HOFFMAN'S LATEST.

He is Now Booming the Petrified Man Industry.

His Report of the Capture of the Itata by the Charleston—Gathering Sea Moss—Why He is Studying the Spanish Language—Natural Soap in Ventura County.

[Special Correspondence of RECORD-UNION.]

I didn't go to Santa Barbara to see the Charleston. I know it was thought that I would go, and a private dispatch informs me that the officers in command of that noble vessel were very much vexed and disappointed. I have always taken a very great interest in the Charleston since her Captain leaned over the rail at San Diego and, carelessly scratching one side of his nose with a marine glass, said to the skipper of the Esmeralda, who was engaged in filling the ship's coal bunkers with charred matches:

"I intend to take the Itata, dead or alive!" To which the Esmeralda's foreman replied: "You'll have to sink the Esmeralda first!" This was only an incident. It never amounted to much. At first the uninitiated crawled under their beds and stopped up their ears when they heard of it. They expected a horrible marine circus, with heavy reports, shrieks, cries, groans, red waves, blood pouring out of the scuppers and the cook's lung hanging on the clickimdoodle of the mainmast, with solid shot crashing through the smoke-stack.

But nothing occurred. The commander of the Charleston went on scratching his nose, and the commander of the Esmeralda went on filling his empty coal bunkers with burnt matches. Then the Charleston steamed out of the harbor of San Diego, and I went back to my office and wrote up a long telegraphic special, with a double-leaded scare head, giving the word Itata the regulation width of thirteen ems, and the foreman smoled a sweet and approving smile.

The pursuit of the Itata was quite a thing. Everybody remembers it. It was extremely blood-curdling. For some time the Charleston was out of sight of land, and nobody knew what her fate was. Grave rumors flew in from sea. A dozen ship's captains reported having seen her lying hull down in the horizon, but she always went off on another tack as soon as they tried to approach and signal her. She was reported in a dozen different localities, going in a dozen different directions at one and the same time. Then came the news that she had overhauled the Itata and a terrible fight had resulted, in which only the lea-scupper of the Charleston and the starboard porthole of the Itata had been left to tell the tale.

The next report was from Chile. The Charleston had arrived. Everything was O. K. on board. There was no cholera nor yellow fever nor smallpox; neither were there any flies on the Charleston. One of the sailors had stubbed his toe against a holy stone while scrubbing decks, but he had tied a chew of tobacco on it and was doing as well as could be expected. It was, however, a matter for doubt as to whether the nail could be saved or no.

Not long afterward the Itata arrived at her destination, signified her willingness to surrender and the Charleston sidled up at once and captured her. She was then brought back to San Diego, and the Charleston was ordered to go forth from one sea port to another and exhibit herself.

This is, of course, my own version of the affair. Other people may not agree with me in all the particulars of the chase as I have set them down. I have tried to describe the thing in a clear, simple and comprehensive way. If I have made any mistakes the Secretary of War is invited to inform me of them, and I will make the necessary corrections.

A great many curious people went to Santa Barbara to see this splendid new cruiser, and the jam alongshore was fearful. It cost money, though. But everything costs money now. The time when we could sneak in under the fence, as it were, and get good value for nothing, is gone.

The sea moss season has opened along the coast, and at every port one may see all sorts of people engaged in fishing out the delicate filaments from the accompanying masses of kelp.

Sea moss is a beautiful marine growth. It smells like a soap factory in a state of excitement, but when washed, pressed and made into wreaths and other things, it is very attractive. A small crab, a "lady's bonnet," or the dried up remains of a shrimp, heaved in judiciously here and there, adds to the effect.

