

## THE PALM BRANCH.

### Mildred's New Year's Resolution.

By I. A. S.

All the family, except Mildred, were at the church, and were to remain to watch the old year out. She would have been there also, at least, until nine o'clock, but she had such a cold! Her mother had said, "No, dear! you must sit here by the fire and take your medicine every half-hour; and when the clock strikes nine, you must bathe your throat with this liniment, put this flannel around it, and go to bed."

Mildred's cold made her feel very wretched, and these directions did not help matters at all; so you will not be surprised when I tell you that after the front door was locked, and the house grew quiet, she curled herself down in a big, easy chair, and cried. She was not at all afraid, for Katy Maloney was in the kitchen, with company, and she could hear their laughter once in a while; but she was half sick and lonely.

But Mildred could not spend the evening in tears, so she "practiced" a half hour, looked over her lessons, read a little in a story book, and then, as a new thought came to her, she went hastily to her father's desk, chose a nice large sheet of paper from it, and sat down by the table.

"People always make good resolutions the last day of the year," said she, to herself. "And that's what they are doing at the church this very minute, I suppose. Then they'll have a praise service. I haven't much to praise for—" Then, as she sharpened her lead pencil, she added, with a side glance at her grey kitten, asleep on the rug, who might have heard her, "O, I suppose I have, take the year through, yes, I know I have! and if I'd been a better girl—" Then Mildred wrote in large, even letters at the top of the page, "Good Resolutions for Next Year." By the time she had drawn a wreath of oak leaves around this, she was ready to go on. "Resolved—That if Will is ever so hateful to me, I will be patient." That was a good beginning, and Mildred enclosed it with more oak leaves. A little pause, and then, "Resolved—That I will not shirk my part of the work, if Ella will do hers." Mildred paused again and looked into the fire steadily. "I suppose I ought to, but I don't always feel like it." Drawing a long sigh, she wrote slowly, "Resolved—That I will go to the Mission Band every time it is possible."

The kitten stretched herself and blinked her eyes sleepily at her little mistress. In a moment Mildred was on the rug beside her, putting and playing with the pretty creature. Suddenly the clock struck nine. "Oh, my medicine!" cried Mildred. "Now I've got to take two teaspoonfuls because I forgot." [A very dangerous thing to do. Hope none of our readers will follow the example.] She swallowed her "double dose" in haste, bathed her throat, wrapped it in flannel, turned the gas low, and scampered up to bed with an easy conscience.

Several hours later, her father and mother, Will and Ella, came from the cold, starlit, outside world, into the warm sitting-room. "Hullo, what's this?" said Will, taking up Mildred's sheet of paper. He read the "resolutions" laughingly, as he said, "Milly's got the same trick I used to have. When I was a little kid, I always promised to be a good boy the last day of the year." "Now, Will Benson, haven't you done that very thing to-night? I should think that first resolution would trouble your conscience," said Ella.

"How about the second one and your conscience?" asked Will. "See that you set a good example in the line of dish-washing and dusting, the coming year."

"I am very glad to see that last resolution," remarked Mrs. Benson. "I have been troubled about that Mission Band business."

"Yes, Milly was ready to go to China a few months ago, but now she 'don't feel like it,' if you speak of going to the band," said Ella.

"Well, perhaps this means a change for the better. Leave the paper on the table, and don't tease her about it."

The next Saturday was a cold, dreary day, with a promise of snow in the gray clouds. Will and Ella were quite sure the new "resolution," would be severely tested; and Will did not intend to help his little sister keep it; when he threw a new magazine into her lap, saying, "Here, Milly, you can read this all afternoon. It's cold as Greenland out of doors, so you'll want to sit by the fire."

"No, I'm going to the Band—I've got to go," said Milly, with a troubled face. They watched her slyly, as she glanced into the new book, and then out at the shivering trees, but at length she arose, laid aside the book, and slowly dressed for her trip.

"Don't forget to take that scrap book, and