

## MIKE REILEY'S FUNERAL

Showing That a Mistake May Breed Mistakes

By OSCAR COX

The incident of this story was a recent occurrence. This is mentioned beforehand because there are carping critics who would say after reading it that the plan was farfetched; that such happenings are only to be found in stories and there is nothing probable in it.

Mike Reiley, a young mason, started out to work on a bright morning, light hearted, for by the end of the week, when paid off, he would have the \$500 that he had resolved to save before marrying Nora O'Toole, the girl he loved and who loved him better than all the world. The banns had been published, and everything was being made ready for the wedding, which was to occur in just ten days from that date.

Mike said "So long" to his mother, who was a widow, and to his sister, Kathleen, who worked in a paper mill, and then walked briskly along till he came to the house where Nora lived and where he expected to see her sitting in the second story window sewing on her wedding outfit, for Nora knew the time that Mike went to work and was always there to give and receive a smile, and sometimes they had a brief chat together.

This morning Nora threw up the sash, and Mike stopped, and Nora asked him if he had attended to this and to that in preparation for the wedding or the fixing up of the nest in which they were to live, a four room house near Mike's present home. He had satisfied her that he had done the painting needed, and replaced the broken glass in the windows, and mended the roof, and they both agreed that there was nothing more to be done on the premises except what could be done after they moved in.

Mike kissed his hand to her. She threw him a kiss in return, and Mike went on his way, while Nora drew down the sash and resumed her sewing.

She was very happy considering that she was to be married so soon to the man she loved and pled her needle briskly. It seemed to go through the fabric of itself.

But suddenly a presentiment came over her that something was about to happen. In her mind's eye she saw a coffin with Mike in it and a lot of mourners sitting about as at a funeral.

Then it seemed to her that Mike sat up in his coffin and said: "What are you sittin' around that way for when you've come to a weddin'? Get up and shake a leg." But Nora drove it out of her head.

About 9 o'clock that night Mike's sister, Kathleen, appeared at Nora's home and asked if she had seen anything of Mike, for he had not come home. Nora was a bit troubled, for Mike, especially since he had begun his preparations to be married, had been very regular in his homecoming after knocking off work at 5 in the afternoon. She told Kathleen that she had not seen him since he went by in the morning, when he was looking very well and very cheerful. She asked Kathleen to tell him when he returned to come and let her know of his arrival, for she would not go to bed until she had news of him.

Mike did not come home that night, and in the morning her mother, his sister and his sweetheart were all very much troubled about his absence. They hoped that the postman would bring a note from him stating that he had been called upon to do some work which would take him too far from home to warrant his coming in the evening and going out again the next morning. But the postman passed, whistling at the door of every other house on his way except that of the Reileys, not leaving them a single letter.

The day ended without any word from Mike. They would have sent to where he worked to inquire about him, but Mike had never taken pains to keep them informed as to the places where he was employed, since he was frequently changing, sometimes working on two or three different jobs in the same day.

A week passed, and Mike did not turn up. His mother was broken down with worry. Nora ceased her preparations for the wedding. Kathleen alone, who was obliged to go to work every day and whose mind was therefore employed, stood up under the trouble. All three of them scanned what newspapers they could get hold of to see if a body had been found anywhere that might be Mike's.

One morning just before Kathleen went to the factory she saw her mother, who was looking in a newspaper for news of Mike, fall in a faint. Kathleen ran to her, and her first words after regaining consciousness were:

"My boy is dead!"

"Where is it, mother?" asked the horror-stricken girl. "Show me!"

Mrs. Reiley put her finger on the item, and Kathleen read that the day before a man had staggered into St. Luke's hospital and had fallen unconscious. He had revived just long enough to say "My name's O'Reiley."

"It isn't Mike at all, mother," said Kathleen. "There's no 'O' to our name."

"Yes, it is," replied the poor woman. "The newspapers never get names right, and like enough the hospital people made the mistake themselves."

"Now, don't you worry, mother, dear. I'll go to the hospital—I'll do no work today—and see if it's Mike. But I'm sure it isn't."

So Kathleen, instead of going to the factory, started for the hospital and on reaching it asked to see the body of the man who had died there the day before. She was taken to where the body lay, and the moment she looked at it the tears started to her eyes, and she turned them away at once, so ghastly was the sight.

"It's my brother, Mike Reiley," she moaned.

She went away, stopping at Nora's to break the sad news to her. Nora was broken hearted, but bore her affliction with resignation. She went with Kathleen to Mrs. Reiley and told her that the body in the hospital was Mike's.

After awhile when they had become quieted they took steps to have the body brought to the house for the funeral. They called in friends, who took the burden upon themselves of making all the preparations. An undertaker was instructed to bring the body, and all other details were attended to.

The same evening the body arrived, already in its coffin.

A number of friends looked at Mike, each making some remark.

"He looks very natural," said one. "He must have died a peaceful death."

"How changed!" said another. "I'd scarcely know him."

And so the comments went on. Mrs. Reiley gazed down upon the corpse, her face blinded with tears. Nora would not look at it, saying that she preferred to remember the happy countenance of her lover as she saw it when he looked up at her while she was sitting at her window the last day he ever went to work.

When the day of the funeral came round the mother, the sister and the betrothed were given seats near the coffin, while the friends of the family took chairs behind them. There they awaited the opening of the funeral ceremony.

We left Mike on his way to his work. He was engaged in laying brick all day, and just before knocking off the boss drove up in a buggy and said to him:

"Mike, I've got a call for a chimney out in the country. The carpenter work is all done, and they can't do any more till the chimney is put in. I've agreed to send a man out tonight to go to work the first thing in the morning. I want you to go."

