

## Our Young People. On the Threshold.\*

A New Year, a New Century, a New Life.

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Standing on the threshold of a new year, we are like travellers who, after a toilsome way over the hills of life, have reached a mountain ridge. Here we rest for a moment and look back over the way we have come, and then, like Moses from Pisgah's heights, peer eagerly over the Promised Land of the future which stretches out before us.

Our first duty is to see clearly what has been wrong in the past, that we may avoid it in the future, letting the "dead past bury its dead" in forgiveness and oblivion; and to see clearly what has been right and true in the past, that we may hold it fast, and use it, and improve on it, making "the goal of yesterday to be the starting point of today."

There is an interpretation of one of the passages selected for our meditation today which is new, and more helpful than the one I have been accustomed to see. The new wine for the new year must be put in new bottles, or leather wine-skins. This new wine is the "must" or unfermented juice of the grape; for "fermented wine may be put in any bottles, old or new." And it was intended that this pure grape-juice should not ferment, should not become intoxicating wine. For grape juice intended to ferment "could not be kept in any leather bottle, whether old or new," so great is the rending force of the pent-up gas formed by fermentation. Our Lord, therefore, speaks not of intoxicating wine, but of "the forever sweet" juice, tuns of which are kept for years in France and the East. It improves by age, is rich and refreshing, but non-intoxicating. And it must be put in new bottles, because there is matter left in the old wine-skins, like minute particles of leaven, which will produce fermentation and cause the bottles to burst.

Let us see, then, how this applies to us as we look into the possibilities of the new year.

Our first longing and prayer should be for the new spirit of life and of love, new devotion, a clearer vision of our true ideal, a breathing in a more heavenly atmosphere, a fuller consciousness of God's presence and love, a deeper longing to serve God and man with wisdom and power. It is the same old spirit, renewed, revived. Like "the old, old story," it is forever new.

Then, like the "new wine" described above, it must be kept from the leaven of worldliness, from the imperfections that have clung to the "old bottles," the old forms in which we have been living.

Every new influx of life and light needs new channels in which to flow, new forms in which to embody itself. The greatest danger is in imagining that, if we only get "new bottles," then we have made some gain. The new is good only as it is the natural and best expression of a new life. It must be an evolution, not a revolution. It is the unfolding of the bud into a flower. If we are only full of the divine life and give it freedom, that life will take on new forms, or modify the old, in the best way, as the chambered nautilus leaves its smaller cell and forms a new one for its larger growth.

Do not be afraid of good resolutions, be-

cause sometimes they have been broken or imperfectly kept. It is not true that "the road to hell is paved with good resolutions." It is the way to heaven that is paved with good resolutions. They are an army of Try-agains. When one fails, another leaps into its place. The loss of one battle does not lose a cause. It is only when one ceases to fight that the cause is lost. A broken resolution is not a sign of failure. The only failure is when one ceases to resolve, and keep on resolving. It is thus that every great victory is won, and every great good attained.

Only a new purpose can make a new year.—Anon.

A year of self-surrender will bring larger blessings than fourscore years of selfishness.—Anon.

O Lord, pinch me into the remembrance of my promise, that so I may re-enforce my old vows with new resolutions.—Thomas Fuller.

What we need is not a new compass every year, but a new determination to steer straight by the old compass, which is the word of God in Christ.—Henry Van Dyke, D. D.

### Notes on New Books.

"AMONG THE GREAT MASTERS OF MUSIC" and "Among the Great Masters of Literature" are companion volumes, each with thirty-two re-production of famous paintings, and text by Walter Rowlands. The first named is bound in green and gold, while the other is dainty white and gold. The paper and printing are excellent, and the short talks on the great authors and musicians are very interesting; but the chief interest centres in the illustrations. Raphael's St. Cecilia, song without words by Poetzelberger, Paganini in Prison by Earth—these are but a few of the well-known paintings which are re-produced. The volumes are sold separately, boxed, and will make a delightful gift. Boston; Dana, Estes & Co.