I gathered my first sea moss thirteen years ago at Santa Cruz. Not having a book or a box to put it in I tied it up in a handkerchief and carried it in my hand until I arrived at a hotel in Marysville. Then I gave it to the porter, and he tied it up in the cellar. Two days later the landlord marked "paid" after the names of all his guests, squared up with his servants and went down to the mud flats along the Yuba River to breathe. The Health Officer made an official visit to the place, and notified the landlord that he must disinfect at once. But for some time it was not done. Finally the discharged porter was found, and he, clad in a diver's suit, and with a Sir Humphrey Davy lantern in his hand, went in to investigate. After a long search the cause of the trouble was located in the cellar, the porter gave the signal and was dragged out unconscious. But in his hand he held a little package, and the crowd, when he was drawn out, rushed pell mell in the direction of Chinatown. The little package was my budget of fresh sea moss which I had forgotten.

That was thirteen years ago, but there are yet a few faint traces of imported sea air in Marysville. The hotel has changed proprietors, and has been renovated and remodeled, but "they say" that the ghost of the porter, who died in great agony, wanders there at night, stepping on the potatoes and searching for something tied up in a dirty handkerchief.

The hills of Ventura County are natural soap mines. Not genuine soap, but a sort of sticky clay abounds, which, when rubbed between the hands with a little water, forms a lather and removes the stains of labor as effectually as the best olive article. It is not "rock soap," and has no grit whatever. It is of all colors, that which is red being accepted by the knowing ones as good evidence of the presence of petroleum. Oil wells are thickly scattered throughout several sections of the county, and the industry is constantly growing. But that is a subject of which I shall write at some future time. At present I am interested in soap. Soap is, I take it, one of the things which only the greaser, who lives in the midst of the greatest soap belt of the Pacific Coast, can get along without. But the greaser is not like other mortals. He hath heard nothing of the old proverb about soap and cleanliness being first cousins to godliness. On saint's days he wets his face and hands, and when he registers a vow he swears that he will accomplish his purpose or wash himself a little on the back of the neck. But no greaser ever was known to fail when he made a vow. With dogged persistency he keeps on striving to fulfill it until Death lays a finger on his pulse and stills it forever.

I am studying Spanish now. Here, in this dreamy old country, where the Dons of old were wont to straddle about their *casas*, with wide *sombreros* and sonorous *carajos*, I am rapidly acquiring the grand old language of ancient Castile, mixed with the choice idioms of the present race, or, rather say the adulterated race of the present time in Ventura. I have purchased a book in which there is not one word of the English language, and I am getting on swimmingly. In order that you may see how well I am progressing I insert a paragraph from my book, and follow it with a translation made all by myself, and of which I am rather proud:

ORIGINAL.—"'Cual es el mas fuerte? El dedo pulgar es el mas fuerte. 'Que es 'fuerte?' Fuerte es lo contrario de debil. Un hombre es fuerte, una mujir (senora) es 'debil.' El sexo masculino es fuerte, el sexo feminino es debil. 'Es V. fuerte, Jorge? Si, senor, yo soy grande y fuerte,'' etc. etc.

TRANSLATION.—"Call it a forty? It died (*dedo*) pulgar (I haven't got to 'pulgar' yet.—A. V. H.), it is more forty. What is forty? Forty (*fuerte*) is a contrary devil (*debil*). A hombre is forty, a female mule (mujir) is a devil. (There seems to be a mistake in the original at this point.—A. V. H.) The masculine sex is forty, the feminine sex are devils. Is five cents forty, Judge? 'Yes, sir, I am a grand forty,' etc. etc.

I do not agree with the writer of the original. No gentleman would say that the feminine sex are devils. But the chances are that the book was gotten up for sale by an uneducated dancing master who had learned how to swear among the greasers, and hoped to make a raise before his identity was discovered. His writings appear to indicate a shaken mental apparatus, with extreme incontinuity and a tendency to change the subject without reason. His grammar is also extremely faulty, as witness the sentence: "Es V. fuerte, Jorge?" "Is five cents forty?" Only a fool would ask it, and no scholar would use a V. when writing five cents unless ink was mighty scarce just then.

