

FOOT-THREE

on me, because it's only like saying how much better friends we really are than we dared acknowledge before. I did not expect you to—to say anything for a long time to come; for I saw, Tom, you recognized that your first duty was to your mother, and I liked you a thousand times better for it. A good son makes a kind husband. You have been a dutiful, noble son, and not even when we are married would I wish to come between you and her. She will not be the less your mother then. And as for all the talk about and caricaturing of the mothers of men, whom a mere ceremony is supposed to transform into odious busybodies, I believe it is largely what the books call 'a figment of the author's imagination.' For several years yet, I shall be still young and inexperienced, so, as your dear mother is such a good, economical housewife, I insist, as the only condition to our marriage, that she shall live with us during her lifetime. One of my reasons for this is that Father and Mother have been too liberal with me, and I am getting to realize that I am rather extravagant, and so I wish to be taught economy. Your mother and I are better acquainted than you think, and I am sure we shall get along well together."

Then he said something rather incoherently, to which she replied in a tone inaudible but to the ear for which it was meant. And then, after further conversation, which the reader is left to imagine, she said:

"Well, then, a year from to-day."

When Tom got home, he found his mother asleep in her chair. So he hastily scribbled something on a piece of paper, put it where she would see it on awaking, and stole like a guilty felon to bed.

And this is what he wrote:

DEAR MOTHER,

Will you as a special favour let me get my own breakfast in the morning? You will find me sitting up so late that I will be over to see you to-morrow. I am, my dear mother, ever your affectionate son,

TOM

WILLIAM L. JAMES

