

embarrassed, and that the colour had mounted to his swarthy cheek.

"Well, it's about religion," explained Tom. "You know, Sue, I'm not the sort of chap to sit in judgment on others, but I always think a man or woman has need of a double supply of the grace of God when they go right away from home like that into a strange country. It's not only the temptations—for there are temptations everywhere—but it's the change of life, the new surroundings, the cutting away of so many things that help to keep men straight at home, things we don't always think about, but which people are bound to miss when they get fixed in those wild, out-of-the-way places."

Susan Playfair glanced tenderly at her brother. He was not in the habit of speaking much on religious subjects—indeed, like many another, he kept his light too carefully under a bushel, forgetting the obligation laid upon us all so to let our light shine before men that they may be led to glorify the common Father, from Whom descendeth every good and perfect gift. And yet there were times when Tom could speak out bravely enough, though few knew how uniformly wholesome was the influence that he exercised on his mates and acquaintances.

"Perhaps, Tom, you ought to tell the Jessops what you think. What you say would have great influence," suggested Susan.

The reply came prompt and almost stern.

"No; my advice has not been asked, and I shall not volunteer to give it. As people make their beds they have got to lie on them. One gets no thanks for rousing them up and offering to make them more comfortable."

"You forget, you were far away when the idea was started, and father thought it was not a bad one at all," said Susan.

"Did he so?" and the question was asked with evident surprise. "Well, that is no affair of mine. Perhaps he is right, perhaps they are right; anyhow, I've my own opinion, but I won't trouble any one with it till I'm asked." And so the conversation ended.

And none of them were in a hurry to ask Tom Playfair his opinion; and that because people seldom seek for advice unless they have reason to hope that it will fortify them in the direction in which their own inclination has already turned them.

Reggie Jessop, having read a good many pamphlets and pored over several maps, began to consider that he had made quite an exhaustive study of the emigration question. He professed to set but little store by Tom's opinion; but as a fact he shrank nervously from the brutal directness of all questions as to what he was going to do, and so forth. He had established himself in dreamland, and there he wished to remain for the present. He could not say exactly what he was going to do. But had it not been almost invariably so with the pioneers of progress, and the men who had won to themselves the best places in the race for wealth beyond the seas? They had gone forth without any settled plan; they had followed their luck; something had turned up; they had "caught on" somewhere just at the right moment. So it had been often; so, no doubt, it would be again.

As for Sybil, she laughed to herself when she heard it whispered that Tom was dead against the emigration plan. She thought she knew the reason; and, perhaps, in part she did. No doubt poor Tom had been wounded in a tender spot, and the pain of that wound had unduly warped his judgment. That much he might have himself admitted had Sybil given him the chance to discuss the matter; but that was what she took good care not to do. She was determined to show her own independence; and indeed, as a matter of fact, Tom and his opinions did not trouble her much. She, too, had her dreams about what might happen in the realms of good luck and chance. She easily imagined herself "doing better" than marrying a grimy-faced engineer.

At all this honest Tom was grieved, but not surprised. Being a modest young fellow and a true lover, he willingly took Sybil at her own valuation, and himself too. He really believed that he was not worthy of her, and that he, a grimy mechanic, was guilty of great audacity in aspiring to win the affections of so smart a young lady. Mrs. Jessop always received him with an air of gentle condescension, and he became unconsciously impressed with the idea that he and his family were inferior people as compared with their more pretentious neighbours.

There was one thing, however, that surprised and puzzled Tom at this juncture—that was the relationship existing between his sister and Reginald Jessop.