

"Merciful heaven!" she cried, as she lifted it in her shaking hands. For there were three rows of handstitching, in what had once been red silk, and the faded initials of a name her own hands had marked fourteen years before, N. L. H.

She sat down, cold and faint on the foot of the bed, and there the young man found her, but half conscious. At sight of him, however, the blood came back to her cheek, and she gasped, rather than said:—

"Where—did—you get this?"

"That is mine. It is the only thing I have to prove the identity of my childhood, if the fortunate occasion should ever come. At six years of age—I think I could not have been older—I was picked up in a drifting boat, far off at sea. I was not a plain speaker then; and suppose I gave my name incorrectly—they say I called myself Noray Aug—I have, of course, quite forgotten my original name. As in time all hopes of finding my family were lost, a rich Cuban adopted me. He was childless—and his wife!"—

"Norman! Norman!" shrieked Mrs. Henry, excited beyond all power of control, "you are my boy—my dear, lost boy, for whom I have mourned for fourteen long years. Call Elsie—call!"—her voice died in a murmur—she had fallen in his arms in a dead faint.

It was a happy restoration—happy seems hardly the word—such rejoicing as there was in the widow's family. Norman at once took his right place as the head of the household, for there was indeed no doubt of his identity. All further anxiety concerning ways and means, was, of course, thrown to the winds, and Letty took upon herself the whole credit of restoring, in the shape of a boarder, son and brother to the home in which he had been so long mourned.

WHAT IS AN OLD MAID?

NEVER be afraid of becoming an old maid, fair reader. An old maid is far more honorable than a heartless wife; and "single blessedness" is greatly superior, in point of happiness, to wedded life without love. "Fall not in love, dear girls—beware!" says the song. But we do not agree with said song on this question. On the contrary, we hold that it is a good thing to fall in love, or get in love, if the object be a worthy one. To fall in love with an honorable man is as

proper as it is for an honorable man to fall in love with a virtuous and amiable woman; and what could be a more gratifying spectacle than a sight so pure, so approaching, in its devotion, to the celestial? No; fall in love as soon as you like, provided it be with a suitable person. Fall in love, and then marry; but never marry unless you do love. That's the great point. Never marry for a "home" or a "husband." Never degrade yourself by becoming a party to such an alliance. Never sell yourself, body and soul, on terms so contemptible. Love dignifies all things; it enables all conditions. With love, the marriage rite is truly a sacrament. Without it, the ceremony is a base fraud, and the act a human desecration. Marry for love, or not at all. Be "an old maid," if fortune throws not in your way the man of your heart; and, though the witless may sneer and the jester may laugh, you still have your reward in an approving conscience and a comparatively peaceful life. For well-to-do old bachelors we have no sympathy. They ought to be taxed nine-tenths of all they are worth to support women and children.

A LAMENT.

BY M. E. W.

OUR blue-eyed babe has sunk to rest,
The golden masses of his hair
Are crushed against my aching breast—
Against its weight of dark despair.
I clasp him to this weary heart,
Thine image as he sleeps I trace
Upon each feature, and I start
And almost fancy 'tis thy face.

I take this lifeless hand of thine,
Its touch is ice—its pulse is still;
It yields no tender clasp to mine,
It gives back no responsive thrill.
I picture thee, beloved, as when
Life's crowning glory wreathed thy brow;
I owned thy soul's best treasure then—
And I have but the memory now.

Adieu, adieu, my heart will break,
I may not longer tarry here;
I dream of happiness—and wake
To find the hour of parting near.
To-night, beneath the mournful moon
The zephyr chants the dirge of May—
To-morrow—in the leafy June
Its breath will float above thy clay.

ARGUMENT in company is generally the worst sort of conversation, and in books the worst sort of reading.