

Truth's Contributors.

A Happy New Year.

BY REV. HUGH JOHNSTON, M. A., D. D.

"I wish you a happy New Year!" How often have we heard it? How often have we repeated it? It has been on the lips of every one. The old year is gone. Poor old man, in the darkness of midnight, Dec. 31st, 1884, he died.

His face is growing sharp and thin.
Alack; our friend is gone.
Close up his eyes, tie up his chin,
Step from his couch and let him be.
That standeth there alone.
And waiteth at the door

The old man whose heart has not been gladdened a, hum? and who has not enjoyed some of his rich gifts?

Now he is gone, and we have brushed away our tears and welcomed the New Year. We exchange greetings and congratulations, and wish our hearts as well as our lips utter, "I wish you a happy New Year."

It is a reasonable wish, for happiness is what we are all seeking for, living for, working for. But such a rare, precious jewel is not to be obtained by merely wishing it.

And if the year is unhappy, we must be happy in its successive parts, happy from day to day.

A rare possession is this.

After the death of Abderman, Caliph of Cirdora, the following paper was found in his handwriting: "Fifty years have elapsed since Sheam Caliph I have possessed riches, honors, pleasures, friends; in short, anything that man can desire in this world. I have reckoned up the days in which I could say I was really happy, and they amount to fourteen."

Fourteen happy days out of nearly twenty thousand! with wealth, pleasure, honor, all that men call the *summum bonum*, the highest good.

The trouble is that we look for happiness when it cannot be found in our surroundings in outward circumstances, and not in ourselves; and so are continually reminded of the legend of Anasta concerning a tree. Many-branched and covered with delectable bunches; but who so shook that tree to win the fruit, found too late that not fruit, but stones of crushing weight came down upon his head.

For the year to be happy it must be a thankful one. Ingratitude is one of the basest of crimes. How many mercies in the past? The business cloud lifted, the child born, recovery from sickness, life sweetened in a thousand ways.

Life has been but a precious chain in which one golden link has clasped another, every hour being a link and every day lengthening the chain.

2. For the year to be happy it must be a watchful one. Each one has his besetment, and the heart itself is like a beleaguered city, beset with enemies without and in danger of being betrayed by treacherous foes within. Our passions are snares. They are lions in ambush. They are tigers that lurk in dark jungles. They burn as the fires burn. They sweep as storms and wintry winds sweep. One companion may be as a whole world tempting us. One impure imagination may break up the great deeps of our evil hearts. One sudden flash of infernal fire may kindle our passions into a very blaze of perdition. Therefore it is *beforehand* or never.

For the year to be happy it must be a year of work. Happiness is always in the ratio of usefulness. Not long ago a man appeared at the counter of a bank, asked for and received specie for bills on the bank to the amount of one thousand dollars. He had kept those bills unused for twenty years. Had he deposited them in the bank at interest he would have received more than double the amount. So our talents lie unused, wrapped up in a napkin instead of being employed in doing good. "What thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might."

For the year to be happy it must be a year of growing and abiding trust in God. There is a sweet antidote to every care and anxiety and unrest.

Business men are living under a constant

strain of effort—insufficient capital, keen competition, and the fear of going to the wall. Can they not take it a little easier? Tired mothers have their faces all covered with lines of care. Why do they fret? God forgive us for our distrust and unbelief in carrying burdens too heavy for us, instead of casting all our care on Him who careth for us. To live a single moment at a time, hilling it up with the best fruit of the noblest well-doing, is the secret of a happy year. Over-anxiety will poison and destroy the happiness of the year. The fear of future evils is in itself the greatest of evils, and to conjure up anxieties is to inflict unnecessary tortures upon ourselves, and like madmen destroy the real bliss of the present. The invisible hand of time has swung open the door of a new year, yet can we live only a moment at a time. The most precious gift that Heaven sends us is time, yet it is doled out by the moment. But it gives all that a man ought ever to ask, an opportunity, and there is no achievement that we may not secure if we know the value of the moment and put ourselves into it. "Give me health to-day," says Emerson, "and I will make the pomp of emperors ridiculous." What, reader, has the past year been to you? Has it been one of wasted opportunities, blasted hopes, or ruined prospects? What will 1885 be to you? Here every man must be his own biographer. Shall you be better, wiser, and so happier? Look forward. Yonder is a grave. Are you hastening to it? Yet may the present afford time for repentance, new resolves, and a long step forward in the Divine Life. I wish you a happy New Year.

