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An Old Maid's Diary.

CHAPTER I.

JAN 6th, 18—. "Well! I do believe its my birthday! I thought of it when I put down January sixth, and— Good gracious! I'm no less than 40 years old to-day! Every day of 40, I can scarcely believe it. But there 'tis, in the family register, plain as can be; there's no denyin' of it,—Well I did used to think, if I ever got to be an old maid, I'd like a cosy little house all to myself, with plenty of time for readin', and sketchin', and patchin' pretty pattern quilts, and writin' poetry too sacred to be read by the criticisin' public. But I've changed my mind. If I had nothin' to live for but amusin' myself, I'd be the most miserable old maid in the world, and I believe I'd be 80 this very day instead of 40, as I am.

I'd rather go down to the hospital and sing for the sick that need cheerin' up, than I'd sit down to a grand piano and spend hours at a time cultivatin' my voice, so's to stand up on a stage and sing love songs without any words to 'em for a big crowd of people, that have nothin' to do but listen.

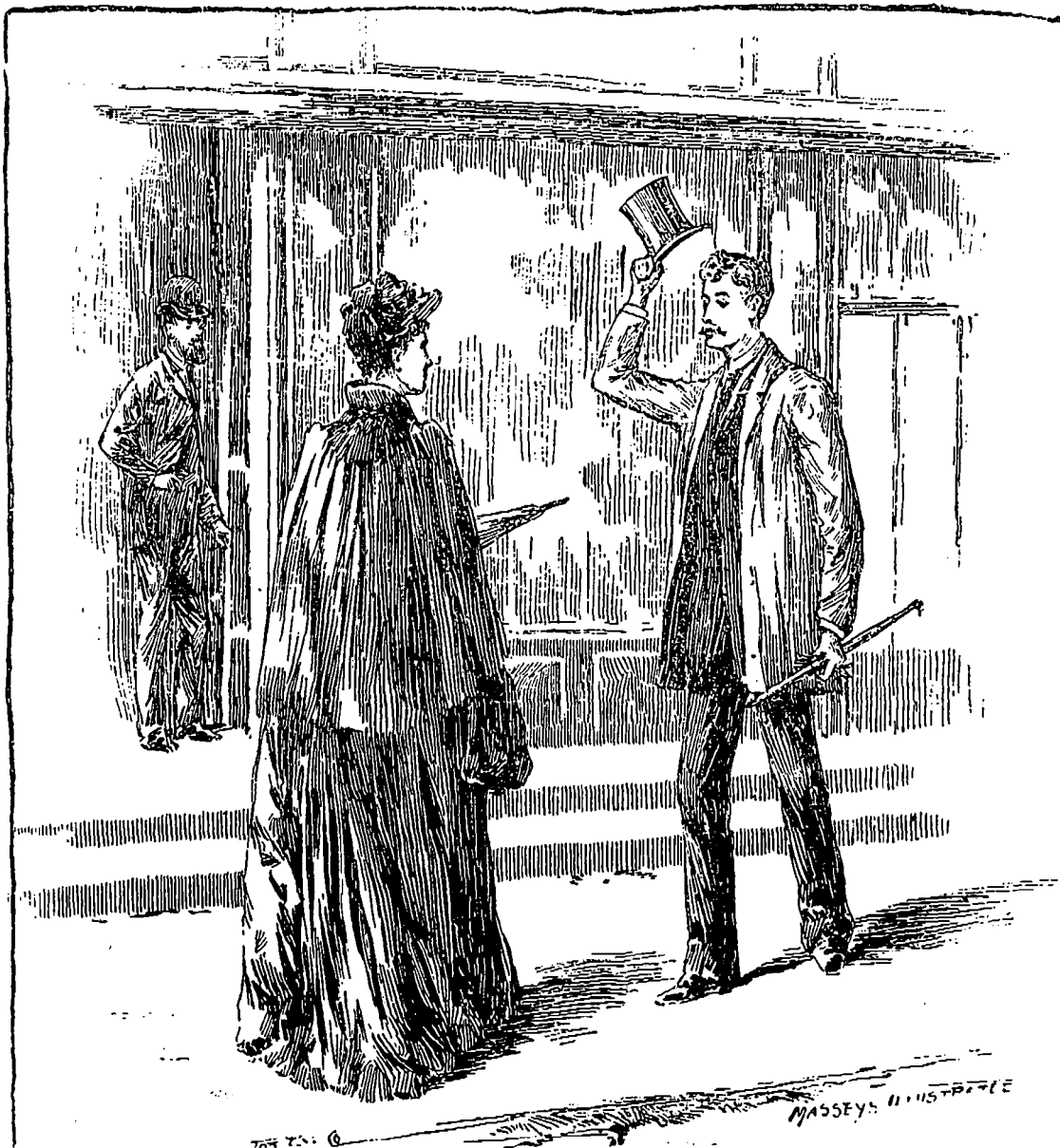
But now, Keren-happuch Benjamin, you don't want to be a Pharisee. What do you 'spose you was riz up an old maid for? and what's the use of bein' an old maid if you can't be some use. 'Tain't right for the mothers to be gallavantin' round singin' and collectin' and canvassin' all the time, and leavin' their children to take their chance of being trained haphazard like. And what has the Lord spared my life till now for, if I can't do what falls to my lot, and take no credit to myself neither. I'm not scoldin' nor complainin' only I just want to give myself a talkin' to 'cause what's rheumatism got to do with hinderin' the Lord's work? The world's got to turn round every day, rain or shine, and whether my limbs ache or no, there's the work to do, and if someone else has to do my share, why that won't save me.