This is discouraging, of course, but I hope, by earnest application, to master the intricacies of the Spanish language, and show off when I return to my old haunts in the northern part of the State. There is one man there with whom I have been at loggerheads for a year, and I have been desirous of telling him to his face that he is an unmitigated old fool and a prevaricator to such an extent that the truth is not in him; also, that he is a thief and would steal the bunghole from a barrel if he could, but his superior size and length of leg has deterred me. Now, however, I can tell him in Spanish, and the poor, ignorant idiot will not be able to retaliate.

Knowledge is power! The tongue is mightier than a club! 'Sdeath!

I am very busy nowadays preparing a petrified man for certain parties in Stockton. The fossil is to be eight feet in hight, with red whiskers, arms folded on a massive chest, toes turned up to the daisies, nose somewhat eaten by earthworms, wart on left jaw, eyes closed and mouth open. The figure is nearly completed, and will be set up in front of the Courthouse as a companion to the *Mail* fountain. It will probably be labeled "The Male Man," or words to that effect.

The petrified man industry is gaining a foothold here. Three orders have been recently received by parties here for human petrifactions, which, when completed, are to be shipped East. One goes to St. Louis, one to New York, and one to Philadelphia. The red sandstone formations which abound hereabouts are peculiarly adapted to the construction of these figures, which by an ingenious process are given a harder coating, resembling the surface of stone buried for a few centuries underground and subjected to the action of earthy salts.

A. V. HOFFMAN.

HORSE SENSE.

What a Horse Would Say If He Could Speak.

Don't hitch me to an iron post or railing when the mercury is below freezing. I need the skin of my tongue.

Don't leave me hitched in my stall at night with a big cob right where I must lie down. I am tied and can't select a smooth place.

Don't compel me to eat more salt than I want by mixing it with my oats. I know better than any other animal how much I need.

Don't think because I go free under the whip I don't get tired. You would move up if under the whip.

Don't think because I am a horse that iron, weeds and briars won't hurt my hay.

Don't whip me when I get frightened along the road, or I will expect it next time and maybe make trouble.

Don't trot me up hill, for I have to carry you and the buggy and myself too. Try it yourself some time. Run up hill with a big load.

Don't keep my stable very dark, for when I go out into the light my eyes are injured, especially if snow be on the ground.

Don't say whoa unless you mean it. Teach me to stop at the word. It may check me if the lines break, and save a runaway and smash-up.

Don't make me drink ice-cold water, nor put a frosty bit in my mouth. Warm the bit by holding it a half minute against my body.

Don't forget to file my teeth when they get jagged and I cannot chew my food. When I get lean it is a sign my teeth want filing.

Don't ask me to "back" with blinds on. I am afraid to.

Don't run me down a steep hill, for if anything should give away I might break your neck.

Don't put on my blind bridle so that it irritates my eye, or so leave my forelock that it will be in my eyes.

Don't be so careless of my harness as to find a great sore on me before you attend to it.

Don't lend me to some blockhead that has less sense than I have.

Don't forget the old book that is a friend of all the oppressed, that says: "A merciful man is merciful to his beast."—Farm Journal.

DESERVED A THRASHING.

The Fresh Young Fellow Who Slapped His Man on the Back.

It was not a kind thing to do, but he was a young newspaper reporter and was, whether justly or unjustly, regarded as "fresh," says the New York *Tribune*. His city editor sent him up to a meeting, and he started out a little too eagerly, for he got the address wrong. He was not so familiar wiih New York as reporters generally are, and by the time he got the address straightened out and found the correct one the meeting was over and he looked only upon closed doors.

On the elevated train he met three other reporters going down to their offices, and he told them his dilemma.

"Oh, it's lucky you got on this train," said one brother newsgatherer. "The very man you want to see is on this train. There he sits down there in the cross-seat—the old man with the umbrella and the gray beard."

"And he's a peculiar old chap," said a second man. "You have to know how to treat him. He's the President of the society, you know."

"You want to be diplomatic," put in the third conspirator. "You've got to let him see that you know him. You want to come up behind him, clap him on the back—a good, rousing whack, you know—and say: 'Hello, Jenkins, old boy, how did the little shindy come off last night?' Then he'll think he knows you and will tell you the whole story."

