

Very Choice Stanzas.

Madam, put this in your Husband's Pocket-Book. Speak kindly, gently to thy wife, She knows enough of sorrow;

Speak kindly, gently to thy wife, She may be growing old, And soon ye both may garner lie In shadows of the mould.

TOM'S WIFE.

We had just finished breakfast. Tom laid down an egg upon which had been playing with, and looked across at mother.

"Annt Anne, I think I'll take a wife," he said, exactly as he might have said, "I think I'll take another cup of coffee."

"Take a wife!" repeated mother, by no means receiving the information as tranquilly as it had been given.

"Well, I don't know," answered Tom, thoughtfully, "it's a notion I have got in my head, somehow."

"All nonsense!" said mother, very sharply. "Do you think so?" said Tom, apparently doubtful, but not in the least put out.

"Think so? I know it. What in the world can you want of a wife? After all these years we have lived so comfortably together, to bring home somebody to turn this house upside down! And then what's to become of that poor child?"

"The poor child—that was I—reddening at being brought into the argument in this way was about to speak for herself when Tom interposed, warily:

"And she's waiting, most likely, for you to make up yours," said mother, forgetting, in her propensity to right matters, that she was playing the enemy's game.

"There's something in that that never occurred to me," said Tom, his face brightening. Mother saw her mistake, and made a counter-move at once.

"But the ways of my times are old-fashioned now; young ladies, nowadays, take matters into their own hands. If she cared for you, you may be pretty sure she wouldn't have waited till this time to let you know it—that is, I judge by the girls I am in the habit of seeing; but if this one is a stranger to me—"

"Not that I have any such an idea," resumed mother-growing warmer; "I have said, and I say again, that to bring a perfect stranger under this roof is not my opinion of you, Tom."

"I felt my mother's words like so many needles and pins; for Tom was looking meditatively across at me, and, though that was just a way of his, it seemed now as if he were reading in my face that the opinion was mine, and that I had been meddling in what did not concern me. I felt myself, for very vexation, getting redder every moment, till it grew intolerable."

"It is so warm here," I said for an excuse turning towards the French window. "I'm going to get a breath of air."

"Not Letty?" repeated mother, turning to Tom. "Then why did you tell me so?"

"I never told you so," said Tom. "Why, yes you did," persisted mother. "You came in and told me you were going to be married."

"Yes, so I am," said Tom, still at cross-purposes. "Now, Tom Dean," said mother, rising and confronting him, "what do you mean? Who is going to be your wife?"

"I never supposed otherwise," said mother. "Of course I did not expect to turn you out of your own house."

"But what is the need of looking out for another?" "Why, for myself?" "For yourself!" repeated Tom, in a tone of utter amazement, "going to leave us—just now? Why, Aunt Anne, I never heard of such a thing!"

"Now, Tom," said mother speaking very fast, and making her needles fly in concert, "we might as well come to an understanding at once on this subject. I am fully justified of your part kindness—now, just let me finish—I say I appreciate it, and have tried to do my duty by you in return, as I hope I should always be ready to do. I wish all good to you and your wife, and shall be glad to help her if ever I can, but to live in the same house with her is what would turn out pleasantly for neither of us, and, once for all, I can't do it."

"Aunt Anne," said Tom, pushing back his chair, and staring in mother's excited face, "either you or I must be out of our wits."

"It's not me, then, at any rate," retorted mother, getting nettled. "Amusement and a certain embarrassment had kept me a silent listener so far, but there was no standing this; I tried to speak but could not, for laughter."

"I think you are all out of your wits together," said mother, turning sharply. "What ails the child? It's no laughing matter."

"You don't understand each other," I gasped; "oh, dear! it—it's not Letty—oh, dear!" and relapsed again.

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most ministers had been richer in grace than in goods, and had left us at his death with very little to live on. Then it was that Tom Dean had come forward, and insisted on giving a home to his aunt and to me, whom he had scarcely seen a dozen times in his life before. That was exactly like Tom—'queer Tom Dean,' friends were fond of saying, 'who never did anything like anybody else.'

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