

[FOR THE CRITIC.]
TWO NEW YEARS.

YEAR I.

For the proud Lucifer, and his rebellious host,
The awful mouth of Hell had yawned to claim its own,
And God a great heart was sad, sad for the many seats
Empty about His throne.

He thought "since he my fairest, and my best-beloved,
Has sinned past all forgiveness, then another race
E'en I shall form from nought, and I shall bring them here
To fill each vacant place.

And I will mould them in my likeness, and will breathe
My breath into their veins, that breath, that even when
The flesh decays, it, an immortal gift, must come
Unto its God again.

And I will make for them a world of fruit, and flow'rs,
Grand mountainous peaks, and vast, mysterious seas
And I will give them beauty, sense, and love, sweet love!
Fainter than all of these.

All, all to be their own: they shall be kings, free kings
To do what e'er they list: only one simple thing
I claim of them the faithfullest my Lucifer
Refused unto his King."

He willed—in the illimitable space beneath
His feeble chaos condensed—and lo! to sudden birth
Emerg'd a small grey ball, which, stooping down, He touched,
And blessed, and called it earth—

YEAR 1886.

The tiny ball of earth, the fancy of a God,
Grown worn and rugged, old in wisdom and in sins,
Sees a new birthday for its countless struggling souls
Another year begins.

But the Omnipotent has veiled His tender face,
Sad for the follies of a world, He made so fair;
For death and wickedness have touched its fairest scenes,
And want, and grief, and care.

And man, ambitious, unbelieving, little man
Holding the wonders of the earth, and air, and sea
Within his grasp, sneers at the grander miracle
Of an eternity—

One, that because he cannot pierce, he laughs to scorn;
This narrow world is all his narrow mind can crave.
A God! Where is He? and a Heaven, bah! His feet
Have strayed across a grave.

Forgetting that the lowly plot of Church-yard ground,
The awful, mould'ring thing the green sods kindly hide,
Must seem a simple, paltry ending unto all
His vanity and pride—

Poor, simple puppet of an ignorant creed,
Whose mightiest wisdom can ne'er bring the breath
To yon dead dog, or see beyond the grave, or escape
The awful doom of death.

Yet, I can see a white-haired man who humbly kneels
Beside a tomb, and prays the tender God above
To claim His own, to bear his tired soul to Him
And to his spirit, love.

And I can see a gentle fair-faced mother kneel
Beside her sleeping boy, the while she softly sings
Of One, who meekly died upon Golgotha's heights
For human sufferings.

-richat, C. B.

VICTOR.

[FOR THE CRITIC.]
THE NEW YEAR.

It is Janu 1886. Everywhere we hear conversation about the New Year. But has seen it? No one; the first day only has been seen. This is but a small portion of the year. We may or may not see the whole of it. Who can tell? Every day of 1885 we have seen; but we shall see it no more. Its record, not its hours, may yet come before our vision. Time is rapidly gliding into the past, but the present remains untouched. It never leaves till its successor appears; then it glides noiselessly, without any resistance into the eternity past. What a remarkable river is time! How gently it flows into the shoreless ocean! It has no rapids, no eddies, though it seems to move faster in December and January than in other months. Time never grows old; it is always new. We never saw the present till now. We cannot gather up the moments of the past, nor can we lay hold upon the future. No mortal eye ever saw to-morrow; when it comes in view, it is no longer to-morrow, but to-day. We call time now, because every minute, as it passes away, is succeeded by a new one.

The year brings other new things as well as time. We never before, in dating on letters and documents, used the same figures in the same order as now. Only the two first we have used without changing all our days. The others change frequently, as every year and decade testify. These numerals of the year, are suggestive, not only of the flight of time, but also of the influence of Christianity. Infidels may intellectually ignore the commemorative facts, at the close of each year, but in spite of their unbelief, their poems tacitly acknowledge them. They may be unwilling to concede the fact, but no religion or government, in the past, has developed such a civilization as Christianity has done.

But what about the year, whose auspicious beginning we welcome with joyous emotions? Ah! that is a serious question none can fully answer. Future events are wisely hidden from mortals; so we speak and think. Correctly speaking, events, that which comes, cannot be in the future, but are always in the present. We may, with certainty, anticipate some occurrences,

but until they take place, they are only ideas, not realities. Much that we expect may not be realized, and more that we anticipate may not transpire. To a large extent, the year will be what human beings make it. Then it will be characterized, in the past, by many imperfections, delinquencies, and painful experiences. These will be closely associated with faithful endeavors, laudable pursuits, noble achievements, and allowable enjoyments.