Mike demurred, but the boss offered him double pay, and he consented. A train was leaving in half an hour, which was barely enough time for him to catch it. He arrived at his destination at 11 o'clock at night and found a team waiting for him that carried him fifteen miles into the country, where there was no other house than the one being built within a considerable distance.

Mike worked several days on the chimney. He thought he should try to get word to his family as to the reason for his absence, but he was too busy to think much about it. He had once or twice remained on a job for several days without going home or sending word and did not expect to be longer on this one. But before he finished it he was called upon to put in the foundation walls for a house ready to be built a few miles away and was offered double pay if he would do it. He thought what a beautiful bridal gift he could buy for Nora with the extra money he was earning. He would take the job and if Nora complained of his being away so long just before the wedding he would console her with the gift.

When Mike finished his work and went home, as he approached the house where his mother lived he saw a hearse and carriages standing before the door. Terrified, he went in, eager to know who was dead. There sat his mother and sister and bride to be in a row before a coffin. His mother gave him one look and fainted. Nora drew back from him. Those occupying the rear seats tumbled over each other to get through the narrow door.

Kathleen alone seemed to take in the situation.

"Mike," she cried, "you're not dead, after all!"

"Dead? Why should I be dead?"

"I made a mistake. Maybe I didn't look close enough."

"What's the matter with you all?" asked Mike.

By this time Nora had recovered her wits and flew to her lover's arms, burying her face on his breast and crying: "Oh, Mike, sure it's a miracle! We thought you were in your coffin!"

"In my coffin? Do I look like that?"

This led to a comparison, and it was agreed that the dead man, though not unlike Mike, under other circumstances would not have been mistaken for him.

"Get it out at once!" cried Mike.

In a twinkling all was changed. The faces put off the lugubrious appearance of mourning and put on the happy expression of wedding guests, for it was decided to hurry up the bridal preparations and turn the funeral into a marriage. That very evening the pair were united and went to life in the house they had prepared for their reception.

My story shows, among other things, the power of the imagination. Kathleen's fear that she would find Mike's dead body in a coffin impressed on her mind that she saw him. This started a chain of imaginary incidents that led to a union of errors. After all, was there anything especially remarkable that Mike being supposed dead, another person with a similar name should have been mistaken for him?

## NEWS FROM OUR NATIONAL CAPITAL

Senate Completes First Reading of Tariff Bill and It May Pass Within Week.

Washington.—The senate has completed the first reading of the new tariff bill, although many of the most important new features of the measure remain to be settled. Senate leaders agreed that the disposal of the first reading of the bill had brought the passage of the measure within view, and that another week may witness its completion and passage.

The rates of the new income tax, the proposed tax on cotton futures, many provisions of the administrative features of the law, the suggested tax rebate of 5 per cent for imports brought in American ships, and many other sections of the measure that will occasion debate were put over without action, and will be taken up again this week. Senator Norris announced that before the bill was completed he would propose an amendment directed at the Brazilian coffee monopoly, giving the president authority to levy a 25 per cent duty on products controlled through monopoly or conspiracy in another country.

Several Important Changes Made.

The senate made several important changes in the bill. The proposal of the democrats to give circuit courts of appeals equal jurisdiction with the United States customs court was withdrawn by Senator Williams in behalf of the democratic committee members. He said the committee had decided it would be better to leave the final judgment in custom cases entirely to the customs court.

A provision prohibiting the importation of goods made by convict labor, or "principally by children under 14 years of age" was adopted.

The provisions giving the President power to establish retaliatory duties much higher than the usual tariff rates against certain imports from countries that might discriminate against the United States were adopted after several fruitless attempts by the republicans to amend them by increasing the list of articles on which the extra duties could be levied.

President Hopeful of Peace in Mexico.

President Wilson is still hopeful of favorable culmination of the negotiations undertaken by this country to bring about peace in Mexico.

His urgent appeal to Americans in Mexico to leave the country was declared to have been determined on after wise counsel, not alone because of the present situation in Mexico, but because of conditions which might develop in spite of the efforts of the provisional government to prevent any harm coming to foreigners.

That the administration is content to give the situation plenty of time to work itself out is demonstrated by the present attitude of the president and his advisers, and is regarded as one of the explanations for Special Envoy Lind's remaining in Vera Cruz.

Legal Lights Meet.

Montreal.—The address delivered by the Lord High Chancellor of England, Viscount Haldane of Cloan, formed the principal feature of the opening meeting in the American Bar Association. Viscount Haldane held an audience which completely filled the Princess Theater and included many of the great legal lights of the western continent and several from Europe.

Legislators Called to Suizer Trial.

Albany.—A formal call for the state legislature to assemble here at noon September 18 for the impeachment proceedings against Governor William Sulzer, charged with malfeasance in office, has been issued.

Compulsory Illuminations.

The west end of London is always ablaze with lights on the evening of the king's birthday, but no living Londoner can claim to have seen a general illumination of the metropolis. In his "Recollection and Reflection" J. R. Planché writes: "The last general illumination of London was that celebrating the battle of Waterloo. Now there are more beautiful displays, but this one was really general. Not a window in the smallest court but had its candle stuck in a lump of clay, while in houses of more pretension one blazed in every pane. Mobs paraded the metropolis from Hyde park corner to Whitechapel with cries of 'Light up!' and smashed every window that did not swiftly display a dip in answer to the summons."

Charm of the Nutmeg Tree.

The nutmeg tree has all seasons for its own. Every day in the year it shows buds, blossoms and fruit in every stage of maturing. The shell of the nutmeg is like a bit of polished ebony, and the once it exposes when it bursts is of a bright scarlet. With all these varied features upon it at the same time, the nutmeg tree is one of the most beautiful exhibitors of the odd and beautiful in vegetation that the world possesses.—Browning's Magazine.



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