

"IT IS DEAD, THE MARSEILLAISE."

BY DR. THOMAS DUNN ENGLISH.

It can never die—the Marseillaise! 'Tis the song of man arisen in the strife For the life Which the people trudge down yearn to gain; It defines the ebb-tide's pain.

It will rise again—the Marseillaise! In its older, true and terror; 'Twill be pealed On the field Where the masses with the King-join in fight, To the bayonet's right.

It will come again—the Marseillaise! And heared by the nations; From its deep, Heavy gloom, It will rise upon the plain and its sound Shake the startled earth around.

It will rise upon the plain and its sound Shake the startled earth around With its terrace vibrations. Then the dead will sit it loudly, And the living hear it proudly; The Italian and the Greek In its rhythm glory seek.

GLIPT WINGS.

The most trying thing about Uncle Ted was his resemblance to his brother. It was sufficiently disagreeable to have an old man with tastes so low and habits so unpleasant fastened upon the family at all; but to see, and to know all saw, in this person the Leffer figure, and the Leffer features, and all the Leffer peculiarities to the very finger-nails, was a misfortune which demoralized the whole of that fortune of which the family motto boasted.

All attempts at reforming Uncle Ted had long since been abandoned. His brother, the doctor, had now grown accustomed to tolerate the complaints of his wife and children by half-remembered reminders of that complete and final release which the whitening hair and bittered frame seemed to prophesy was near at hand. No other comfort concerning the old man presented itself; and even this, suggested by his appearance and sometimes rambling mind, was made faint and doubtful by his good appetite, long walks, and early hours.

Uncle Ted had for years submitted himself to a blind dependence on his brother. He could not work, he could not cope with strangers. Innumerable were the situations his brother had obtained for him, and the wardrobes Mrs. Leffer with willing fingers had prepared, and the departures that Uncle Ted had made; but swift had been the return on each occasion, pathetic the tale, irresistible the prayer to be allowed to stay.

The doctor continued his efforts from time to time; but, finding them always followed by the same results, and finding also that as the dull form and noble-looking, half-vaunted face grew more and more like his father's it became more and more difficult for him to force him from under his roof. The doctor, therefore, had settled in his own mind, and made the family aware, he should not again seek a situation for Uncle Ted until he was compelled to place him in that from which return is impossible.

He was certainly a formidable incumbent — one whom it was impossible to exclude from society as it was to expect society to receive. Through his peculiar habits rendered it necessary for him to be banished from the room on the arrival of visitors, no one could be sure he would not come back for his niece's work-basket, or one of his enormous slippers dropped in his precipitate retreat, and in search of which all the ladies would have to rise, and turn about, and look under their chairs, while the doctor and Mrs. Leffer stood in sick, snuffling patience; and uncle bowed, and apologized, and uttered most absurd compliments, and made—as his niece afterward would declare—a "fearful exhibition" of himself.

Uncle Ted was full of admiration for these nieces, but they were scarcely able to appreciate his high opinion of them, their beauty, elegance, and accomplishments, since he was in the habit of confiding his opinion to the footman and the cook, who were kept well informed by him as to the conquests and matrimonial chances of the young ladies; and, indeed, as to most of the family affairs, private or otherwise, with which he might happen to become acquainted.

It was no longer of any use trying to keep him from talking to the servants. Who else could or would talk to him? His brother had done his utmost to frighten and persuade him out of the habit, had insisted on each member of the family devoting an hour a day to him, that he might not be driven to this extremity. But all was of no use. Uncle Ted was tireless, and full of it to keep his appointments. The young people were full of their own cares and pleasures, or rather of the pleasures which were their care. The strong young wings wearied of trying to fly so low as this man and degraded old eagle; so they left it, and pursued their own bright flight.

Uncle Ted now, therefore, almost unheeded, carried his paper down in the kitchen every morning, and read leading articles to the cook, who without ceremony ordered him from place to place, to suit her convenience; while the housemaid would peep over his shoulder at the advertisements, and the footman sit on the table, discussing politics with him, undisturbedly paralyzing.

