

# The Port Tobacco Times

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**A Select Story.**

Her Son's Wife.

"Oh, Tom! Tom! I did not think  
she could be so cruel!"

The speaker was an elderly woman,  
in widow's weeds, and the picture she  
was gazing at showed a girlish face  
fair and delicate, with limping cheeks  
and a pair of soft blue eyes.

Tom Raymond was his mother's  
idol—at least, as much of an idol as  
was consistent with her devout ad-  
herence to the Decalogue; but her  
love for him had that unselfish quality  
that always characterizes true mother  
love, and when he brought home his  
young wife, she took the girl to her  
heart at once, thinking Tom with  
gentle pleasure, for the sake of her  
youngest daughter. And for a time  
everything went smoothly, the young  
couple making it a point to go to  
"Mother's" at least once a week, to take  
tea and spend the evening. Just how  
the alienation began it would be diffi-  
cult to tell. To Tom and his mother it  
was always a mystery, neither of  
them being conscious of harboring  
any unkindly feeling. Perhaps an  
unfounded suspicion in regard to the  
hygienic treatment of the baby had  
something to do with it for Lita was  
a warm advocate of "Mrs. Winslow's  
Soothing Syrup," of which nostrum,  
Mrs. Raymond, Senior, had a whole-  
some abhorrence; and perhaps it was  
partly due to Tom's frequent allu-  
sions to his mother's skill in prepar-  
ing his favorite dishes—young hus-  
bands are prone to all this sort of  
inexperienced wives by their out-  
spoken allegiance to the traditions of  
the mothers in culinary affairs; but  
whatever may have been the entering  
wedge, the breach had gradually  
widened, until all intercourse with  
the old home and the new was practi-  
cally at an end.

Even after matters had reached this  
unhappy pass Tom continued to make  
his mother's name a household word;  
but one evening, when, with little  
Phil on his knee, he began talking of  
"Grandma," Lita angrily interrupted  
him.

"I wonder that you ever consented  
to leave that mother of yours! I  
would think there was not another  
such on the earth!" she cried, a red  
spot burning on either cheek.

Tom looked at her for an instant,  
his fine gray eyes widening to their  
utmost limits.

"There are not many like her," he  
said, quietly; but after that he never  
praised his mother in Lita's hearing.

One day Aunt Trudy, who had  
come to visit, had been with Tom  
and Lita, and when she had seen  
Lita, with her satchel and un-  
derneath her handkerchief, her intention  
of making a week's visit.

"What a sweet looking old lady!"  
she exclaimed, the next morning,  
holding up a photograph that she had  
found buried under a heterogeneous  
collection of discarded *l'airs a bric*,  
from which Lita had told her to help  
herself to whatever she fancied.

"Who is she dear?"

"That! Oh! that's Tom's mother!"  
said Lita, indifferently.

"Your husband's mother? Why  
child, I must take me to see her. I  
know I shall like her."

"We are not on visiting terms," an-  
swered Lita, coldly.

"Not on visiting terms?" repeated  
Aunt Trudy, anxiously. "My dear  
child, I hope it is not your fault."

"I am sure I don't know what it  
is," said Lita, indifferently.

"You mustn't forget to show your  
musical album. That is a real  
curiosity." But Aunt Trudy was not  
to be turned from the subject in hand.

"Whoever is to blame, it is all wrong  
dear," she said, earnestly. "A wife  
who sets herself against her husband's  
friends loses what she can never re-  
gain in her husband's regards. Es-  
pecially ought his mother to be  
sacred to her. Remember he can  
never have another mother and for his  
sake, no matter what the trouble has  
been, you ought to be friendly with  
her. I beg of you, dear child, not to  
let it go on another day."

But the good words fell on stony  
ground; and when, on one day, Tom  
ventured to hint that he would like to  
ask his mother to take a dinner with  
them, Lita promptly an-  
swered that she had already invited as  
many guests as the table would accom-  
modate.

The same morning, while they sat at  
the breakfast table, a note was received  
from Mrs. Raymond, begging Tom to bring  
his wife and boy to spend the day with  
her.

