

NOTES.

The year 1881 just closed will be long remembered as one of sad disaster. During the early summer months the steamboat catastrophe in our own Dominion on the River Thames clothed many families with sorrow, and called out the sympathy as well as the indignation of the entire country; then followed forest fires in Michigan, burning up whole townships and leaving many hundreds homeless and penniless, next come the dastardly assassination of the President of the United States awakening the horror of men everywhere. This latter event was truly unique in character as also in its results. No other event in modern times, so touched human feelings, proving the old adage true as ever, that "one touch of nature makes the whole world akin." The closing months of the year have been noneless productive of strange phenomena in the vicissitude of human existence. The men whose business it is to go down to the sea in ships have seen God's wonders in the mighty deep. Ships have been retarded on their ocean journeys, many lives and much property have been swallowed up in the raging sea. On *terra firma* the devouring fire has carried away its victims with almost unparalleled fury. Many examples are set fresh in the mind of every one, perhaps the most appalling are the burning of the theatre at Vienna, in which over six hundred persons lost their lives, and the late colliery explosion in England, in both cases—from the intoxication of sensuous enjoyment as well as from laborious toil, men were called unexpectedly into the presence of their Maker and their Judge.

The political outlook at the close of the year is also such as to awaken serious thought in the mind of every one.

There are no great wars being waged on the tented fields, yet, on the fields of human society and human rights, men are struggling with one another. Ireland continues to present a sad spectacle to the world, agrarian crimes are multiplied, prisons are being filled with the haters of law and justice is often powerless to enforce her decisions. Ireland after all is not so exceptional; in the green fields the sores are open, while in other European countries they are only festering. Russia, Germany, Spain, &c., all are in a state of seething restlessness. A meeting of Emperors on whatever pretext makes European cabinets tremble and state policies feverish. When will wars and rumors of wars come to an end? When will the rights of men find a true solution in the enforcement of the rights of God? When will the God of all the earth arise to take vengeance upon the workers of iniquity, and to free the oppressed from their oppressors? When will men open their eyes to the truth that sin is the only cause of sorrow and disaster, and that there is a remedy provided? There is "balm in Gilead," there is a physician there—"a tree whose leaves are for the healing of the nations," a Saviour who was "lifted up" on Calvary as the hope of a sin-cursed world, and there is salvation in no other for the material, social or national troubles of men. "He is our peace."