"Be sure you crack him on the back," was repeated.

"Oh, trust me," said the young reporter, with a confident smile. Down the aisle he went, and, reaching the "President," he gave him a terrific thump on the back. For one second there was an awful calm. Then "Jenkins, old boy," raised his umbrella and started for the offender. It was a chase for the door, the young man yelling out his apologies, the old man frantically brandishing his umbrella and making violent whacks at the head of his assailant. The younger man reached the door in advance, however, and, darting through it, slammed it in the old man's face. As the wrathful old gentleman was returning to his seat, and panting, three young men, without consciences, were letting out howls of laughter.

A young lady gave the following reason, says a Chicago paper, for rising very early on a railroad train: "Well, you see there were three other women on the car; I noticed that last night, and I knew if I didn't get up before they did I'd never be able to get into the dressing-room for hours and hours, and would probably miss my breakfast. When one of them gets into the dressing-room on a sleeper she locks herself in and just takes her time, no difference how many may be waiting. I've been there before, and I just made up mind to have the first chance at it for once. My! but weren't two of 'em mad when I came out!"

A WARNING FIERY PHANTOM.

The Most Memorable Ohio River Calamity.

Burning of the Steamer Belle of the West—Peculiar Incidents Connected Therewith—Preachers and White Horses.

In April, 1850, I was one of a party bound for California. The party consisted of Robert Chalmers, John S. Ferrier, John Ames, James McCullough, Perry Wiggins, Samuel Hopkins, M. Morton, John Aiken and W. P. Bennett. We left Buffalo, N. Y., April 9th, for Cincinnati, Ohio, where, on the 15th, about 5 o'clock P. M., we took our departure on the fine, first-class river steamer Belle of the West for St. Louis. There were over one thousand passengers on board, a large number of whom, like ourselves, being on their way to California. On the upper deck were wagons and other traveling outfits, and the lower deck and hold were packed with baggage, freight, provisions and general merchandise.

That evening the passengers enjoyed themselves in all directions, singing, dancing, playing cards. A preacher who had a white horse on the lower deck, attracted considerable attention by his discourses and exhortations, and everybody seemed inclined to be amused and happy.

AN OLD-TIME STEAMBOAT RACE.

Another steamer, which left Cincinnati when we did, showed a disposition for a race, and pretty soon both boats were driving along at a very lively rate. Naturally many of our passengers got more or less excited by the spirit of rivalry. Our smokestacks were red hot from the fierce fires under the boilers, encouraged by generous contributions of pitch and similar combustibles, and, no doubt, such heroic racing measures were resorted to on the rival steamer.

Chalmers and myself stood near two middle-aged ladies, and heard them say to the Captain: "You won't run no race with that other boat will you, Captain? You are too good a man for that. We don't like to see such a race." But pretty soon they said: "Captain, the other boat is gaining on us. If we fired up a little more couldn't we beat 'em?"

"Doing our best, ladies. Chucking in pitch, tallow and everything of the kind."

"All right, Captain. That's our bacon down there in the hold. Use it if you think it is required; but that boat should not be allowed to beat us."

He might have used their bacon had the race lasted longer than it did.

A FIERY PHANTOM FORERUNNER.

About that time somebody called attention to a strange apparition glowing in the water between the two racing steamers. It may have been reflection from the flaming smokestacks, but to me, as well as all others who witnessed it, the appearance was distinctly like a big steamer on fire. It was a grand sight, lasting only a few minutes, but we all, most impressively, remembered it, three hours later, regarding it as a phantom premonition of the fearful calamity which then occurred.

THE BELLE OF THE WEST ON FIRE!

Suddenly, about midnight, a wild alarm resounded throughout the boat from a fire being discovered burning fiercely in the hold. The commotion among the passengers was simply terrible, many being in bed at the time. The most active and strenuous efforts were made to extinguish the fire, but the flames soon burst forth amidships and total destruction was inevitable. The steamer was steeered for the shore and soon grounded. Many passengers sprang overboard and were swept away and drowned in the flowing stream. In fact, so rapid was the progress of the flames, that failure to get ashore was death by either fire or water. And by fire or water men, women and children did die—nearly a thousand thus meeting their fearful doom.

