

## A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

DEAR YOUNG READERS,—As soon as the dawn breaks on the first day of the New Year, and all the world rises from its sleep, and begins the hum and stir of its daily life, you will hear a short hearty little phrase greeting you from every tongue. Everybody seems to utter it—every face to smile it on you—every hand to convey it to you in its clasp—every prayer to breathe it out for you at your family and closet altars. Some of you, who are so happy as to have a mother near you, will hear it in the tenderest of whispers, and see it in the warm light of a kind mother's tearful eye; and some of you, who are so blessed as to be growing up under a father's care, will listen to it with deepest reverence, as a kind father's hand is laid upon your head. If you meet your minister, it is the very first thing that starts to his lips; and if you assemble in your Sabbath school classes, it is the readiest phrase of welcome on this New Year's day your teacher can find. And should it be a clear bracing sunny day, the fields and the woods, sparkling in their crisp and hoary dress, will seem to have the same thing written for you on their face; the cheery echo everywhere, the lightsome voice, the merry laugh, the golden sun, and the blue heaven, will seem to be full of it; and so all the world God has arrayed in so much unsearchable grace and beauty around you, will seem to be breathing and murmuring out the one gladdening wish. In short, not to keep your curiosity too long on the stretch, we begin by putting all this in the few simple words you have heard so often—*we wish you a happy New Year!*

Now, some believe it would be a happy New Year if it brought them not one hour's sorrow; if, in all its course, they were to meet with no hardship or difficulty; if every day were to bring with it something new and pleasant—something to excite wonder and curiosity—something to gratify them greatly, in hearing praise, in enjoying holiday pleasures, in being free from all serious studies and serious duties, in gaining rewards without much trouble, in being called to make no sacrifices, and, perhaps, in winning such success and receiving such gifts as may make others look at them with very envious eyes. Now, little readers, as you are reading these lines, look into your own hearts, and, while you hear everybody wish you a happy New Year, ask yourselves what you really understand by the words, and what kind of a year it would be, if, according to the notions