

1888.

Well, dear Friends, Subscribers and Readers, Christmas has passed, let us hope merrily to most. It now remains to us to wish you and all the world A HAPPY NEW YEAR. That which is now so fast drawing to its close will recur to us as one, perhaps, more than usually chequered in its reminiscences. If hereafter the notes of rejoicing for the jubilee of a reign purer and more fortunate than has perhaps ever fallen to the lot of earthly monarchs re-echo in our ears, they will be tempered with the remembrance of an abnormal list of catastrophes by flood, by tempest and by accident, not unfrequently chargeable to neglect of precautionary safe guards. If, on the one hand, the fair rewards of agriculture and the peaceful prosecution of our various industries demand a tribute of thankfulness, it is impossible not to feel that our contentment might be less alloyed, and even our material gains perhaps greater, but for the spirit of faction, disunion, want of faith in our country, and want of courage to stand shoulder to shoulder in her support, which have been too apparent and too tangible to be ignored.

Abroad, Europe may be thankful even that the war-cloud is still suspended, and, though threatening and heavily charged, has not yet burst, and probably now cannot discharge itself for three or four months to come.

The old countries—our own countries, we mean—England, Scotland and Ireland—like ourselves, present a spectacle of, on the whole, fair material prosperity; but again, like ourselves, though in a more aggravated form, of the evils of unscrupulous political faction.

The general fusion of ideas resulting from the thorough ventilation the Irish question is now receiving, and the consequent increase, on the whole, of mutual toleration, seem, at the close of 1887, to admit a gleam of hope of some subsidence of the flood of bitter waters. May that hope, if as yet dim and faint, gather light and strength with the advancing year.

Perhaps, if we choose to be fancifully inclined, we may augur well of the coming Child of Time from the numbers which compose it, or at least from the last three of them. There is much virtue (or otherwise) in triplés. If, in the system of agadistic enigma with which both Jews and Greeks of the Neronian Empire were familiar, 666 was the "Number of the Beast," being the essential number of tribulation, toil and imperfection, and constructed out of the letters of the name "Neron Kesar," no less was 888 similarly evolved from the Greek letters of the name of Jesus (Iesous) a number which typified their opposites, peace, joy, perfection.

May the coming year fulfil the weird; and let, us in the words of the Laureate—

"* * * trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pain of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt and taints of blood."

Ring out the Old, ring in the New,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow;
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

WHOM TIME MOVES WITHAL.

It is not uninteresting on the immediate Eve of the New Year, to think for a moment of the ages of personages who, from birth, rank, genius, or other cause, occupy a position of prominence in the eye of the world. Some of these have attained a term of years so prolonged that it is more than probable another annual summary will miss some name of mark, for we only mention such as are of what may be called somewhat advanced age.

If it were not fitting to give the *pas* (and *place aux dames*) to Her Majesty, who will be 69 next May, we might begin with the more real alternate rulers of the United Kingdom, Mr. Gladstone and Lord Salisbury, between whom there are 20 years of difference. Lord Salisbury will be 58 on the 3rd February next. Mr. Gladstone was 78 yesterday. It has been a frequent mistake of late to speak of Mr. Gladstone as being 79, and there is often a confusion about ages, which seems to arise in this way. Some one speaks of, we will say Mr. Gladstone's 79th birth-day, and some one else at once sets him down as being 79 years old. Of course, a 79th birth-day is the beginning of the 79th year. The 78th was completed with the previous day. The birth-day which comes when a child is one year old, is his second birth-day. Mr. Gladstone was born on the 29th December, 1809.

There are two Royal Personages, who, though standing in very different degrees of interest to the world, are alike remarkable for their length of days. One is the grand old Emperor William, the other the venerable Duchess of Cambridge; both were born in 1797. The Emperor will be 91 in March, the Duchess in July.

Two Field Marshals, of widely different reputations, were born in 1800 and therefore go with the century. One is Von Moltke, the other the Earl of Lucan, who commanded the British Cavalry in the Crimea.

A younger, but prominent soldier, Lord Wolsely, will be 55 next June. Three venerable Admirals attract attention by their age.

Admiral of the Fleet, Sir Provo W. P. Wallis, is 97. He was, we believe, born in Halifax, and as Second Lieutenant of the *Shannon*, brought her and her prize, the *Cheapeake*, into Halifax Harbor in 1813. He was posted in 1819.

Sir Wm. Fanshawe Martin, Rear Admiral of the United Kingdom, and the Senior on the Retired List, is 88. He was a post captain of 1824.

Admiral Henry Eden, who stands next on the Retired List, was posted in 1827, and is 90 years of age.

