

*JOCK TURNIP'S MITHER-IN-LAW.*

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JOCK TURNIP got married to Jenny Sybo yae nicht very suddenly, after an eventfu' coortship o' seven years' duration. The event having cam' aff suddenly at the last, Jenny urged Jock to consent to lodge wi' her auld widowed mither, till such times as they had gathered twa-three hoose-things thegither. On hearing the proposal, Jock laughingly said—

“Weel, Jenny, my dear, my name's Turnip, an' your mither's name's Sybo: neeps an' sybos usually mak' no' a bad blend; sae, I think we'll e'en gang an' lodge wi' yer sonsie auld mither, Jenny, dear.”

It was a' richt the first nicht o' the marriage. Mrs. Sybo was in gran' tune—the dram being guid, an' her—weel—no' juist teetotal, ye ken. Everything gaed on first-rate, an' like rale clock-work, an' Jock thocht he had got married intae a fine, warm, cosy nest. An' it very sune proved a warm enough nest, nae doot, but—Jock shook his heid ower the rest o't.

Weel, the very next mornin', Jock fand oot, to his cost, that he had married his mither-in-law, as weel's her dochter, an' that the courageous mither-in-law had already put on the domestic breeks, an' was very evidently intendin' to regularly wear them. The dawn was juist beginnin' to blink thro' the window shutters, an' the half-past five o'clock bells were scarce dune ringin', when the awfu' voice o' Jock's mither-in-law was heard ootside the room-door, cryin'—

“Get up, Jock Turnip, if ye're a man at a', an' mean to begin life weel! Get up, an' dinna lie there, sotterin' in yer bed till a' hours o' the mornin'.” Jock roused oot o' deep sleep, rubb't his twa bleer't e'en wi' his faulted knuckles, an' turned his gaze for a moment on his newly-made an' lovely better-hauf, wha was lyin' alangside o' him, six miles deep in a soun' sleep at the moment.

“Jenny! (no response) Jenny!! (no movement) Jenny!!!” (gi'en her a heavy dunch wi' his bent elbow)—

“Um?” grunted Jenny.

“Yer mither's wantin' ye.”

“Naething o' the kind,” said the mither-in-law, “let the puir, wearit lassie lie still. It's you I want up. Get up, an' get oot to yer wark this minute, or I'll very sune open yer twa steekit e'elids wi' the clash o' a wat dishclout! D'ye hear me speakin'? get up at yince, Jock Turnip!” and Mrs. Sybo began drumming pertinaciously on the door panels.

“I was married only last nicht!” expostulated Jock.

“A’ the mair need ye should get up an’ hurry oot to yer wark this mornin’, ye lazy, guid-for-naething sumph!”

There was no escape from this kind of annoyance; but so long as Mrs. Sybo was kept outside the snibbed door there was at least safety from personal harm. So Jock, who had a certain rude sense of humour, got up and deliberately locked the bed-room door from the inside.

“An’ noo, Mrs. Sybo,” he cried through the shut door to her, “I’m gaun back to bed for twa hours’ rest, an’ I’m thinkin’ ye’d better be daein’ the same.”

“Gang back to my bed!” yelled Jock’s defeated mither-in-law: “gang back to my bed, an’ a lazy, yisless, guid-for-naething son-in-law sleepin’ awa’ his seven senses on the first mornin’ o’ his married life—the thochtless, extravagant scoundrel!”

So far, Jock had clearly defeated his domineering mother-in-law. She had made the first move on the newly-arranged domestic draught-board, and he had rather smartly checkmated her play. Thus far, the best of the game was his. But Mrs. Sybo, although checkmated, was by no means defeated. She was a woman, and being a mother-in-law, she was a woman of very considerable resource. So she began to noisily heave about the kitchen furniture, ostensibly by way of showing her indolent son-in-law a brisk example of domestic energy, but in reality with the intention of tormenting him into a prompt compliance with her demand.

“Faith!” thought Jock, “I may lie in bed till doomsday, if I like; but, my wordie, I’ll no’ be allooed to sleep yae blessed wink mair, I see—lie or rise!”

Bang! (rattle—addle—daddle!)

“Ow, what a smash! that’s the three-legg’t stule she’s flinging about; I’m vex’t for the neebors below!”

Crash! (jangle—angle—dangle!)

“There goes the fender!”

Breenge! (pirr—irr—irr!)

“O’d, that’s surely the tangs swishin’ across the flair!”  
Dump! (dirrump—irrup—irrup!)

“Great sticks! that’s the auld watter-stowp noo! the table ’ll gang next!”

At this juncture, however, Jock’s lovely better-hauf suddenly jumpt up, an’ look’t wildly roun’, wauken’t oot o’ her six-miles-deep sleep by the crashing noises in the but-an’-ben kitchen.

“Eh, Jock, dear, what’s gaen wrang at a’? is this the last day, the jidgment mornin’, or what?”

“’Deed, Jenny, lass, an’ I’m jist thinking it’s either the crack o’ doom, or some terrible earthquake that’s takin’ place.”

“Oh, mercy me! an’ whaur’s my puir mither?”

