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A Little Surprise for Mabel

BY CHARLES H. SMITH.

If you should ask anyone in Veronica who owned the best farm in that vicinity they would undoubtedly answer "John Brown." And if you cared to listen they would tell you all about his one hundred and sixty acres of gently-rolling fertile soil equipped with fine buildings, good silos, new fences and the latest labor-saving devices known to modern agriculture. All of which would be true.

Ever since he had married five years ago and moved on his own farm John Brown had striven to make it one of the best farms in Veronica county. Unhindered by the traditions of early farming he had been quick to grasp each new idea as soon as it was worth had been proved and so it was that his neighbors judged his farm to be one of the best-equipped farms in that section of the country. John Brown was a leader. If he installed a new device of any kind it must be right, declared his neighbors, for John knew what he was doing.

But there was one place on his farm that was not up to date. And alas! that was his own home. Just before he had been married he had collected a rather nondescript assortment of furniture—most of it old and second-hand—and Mabel had loyally said that she would make it do until they got a start. But now they had a start—a fine prospect ahead of them—and the old furniture still remained in the house with no new additions. Progressive as he was in getting the latest machinery and conveniences around the barns, John hardly gave his own living quarters a serious thought. He was comfortable, and that was sufficient. His home produced no revenue and his thoughts were concentrated entirely upon the revenue end of the farm. After everything was perfected around the buildings, and all debts were paid, then he might give his attention to his home and furnish it with the same thoroughness he had his barns. Probably he would have done this, too, in time.

Since the first year of their marriage his pretty little wife, Mabel, had confided to him her longing for pretty furniture—and a piano. But never insistently. It was "John, dear, wouldn't this bedroom look lovely with an ivory dresser, bed and dressing-table—and a green velvet rug? I just wish we could afford to have it!" Or, "John, don't you wish we could furnish our living-room in mahogany? And if we could only have a piano, too! I'd just like it so much! Oh, I'm afraid I'll forget how to play before we can afford to have one."

And John would patiently explain how necessary it was that he should get this or that for the barn or that he had some bills almost due, telling her how he'd like to get all of these things for her if only he could afford to buy them. But some day, some day she should have all the pretty things that she wanted. Mabel would sigh a little, re-arrange the old furniture as prettily as she could and try to content herself with promises of the future. But at times her longing would get the better of her and then she would bury her face on John's big shoulder and say, "Dear, don't you think you can afford to get our pretty furniture soon now?" And John would always answer, "Yes, Mabel Girl—pretty soon."

But five years had slipped by and no new furniture had been bought. Then one afternoon the little wife had gently asked that same question. And John, as always, had answered, "Yes, Mabel—soon now," and had explained how he must have a new gasoline engine so that he could have more power to run his machinery, which would take about all of his cash. Seeing how disappointed she was he had tried to cheer her up by telling her that the new furniture would be there much sooner than she expected. And then he had driven to the city for the new gasoline engine.

The next afternoon a big van drove up laden with furniture. When Mrs. Mabel Brown saw it turn in the yard her heart beat fast with anticipation. The driver descended from his seat and knocked at the door. She flew to it and jerked it open.

"Is this where Mr. John Brown lives?" asked the driver.

"Yes."

"Well, I've brought the load of furniture he ordered yesterday," replied the man. "Where do you want it unloaded?"

So John—Dear Old John, had surprised her by saying nothing about getting the furniture but going to town and having it sent out! Now she knew what he meant when he had said that it would be there sooner than she expected! It was so good of him! She would show him how happy it made her when he came in that night.

"Oh! Unload it on the front porch!" she finally exclaimed after partially recovering from her surprise.

Then she went to a point of vantage on the lawn and seating herself watched the burly driver and his assistant unload the big van. John certainly knew just what she wanted—the old dear! The ivory bed-room suite brought a series of delighted little exclamations of admiration from her as the men unloaded each piece. And when they began carrying the different pieces which went to make up the beautiful mahogany living-room suite she could scarcely contain herself. And there were other pieces of furniture that she hadn't even mentioned to John—but they were just what she liked! Another bedroom suite in walnut! Some pretty wicker porch furniture—a settee and three rockers! Suddenly a brilliant thought came to her. Why not move in all the furniture and have it all arranged in the different rooms when John came in to supper? To be sure, it was rather heavy work for such a little woman but then, she could get the furniture men to place the heavier pieces. And wouldn't John be pleased. Jumping up she ran up to the men.

"Would you men please help me to place this furniture in the house? I'll be glad to pay you for it if you will," she said appealingly.

For a second the men hesitated. This wasn't part of their job. Then one of them spoke up: "Sure, Miss, we'll be glad to help you."

When John Brown stepped on his back porch that evening a vision in white flew to him, two small white arms wound themselves tightly around his neck and a dozen kisses were rained upon his tanned face in quick succession. The attack almost took his breath away.

"John! You Old Dear! Why didn't you tell me you were going to do it? I just love you, sweetheart!"

