

A YEAR.

BY MRS. H. E. LEWIS.

WHAT is a year? 'Tis but a wave,
On life's dark rolling stream,
Which is so quickly gone that we
Account it but a dream:

'Tis but a simple, earnest thrub
Of Time's old iron heart,
Which, tireless now, is strong as when
It first with life did start.

What is a year? 'Tis but a turn
Of Time's old brass wheel;
Or but a page upon the book
Which time must shortly seal.

'Tis but a step upon the road
Which we must travel o'er;
A few more steps and we shall walk
Life's weary road no more.

What is a year? 'Tis but a breath
From Time's old nostrils blown,
As rushing onward o'er the earth,
We hear his weary moan.

'Tis like the bubble of the wave,
Or dew upon the lawn,—
As transient as the mist of morn,
Beneath the summer's sun.

What is a year? 'Tis but a type
Of life's oft changing scene,
Youth's happy morn comes gaily on,
With hills and valleys green.

Next summer's prime succeeds the spring,
Then autumn with a tear,
When comes old winter—death, and all
Must find a level here.

GRACIE'S NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS.

BY NELLIE GEORGE HALLETT.

GRACE sat by the table writing with a great deal of care in a small, red-covered, gilt-edged book, when Willie came bounding into the room to tell her that the boys and girls were getting up a coasting party. The brother and sister were twins, and shared their joys, their sorrows, and their secrets. Willie's news was delayed by his curiosity to know what Gracie was doing, and this is what she told him: "This is the diary that Aunt Carrie sent me, and I thought I would begin it with some New Year's resolutions." "Let me see them," said Willie, and the little girl handed him her book, as she would not think of having anything that her brother could not see. These are the resolutions that she had written: "Resolved, First, to get up as soon as I am called in the morning; second, to be perfect in my lessons; third, to give up to Willie." Willie read these words aloud and then laughed, at which Gracie coloured and reached out her hand for her book. "Pooh, Grace, what's the use of writing down such little things?" "I thought I ought to write about things that are hard for me to do; and you know I love a little nap in the morning, and it is so hard for me to study those dry old lessons when there are such lovely fairy tales to read, and I don't like to give up to you, Willie, sometimes, I mean."

Willie looked sober and made no reply. "Why do we make resolutions at New Year's, Willie?" "Oh, because it's the beginning of the year. Don't you know how well we always get our lessons the first of the term? It's nice to begin anything right." "And to end it right, too," suggested Grace. "That doesn't come till the last of the year," and Willie whirled around on his heels, with a boy's carelessness of the future. "But, Grace, what I started to say was that if I took the trouble to write down resolu-

tions, I'd have something worth while. I'd resolve to do or become something great or wonderful. Of course, one can manage all these little things." Gracie made no answer, but knit her pretty brows, not knowing how to take this new idea.

"Children!" They were both startled, for they had not noticed that their father was sitting in the recess of the bow window. Gracie flew across the room and perched herself on her papa's knee, while Willie followed a little more reluctantly. Mr. Harding pushed back the blind that they might have a clear view out of the window. "Willie," said he, "do you remember how interested you were last summer in watching the building of that house across the way?" "Yes, papa." "What did they do first?" "They put in the foundation." "And then what?" "Built the brick wall." "How did they build it?" "I don't understand what you mean, papa." "How many bricks did they lay at a time?" "Only one." "Why didn't they do something great and wonderful, and put up the whole wall at once?"

Willie's cheek grew red as he saw the application of his father's illustration, while Grace looked up with much interest. "If my little girl keeps those resolutions all the year, she will have added a new story to a house that is to last forever. The first will help her to form good habits; the second will be the performance of a duty, which always renews our strength; the third will be a victory over her own self. And good habits, duties well-done, and self-mastery, all help to make character. We are building every day—not houses that the winds and storms of time can overthrow—but characters that are to go with us through this life, and be all that is to live on through eternity." The children looked very grave, for their father spoke earnestly and seriously. "Many a boy, Willie, has started out with the resolution to do something great and wonderful, and has made his life a failure, because he looked past the little things that lay just before him, to catch sight of some great possibility in the far distance. 'Wings for the angels, but feet for men,' says Holland, and so we can reach the end only by patient plodding, laying one brick upon another until the whole is finished. And that is why I think Gracie's resolutions are wise, because they have to do with her everyday life. And every duty done, every victory over self, every little help in the formation of a true and noble character, are like additional pieces of armor, fitting us to gain new victories, and to battle with new foes."

"And what about the end of the year, papa," asked Gracie. "That will depend on you and all the days between now and then. You have one to help you, remember, and can keep your resolutions only by the word of his grace, which is able to build you up."

