

For The Amaranth.

THE MINER'S TALE.

I REMIND me, 'twas like the mighty rush
Of roaring winds, as through the distant *drift*
That sound came rumbling on; and each man
lean'd

Upon his spade—awe-struck and still—each
cheek

Blanched in the sickly lamplight; 'twas but
A moment, then cries and yells of warning
Through the vaults, and a man came flying past
With wild shout of agony—"the waters!"—
Aye, all died! The youth in his golden prime,
And the old time-worn miner in his age;
The warm heart and the sunny brow, the eye
Of passion and the breast of guile, grew chill
And rigid 'neath that life-devouring flood;—
They perished all!

Six of us there were,

And we gained a ledge of rock above
The whelming wave, and scann'd each face to
see

What friends were there. The horror of our
doom

Then withered up our souls, searing as
A lightning flash, its depths: to be entomb'd
In rocks of adamant—foodless—hopeless,
O God! 'twas a wild thought; so wild, that
some

Grew mad, and cursed and laughed with mirth
Which was a mockery; and some lay down
And covered up their heads in speechless woe,
So silent, that they seemed bereft of thought
And life in their deep misery. But one
There was, a boy—a young and gentle boy;—
The sad, bright tears were flowing down his
cheek,

As with clasp'd hands, and knee upon the rock,
He breath'd a prayer to heaven, mingled
With his mother's name; I could not look upon
His holy grief: the strong man crush'd and
bow'd,

The maniac in his rage, were nothing
To the prayer and tears of that pure child!
Then hunger came and gnaw'd within us, like
An undying worm, and the shrunk skin upon
Each spectral face, looked hideously
In the expiring lamp. It could not last.

Some sprang into the flood with blasphemy,
But others were too weak, and could not move
Their fleshless limbs, save when a spasm shook
them;

These died hard, and when their cries were
hushed

There were none left but the poor starving boy,

Whose moans grew fainter as his blue eye
clos'd.

I know not how it was—I could not die;
Like sapless autumn leaves they fell around,
Yet still I lingered on, with burning throat,
And swell'd and speechless tongue, craving
strength

To tear the half-eat shoe with hungry jaws,
And teeth that chatter'd with a hollow sound
In racking pain; yet still I did not die,
But grew delirious, and then, methought,
A gabbling demon sat before me,
Feasting on a bone—a human bone,
And as he tore the flesh with wolfish fangs
He laugh'd with hellish glee, and I laugh'd too,
He seem'd so merry; but the sound I made
Scar'd me into sense, and then I wonder'd
Where I was, it seemed so dark and still,
And stretching forth my hand I touch'd a face—
A shrivell'd, bony face—and shuddering,
Remember'd all; then numbness crept upon
My nerveless limbs, and thought and feeling
merg'd

In listless lethargy.

Yet still I breath'd,
A bootless thing within that dreadful grave;
Enclosed in solid stone;—a living man
Imprison'd in the bowels of the earth
With the rank dead for his companions.
What time elapsed I knew not, but a voice,
Making strange music in that lonely place,
Re-echoed through the cavern; a light
Gleamed before my eye-balls and I look'd,
And lo! a miner bent him over me,
But started when he saw my famish'd face;
The waters had subsided—I alone,
Of those ill-fated mortals yet surviv'd
To tell this tale!

St. John, December, 1842.

EUGENE.



Habit hath so vast a prevalence over the human mind, that there is scarcely any thing too strange or too strong to be asserted of it. The story of the miser, who, from long accustoming to cheat others, came at last to cheat himself, and with great delight and triumph picked his own pocket of a guinea to convey to his hoard, is not impossible or improbable. In like manner it fares with the practisers of deceit, who, from having long deceived their acquaintance, gain at last a power of deceiving themselves, and acquire that very opinion; however false, of their own abilities, excellencies, and virtues, into which they have for years, perhaps, endeavoured to betray their neighbours.