

The New Year Ledger

BY AMELIA E. BARR.

I said one year ago,

"I wonder, if I truly kept
A list of days when life burnt low,
Of days I smiled and days I wept,
If good or bad would highest mount
When I made up the year's account?"

I took a ledger fair and fine,

"And now," I said, "when days are glad,
I'll write with bright red ink the line,
And write with black when they are bad,
So that they'll stand before my sight
As clear apart as day and night.

"I will not heed the changing skies.

Nor if it shine, nor if it rain;
But if there comes some sweet surprise,
Or friendship, love or honest gain,
Why, then it shall be understood
That day is written down as good.

"Or if to any one I love

A blessing meets them on the the way,
That will to me a pleasure prove;
So it shall be a happy day;
And if some day I've cause to dread
Pass harmless by, I'll write it red.

"When hands and brain stand labour's test,

And I can do the thing I would,
Those days when I am at my best
Shall all be traced as very good.
And in 'red letter,' too, I'll write
Those rare, strong hours when night is might.

"When first I meet in some grand book

A noble soul that touches mine,
And with this vision I can look
Through some Gate Beautiful of time,
That such happiness will shed
That golden-lined will seem the red.

"And when pure, holy thoughts have power

To touch my heart and dim my eyes,
And I in some diviner hour
Can hold sweet converse with the skies,
Ah! then my soul may safely write:
'This day hath been most good and bright.'

What do I see on looking back?

A red-lined book before me lies,
With here and there a thread of black,
That like a shadow flies—
A shadow, it must be confessed,
That often rose in my own breast.

And I have found it good to note

The blessing that is mine each day;
For happiness is vainly sought
In some dim future far away.
Just try my ledger for a year,
Then look with grateful wonder back,
And you will find, there is no fear,
The red days far exceed the black.

"RESOLUTION No. 13."

BY MARJORIE S. HENRY.

"I, HERBERT LANK WILSON, do solemnly promise"—take care, Tom: I can't write when you shake so—"not to smoke, not to swear, not to—"

"But you never do any of those things, so what's the good of putting them down," suggested Tom, from his perch on the writing-table.

"That's just it," answered Herbert, "I don't know but I might be tempted this year; and resolutions keep people so safe," he added, giving a final flourish to a capital S.

"If people keep the resolutions," broke in a faint voice from the doorway. And Uncle Jack toward the boys, looking with an eye at the elaborate paper Herbert was writing so carefully, "New Year's Resolutions, 'To be brave' letters at the top, and 'Resolution No. 13: To be brave' etc., all the way down the sheet

"Everybody ought to make a list like Uncle Jack!" asked Her-

bert, a little surprised and disappointed at the look in his uncle's face, which was hardly the one of commendation he had expected to see.

"I don't find fault with the resolutions, boys; it is ourselves, not the resolutions, that fail. I tried Herbert's plan once, and since then I have had far more faith in the doing than in the resolving. Shall I tell you about it? It happened long ago, when Percy—your father—and I were boys, and Alec—"

"That was little Uncle Alec?"

"Yes. He was only twelve years old then, and Percy and I were little company for him, I fear; we were too much taken up with our own sports and amusements, that he, being naturally a timid child, found little pleasure in, and after your grandmother's death he spent most of his time in reading books far too old for him, or in dreaming to himself, curled up on the wide window-seats. Our housekeeper was a kind-hearted woman, and did all in her power to make us comfortable; but I think now what lonely times Alec must have often had, accustomed as he had always been to mother's care. Father was away from home very often, on his 'court-week' trips, and we boys were left to the care of Mrs. Mason and the servants. It was in one of these times my story happened; and, when I tell it, Herbert will not wonder that I shook my head at his long list of resolutions, remembering as I do when last I saw a paper like it.

"It was the week after Christmas, and all the festivities of the season were about over. Father had gone to court in a town not far distant, and we boys were gathered round the fire one stormy night, expecting every moment to hear the sound of his carriage-wheels on the drive, and to welcome him home warmly after his few days' absence.

"The storm had been very severe in our part of the country—a warm rain, such as often comes with a January thaw—and it had sent large blocks of ice floating down the river, which roared and rushed but a short distance below our home. We boys had begged Mrs. Mason for a liberal supply of nuts and apples that night; and Percy and I were busy at a set of resolutions much like those Herbert holds in his hand. Alec lay in his usual place on the hearth-rug.

