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W. J. EWING, Editor.

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AN APRIL HOAX.

Looking at it from without, it does not appear very unlike its fellows, this little suburban cottage of the Rosy, with its unpunctuated hooded porch, over which the ivy trails its dark green foliage, and its two parlor windows in front, and its bay-window at the side; but within there is nothing commonplace. Every room, every corner, reflects the refined taste of Janet Roy, and the quaint fancies of her brother Dick.

Dick, the handsome, the talented, the gentlemanly—he is all this and more in his sister Janet's eyes—is sitting on the window-seat, the sun bathing his shapely figure in its impartial rays. He is reading the morning paper; with more interest probably than most men are wont to have, for he recognizes the mannerism of each writer on the editorial page—he is on the editorial staff himself—and takes pleasure in seeing how Smith treats the Eastern question, what Jones thinks of the condition of the Indians, and what Brown has to say on the presidential policy. He has not written a stroke for over a week himself. He has been quite ill; a heavy cold threatening pneumonia has kept him a prisoner at the cottage, and for seven mornings has the public been deprived of the pleasure and profit of perusing his timely and caustic remarks upon general topics. Only yesterday he stepped across the threshold into manhood; it was his twenty-first birthday: to-day he is a citizen of the republic.

The clock on the mantel-shelf tinkles forth eight silvery notes. Dick looks up from his paper with some show of impatience. Where can Janet be? As if in answer to his thought, the door opens, and Miss Roy, tall and graceful, in a dress of olive-green serge, in charming contrast with her light golden hair, comes softly in.

"Have you been waiting long, Dick?" she asks, in a pleasant, kindly voice. "I must have overslept myself."

"No," replies Dick, throwing down his paper and yawning languidly, "not very long; but I'm glad you've come, or I'm deucedly hungry. Rather a good sign, isn't it, Jean?"

"Very good," replies Janet, sitting down at the table and tapping the call-bell. "But it won't last very long. I'll venture to say that in fifteen minutes from now your appetite will be considerably diminished."

"Very likely," said Dick, as Sarah enters from the kitchen, bearing the coffee in one hand and a dish of beef-steak in the other. "At any rate, I will see how far steak, coffee and hot biscuits will go toward diminishing it."

Presently there is a violent ring at the door-bell.

"Who can that be?" exclaimed Dick, inquisitively. "I wonder if any of the boys could have come out to see what had become of me?"

"It sounds very like the postman," adds his sister; and the postman it is. Two letters are his contribution to the Rosy this morning, both of which Sarah hands to Miss Janet, who hurriedly reads the addresses. One is for herself, the other is for her brother.

"Here is a letter for you, sir, if your name is Horatio," she quotes, reaching it to him across the table.

"But my name is not Horatio," he replies, correctingly, as he takes it. "Are you aware that to paraphrase is perfectly allowable? If your name be Richard, would be much more appropriate, and would sound far better."

Janet scarcely listens to the prattle of her brother; the letter that has come for her is edged with black, and she is nervously tearing open the envelope in her haste to see what ill news it has brought, whose death it has come to announce.

Dick notices her agitation as she draws out the inclosed sheet, and wonders, even as she is wondering, what can be its message.

"Uncle Arthur is dead," she says, the next moment, giving a sigh of relief. "I saw it was in Harry's handwriting, and so feared it was Cousin Margaret."

"Uncle Arthur!" repeats Dick. "Uncle Arthur! He's one of my respected great-uncles, whom I have never had the pleasure of seeing; a California millionaire. I wonder did it ever strike him that a little of his wealth would be acceptable to his great-niece and great-nephew, who are battling with the world far away over here in the East?"

"Oh, Dick!" exclaims Miss Roy, greatly shocked, "how can you talk of the poor man's money when he is just dead?"

"Poor man!" says Dick, laughing. "I always thought he was a rich one." "May I inquire," asks Miss Roy, meekly, when her brother had twice read the epistle he holds in his hand, and is about to begin again, "what Nell has to say that is so very interesting?"

A slight flush mounts to Dick's face as he hurriedly crumples the missive into his pocket.

"Nell!" he repeats. "How did you know it was from Nell?"

"I know her handwriting." "But it's just like hundreds of others," continued Dick, buttering a hot roll in continuance of his breakfast. "All ladies write in the same style now-a-days. The letters are all very tall and all very thin."