The doctor could do nothing but sigh helplessly as he, passing the kitchen stairs for a stroll in the garden, heard that ineffectual voice losing every day something of its nobility of tone, and that pure ancient beauty so uncertain and vulgarized. Yet it would have been well for the family had Uncle Ted confined his friendship to his brother's servants solely. This, however, was not the case; for the doctor had more than once surprised him, before breakfast, standing

on the step, leaning against the area railings—his skull-cap on the back of his head, his hands in the pockets of his old dressing-gown—asking the milkman's advice on some delicate family matter, hitherto supposed to have been a secret from Uncle Ted himself.

Led gently away by his brother's trembling arm, and sternly, yet entrancingly remonstrated with in the seclusion of the doctor's study, Uncle Ted defended his conduct on the score of the milkman's being a very remarkable man, a gentleman under a cloud, a person of considerable natural endowments; and the interview would be brought to an abrupt close by an earnest recommendation from Uncle Ted that his friend should be asked to dinner.

Among the nurse-maids in the park, no less than among his brother's domestic and tradespeople, Mr. Edward Leffer was incessantly discovering some "highly gifted mind," or some "fine nature," that demanded not only the devotion of his morning hours, during which he would sit in speechless or eloquent admiration of the "mind" or "nature" in question, usually to the embarrassment of his owner, and of some policeman or of the constable on duty, but, unfortunately, too often demanded also, housing, in the shape of a silver thimble, brooch, or ribbon, plucked from the toilette-table of one of Uncle Ted's nieces.

When the family went out of town, Uncle Ted was left behind. To carry such a disgrace among fresh scenes and servants was, of course, out of the question; yet the alternative was a serious one. In fact, it generally happened that, from the moment of the family's return to the moment of its departing again, fresh revelations were constantly being made concerning Uncle Ted's peculiar modes of passing this interval of separation from his relatives.

At first when the doctor, on opening one after another of his favorite books, found himself possessed by a strong inclination to sneeze, and traced this strange effect of his exertion, finally a few grains of brown powder sifting nearly every page—he concluded that Uncle Ted had been devoting his time exclusively to studying during the family's absence. Sundry old volumes being missing from their places, and undiscoverable any where else, Uncle Ted's bedroom and favorite little retreats would be searched. As to the volumes themselves, the search would be vain, but would result in the finding of mysterious little tickets bearing mention of the missing books and their whereabouts; and not of those alone, but bearing mention also of other little trifling articles and their whereabouts. Perhaps the whole amount which the exchange of the things mentioned on the tickets themselves had brought Uncle Ted would not be more than ten or twelve shillings. But the moonlight thought to the family was not, after all, the way by which the money had been obtained, but the way in which it had been spent.

Who could tell for what purpose it had gone? Perhaps in wooing to be Mrs. Edward Leffer, Mrs. Woods, the tobacco-shop, a widow with six children, and a person for whom Uncle Ted had confessed a feeling of no common friendship, through her likeness to a certain Lady Emily, his first love; or perhaps it had purchased a betrothal gift for Mrs. Webber, the char-woman, whom the master of the house was ever in fear of having introduced to him as his sister-in-law.

It can not be supposed that the discovery of these tickets could be passed over as easily as Uncle Ted's other little eccentricities. A sense of unavoidable but useless duty compelled the doctor to summon his brother to his study, and endeavor to awaken in him some feelings of shame and penitence; but when, in obedience to his stern command, the tall form appeared, there was still so much of the old nobility about it that the doctor felt himself almost overcome with shame at the accusation he had to bring against him, and his voice would tremble as, pointing to the tickets on the table, he would say, "Well, Edward, so it has come to this, has it, again?"

Uncle Ted, though seated in an attitude as dignified as his brother's, would gaze on the tickets with the expression of a child being chidden for a broken toy, and wondering things whether the fact of its being rendered useless ought not to be considered sufficient punishment, without further interference.