"'Jack,' said he, looking up from his book, as a gust of wind swept down the chimney, and the rain beat against the window-panes, 'oughtn't father to be here soon?'

"'Unless he can't come by the town-bridge,' I answered. 'Colonel Strong called out as he passed that it wasn't safe to-night, so father may have to go by the mills. Go on, Percy. Resolution 13: 'To be brave—'

"'Jack, oughtn't some one go to warn father?' broke in Alec's voice again.

"Percy laughed.

"'Yes, baby,' he answered, 'I think we'll send you to sit on the bridge until father appears. Take a lantern, Al, and a red flag.'

"Then we turned again to our resolutions, but, somehow, the pen seemed to stop at the last one—'To be brave;' and Percy and I rambled off into a many-sided argument as to what true bravery consisted in.

"'Percy,' said a low voice, again. Alec had risen now, and was standing by my side. 'Won't you go down to the bridge and wait for father? It rains so dreadfully!'

"Percy and I laughed again, and told Alec that father was able to take care of himself.

"'But, if he shouldn't know! Oh, Jack!—and a tender hand was laid on my arm—'can't you go? I would, if I could.'

"For a moment I almost started for my rubber coat and umbrella, but Percy's laugh, and the un-

pleasant roar of wind and rain outside, made me shake off Alec's hand with an impatient gesture.

"'Father will probably not even start from Sayville to night, and much good it would do, my sitting in this hurricane on that old bridge. Go yourself, if you are so anxious;' and we turned to sign our names, in legal style, to the paper before us. I can yet see the way the letters in my name looked, written directly under Resolution 13, 'To be brave.'

"By-and-bye, Alec slipped away—as we supposed, to bed—and not long after, father's voice sounded in the hall.

"'No, indeed!' he laughed, in answer to our inquiries; 'I did not try our bridge. They say it will not stand until morning. I heard of it in Sayville, and came by the upper road.'

"When we told him of Alec's determination to warn him, he asked, tenderly:

"'Where is my little man? I must go assure him that I am safe.'

"Where was Alec, indeed? Not in his little bed, nor in the house, though we searched in every room, calling his name in anxious tones; but only the howling wind answered when we paused to listen for a reply.

"'Could he himself have gone to the bridge?' some one asked.

"No, never; our timid, shrinking Alec, to whom even the dark rooms at bedtime were a trial. But on to the bridge we went—father first, his face white and anxious, the servants carrying lanterns, and then Percy and I, in awed wonder.

"The old bridge was yet standing, although the timbers creaked and groaned as we passed over. Father paused by a broken plank at the far end, and the light of the flickering lantern fell on little Alec's face.

"'Oh, father,' he cried, 'the bridge—is not—safe!' and fell back, unconscious, in father's loving arms.

"As we carried Alec home that night, I think we all know that there was another bridge his feet would soon cross—a bridge that is always safe and sure to his little ones.

"The old bridge stood the storm, but was rendered so unsafe by the strain it had undergone that it was taken down to make way for a stone one.

"'What about the resolutions,' did Uncle Jack Herbert? Among the few treasures I have fully kept, is a yellow scrap of paper, and often, when tempted or troubled, I have read in faded letters, written in a boyish hand, 'Resolution No. 13: To be brave!' and not the words themselves have helped me, but the memory of the lesson I learned that night—that, while some resolve, others are doing the work. There, boys: there is a moral. Can you find it?"

But Herbert only tore his resolutions into many pieces, and said:

"It must be in the heart, Uncle Jack; on the paper will do no good. I understand."

TOOLS OF INSECTS.

THERE is a little fly called a saw-fly, because it has a saw to work with. The fly uses it to make places where the eggs will be safe. What is more strange, it has a sort of home-made glue which fastens the eggs where they are laid.

There is a kind of bee which has a boring tool. Its nest is made in old wood, and the borer cleans out the nest ready for use. When all is ready, the bee cuts out pieces of leaves to line the nest and to make the cells. These linings are cut in the shape of the cells. You would be surprised to see the care taken to have every piece just the right size, so that it will fit. When they are fitted, they are nicely fastened together and put into the nest.