"Each lady's hand has a peculiarity, nevertheless." "Which nobody can deny," quotes Richard. Some hands are pink and

some are white, some are fat and some are lean, some wear diamonds and some wear none."

"How you trip one up!" exclaimed Janet, smiling. "You know very well what I mean. Would you have me stumble over the whole length of 'chirography' every time?"

"By no means. It would only be a waste of breath, and would seem as though you were intentionally airing your knowledge of Webster's Unabridged."

Dick is beginning to congratulate himself on the masterly way in which he has turned the subject and escaped rudely telling his sister that the contents of Miss Nellie Taylor's letter are not for her ears, when she again refers to his remarks.

"By-the-bye," she says, as she draws from the urn her brother's second cup of coffee, "speaking of some hands with diamonds and some without, Nell doesn't wear one, does she? When do you propose presenting her with one of the gems?"

"I was not aware" (with mock gravity) "that young men are generally expected to provide their lady friends with diamond rings."

"Did the fact that there is such a thing as an engagement ring ever present itself to your enlightened intellect?"

"Engagement?" repeats Dick; "did I understand you to say engagement? Since when, pray, did you conclude that your respected brother had given his heart to another? I know of no engagement."

"Oh, dear!" says Janet, sighing melodramatically; "have I really been mistaken? And here I was already congratulating myself on so soon having a sister-in-law!"

"Do you remember the nursery rhyme?" asks Dick: "Can the love that you're so rich in Build a fire in the kitchen? Or the little god of love turn the spit, spit, spit?"

I should hesitate, I think, to ask any one to marry me, for fear of having that couplet thrown in my face. Now if that dear old great-uncle of ours had only taken it into his aged head to leave us a few of his many thousands, then perhaps I might begin to speculate on the comparative advantages of my various lady friends as a sister-in-law."

"Poor, dear old man!" Janet continues, kindly. "I can just remember sitting on his knee and playing with his long beard at the time he was on from the West. It's really a shame, Dick, our being so lively, and Uncle Arthur, grandfather's own brother, lying dead."

"Well, my dear, I should be lying alive if I said I was sorry he's gone; for while there's death there's hope, and who knows but he may have thought of us?"

"Oh, Dick!" beseechingly, "please don't joke about it. I really do feel badly, and Cousin Margaret and Harry must be so grieved."

"So they must," says Dick, apparently acquiescing in his sister's views. "I am sure we all do. Don't you think, Jean, we had better bow the shutters and hang out black bombazine?"

"I shall bow the shutters," adds Janet, feeling rather angry at her brother's continued joking. "It is the least we can do, and it shows some respect for our grandfather's brother," rising and leaving Dick still at the table.

"Our grandfather's brother!" repeats he; "what an awfully near relative! Surely he must have bequeathed something to his brother's grandchildren."

Dick is in his study now—a neat, cozy little room back of the drawing-room, which is in reality the library, but which Mr. Roy, he being a literary man, chooses to call his study. He is sitting at his table, with Nell's letter spread out before him, and is reading it for the fourth time. There is nothing very remarkable about it; it is not what one would style a love-letter, and yet Dick would not for all the world have his sister get a glimpse of it.

"DEAR DICK,—I have been looking for you to call, as you promised, and am much surprised at not having seen you. Your birthday, I think you told me, is about this time. Did you have a party? and are you so elated at having attained your majority that you are above visiting your friends? I cannot think that because you are now a man you have given up all the friends of your childhood. Please call soon, and tell me all about your presents. Ever your friend, NELL."

That is it; and in it Dick is trying to find traces of something more than friendship.

"Nell is an awfully jolly girl," he says to himself, leaning back in his chair and thrusting his hands into his pockets; "just as full of fun as ever she can be. I wonder whether she really does care anything for me? I'm not altogether a bad-looking fellow, if I do say it myself, and I fancy I can talk quite as well as the most of 'em. How is one to tell whether a girl cares more for him than for another, when she persists in being jolly with every one?"

Then he gets to thinking of some means to solve the problem. How shall he prove her? Presently an idea comes to him, first faintly, indistinctly; then more plainly and more vividly, until a plan—an excellent plan, he thinks—stands out before him in beautiful symmetry. Everything seems to have worked in favor of it, and he is naturally joyous over his discovery.

