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An Old Maid's Diary.

CHAPTER IV.

Concluded.

WELL, when I'd done with canvassin' and collectin' for awhile, the young people asked me to help 'em get up an Old Maid's Social. Just for novelty they said, and I was to be chairman or chairwoman for them. So I was asked to the meetin' to hear all about it. There sat all the pretty young girls of the church, but not a male gender among them, of course.

"Well, Mrs. Younghusband," I says, when I see 'em, "if all these young ladies mean to represent the sociable old maids, what do you want me to represent? I've been an old maid ever since I was a young girl, and—" I couldn't say any more for all them young old maids laughed right out, and I looked pretty dignified at 'em, for I thought they were makin' fur o' me, but half a dozen cried out, "Then are we real old maids, Miss Benjamin?"

"Seems like it!" says I. "If not, you're most

anxious to be," and I looked pretty sharp at several I knew drove around regular with the same beau, and some others that flirted a bit with half a dozen. Mrs. Younghusband was saying, "We can't do without you, Miss Benjamin. You're such a good organizer and manager, and the young ladies are so anxious to have you as chairman"

"Well," says I, "I s'pose they will be timid at their first appearance in that character and would like a real experienced person to bring them out like. When young ladies enter society, I believe they like a chaperone with experience of the world, and I can't deny I've had experience as an old maid, and will gladly introduce you and initiate you into old-maidism, though it appears to me some of you will be wantin' to leave the society before long."

They laughed and thanked me all at once, and talked plans and paraphernalia, till young Mrs. Younghusband, "with her usual grace and tact" (as the papers say), called order and began to lay out our duties, so to speak. It was decided that each should wear a mob cap and large apron to match, and cheese cloth was to be the material, and no ribbons must be put on either. There was to be a programme, of course, and a supper, and 'twas to

be a sort of Old Folks' Concert, too, only everything must be done by the maids, even to the provisions, which were positively to be of their own cooking. No married people should take part, and of course none of the male species could be asked to render any assistance whatsoever. I must needs wear a cap and apron, as it was considered proper, and sit on the platform and open with a speech, which last I refused to do unless someone would tell me what to say pretty much, because I wa'n't goin' to have them say, Kerran-happuch Benjamin spoiled it all. So Mrs. Younghusband, (she's a sprightly young wife instead of husband), she gave me the gist of it, in her conversational way and says she, "Of course you can put it in your own words to be natural."

They do say she's a bit stagy, but what does that matter so's she let me see what I'd sound like up there.

I felt a little nervous thinking about it before it came off, but I soon forgot Mrs. Younghusband's little speech, and knew I'd have to make up as I went along, for I'd be sure to break down, if I tried to say anything that I'd learnt and studied up before hand. I just fixed on two or more ideas I'd



"LADIES AND GENMLEMEN, WE'RE JUST A LOT OF OLD MAIDS."