

## Our Secular Story.

### Saved by a Sewing Machine.

Isabel Allen was about to start for California, and not wishing to be cumbered with a sewing machine, she concluded to follow the example of numerous religious societies and dispose of it by raffle. She readily sold fifty tickets at a dollar apiece, and Wednesday evening was to witness the drawing of the lucky number. The time came, and Jack Hopkins was discovered to be the holder of the fortunate figure.

"Good Lord!" said he, when the fact was made known to him, "what under the sun shall I do with a sewing machine?"

"Why, get you a wife, or go into the tailoring business and make a fortune," said Isabel Allen's brother.

"Bother the wife! and as for tailoring, can't do my own sewing," was his reply, as visions of torn button-holes, buttonless shirts, ragged wristbands and worn sleeve-linings rose before him; for although Hopkins was a "man-of-war's man", he never could see into the art of top-sewing and her-ring-boning. He felt like the man who drew the elephant, and what to do or where to store his sewing machine he did not know. He had no time to look about, for he was ordered on board ship the next morning. As he sauntered along whistling,

"A life on the ocean wave,  
A home on the rolling deep",

suddenly he caught the wicked, serpent gleam that flashed from the sinister eyes of a fashionably-dressed man, as he whispered to his companion, a poorly-clad but handsome girl of not more than sixteen summers. A strange impulse prompted Hopkins to turn and follow the couple through many winding streets until they paused before an elegant mansion, from whence issued sounds of music and laughter. It was a cloudy night, misty, dim and dark, a night well adapted to wickedness and crime. The street lamp shed its light full on the faces of the couple.

"Villain!" hissed Hopkins. "My little sister, my only remaining relative, as fair a bud as ever blossomed under summer skies, lies in the chill and mould of yonder churchyard tonight, and you sent her there! It was years ago, but I've not forgotten her or you. And now you seek the destruction of another with the poison of your deceitful tongue, you smooth-faced murderer! Take that, and that, and that!" and the heavy blows fell thick and fast upon the de-

stroyer of womanhood with all the ferocity of an enraged tiger.

Do you wonder that he left his foe there, bleeding, wounded and with scarcely the breath of life in him? Wouldn't you have done the same? Under similar circumstances, would you have left him alive at all?

The trembling girl, fainting, frightened, stood spell-bound, sole witness of the scene.

"Here, come with me, and don't be afraid," said the honest-hearted sailor. "I'd not harm a hair of thy young head for all the wealth of California's gold mines. Come with me. Thou art as safe as though asleep upon thy mother's bosom."

Rough, hard, profane, ferocious Jack Hopkins—that was the side the world saw; but that night revealed him gentle, tender as a woman, pure as a star.

Rosa Grey, with trusting confidence, put her hand confidently in his, and he hastily led her from the spot where her innocence and happiness had been so nearly wrecked for life.

"Poor little girl!" said he, soothingly. "Don't cry." And then torrents of oaths escaped him as he remembered the wretch he had left bleeding upon the pavement. Suddenly he thought of his sewing machine, and that it might possibly benefit the weeping girl beside him.

"Can ye steer such a craft as a sewing machine?" he asked.

"Do you mean, sir, can I run a sewing machine—can I make it sew?"

"Yes, that's what I mean."

"Why, no, but I could learn, maybe, if I had one to work with."

"What's your name?"

"Rosa Grey."

Leaning against a lamp post, the sailor wrote an order to Isabel Allen, instructing her to deliver to Rosa Grey his sewing machine, and signing the paper, handed it to the bewildered girl.

"Here, take this," said he, "and go get your living," and then with the lavish generosity of sea-faring men, he placed in her hand a bunch of crumpled greenbacks. "Better that she should have it than the grog shop," he muttered, as he turned and went his way, leaving Rosa Grey almost petrified with astonishment. Great drops of rain mingled with her fast-falling tears, as if the heavens wept in sympathy.

The poor girl was an orphan, friendless and alone. Driven from the miserable shelter that she called home by a merciless stepmother, who, since her father's death, had

heaped every indignity upon her. Forsaken, desolate and desperate, she would have fallen an easy prey to the destroyer, had not the bronzed hand of the sailor snatched her from the snare set for her unwary feet.