I was driven forward by the flames to the bow of the boat, where I secured a plank, tied a rope to it and my waist and prepared to navigate ashore. An old darky near me had a cabin door in his hands for the same purpose.

THE PREACHER AND THE WHITE HORSE.

"Say, massa," exclaimed he, "did yer see dat ghost steamboat all afire in de water when we was away down de ribber, an' did yer see 'em all ajumpin' overboard?"

I replied, "most certainly I saw it. Same as you and all the rest."

"Well, now, I'se gwine to tell yer dat 'twas de ole debble hisself come arter his people. I seed it den an' I knows it now. Gorra mighty, massa, ef I was ter lib a thousin' year I'll nebber, nebber again trabble on a steamboat or anything else whar dar's a preacher an' a white hoss."

We went overboard together and struggled safely ashore. Then he stood up and shook himself, raising his hand very impressively toward me as he said:

"Yes, massa, as I was a tellin' yer, 'fore de Lord, dat's so. Dis am de second time I'se trabbled whar dar was a preacher an' a white hoss, an' I'll nebber, nebber do so any mo'."

Then the old darky, waving his dilapidated hat by way of a parting salute, struck out on a lively run for the nearest woods, and I never saw or heard of him since.

A FEARFUL SCENE OF DESTRUCTION.

Next day, with hundreds of others, I reviewed the wreck, burned to the water's edge, near the shore. It was a silent and horrible scene of disaster, especially to the few who had fortunately escaped with their lives.

Those two women who were talking to the Captain about the race and suggesting the use of their bacon, if necessary, certainly did not save their bacon. They were found among the charred corpses between the boilers, and for many days afterward dead bodies were recovered from the river below. Many of the victims never were found.

And there, near the river bank up to his knees in water, stood the preacher's old white horse. The poor beast had frantically jumped overboard and swam ashore thus far, but his hair was all burned cleaned off to the naked hide, and his eyes were destroyed. He was groaning just like a human being, and looked utterly disconsolate and gone. Friendly pistols put him out of his misery. As for his evangelical master, the preacher, he was also of the many hundreds whom Divine Grace did not save.

My party were all among the few who escaped from the terrible disaster, and we came through to our destination together; but I never can forget the scenes and incidents of that memorable night, and the old darky with his preacher and white horse proposition.

W. P. BENNETT.

THE BRUNETTE.

Will She Ultimately Supersede the Blonde in America?

The fact of the matter is that the scientists of the modern times are dealing harshly with the blonde and are relegating her to obscurity while sounding the praises of the brunette. Indeed, no more interesting theory concerning the future of the fair sex was ever advanced than that put forward by these same scientists prophesying the utter extinction of the blonde in America and the evolution of a uniform type of small brunette women—women of less than medium stature, with dark hair and eyes, a somewhat plump physique and a complexion of a pale olive tint. Hardly a generation has passed since the British ethnologists began to broach this theory somewhat cautiously, and at the same time it seemed a very extraordinary prediction—so much so that the date of the coming of this little dark woman was put very indefinitely in the remote future. But to-day, when one considers the vast and continuous stream of swarthy and low-statured immigrants pouring into America every year from the west and south of Europe, it certainly seems a plausible belief that they will play an important part in modifying, by intermarriage, the race characteristics of the typical American. And it hardly appears to be too great a hazard of veracity to affirm that in the large cities, at least, the advent of this petite brunette is almost at hand.

This is particularly true of New York city, where anyone who walks about with his eyes open, cannot fail to observe the noticeable preponderance in numbers of brunettes. In both sexes the brunette type of beauty largely predominates, and the women, while dark complexioned, are also quite small and usually of well rounded figures. In Boston and Jersey City practically the same conditions obtain, but Brooklyn has a rather larger percentage of blondes.

