



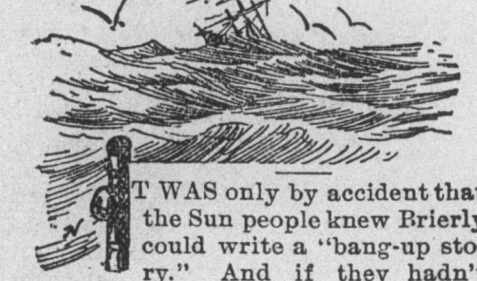
**The New Year.**

UNTIED, unknown and fair.  
With deep, mysterious eyes and  
starwreathed hair,  
Untouched by any breath of sin  
or shame,  
Undimmed by care the brow's white flame,  
The New Year meets us, face to face,  
Laden with gifts of grace:  
The wealthy hours, with unknown blessings  
fraught,  
Fair space for earnest toil and fruitful  
thought,  
For kindly word and generous deed,  
For binding up the hearts that bleed,  
For conquering self and sin,  
For waxing strong within.

Alas! all pale and cold,  
Mid drifting snows, withered and shrunk and  
old,  
We see the Old Year's sad, accusing ghost,  
Laden with treasures we have lost:  
The wasted hours, the deeds unwrought,  
The idle word and thought,  
The waiting good wherein we weakly failed,  
Sharp tests of life, where strength or courage  
quailed,  
The gracious toll we might have shared,  
The lost for whom we might have cared—  
Sweet Heaven, how can we brook  
The Old Year's ghostly look?

Ah, let us gaze no more  
On loss and failure that have gone before;  
The future still hath space for truer life,  
For generous deeds and noble strife:  
The soul that cannot rise with wings  
May climb to higher things.  
And Thou, Almighty One in whom we trust,  
Who still rememberest we are but dust,  
Whose mercies all our sins outlast,  
Lift from our hearts the heavy past,  
That we may go with cheer  
To meet the glad New Year.  
—Samantha W. Shoup, in N. Y. Independent.

## BRIERLY'S STRANGE PRESENT FROM THE SEA.



IT WAS only by accident that the Sun people knew Brierly could write a "bang-up story." And if they hadn't found it out he wouldn't have had any New Year's present, and this story would never have been written.

He had always been on the night desk, which is of the same family of furniture as an entertainment bureau. That is, he sat all night at a table with nine other men reading and editing local and telegraphic copy for the morning Sun.

It was the Sun's policy to hire some one from outside the office when they wanted a new man on the desk. And he came quietly in one afternoon as it was getting dark, and in a few words told the managing editor he was out of a job and could do desk work. He never said a word about salary, so the managing editor hired him.

He went to work that night, and it was a long time before anyone knew anything about him except that he lived on the hill.

He never came till just as the clock was striking seven, and it never stopped wheezing and puffing over the exertion before he walked in. He always said "Good evening, sir," to the night editor. The night editor always said "Good evening, Brierly," to him.

Sometimes the lavish politeness would spread to the other desk men, and they would wish him a good evening; but more than half the time they didn't take the trouble.

And then Brierly would sit right down to the grind and turn off more work and do it better than any other two men put together. The men could never fathom him.

He never went out to the 11:30 lunch they indulged in, and when he repeatedly declined to go down to Catder's and have a beer they threw up the case in despair and refused longer to take any interest in him as a healthy human newspaper man.

When the city edition was sent down at 3:30, and Rich, the night editor, said: "Good night, gentlemen," Brierly got up, echoed Rich's sentiments, and—vanished.

He never got any mail. In short, he was a mystery.

It was spring when Brierly came, and it was October before Dearborn stumbled on his story. When the ten o'clock mail came that night, Walter, the office boy who looked it over, uttered an exclamation of surprise and tossed an envelope across the desk to Brierly.

He took it, cut it open, looked at the signature, turned white, stuffed the letter into his pocket, and went on editing his copy.

Every eye in the room was on him, but he did not look up, just shut his lips together tight and went on.

All but one man had sense enough to keep quiet. But he was a fellow who had a fatal faculty of thinking his own sayings funny, when they were only flat and intensely irritating. He sang out:

"Well, Brierly, got a letter from her at last, have you? Why didn't she write before? Come, let's hear it! Why don't you tell us?"