“She’s busy superintendin’ the removal o’ the kitchen furniture.”

“What! Jock; are we flittin’ then?”

“It seems sae!”

“An’ whaur are we flittin’ to ava’?”

“Weel, Jenny, last nicht when I got married to you I thoct I was flittin’ to bliss, but on waukenin’ this mornin’ I find I’ve taken a trip to perdition; an’ the only thing that vexes me is the want o’ a return ticket back hame again.”

“Eh, Jock, that’s a sair word for a man to gi’e a new-married wife,” said Jock’s better-hauf, reproachfully.

“It’s no you, my dear; it’s yer lovely mither that’s the sair bit. She’s a fine, big, roun’-shape’t, sonsie-lookin’ woman, but her tongue’s been dippit in vitriol; an’ if yer late respected father dee’d abroad I wadna blame him for’t.”

Weel, to resume, Joek attacked his bowl o’ porridge in dour silence that mornin’, an’ gaed oot to his wark wi’ his mind in a kind o’ mixed state.

“Hallo, Jock,” said a bench-mate; “greetings t’ye, noo that ye’re a married man; an’ what think ye o’ the wife?”

“Wh—wh—which o’ them?” asked Jock.

“Which o’ them d’ye ask! o’d, are ye a Mormon, Jock? ha’e ye married twa?”

“Seems sae,” answered Jock. “I’ve married the wife, an’ along wi’ her, her tart auld mither intae the bargain; an’, let me tell you, the pair o’ them’s likely to mak’ a fou’ handfu’.”

“There’s mair than you in that same box, Jock; but listen; if ye’ve ony notion o’ character, a mither-in-law’s a gran’ study for ye.”

“Study, be hang’t! no, no; I’ve nae notion o’ studyin’ her character onyway; I want shot o’ her; can ye advise me, mate?”

“Ay, can I, Jock.”

“What then?”

“Shift yer lodgin’s, Jock; it’s the only effectual cure.”

“Ye’ve said it, man; ye’ve juist said it. I’ll e’en shift my quarters this verra nicht; mony thanks to ye for the kind hint.”

Weel, that same nicht, Jock, before gaun hame, secured a room for himself an’ his better-half, Jenny, an’ gettin’ a han’-barrow, an’ along wi’ that the help o’ twa strong men, he hurried awa’ owre to his awfu’ mither-in-law’s, to remove his wife’s “kist an’ beddin’,” along wi’ her share o’ the hoose furniture, which simple Jock had been a’ along led to believe was most valuable, and very extensive.

Arrived at the door, Jock sent up the biggest o’ the twa men he had brocht along, wi’ a message for Jenny to come doon at yince, an’ to bring her kist an’ her beddin’ along wi’ her.

“Is Jock Turnip wi’ ye?” was Mrs. Sybo’s first pointed question.

“He’s waitin’ at the stair-fit,” was the answer.

“Send the rascal up here this instant; I want to see him very particularly.”

Down goes Jock’s assistant with the curt message.

"Weel, hoo does the moral barometer stan'?" was Jock's first question, "stormy lookin', I suppose?"

"Ye're wanted up stairs, Jock, by yer amiable mither-in-law, very particularly."

Jock touched the one side of his nose with the tip of his fore finger; and winked suggestively with the opposite eye.

"What, are ye no gaun up?" asked his cronie.

"No this time," answered Jock.

"What, frichtit, Jock?"

"No exactly that," answered Jock, "but, ye see, my life's no insured, an' if I was to venture on an interview wi' my most amiable mither-in-law at this interesting juncture, it's mair than probable ye'd get me to hurl hame on that barrow, instead o' my wife's portion o' the hoose furniture, d'ye see?"

Yes, they both clearly saw it, and had not long to wait a final solution of the dilemma.

In less than twa minutes doon comes Jenny wi' her share o' the hoose furniture in her arms, in the shape o' a hymn-book, a cup an' flett, a pair o' fitless stockings, a disconnected "dress-improver," an' a broken umbrella of great size, but of quite indefinite age. An' hard after her cam' also down Mrs. Sybo, Jock's awfu' mither-in-law, wi' fire in her twa black e'en, an' an auld broom-handle fiercely grasped in her han'—

"Ye wad steal awa' my dochter, ye heartless fellow, an' syne ha'e the impidence to come back wi' a barrow for my hoose furniture, ye unconscionable rascal! O'd, I'll furniture ye!" and swinging aloft the formidable broom-handle, Jock's valiant mither-in-law made a sweeping charge at the whole group—the empty barrow included.

"The situation's dangerous," cried Jock, "lift men, an' rin for yer lives!" an' afore twa ticks, the spot was clean vacated, an' Jock's drum-major o' a mither-in-law was left in free possession o' Jenny's imaginary kist—alang wi the

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equally-imaginary stores o' beddin' an' general kitchen furniture foolishly supposed to belang to her.

Jock, however, keeps a firm haud o' his new lodgings, and thinks the bargain a perfect blessin', noo that he has secured undisputed possession o' his wife, Jenny, and got happily rid o' his awfu' terjer o' a mither-in-law.

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