

the other; the death of that giant in mind, though dwarf in body, Monsieur Thiers, who piloted the nation in safety at the close of her late disastrous war with Germany; and a continuation of the wonderful prosperity which has attended the commercial affairs of that elastic country; notwithstanding the prevailing revolutionary agitations and alarms. To come now to that usually most favored land, the "seagirt isle," Great Britain, the year which is about to close shall have to be recorded as an exceptional one; a year of anxiety, and active preparation for war; a year of almost incessant rains and storms, and consequently of one of the worst harvests on record; the cutting of the crops in many places having to be given up a hopeless.

In the United States of America the reviewers of 1877 shall be enabled to record a year of returning prosperity, after a lengthened period of almost complete commercial stagnation. In the opening words of President Hayes in his message to the Senate and House of Representatives:—"With great gratitude to the bountiful giver of all good, I congratulate you at the beginning of your first regular session, that you find our country blessed with health and peace and abundant harvests, and with encouraging prospects of an early return of general prosperity." Yet one drawback to this prosperous state of things during the year shall have to be recorded. We allude to the gigantic strike of the employees on several of the great lines of railway, which was attended by so much bloodshed and loss of life, and caused such interruption to traffic throughout the country, as to make it amount almost to a revolution. To come now to *our own* country, whether by birth or by adoption, our experience of the year which is just passing away can compare favorably with that of any other country. With the exception of the great scarcity of money, arising from the universal stagnation of trade, but which is now happily passing away, the year has been with us, as in the United States, one of peace and plenty. We have devoutly to thank the bountiful giver of all good for all the good this year has borne us. We have to render unto Him the homage of grateful hearts for still merci-

fully preserving us in life while myriads of our fellow-men who, like ourselves, saw the beginning of the year, have been called away to their account and are now insensible to all that is doing under the sun.

As a nation we have to bless Him for such a magnificent harvest as has not been experienced for many years, while multitudes in other lands have been perishing from want or famine. We have to bless Him for peace within our borders while others have been fearfully embroiled in bloody wars and fierce contentions. And as congregations and families we have to bless Him for daily leading us with his benefits; for all the blessings, both temporal and spiritual which he has showered down upon us. In looking back upon the year, and considering all our experiences of it, we cannot but feel constrained to say that goodness and mercy have followed us during it. But sad thoughts will no doubt occupy the minds of many of us as we look back upon the dying year. Death has not allowed it to pass without leaving the impress of his icy hand on many of our families. In his desolating march he has not exempted any of our congregations however small, from his ravages. He has entered happy homes belonging to all our congregations, and snatched away his helpless victims, the babe, the child, and the parent, the husband and the wife, the sister and the brother.

By all these sad bereavements we are solemnly reminded, at such a season as this, that our time on earth is short, that we are but strangers and sojourners here as all our fathers were, and that when a few more years at most are come, then shall we also go the way whence we shall not return.

We may be nearer our end than we think. Others have been suddenly called away in the midst of health and strength, and why may not we? At the close of 1876 there were those with us, mingling actively with us in the business of life, and sitting with us in our Churches who are not with us now. What, then, if our turn should come before another year has run its course? Does not the solemn question occur to our minds:—"Shall we be found ready?" O then let us see to it that we be always ready, for