

THE NEW YEAR.

WHAT do you mean to do with this bright, white, beautiful year that God has now put into your hand? It is a book of three hundred and sixty-five pages—all blank pages yet; pure, clean, unsoiled. You are to write something on each page while it lies open under your hand. Then the leaf will be turned over and sealed down, and another one will spread out its white face before you. At the close of the year your book will be written full, and then it will be carried away by the Angel of Time and preserved until the last day, when it will be opened to show how you have lived this year. What are you going to write in this book? You know that everything you do writes itself down. One of the wonderful inventions of these late times is an instrument which preserves the words that are spoken into it. You talk beside it, and every word is caught. It may be carried thousands of miles, and laid away for years; but when the wonderful machinery is set in motion, the words come out just as they were spoken, and you hear the very tone of voice of the person who uttered them.

This is a little illustration of the way our deeds and our words go down on the pages of the book each one is writing. We do not always think much about what we are doing as the days pass. Sometimes we do careless things, or even very wrong things. We speak words that are not gentle and kindly; we show tempers and dispositions that are not sweet and beautiful. We forget these things soon afterward, but let us remember that they have all gone down day by day on the pages of our book, and are not lost. Some day we shall have to see these pages opened again, and shall have to look at what we have written on them; some day we shall have to hear our careless, bitter, unkind or untrue words again in the very tones of voice we used when we spoke them.

This ought to make us very careful what we do and what we say. Now is a good time to begin in the new. How was last year's book filled? What did you put on the pages? Perhaps they were blotted, some of them, or stained by sins or follies. Perhaps there were whole pages with nothing beautiful on them—only idle words and idle acts. Well, you cannot change anything now in last year's pages. The thing written you cannot blot out; the words said you cannot unsay.

“Never shall thy spoken word
Be again unsaid, unheard.
Well its work the utterance wrought;
Woe or weal—whate'er it brought—