

an age of rapid progression in science, in art, and their various applications to human life. But ours is especially an age of rapid change—when its travel by steam, and its communication by telegraph, seem symbolical of the suddenness of its social changes, and the rapidity with which great events follow one another. It is a fact that revolutions now take place in a single year which in former ages would have been spread over a generation. There are many indications that we are on the eve of great events, which will change the race not only of European civilization, but of the Mahometan and Heathen worlds. And as the great drama of ages seems about to close, and a new era to be ushered in, events move with accelerated rapidity, and a single year brings changes of vast moment to the destinies of man.

The year has had its events of thrilling interest and of solemn importance. Prominent among them has been the fratricidal war, which has raged among a neighbouring and kindred people. What right thinking man but does not mourn over the scenes of slaughter and desolation which that country has recently presented? And yet how lightly do we often think and speak of the scenes of war:

"Boys and girls

And women that would groan to see a child
Pull off an insect's leg, all read of war,
The best amusement for our morning meal!
The poor wretch who has learnt his only
prayers

From curses—who knows scarcely words
enough

To ask a blessing from his Heavenly Father
Becomes a fluent phraseman, absolute
And technical in victories and defeats
And all our dainty terms for fratricide,—
Terms which we trundle smoothly o'er our
tongues,

Like mere abstractions, empty sounds to
which

We join no feeling and attach no form!
As if the soldier died without a wound—
As if the fibres of his god-like frame
Were gored without a pang—as if the wretch
Who fell in battle doing bloody deeds
Passed off to heaven, translated, and not
killed—

As though he had no wife to pine for him
No God to judge him.

To us the American war, whether we
look at it as among a people of the same

race and lineage with ourselves—and partakers of the same great heritage of Protestant Christianity—whether we look at the close relationship between the parties—whether we consider the amount of slaughter and desolation it has occasioned, or the apparent hopelessness of any satisfactory result, appears the most sorrowful spectacle of modern times. Our only relief is in our assurance that the Lord reigneth, and the conviction that though it may be by terrible things in righteousness, he will yet render all these sad scenes subservient to the accomplishment of his own great and glorious designs. We cannot help seeing already that he is accomplishing two ends—that he is humbling the most boastful nation the world has ever seen, and that he is opening the prison doors that the oppressed may go free. "They that walk in pride, he is able to abase," and he "executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed."

Casting our thoughts across the Atlantic, the old world has not during the past year witnessed events as stirring as the new. Its surface presents an outward calm, and yet it has exhibited much of deep interest, many indications of progress, and many harbingers of coming changes. In our Mother country the Great Exhibition has been a glorious triumph of peaceful industry contrasting strongly with the sounds of war wafted from our own side of the Atlantic; the distress of thousands has appealed to the benevolence of the nation, and met with such a response as does credit to the christianity of the age. On the continent of Europe there are but few countries free from settled discontent, and if there have been few positive outbreaks, there has been much to indicate coming dangers, and "men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking for the things which shall be on the earth."

Among the difficulties which agitate the European mind, the Roman question must to the Christian be regarded as of chief interest. During the past year it has already advanced a stage. The decided position taken by the Emperor of France, not to withdraw his troops from Rome, and his determination to uphold the Pope in his