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**A Vampire**

How His Old Father and Mother  
Stood by Their Son Even to  
Giving Up the Farm.

By F. A. MITCHEL.  
Copyright, 1910, by American Press Association.

They say that doctors and clergymen see more of humanity as it is than any other class of men, but I question if the endless panorama of incidents typifying the different phases of human life is witnessed by any class that every day passes before bankers. Sometimes whole stories are enacted before us spread over a term of years. I am the repository of one such story that I watched from its beginning to its climax.

One afternoon a weather-beaten old farmer with silky white hair scattered over his head came to my desk and, pulling out a wallet, asked for a draft on Denver for \$200 in favor of Thomas Williams. He counted out the money, and then, having nothing to do while the draft was being prepared, began to tell me the beginning of his story.

"I'm sendin' the money," he said, "to my boy out in Colorado. He went out there a year ago, takin' some money with him that I give him, but he hasn't had much luck, and it's all gone. First he got sick; then when he got well he went prospectin' and struck somepin that looked good, but some other fellers jumped his claim, whatever that means, and took it all away from him.

"Then Tom got sick ag'in and went to a horsepit and stayed there three months. Now he's got out of the horsepit and lookin' about for somepin. I'm sendin' this money to give him a chapin. Tom's his mother's pet, and she lays awake nights worritin' about him. I'm mighty fond of the boy myself somehow. He was always a smart little chap—took lots of prizes and things at school.

"When he got old enough to work I wanted him to help me on the farm. He tried it for awhile, but I see purty quick he didn't take to it. He was too smart to be contented to follow a plow same 's his father, who didn't never get no education. So I says to him one day: 'Tommy, reckon you'd better go to the city and work that a-way. This don't suit you.' He was mighty well pleased at that. It almost broke ma's heart to part with him, but she knowed it was better for him and let him go.

"Tom didn't like it in town so well as he thought he would. Legstays he didn't stay long in the place he went into. They must 'a' thought a heap 'bout him, though, for they raised his salary twice, so he wrote me. But he got into a fight with one of the head clerks and got himself discharged. He said the head clerk accused him of stealin' some money.

"Tom was allus an ambitious little chap, and after leavin' his place he concluded he'd go west and try and do somepin big, for ma and me agin we got too old to work. So we scraped up \$500 and give it to him, and he—

At this moment a clerk laid the farmer's draft on my desk, and the first chapter of his story was finished; for he began to count over his soiled and torn bills, now and again wetting his thumb on his lip as he turned them up. Then, leaving them to me and carefully folding his draft, he put it in his wallet, crammed the wallet down into the bottom of his pocket and with a "Goodby, Mr. Cashier," left the bank.

The second chapter of the story is very short. There is hardly enough in it to make a chapter, but there is a good deal beneath the few words required to tell it. A girl of eighteen came to the bank, laid down \$24, nearly all in silver coin, and asked for a draft to cover the amount.

"To whom will you have it made payable?" I asked.

"Tom Williams," in a soft voice, almost a whisper.

I ordered the draft made out, and the girl stood waiting. Unlike the farmer, she didn't tell all I would have liked to know, so I asked:

"Is Tom Williams your brother?"

"No," she replied, looking down on the floor.

I had not liked the indications as to Tom's character as they appeared in his father's account of him, and now that money was going to him from his sweetheart I began to despise him. I handed the girl the draft and had a good opportunity to study her, for she never once looked up at me. She went out with it lugged up against her heart, as though she loved it because she had saved it for Tom.

My next visitor in behalf of Tom was his mother. She stood by my desk emptying on it from a carpetbag a lot of bills and silver and copper coins. Not knowing who she was, I asked what I should do with the money, and she said: "Send it to Tom." By this time I was not likely to forget Tom and asked if she wished a draft for Thomas Williams. She said she did. I turned her funds over to a clerk to count, and he reported that they amounted to \$642.47. I ordered the draft to be made out, placed a chair before the old lady and said, with a view to my enlightenment:

"Mr. Williams pretty busy nowadays?"

