

"Characters" You See On The Streets Of Salt Lake.

Sketched From Life For the Deseret News
By SEARS and SQUIRES.



WILLIAM HENDERSON,
Sightless and Cheerful, Who Sells Shoe-
laces and Newspapers for a Living.

NIELS PETER LARSON, THE BLIND ORGAN GRINDER.

METHUSELAH THORNE,
And His Basket of Peanuts, Pop Corn and Celery.

A SOUTHERNER'S DARKENED "SHOE LACE" LIFE.

"Long, strong leather laces!"
You've seen him.
"An' as I was a-tellin' ye, Joe said
he'd come along this way 'bout 8
o'clock an' tote me off home; but so
fur—
"Long, strong leather laces, ma'am!
—he ain't showed up. But never mind,
he'll be along soon an' then—
"Laces, sir; a nickel a pair—I'll jest
git up agin a warm fire an' toast my
shins a bit."
This one, although blind, seems al-
most to be light-hearted. Very often he
is talking to some friend and cracks
jokes and laughs with the best of them.
He is covered from head to foot with
shoe laces. They hang all about him;
but they are as safe as if locked in a
vault.
His post is at the Godbe-Pitts corner,
on First South and East Temple
streets; and one may seldom pass there
but the blind shoe lace man is in view.
Despite the cheerful disposition his
body feels the biting cold of winter and
then he goes in and warms himself by
"Big John's" stove.

William Henderson came west from
Alabama, where he entertained many
"Mormon" missionaries who were trav-
eling in that state, and many of whom
remember his kindness and that of his
wife to them. In 1882 he lived near
Traveler's Rest postoffice in Alabama,
and was visited at his home by John B.
Fairbanks, the local artist, who speaks
very highly of him and of his cheerful
and generous disposition.

Coming west he first moved to Idaho.
With practically no education he
bought books upon penmanship and
studied the art until he became suffi-
ciently proficient to teach it and made
quite a success of his undertaking.
Failing to succeed as well as his am-
bitions prompted he came to Utah, be-
ing first employed as a shepherd at
Beckstead's, in South Jordan. He
sometimes did a little blacksmithing
there and one day a small piece of steel
flew into one of his eyes, blinding it.
Out of a sympathetic affection the oth-
er eye also became sightless and for
some time the poor man has been
obliged to gain a livelihood by selling
his shoe laces. He is becoming quite
a "landmark" at the Godbe-Pitts cor-
ner; and there are many who purchase
from him occasionally a pair of laces
without any present need for them.

"Charity covereth a multitude of
sins," and that being the case there is
plenty of opportunity here for Salt
Lake's to offset some of their wander-
ings into bypaths.

METHUSELAH THORNE,
THE CELERY MAN

Who has lived or stopped in Salt Lake
City for any length of time.

mention and yet has failed to see him?
What ice-laden blast of winter or
melting stillness of August days have
served to remove or to even modify
the obsequious smile that everybody
has seen fixed upon his face during his
waking hours, and which everybody is
pardon for believing remains there
while the tired body rests in slumber?

True, the smile is not so broad as to
attract much attention at first; in fact,
it is a sort of half-smile, at the same
time breathing thankfulness and ex-
pressing supplication. "I am glad,"
and "please be good to me," seems to
be its continuous dual import.

Have you never bought pop corn,
crispetts or peanuts of him as he pa-
tiently stood on the inner edge of the
sidewalk at the Garfield beach station?
Nor invested a nickel with him for
fruit or sweets before the train pulled
out for Saltair? Did you never stop
away in your lunch basket a few ban-
anas or oranges bought from him just
as the conductor yelled "All aboard for
Lagoon?" And again: As you have
passed the Deseret National bank cor-
ner on a Saturday afternoon, have you
not concluded to take home a bunch or
two of celery—well not to eat, particu-
larly; but simply because he was there?