And then another hug that threatened John's vertebrae and some more quick kisses and taking him by the arm she quickly pulled him into the house.

"Isn't it lovely, John dear?" she asked when she had piloted him through the kitchen into the living-room with the new mahogany furniture all tastefully arranged. "When the delivery man drove in the yard and asked if Mr. John Brown lived here I knew right away what you'd done. But when he unloaded all these lovely things—just exactly what I wanted—well, I was the happiest girl in all the world, Dearest. And I just got the men to help me settle the house and surprise you, John dear. Now come and see our other rooms. Oh! It's all so pretty! You're so good to me."

She gave him a quick little kiss and then slipping her small arm around him led him to see the ivory bedroom suite, which had particularly delighted her.

If Mabel had not been so supremely happy she might have noticed the look of surprise on her husband's face when she bustled him in and showed him the new furniture. But happily she didn't and so her happiness was unalloyed. For the fact is that John Brown had not bought a penny's worth of furniture and had never even seen this particular assortment before. While his little brown-eyed wife was so happily displaying the new things, he was trying to solve the enigma. Suddenly he remembered of hearing about a young fellow named John Brown who had just been married and was moving on the Wentworth Farm a mile south. That was it! The young bridegroom

had ordered the furniture sent out to the Wentworth Farm from Minyon City and the driver had made a mistake due to the likeness in names and had delivered it to the wrong house. And the furniture was all arranged in his house. He wanted Mabel to have it. He hadn't realized before how much it meant to her.

"John, why don't you say something? Don't you like the way I have everything arranged?" asked Mabel noticing his silence.

"It's—it's fine, Mabel Girl. You've done just fine. Everything looks great," he replied trying to appear enthusiastic.

"I'm so glad you like it. You do, don't you?" she asked again, wishing to be reassured once more.

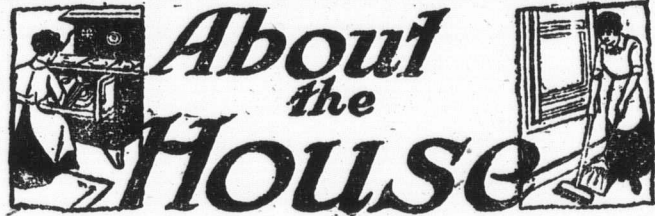
"You bet I like it. It's all right," answered John as he macked his brain to figure out how he could make it "all right."

The next morning he drove over to Minyon City and hunted up the firm that had delivered the furniture to his home by mistake and after some explanation and a little diplomacy he persuaded the dealer to allow him to keep the entire order and send the other John Brown a duplicate order. After paying the bill he drove to another store and after careful consideration made one purchase, stipulating delivery that afternoon. Then he drove home. When he turned into the yard Mabel was on the front porch sitting in one of the new wicker rockers reading a book.

"John dear," she called to him, "You didn't tell me that you were going away."

"Well, Mabel, I just had to go to the city and give that man a calling down for not delivering your new piano with the rest of the things. But it's all right. It will be here this afternoon," replied John laughingly.

Minard's Liniment For Burns, Etc.



Penny Savers.

A stitch in time saves nine; not stitches alone, but sometimes dollars. A pretty cap for baby can be made out of the tops of white silk stockings. Interline the cap with sheet cotton.

The tops of woolen socks make good, warm wristlets.

Pillow-cases of tubing will wear much longer if the bottom seam is cut out and sewed again, after folding them so that the sides come in the centre.

Baby's shoes can be patched nicely by applying a neat piece of surgeon's caulk-plaster, slightly warming it. Let the shoes stand over night, then polish with a liquid shoe-polish.

Men's old suspenders, washed and ironed, and stitched together if too narrow, make good firm belting for women's one-piece dresses, not crumpling as ordinary belting does.

When pearl buttons look dull and old, dip them first in olive oil, then in any good nail powder and let stand over night. In the morning, polish the buttons with the wrong side of an old kid glove.

An old plush coat will furnish sufficient material for a warm and pretty muff and stole. It is an easy matter to join the ends of a strip of the plush and slip it over a ready-made "muff bed" or foundation.

The thin strips in the front of open-faced envelopes much used nowadays by business firms are excellent for mending torn places in sheet music or books.

Do not throw away the tops of old shoes. They make excellent interlinings for iron holders. Make the holders oval in shape, and both cover and lining the same size. Stitch them firmly around the edge by machine.

Preparing Wool for a Comforter.

I want to tell our readers how I prepare the wool for comforters. A six-pound fleece is considered about the right amount for an ordinary-sized comforter. I open the fleece and carefully pick out any loose chaff or straw, then I put it in a suds in the washing machine, adding a tablespoon of washing soda. I have the water as hot as the hands can bear, and wash for five minutes, then put in another soapy water the same temperature as the first. Stir the wool thoroughly then squeeze it out and drop it into warm water in which a little mild white soap has been dissolved. Now pick out any dirt that may be seen, squeeze out again and put into perfectly clear warm water. Squeeze as dry as you can and place the wool on a sheet and lay out on the grass in the sun to dry. Never twist the wool to get the water out, as that will make it much harder to pick.

