keep the shoes of the city footmen clean, and sharpen the noses and appetites of all parties present. Then it was considered winter, and it was orthodox to handle the poker and coal-skuttle. We are a more impatient generation, and do not choose to let our teeth chatter in our heads till his Lordship has paid his morning call to the Judges at Westminster. Every age has its prejudices, but we cannot help thinking our plan is the most rational—to light up the hearth when it is required, without regard whether it is “a day before or a day after” any event at all. So put on some more coals!

The air bites shrewdly, it is very cold;  
It is a nipping and an eager air!

There! now we begin to look comfortable, and to feel so also; and having broken a solid lump of the “heat-diffusing” substance, as Homer would have called it if he had ever sung of coals, for the mere sake of seeing the flame, we find ourselves warming into poetry, which thus breaks forth into—A SONG FOR THE SEASON.

THE FIRST FIRESIDE.

The Spring may boast its vernal bow'rs,  
Its closing shades and opening flow'rs—  
Its songs of birds from morning hours  
To ev'ntide —  
Give me the homely joys we greet  
When, fill'd each hospitable seat,  
Some kindred spirits kindly meet  
Round First FIRESIDE.

Let Summer shed her burning glow  
To melt the chilly mountain snow  
And make the valley-streamlets flow  
In gushing pride —  
She hath not such a charm to make  
The drooping heart so sweetly take  
A part in mirth for mirth's own sake  
As warm FIRESIDE!

Rich Autumn with her golden store,  
May count her treasures o'er and o'er,  
And say such wealth did ne'er before  
The land betide —  
But in a snug and shelter'd room  
Where neither mind's nor season's gloom  
Can blight our joyous-mental bloom —  
Give me—FIRESIDE!

Now fruits and flowers, and yellow sheaves  
Are gather'd in, and wither'd leaves  
Be all the traveller's eye perceives  
In prospect wide —  
How sweet to ramble through some book,  
Or chat with social friends in nook  
From which we have the cheering look  
Of good FIRESIDE.

And then to send the glass around,  
And have the happy meeting crown'd,  
With some old ditty's cordial sound,  
Too oft denied —  
To melodies of greater skill,  
That have no power, if they've the will,  
To touch our hearts like those that thrill  
Round old FIRESIDE.

Then hail the genial season, hail!  
O'er mild October's nut-brown ale,  
Let's sit and hear the merry tale,  
Or aught beside —  
Which may the passing hour engage —  
Of life we'll con the varied page,  
And hope for happy good old age  
By our FIRESIDE.