A wise appreciation, and improvement of time, is an important thought which should influence every mind, especially the young. This season of the year, in various respects, is favorable to mental cultivation and the acquirement of literary treasures. A few highly value, and wisely use those opportunities and privileges, and thus secure useful treasures of knowledge. But multitudes squander in vice, and in the pursuit of baubles, those golden opportunities.

To make this one of the best years of life on earth should be the ambition of all. To realize this, all that is required is to give due attention to the claims of duty. This is a little word, but it has a large meaning. It has no past or future tense, but belongs only to the present. True, it is a noun, but a verb is understood, generally active, passive only in suffering.

There is no difficulty in finding the path of duty. More know it than walk in it. It is the only safe path in the world. The adverb now is always associated with it. Its requirements are never more than native or acquired ability may do.

If the duties of January are neglected, such, in all probability, will be those of other months. Nor is duty transferable; it cannot be performed by proxy. As the close of the year is especially the time for review, the beginning is the time for noble resolve. Reflection and anticipation both converge to the present. Existence is a present reality, and always will be. Hours, days, weeks, months, and years, may come and go, but we change not as regards identity. There are a good many things in the universe that change; more that do not. We say that the seasons change, not much, however; they are nearly the same, year after year. There is no doubt about the changeableness of human nature, and yet it is very much alike all the world over. This year will, doubtless, see many changes. May they all be for the better. Such will surely be the case, if, as individuals, we attend to duty.

ALPHA.

[FOR THE CRITIC.]

CANADA'S MILITARY STATUS.

No. VI.

When the great debate on the negotiations was going on in the Senate, Daniel Webster gave a perspicuous outline of the several avenues of approach to Canada through American territories. "There are two old and well-known roads to Canada," said the illustrious statesman, "one by way of Lake Champlain and the Richelieu to Montreal; the other from the Kennebec river to the sources of the Chaudiere and the du Loup, and so to Quebec. East of this there is no practicable communication for troops between Maine and Canada till we get to the Madawaska. Of one thing I am certain, that the true road to Canada is by the way of Lake Champlain. That is the old path. I take to myself the credit of having said here, thirty years ago, speaking of the mode of treating Canada, that, when an American woodman undertakes to fell a tree he does not begin by lopping off the branches, but strikes his axo into the trunk. The trunk, in relation to Canada, is Montreal, and the river St. Lawrence down to Quebec." Mr. Webster also laid particular stress upon the strategical value of Rouee Point, declaring it to be the best means of defending both the ingress into the lake and the exit from it, and that on the whole frontier of New York, with the single exception of the narrows below the city, there is not a point of equal importance.

As at present constituted the militia of Canada is divided into active and reserve forces for both land and marine service. The active land force is composed of:

(a) Corps raised by voluntary enlistment.

(b) Corps raised by ballot.

(c) Corps composed of men raised by volunteer enlistment and men balloted to serve. The active marine force, to be raised in a like manner, is composed of seamen, sailors, and persons whose usual occupation is upon any steamer or sailing craft navigating the waters of Canada. The reserve, land and marine, consists of the whole of the men who are not serving in the active militia for the time being. Thus it will be observed that the entire male population is liable to be levied. But Canada's real refuge in a storm would be her active militia force. And has she at this moment one regiment in a state of organized efficiency? One who would give a conscientious reply must answer in the negative. General Luard understood this fully, and was actually hounded out of the Dominion because his pills were not sugar-coated. How the Canadian authorities should set about reforming their military methods is not the province of the writer to suggest. When one seriously considers the fragility of the Canadian alliance, however, it is little wonder that a country whose constitutional frame-work is held together by the most superficial political solder should be a stranger to a sound military regime. While making every reasonable allowance for the juvenility of the confederation the most cringing partisan cannot be so undiscerning as to fail to see at a glance that the country is being ravaged and consumed by parliamentary charlatans. Toryism, with all its concomitants, has firmly implanted its banner at the Canadian capital, and with an astute and unscrupulous agent as its champion is rushing the country into bankruptcy at a galloping speed. Machiavelian scheming has failed to prevent the exposure of ministerial mismanagement in the several public departments. During the Riel insurrection the matchless blunders that were made in providing supplies