New hope and courage possessed her, as she presented her order for the sewing machine just at the hour when the ship on board of which was Jack Hopkins hauled out from the dock.

Industry, aptitude and patient persistence soon placed Rosa in comfortable circumstances. She sought and obtained all the work she could do, clothed herself neatly, and by and by had a comfortable sum in the savings bank. As the years rolled on, her sweet face and amiable manners attracted, among others, the admiration of Ronald Congdon, whose esteem ripened into affection, and he sought her for his wife.

Her marriage with Ronald Congdon placed her at once in the best and most refined Society, where her native tact and grace enabled her to adorn the position for which she was fitted by nature.

Ronald Congdon was wealthy, a millionaire in heart and mind, as well as in this world's goods; and it was his delight to lavish all the luxuries that art or money could produce upon his lovely wife.

One day, in the spring-time of the year, when the violets made the mossy banks fragrant with perfume, Rosa was returning from a drive to the woods, laden with ground-pine, velvety mosses, feather ferns and trailing arbutus. She rode past the General Hospital just as a sick man was lifted from a wagon, preparatory to taking him to the sick ward.

"Surely," thought Rosa, as she looked upon the emaciated form, "I have seen that face before!" and all the way home, the pale attenuated features haunted her. When, where, had she seen that man? The dim, shadowy past, with its wonderful changes, passed like a panorama before her, but still she could not locate the stranger. Restless, uneasy, she resolved to visit the hospital, and discover, if possible, who the stranger was. Upon arriving there she inquired of the clerk the name of the gentleman brought there that forenoon. "John Hopkins," was the reply, after examining his register.

It was the name of her benefactor! and in an instant she had recalled all the scenes of that eventful night that had so changed the current of her life. Her request that she might see him was granted, and precious tears of joy dropped upon the old sailor's neck. He wept, also, as she told him her name and related how he had saved her from shame and infamy.

"I thought I was old and poor, sick and friendless and forsaken,"

said he, "and here comes a ministering angel bending over me, and assuring my old heart that the world isn't all hard and selfish, that there's some good in it yet."

Every day Mrs. Congdon sat beside the bed of the sick man and watched his failing breath, for it was evident that his days on earth were few.

Gently, tenderly, affectionately, he was watched and cared for by the woman he had redeemed, and who, in return, told him her home, wealth, influence and services were at his command. Her husband joined with her in good offices to the benefactor of his wife, and assured him that if health returned he should never again feel compelled to wander in foreign lands. But all was of no avail; the shadows had fallen, and night was approaching. Mrs. Congdon sat by, a faithful watcher, and as she recalled the distant past she wept softly.

"Why do you weep for the old salt?" questioned the dying man. "I've had a long voyage, shipwrecked many times and often tempest-tossed, and now I'm coming into port, worn, with ragged sails and rotting timbers, but I shall be glad to cast anchor in a harbor where there are no storms or raging billows."

Pausing a moment, he said:

"Rosa, I never took much stock in preaching or praying, as it goes on in the world, but I've prayed and fasted some after a fashion of my own. Maybe it was right and maybe it was wrong. I don't know, but I've tried to do as well as I knew how, and anyway, it was honest. And if I should happen to wake up in some foreign land, and the captain calls me to give an account of myself, I'll just tell him how it was, and I won't forget to let him know how I thrashed that miserable scamp—and gave you my bottom dollar and—a sewing machine, and maybe he won't be very hard with me. Good-by! The storm is over, there's blue sky yonder, and 't is my watch below!"

John Hopkins never spoke again. Rosa reverently folded the rough, scarred hands above the pulseless bosom and closed the eyes of the brave-hearted sailor.

She had the remains robed and placed in an elegant rosewood casket, and conveyed to her own beautiful home, where appropriate services were held ere the body was placed in its last resting-place.

In Mrs. Congdon's parlor, in an alcove, there stands today an old-fashioned sewing machine, covered over with purple velvet, whose fringe of gold sweeps the costly Wilton carpet. Upon the top of the velvet cover rests a solid silver plate, encircled with a wreath of flowers. It bears this inscription: "Sacred to the memory of John Hopkins."

When the curious ask why she keeps that old-fashioned machine so choice; she answers reverently, "It is my savior!"—[Susan H. Wixon.