Suppose someone says to me, "There's poor old Mrs. Jones is sick and lonely, and wants someone to cheer her up a bit, and you're the best one to go." Would it be any good for me to say, "I've got a lame back with collectin' in the rain yesterday, and I feel blue myself because the sun don't shine like it did last week, and I think I'll go home and rest." Do you think I could rest after that? No! something'd keep sayin' to me, "Keren-happuch Benjamin, you're the one to go," and there'd be no rest till I went.

But then I don't always feel sure that what folks want me to do is just what the Lord would require of me. I downright re-

fused to help the Ladies' Aid furnish a drawing-room in the parsonage, but collectin' for the missionaries, that deny themselves bodily comforts for the sake of the heathen in the regions beyond is quite another thing. I've just finished a "very successful tour" so I mean to write down a pretty good account of it. I had some misgivin's to start with and felt sort o' hypocritical to go out without my own name down first, but then I thought of the Pharisees, and decided to keep it till the very last. Then I meant to go to some of the rich folks first, so's to get an encouragin' start and have some big amounts to show at the head, but then, that might kind o' shame the poorer ones I thought, so I began right where I was and dropped into Mrs. Taylor's. She takes in washin' and was busy ironin' but when I said I'd called to give her the privilege of givin' somethin' to the missionaries, she goes right and takes down a little, old-fashioned tea-caddy, and says she, "This is where I keep what I can spare, you can have it all and welcome. It seems but a stingy bit after all, when I've strength to work, and the work plenty. And you needn't

put down my name—." "Yes it shall head the list," says I, "to shame them that get money easier and give less." Then I dropped into Mr. Miserly's little shop. He was all alone, as usual, but not much pleased with my errand. He didn't know anything about the missionaries, nor what they was doin' and didn't think they needed any money." "Shame on you," says I, "and you live in a Christian land. Can't you read? Don't you go to meetin'? Nor read your Bible? Didn't Christ say "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature?" Don't that mean the heathen? in Africa, India, and everywhere else?" He allowed so, and finally gave me twenty-five cents. Next I met, banker Black, but he was in a hurry, had an "important engagement, and couldn't attend to my case at present." I told him 'twasn't my case but the Lord's. Then I called on a number of indifferent people, and some "really couldn't afford it," or "hadn't it just now," and others seemed to give because they didn't like to refuse, or because others had given, and one old lady supposed it would be like "lendin' to the Lord," an-



NEXT I MET BANKER BLACK, BUT HE WAS IN A HURRY.