Brierly changed color several times and stood the chaff as long as he could. Then he rose suddenly, threw down his blue pencil and roared out to the witty man: "Shut up your ugly mouth."

With that he flung out of the room. The witty man was so surprised he gasped and the rest of the men laughed at his discomfiture when they recovered from their own astonishment.

In five minutes Brierly came back and sat down without a word. Nobody said anything to him, and at half-past eleven the editors went out for their lunch. On the stairs they met John Dearborn, who blessed them all for "pretty cheap editors."

They went down discussing Brierly's letter. Dearborn went up and sat down at his desk in the large room, where there were many other desks. Opening from it were several smaller rooms with a few desks in each.

The office was deserted. The night city editor had gone home, and the all-night "on call" man had gone down to Catder's.

Dearborn, grumbling away to himself, dipped his pen into the ink and poised it in the air while he thought of a short, striking sentence with which to begin his story of a night along the wharves. Just then he heard a sound like a muffled sob. He listened, and thought it was the wind.

Having at last succeeded in fishing from the recesses of his brain a short, striking sentence, he penned it quickly before it could escape him, and for five minutes his facile pen slid smoothly over the paper.

Then he needed another idea; again the pen was poised in the air. Again he heard the muffled sob. This time he launched a string of unusually picturesque oaths and started to investigate.

Yes, there could be no mistaking that sound. Some one was sobbing strongly and trying to control himself. Now, under all his rough, gruff exterior, old John Dearborn had as warm and kind a heart as ever beat. Guided by the sound he softly opened the door of one of the small rooms and stood there looking in and thinking what a dramatic scene it was.

There sat Brierly in the middle of the room, his arms stretched out on the desk before him, his head buried, and his hand holding the letter. He was crying like a baby.

Dearborn stepped in and laid his hand firmly on Brierly's shoulder. Brierly turned a startled, defiant face up to Dearborn's and growled out: "What do you want?"

"What's broken you up, old man?" said Dearborn.

"Nothing," said Brierly, catching his breath.

"You're a liar," said Dearborn, "and you have got to tell me what the mat-

ter is. Perhaps I can do something for you."

With that he stepped to the door, snapped the key, and put it in his pocket.

Then Brierly began to sob again. Dearborn hummed a tune, whistled a bit, swore under his breath and waited for Brierly to grow calmer. Finally he looked up and said with an effort:

"I have got a letter—from a brother—that's given me the blues. Come up the hill with me when we get good night and I will tell you."

When the men came in at midnight from lunch Brierly was sitting at his place as usual and looking over a paper as if nothing out of the ordinary had happened. They glanced inquiringly at him, but they didn't dare to ask for an explanation.

At 3:30 he said good night, hunted up Dearborn, who was waiting for him, said "Come," and they started up the hill.

When the whole story was told long afterward Dearborn said that during that walk to Brierly's room neither spoke a single word to the other.

When the gas flared up in Brierly's room, Dearborn saw a small cozy apartment with a desk in the center and the walls completely lined with books. A cot stood in a little alcove.

Brierly poked up the fire, handed Dearborn a pipe, lighted another himself, and reached into his pocket.

All this time he had not said a word and Dearborn, with the ready tact born of a long newspaper experience, said nothing. Finally Brierly handed him the letter and said: "read it."

"This is what Dearborn read:

"BEN—What's the use? It's three years since you refused to have anything more to do with

me, and I can't seem to catch on anywhere. No matter where I've been since I saw you. I am going to do really something decisive in my life now; I am going to end it."

"Good-by."

Dearborn read it through twice, looked at the postmark, blurred by rain beyond all recognition, looked at Brierly, and said:

"Well, old man, who's John?"

"My brother," said Brierly.

And then he began to tell his story, and he never stopped until he had told it all, and even then he did not say a great deal. It was the shortest, saddest history Dearborn had ever listened to. Here it is:

"My father was a rich man once. This is all that is left of his fine library. He died poor long ago and my mother did not outlive him long. John and I were the only children. John was a little chap when they died. I was twenty-one and I went to work. I had been through Harvard, and I scripped and pinched and saved every cent to send him through, but he did not care anything about such things. He was a careless, wild sort of fellow, and crazy to go into the newspaper business.