"You will go, won't you, dear?"  
said Tom, eagerly.

"No, I will not," answered Lita.  
"You can go, if you like; but as I told  
you before, I have invited company to  
dinner, and it would be somewhat  
awkward to have you absent."

Tom, pushing back his scarcely  
tasted breakfast, rose from the table  
in grim silence and marched off, with-  
out even giving her his usual good-  
bye kiss.

"Poor Mother!" he said to himself,  
and though he had intended to write  
at once, he put it off until the last  
thing before leaving the office, hoping  
for some message from Lita that might  
change the tenor of the answer; but  
none came, and when at last he took  
up the pen he was strongly tempted  
to say that he and little Phil would  
come, but in doing that he would  
necessarily make Lita seem at fault;  
so, using as an excuse the fact that  
his wife had made other arrangements  
before her invitation was received, he  
expressed his hearty regret and pro-  
mised to drop in to see her as soon as  
practicable.

"Poor Mother!" he said again, as he  
dropped the letter into the lamp-post.  
"She will be so disappointed!"

And could Lita have peeped into  
the old home the next day, perhaps  
she would have said, "Poor  
Mother!" for Tom's letter, owing to  
his having, in his preoccupied state  
of mind, directed it to the wrong  
number, did not come to hand until  
Tom was ready to be served, and  
lying down alone, with those empty  
eyes staring at her—Tom's own high  
chair, that he had used when a baby,  
sitting for little Phil—the Widow  
could not keep back the tears. She  
had so longed to see them all, and  
especially "her boy."

"Just for one look from his dear,  
brave eyes!" she sighed that evening,  
as she stood gazing at Tom's portrait.  
From the little easel beside it Lita's  
girlish face smiled up at her.

"Oh! Tom! Tom! I did not think  
she could be so cruel!" she said, sor-  
rowfully, "to rob a poor old mother of  
her only boy."

One black afternoon, some two  
weeks after the dinner, Mrs. Ray-  
mond, Senior, had just stepped from  
a top-shelf, with her arms full of  
bundles, when she heard a glad little  
voice shouting, "Gan'ma! Gan'ma!"

"Why, Phil, you darling," she cried  
springing toward the boy, but before  
she could reach him a horse, of which  
the driver had lost control, dashed  
upon the sidewalk, and the next in-  
stant the childish figure lay bruised and  
senseless on the pavement.

"Give him to me!" cried Mrs. Ray-  
mond, dropping her bundles and  
snatching the little fellow from the  
stranger who had taken him up.

The crowd pressed about her, some  
full of solicitude, others simply curious.

"What could they do for her?"  
"Was the child seriously injured?"  
"Would she have a carriage ordered?"  
But she did not seem to hear them.

"Permit me, Madam," said a tall, el-  
derly man, bending down, he passed  
his hands carefully over the inanimate  
form.

"Not fatally hurt, I think," he said,  
"but his arm is broken. Take him  
home and have it set as quickly as pos-  
sible."

Her own carriage was in waiting on  
the opposite side of the street, and the  
stranger having summoned it and lift-  
ed her in, with the boy still in her  
arms, she directed the driver to lose no  
time in reaching home.

"It would take so much longer to  
carry him to Tom's," she said to her-  
self, and then, for the first time she  
remembered how it happened that the  
little Phil had been hurt.

Where was Lita? Where was the  
nurse? The next telegraph to Tom  
at once.

Fortunately, her physician was her  
next-door neighbor, and fortunately,  
they found him in. Once or  
twice the child had opened his eyes;  
but only to close them with a moan.

"Poor little man!" He has been  
pretty badly shaken," said the doctor.  
"And I am afraid he won't be able to  
hold up his head again very soon.  
He must be kept as quiet as possible."  
And Mrs. Raymond, hearing it, could  
not help feeling, in spite of her sor-  
row and anxiety, thoroughly glad that,  
since the accident had happened, she  
had the darling under her own roof,  
where no one could hinder her from  
caring for him.

