

I wondered about Mary and the children and since the nurses had left for a few minutes, I asked my father about their condition.

"It is very serious, Joe," he said; "I don't think I can tell you about them. Here is yesterday's paper with an account of the whole accident."

As he handed me the paper, the headlines stared me in the face. "Mother and Two Children Fatally Injured, Father in Hospital in Critical Condition after Car-Truck Collision on Dangerous Curve."

M. J. R.

WILLIAM GOES TO A WAKE

William Blackburn lived with his mother on a small farm. Nature was the sole means of livelihood for uneducated William and his mother. In fact, nature provided everything for William except a wife.

William was not handsome. He was tall and somewhat slim except for a few extra pounds around the waist. His fifty years had brought a few wisps of grey to his otherwise jet black hair. His countenance might have been handsome except for a protrusion of the lower lip, which was, however, somewhat hidden by a large black mustache curled upwards at both ends.

One cold morning in January William was plodding his way through the deep snow on the way to the mailbox. As he neared the gate, the mailman was bringing his horse to a stop and preparing to put the mail in the box. William spoke.

"Good mornin, Joe. This is a bad sort of a day."

"Yea. It's cold alright."

"Yes, I guess it went down to about ten below last night."

"If not more."

"Any mail, Joe?"

"Just the paper. By the way, did you hear the latest news?"

William looked at the mailman with his dark eyes twinkling.

"No, I don't think I did."

"Timmy Butler died last night."

"Get out!"

"Yea, poor Tim is gone."

"Yea, I guess I'll go and tell Mar the sad news. Good-bye, Joe."

"So long, Will."

William put his newspaper carefully in his coat pocket and slowly wended his way toward the little house in the woods. Now and then he pulled his collar higher over his ears to escape the snowdrifts, but all the time he thought about Tim's death, and was eager to surprise his mother with the news.

When he reached the house his mother was preparing breakfast, and seemed to be in a particularly good humor this morning.

"Any mail, William?" she quickly inquired.

"Get the smile off your face, Mar. Tim's dead."

"No! William."

"As sir, he died last night."

"Well that's the way it goes. Pretty soon I'll be gone too."

William did not bother to comment on this remark, but took off his coat and cap, and with an air of satisfaction sat down with his mother to breakfast. The two were quite silent except for an occasional request for some of the food, which was spread out upon the table. The silence was soon broken, however, by a knock at the door and a fierce barking of the dog, aroused from a peaceful slumber in his bed by the stove. William jumped to his feet and tried to quiet the dog.

"Go and lie down, Bob. You are one. . ."

William hastened to the door eager to see his visitor. After a few more vain attempts to quiet the barking dog, he opened the door to an elderly man named John Stratt.

"Good day, good day, John. This is a cold sort of a day. Come in.

"Why don't we take the day off and hang that dog!"

"Ha! ha! I wouldn't part with that dog."

"I was just passing by, and I thought I'd drop in and tell you about Tim's death."

"I heard about it this morning."

"Are you going to the wake?"

"No."

"It's pretty bad when a person can't pay his respects to the dead. Why didn't you go to Bob Hughes' funeral?"

"He'll not come to mine."

"Education is what you need, William. Why didn't you

go to school when you were young?"

"Well, the first day I went to school the seats were filled. I had to stand up, so I never went back."

"Why do you get the newspaper? YOU can't read."

"To make monkeys ask questions."

"What a silly old nut you are! Tell me, why don't you get married?"

William's mother, who had remained unconcerned during the conversation, was brought to attention by this last question.

"There'll be no Biddy McGee in my wee corner."

John glanced from one to the other and decided that he had better leave before he started trouble.

"I must be going. I got some wood to chop."

"Well so long John."

"I'll see you at the wake, William."

"I'm doubtful about that."

The remainder of the day passed quietly for William as he went about doing his usual chores on the farm. All the time, however, he was seriously thinking over the things that John Stratt had said to him in the morning. Maybe he did need education. Maybe he wasn't doing right after all. As evening approached his conscience bothered him so much that he was forced to make the decision. He hurried to the house to make preparation for the wake.

"Mar, iron the white shirt. I'm going to the wake."

"What came over you, William?"

"I'm changin' my ways, Mar. I think a man ought to pay his respects to the dead."

"Well, O.K. Suit yourself. I'll have yer clothes ready in a jiffy."

After supper, William got ready for the wake. He washed, shaved, dressed in his best, and then stepped out into a dark, cold night. He weakened as he thought of the long walk and the silliness of the night. However, he was not a man to change his mind after he made a firm decision. For over an hour he plodded through the snow, now and then meeting people coming from the wake, until finally he reached his destination.

The wake-house seemed dismal to William as he gazed at the snow-covered roof, and observed that there was nobody outside. Near of the windows, there were two doors. William stopped and pondered which door he should enter. After a moment's consideration he picked the one which he thought to be the porch-door, opened it, and entered. For a few brief horrible seconds he realised what he had

done, then he lay senseless at the bottom of the cellar.

After a few minutes William struggled painfully to his feet. His whole body ached. His clothes were torn and covered with sand. Home was his only thought. He would start for home immediately.

His walk back home was not pleasant. Every step brought pain, agony, and anger. Every minute brought a new idea for revenge on John Stratt. Such was the situation until he reached his sorely missed little house.

Before retiring to bed, William spent a long time bathing and bandaging his wounds. His mother was awake waiting for his return. For a long time she listened to his muttering and wandering about. Finally she heard the creaking of the stairs, and the angry sound of his voice.

"The last funeral I'll ever go to. The last funeral..."

"Willum, what's the matter with you?"

"Go to sleep, Mar, and don't be asking questions."

"Good-night, Willum."

"Good-night, Mar."

WILLARD McCARRON, '58.

THE PRODIGAL

Beside the road, with head in hands,
He sits and views his father's lands,
Whose fruits once built this youthful boy
Into a son of pride and joy.
He's wondering if mercy still
Prevails within that ancient will
That wished the soiled and restless lad
To stay and aid his withered dad,
Instead of setting out to find
A wage for work in gold or kind,
In that dread world or' flown with sin
Where youth has little chance to win.
Yet up to that parental door
He dragged his bones with heart full sore,
And there beheld in tattered dress
A prayerful saint in thankfulness.

-- EUGENE MOONEY '56.