The blonde, however, if she is to be found in any numbers, must be looked for outside of the nation's metropolis. The fair-faced and light-haired American woman of to-day is rather a product of the villages and the country than of the Eastern cities where the population is densest. There are blonde girls in abundance on the East side of New York, where the Germans congregate; there are some, too, on Murray Hill, of aristocratic lineage; and in Harlem, where many Swedes live, there are numbers of light-haired girls, but altogether they form a comparatively small percentage of the city's inhabitants. The real stronghold of the blonde is in the West and Northwest. There are many blondes in Minnesota and the Dakotas, the offsprings of Scandinavian parents, and they abound in Nebraska and Southern Illinois, where large colonies of Germans have settled. There are multitudes of fair-haired girls in Eastern Pennsylvania, the daughters of the Pennsylvania Dutch; and in Delaware, in Kentucky, in Baltimore and in Philadelphia they are not rare. But very generally in the East, and especially in the large cities, brunette women greatly outnumber the blondes, as they do, in fact, the world over.

A partial explanation of the causes that have brought about this singular distribution of races in America—the dark-haired in the cities and the fair-haired in the towns and country—may be discovered by an examination of the statistics of immigration. In 1890 an almost equal number of dark-haired Italians, French, Hungarians and Poles, and of light-haired Germans, Swedes and Irish came to America, but the latter being for the most part country-born and bred, sought the farms and towns of the Western and Northern States, while the former, known through all time for their fondness for city life, showed themselves true to their national characteristics and remain in the large cities.—Epoch.

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THE DONATION PARTY.

"We're great on donations, elder. We go in heavy on them things."

Deacon Spears made the announcement to the new minister with the air of stating the possession of a great moral virtue peculiar to the people of Scragsby Corners.

"I never found donation parties very satisfactory," said the minister. "I would greatly prefer having a stated salary, and having it paid in cash."

"Wa'l, yes, I s'pose ye would," said the deacon. "That's what all the ministers say. But ye see t'won't hardly do, here in Scragsby Corners."

"Why not?" asked the minister.

"O, they've got in a habit o' havin' donations, an' they expect 'em, ye see," replied the deacon, "an' they'd feel sorter offended ef a preacher sot his foot down an' said he wouldn't have 'em. Some fo'ks give suthin' in that way that wouldn't give nuthin in cash, and we're bound to git all out o' the community that we can, ye see."

"My experience has been that a great deal of what people bring to a donation party is worthless or useless," said the minister.

"Wall, yes, I s'pose so," assented the deacon. "But t'wouldn't do to kick ag'in donations on that account here. Ye'd have the folks down on ye in no time."

"Well, then," said the poor minister, with a sigh of resignation to the inevitable, "I suppose it will have to be." He thought of his last donation party with its dozen loads of oozy, half-rotten stove wood; wood which was worthless to the donors because it had been cut so long that it was unsalable, and which they would never thought of using at home. More than once his wife's temper had been sorely tried with the miserable stuff, and she had threatened making a bonfire of the whole lot, and probably would have attempted carrying the threat into execution if she had any idea that it could have been coaxed to burn itself up.

"Dear me!" exclaimed Mrs. Spooner, in dismay, when her husband told her that a donation party was being talked up. "I did hope we might escape the infliction when we came here. I don't think I was ever more vexed than I was the morning after the last one. There wasn't a room in the house fit to use until it had been cleaned. There was half a chocolate cake between the pillows on the parlor bed; pie in the bureau, and some one had emptied a plate of baked beans behind the sofa. It took me all of two weeks to get straightened around. And now that we've just got settled there's to be another. It's too bad, but I don't know that we can help ourselves, since a minister and his family are considered objects of charity, and, therefore, obliged to take up whatever the people see fit to give them, without the chance to say a word for themselves."

"A donation party will be held at Elder Spooner's next Thursday evening, the Lord willin', and it's to be hoped ev'rybody'll turn out, and bring suthin' for the s'port of the gospil," Deacon Spears announced, one Sabbath, after service. "The Lord loves a cheerful giver," he added, in a sort of proscript, after which he blew his nose vigorously on a great red-and-white bandana, in a manner that suggested applause over the neat way in which the announcement had been made, and then sat down.

