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MICHAEL VERRAN THE HERO.

There are heroes in every class of life ; many a time unnoticed and unknown to fame, yet written in the Book of Life, enrolled in the noble army of martyrs, who have laid down their lives for others for His sake who died for them.

Such a hero was Michael Verran, a splendid specimen and true type of a Christian Cornish miner.

From a boy he had lived and worked in the dark mines ; but he had learned to hush the name of Jesus at his mother's knee, and the dark galleries and levels of the mine did not hinder his having an abiding sense of the Saviour's presence.

One day, in his full manhood, he was engaged with two others sinking a shaft. They had bored a hole in the usual way for blasting, and then, according to rule, one of the three had descended the shaft, leaving the others making preparation for firing the charge.

The hole was filled with powder and securely tamped, and all that was left to do was to cut the fuse, and then for one man

to ascend the shaft, and let down the bucket for the last, so that he who fired the fuse might have time to be drawn up to the surface before the charge could explode.

Michael and his companion had become familiar with danger. They were careless ; and, while the fuse was attached to the charge, they set to work to cut it through with a stone and an iron drill. It doing it the iron gave out a spark, and in a second the hissing of the fuse told them that in a few moments the whole would explode.

Both dashed to the shaft, and, holding on to the bucket, gave the signal to be drawn up ; but, alas ! the strength of the man at the windlass was not equal to lifting two—he could wind up only one man at a time.

To remain was death to both, and it was Michael Verran's turn to ascend. He looked at his companion, stepped from the—

"Escape, lad, for thy life ; I shall be in heaven in a minute."

Swiftly the bucket ascended, and the man saved leaned over the pit's mouth and listened—listened for what ? For the great roar and boom that told him of the destruction of the brave comrade who had given up his life to save him.

Up came the smoke and rubbish, blinding and sickening. There could be no doubt of the miner's fate close shut against that fearful hole. Yet down they hurried ; and among the scattered blocks of rock at the bottom of the shaft they shouted in faltering tones his name, "Michael ! Michael ! where are you ?"

And the strong answer came, "Thank God, I am here !"

Eager hands dragged away the rubbish and rock, and there, underneath, a huge slab of stone that had been blown across him, and lodging against the end of the shaft protected him from all the rest, they found him safe, not a scratch upon him, nor his clothes torn.

He had sat himself down in the corner of his rocky prison, placed a shield of rock before his eyes, and commended his soul