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A TIME TO REMINISCE

FOR us, the past year will be remembered as a very good year for friendship and this verse from Richard II by William Shakespeare illustrates my feeling so well:

"I count myself in nothing else so happy
As in a soul remembering my good friends"

When I was browsing through an old book I found an edelweiss, a wild orchid and chaffinch feathers tucked away between the pages. They reminded me of my happy childhood in a sunny mountain village in distant Switzerland, of my family and friends – not only the friends I had in those days, but also the many friends we have made since and we are still making in this friendly village. What would we do without them?

As I looked at those childhood treasures, and the feathers in particular, I thought how like the wild birds we are – shedding a feather here and there, leaving a little part of ourselves behind. What do we leave? Kind words, being helpful to neighbours, to friends? Or do we leave words said in haste which we later regret? Perhaps we should resolve to be more circumspect and think twice before saying something, be more thoughtful and considerate for others. Have more courage, more common sense, and above all have the faculty to laugh at ourselves.

In a few years' time when I find that edelweiss, orchid and feathers again, I hope that the imprint I left behind, the impression I made on my friends, will be a happy one. It would be marvellous to be able to say: "I have no regrets." It is comforting to think that despite the many changes in the world around us, the fundamental values are still intact and:

"As sure the night must follow the day
As sure as no dawn can ever stay
As sure as clouds across the sky
Will always and forever fly
So surely too will small birds sing
And flowers bloom when breaks the Spring."

E. Marie-Louise Grout