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THE NEW YEAR—A FEW THOUGHTS ON THE PAST.

Rightly considered, every portion of our time—every day—every moment is of solemn importance to us. Every moment is shortening the day of our merciful visitation, and hastening on the time when we must enter on an eternal and unchanging state of being. It becomes us then habitually to number our days and redeem the time. But it is well to note more especially such a time as the present—the close of one year and the commencement of another. The sands of time may not run faster now than at any other season of the year. But the lapse of time is more marked and more palpable. When we cease to date by one year, and begin to use another, we cannot well avoid noticing the change, and feeling that we are advancing farther and farther in the journey of life, and that our days pass away as a tale that is told. It is well then to take advantage of the general feeling that is thus produced by the advent of the present season of the year, and to pause for a little amidst the busy round of business in which we live, looking back upon the past, and looking forward to the future that lies before us.

In looking back upon the past various feelings fill our souls in view of the manifold dealings of God with us. We speak more especially of God's dealings with us as a community. It is indeed good to consider God's dealings with us as individuals and as families; to look back on the way by which He has led us; to thank Him for His mercies, temporal and spiritual; and to consider the meaning of His chastenings. But this we must do each in our own retirement, in the privacy of our own closets. God's dealings with us are so diverse, that it is to a very limited extent that we can assist each other in this matter, or suggest suitable trains of thought. In reviewing the past year, then, we purpose to note particularly those events of God's Providence which more especially refer to us as a community, or to other portions of the human family.

The year on which we now look back opened amidst dark and heavy clouds, which diffused general gloom throughout the community. The recent intelligence of the sudden decease of the estimable and excellent *Prince Consort*, had filled every heart with unfeigned sorrow, and with heartfelt sympathy with our beloved Queen under the appalling trial which she had been called upon to bear. The threatened outbreak of hostilities between Britain and America was another thing which contributed to spread gloom over society. For however