Lady Burdett Coutts will be 74 in April.

Tennyson and Browning are both about the same age, 75 or 76. Whittier is 80.

Cardinal Manning is also about 80, and Cardinal Newman 84.

The redoubtable M. DeLesseps, of Suez-and-Panama Canal fame, is 83. Sir John Millais, the great painter, is 59.

As a centenary, the death of Prince Charles Edward, the young Pretender, may be borne in mind when we come to the 31st January—that event having taken place on that day, 1788. That of his brother Henry, the Cardinal of York, and last of the Stuarts, did not occur, if we remember rightly, till 1809.

HALIFAX NUISANCES.

Three or four weeks ago judgment was given by Mr. Justice Frazer in the case of a Miss Gilmour versus the corporation of St. John. A verdict was rendered against the city for culpable negligence in the care of the sidewalks, whereby serious injury was caused to the plaintiff in whose favor judgment was recorded to the amount of \$2000.

This case may well stand as a warning to our own City Council. The City of Halifax, considering its extent and population, carries an amount of tax which may well be called enormous, but the state of the public highways within its boundaries affords but little evidence of a judicious expenditure of it.

At any moment the city might find itself called on to pay damages arising out of the state of its sidewalks. The cobble stone carriage-entrances here and there are dangerous in weather slippery either from frost or wet, especially to females. Young, active and expert women evade them by balancing along the curb-stone—its narrow enough—but elderly ladies are often deficient in the necessary gymnastic powers.

The raised drains across the sidewalks in some parts are particularly dangerous on dark nights, and plank walks might surely be laid over a large extent of streets which now entail a helpless slipping about in mud more or less liquid or sticky.

Everybody anathematizes the winter ice-nuisance, but no such thought seems to occur to the "patres conscripti" as determination to abate it. If property owners are not rigidly compelled, as they ought to be, to clear the ice from their frontages, they ought at least to be made to sprinkle ashes. But we know how it goes in small cities. Every merchant or shopkeeper has his civic clique. The last thing he would think of conforming to in his own high and mighty person is obedience to any bye-law which might interfere with his smallest convenience, and he would accordingly make it cheerful for his ward representatives if he were coerced. It is the same thing with the frequent shameful obstruction of the footpaths by goods permanently exposed on them. Any stiff and stern chief of police, endeavoring to do his duty without fear or favor, would probably have a short time of it, and not a merry one.

Some of the curbs at the street corners are exceedingly dangerous, and we have noticed some corners, where, at the bi-section of the angle, the pavement is actually raised to a convex, rendering it almost impossible in icy weather to attempt to round the turn on the sidewalk at all.

The general state of a large portion of sidewalk throughout the city is very bad, and cellar-ways and man-hole traps are too frequently left open or insecurely fastened.

If some of our hackmen (we do not say all) dressed themselves more decently, kept their cabs cleaner, refrained from coarse and profane language, not infrequently to be heard opposite the Grand Parade, and cultivated civility of demeanor instead of insolence, it would not only be more satisfactory to the respectable public, but would also probably be money in their own pockets.

We have more than once before called attention (and we have been requested on many hands to do so) to the intolerable nuisance of the deafening racket made by trotting drays and heavy carts, both in the business and quiet portions of the city. A bye-law ought certainly to be passed restraining these gentry with their rattle-trap vehicles to a walk. Is there an alderman brave enough to incur the wrath of the carters and truckmen?

We respectfully tender these little items to the Corporation of the City of Halifax as a New Year's tribute of our good will and consideration for their reputation and interests.

We have been rather in the habit of regarding the cheek and counter-cheek features of the American constitution with disfavor; but the recent French crisis induces some reflections from a new point of view. As the French constitution now stands, the Legislature can force the resignation of the President by refusing its confidence to any cabinet which is willing to work under him. The chambers, therefore both make and unmake the President. It would be no great stretch of imagination to conceive a Radical majority in the British House of Commons unmaking the British monarchy. But the President of the United States, his cabinet, and the whole Executive, are independent of the Legislature. He is responsible only to the people, and the Executive to him. The Legislature, particularly the Senate, can annoy him, but nothing short of impeachment can depose him. Herein is much food for thought.

It is not an unpleasant reflection to begin the New Year with, that the great English medical scientist, Mr. Spencer Wells, says that the average duration of human life in Great Britain has increased during the last fifty years from thirty years to forty-nine years. The annual death rate has also decreased in the last 115 years in a very marked degree. In London, in 1744, it was 48.1 per 1,000; in 1846, it was 25 per 1,000, and 1885, it was only 19.3 per 1,000.