A STORY OF THE

BY FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT.

"No," she answered, "it is na." The woman heaved a sigh of relief. "I thowt it wur na," she said. "I towd th' Maxeys as I did na pelieve it when they browt th' tale to me. They're powerful fond o' tale-bearin,' that Max-

Joan stopped in her play with the

"They dunnot understand," she said, "that's aw. I ha' learned to think different, an' believe i' things as I did na used to believe in. Happen that's what they mesan by talkin' o' th' Methodys.'

People learned no more of the matter than this. They felt that in some way Joan Lowrie had separated herself from their ranks, but they found it troublesome to work their way to any more de finite conclusion

"Hast heard about that lass o'Lowrie's?" they said to one another, 'hoo's taken a new turn sin' Lowrie deed; hoo allus wur a queer-loike, high-handed wench.

After Lowrie's death. Anice Barholm and Joan were oftener together than ever. What had at first been friendship had gradually become affection.

"I think," Anice said to Grace, "that Joan must go away from here and find

ing but also, it is and out ting with it upon her knoe in her ac-"In this old one there has been noth-

Fergus Derrick was sitting at the table the small face. looked up sharply.

even a semblance of assistance."

was always restless and eager where she herself. was concerned. All intercourse between them seemed to be at an end. Without appearing to make any effort to do so, she kept out of his path. Try as he might, he could not reach her. At last it had come to this; he was no longer dallying upon the brink of a great and dangerous passion .- it had overwhelmed

in on her way from her work, before would like to see you, Miss," said the lation of the condition or the men who derstood me: upon the hearth-ru; to warm herself, girl. There had been no light in the room but that of the fire, ank its glow, falling upon

Anice turned to the fire.

Joan looked up at her not defiant, not bitter, not do to binnely in appeal go wi' yo'." against her own descript.

"Is no theer a we all's place for me it th' world! Is it allie to be this way will them; and now, when Mrs. Thwaite restrive as I will, pray as I will—fur I her, and the cottage was locked up. strive as I will, pray as I will-fur I her, and the cottage was locked up. have prayed. Is no theer a woman's place fur me i' th' world ?"

ha' almost gi'en it up. If theor is such borsday, surely.".

Anice thought of all this again when mony a bit o' help to me." she glanced at Derrick. Derrick was more than usually disturbed to-day. · He had for some time been working with some annoyance and anxiety to the owners in a few weeks, and at meeting he had determined to firm stand.

"The longer I remain in my position, the more fully I am con leved of the danger constantly threatening us. he said to Anice. "I am convinced the the present system of furnaces in the cause of more explosions than are gover- His eyes chanced to meet Anice's, and rash or enthusiastic, I am neither the Gradually there dawned upon the ally attributed to it. The mine here is a la dark thush swept over his face. He one nor the other. It is not enthusiasm | curate's mind certain remembrances con-

bread to helpless women and children. will end for me?" not allowed to place one frail barrier he- Anice.

The men under him worked with a dull, heavy daring, born of long use and going down the shaft to his labour, he leaving Riggan or remaining in it." might be leaving the light of day be-Explosions had occurred, and might oc- next moment. men crushed out of all semblance to hu- tion for me."

tace the same hazard recklessly. With Fergus Derrick, however, it was lead these men into new fields of danger. ard before !"

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A COMPACT. The last time came, before many days, customed place she saw a change upon "I did not need reminding," she said

"Where can you find a new life for Joan bent over it. She had been hold- let us make the compact over again." her?" he asked. "And how can you ing the tiny hand as she always did, and She held out her hand to him, and he help her to it? One dare not offer her at this moment the short fingers closed took it eagerly. upon one of her own quietly. She was They had not spoken to him, but he quite alone, and for an instant there was had heard, as he always heard, every- a deep silence. After her first glance at thing connected with Joan Lowrie. He the tiny creature, she broke this silence

broke upon her.

or blame her. Where was Liz to-night, they were astounded to find that it did Grace's voice had broken in upon him

holm was met by a servant.

that it was gone, the emptiness of the "What is it? she a led, almost for a her companions were about to leave her. say, there have been furnaces ever since her companions were about to leave her.

she broke down.

that she should make her home with which was to some extent a mystery, but "I had no right to blame you. I had