Sometimes, when the doctor's words were more than usually stern and rousing, when his eloquence over the family honor came strongly, like the wind from mountain heights, to this poor fallen human eagle, he was stirred, would ruffle his feathers, and struggle to soar to where he had fallen from. His brother, pausing for want of breath, would gaze upon him with some hope, as he saw the thin figure draw itself suddenly up, as if stung, the long hand trembling and nervously stroking the long chin, the fine blue eyes kindling to something like horror as they rested on the tickets; but the very next instant, catching sight of his brother's relenting eye, Uncle Ted would forget every thing but the fact that he was about to be forgiven and set free, and the doctor saw that he had seized upon that thought with the joyous avidity of a child, though he still tried to keep the corners of his mouth drawn down, and an affectation of remorse in his eyes during the rest of the lecture.

When it was over, and the doctor looked after his retreating form, trying to cover its relief by a greater show of infirmity than usual, he sighed to think how useless it seemed even to point out to him a better state, since it was so impossible for him to reach it. Not only had fate so cast his lot, but he had taken away all by which he might ever hope to rise—his wings, which in this world could surely never grow again. The poor eagle might ruffle its feathers and struggle, but never soar.

It did continue to struggle at times even while its decadence went on so rapidly—when, while reading his paper, the house-maid, in her anxiety to hear of a more eligible situation, so far forgot herself as to lay her black-leaded fingers on his shoulder; or when, in the heat of a political discussion, the footman addressed him by an opprobriously familiar name; or when the cook, after the failure of repeated hints as to the kitchen fire being needed for other purposes than toasting the sole of his slipper by, dropped the poker accidentally on his foot; on such occasions Uncle Ted was seen to change from his normal state. The half-startled, meditative look would come suddenly into his eyes, the long hand began stroking the chin with quick, agitated fingers, the figure drew itself up, and make its retreat from the kitchen with a dignity that accorded but ludicrously with the set of the ragged and patched Indian dressing-gown, which had something of the character of the garments worn by monkeys on barrel-organs.

These attempts at flight were very rare, and of brief duration. Before his friends in the kitchen had enjoyed his absence a quarter of an hour, Uncle Ted would probably be again among them, assisting the offending house-maid to shell peas, helping John to spell out a love-letter from the country, or bowing at cook's elbow with his newly allied snuff-box, and the request, "Madam, oblige me. I have desired Mrs. Woods to put in a little more raspe than Scotch on purpose to suit your taste. You will oblige me?"

The grave or snice of such a day usually seemed to suggest that cook had not spurned the prayer, though it might have happened she had

not sufficiently recovered her temper to utter her accustomed magnificent reply—"Certainly, Mr. Edward, Sir," while her huge thumb and finger filled his tiny box which he held to tenderly, perfectly concealing his dismay, not only at so much of its contents being covered by the finger and thumb, but at so much more being scattered around in their efforts to squeeze themselves out of the box again without losing a grain of what they had secured.

One day it was exceedingly desirable that Uncle Ted should be so disposed of as to leave no danger of his intrusion at a little dance to take place in honor of his oldest niece's engagement. The task had been undertaken by Dr. Leffer, at the earnest entreaties of his daughter, who, in consideration of her high birth and poetic temperament of her betrothed, implored that he might be spared the sight of Uncle Ted until a closer intimacy would allow of some explanation as to his condition.

The queen of the evening was Uncle Ted's special favorite and the object of his most intense admiration. Ever since he had heard of the engagement he had been in a state of wild anxiety to see the person for whom all those affairs of Sophy's, in which he had shown her such lively though inconvenient sympathy, had been brought to so sudden a termination. But though Uncle Ted rushed out into the area, and started up every time he heard a carriage stop at the house, he had always as yet managed to miss his carriage; though he had paced the hall for half an hour when he knew him to be in the house and on the point of taking his departure, he had been always beguiled away before the moment came, and listened at a distance to the buoyant step and voice in indulgent disappointment. He did at last obtain a sight of him through the key-hole, and spent some time there—rushing down every minute to confide to the servants his impressions of the bridegroom elect from his narrow point of view, then rushing back to it again. These impressions, unfortunately, were such as to make him more eager than ever for an introduction. Countless pieces of paper were found about the house, the beginning of letters presenting "Mr. Edward Leffer's compliments to Captain Aldyce," and begging for an interview at Mrs. Woods's, or at some other of Uncle Ted's choice resorts, at the captain's earliest convenience. These notes sadly alarmed Sophy, who felt sure the writer was waiting his opportunity to throw one into the captain's carriage, or have it delivered to him in the house, as perhaps it would be, in her own presence.

