

THE FREE LANCE.

*His good blade carves the casques of men, for the Free Lance
thrusteth sure."*

VOL. XVII.

NOVEMBER, 1903.

No. 5.

THE SECRET OF A CUSHION.

About two years ago, when I was deep in the first happiness of being engaged to Charlie, I would have attacks of the most severe melancholy, and they generally came on days that I called "straightening up days." On those days I would sit down before a little cupboard, I'll call it that for want of a better name, for it had in turn served as dolls' dish cupboard, dolls' wardrobe, case for school books, receptacle for quilt blocks and examination papers, and, finally, for a treasure box for my letters. Little by little I had thinned out my papers and letters, burning each time all that I sorted out as the poorest; but there still remained a good sized box of them, which I had never had the heart to even sort over with a view to destroying part. They were my first love letters, written by my first lover when I was at college. I knew it would never do to take them to my new home, for although Charlie was the most lovable and reasonable fellow alive, he would never tolerate a box of sweets from my first love.

One day after indecision, sentiment and common sense had united their strength to make me miserable for several hours, I sought out the box and sorted over the letters, placing the "good" ones in one pile and the others in another; but after I had finished, the "good" pile was so large that nothing would be gained by burning the "poor" pile, so I put them all away again. As I pressed them back into the box practicability whispered to me for the first time;