

verge of starvation. These are the things, they claim, on which the happiness or misery of the year will, in part at least, depend; and, certainly, they are almost beyond human control. With some people, no doubt, this would be a telling argument; but it rests upon a very poor conception of happiness. When we wish our readers a very happy New Year, we by no means express the hope that God may shelter them from these things. He is the best judge of that. In the past years His heavy hand has been felt by good and evil alike. It is altogether likely that there are in store for us things hard to be borne. They are necessary for us. May we have the strength to face them like true men and women! But a happy life is not a life that is free from trouble and misfortune and sorrow, though so many people think it is. No man, perhaps, was ever happier than St. Paul, and few have ever had greater hardships and sorrows. Not very long ago it was said by a poor God-fearing workman, on the death of his son: "I have never had such trouble as during the past year, but I have never been so happy." The happiness that we wish our readers is that grand peace of mind and joy that is proof against all the afflictions of life. It does not shun trouble as something terrible, but bears it patiently as a discipline coming in the good providence of God. Jesus said to His disciples, "In this world ye shall have tribulation"; but He also said, "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." It is this joy that we wish our readers. If it is not theirs, surely the fault is with themselves.

WHAT a very convenient thing our human forgetfulness is! The year 1894 is gone, and there is very little of it that we shall remember long. A few striking events, a few happy hours, and a few familiar faces. All the rest will sink into oblivion. The present and the future will absorb us. But of what does that past consist that we so conveniently forget? Is it not the mistakes, the failures, the mispent or wasted hours, the hasty words, the bitter thoughts, and the hardness of heart; the long, long tale of petty dishonesty, crooked dealings, and untruthfulness in business or social life; of unkindness to others, and obstacles thrown in their way; of impurity and hatred and strife and irreligion, or whatever else be our besetting sin? Every day had its quota. It took but a second, and the wrong was done. But it was done, and nothing could undo it. We cannot remember these

things, and we do not wish to. We are much happier without the recollection. And, in a sense, this is as it should be. If we carried this load daily, and were continually conscious of it, it would paralyze our activity and make most of us very gloomy and morose. Besides, what is done is done, and we are helpless to change it. Hence it is that St. Paul speaks those well-known words to the Philippians: "This one thing I do: forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things that are before, I press toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." He is running a race, and the runner must look not behind, but at the course before him. There is, however, another thought that might be suggested by this forgetfulness of the past. Bear in mind that *God never forgets*. He forgives, but He cannot forget. Those past years of ours, just as they were spent, without one shortcoming removed, are engraven upon His memory. Geologists tell us that they can read the history of this earth for hundreds of thousands of years, though for all but the last few thousand years there were no human beings to write it. It has been written by God upon the face of the earth itself. And that same God has written somewhere, line for line word for word, without the omission of a single detail, the whole story of our lives. It waits for us. What shall we do when brought face to face with it? There is an awful solemnity about the mere thought, but what will the solemnity of that day be? This is a time when such thoughts ought to come home to us with power.

THE first day of the New Year is the great day of resolutions. Who does not make resolutions on that day? All are full of the best intentions, and, if the year is not satisfactory at its close, it is certainly not for want of good purposes at its beginning. It is so old a story that the ludicrous side of it has long since caught popular attention. But how many are there out of every thousand whose lives are really changed in consequence of New Year's Day resolves? They are so easy to make! Twenty may be made in as many seconds; but, somehow or other, they are all broken after a little. We fully meant to keep them at the time, we acted in all sincerity; but old habits were terribly strong, and we could not resist them. What is the difficulty? Is it out of the reach of most people to throw off their vices and live better lives? Surely not. But they are not likely to succeed by

mere New Year's Day resolutions. They are utterly inadequate. Some petty foibles may, of course, be overcome, and many rather questionable ways abandoned. Such things cost us no great effort; to give them up is not much of a sacrifice. But they do very little towards the re-making of a man's life. It is those deeply-rooted vices of a more serious character, and the absorbing passions that grip us tightly and are dragging us down lower every day, that we would be rid of. And it takes something more than a mere resolve to exorcise these. The demon of drink will not often go merely because a man declares on New Year's Day that he will live henceforward in sobriety. The reason of all this is evident. When we make our resolves we are in a penitential mood. It is after a fall. Sorrow and remorse fill our hearts, and the temptation or passion that led us into evil is not present. We forget how intensely it burned when we last succumbed. Nothing is easier than a good resolution. But when some day that same passion burns within us again, as it will, or old temptations come thick upon us, will there be found power for victory in the struggle?

HERE is the weakness of mere good resolutions. We forget to provide power to keep them. Every work in the world calls for power, and, if there is none, it is folly even to think of it. It is quite beside the purpose, in a matter of moral improvement, to say, "I am a man, and what other men have done I can do." Two sea captains, so the story runs, were in command of vessels built after very similar models. They were of equal length and breadth, and about the same tonnage. One vessel had already made a great record for speed. The captain of the other, having surveyed both very carefully, even to the smallest details of their machinery, declared that his vessel could make as good time, if not better. It was agreed that the two boats should be put to the proof on their next voyages. Splendid starts were made, and both vessels cut through the seas at a tremendous rate. But when four days out from land, it was reported to the captain of the challenging boat that coal was running short, and they were already economizing. There was hardly enough to complete the voyage at half speed. The foolish captain had forgotten that high speed requires tremendous power, and that this again causes an enormous consumption of coal—out of all proportion to the increased rate. His coal was his power,