All his efforts failing, Uncle Ted had of late begun to give way a little to despondency. This had been brought about by a severe cold he had caught through waiting half an hour in the area on a foggy evening just to see the captain's carriage fidgets pass by. He had not been out for the last day or two, to the wonder of several small pensioners of his to whom he made a daily allowance of hard-bake out of the little money with which the doctor ventured to trust him for his snuff. He had passed most of his time in the kitchen, had been rather more silent—"mopsy," as cook expressed it—and altogether less sociable than usual, muttering, when asked what he would take to eat, some gloomy allusion to a dry crust, and snappishly offering, when asked where he would sit, to go to the coal-hole, if his doing so would afford any body satisfaction.

Dr. Leffer found him seated by the fire, and his first glance at him led him to expect even more opposition to Sophy's wishes than he had anticipated. "I'm sorry to hear your cold's worse, Edward," he said, in a professional tone. "You must go to bed very early."

To his surprise Uncle Ted answered immediately. "Yes, Theodore, I think I will go to bed early to-night."

"I would, indeed, Edward," urged the doctor. "I think I'll go now, Theodore," declared Uncle Ted, rising from his chair.

"Well, I really would," agreed the doctor, trying hard not to appear too much relieved. It began to think as he gave Uncle Ted his arm up the stairs, that he must have forgotten about the party altogether, but as he gave him over to John's care in the hall he was undeceived in this matter by Uncle Ted's observing quietly, as he looked round at the emelmas and lights, "I should like to have seen Sophy when she's dressed."

"You shall do so," said the doctor. "Sophy shall run up and see you, only you must not trouble her about anything. She is overexcited as it is; you must not add to her excitement by troubling her in any way."

"No, Theodore," answered Uncle Ted, meekly, and after one dazed, lingering look at the lights and flowers, passed up the stairs with John.

He kept his word, for when Sophy went up to his little room at the top of the house, John carrying two candles before her, and her maid keeping her dress from touching the floor, Uncle Ted only raised himself on his elbow and gazed at her till the tears came into his eyes, then he lay down again, saying gently, "Thank you, Sophy; I'm much obliged to you, Sophy. I haven't excited you, have I, Sophy? Tell your father I have not excited you, my darling."

Sophy assured him with a conscience-smitten tenderness, and throwing him a flower out of her bouquet, and courtesying with mock solemnity at the door of his little room, left him by himself.

He had promised to send him some snuff, but forgot all about it, and he lay in the bed listening to the murmur and thinking of his darling, all loveliness and love, floating among the lights and flowers, and of the bright young conqueror, whom he was not allowed to see.

After lying so long time, he heard John bounding up the stairs to take a peep at himself before attending at supper.

Uncle Ted called to him, but he tripped down again, calling back carelessly, "Can't stop now, Mr. Edward. Just-a-going into supper. Lie down and keep warm now, or we shall be a-baving bronchitis set in. Be up directly. *Have reward.*"

It was about half an hour past midnight when John whispered something to Dr. Leffer that caused him to get up the room and go straight up to Uncle Ted's attic.

The doctor sat down on the edge of his brother's bed, scarcely knowing for a moment or two what it was which had so shaken him—his sudden ascent of the stairs, the sight of Uncle Ted's face, or the weak cry with which he had greeted him.

"Theodore, I will see him—I've a right to see him."

"Be quiet, Edward; you shall see whom you like; but don't excite yourself. What is the matter? Have you been alone long?"

The quiet, authoritative, professional tone and manner had some effect. Uncle Ted became a little calmer.

The doctor gave John some directions, sent him down stairs, made an alteration in the arrangement of the pillows, then sat down again and felt his brother's pulse.

