

FUN OFFICE, Wednesday, Dec. 30, 1874.

A WORD IN SEASON.

THE New Year's soon comes round again—let's welcome Seventy-five. Let's thankful be we're here to see the metal day arrive; And while we think of pleasures past, and bless our happy lot, Don't let us shrink our New Year's work—forget the poor we'll not.

On New Year's Day let's give away
Whatever we can spare;
It mayn't be much, but yet it's such
As poverty may wear.

The New Year's time's a jolly time to those who're warmly clad,
To those so cold, who're far from cold, it's anything but glad.
But if the rich would only send from out their warehouses' wealth
The wools and strays, 'twould smelt pain, and give the poor man health.

To let us give, while yet we live,
And never seem any ray,
The chance may not be always got—
"Do raise the world away."

THE most recent action of the Lord Chamberlain is very suggestive of the oft-repeated official performance of locking the stable when the steed has been stolen. For a considerable time the play-going public had to bear certain very palpable injustices, and so long as the public was content to submit quietly the licensee of plays and the keeper of the menagerie's conscience were quite satisfied that things were as they should be—or near enough to make no matter. But at last a stir was made; the audience at one theatre showed itself quite demonstrative with regard to the telegraphy—or, strictly speaking, to the indecent allusion—of certain so-called actresses; and various other signs of the times made it manifest that a healthier tone was imperative in things theatrical. A desire was shown for ability; playgoers no longer demanded legs in preference to legitimacy, and clamoured for actresses while deriding comedies; and matters which had been wrong for a very considerable period were slowly but certainly righting themselves. Finding that the people were about to settle the matter entirely by themselves, the Lord Chamberlain issued a manifesto quite endorsing the popular view, and showed that he was not to be left so far behind after all.



THE HEROISM OF BLISSETT BAMBERGER.

FAR away from the war and riot of the mighty metropolis dwelt Blissett Bamberger. Where the verdant valley lies like a cloak and sheltered housed at the foot of the great green hill its lord—where the golden ranunculus and the yellow flower of the great meadows lift scented lips to kiss the heels of travelling kins—there had fate fixed his modest dwelling. He was a country lad. Humble was his origin, lowly his occupation, but noble his aspiration, and glorious the goal that glowed like a scintillant star through the haze of his years to come.

Once, while driving the four-footed companions of his solitude home to the guardian fold, he plucked from the leaved hedgehog a sheet of snow-fang flutter by the contemptuous wind. "Twas a printed record of a great and glorious deed, and told how up in the great town-world a gallant youth had leapt from a bridge into the torrent beneath and saved a human life. That night Bamberger drank not, neither did he sup. Fancy spread her radiant pinions, clasped him in her arms, and bore him far away. He stood upon the bridge, he sprang, he swam, he swam! Thus the murmur of myriad voices hounding, his name echoed the excited brain, and uttering "Johnson," he fell asleep. When he rose up on the morrow, Hope had written "Fain" to one

chapter of his life. For the mid-day sun had fairly settled down to its daily task of blistering the pavement, his cottage door he was on the road to London, prepared to do or die; to be a hero or—perish in the attempt. He had one person in view, and not all the distractions of the 19th century Babylon made him swerve from the path. The axe of determination had been for him through the cock of fatality. Let us follow him.

Day after day he stood upon London-bridge, stripped to the shirt, and ready for the daring leap. Once an old gentleman expressed his intention of committing suicide, and awaited the prospect. In a moment Bamberger was in the river waiting for him. But the old gentleman altered his mind and didn't come. The police did, and took our hero into custody, from which he emerged upon payment of forty shillings and costs. He abandoned the Thames and took to boating upon the Lea on Sunday. He received fourteen maims and ten fowls in three weeks; but the moment they were safe on shore they changed him with wilfully upstating them, and instead of giving him to the reprovers he was led to live from the wrath of the boat-swains. He attended every fine within twelve miles of London. At the peril of his life he mounted ladies and brought women and babes from garret windows. But when he reached the ground the firemen "cursed his impudence," and the police ordered him to "move on." Never a line in the newspaper came to fill his soul with gloom.

At last the tide turned. One day a friendly crossing-sweeper gave him a Sunday ticket for the "Koc," and putting on his oldest coat, in order not to appear conspicuous, he took one Sabbath afternoon, he repaired. The company was rough and noisy, and the country-head yawned aside over to the solitude of the den of the psaltery-makers, there in contemplative the habits of the thick-skinned mammalia and sat a cypress-bark in peace. The skincooter was hungry that afternoon, and gazed first at Bamberger and then at the bar. Not a word was said. Slowly the crew rose of solid flesh advanced to the bars, its evil, bloodshot eye glittering greedily. In a moment the current was between his narrow jaws. Then did the valorous soul of Blissett Bamberger catch the punt-up fury of its fangs. Arming himself with a long straw, he proceeded to tickle the animal's eye. The animal gave a short Julia-like laugh and dropped the bar. With the energy freed of despair, our hero thrust in his walking-stick and drew the rescued mammal towards him, wiped it, put it in his pocket, and walked quietly away.

He knew not that he had been observed. On the following morning London was riving with "The Heroism of Blissett Bamberger." The biggest words in the English language were employed to sing the praises of a man who had, single handed, rescued a Mr. Horn from the jaws of a mad skincooter. He had only been identified by a handkerchief dropped in the scuffle. He was compared to Hercules, and Antinous, and Guy Livingstone, and all the heroes of the past, the present, and the future. He read the articles, he accepted the sovereigns sent to the newspaper offices for him, and he retired to seek a wife and a tender man. He had perilled his life over and over again, and virtue had been its own reward. He had done deeds of heroism by the score, and the world had passed them over with silent contempt. But he had tickled a skincooter in the eye with a straw and he found himself a hero.

Blissett Bamberger smiled himself at the first cheap eulogy and returned to his native obscurity before the bubble of his reputation burst. But his fame followed him, and he who had loved heroism for itself, and sought it in its noblest aspects, found his name linked with a newspaper lie, and his heroism a scandalous synonym for a gross exaggeration. Alas, poor Blissett Bamberger! the Press was thy witness and the making of the fad who covered thee with shame.