This alteration changed greatly the routine of her life. There were chil-"Yes," said Anice, "I am sure theer dren in the Thwaite household—half a to be recognized, when they were recog- will have to begin again." dozen of them—who, having overcome nisable, by mothers, and wives, and Derrick drew a heavy breath. He "I've thowt as theer mun be some- there first awe of her, had learned before children, who depended upon them for took up a paper-knife from the table, wheer. Sometimes I've felt sure as the bady died to be fond of Joan. Her theer mun be somewheer. Sometimes handsome face attracted them when Derrick argued his cause well and with "Yes," he said, "we shall have to be I've felt sure as theer mun be, an' they ceased to fear its novelty, and the spirit, keeping a tight rein upon himself; gin again. And it is told in a few then again I've been beset so to re that I hard-worked mother said to, her neigh-

a place fur me, I mun find it I mun!" "She's getten a way wi' childer, some-"You will find it," said Anice, "some how, - that lass o' Lowrie's. Yo'd won- settled matter that he should not, he what would you think of a man who der if yo' could see her wi' 'em. She's took fire.

But as time progressed, Anice Barhis worn look upon her face. Instead of honour to tender you my resignation." Joan Lowrie?"

Anice once, abruptly. Anice shook her head.

"No, she is not ill." body knows about," he said. "What a "A man with a will and a pair of clean I have confronted the possibility of lov-

tween them and sudden death, I will Yes, I am still determined. I wish unenviable reputation of being a firelead them into peril no longer-I will it were over. Perhaps there will be a and-tow young fellow, who was flighty resign my position. At least, I can do Fate in it,"-his voice lowering itself as enough to make a martyr of himself. he added this last sentence. "A Fate?" said Anice.

"I am growing superstitious and full way home. a knowledge of their own helplessness of fancies," he said. "I do not trust to against their fate. There was not one myself, as I once did. I should like his arm. among them who did not know that in Fate to bear the responsibility of my . Once within the walls of the pleaants

"And if you leave it?" asked Anice. hind him for ever. But seeing the blue For an instant he paused in his walk with his employers, and its terminasky vanish from sight thus during six with an uncertain air. But he shook tion. days of fifty-two weeks in the year en- this uncertain air. But he shook this "A.few months ago, I flattered myself gendered a kind of hard indifference. uncertainty off with a visible effort, the that my prospects, were improving," he

up to be stretched on the green earth- return, and Fate will have settled ques- by the way."

marks of terrible maining; but it was in a low tone. "Settle it for yourself, but still his mood was by no means unan old story, and they had learned to It does not-it is not-it looks-"

"It looks cowardly," he interrupted It was after they had had finished tea her. "So it does, and so it is. God and the arm-chairs had been drawn to a different matter. It was he who must knows I never felt myself so great a cow- the fire that Grace himself made a reve-

stood before her. The girl's grave, de- returning from a visit I had paid to Joan licate face turned to meet his glance, Lowrie. and seeing it, a thought seemed to strike "At Thwaite's?" said Derrick.

her present life was broken. The little afresh, "I promised you that if the time to change her plan of life." one, who from the first had clung to ex- should ever come when I needed help istence with a frail hold, at last loosened that it was possible you might give, its weak grasp. It had been ill for sev- should not be afraid to ask you for it. I "That is the only way," he answered, eral days—so iil that Joan had remained am coming to you for help. Not now— to find her other employment." at home to nurse it—and one night, sit- some day not far distant. That is why I

to him. turning over a book of engravings. He It had been moaning continuously, and "I might have known that," he anssuddenly the plaintive sound ceased. wered,—"I think I did know it. But surprise.

> CHAPTER XXXIV. THE ENGINEER RESIGNS.

"Little lass," she said in a whisper, held their meeting. That a person in had been stung. Derrick simply flush-"what ails thee? Is thy pain o'er?". their employ should differ from them ed.

As she looked again at the baby face boldly, and condemn their course openly "What is it?" he asked. upturned, as if in silent answer, the truth was an extraordinary event; that a "I-I do not think I understand," Folding her arms around the little should dare so much was unprecedented. "Surely I am blunder-should dare so much was unprecedented. ing." form, she laid her head upon its breast, It would be a ruinous thing, they said . "Nay," said Derrick gloomily. "You and wept aloud—wept as she had never among themselves, for so young a man cannot blunder since you know the wept before. Then she laid the child to lose so important a position on the truth. You did not fancy that my feel-"One cannot even approach her," he upon a pillow, and covered its face. very threshold of his professional life, ing was so trivial that I could have con-Anice regarded him with a shade of Anice regarded h

pity in her face.

"The time it coming when it will not be so," she said.

The night before, Join Lowrie had or blame ker. Where was Liz to-night, they were astounded to find that it did of Grace's voice had broken in upon him not.