At Tom's meanwhile, this house was  
in a state of alarm, an aggro,  
the nurse having made her appearance  
some two hours after the time fixed  
for her return, weeping hysterically  
and declaring that little Phil had been  
"stole."

"Share an' he was standin' formin'  
me, lookin' in at the wind at the wee  
Christmas; an' when I turned my-  
self to speak to him, he was nobber  
to be seen. An' sez I, the saint's bliss  
be darlin'! He's went inside! So I  
walks in meself, thinkin, look as not  
he was at some of the counters, but  
niver a sight could I catch of the  
charub, though I went from one end  
of the store to the other. And when I  
comes out there was an odd laddy,  
shure, an' she had the look of a laddy,  
Mom, bad as she's! Just alightin, in  
her kerriage, wid the darlin' in her  
arms. An' sez I, the blessed Virgin save  
him! An' afore I could speak the  
driver was off like a fether an' the  
wind, an' when I screamed to the  
police to stop 'em for a thafe, he just  
laughed in me face. Och! shure, an'  
I'll niver say a word."

But her mistress sat looking at her  
with a frightened face, too over-  
whelmed to speak or act, Tom had dis-  
appeared before the girl had half-fini-  
shed her story, and was already tele-  
graphing in every direction that sad-  
dest of messages, "A child lost." In-  
stinctively his heart turned to his  
mother. "But why trouble her? He  
is to himself. It would be time  
enough to tell her when the suspense  
was at an end, in whatever way the  
odd might come."

Late in the evening, Lita, watching  
for him in a state bordering on frenzy  
was startled by a sharp peal of the  
bell.

"Shure an' it's a telegraph, Mom.  
Praps you kin tell by the writtin' who  
it's from," said Maggie, the wringing  
with the inevitable yellow wrapper.  
The mistress tore it open with quak-  
ing hands. "Quick, Maggie! Put on  
your shawl and come with me," she  
cried. And tell Bridget to tell Mr.  
Raymond that we have gone to  
"Mother's." And half an hour later  
they were at Mrs. Raymond's door.

What words of reconciliation passed

between his mother and his wife Tom  
never knew; but when at midnight  
he walked in, wan and haggard, he  
found them sitting hand in hand,  
watching with trouble faces, little  
Phil's uneasy slumbers. He was too  
overwrought to trust himself to speak;  
but, going down on his knees, he put  
his arms about them both and the  
three wept together. During the anx-  
ious days that followed, while Nature  
was knitting together the poor little  
broken bones in the baby arm,  
a knitting together of hearts was also  
in progress, and by the time the child  
was pronounced "out of danger," Mrs.  
Raymond had found a daughter and  
Lita a mother.

"Stipped on the ice and broke my  
arm from heel to foot," sighed Mr.  
Spoopendyke faintly.

"Great gracious!" ejaculated Mrs.  
Spoopendyke. "Whereabouts? where  
did it happen?"

"Out door, dod gusht it! Where'd ye  
'spose I did it? Think I brought the  
ice in the house and laid down on it?  
Oh, dear! I'll never get my clothes off  
again. I've got to sit here and die."  
And Mr. Sloopendyke leaned back in  
the chair and closed his eyes with re-  
signation.

"I'll help you off with your hat and  
overcoat," said Mr. Sloopendyke ten-  
derly. "Let me help you."

"Be very careful about taking off  
my hat," said Mr. Sloopendyke, foun-  
ding up. "Take it off easy, or you'll  
hurt my elbow. Pull the left arm of  
my overcoat down, so it will slip off  
—what ye doing? Trying to skin me?  
That sleeve's full of broken bones, I  
tell ye. Now help me to a chair. I  
knew I must go sometime, but I never  
expected to die so suddenly as this."  
And Mr. Sloopendyke, putting his feet on  
a chair and composing himself for dis-  
solution.

"You'd better let me attend your  
arm," recommended Mrs. Sloopendyke.  
"If it is badly sprained, you ought to  
have something on it."

"Did I tell you it was broken?  
Just got curiosity to see, haven't ye?  
Can't wait for the post mortem, can  
ye? Go ahead. In a little while I'll  
be beyond pain. Just take and do  
what you like with it," and Mr. Sloop-  
endyke struck the maimed arm out  
straight and waved it around like a  
bam.