He opens one of the drawers in his writing-table and takes out a packet of

letters. Through them he searches until he finds two that Janet wrote him while he was away on his midsummer vacation. These he spreads open before him, and taking a sheet of note-paper he begins to write, now closely studying his sister's letters, now slowly putting words upon the paper. Half an hour and he has finished. He folds the sheet, incloses it in an envelope, and addresses it as carefully as he has written it. Then he rises, and, unlocking the door, meets Janet in the hall. She sees him take down his hat to go out.

"Had you not better wear your overcoat?" she asks. "I'm afraid you might take cold again."

"I'm not going far," he answers; "only to post a letter."

"To Nell?" she asks, teasingly. "Are you not rather prompt in answering your correspondents?"

Dick, making no reply, goes out, while she, laughing to herself, hurries away to her numerous household duties.

The next morning is the 1st of April—All-fool's Day, with its temptations to practical jokes and its myriads of little innocent lies, when every one does his best to make a fool of his dearest friend as well as his direst foe. It is a bright, sunny morning, that sweeps the buds to bursting, and draws up the blades of fresh young grass as a magnet draws steel. Dick Roy is in the very best of spirits; he has persuaded Janet into believing that he has taken a fresh cold; has assumed a voice as hoarse as a veteran bull-frog; and has been looking the very picture of distress, until the arrival of the postman—just as he is creeping in to breakfast—adding to his sister's anxiety by his distressed countenance—causes him to brighten up, and in the clearest tone remark, "On my word, Jean, my cold's gone. Did it strike you this was the first day of April?"

An expression of relief mingled with annoyance mounts Miss Roy's countenance.

"You awful boy!" she exclaims. "You should be ashamed of yourself, trying to fool your own sister."

"And succeeding, too," laughs Dick. The only letter this morning is one for him. It is hidden by a very yellow envelope, and addressed to a bold heavy hand that gives one an impression of important business at once. As Dick opens it and catches sight of the heading, his face brightens in expectation, and continues brightening until he has read it quite through, when he is wearing the broadest of smiles.

"Hurrah!" he shouts, his boyishness making its appearance through his newly acquired manhood—"hurrah for Uncle Arthur! Hurrah! Jean, we've been left a fortune!"

Janet looks at him unbelievably. She has been fooled once this morning, and does not intend to submit tamely to what she considers her brother's second attempt.

"If you must joke, Dick," she says, calmly, her voice and manner strangely contrasting with his excitement, "pray don't take such a subject. You are playing your part very well, I admit; but still I remember now what day it is."

"But I'm not joking; it's a fact. Here is a letter from the dear old boy's lawyer. Look at the postmark; look at the letter-head; read the message," he goes on, excitedly, running around to his sister's side of the table and spreading the envelope and its contents before her.

He is certainly not fooling her now, as she is compelled to admit when she is thus presented with the evidence. The same heavy style of writing that was without is within.

"Richard Roy, Esq.,"

"DEAR SIR" (it begins),—"I have pleasure in informing you that the will of the late Arthur Roy, Esq., of this city, bequeaths to his great-nephew and great-niece, Richard and Janet Roy (yourself and sister), each the sum of fifty thousand dollars. These amounts are invested in United States government bonds, and shall be forwarded to you in due course."

"I have the honor to be your obedient servant,"

"J. MADISON PERRY, Executor."

The effect of the reading on Janet is quite the reverse of that on her brother. Instead of breaking forth into joyous shouts, her sensitive nature causes her to burst into a flood of tears.

Dick looks at her in astonishment. What can she be crying for? he thinks. A legacy of fifty thousand dollars he does not consider a cause for weeping, and concludes that his sister has become mystified in regard to the time to weep and the time to laugh.

"What is the matter with you?" he asks, when the first outburst has subsided into occasional suppressed sobs.

"Oh, Dick!" cries Janet, wiping her eyes, "I believe you have no feeling at all. Just to think what a dear, kind uncle we have lost! How good of him to remember us!"

"Very good of him, indeed," adds Dick; "but I can't see that that ought to make one sad. Rather a cause for rejoicing, I should say. Poor fellow, he was so old he couldn't enjoy it, and I dare say he's better off where he is; that is, if he was as good as his will makes me think he was."