The next morning, on her way down stairs to the breakfast-room, Anice Barland them before them. They were mutual bewilderment. Then again Der-The young woman from the mines plans for the abolition of old and dan-rick was the first to speak. gerous arrangements, for the amelior- "Grace," he said, "you have misun-Laboure lat the hourly risk of their Grace answered him with a visible

house chilled her. At the last, when plaint," remarked Derrick. "As you imagined I referred to Miss Barholm?" there have been mines, an there have ed reply. "As I said before, I have EVERY LARGE BREEDER "I conna bear it," she said. "I will also been explosions, which may in many misunderstood you miserably." cases be attributed to them. There was "And yet you had no word of blame Thwaite's wife had proposed before an explosion at Brownton a month ago for me?" This alteration changed greatly the the result was that forty dead and "But don't mind me, Derrick. Let us

their scant food." but when, having exhausted his argu- words," he said with a deliberateness ments, he found that he had not ad almost painful it its suggestion of an invanced his cause, and that it was a tense effort at self-control. "Grace.

but one resource. I will hold no human the possibility of loving and marryingholm noted the constant presence of that life lightly in my hands. I have the if she can be won-such a woman as

way to an important decision, fraught diminishing, it grew and deepened. There was a dead silence for a miment "You are putting me in a difficult po-Even Derrick who met her so rarely, or so. They had certainly not expected sition," Paul answered. "If he would of saw it when he passed her in the street. such a result as this. A well-disposed dare so much, he would be the man to "She is not ill, is she?" he asked young man, who sat near to Derrick, dare to decide for himself."

spoke to him in a rapid undertone.

beautiful creature she is !" impetuously hands is not easily ruined," returned ing Joan Lowrie until I do love her. So - 'and how incomprehensible ." Derrick a triffe hotly. "As to being there the case stands."

ing under me whose existence means the mines," he said. "I wonder how it been decided. At the end of the week tery. he would have no further occupation in I hold their lives in trust, and if I am "Yon are still determined?" said Riggan. He had only two more days' work before him and he had gained the

> Under the first street-lamp he met Grace who was evidently making his

> "I will go with you," he said, taking

little room, he found it easy to unbosom himself. He described his interview

said; "but now it seems that I must becur again; dead men had been carried "If I leave it, I do not think I shall gin again, which is not an easy matter,

By the time he ended, he found his manity. Some of themselves bore the 'Don't leave it to Fate," said Anice temporary excitement abating somewhat, disturned.

> lation. He had pause l'again. This time he "When you met me to-night, I was

> "At Thwaite's. She-the fact is I "Anice," he said, the dark flush rising went on business-she has determined

"In what manner?" "She is to work no more at the mines. I am happy to say what I have been able There was an interval of silence, at

length broken by Derrick. "Grace," he said, "can you tell me why she decided upon such a course?" Grace looked at him with questioning

"I can tell you what she said to me on the subject," he replied. "She said it was no woman's work, and she was tired

"She is not the woman to do anything without a motive," mused Derrick. "No," returned the curate.

A moment later, as if by one impulse, The owners of the Riggan collieries their eyes met. Grace started as if he

"I was sure of it,"-was Grace's agitat-

found himself setting reason at defiar ce. "Then, gentlemen," he said, "I have and in spite of all obstacles confronting

Derrick tossed the paper-knife aside. "My dear fellow," he said, "it will be "And you know that I am the person the ruin of you. For my part, I admire in question. I have so defied the world, "Then she has some trouble that no- you enthusiasm, but do not be rash." In spite of myself at first, I must confess.

'fiery' one, as they call it, and yet day got up almost immediately after and beafter day goes by, and no precautions are taken. There are poor fellowswork
"Next week the crisis will come at When he left the room his fate had possibly, might be a solution of the mys-

"And Joan Lowrie herself?" he ask ed, questioningly. "Joan Lowrie herself," said Derrick, 'is no nearer to me to-day than she was a year ago,

"Are you"-hesitatingly-"are you quite sure of that ?" The words had escaped his lips in spite of himself.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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There had been no light in the room but that of the fire, ask its glow, falling upon her face, had revealed to Anice something like hargardness.

"Joan," she said, "are you ill?"
Joan stirred a little uneasily, but did not book at her as she answered with it di room aw th neet, an then I left it to come here."

"Nay, I am notal; I niver was ill in white and Thwate's wife returned home with her. What little there was to be done, they remained to do. But this was scarcely more than to watch her until the pretty basby face was hidden away from humon sight.

"En tire," o. "I Joan answered the independent of the finely molecule, white away and loss in I fell upon her that a way," and loss in I fell upon her with the form utter desolation, find now."

"So far they have had reason for com-

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