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## Aunt Becky's Green Chair.

(By Susan Hubbard Martin in the 'Ram's Horn.')  
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There wasn't much in the front room. Only the big bed with its plump little pillows and gay patchwork quilt. The table was a box covered with white muslin with ample ruffles of the same, edged with coarse, cotton lace. There was one picture on the wall. Someone had given it to Aunt Becky years before, 'Washington Crossing the Delaware.' The frame was of oak and the picture itself was stained and colored with age. A rag carpet covered the floor. One cane-seated chair stood

chairs one a straight-backed, wooden one, the other a small rocker. A braided rug or two lay on the floor.

Adjoining this room was a small shed where she kept her articles of labor, namely, her tubs, her boiler, and her washboard. Aunt Becky was a beautiful washer and disdained any of the new fangled methods of making work easier. She believed in working with her hands. No clothes could be whiter than hers, no linen sweeter, but it had come sorrowfully home to Aunt Becky of late that her active days were over.

At seventy-eight she had given up the

Aunt Becky had sobbed piteously. 'Can't I stay here?' she had asked imploringly. 'I ain't helpless and I don't want much—only a little bread and tea. The rent is small. It seems like I just can't leave it all. Besides there's the church.'

Sure enough they had forgotten that. Her chin had quivered and there had been a pleading look in the dim and faded eyes. No one could take any action after that.

The poor-house was far out in the country and Aunt Becky's little rooms were right in town, close to the church she loved. By slow and painful walking she managed to reach it every Sunday morning, where she sat well up in front, eager and attentive. To have taken her away from the services, the prayer-meeting and the Sunday School would have been little short of cruelty. So the matter was quietly dropped and provisions made for her at home.

'I was down to see Aunt Becky yesterday,' said young Mrs. Fletcher at the Aid Society that afternoon. 'Can't we do something for her. Her rheumatism is so bad. Her rooms are clean and comfortable enough, but the chairs are awful. She needs something to lie down on.'

'How would a reclining chair do?' asked a soft voice.

Little Mrs. Fletcher turned. It was Miss Fairchild who had spoken; Miss Fairchild to whom every one in Finley went in trouble.

Miss Fairchild was small and pale and fragile and she walked with a crutch herself, but her smile was sunny, her face bright, and she never alluded to her infirmity. If she suffered she kept it to herself. Blessed with a handsome fortune, and the consecrated desire to do good, it was astonishing how much she accomplished. Yet so quietly, so noiselessly, so unobtrusively was it all performed that half the time no one knew who the good fairy had been.

'The very thing,' cried Mrs. Fletcher beamingly, 'but can we manage it? Funds are low and there are other things. The ladies have agreed to pay Aunt Becky's rent, and Mr. Towne has given her a little order every week from his store, but reclining chairs—'

'Leave it to me,' said the same quiet voice. 'I reproach myself already for not thinking of it. Poor Aunt Becky!'

'Ah, but you must let the rest of us have a hand in that,' cried Mrs. Allen laughingly. 'Here's a pencil and a paper, pass it around and let us each give what we can. Aunt Becky's reclining chair! I'm sure it's a privilege to give to that. There is scarcely one of us present but that is indebted to her for some past kindness.'

'That is so,' cried Mrs. Parkhill heartily. 'She stayed with my children while I attended the State Convention.'

'And she washed my lace curtains for me when I was too ill to do it myself,' said another.

'She made me a cough syrup that cured my little boy's cold,' added someone else, and so it went on until nearly everyone had spoken.

Miss Fairchild never told how much she



"IT'S A CHAIR," THE MAN EXPLAINED SMILINGLY \* \* \* "THE CHURCH LADIES GAVE IT TO YOU."

primly against the wall and there was a chest of drawers in the corner.

In the next room, however, it was more cheerful, for in this Aunt Becky lived and received her friends. There wasn't much here either, for she had toiled hard all her life. There had never been any time to rest, or any money to spend, except for necessities.

A wooden cupboard occupied one corner, on the top of which reposed her big Bible and spectacles. The cooking stove stood out from the wall, clean and shining. There was a plant or two in the window, a little round table on which she ate her meals, and two

struggle. She could work no more. Never again would she hang out her clean clothes under the blue sky; never again would she pile them, fresh and sweet-smelling, into the big basket. The steam and water of continual wash-days had done their work well.

Aunt Becky could never wash again; a long life and a hard one, yet not without its happy hours. Now she sat all day in her little room, sewing carpet rags as best she could with her poor, crippled, rheumatic, water-soaked fingers. There had been some talk of putting her in the poor-house, but after the first conversation with her, the committee had given it up.