

"What in the world are you going to Chicago for?" she exclaimed.

"To get work. I might as well tell you, wife; I've been to see Squire Scott to-day, and I can't get another dollar on this place. It's either that, or—or Tom comes home."

Mrs. Belden wiped away a tear with her apron, and then mechanically commenced her work again. She couldn't speak. For more than a score of years they had worked and saved that they might have a little home of their own, and how thankful she had felt when, three years ago, her husband had brought home the last mortgage, redeemed! It was for Tom, their only child, that they had sacrificed so much.

"O Henry, I don't know what to do or say!" Her voice trembled, but her husband knew how she loved Tom and knew that she would consent.

Mr. Belden had done everything in his power to raise money that Tom might go to college, but times were hard and it was necessary to mortgage the place again. Crop after crop failed until he had drawn all the money that Squire Scott would advance on their place, and a crisis had come. Mr. Belden was a good carpenter and he felt confident of securing plenty of work in a big city like Chicago, though there was none about home.

"You know the elder says Tom is so bright and ought to have advantages," said Mr. Belden, after a moment.

"Yes, the Lord has been good to give us such a son," replied his wife, solemnly; "there aren't many like him, and such are created for something special, I believe. We're held responsible for the way to bring him up, and we ought to do our best by him on that account, even if we didn't love him enough to do it just for his own sake. The Lord knows how we've struggled to educate that boy, but now," her voice was broken with sobs for a minute,— "but now—no, it's the last thing on earth we can do, and I sha'n't oppose it; maybe it's the Lord's will—at least, no one shall ever say we left a thing undone we could do—for our Tom."

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A group of Milton College boys were lounging around the smoking-room of their fraternity house.

"I say, fellows," said one, "this term is half over and we haven't had a good out-of-town lark yet. Who's got something to propose?"