

## THE SAVING CIRCLE.

From Mrs. Ben. Darby.

CHAPTER I.

Ah, gentle dames, it goes so great,

To think how much comes so sweet—

How monie laughtens says advices,

The husband's the wife's deceptions,

—Brass.

Among the various societies of Hap-Hazard, for the benefit and amelioration of the human race, was the "Ladies' Union Missionary Sewing Society." It congeated once in every week, at different houses, suiting itself to the convenience of its numerous members. Its officers were active and efficient in their operations; that is, whenever they could settle unanimously on a subject. The great feat to perform generally was, to bring them into that desirable position, for every one had their opinion (who ever knew a woman without one?) and held on to their rights with great tenacity, and were remarkable for carrying their point *pour et contre*, as the case might be—I would not convey the idea that the ladies of Hap-Hazard were more difficult to conciliate in their various positions, than ladies generally are; but I speak of it as a general thing, and the ladies of the Union Missionary Sewing Society of Hap-Hazard were not an exception to the rule. Women are unionists in the abstract—not in the aggregate.

The first lady that entered the society, (it met at Mrs. Grimes') was a pale-faced, weakly looking creature, with a hectic cheek. She was dressed simply, and looked as if she had not yet concluded to live or die. She had been dying ever since she was married, but some how or other, she made out to get along on the highway of life pretty fast. She had breathed on, through her threatening doom, until she was thirty-five, and had made her husband the envied father of nine boys. Mrs. Grimes said, "that was *all* that kept her alive!"

Mrs. Rosburn came to before Mrs. Pinkton had taken *all* of her things.—She was a very handsome lady, very ladylike and affable in her appearance—her language was decidedly grammatical, and smacked of city experience. No one found fault with Mrs. Rosburn's manners; yet she did not seem very popular, considering she had so many advantages, and so many facilities to please. She seated herself in the big rocking-chair, and, drawing out the skirt of her black silk dress, smiled complacently, as much as to say, I am not quite approachable—pray don't come too close! There was something in her that could not be passed. Mrs. Grimes said "it was the Eastern streak, and you might as well try to walk over the Ohio, as to get past it!"

Mrs. Saul Jenkins was the president of the society. She was one of your good, kind, bustling old ladies, with a heart as large as a millstone, and as soft as a sponge. She could cry one minute at the sorrows of her friends, and the next, laugh at their ridiculous ways; her hand was open "day to melting charity," and whenever anything was concocted for the benefit of the poor or the helpless, Mrs. Jenkins was sure to be there, and no mistake. To her was consigned, by mutual consent, the management of affairs.

"Ladies, I declare I am sorry I kept you waiting so long!" said Mrs. Saul Jenkins, hustling into the room, where the ladies had already commenced ransacking the baskets for unfinished garments, "but our clock runs down, for a wonder, for it keeps monstrous good time, and that put me a little behindhand, and just as I was putting on my bonnet to start, in comes Sam Jones to see if he could get the loan of our big copper kettle to make apple butter. I went into the smoke-house to get it, and lo! and behold! Sally had left the Hickory dye in it ever since I colored the warp for my rag carpet! It took me a full half hour to brighten it, and don't you think, after all, it was to little!"

"It is morally impossible, Mrs. Jenkins," said Mrs. Pinkton, "to expect a girl to keep things tidy. If you believe me, the last time I was at the Society, that great *gump* of a girl of ours burnt up an oven of bread as black as a coal, and the cow got into the back shed and eat up a barrel of potatoes and turned over a char of soft soap."

"La, me! that would have bought truck enough to make two or three shirts for the heathens," said Miss Fobes, an old lady who tried to appear very youthful; "I do declare, what a pity!"

"Yes, I guess it was a pity, and Mrs. Pinkton said charity began at home, and that I had better let the Sewing Society sweat and stay at home and keep things posted. Men are so unreasonable, Mrs. Grimes, don't you know it?"

"Indeed, not I," replied the lady addressed; "they like to see things sung at home in doors and out. I would not give a pinch of snuff for one of your poor-easy sort, that comes and goes, like a domestic critter, to get his grub, and never knows whether his wife or the kitchen-girl makes his tea!"

"I would prefer such a man," said Miss Fobes, "to one like Mr. Sharpe; he is a real coot-Betty, poking his nose into every hole and corner on the premises. Mrs. Sharpe never sees a quiet moment. She can't lend a neighbor a morsel of tea, but he is consulted, or give away an old petticoat but what he must survey it from top to bottom to see if it is *ginea*."

"Well, I declare!" cried Mrs. Lawson, a pretty little white woman with very black eyes and white teeth; "if a man was to look about my concerns in that kind of style, he would be very apt to catch it. I desire to see them mixing up messes or meddling in any way with house concerns. In Kentuck they are raised to know better."

"Indeed, I think it is as much their duty to see to things as the wife's," said Mrs. Rosburn; "the New England men make the best husbands in the world; they are so handy—especially with cows and butter."

"Well, well! I had rather see a bear fight than to see a man charming. Let Mrs. Rosburn I hope you don't use your husband for that purpose?" said Miss Fobes, laying her work down on her lap and laughing heartily.