At a Dublin Mansion House dinner, one of the livery servants went up to a gentleman who was carving a joint of beef, and said: "I'll trouble ye, if ye please, for a slice for me master. 'Certainly! How does your master like it?' 'Bedad!' cried the valet, 'how can I tell ye how he likes it until he has tasted a bit!'"

BANDS OF MERCY.

BY ROBIN MERRY.

"BLESSED are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." These are among the golden words spoken by our Saviour in his sermon on the mount. How many of my readers think they were intended to apply only to human beings? How many think they were intended for all living creatures—to birds, animals, insects, fishes, every form of life that God has made? When you throw a stone at that sparrow perched on a limb, and the poor innocent bird fell dead to the ground, did it occur that God was noting what you did? Do you remember the words of Jesus when he said, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your father's notice?" That is what Jesus said, and that is just what God does. He looks with displeasure upon every act of wantonness or cruelty toward any of his creatures.

And here the editor takes pleasure in mentioning that in various places societies have been organized for the prevention of cruelty to animals, and that very marked results in the diminution of cruelty have followed. In many places also "Bands of Mercy" have been organized. These are frequently formed in the Sunday-schools, the entire school resolving to form itself into such a band. The pledge taken is very simple, and may be kept by any one, child, man or woman. Here are the words of the pledge:

"I will try to be kind and merciful to all living creatures; and I will try to persuade others to be the same."

Any boy or girl taking this pledge will think a moment before performing an act of cruelty, or inflicting unnecessary pain upon any animal, whether great or small, strong or weak. And when he sees others engaged in acts of cruelty he will naturally try to prevent their harsh conduct. I am sure that God looks with approbation upon every effort to protect his creatures from needless pain. Will you organize a "Band of Mercy" in your Sunday-school? Or where you cannot do that, will you get as many of your young friends as you can to join you in organizing a band?—*Children's Friend.*

IT PUT HIM IN PRISON.

THE giving of intoxicating liquor as a medicine has often produced life-long disaster. A gentleman called on an influential friend of his and said: "I wish you would go and see my son Charlie, who is in prison."

The friend was surprised that there should be any need for such a request, and asked: "How is it your son is imprisoned?"

The father replied: "You had better ask him yourself, for I would rather not tell you."

The friend went to the prison and found the young man, to whom he said: "Tell me frankly what brought you here?"

"Well," he answered, "I have been robbing my employer."

"What made you rob him?"

"I wanted money for theatres, cigars, and brandy, and as my salary was not enough I took my master's money."

"But," said the gentleman, "you were a Band of Hope boy, and therefore what did you want with brandy?"

The reply of the young man was a sad one, and showed that the evil began years back. Said he: "When I had a fever in my fourteenth year, the doctor ordered my mother to give me brandy; she did so, and I never lost my taste for it, and that," said he crying bitterly, "has brought me here."

What a sad case! The appetite formed then followed him and became his master; made him forget the teaching of his Band of Hope, his solemn promise not to drink, and brought sorrow, suffering and shame to him and to those he loved.

And yet the case is only one of many just as sad. Hundreds have been ruined in body and soul by brandy and wine taken at first as medicine. Thousands are cured of all manner of sickness and disease without them, and some other drugs can be given in place of harmful, poisonous alcohol.

We have another boy in mind who was likewise taken very sick. His father, who was a strict total abstinence, was away from home at the time, and the doctor who was called in told the boy he must take brandy. The boy objected, and said he could not do it, for his father did not believe in it, and the boy had promised he never would touch strong drink in any form. The doctor urged him to yield to his advice, for without the brandy he might not live.

To this the noble boy replied: "I will die then, for I will not drink what my father has told me is wrong."

We are glad to say he did not die, but recovered, and without the brandy, and is to-day more firm in his belief that liquor-drinking is wrong than he was then. We want more of such boys.—*Exchange.*

THE BIRD'S VISIT.

THAT elegant and accomplished German writer, Dr. Krummacher, relates a beautiful incident which occurred in his neighbourhood, in which a poor man, who owed a debt he was unable to pay, was delivered out of his distress by a song bird.

The man was sitting, early in the morning, at his house door, expecting an officer to come and distrain him for a small debt; and whilst sitting thus, with his heavy heart, a little bird flew through the street, fluttering up and down, as if in distress, until, at last, quick as an arrow, it flew over the man's head into his cottage, and perched itself within a cupboard.

The man caught the bird, and placed it in a cage, where it immediately began to sing very sweetly.

Suddenly some one knocked at the door. It was the servant of a respectable lady, who said that the neighbour had seen a bird fly into his house, and she wished to know if he caught it.

"Oh, yes; here it is!" And the bird was carried away.

A few minutes after the servant came again.

"You have done my mistress great service," she said; "she values the bird highly. She is much obliged to you, and requests you to accept this trifle with her thanks."

It proved to be the exact sum he owed; and when the officer came, he said: "Here is your money; now leave in peace, for God has sent it to me."