Janet is really grieved. Her nature is so intensely sensitive that a great kindness invariably has this effect upon her. She refuses any more breakfast, and goes hastily up to her room, where she spends the morning in trying to picture her uncle as he was when, so many years

ago, she sat on his lap, and child-like ran her tiny fingers through his long gray beard.

All through the morning, as, thinking thus, she sits diligently sewing, tears ever and anon well up in her eyes and go trickling down her cheeks before she is aware of their presence. As a natural consequence, twelve o'clock finds her with very red eyes and nose, and a general appearance of having gone through a most heart-rendering affliction. This is her condition when Sarah knocks at the door, and on entering announces that Miss Taylor is in the drawing-room.

"Oh, what shall I do?" exclaims Janet, in perplexity, as soon as the maid is out of ear-shot. "She will see that I have been crying, and will want to know all about it; and I really can't talk of it now. I wonder where Dick is; he might go and see her, and explain that I'm not well; but dear me"—getting up and smoothing back her hair with both hands—"I suppose he's out somewhere. He never is about when he's wanted, but is sure to be here when he's not." So, wiping her eyes for the hundredth time since breakfast, and giving her nose the fiftieth gentle blow, she goes softly down to the drawing-room in search of her visitor. Nellie Taylor—a rather short, plump girl, with a charmingly pretty pink and white face—rises quickly as Janet comes in.

"Oh, Jean!" she says, going to meet her, and presenting a countenance that for signs of weeping is not a whit better of than Miss Roy's, "I do so sympathize with you!"

Janet is much surprised at these words. On what account does she sympathize with her? Surely she cannot know why she has been spending the morning in tears.

"Come and sit down by me," Nell goes on, taking her hand and drawing her to a sofa. "Trouble comes to all of us some time, you know."

"But," begins Janet, thoroughly puzzled, as they sit down together, "my dear Nell!"

"There, now," interrupted she, "don't speak to me of it; don't tell me how much worse you feel than I. I know you think so, but indeed, my dear, my tears began to trickle down my cheeks again—you don't know how I loved him."

"Nell, what are you talking about?" Janet asks, excitedly, her grief having given way to astonished curiosity. "It is evident there is a misunderstanding somewhere."

Nell looks at her curiously.

"Are you angry?" she asks, in a hurt tone; "would you not have approved of his making me his wife?"

"You marry Uncle Arthur?"

"Uncle Arthur?" repeats Nell. "It is she who is surprised now. 'Who is Uncle Arthur?'"

"The dear, kind old gentleman who has just died."

"But I have been talking of Dick. You must have known I was. Poor dear Dick!" and again she is weeping as though her heart would break.

"But Dick is not dead!"

Nell looks up in incredulous, glad surprise. There is a movement of the portiere which covers the entrance to the library.

"Not likely to be soon," shouted Richard, running forward from his hiding-place, where he has heard all the conversation, his pleasant face wreathed in smiles.

The next moment he has caught Nell in his arms and is kissing away the remaining tears.

"You darling good girl!" he says, passionately, "now I believe you do care a little bit for me."

"But I cannot understand it," says Janet, in wonder. "What ever could have caused you to think Dick was dead?"

"The idea of asking me, after the letter you wrote!" replies Nell. "Didn't you tell me so? I didn't think, Jean, that you could perpetrate such an awful joke."

"But I wrote no letter," adds Janet.

Nell puts her hand in her pocket and draws forth an epistle.

"Read it," she says. "If you didn't write it, who did?" And Janet read:

"Friday morning.

"MY DEAR NELL,—I have very sad news for you. Our darling boy is no more. At twelve o'clock Wednesday night he breathed his last. Oh, how can I write it? I can scarcely realize that he is gone. Please do come out and see me. I know you thought a great deal of him, and can sympathize with me."

"Ever yours, JANET ROY."

Suddenly it comes to Janet that perhaps her great uncle was related to the Taylors also.

"Was he?" she begins; but before she can finish the question Nell answers her: "Yes" (sobbing). "Didn't you know it? Oh, why didn't some one let me know that he was so ill? I would have so liked to be with him!"

Janet looked pityingly at her young friend. Surely her uncle must have been a very lovable old gentleman to inspire this affection.

"But how strange it is," she thinks, "that I never knew we were even distantly connected with the Taylors. Perhaps Dick knew it, but I'm sure he never told me." Then she begins sobbing again for mere sympathy, and for a moment not a word is spoken.