"No, pa ain't busy. He's sick. I wish we had our boy here to help us. He's out in Colorado prospectin'. He says he's struck somepin or a-gold, to strike a mine or somepin, and wants some money for grub-stakin' or somepin like that. We're sendin' him all

we kin jest now, but hope to send him some more blue by. We had some money saved up for old age, but we've been drawin' on it for Tom, and this is all there is left."

When she went out with her draft I found myself boiling with indignation at this worthless scamp, who was sucking the lifeblood out of his old father and mother—even his sweetheart.

There was a visit from the sweet heart after this, for a draft of \$18.50, which convinced me that Tom had accepted the last amount she had sent him. Then one day the old farmer came in pale and trembling, evidently just out of a sickbed, with the check of a mortgage company for \$1,000. He asked for a draft in exchange for it payable to this vampire of a son. We bankers make it a rule to mind our own business, but I had reached a point where I could no longer refrain from warning this poor old man.

"So you have mortgaged your farm to send money to your son?" I said.

"Yes; Tom's in powerful need of money. The mine he thought was goin' to turn out so fine petered out. He says it closed up as he went down instead of openin'."

"And you lost all the money you sent him for the development?"

"Yes, we lost it," replied the old man with a tremulous voice.

"Aren't you afraid you'll lose this too?"

"I dunno. Tom's got another mine. He says he's sure o' this."

"Of course it's no business of mine, but I don't like to see you, an old man, mortgaging your farm to send money to a son who should be giving you money instead of you giving it to him. Suppose you can't pay the interest on the mortgage when it is due. You will lose your farm."

The old man stood wiping his face with a handanna handkerchief, the picture of misery.

"I know what yer mean," he said, "but ma she won't keep back anything the boy wants. She never did. I always told her she'd spoil him."

"I'm afraid she has spoiled him. You should know that your son is not wasting your money at gambling or something like that and telling you that he's on the verge of making a fortune in a mine before risking any more money on him."

"That's what I tell ma."

At this moment the draft was laid before me, but instead of handing it to him I said:

"Hadn't you better think this over?"

He stood, his eyes fixed on vacancy, slowly swaying or tottering, and I knew there was a great contest going on in his mind. His love for his boy conquered.

"I'm bliged to you, Mr. Cashier, and mebbe you're right, but I allus believed in my Tom, and I can't go back on him now."

I handed him the draft, and he scuffled slowly out of the bank.

The old man must have borrowed all he could on his farm, considering the transaction as a sale, for he failed to pay the first interest that fell due on the mortgage. I knew this, because I saw in a newspaper a legal notice of foreclosure proceedings on his farm.

"Well," I sighed, laying down the paper, "the old man has given his home to his reprobate son; he has nothing more to give. I shall not suffer again at seeing him come into the bank to do what I can't prevent his doing."

The same day I met the young girl on the street whom I was sure was Tom's sweetheart. I stopped her and asked:

"Is Farmer Williams turned out of house and home?"

"Not yet, sir."

"But he will be?"

"I suppose so."

"Has his son sent him anything to help him?"

"No, sir. He wrote to say that he was awful sorry to see the farm go, but he could not help it."

"H'm. Do you think a son who will treat his father and mother like that would treat a wife any better?"

Tears came into her eyes. I was ashamed at giving her this useless pain. I walked on.

About a month after this a strapping young fellow with a fine, manly face came into the bank and said he wished to open an account. I assented, and he made a deposit of \$49,500.

"Will you please leave your signature in this book?" I said. He took up a pen and wrote:

"Thomas Williams."

"You Tom Williams?" I exclaimed.

"Yes. What do you know about me?"

"Son of Farmer Williams?"

"Yes."

"Sold your mine?"

"Yes; I've sold a mine in Colorado, or two-thirds of it. This money I'm leaving with you is the first cash payment; there are two others of \$50,000 each."

"Has your father's farm gone to the mortgage?"

"No; I'm in time for that. I was afraid I wouldn't be, though. Anyway, I'd have bought it back. If it hadn't been for the money father sent me I couldn't have carried the debt through. I expected the farm to go for the mine."