"I said no, because I knew that he would go to the devil in it. He started in at college and did not make the sophomore class. He spent all the money I could rake and scrape.

"When he was dropped from his class I upbraided him severely, and in his careless, insincere fashion he told me that he wanted to go to work.

"I told him that he should go through and that he should not go to work, surely not in a newspaper office. He told me he never would go through college.

"Then I pleaded with him not to disgrace the family name, and he promised to try again. But he did disgrace it not long after. He got into a terrible scrape and was expelled.

"I couldn't stand that, and when he came to me with his story I cursed him. I told him I was done with him forever, and in my bitter wrath I meant it.

"He was frightened at first. Then the Brierly will came to his aid, and the replied as bitterly that he didn't need my help. With that he left my room.

"From then until now I have never seen him nor heard from him. God knows I loved him better than my life, and how deeply I have regretted sending him away. I never could track him, and now he's dead. That's all, Dearborn."

Dearborn went across the room, laid his old hand on Brierly's shaggy head,

"See here, Brierly, what can I do for you?"

"Nothing, sir," said Brierly. "I shall start at once."

It was early morning when he reached the little seaport, and he started off for the station, on the bit of a beach that was set among the rocks like a single jewel in an iron crown.

The battle with the wind and snow that wild New Year's morning called out all his powers of resistance, and when he reached the station and told the man in charge his errand, he was almost jolly!

He was armed with a permit from the chief of the service, and the brave, honest fellows soon made him at home. He had a long chat with the man in charge, went out in oilskins and patrolled the beach awhile, then went back to the warm, comfortable station and examined all the apparatus, taking a few notes.

The storm increased in fury steadily and the wind came off the sea in great gusts that seemed strong enough to shake the little station down.

It grew dark early, and when the afternoon patrol came in at five o'clock night had settled down.

It must have been about ten o'clock when the steady pound of the breakers on the sand was broken by a different sound. It was the boom of a gun over the water.

They shook Brierly out of his doze, and just then the door burst open and the beach patrol thrust his head in and shouted:

"Run out the gun and the lines. Something's on the Halfway rock and shootin' rockets."

Here was Brierly's chance. Hastily throwing on his oilskins he started out with the men.

The snow had stopped falling. It was a bit lighter, and they could see the silver line of surf stretching either way on the beach. Its roar was so loud they had to shout in each other's ears to be heard.

With unceasing regularity the boom of the gun rode in to the men. At less regular intervals a fiery snake wriggled out of the blackness and died in mid air.

It was a tough struggle to the water's edge, but at last they planted the gun and made ready to drop a line over the vessel. Several times they were unsuccessful, and pulled the line back again, but finally succeeded.

By this time the gun had ceased its booming and the fiery snakes wriggled no longer. Brierly had walked along the beach so he might look out at a different angle, and was standing straining his eyes for a sight of the vessel.

He was just starting back when a huge object came bounding in, bearing a black object on its crest. Brierly saw it and waited.

On it came, curling, seething, flashing and foaming. With a last mad leap the breaker struck the shore, wetting Brierly to his waist, and laying at his very feet its burden.

It was the body of a man lashed to a spar.

All signs of life were beaten out of the body.

Brierly cut the lashings, shouldered the body and fought his way to the station. It was deserted. By the light of the lamps he saw the man was young and that he was breathing.

Brierly's first thought was identification. Slipping his hand into the man's breast pocket he took out a little leather photograph case and opened it, and saw—his own face.

For a moment he was puzzled. Then he gave the man's face a long look and jumped to his feet with: "John, back from the dead!"

Outside the wind whistled under the eaves and shrieked like ten thousand demons. Then it would sob and moan and slip off like a pack of frightened wolves. Those few moments seemed hours to Brierly, and he worked as he never worked before.

Time and again he stooped over and kissed the cold, wet lips, calling on the silent form to speak to him. And outside the wind went howling by.

Then John opened his eyes and smiled, and Brierly danced—yes, actually danced—with joy.

The story is very nearly told. Next morning Dearborn got a telegram, which said:

"My brother is here; come. BRIERLY."

