

1902-1903

TWO men stood on the top of the Alps. One of them raising his hat towards Rome exclaimed, "Glories of the past, I salute you!" The other, lifting his hat and looking towards Germany, said, "Glories of the future, I greet you!" To-day, we stand on the Alpine-top of experience, from whence we can look upon the victories of the past and future, and salute both.

January takes its name from Janus, to whom the Romans dedicated this season. They represented him with two faces—one that of an old man looking back upon the past; the other that of a young man looking forward to the future. He had a key in one hand and a staff in the other—the symbol of his opening and governing the year.

The key! what has it opened for us in this year? Every day has shown us, framed in brightness, an open door. Life is full of illustrations. We are continually coming up to doors which stand open for a little while, and then are shut. An artist tried to teach this in a picture. Father Time is there with inverted hour-glass. A youth is lying on a luxurious couch, while beside is spread a table with costly viands. Passing by him towards an open door are certain figures, which are opportunities; they invite him to come to nobleness, manliness, usefulness, worth.

First is a rugged, sun-browned form carrying a flail. This is labor. He invites the youth to toil. He has already passed far by unheeded. Next is a philosopher with an open book inviting the young man to thought, that he may master the secrets of the mystic volume. But this opportunity, too, is disregarded. Close behind the philosopher comes a woman with a bowed form, carrying a child. Her dress betokens widowhood and poverty. Her hand is stretched out appealingly for aid. Looking closely at the picture, we see that the youth holds money in his hand, but he is clasp- ing it tightly and her appeal is in vain. Still

another figure passes, endeavoring to woo and lure him from his idle ease. It is the form of a beautiful woman who seeks by love to awaken in him noble purposes, and to inspire him to ambitious efforts. One by one these opportunities have passed, with their calls and invitations. At last he is arousing to seize them, but it is too late; they are vanishing from sight and the door is closing.

This is a true picture of what is going on all the time in the world. Offers and solicitations are rejected one by one, and pass by to return no more. Door after door is shut in our faces while we languidly loiter outside, till at last the sound of shutting bolts falls on our ears as the knell of hopeless exclusion, and so we stand with beggared lives, having missed all the enrichment from the passing days.

He is a genius at stupidity who does not think now. Will the coming months mark the advent of new energy, or witness the continuance of old indolence? The new way will have new scenery, new possessions, new joys, and should have new songs. It should be a better year than the last, or we have missed our lesson. The life of Jane Seymour, the English Queen, departed when that of her son Edward VI. dawned. The Queen died, a King was born. The grave was on one side, the cradle on the other. It should be the history of the years.

To all of us the paths of 1903 will be new. "You have not passed this way heretofore." What shall come, we cannot tell. A thousand ships may sail over the same sea, but to each the voyage is new and unfamiliar. The keel leaves no trace in the sea to guide others. So human lives beat no paths across the world. No one who has gone before us had precisely the same experiences that we shall have. We are getting ready to climb this Matterhorn of a New Year, which springs from the base, where we are standing, up and up into the silent blue. We are seeing if there is meat and drink in our wallets, against the biting hunger of that