Immediately there was a buzz among the female portion of the congregation, and little groups of women put their heads together and began to discuss what to carry in the shape of eatables: while the men got together in the vestibule of the church and consulted with each other on what they were to donate.

"I reckon I'll take beans this year," said Mr. Wade. "It's been a great year for beans. I hain't raised so big a crop enny year since '65, 's I can recollect. I can give beans 'thout feeling it much."

"So can I," said Mr. Pettigrew. "I got a jofired big lot off'm the side hill lot. I guess I'll take beans, too. I can spare 'em better 'n anything else, and they ain't goin' to sell for much this year, 'cause their so plenty."

Several others who listened to their conversation concluded to take beans also, for it had "been a great year for beans" in Scragsby Corners, as Mr. Wade had said.

"I've a good notion to take some o' my Almiry's clo'es," said Mrs. Deacon Spears to Mrs. Pettigrew. "She's out-growed 'em, but they'd jest fit the elder's oldest girl, I sh'd jedge, an' they're most as good as new, some on 'em. You don't s'pose Mis Spooner 'd feel put out about it, do you now, Mrs. Pettigrew?"

"I can't see why she should," responded Mrs. Pettigrew. "Clo'es is clo'es, an' minister's folks hadn't ought to get mad at what's give 'em as long as they hev to depend on us for a livin'. Tain't as if they could afford to be independent, ye know. I s'pose I might take some trows's that are gettin' putty sung for the boys. I will, if you conclude to take some of Almiry's dresses, Mis Spears."

"Well, then, s'pose we do," responded Mrs. Spears.

The evening of the donation party came.

The first arrival at the parsonage was Mr. Wade. He met the minister, who came to the door in answer to his knock, with a two-bushel bag full of something on his shoulder.

"How'd do, elder. Beautiful night for the donation, ain't it?" was his greeting as he shook hands with the minister. "I've brought some beans for ye. Fustrate beans too, ye'll find. Beans is healthy livin', elder. I was raised on 'em. Nothin' better for groin' children."

"You can put them in the wood-shed," said Mr. Spooner. Just then Mr. and Mrs. Pettigrew drove up.

"Hello, elder, good evenin'," called out Mr. Pettigrew. "I've got some beans here for ye. Wher'll ye hev 'em put?"

"In the wood-shed," said the minister, with a smile at his wife. "It's going to be beans this year, my dear," in a whisper.

Then other arrivals followed in rapid succession, and at least three out of every four brought beans.

"I've counted fourteen bushels already," whispered the minister to his wife about 8 o'clock, "and still there is more to follow."

"It's old clothes in my part of the house," said Mrs. Spooner. "I do believe there's enough to last the children till they are all grown up, if they'd fit till that time. I can imagine the appearance they'd make in them. No two alike, and probably not one that would fit one of the children. It's too provoking for anything. If it wasn't for making the people mad, I'd sell the whole lot of rags to the first peddler that comes along."

"Brothers 'n' sisters 'n' friends 'n' neighbors," announced Deacon Spears, after supper, when the party was about ready to break up, "the proceeds of this 'ere donation amounts to twenty-seven bushels 'o beans, three turkeys, a pig, two bushels o' potatoes, an' a large amount of clothin' and some other things. In b'half o' the elder and his folks, I thank yer fer y'r lib'ral'ty. Yer kindness is appreciated by him 'n' his'n, I feel sartin, an' I'm shure his heart 'n' han's is strengthened by this evidence o' fellowship on your part. Truly, as the psalmist says, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

"I cordially indorse the sentiment from the receiver's standpoint," said Mrs. Spooner as they looked over the "proceeds" of the donation party when they were alone. "Just look at the old clothes, Henry. I suggest that you give up preaching and move to the city and start in business as a bean broker, and I'll run an old clothes store. We'd be well stocked up to begin with."