"Theodore."

"Don't talk, Edward; don't talk just now," said the doctor; "presently will do."

"No, it won't, Theodore. I want to tell you something."

"Well, if it will relieve you. But you must be very quiet."

"Theodore, the night father died—you know I was alone, taking care of the house—mo and Mrs. Webber. I was out when they brought him home in a fit; I was taking a cup of tea at a friend's—excellent woman, Theodore—perfect lady, though I confess to be a muddle."

"Don't excite yourself, Edward, pray," said the doctor, beginning to have appalling forebodings as to the actual existence, after all, of the long-dreaded sister-in-law. "Well?"

"We had conversed on the subject of your quarrel with poor father, and the joked me about being likely to have all if he should die before you made it up, and said that people *die* say he had made a will in my favor. Then they fetched me, Theodore—Mrs. Webber came in a cab for me."

"Now you are exciting yourself, Edward."

"Theodore, he *did* have a will, leaving all to me; he put into my hands—his—his—"

"Be quiet; pray be quiet," said the doctor, half-dreadfully, keeping one of his brother's hands as he took the things they thrust into his arms. He was almost started out of his usual insensible pulse-beating expression. How great and sudden a change must have come to the poor, weak, isolated mind—all unnoticed—for such an idea to have found place and conviction in it! At that moment a recollection of his brother's manner when he had returned home after his father's sudden death caused the doctor to think over the words he had just heard in an entirely different spirit.

After sitting looking into his face a minute, he got up slowly and went to the candle with the paper Uncle Ted had given him. There was no mistaking it for the very same will whose reported existence, twelve years ago, had filled his heart with misgiving and bitterness.

"How could you do this, Edward? How could you receive me as owner of all, and remain yourself almost—God forgive me!—almost penniless? How could you, Edward?"

"Was I fit to be anything but almost penniless, Theodore?"

"But why not have told me—have shared it with me equally?" asked the doctor, with almost passionate reproach.

Uncle Ted sighed, and shook his head. "Ask your own spirit—he said 'spirit.' In imitation of cook—" Ask your own spirit, Theodore. You know as well as I do you would almost have cursed your poor father, Theodore—you know you would—and let your children starve, rather than let them touch a penny of his money so left. Ah, I knew you, Theodore—I knew you. I know I must be all or nothing. I say to myself, What am I? I only want to see the children happy, and find a home among 'em. And I have found a home, and been a lucky trial to you, Theodore; but it won't be for long—I feel it won't be for long, Theodore."

"The doctor sat with his face buried in his hands. The story had not startled him. He knew that such an act was simply natural to Uncle Ted. There had not been the slightest heresim about it; it had been his *castest* course, and therefore the one most pleasant to him.

"But, Theodore, you wouldn't always let me see you happy. Sophy won't let me see her happy; she won't let me see young Aldyce. It's too bad, that is, Theodore."

"I will fetch them," said the doctor, huskily; "the shall both come."

"Stop, Theodore," cried Uncle Ted, with a vehemence that left him breathless.

When the doctor reached the bedside, he had turned his cheek to the pillow, and closed his eyes.

"Don't call 'em," he said, faintly. "I like to hear the music, and to think they're happy. Don't make 'em leave off for me. I'd rather not see him now. I won't have her made to leave off dancing, and set a-crying with her happy eyes. Not to-night, Theodore. Let her dance; let her be happy. Bless her!"

After watching by him some little time, Dr. Leffer ventured to disrobe the master of the house so far as to undress his relatives and Captain Aldyce to his bedside.

Uncle Ted was so favorably impressed by Sophy's choice, that he left him a verbal introduction to carry to his special friend the policeman, lodging at Mrs. Woods's, whose acquaintance he strongly advised the captain to cultivate.

He passed away at seven o'clock in the morning, in the presence of all he loved, and looked on by a landlady of honestly regretful eyes.