If you are a grown-up citizen of this
town you have done some, or all of
these things and each time you have
felt as if you had not wasted the few
cents that jingled into the man's wel-
coming and by no means incapacious
pocket.



THIRD SOUTH BANANA VENDOR

And now comes to mind the pecu-
liar feature by which you know him
best. You have some time walked
along the street with "eyes front" and
light heart when something in the
mode of locomotion of an approaching
pedestrian has attracted your attention.
He sidles along towards you with the

left side of his face in the majority to
your view. Not his swinging gait
and firm stride of exuberant strength;
but with his countenance presented
astant, his body describes the motion of
a metronome set at the "alle-
gro" gauge. In this manner
and position he seems merely to nibble
at the distance he is covering; and now
and again he hesitates in fear of col-
lision with some rushing messenger, or
stops to correct his bearings by fixing
an eye—always the left one, bird-like—
upon some familiar landmark. If he
hasn't got a basket on his arm, it isn't
he, or perhaps he has left it at the place
where he made his last little purchase,
or some young mischief has run away
with it while the poor man was not
looking with what little he has to look
with.

Stop and talk with him. You make a
purchase and utter some remark that
calls for a reply.

The answer comes in words so sharply
cut and rapidly spoken that you imag-
ine he's glad that they're out. And
yet you know that they are kindly and
patiently spoken. But your magnani-
mous purchase and the trouble you took
to speak has brought you information.
You have by this time concluded that
were the man now in the country from
which he came his cry would not be
the sharp, modest little "Peanuts or
popcorn" that it is now. Most likely it
would be:

"Fine, new Yahmuth blewtehs!"
Do you know him?
It's Methuselah—Methuselah Thorne.

bless his old soul! The youngsters call
him Methusalem; and that brings to
mind the fact that some people think
Methusalem is as old as his namesake
of the book of Genesis. At any rate,
the people don't know, Methusalem
won't say, and this voracious chronicler
will never try to guess.

BICKNELL'S BOUQUETS; "BUY ONE, PLEASE."

Nearly all of you have seen W. R.
Bicknell.

Carrying in one hand a little oblong
chip basket full of boutonnières and in
the other a walking-stick that is made
to do duty in the task of dragging along
a leg and foot that seem unwilling to
accompany him, he solicits pedestrians
on the streets to buy from him his
gaudy paper flowers.

"Flowers, please!"

One day the poor fellow "struck it
rich." His plaintive appeal reached
the ear of a passer-by who was very
readily recognized as a visitor in town
and that his regular occupation would
include a knowledge of the under-
ground workings of some of Utah's
precious metal mines. But that day the
stranger was dressed up, and was also
possessed of the thing that is said to
accompany such an innovation in the
garb of the miner.

"Flowers, please!"

"Lemme see 'em."

"Here they are, sir; beauties!"

"How much d'ye want for the hull
basketful?"

"One dollar, sir; an' mighty cheap at
that, sir. Jest come from the 'or'ouse,
sir. Look at 'em; fit fer 'er majesty to
wear!"

"Gimme the bunch."

Flowers and dollar changed hands and
the miner proceeded to bedeck himself
from hat to coat-hem. From every
buttonhole of vest and coat and all
around the hairband gravely bowed a
fiery boutonniere. The stranger "took
in the town." He swayed on the clock
corner; he embraced a pole at
Schramm's; the curb at Walker's bank
was pressed into service as a seat; he
walked along to State, the cynosure of
all eyes, and later turned up at Godbe-
Pitts corner, where he began to nod and
the flowers to nod with him. A kindly-
disposed "copper" invited the man to
take a walk and escorted him, flowers
and all, over to the police station.

But Bicknell had the dollar and, sur-
prising to relate, had suddenly "raised"
another basketful of "ot'ouse beau-
ties" whose presence was made known
with a weakly "Flowers, please!"

That was the biggest sale the cripple
had ever made at one time and there
was an extra hot pie in his supper that
night.