"Dr. Rosburn never does anything beneath the dignity of a gentleman," replied his lady drawing herself up proudly.

"Never let him churn then," added Miss Fobes.

"How mistaken you are, Miss Fobes!"

said Mrs. Overton, playfully: "I think it the pleasantest thing in the world to have Henry pottering round the house and kitchen with me, helping me to peel apples or string beans, or rock one side of the cradle while I rock the other."

"Of course," said Miss Fobes, sarcastically: "I would not object to the latter employment as it must be so very profitable!"

"I am like Mrs. Overton," said Mrs. Grimes, looking benignly over her spectacles; "I like the men folks, and I will own up to it, and I believe there is only one in ten but what would do right if his wife would only let him."

"Oh! Mrs. Grimes!" cried Mrs. Pinkton.

"It is a fact—I know it," said the old lady.

"I am never happy without my husband is at home," said Mrs. Judge Wilford; "although I have been married twenty-five years, and have lived half that time alone, for he is always nearly on the circuit."

"La! Mrs. Wilford! I would not be tied to any one that way," cried Mrs. Fobes.

"Nor I," said Mrs. Pinkton.

"Where is Mrs. Larkins?" asked the lady president; "she does not attend very regularly."

"Sally has her hands full at home, I guess," replied Mrs. Grimes; "she hasn't no notion leaving unless everything is just so. She never neglects home—she had either pay the fine—

All who are engaged in this good cause ought to double diligence at home—never curtail domestic comfort; for what a man comes home and finds his wife gone is very apt to conceit his comfort is gone, but if he is put up in a half-cooked supper and a dirty table-cloth, and the young ones cutting up, he falls out of humor with himself and everybody else. I never knew a hungry man, under such circumstances, anything but ill-disposed some way; such times I feel for them."

"Oh! yes! they are lords of creation, and ought to be attended to above all things. Now I think a woman has her rights, or should have them," said Miss Fobes.

"That is well put in, Miss Eliza," cried Mrs. Tucker; "for my part, I think they are very much like slaves—worse than some slaves I know. I never saw that they have any rights at all."

"All a mistake," Mrs. Tucker, replied a little pale-faced lady in a green tissue with a pink neck-ribbon and a cameo brooch as large as a door-knob; "she has a right to stay at home and have a baby every fifteen months; to make pies and corn dodgers—that is, if she can get the where-withal to make them; then she has a right to work, to patch her husband's pants; to sew on his everlasting buttons; to set up every night with a sick child, until he comes home from the Odd Fellows, Hall, or the temperance meeting; or if it is election time, you have a right to stay home and get up big dinners, while he takes care of the president's business and comes in at meal times, with a regiment of *Hoosier* gongers to sweep up the house and spit on your clean carpets—but you can't vote. No! a woman can't vote."

"Nor in the Senate," said Miss Fobes.

"No," said Mrs. Grimes; "God has given her a different place. Adam was made first, and all creation was put under his administration—woman's place is by his side to assist and comfort, honor and obey."

"Some husbands," said Mrs. Pinkton, looking indignantly, "could not be honored even if they were obeyed—such poor, pusillanimous—"

"When I say man," said Mrs. Grimes, "I mean man, and not individual."

"I like the men very well in their proper places, and in season," said Mrs. Pinkton.

"That is to say, when you want money," said Miss Fobes; "or to take a trip to the Fails, or to New York city, or sit up with the sick baby or in case of a thunderstorm. Mrs. Jenkins, must I say, is a very nice notion, Mrs. Pinkton, I know, but sick folks will have strange ideas—all at once, mother took a fancy to biscuit, and she says she must have Mrs. Paine's."

"Mrs. Smith that was not as bad as the mistake between Patsy and I," said Mrs. Grimes.

"No," said Mrs. Grimes; "she is a good, kind, bustling old ladies, with a heart as large as a millstone, and as soft as a sponge. She could cry one minute at the sorrows of her friends, and the next, laugh at their ridiculous ways; her hand was open "day to melting charity," and whenever anything was concocted for the benefit of the poor or the helpless, Mrs. Jenkins was sure to be there, and no mistake. To her was consigned, by mutual consent, the management of affairs."

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little Mrs. Pinkton, but the simple soul thought they were laughing at the South Sea Islanders.

"Oh! how some pow'r the gulf giv us  
To see ourselfs' sa' liters see us,  
It wade frus mornin' a blunder free us,  
An' foolish notion."

But there was no such talisman vouchsafed to Mrs. Pinkton—so she was often found shooting her arrows in the dark—sometimes they rebounded.

Mrs. Smith took her work, and went to the window, where Mrs. Pinkton was cutting out aprons for the coming generation. She seated herself, and sewing rapidly without raising her eyes, said, "Mrs. Pinkton is Mrs. Berryman laughing at you?"

"No—why should she?"  
"Yes she was!"

"Is my collar straight?"

"Oh, well! I could not have been me who was quizzing."

"She was *thought*," answered Mrs. Smith, "she has a fashion of making jests—these western people all do and we never get thanked for trying to refine them—they are so rude and so uncouth. I wonder if Indiana will ever be civilized," continued Mrs. Smith, raising her voice for the benefit of the listeners.

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