The Indian dressing-gown was bequeathed to Captain Aldyce, and now serves as a nursery pin, the bright colours of which baby hands put adoringly. The slippers were left to cook, their owner having observed, he said, that she had a Cleopatra foot. The snuff-box had so many claimants that the doctor, to settle the matter, decided to retain it in his own possession.

PROVINCIAL THEATRICAL AUDIENCES.—In the small towns of the agricultural districts still linger some remnants of the old-fashioned audience of our father's days. These managers are still dependent upon the patronage of the surrounding country. Upon these people depend our great gatherings presenting curious studies of character to those used to the dull monotony of town audiences. First and foremost is the playgoer who has ceased to frequent the theatre save on such particular occasions, who shrinks his head at all modern acting, and after the play, adjourns to the bar parlour of the hotel to solemnly smoke a long pipe, and tell long stories about the actors of his youth. Then there are the serious people who object to such places, and live only some because Mr. So-and-so presented them with tickets: old ladies and gentlemen of extremely sour aspects, who never relax the preparatory moral look which they wear with the shooting things they carried around all plays are filled with. Then there are the serious young men of Christian associations, and the serious young ladies who, with much difficulty and after many anxious inquiries as to whether there would be anything improper, have been prevailed upon to take tickets in honor of the patron, but who in spite of all assurances to the contrary, look at first extremely uncomfortable, in anticipation of something dreadfully wicked coming every minute; then, however, gradually into a state of high delight. Nor must we forget the pleasant buxom people who do not visit the theatre very often but, when they do, thoroughly enjoy themselves; these are accompanied by many-faced children, who make the house ring with their boisterous merriment. Besides these, there are all the Mistresses and Misses, and Mrs. Somebody, and Mrs. Somebody else, and the farmers in the pit, who laugh until they are purple in the face, at the comedy, but grow uneasy at the serious portions of the play—the rustics in the gallery who have been treated by the rustics, who stare at the stage in open-mouthed wonder. And lastly, the negation of the night, the air or the lord, who sits in the box, surrounded by his friends, really enjoys the performance, upon whom all eyes are frequently turned. Of course everybody laughs when he laughs, and everybody applauds when he applauds. The town-bred may laugh at these unsophisticated people; but there will be found among them many of taste and education, who would not endure the slang trash of a burlesque, or the exciting rubbish of sensation dramas, but who can still relish the polished wit of our older, more noble contrast to the present, to be found in the brutal audiences of the manufacturing towns of the midlands and the north, into the theatres of which, always excepting the taste of a three-penny gallery, the most bloodthirsty of dramas and the most stilted of actors must be provided. I remember hearing a north countryman sum up his praise of an actor in these words—"Oh, he's a fine actor, look what his legs 'a got!"

When Charles Mathews visited the potteries, on a starring engagement of two nights, he was regarded by the pit and the gallery as a positive swindler.

"Call that acting?" cried many a teeming would-be actor, as he saw a man again if I was paid for it?"

"Dark Blue."

SISTERHOOD.

My brain is dizzy and wild. In the whirl of the hurrying street; And, oh! for the fields where the violets smiled, And the green grass under my feet.

I long for a voice that is kind, And a smile that is smil'd for my sake, And I think of the friends I have left behind, Till my heart is ready to break!

Lonely, and poor, and proud, And a woman, and none to care I could cry aloud to the pitiless crowd, And shirk in my great despair!

Yet, I have not suffered for bread, Nor the fire come out on my hearth, And I have a bed, and a roof for my head, And a good name still on the earth!

But sinful and desolate one, Branded and set apart, I stand so near, I can almost hear The throbs of your passionate heart!

I know how and you have been— How the voice of temptation is sweet— How to enter into the path of sin Is easy for t'reat feet!

Do I ponder at your fall, I wonder if I wonder that all Poor women are not as you are!

I know that you are not good, And 't'is wicked to do as you do, But if I had stood where you have stood, Would I have been better than you?

Whatever of ill you have done, It is yours, not mine; and I own I am not the sinless one That should dare to cast the first stone.

TWICE AN APRIL FOOL.

BY S. ANNIE FROST.

