

was rather mystified  
r whose influence he  
nat as goes wi' th'

wife, "so theer is;  
in along in, lad," to  
at to eat: you look

n a wonderfully quiet  
lad Seth. He came  
om the mine with  
working with the  
ith the Janners, and  
ty left vacant by the  
mirer who had found  
o monotonous to suit  
knowledge of his an-  
at. He had come

at was the beginning  
In fact, his seemed  
ent nature. He was  
nd spent most of his  
te little shanty. At-  
appeared to trouble  
and accordingly he  
t worth cultivating.  
' talk more?" was a  
ghter, who was a  
oman, with a sharp

vt to say," was the  
onse.

ng the humble face  
remarkably enough,  
in it, though, being  
her first bloom, and  
e said, she was some-  
as a rule. In truth,  
nce in the dull, soft  
little uncomfortable.  
ails thee," she re-  
ious candour, "but

ured," said the lad,  
away.

ne evinced a certain  
is host's daughter.  
eals, he lingered for  
g her at her work  
ing by the fire or  
rding her business-  
istful air of wonder  
yet so unobtrusive  
ns that Bess Janner  
form of resentment

sweetheart at last,  
Janner's favourite  
it with character-  
an as big a foo' as I  
an I dunnot moild  
he was a wench

Small as was the element of female society  
at Black Creek, this young woman was  
scarcely popular. She was neither fair nor  
fond: a predominance of muscle and a certain  
rough deftness of hand were her chief  
charms. Ordinary sentiment would have  
been thrown away upon her; and, fortunate-  
ly, she was spared it.

"She's noan hurt wi' good looks, our  
Bess," her father remarked with graceful  
chivalrousness on more than one occasion,  
"but hoo con heave a'most as much as I con,  
an' that's summat."

Consequently, it did not seem likely that  
the feeling she had evidently awakened in  
the breast of their lodger was kin to the  
tender passion.

"Am I in yo're way?" he would ask  
apologetically; and the answer was invariably  
a gracious if curt one: "No—no more than  
th' cat. Stay wheer yo' are, lad, an' make  
yo'resen' eomfortable."

There came a change, however, in the  
nature of their intercourse, but this did not  
occur until the lad had been with them some  
three months. For several days he had been  
ailing and unlike himself. He had been even  
more silent than usual; he had eaten little,  
and lagged on his way to and from his work;  
he looked thinner, and his step was slow and  
uncertain. There was so great an alteration  
in him, in fact, that Bess softened toward  
him visibly. She secretly bestowed the best  
morsels upon him, and even went so far as to  
attempt conversation. "Let yo're work go  
a bit," she advised: "yo're noan fit  
fur it."

But he did not give up until the third  
week of illness, and then one warm day at  
noon, Bess, at work in her kitchen among  
dishes and pans, was startled from her  
labours by his appearing at the door and  
staggering toward her. "What's up wi'  
yo'?" she demanded. "Yo' look loike  
death."

"I dunnot know," he faltered, and then,  
staggering again, caught at her dress with  
feeble hands. "Dunnot yo'," he whispered,  
sinking forward—"dunnot yo' let no one—  
come anigh me."

She flung a strong arm around him, and  
saved him from a heavy fall. His head  
dropped helplessly against her breast.

"He's fainted dead away," she said: "he  
nuin ha' been worse than he thowt fur."

She laid him down, and, loosening his  
clothes at throat, went for water; but a few  
minutes after she had bent over him for the  
second time an exclamation, which was al-  
most a cry, broke from her. "Lord ha'  
mercy!" she said, and fell back, losing some-  
thing of colour herself.

She had scarcely recovered herself even

when, after prolonged efforts, she succeeded  
in restoring animation to the prostrate figure  
under her hands. The heavy eyes opening  
met hers in piteous appeal and protest.

"I thowt it wur death comn," said the  
lad. "I wnr hopin' as it wur death."

"What ha' yo' done as yo' need wish  
that?" said Bess; and then, her voice shak-  
ing with excitement which got the better of  
her and forced her to reveal herself, she  
added, "I've fun' out what yo've been  
hidin'."

Abrupt and unprelaced as her speech was,  
it scarcely produced the effect she had ex-  
pected it would. Her charge neither flinched  
nor reddened. He laid a weak, rough hand  
upon her breast with a feebly pleading touch.  
"Dunnet yo' turn agen me," he whispered:  
"yo' wouldna if yo' knew."

"But I dunnot know," Bess answered, a  
trifle doggedly, despite her inward relent-  
ings.

"I comn to yo'," persisted the lad, "be-  
cause I thowt yo' wouldna turn agen me;  
yo' wouldna," patiently again, "if yo'  
knew."

Gradually the ponderous witticism in  
which Janner had indulged became an ac-  
cepted joke in the settlement. Bess had  
fallen a victim to the tender sentiment at  
last. She had found an adorer, and had ap-  
parently succumbed to his importunities.  
Seth spent less time in his shanty and more  
in her society. He lingered in her vicinity  
on all possible occasions, and seemed to de-  
rive comfort from her mere presence. And  
Bess not only tolerated but encouraged  
him. Not that her manner was in the least  
degree effusive: she rather extended a rough  
protection to her admirer, and displayed a  
tendency to fight his battles and employ her  
sharper wit as a weapon in his behalf.

"Yo' may get th' best o' him," she said  
dryly once to the wit of the Creek, who had  
been jocular at his expense, "but yo' conna  
get the best o' me. Try me a bit, lad. I'm  
better worth yo're mettle."

"What's taken yo', lass?" said her  
mother at another time. "Yo're that theer  
soft about th' chap as theer's no makin' yo'  
out. Yo' wur niver loike to be soft afore,"  
somewhat testily. "An' it's noan his good  
looks, neyther."

"No," said Bess—"it's noan his good  
looks."

"Happen it's his lack on 'em, then?"

"Happen it is." And there the discussion  
ended for want of material.

There was one person, however, who did  
not join in the jesting; and this was Laugley.  
When he began to understand the matter he  
regarded the two with sympathetic curiosity  
and interest. Why should not their primitive