

tend to check the sorrow and to increase the joy of our world. In this joy let our children participate, that they may shortly join with us in shouting "Hosanna to the Son of David."

It may be that in many cases the thought and joyous emotions associated with this commemorative and festive period are more worldly and sensual than devotional; yet the undertone, whether listened to or not, is favorable to Christianity.

Infidelity has failed, after repeated and strong intellectual effort, to drive Christmas out of the world. It is a powerful argument for the personality and divinity of the man Christ Jesus, which the eloquence and venom of Ingersoll cannot disturb.

No sooner does the month expire, and with it the year, amid the silence of the midnight hour, than the New Year takes the reins, and obsequiously the sceptic and the believer drop the numeral they have been using for a year and henceforth the next one in advance supplies the place. Documentary testimony declares that no other babe that ever was born so largely influenced the chronology of the world as does to-day Jesus the Christ, who was eighteen hundred and eighty-five years ago the Babe of Bethlehem.

It seems difficult in thinking, speaking, or writing about the month of December to get beyond the precincts of Christmas.

There let me tarry, wonder, and adore,
Lights greet my vision never seen before,
Let Hallelujah's undertone be heard,
It is a Babe! a Saviour! yes, the Lord.

The month of May, with its refreshing smiles, opening flowers, and other significant intimations of approaching Summer, brought much joy to the sons of men, but December brings more. Heaven and earth never were so close together as they were at the first Christmas. The union still continues. No poet, inspired or uninspired, since that day, has constructed a better dextology than that which the angels sang "on that auspicious morn." Never before nor since did our atmosphere vibrate with such enrapturing music. Never before nor since have mortals heard a more sublime song, both in its God-ward and man-ward references.

Every December is somewhat similar to its predecessor, but no two since the beginning have been precisely alike. There is always sufficient variety, atmospheric, commercial, social, and religious, to keep up the interest. Like sunrise and sunset—the return of the seasons, and other repeated occurrences of nature, there is a freshness and versatility which awaken pleasing sensations in man's emotional nature. Nor will the glorious thoughts concentrated in the word Christmas, ever become stale to a race so deeply concerned in the marvellous manifestation.

This month is suggestive of life's December, which is never an item in the earthly Calendar, except in a few cases, in reference to the past. It is universally expected, and may come any month of the year. The world's December, too, is approaching. That will be a period of unprecedented solemnity and awful grandeur, ending the periodical memorials of Christmas, terminating all doubt respecting the wise government of the Universe, and settling into eternal permanence the moral condition of men and angels.

The signs of the times indicate the declination of Heaven and Earth towards that hour, when they "shall pass away." If the nineteenth century be not the beginning of the world's December, we believe it is the autumnal season,—the eve of "ripe Millennial fruit." But as the "times and seasons" of the moral Government of God, are retained in His own hands, we shall not dogmatize in reference to dates; or vainly attempt to imitate the prophets of old, whose office and work, the Babe of Bethlehem has rendered unnecessary.

The varied lessons of the year, if now carefully received and pondered, will doubtless lead to good practical results. These should be high and noble resolve, acknowledgment and appreciation of providential and gracious favors, and the blessed realization of a conscious union of soul and purpose with Emmanuel in all his beneficent designs. A contrast between Christmas influence in our world to-day, and those of eighteen hundred and eighty-five years ago, opens up a wonderful field of thought. The great event is not yet universally known; but the knowledge is extending in all directions. Doubtless a period is approaching when a bolt of gospel hallelujahs will encircle the globe; and all the earth rejoice in the "good tidings," first announced in connection with the birth of the world's Redeemer.

G. O. HUESTIS.

Baron Steuben, the distinguished Prussian officer, who joined the American army under Washington at Valley Forge, was dissatisfied one day with the lack of martial bearing among the Revolutionary troops and concluded that he would drill them. Standing in front of one of the regiments, himself the embodiment of soldierly qualities, he commanded in broken English: "Look bold. Look fierce. Look like the devil. Look as I do." It was too much for the un-martial but quick-witted Continentals to endure in silence, and a shout of laughter went up from the ranks along the line. When the situation was explained to Baron Steuben, he had a good laugh over it with his associate officers.

Dr. Samuel A. Green of the Massachusetts State Board of Health, is very much interested in American antiquities. In the early days of Mount Desert, he visited the place, mainly in the interest of his passion for curiosities. Leaving his baggage at the wharf, he sought out one of the primitive hotels, near which was a mound, that suggested to him an Indian burial spot. Securing a shovel, he commenced digging for relics. While engaged in the work a woman rushed out from the hotel and furiously demanded of him: "What be yer diggin' there for? You just stop it." "Oh," replied Dr. Green, "I was looking for curiosities in this Indian mound." "That ain't no Indian mound," replied the woman; "that's where them Higgins children is buried."

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