

"For myself I don't know that I care very much," replied the girl frankly. "Every one says emigration is a good thing, and Reginald, at all events, seems to be wasting his time here. You know, they are really very badly off."

"They might be worse off out yon," said Tom gravely. "Emigration is all very well for the right sort of people, but it's a bad job for those who are not the right sort. I've seen lots go out, and I've seen a many come back, too—'returned empties,' you might call 'em."

"But don't you think Sybil ought to do well?" inquired Susan.

Tom winced. "Ay; but if she'd be advised by me she might do well without going all the way to America."

"I know what you mean, brother; but I am afraid Syb is not the sort of girl to be advised by any one."

"And what about Master Reginald? I'd have thought you'd have taken an interest in him, anyway."

"Not any special interest, Tom. I told him I thought it might be a good thing."

"And you and he are quite content to part?"

"Why not? That is—of course, the Jessops are our friends, and we'll miss them, it will make a difference——"

"You don't mean to say," interrupted the young man, "that the children are to be taken, and that poor wee woman that looks as if they kept her in a band-box from Monday till Saturday?"

"They are all going—going in a family party," explained Sue.

"Well, I call it madness, cruelty to animals, anything you like," cried Tom indignantly.

Susan Playfair was deeply distressed. "I wish we had said nothing—not till you came home, at all events. Perhaps I was wrong to encourage poor Reggie——"

"To encourage him—how so?" inquired Tom, perhaps maliciously.

"I mean in the notion of emigrating. You know very well that is what I mean," retorted Susan.

"All right," laughed the young engineer; "but to tell the truth, I think you'd have done him less harm if you'd encouraged him a bit the other way. Not that I want him for a brother-in-law—at least, that is, not that way,

not through you. But now will you just tell me what a chap like that could find to do in a new country?"

"Well, a gentleman who gave a lecture here said lots of young fellows got on as farmers—fellows that had been brought up in offices, too, just like Reggie."

"That may be," replied Tom, "I am not disputing it; though I'd guess most chaps of that sort were country bred, and never took kindly to office work. But I'll allow that a fellow with grit in him can do most things. Only folks go out from the old country, and they have no notion what they are going to; they don't know what they will have to put up with both on the way and when they get there."

"But they can read about these things. The gentleman who lectured said there would be hardships, that people would have to 'rough it,' as he called it, that there would be temptations and all that," urged Susan.

"Ay, that's right enough; but it's one thing to read about matters, and quite another to have to go right into them. There is a danger of people working themselves up till they think they are fit for anything. But the question is, will they persevere? And then, there is another thing——" and the young fellow stopped abruptly.

"Yes, Tom," said his sister, encouragingly, for she noted that he seemed



TOM AND HIS SISTER.