"If you let me rotate it a little, and  
then bind it up with arnica, you'll be  
all right in an hour," cried Mrs. Sloop-  
endyke affectionately.

"Rotate it, then," murmured Mr.  
Spoopendyke. "I don't suppose it will  
make much difference to my estate.  
Take it down in the kitchen and ro-  
tate it. You might—hold on, dod gusht  
it! What'd ye think I am—a  
pump? Got an idea I'm a clock?  
Let go that arm, will ye?" and Mr.  
Spoopendyke pranced around the  
room. "Oh, ye're a surgeon, you are.  
All you want is a buckus and a  
broken balustrade to be a medical col-  
lege. Going to pull out by the roots?  
Spose that's a good idea?"

Mr. Sloopendyke, who had been  
brushing the injured member, be-  
came to stroke his shoulder and sym-  
ptomize with himself.

"Let me be it in arnica," said Mrs.  
Spoopendyke. "That's the best thing  
in the world. Just let me turn up  
your shirt sleeve and I'll fix it in a  
minute."

"Very good," said Mr. Sloopendyke;  
"I don't suppose it will do any harm  
to hurry matters. I got a dress suit  
brushed. Have I my shirt with a  
button on the back to be buried in?  
Have I got a pair of socks that's my  
immortal soul won't shine through  
the toes of? 'Cause if I haven't, ye  
had better use some of your measly  
arnica on my clothes. If you think  
I'm going into the tomb all covered  
with grease, and my shirt flapping  
around me like I was a clothes  
line, you're mistaken, that's all; and  
Mrs. Sloopendyke eyed his wife gloomily,  
while she prepared to have his  
sprained shoulder. "Will you put me  
in a casket?" he moaned as she began  
operations.

"Yes dear," replied Mrs. Sloopen-  
dyke. Mr. Sloopendyke regarded his  
wife with one eye and grunted feebly.  
And you'll put on a silver plate  
with my name and age, and get a few  
flowers? You don't want many. I  
shan't mind the rest, but don't moan  
at me. Will you attend to it?"

"Yes, answered Mrs. Sloopendyke,  
"I'll see that you have lots of flowers  
and a big fun—"

"I don't want a big funeral. Sup-  
pose I'm being cut off in the midst of  
my usefulness just because funerals  
are cheap? Have you got a clean  
handkerchief to put in my pocket  
when I'm dead?"

"Certainly, dear," replied Mrs. Sloop-  
endyke; and having thoroughly  
bathed the arm, she bandaged it care-  
fully. "Don't you feel better?"

"Perhaps if it were amputated in  
time I might get well," rejoined Mr.  
Spoopendyke, hitching his arm  
around to see if he could find a pain  
anywhere. What kind of cravat have  
I got to wear in case of—in the event  
of the worst? And Mr. Sloopendyke  
approached the climax of his question  
as a man who shrinks from the inevi-  
table.

"The one you've got on will do,  
won't it?" inquired Mrs. Sloopendyke.  
"No it won't either. Is that all I've  
got? Expect I'm going to be buried  
among strangers in a dod gasted neck-  
tie that won't hold together four days  
longer? Calculate I'm going to be  
promised land as though I was hunt-  
ing for a job? Want me to prowl  
around among the dead, lamented as  
though I'd busted up in business?  
Think I'm a measly tramp?" and Mr.  
Spoopendyke tore of the tie and  
stamped on it, and then dove into the  
bed.

"Can't you bring up my breakfast?  
demanded Mr. Sloopendyke, the next  
morning. "My arm's so lame I can't  
go down stairs."

Mrs. Sloopendyke brought it to  
him an hour later; when dressing, he  
asked for his necktie.

