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THE FREE LANCE.

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WE are all familiar with the old custom of making pledges for the year, "swearing off," making new resolutions and doing many other deserving

things, during the early part of every year.

Some poor unfortunate who has been overcome by indulging in bad habits, smoking, chewing, drinking, gambling, or what not, now says that he will abstain from such habits for a certain length of time or possibly quit them entirely. Nothing could be more desirable than that he should do the latter; but does he do it? We are too familiar with the majority of "New Year's pledges" to look upon them in a general way with favor. With those who keep them we have nothing but praise, but what of those who do not? Is this not the experience of many who fall? They would wait until the beginning of the new year before they stop on their downward careers. It is not the *time when* a determination is made, but the strength of that determination which tells the story. If the will is in accord, why not stop at any time?

Here is a weakness in human nature: "We put off until to-morrow that which we might do to day." The trouble is we have not the will to do it to day, and what is there to strengthen our will to-morrow?

Why not cultivate a sense of duty which responds when duty calls? That which is done mechanically may be done without the right spirit. That which is