And when he came John told them how at the very moment he was going to end his miserable life he had been persuaded to ship as a common sailor on board the Mermaid. She had gotten off her course in the storm, and here he was.

It was a week before he was able to go up to town. But when he did go he went to work on the Sun and is making a success there under the watchful eye of his brother.

And the witty man says that: "Brierly has gotten to be quite a decent sort of a fellow now."—George L. Sullivan, in Boston Globe.

**The Year's Best Gift.**

The fire was bright. The night was clear. We sat and praised the parting year.

One guest gave thanks for added wealth. And one for quick return to health.

The aged father told, with joy, The coming of his absent boy.

"A glad some year!" the brother cried, And smiled upon his rosy bride.

"Ah, yes!" the sister said, and pressed Her infant closer to her breast.

"It was a glorious year, in truth, I gained my 'sheepskin'!" cried the youth.

The patient mother gently sighed, And breathed the name of one who died;

Then softly said: "To her was given The year's best gift, for she has Heaven."

—Mrs. McVean-Adams, in S. S. Times.

Unprofitable Economy.  
To economize is a sensible thing, and yet there are occasions when it brings trouble, as in the case of a Mr. Johnson. Mr. Johnson's lawyer, calling one day, found Mrs. Johnson alone and walking about in a state of violent excitement. He asked what was the matter. Her only answer was that her husband was "a villain." After a time, she added, with some hesitation: "Why, I have discovered all the love letters he sent me were the very same he sent to his first wife."

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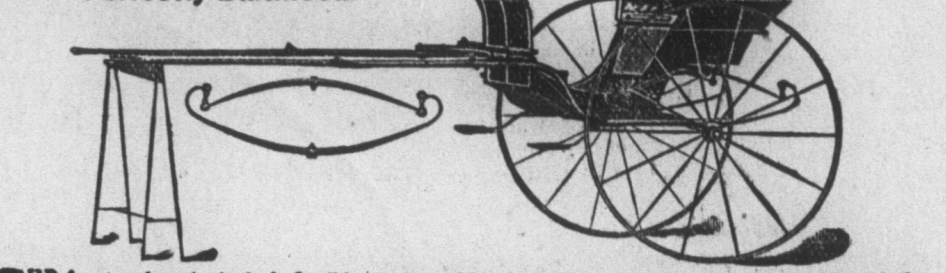


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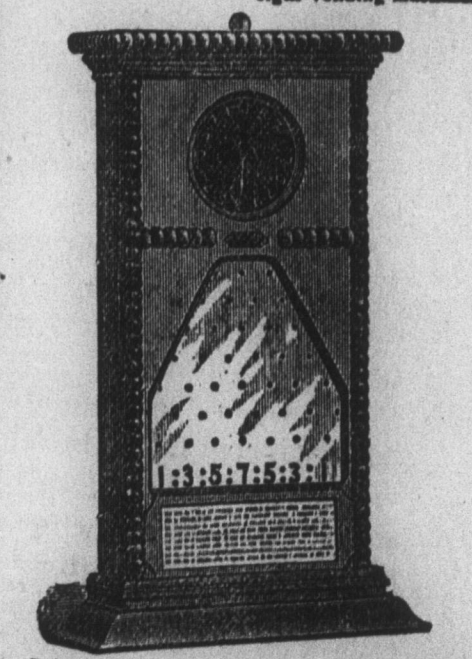
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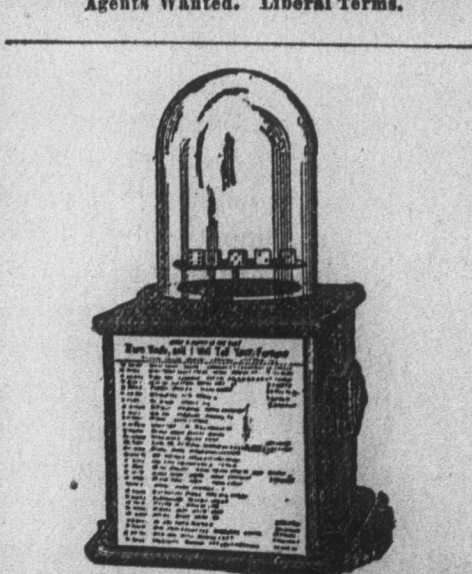
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