"What will you do with the stuff," asked the minister, turning over old jackets and aprons and other articles of clothing with a comical look of dismay on his face at the formidable collection.

"I think I shall make about a hundred yards of rag carpet," answered Mrs. Spooner. "That's about all a good deal of it is fit for."

One afternoon the following week the minister sat down to prepare a sermon for the coming Sabbath. As was often the case, he talked it over with his wife. When he named the chapter he proposed to read for the opening of the service a sudden gleam of mischief came into Mrs. Spooner's face. But she said nothing.

During the week Mr. Spooner wrote to a friend in the city, asking him if there was any sale for beans there. He had twenty-five bushels to dispose of at a low price, he wrote, adding that it had been a great year for beans at Scragsby Corners.

When Sunday morning came Mrs. Spooner sent her husband on to church ahead of her under the plea that she had not got the children quite ready. "Don't wait for me, Henry," she said, "or you may be late. We'll get there in time for the sermon."

He was reading a chapter from the Psalms when his family arrived. He had reached the verse in which the lily of the valley is spoken of, and these words rolled off sonorously from his tongue just as the door opened and Mrs. Spooner, followed by her children, filed slowly and impressively in—

"Verily, I say unto you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

As he finished the verse he looked up at the advancing arrivals, and the spectacle that met his eyes tested his powers of self-control more than anything else he had ever experienced, he afterward told his wife. His mouth twitched, and a smile flickered about his eyes, but he managed to keep back the grin that would have appeared at the slightest encouragement.

Such a sight! The eldest girl was arrayed in Almiry's cast-off dress of navy blue, with some other girl's polonaise of red. Her sister was resplendent in a dress of Scotch plaid pattern of most gorgeous colors originally, but now somewhat subdued by time and wear, still very vivid, and over it all she wore a jacket about three sizes too small for her, the picturesque costume being topped off by a hat trimmed with old ribbon freshly dyed a very bright magenta color. The oldest boy had a pair of trousers which fairly dragged at the heels, and a jacket which was long enough for an overcoat, while the other boy wore trousers so short that they failed to reach the top of a pair of bright blue stockings, while his jacket refused to keep company with the top of his trousers. Each article had a peculiar color of its own, and the general effect was, as has been said, decidedly picturesque.

The minister had no inkling of what his wife intended to do, and the sight of his family in such fine array so upset him for a moment that he read the verse he had just finished over again—

"Verily, I say unto you, Solomon in his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

A very audible titter went through the younger portion of the congregation. Some even laughed aloud. Mrs. Spears looked at Mrs. Pettigrew to see what that estimable woman seemed to think of the proceeding, but she couldn't catch her eye. She was too busily engaged in following the Scripture lesson to look at anyone.

"I'll bet she's mad, though," thought Mrs. Spears. "One o' them jackets and one o' them trowsis came from her. I dunno, though, as they look enny worse than that dress of Almiry's does. I didn't s'pose they'd think of riggin' the children out in 'em to wear to church. I'll bet Miss Spooner done it a-purpose."

Mrs. Spooner had "done it a-purpose," as she admitted to her husband on their way home.

"I don't think you ought to have done it, Susie," he said gravely, but there was a laugh in his eye as he said it, as he looked at the motley group ahead.

"Perhaps not," was his wife's reply, "but I wanted them to see the striking effect resulting from their generosity. Of course they can't get angry about it, since they gave the clothes to be worn. I do think it'll have one good effect, and that is, that old clothes won't be one of the important features of the next donation party here."

Mrs. Spooner was right. When the next donation party occurred not one old garment was "donated." Mr. Spooner at last succeeded in disposing of his beans, but he had to do so at a sacrifice, on account of its having been such a "great year for beans in Scragsby Corners," that they overstocked the market. —Ebner E. Rexford in the Yankee Blade.

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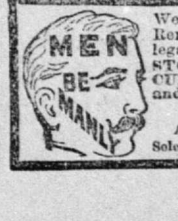

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