While it is drying I pick out any pieces of dirt that remain and put it on to another dry cloth. Sometimes it will be dry at the end of one day, but if not I spread it out in an upstairs room to finish drying. The wool is then ready to work on. I sometimes have to loosen it up nicely and card it with the common wool carders, putting a small bunch of the wool on one carder and combing it the opposite way with the other one. This may seem like a lot of work, but when you see the pile of snow white wool, you will feel repaid for the trouble.

Surprises for the Holidays.

Plenty to eat and something different from what they get at home are

two things essential to the success of any celebration for the little folks, and especially the Christmas frolics. And the more spectacular you are able to make the refreshments, the greater will be their appeal.

At one party I remember, the children all clapped their hands in super-joy when they found little animal crackers as favors at each plate, glued upright to crackers and cookies. A bit of icing or thick molasses anchored them securely. The long Saratoga flakes were used too, and an effect not unlike that of a rocking horse was the result.

Another clever way to use them is in a parade around a big cake. Insert the crackers into the icing just before it sets. A very pretty centerpiece is obtained by pasting the animals to a long strip of narrow paper, and when dry, bending it into a circle around a Noah's ark placed in the middle of the table.

Or a fence can be made by sticking sweet wafers together, end to end. Then fasten the animals to small crackers and put them inside the fence. A little red barn may be fashioned of cardboard.

Even so simple a treatment as dipping each animal in melted chocolate or colored icings, or merely putting two of a kind together, sandwich fashion, with a generous filling of icing, a date or fig paste, will be appreciated.

The very young children delight in little letter blocks that may be eaten. For these use square angel cakes covered with colored frosting, and on each of the six sides print letters with the aid of a toothpick and melted chocolate. Dominoes are easily achieved by cutting wafers in half and dipping them in chocolate, then marking the dots with white icing.

Representations of faces or figures never fail to arouse amusement. Round, flat mint candies lend themselves to this form of decoration, and may be used as a sweetmeat alone or for garnishing other dishes. Use a toothpick and chocolate for marking the features.

A novel way to serve the ice cream is in the form of a clown's head. For this an ice cream cone is set jauntily on the top of a ball of cream, and features marked on the latter with small chocolate candies for the eyes, strips of dates for nose, and a piece of cherry for the mouth.

A snow man is also popular. One delectable one I saw at a party was made of two balls of ice cream, one on top of the other, the smaller one for the head and the larger for the body. The arms were of stick candy, there was a row of red candy buttons down the front, cloves formed the eyes and a cherry the mouth.

By the aid of fine wire all sorts of funny little creatures may be fashioned. With almonds for feet, figs for the body, marshmallows traced with chocolate features and hair for the head, peanuts and raisins for arms and hands, and a piece of fig for a hat, a very good-looking and equally good-tasting little fellow may be brought into existence. It will really be a very hard matter to decide whether to keep him or eat him.

Storing Cured Meats.

If you want to keep meat over a long period it should be first thoroughly cured, well smoked, and dried on the surface. After smoking hang it in a cool, dry place for a day and then properly pack in salt or cloth and pack in

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Do a Good Turn.

How many we find in this workaday world
Whose aim is to plot and to plan
To keep others down, and refuse, with a frown,
To do a good turn when they can.

It is easy for those who have riches galore
To prove helpful, but give me the man
Who is ready each day to go out of his way
To do a good turn if he can.

Though you're often hard pushed and have little to spare,
And practical help you must have,
A kind word or a smile will prove welcome the while,
So do a good turn when you can.

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After All.

After all, to be living,
To be part of it all, to be
Something of all the giving,
Something of all we see,
Something of all that's glowing
In the world around us, dear—
And all to be living.

Now, this moment, and here!
What if the dreams do shatter,
What if the dust does rise;
What if the small things matter,
What if the spirit cries!
Something in all makes even
The joy and the sadness true;
Storms may shadow our heaven,
But skies next day are blue,
Just to be part of the effort.

A seed in the growth of time,
A bubble of bloom in the weather;
A breath of the morning's rime;
God, it is worth the anguish
Just to be living and part
Of the beautiful world whose singing
Is a song in the heart.

Minard's Liniment Relieves Colds, Etc.

World's Rainfall.
The total annual rainfall upon all the land of the globe amounts to 29,347 cubic miles, and of this quantity 6,524 cubic miles drains off through rivers to the sea.

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In all, about 2,735,000,000 tons of solid matter are thus carried annually to the ocean.

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Making hooked, or drawn-in, rugs is fascinating work, easy to learn, simply pulling loops of rag or yarn through a burlap pattern with a rug hook, which you can actually learn to do in a few minutes, and with a little practice you can make your cast-off clothing, underwear, and blankets into beautiful rugs.

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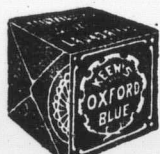
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