

Tom's Graduation

“**A**ND so tomorrow is the closing, and after that we are ushered into the world” said Tom Jones, speaking to five other graduates who are assembled in his room. “And I say, how many guests are you going to invite to hear your valedictory?” asked Jack Harris. Now we will have a chance thought he to see Tom's friends. “I shall invite no one,” answered Tom, “my friends are few”. But his conscience smote him as he said this. He knew that his chums were curious and would love to see a sample of his people.

“Say, let us get ready for Town, boys,” spoke up Bill Bradley, “I'm expecting a score of friends on the three-fifteen.”

So they all went out, and Tom was left alone.

Now Tom was one of those delicately sensitive young men, who did not mingle much with the “boys.” Many called him stiff and proud, but could they see into his heart they would find it warm, eager and longing for friendship, but with no way of displaying its feelings.

He is thinking of his mother all alone in their little country home; how he would love to have her hear him read his valedictory on the morrow; how proud she would be of him; how she toiled for him and planned and how he loved her in return; but perhaps the boys would laugh at her shabby little figure, perhaps their aristocratic friends might sneer at her. So he decided, it is better she is not here, surely thought he things work out unjustly and unfairly in this world, most of the boys can have all their friends and I can't have one. While thinking over this he falls asleep. The train stops at the little station of X— and Tom

Jones gets off. What is the matter? he does not look the same. his face is haggard and drawn; he does not notice the loveliness of the summer evening, the bird-song and beauty and bloom. Soon he enters the garden everything is as of yore, the trees look beautiful and green, the pansies and mignonette are in bloom and the morning-glories are twining around their trellises. He enters the house but all is still, no mother meets him and folds him to her breast, all is neat and trim as ever but his mother is lying cold and dead in her coffin; he kneels beside her lifeless form with a bursting heart. Her hands hard and calloused are folded across her breast, but grim death cannot rob her face of that sweet smile that so characterized it in life. Can you imagine Tom's sorrow? perhaps you can. A flood of thoughts came crowding into his brain. Once more he is a child kneeling by her side lisping his evening prayer, while her hand gently brushed back the curls from his brow. How she soothed him in his childish troubles, and in youth how good and salutary was her advice, but soon nothing will be left but the memory of her love and kindness, that will live in his heart for many long years. "O! if you could only awaken mother! I would never be ashamed of you." But no reply comes from those cold lips of clay.

An impatient rapping at the door rouses Tom from his sleep and his dream; on opening it the Perfect of Discipline enters, and tells Tom that he is wanted in the parlor.

Soon he is with his mother for it was she who came uninvited and unattended. "Perhaps I did not do right to come Tom but I could not stay at home." "You do not know how welcome you are answered he (thinking to himself I am glad it was only a dream.) He did not notice her shabby dress and bonnet nor did

anyone else, for to look at that sweet kindly face was to forget about such trifles and you may rest assured that no pleasanter smile ever played over the features of a departing graduate than that which adorned the face of Tom Jones, as proudly taking his old mother's arm he raised his hat in a last farewell to his old Alma Mater.