ESSAYS ON BOOKS AND CULTURE, by Hamilton Wright Mabie. Dodd, Mead & Company, New York; Ottawa, James Ogilvy; Montreal, Wm. Drysdale & Co. This dainty little green-clad volume, just the size to slip into one's pocket, contains twenty-four essays in Mr. Mabie's happiest style. They are simple, but helpful, and will give food for much thought. In the first essay the writer says: "It is with the hope of assisting some readers and students of books, and especially those who are at the beginning of the arduous, the delights, and the perplexities of the book lover, that these chapters are undertaken. They assume nothing on the part of the reader but a desire to know the best that has been written; they promise nothing on the part of the writer but a frank and familiar use of experience in a pursuit which makes it possible for the individual life to learn the lessons which universal life has learned, and to piece out its limited personal experience with the experience of humanity. One who loves books, like one who loves a particular bit of a country, is always eager to make others see what he sees; that there have been other lovers of books and views before him does not put him in an apologetic mood. There cannot be too many lovers of the best things in these pessimistic days, when to have the power of loving anything is beginning to be a great and rare gift."

We wish our readers, one and all, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

### From Publishers Syndicate Toronto.

LUTHER AND THE GERMAN REFORMATION, by Professor T. M. Lindsay. Ottawa: James Ogilvy, Montreal: Wm. Drysdale & Co. This volume is one of a series called "The World's Epoch-makers," and there can be no doubt as to Luther, "the monk that shook the world," being an "epoch-maker." The words of this, his latest biographer, are hardly too strong. "Luther occasioned the greatest revolution which Western Europe has ever seen, and he ruled it to his death. History shows no other man with such kingly power." Professor Lindsay quotes Harnack's clear, strong words: "What an inexhaustible richness his personality included! How it possessed in heroic shape all that the time most lacked—a wealth of original intuition which outweighed all the elements of culture in which it was defective; a certainty and boldness of vision which was of more value than any insistence on free investigation; a power to hold on what was true and to conserve what would stand the test of time, compared with which the merely critical faculty is pointless and feeble; above all, a wonderful ability to give expression to strong feeling and true thought, to be a seer and speaker, to persuade by the written and spoken word as the prophet must do." Let those who wish to know how the peasant's son became a prophet, read Dr. Lindsay's book. We can cordially commend it. The index, chronological tables and bibliography add to its value for the student, while its clear style makes this biography suitable for the general reader. Though there have been many books on the great German Reformer, there is certainly room for this one.

HERSCHEL AND HIS WORK—by James Sime, M.A. Ottawa: James Ogilvy. Montreal: Wm. Drysdale & Co. This volume is one of the series called "The World's Epoch-Makers," and the saying of Arago is quoted on the title page, that "The life of Herschel had the rare advantage of forming an epoch in an extensive branch of astronomy." This story of the life and work of the illustrious astronomer is written in an exceptionally interesting manner. The writer has allowed Herschel and his contemporaries to tell their own story and relate their own impressions whenever possible, thus giving a more vivid effect to the book. The great man's discoveries are treated of in a simple yet scholarly way, which will make the book valuable to both student and ordinary reader.

THE CANADIAN ALMANAC FOR 1901 is an indispensable adjunct to the business office, the library and the home. The issue for the opening year of a new century is far ahead of any of its predecessors, being made up of nearly 400 pp. of all needed information concerning the Dominion of Canada. Toronto, The Copp Clark Co., Publishers. For sale by James Ogilvy, Ottawa; Wm. Drysdale & Co., Montreal, and all booksellers.

E. P. Dutton & Co., of New York, have always excelled in publishing calendars which are truly works of art, and those for 1901 are not below the high average already attained. The artistic color work of flowers bits of landscape furnish a most beautiful setting for each calendar month, the pages being tied together with suitable ribbon. Hung upon the walls these calendars will greet the eye pleasantly throughout the year.

The Ottawa Ladie's College has just closed a most successful term. Classes will be resumed on the 9th January.

\*Topic for December 30.—"The old and new: your purposes."—Matt. 13: 51, 52; Luke 5: 36-38.