"What are you doing, Bert?" Herbert Irton looked up from his occupation. He had been carefully pointing a few lines upon a sheet of snowy paper, and evidently trying to disguise his hand-writing.

"Copy that for me, that's a good fellow, and I will tell you all about it."

"Give me your pen and a fresh sheet of paper," replied Mark Leslie, his friend, and in a few moments he tossed over the results of his labors.

"Now direct this envelope to Herbert Irton, Esq."

"Yourself?"

"No, 29, Elm Row."

"Oh your uncle."

"Now, I will fold and seal this, and then tell you about it."

"Read it, and see if it is all right."

DEAR SIR:—Will you oblige me by accepting a hamper of five game, which I will send to your residence this afternoon?

Yours truly, A. P. RILFOOL.

April 1, 1850.

"All right. Do you know my uncle, Mark?"

"I have heard you speak of him as an old bachelor of rather crusty temper, who resides with a maiden sister as cross as himself."

"Correct, as far as it goes. Uncle Herbert, for whom I was named, is not so very old, about forty years of age, and Aunt Mattie is five years older; but they have lived alone so many years that all the talk of human kindness is being curdled in their veins. Sister Amelia and myself have come to the conclusion that it is time they were coaxed out of their seclusion, and, with mother's permission, we are going to try our luck as doctors for the mind disease. Last month our washerwoman died, leaving a baby six months old, a pretty little girl, bright and lively, but, alas! the eleventh blessing in the family. Her father has gladly consented to let us have her. Mother and Amelia have made her abundance of clothing, and we are going to pack her in a hamper, and send her to uncle Herbert. Wait, my little brother, nine years old, is crazy to be the messenger, and, after dark this evening, he and I will carry the hamper, sending the note by mail this morning."

"Sure enough it is April Fool's Day! But suppose your uncle won't accept his live game?"

"Mother and Amelia will take her.—They will probably have the most care of her at any time. Aunt Mattie was always very kind to us, and mother thinks she will be perfectly happy to have a baby to pet, now Walt is outgrowing jumping-jacks and nine pins. She is always lamenting that he is not a girl, and over nice father died has been lavish of pennies and sweetmeats for the young scamp."

"If you want to get that precious document in this morning's mail, it is time you started it," said Mark, and the two young men strolled out together to the post office.

No. 29 Elm Row was a lovely home, situated about five miles from the heart of the city, but easily accessible by stage or carriage. It was not a very large house, a cottage in style, but substantially built, and finished with every convenience and comfort, taste and elegant money procuring. The fatherly stable accommodated a cow, as well as the two sleek horses and family carriage, and about the whole establishment there hung the air of staid respectability that will hover around single people no longer young. The only break upon the quiet monotony of the house was when the three young Irtons—Herbert, Amelia, and Walter—came to visit their uncle and aunt, which was not very often, as they were averse to the rather strict rules regarding flowers, fruit, and the use of the best furniture.

Mr. and Miss Irton, if truth must be told, although fond of their brother's widow and the children, only half enjoyed any break in the calm monotony of their existence; and even Walter, his aunt's favorite, was watched with terrified eyes when near the study library, or his aunt's parlour—books were the companions sufficient for the happiness of the gentlemen; and birds, rabbits, cats, and goldfish for that of the ladies. They lived in perfect harmony, each giving full scope to his or her peculiarities, and each having an ample income for their own comforts and many acts of charity; for they were kindhearted, even if in their manner to their gay nephews and nieces found them formal and prolix. On the momentous first of April, when such important machinations against their peace were in progress they were seated at luncheon, calmly unconscious of impending ills.

The gentleman short, stout, and florid, had been superintending his groncor in some horticultural mysteries; and the lady, also short, stout, and florid, had been finishing an elaborate piece of embroidery destined to cover a pair of ottomans for the drawing room. The conversation naturally turned upon their occupations, and Miss Mattie said, half sighing—

"Sister Grace and the children are coming to-morrow to pass the day, Herbert."—Little did they guess the reasons for the proposed visit.

"Dear me! I hope that young scamp Walter will let my young post-horses alone. He almost ruined the apricot last year with