The Field of Truth.

BY D. WYLIE, BROCKVILLE.

When TRUTH touches matters of a public nature there is nothing of partyism discernable. This is well. A family paper cannot descend to political bickerings. Were such a course followed the paper would lose much of its popularity. When matters of public interest are dealt with, truth is aimed at. The reader is consequently left to decide for himself, as to the good or evil likely to result from the discussion of the question dealt with. Canada has long been a field of political strife. From a Tory point of view, all is right, while from a Liberal point of view, all is wrong.

In the old land, the question of a redistribution of seats in the House of Commons has been a source of much discussion. In carrying out this important measure "the grand old man" of England has acted honorably. Before laying the bill before Parliament, he held a conference with the leaders of the Opposition. How different from the action of "the grand old man" of Canada when dealing with a similar subject for our Dominion. His plan was not to please his political opponents, but to legislate them out of their seats.

Mr. Gladstone, on the other hand, has legislated out of Parliament a greater number of his own political friends than of his political foes. The number of his friends thus dealt with is fifty-seven, while only forty-eight of his enemies have been interfered with. The Parrellites lose eight seats and the Home Rulers only three. There are sixteen constituencies, in which one of two members will have to retire to private life, but in which the interest of the minority is cared for, as the candidate lowest on the poll will receive the first place. These constituencies number sixteen, while the number of Conservative constituencies similarly placed, only number eleven. From this it will be seen how Mr. Gladstone has added to his truthfulness as an honorable statesman. So much is this the case that the *Daily Telegraph* says:—"To sum up in a few words the characteristics of the Redistribution Bill, it is large and it is simple; it goes far and is easily understood. The one-member principle which pervades it almost throughout—for it will apply to more than five sixths of the constituencies—has many recommendations and few disadvantages. It will simplify contests, and thus tend to educate electors. The cost of elections will be considerably reduced. The contact of the member with all his constituents will be facilitated and form a reciprocal education. The plan will tend to secure indirectly the representations of minorities and to prevent the swamping of one class by another numerically superior."

Had Sir John Macdonald acted as Mr. Gladstone has done, what an amount of obliquity would have been prevented on one side, while the people of Canada would have honored the "old man" for such an act of political disinterestedness.

In speaking of Sir John, the memory goes back to the night when the mob set fire to the Parliamentary buildings in Montreal. Sir John was then a much younger man than he is now, but his leadership was beginning to bud. The writer was a witness to the acts of vandalism performed that night. He saw the mob enter the buildings, the splendid chandelier broken to pieces, and the mace torn from its place and carried from the chamber on the shoulder of one of the mob, the Speaker's chair invaded and the House dissolved by the daring occupant. The mace was carried to Sir John at his hotel, but he would not receive "the bumble," and it was said referred the rabble to Sir Allan Macnab, with whom it was left. The night was one of terrors, yet no life was lost, although some of the Reform members received "more kicks than coppers," as the saying is. One gentleman, the late Mr. Lyon, of Ottawa, although a large, powerful man, was kicked from the entrance to the House all the way across the street, step by step. One member, the late Mr. Stevenson, of Picton, while stones were rattling through the windows, took refuge on a seat between two windows, and remained in his position till a lull came, when he started on the run for the door leading to the library. He was the only member at the time left in the House, the others having decamped as soon as the "ones entered the Chamber through the back windows. Col. Gray was the only member who acted the part of a hero. He boldly confronted the mob, and, seizing one fellow by the collar of his coat, pitched him out of the House. Yes, it was a terrible night, and the three following days will long be remembered as days of despair to men who boasted of their liberty as British subjects.

Insane Asylums.

BY DANIEL CLARK, M. D., MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENT ASYLUM FOR INSANE, TORONTO.