A very curious peculiarity about
Bicknell's flowers is that they are as-
tonishingly all alike, but, then, art is
ever known to improve upon nature.

COURAGEOUS WOMEN OF THE STREET.

Among those who depend upon the
passerby for sustenance, but who are
more fortunate than those bodily af-
flicted, are the four women who sell
newspapers on the street corners—the
newsgrils. They do not beg for alms,
but in a desire to help them along there
are many business men and clerks who
go out of their way to buy their even-
ing or morning paper from the news-
grils. These street vendors of the day's
happenings exhibit considerable busi-
ness ability in their vocation and they
are stout in maintaining their respec-
tive "stands" from the poaching of
newsboys. Most of the "Jimmies," the
"Soxies" and "Whitties" know better
than to trespass upon these pre-empted
domains and tie themselves to other
marks of news trade. The particular
"stands" of the women of this occupa-
tion most familiarly known are:

Walker's bank corner—Mrs. Van
Patten.

White House corner—Mrs. Levin.

Smith Drug corner—Mrs. Coates.

Godbe-Pitts corner—and every other
available spot—"Carrie Nation."

That last name is not the real one,
but the "impudent newsboys" gave it
to the old lady and it "sticks."

Mrs. Levin and Mrs. Van Patten
have been selling newspapers in Salt
Lake for years, while Mrs. Coates and
Carrie Nation are more recent acqui-
sitions to the city's list of characters
that everybody has met.

And there are people who say that
the two first-named ladies have made
some money. But it's an awfully cold
job sometimes and the profits achieved
are certainly thoroughly earned. In
summer time it's not so bad and the
newsgrils may go lightly dressed. In
winter, though, Well, you have all seen
them and you know how they must
bundle up. It's curious, but they all do
about alike during cold weather, and
the fashion set by Mesdames Levin
and Van Patten seems to be that fol-
lowed by the others. With heavy cloth
overshoes, big comforters wrapped
about the head and skirts piled on half
a dozen deep, each looks twice her real
size.

"Seems like she'd weigh a ton," is
the way they appear in one little chap's
eyes; but even with this extra clothing
they are none too warm.

Two of the women have distinctive
features connected with the pursuit of
their business—Mrs. Levin always has
a toy express wagon in which to haul
her papers to her stand on the White
House corner, and "Carrie Nation"
never appears without her umbrella
and just the tiniest little hole in her
headgear out of which to peep at cus-
tomers and other things about her.

Mrs. Van Patten stays faithfully by
Walker's bank and Mrs. Levin carries
on her trade at the White House cor-
ner exclusively. Mrs. Coates was at
first located at the northwest corner of
Third South and East Temple streets,
but some time ago moved up to the
Smith Drug company's corner, oppo-
site Mrs. Van Patten and "caty-corn-
ered" from Mrs. Levin. "Carrie Nation"
principally "holds down" the
Godbe-Pitts corner, and again may be
seen near Schramm's or on the "clock
corner." In fact, she considers herself
privileged to roam at will, and the
other newsgrils think she is a poacher
on their domain. At times the old lady
takes pot luck with the boys and
bustles along the streets with never a
thought but for her umbrella and a
wish that she could run faster than
"them pesky kids." Because sometimes
the youngsters dodge in and out just
ahead of the poor old lady and sell to
every customer in her contemplated
path. And then is explained the never-
failing presence of the umbrella, for if
the offending "pesky kid" be caught
up with in the midst of a business
transaction the formidable weapon de-
scribes a parabolic circle and ends its
movement with a resounding whack on
the tickled person of the newsboy. The
latter only emits a "merry ha-ha!" and
is off to forestall the old lady once
again.



EMPERESS AT WALKER'S BANK.



HOLDING HER CORNER DOWN.

DON'T YOU KNOW HIM?

PREPARED FOR A STORM.

THE SMITH DRUG CORNER.