**Correspondence.**

Mr. Editor:—In your issue of the  
4th inst. over the signature of a voter,  
a correspondent combats local option  
as a special election by the people of  
Charles county on that subject, saying  
I do not believe in depriving the  
State of so large a revenue because  
some people choose to abuse the privi-  
lege, neither do I believe in closing  
the stores which sell the same; then  
argues that such action would in-  
crease drinking in the county, whisky  
being brought in clandestinely, and  
then proceeds as follows: "No citizen  
in this county admires temperance or  
total abstinence more than I do, none  
can have a greater abhorrence for in-  
toxication, but as I said before, local  
option laws in Charles county to make  
people sober with our proximity to  
Baltimore and Washington, is simply  
absurd. Less whisky might be  
drank at stores, but double the quanti-  
ty in secluded parks and tence cor-  
ners, which I can never vote to sanc-  
tion."

Now local option is no new experi-  
ment in this State, and I propose in a  
brief way to show its result elsewhere  
under even more disadvantageous cir-  
cumstances than our own.

In Worcester county the vote was  
taken and local option carried in  
April, 1874, and in May, 1875, several  
letters showing its workings the first  
year from which I quote.

Dr. Quinn, of Newtown, says: "Per-  
haps there is no county in the State  
where local option obtains in which it  
has been subjected to so severe a test  
as in Worcester, bordering Delaware  
on the North, Virginia on the South,  
and a district in Somerset county in  
this State in which licenses yet pre-  
vail, we have been subjected to the  
same within our county pro-  
vided outside its limits. We have two  
rum mills just across the river Peo-  
acomac county, Va., with whisky  
stores all along the line; thus you see,  
liquor is very accessible to our people,  
and there is not one sixth of the drunk-  
ennesness now in our community with  
which we were formerly afflicted. The  
drunkenness which now prevails is  
almost exclusively confined to the old  
drinkers in whom the habit is so con-  
firmed and their moral sense perverted  
that they have become the helpless  
slaves of the appetite."

Rev. F. B. Benson, of the Metho-  
dist Protestant Church, not only con-  
firms the statement of Dr. Quinn, but  
goes more into details, he says of  
Newtown: "Formerly drunkennes  
fighting and profanity and all the  
horrid sights and sounds of inebria-  
tion were the common scenes of Sat-  
urday. The law has reduced this  
nineteenth century. Very many who  
were accustomed to squander their  
scanty earnings for strong drink, now  
spend them for the benefit of their  
families and go home sober."

Our Chief Judge, Magruder gives  
effectively decided testimony to the good  
results of local option in Calvert  
county, that crime and drunkenness  
are greatly diminished though they  
had at first to contend with whisky  
stores all along these borders, and the  
easy access to Baltimore of those who  
wished to bring it in demijohns and  
and jugs, and sell it at a fence corner,  
&c., as described by voter.

I also see one of your correspon-  
dents lately gave a good account in  
your columns of its marked success in  
Prince George's county, though much  
nearer to Washington and Baltimore  
than we are, and consequently more  
exposed to smuggling in and secret  
sales than we are.

Then Mr. Editor, with all this tes-  
timony and much more at hand of the  
good results of local option elsewhere,  
I am unwilling to insult the good peo-  
ple of Charles county (as voter virtu-  
ally does), by charging them with be-  
ing worse violators of law than their  
neighbors, or more insanely bent on  
destruction by strong drink in secret  
than others, but believe the law would  
be fairly enforced, not without some  
violations to be sure, but so greatly to  
lessen crime in our midst and re-  
lieve our people of many burdens they  
now bear, and we would become as I  
have shown they have elsewhere, more  
thrifty and prosperous people.

OCCASIONAL.

**Select Miscellany.**

An Interesting Invalid.  
Mr. Sloopendyke's Narrow Escape from  
the Silent Tomb.

"Why what's the matter, my dear?"  
cried Mrs. Sloopendyke, as Mr. Sloop-  
endyke limped into the room and  
dropped into a chair. "What on earth  
has happened to you?"

"I fell down and killed myself,"  
moaned Mr. Sloopendyke.

"Now, where?" asked Mrs. Sloop-  
endyke, bustling around him, all  
nervousness. "How did you do it?"

"I wish you'd look for it," querul-  
ously. You know I can hardly move."  
"Here it is, dear," said Mrs.