There are in the Dominion eight Public Asylums for the Insane. There is one in Nova Scotia, at Halifax; one in New Brunswick, at St. John; one near Quebec; one near Montreal; one at Kingston; one at Hamilton; one at London and one at Toronto. One is being constructed at Selkirk, near Winnipeg, Manitoba, and another in British Columbia. In the eight asylums already in operation there are about 6,500 insane. This will make about one lunatic to every 620 persons of our population. The proportion is much less than in the United States or Britain. This calculation is made on an average of 3,100 patients in Ontario; 2,400 in Quebec, and 1,000 in the two Eastern provinces. We might make a slightly larger estimate than the above to account for those in jails or retained at home. The latter class is not large in the Dominion. Besides the public asylums there are two private asylums, in which are about 75 patients, but the most of these are opium eaters, or dipsomaniacs, and are not usually classed among the insane. In all the provinces, except in Quebec, the Local Governments supervise, control, and support these institutions out of the public funds. In Quebec the asylums belong to private corporations. The Government of the Province send all the insane paupers to these refuges, paying a stipulated rate per week for their maintenance. This system has been called "farming out," and as may be readily understood, is liable to abuses, which are inherent in such a system. It is easy to see that such a company may increase the profits to the lease holders by pernicious administration. The cheaper the patients are fed, clothed and nursed the greater are the dividends. The plan is essentially a vicious one and liable to grave derelictions of duty under the best inspection. Even when well conducted a jealous public may be prone to misjudge their actions of those who may have pecuniary interests in an asylum thus administered, especially in the retention of patients, as a source of revenue. The honest officials have often to meet small suspicions, just as a hotel landlord would in unduly retaining a guest. The insane are a helpless class of unfortunates, and all incentives to treat them well should be held out to those

having supervision. Self-interest should always be excluded as a factor in this case of "One more unfortunate." It is not a good system which even tempts to riggardness in furnishing necessary supplies and comforts, even when the desire to act conscientiously may exist. It is well not to tempt even the most benevolent in such a work, essentially charitable as it must be.

In Ontario the Superintendent is a medical man and the Chief Executive Officer. He is guided by Statute and By-law in the discharge of his duty. The financial affairs are virtually in the hands of the Government, and are administered by the Inspector. The Superintendent has full charge of the Asylum economy. He is responsible for its administration, and has full power to hire and discharge all servants and attendants. The Government Inspector is obliged to visit the Asylums in his charge at least three times in a year, but as often as may be necessary. All reports of the Chief Officer are made to him for Government inspection. The Ministry of the day is in this way made responsible to the people for the proper administration of such institutions.

The liberty of the subject is sufficiently guarded in the requirements for admission. There are two methods which are legal. The first is by two medical certificates of "legally qualified medical practitioners." These must not only contain a general statement that it is the physician's belief that the person examined is insane, but must also state the facts observed by himself, as well as those related by relatives or friends, on which such an opinion is based. If these are not satisfactory to the Superintendent, admission is refused of the patient charged with insanity.

The second method is where a person is arrested because of disorderly conduct, and supposed to be insane, thereby assumed to be dangerous to himself or others, or not able to look after himself. Such is committed to jail and is then examined by the County Judge, the jail surgeon and one other medical man. All the evidence in such cases has to be examined and approved of by the Provincial Secretary, and also by an Asylum Superintendent before admission to an asylum. It will be seen that the chance of anyone not insane being incarcerated in an asylum is exceedingly small. The friends, the medical men, the asylum officials, the attendants, the Inspector and County Judge would require to be in collusion to deprive such a person of freedom. The probability of such being the case is almost impossible in this Province. In a public asylum the safeguards against undue detention are many, and not the least is the desire of the chief officials to have as good a record as possible of discharges, and his having no interest in such an establishment beyond the well-being of the afflicted in his charge. His effort in a pecuniary sense is to procure all the needs and comforts he can in reason for the benefit of his patients. The oversight is thorough, and all well organized asylums enforce discipline as strictly as if they were military camps or barracks. Nearly all the scandals which have arisen in Britain and in the United States in connection with the insane, has been in district poor houses, without proper organization or oversight. They are under municipal control, and the great aim of the most of these bodies is to run these county houses as cheaply as possible. Poor buildings, inferior food, cheap attendance, loose discipline, cruelty and immorality have been too often the result. Seldom are these charges successfully made against Provincial or State Asylums properly officered and organized under direct Governmental control. It may be of interest to know what each patient costs the taxpayers of this Province. Taking one year with another, the annual outlay a person is \$132. This covers all expenses, including salaries, repairs, gaslight, fuel, clothing and food. When it is considered that this is only \$2.50 a week for all such purposes, it will be seen that economy can scarcely go lower, if ordinary comfort and efficiency are considered. If the household expenses of the poorest family are noted, it will be seen that 30 cents a day of expenditure would mean rigid oversight in purchasing and in prevention of waste. The clothing is mostly twiceed for the men and wincey for the women, with woolen and cotton underclothing, according to the time of the year. The food is as varied and substantial in our free wards as may be found in a dollar a day hotel, or at a farmer's table.