"And the young girl to whom we gave drafts payable to your order?"

He colored and said: "It's in with the rest, but she and I'll be one anyway. I shall transfer two-thirds of this deposit to father. I took him and mother in for thirds."

I went to see the old farmer and his wife and found them jubilant. "I told you I had confidence in my boy," the farmer said. "He was always straight."

I attended Tom Williams' wedding and kissed the bride. I couldn't help it.

**LIFE'S UPS AND DOWNS.**

The Magnificent Revenge of a Governor of Missouri.

While Robert Stewart was governor of Missouri a steamboat man was brought in from the penitentiary as an applicant for a pardon. He was a large, powerful fellow, and when the governor looked at him he seemed strangely affected. He scrutinized the man long and closely. Finally he signed the document that restored the prisoner to liberty. Before he handed it to him he said: "You will commit some other crime and be in the penitentiary again, I fear."

The man solemnly promised that he would not. The governor looked doubtful, mused a few minutes and said:

"You will go back on the river and be a mate again, I suppose?"

The man replied that he would.

"Well, I want you to promise me one thing," resumed the governor. "I want you to pledge your word that when you are mate again you will never take a billet of wood in your hand and drive a sick boy out of a bunk to help you load your boat on a stormy night."

The steamboat man said he would not and inquired what the governor meant by asking him such a question.

The governor replied: "Because some day that boy may become a governor, and you may want him to pardon you for a crime. One dark, stormy night, many years ago, you stopped your boat on the Mississippi river to take on a load of wood. There was a boy on board who was working his passage from New Orleans to St. Louis, but he was very sick of fever and was lying in a bunk. You had plenty of men to do the work, but you went to that boy with a stick of wood in your hand and drove him with blows and curses out into the wretched night and kept him toiling like a slave until the load was completed. I was that boy. Here is your pardon. Never again be guilty of such brutality."

The man, cowering and hiding his face, went out without a word.—Exchange.

**Origin of "Whig."**

Several reasons have been assigned to account for the word "Whig." By some the word is supposed to be a contraction of a longer one, "whiggamore," which in some parts of England and Scotland, especially Scotland, signifies a drover or herder. It was in 1679 that the word first became common in the British isles, when the struggle was in progress between the peasantry and the aristocracy to have or not to have the bill passed by parliament to exclude the Duke of York from the line of succession. All who were opposed to placing the duke in the line of succession were derisively called "whiggamores," or "drovers."

But Scotch tradition gives a different reason for the existence of the word. It is this: During the early religious wars in Scotland the weakest of the factions used the words "We Hope In God" as a motto. The initials of these words were placed on their banners, thus, "W. H. I. G.," and some of the followers of that clan were given the title of "Whig," which was afterward attached as a party nickname.

**Perfectly Frank.**

"I've listened to many divorce cases," said a Louisville judge, "but never have I heard such an all embracing appeal for separation as that Virginia ducky gave before the country justice in Virginia.

"Why, Sally," said the justice, "what are you doing here?"

"Well, jedge, I wants a divorce."

"You want divorce, Sally? Why, I thought Bill was a good nigger. Ain't he good to you?"

"Oh, ya-as, jedge; Bill ain't never hit me a lick in his life."

"Well, doesn't he support you?"

"Ya-as, sir; he give me 60 cents last Saddy night!"

"Well, what in the world is the matter with you, then?"

"Jedge," said Sally in confidential tones, "to tell you de truf, I jes' los' my taste fer Bill."—Louisville Times.

**Optimism.**

When the optimist was dispossessed and thrown, along with his household impedimenta, into the cold street he chuckled furiously.

"Why do you laugh, my friend?" inquired a passerby.

"Because I have just now been emancipated from toil," replied the optimist. "For years my life has been one long struggle to keep the wolf from the door. But now that I have been deprived of the door I no longer am compelled to toil. Sweet indeed are the uses of adversity!"

Then the optimist walked off, whistling gayly, into the sunshine.—New York Sun.

**Are You Honest?**

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