"Was he so very dear to you?" asks Janet, bringing the cambric into play again.

"Oh, Jean," Nell answers, also wiping away the tears, "you cannot imagine how we loved each other. There was no time set, but then it was understood that it was to come off as soon as his salary was sufficient for him to"—and then she burst into tears again.

"What do you mean?"—in surprise. "What was to come off?"

"We were engaged, you know," Nell says, looking up.

"Engaged?"—with great astonishment. "Did you not know it?"

"But it is not my writing," says Janet. "I never make my e's like that, nor sign myself 'Ever yours,' and, besides, there was no black on the door."

"It is very like your writing, and I never thought of the black. Who could have sent the letter if you didn't?"

Dick, who is still standing with his arm about Nell's waist, bursts into a hearty laugh. "I am the author," he says. "It was a little April hoax, and it worked admirably—far better than I expected."

"You awful boy!" exclaim Nell and Janet in chorus.

"The boy is dead," persists Dick.

"But what a frightful story you told!" says Nell; "and how terribly I was worried!"

"It is all true," says Dick. "There is not an untruth in the whole letter: the boy is no more; the boy *did* breathe his last. I am a man now. Thursday was my twenty-first birthday."

"But you forged my name," says Janet.

"I put my initial below, if you notice," replies Dick. "And sure enough, there it was. 'And our wedding will be just as soon as you can get ready,' he adds, turning to Nell. 'The interest of fifty thousand, which you must know the puzzling Uncle Arthur just left me, plus my salary, is all-sufficient, isn't it?' and I say, Jean, how do you like the prospect of a sister-in-law? It was rather a pleasant April-fool after all, wasn't it?"—*Harper's Bazar.*

Where False Hair Comes From.

False hair having come to be recognized as a necessity of the modern female, it is interesting to trace its origin, and how this constantly increasing want is supplied. Live hair, bought "on foot" (to use the technical term of the trade), constitutes but a very small percentage of the stock in market, as there are few women who are willing to part with their locks for money, and those who have superfluous locks to spare grow fewer year after year. When second-hand tresses were needed merely to furnish wigs for a few elderly ladies, agents found no difficulty in securing a sufficiency among the peasant maids of Auvergne and Brittany. The present demand, however, greatly exceeds the supply, and it is asserted that Paris alone uses more than all the available crop in France, and that Marseilles (the great center of traffic in hair) deals with Spain, the Orient and the two Sicilies, for forty tons a year of dark hair, of which she makes upwards of 65,000 chignons annually. Under the name of "dead hair" are classed the "combing," which thrifty servant girls save up and sell, the clippings of barber shops, faded curls, worn out switches, etc. The scavengers of every city, both at home and abroad, value nothing short of a silver spoon among the refuse so much as a snarl of combings, however dirty, as it will find a ready sale. Such findings are afterward washed with bran and potash, carded, sifted, classed and sorted, and then made into the cheap front curls, puffs, chignons that abound in market. Much of this enters into the cheaper grades of the 350,000 "pieces" annually made in France, of which enormous trade England is said to be the best customer, and America almost as good. Late reports on the commerce of Swatow, China, show that a large export trade in "dead" hair gathered in the stalls of barbers, sprang up in 1873, during which year 18,800 pounds were exported to Europe. In 1875 the export of this refuse arose to 134,000 pounds, with a commercial value of over \$25,000. It is an undoubted fact, too, that pauper corpses are often despoiled of their hair to meet this same demand of an increasing commerce. Those, then, who sport other than their own natural locks, can never be sure whether these are redolent of the sepulchre, the gutter, or the servant girl's comb.—*Scientific American.*

Words of Wisdom.

Flattery is a sort of bad money to which our vanity gives currency.

Hard words have never taught wisdom, nor does truth require them.

What is the best government? That which teaches us to govern ourselves.

Some hearts, like evening primroses, open most beautifully in the shadows of life.

It is extraordinary how long a man may look among the crowd without discovering the face of a friend.

There is no wise or good man that would change persons or conditions entirely with any man in the world.

"A polite man," said the Duc de Morny, "is one who looks with interest to things he knows all about when they are told him by a person who knows nothing about them."

Conclusive evidence at a recent trial in England proved that a girl had become a mother at the age of twelve years and one month.