

coming from the pit carrying their burden on the stretcher.

'Whee is't?' he asked, approaching them.

'Lang Tom!' one of them impatiently responded.

'He's not deed, is he?' and Tommy's eyes seemed to be galloping round their sockets.

'Nae, he's not deed, but bornt, an' badly!'

Tommy followed them to the door, his face full of concern and fear. All the day he waited. He saw the doctor coming and going.

In the days that followed he lingered near the house where the injured man lay. Death was feared. By-and-by, it was known that Long Tom was blinded for life.

Tommy was distracted. Effie was more than terrified at his grief.

Long Tom's wife had noticed his persistent presence.

'Wad tha like to see him?' she asked one morning, but he took to his heels, and did not reappear that day.

The next morning he ventured near the door.

'Thoo can see him if thoo likes,' Mrs. Greener suggested, but he burst into tears and fled again.

'He wad like to speak to tha!'

She had been expecting him and hoped to coax him in.

Long Tom was sitting up in bed with bandaged eyes.

Tommy would have fled, but the door was closed.

'Whee's that?' the blinded man inquired in feeble voice.

'It's me! Tommy! Tommy, the good-for-nowt!' and he began to cry.

'I wish I could see tha! But thoo's not a good-for-nowt! Thoo's one o' my canny lads. Gi'e me thee hand!'

Tommy shuffled to the side of the bed.

'Canny Tommy,' the sick man murmured. 'Wad thoo mind when I'm better to be me guide for a bit? I'll need a friend, Tommy!'

Tommy fell to his knees, overwhelmed with pity and shame.

'I'll dae owt thoo likes, Tom, if thoo'll not be ashamed to be seen wi' me.'

Thus it came to pass that for weeks and months the blinded Tom and the penitent Tommy were always together. Many a heart ached at the sight. It was pitiful to see the sightless collier holding the arm of the lad despised.

They became inseparable. Tommy had to read to him. Chapter after chapter daily the Bible was read. All the favorites of Long Tom's library were perused. Every evening the newspaper was scanned. Together they sat in the chapel and in the Sunday-school and at the class-meeting. The blinded man could not go anywhere without him.

And a wonderful thing ensued, to the surprise and gladness of every heart.

Tommy was transformed. The deeps of his soul were broken up. His intellect was awakened. All unconsciously, he took on the ways and words of the man he loved. Many, indeed, were the confidences exchanged between them.

That Sunday night in the prayer-meeting Long Tom prayed. For the sad and the sinful he pleaded. For their conversion that hour he yearned.

Seating himself, his hand went out for Tommy.

His place was vacant.

The blinded Tom moved around uneasily, feeling for his guide.

'Tommy, Tommy! Where is tha?' he whispered hoarsely, and the truth was explained to him.

Tommy had crept to the penitent form to give himself to God.

Then an extraordinary thing occurred. Long Tom sprang to his feet, walked up the aisle, and knelt by Tommy's side.

That was one of Blackerton's immortal scenes. The sightless Tom led the penitent Tommy into the light of life.

It all happened years ago, but Blackerton will never forget.

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'I Serve.'

(E. A. Gillie, in the 'Sunday at Home'.)

The soldiers lying in lines upon the ground had forgotten the death and danger before them in sleep. Yet there was one young officer to whose eyes sleep refused to come, whose cheeks were flushed by feverish thought.

'Stépan,' he said in a quick low whisper to the man who was busy with his tent, 'listen, it is no good—I am a coward. All to-day, all yesterday—ever since we left Mar-seilles, every hour of the day and in my dreams the dread has been coming nearer—and if we meet them to-morrow as I suppose we will—I cannot say what I may do. Think of it, Stépan—one of my race—a coward!'

The young man dropped his head into his hand, and over the square, brown face of the

might at least have had respect for your officer. You gave him a wound that will disable him for some time.'

It seemed almost as if Stépan's face showed pleasure. 'I knew'—he began, then stopped and started afresh. 'I am sorry I hurt my master, but—it is better—he need not know about this till afterwards.'

'He will not,' said the younger man. 'And now, is there not perhaps a message you would like to write—or say?'

Stépan looked up eagerly. He was thinking of Annette, who had always held him to be a hero.

'How will they describe it,' he asked—'how will the lines run—in the newspapers?'

"Shot for gross cowardice" will be the



'I AM A COWARD.'

other soldier there passed a momentary quiver.

'It is the heat that wearies you, monsieur,' he said.

'Stépan, do "you" feel afraid?'

The man shrugged his shoulders.

'Why, I am made of such coarse stuff'—then he stopped and looked at his master. 'But I, too, oh yes,' he added, 'I fear. But with sleep it will pass, monsieur; lie down and rest, you will feel different to-morrow.'

'I wish I might never rise again,' the young man said fiercely, and turning his head away he flung himself down on the ground, and in spite of his belief to the contrary was soon asleep. Not so Stépan; thoughts for his master kept him awake.

The fight was over and the enemy repulsed, at what cost those who were burying the dead might say. Yet there was a sadder task still to come—the execution of a runaway, and one at least of the officers who had condemned the man was filled with compassion for him, for he did not look like a coward nor of the stuff that makes a runaway.

'What made you run away and then attack your officer when he tried to stop you?' he asked the condemned. 'Can you not give any reason?' Stépan shook his head.

'It was terror, monsieur,' he said, 'sheer terror.'

'Fool!' the Colonel broke out angrily, 'you

heading, at any rate,' the Colonel said sharply; 'there will be no mincing matters if I can help it. We don't want any more to follow your example.'

Stépan sighed. It did not sound nice that, after all, it would make little difference to him dead.

'I have no message to send,' he said.

'Not even to your master?'

Stépan wanted to say much, but yet dared so little. He spoke at last slowly.

'Tell him, monsieur, I grieve I can no longer serve him. I am sorry I wounded him, and that I know for certain now it is easier to fight than run away.'

The Colonel laughed harshly.

"A la bonheur"! A little too late for such reflection. What?'

But the eyes of the accused sought the face of his second judge, where they lingered, and the wistfulness passed from them.

'I will see your master gets your message just as you wish,' said the younger man; 'you need not fear.'

His eyes still followed Stépan till just before leaving the tent the prisoner paused again. 'Will you tell him, too, I loved him—though a runaway?'

Again the eyes of judge and accused met and the judge bowed.

'A thousand thanks, monsieur,' Stépan cried, 'I am content,' then turned and went out smiling.