

That Lass o' Lowrie's,

A STORY OF THE LANCASHIRE COAL MINES.

By FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT.

Possibly her silence attracted Liz's attention. Suddenly she looked up, and when she saw the gravity of Joan's face, her own changed.

"You're grudin' me doin' it," she cried. "You think I ha' no rest to care for sich things," and she dropped her hat and ribbon on her knee with an angry gesture. "Happen I ha' na, she whimpered. "I ha' na gessing no rest to no sort o' pleasure, I darsay."

"Nay," said Joan rousing herself from her reverie. "Nay, yo' must na say that, Liz. If it pleases yo' it canna do no hurt; I'm glad to see yo' pleased."

"I'm tired o' doin' nowt but mope i' th' house," Liz fretted. "I want to go out a bit loike other folk. There's places i' Riggan as I could go to wout bein' slurred at—there's other wenches as has done worse nor me. Ben Maxy towd Mary on'y yesterday as I was the prettiest lass i' th' place, fur aw their slurs."

"Ben Maxy?" Joan said slowly. "Liz twisted a bit of ribbon around her finger."

"It's not as I care for what Ben Maxy says, or what any other man says, fur th' matter o' that, but—but it shows as I need na be so much ashamed o' mysel' after aw' yo' need na stay i' doors as if I dare na show my face."

"Joan made no answer. "At yet," she said, smiling faintly at her own train of thought afterward. "I dunno see what I'm complainin' on. Am I out o' patience because my pairt is na deeper? Surely I am in a widdical humour, bein' a queer wench, tryin' to mak' her happy, an' then feelin' wroth at her forgettin' her trouble. It's well as she can't be bothered with me."

But these thoughts were of no avail, not help being anxious. Liz gradually drifting out into her old world again. She was so weak, and so weary, and so ready to listen to rough flatteries. Riggan was more than a criticism than in its morality, and criticism having died out, offence was forgotten through indifference rather than through elation. Those who had been hardest upon Liz in her days of distress were carelessly ready to take her up again when her fault was an old story, and unheeded by some newer scandal.

Joan found herself left alone with the child of her own, she used to be, but in truth this was a relief rather than otherwise. She was accustomed to solitude, and the work of self-culture she had begun filled her spare hours with occupation.

Since her dismissal from the mines, she saw but little of her father. Sometimes she saw nothing of him for weeks. The night after he took his place, he came into the house, and looking up a small bundle of his personal effects, took a sure look at the two women.

"I'm glad to see you," he said. "If you axed, yo' can say I'm gone to look for a job. My day has na come yet, but it's on the way."

Since then he had only returned once or twice, and his visits had always been brief and unexpected, and at night. The first time he had started Joan by dropping in upon her at midnight, his small form in his black coat over his shoulder, his clothes bespattered with mud, and they're tight, but I'm na say as I wud look by that little wench o' the parson's. "I wud look by her."

"She would be glad to see you, I'm sure, with an ivy so shabby that she may proceed with fresh gravity."

"I mak' no doubt on't, demagogically. "I mak' no doubt on't if I wud, but I dunnot know as th' fattery is doin' good. Sugar soap is na so desirable as th' best o' em. There has to be a bit o' clean, yo' see. But I'm na say as I wud look by that little wench o' the parson's. "I wud look by her."

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Tha't ha' to tak' both fat an' lean together i' these days, or go w'out mate."

Sammy remembered these sage remarks rather sorely as he sat awaiting the master of the household. His independence had been very dear to him, and the idea that he must relinquish it was a grievous thorn in the flesh. He glanced round at the pictures and statuettes, and shook his head dubiously.

"A man wi' so many crinkum-crankums as he seems to ha' gotten'll be apt to be reither set i' polytics. An' I'll warrant this is na' th' best parlour neyther. Aw th' wall covered w' books too, an' an ornamental step-lather to climb up to th' high shelves. Well, Sammy, owd lad, tha's not seen aw th' world yet, the finds out. There's a bit o' summat outside Riggan. Arter aw, it does a man no hurt to travel. I should na wonder if I might see things as I never heard on if I gotten as far as the Contynent. There's France now—foak say as they dunnot speak Lancashire i' France, an' conna so much as understand it. Well, there's ignorance all o'er the world."

The door opened at this juncture, and Mr. Haviland entered, fresh, florid, and cordial. His temperment being easy one, he rather dreaded collision with anybody, and would especially have disliked an uncomfortable interview with this old fellow. He would like to be able to preserve his affability of demeanour for his own sake, as well as for Miss Barholm's.

"Ah," he said. "Craddock, is it? Glad to see you, Craddock."

"Aye," he answered. "Sam'll Craddock fro' Riggan. Same to yo', Mester."

Mr. Haviland waved his hand good-naturedly.

"Take your seat again," he said. "Don't stand. You are the older man of the two, you know, and I darsay you are tired with your walk. You came about the lodge-keeper's place?"

"That little lass o' th' owd parson's," began Sammy.

"Miss Anice Barholm," interposed Mr. Haviland. "Yes, she told me she would visit you. I never had the pleasure of seeing her until she drove here yesterday to ask for the place for you. She was afraid to lose time in waiting for her father's return."

"Yo' never saw her afore?"

"No," he answered, "I never saw her afore. "Well," rubbing his hands excitedly over the book on the table, "I'm na say as I wud look by that little wench o' the parson's. "I wud look by her."

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al right to respect him. It was their ground too, and he had held it for them as well as for himself. He stopped at the Crown for his mid-day glass of ale; and his self-satisfaction was so evident that his friend observed it, and remarked among themselves that "th' owd lad wud pickin' up his crumbs a bit."

"Yo're lookin' graidely to-day, Sammy," said one.

"I'm feelin' a trifle graidelier than I ha' done," he answered, oracularly. "Things is lookin' up."

"I'm main glad to hear it. Tell us as how."

"Well—with studied indifference—" "It's na so great luck i' comparison, but it's summat to be thankfu' fur to a man as is down i' th' world. I've gotten the lodge-keeper's place at Mr. Haviland's."

"Tha' never says! Who'd a thowt it? How ever did that come about?"

"Friends i' court," with dignity. "Friend's i' court. Houd me that jug o' ale, Tummy. Haviland's a man o' discretion, if he is a Member o' Parliament. We've had quite a friendly chat this mornin' as we set i' th' lobby together. He is na so bid i' his polyticks as he's afore said and done. He'll do, up th' whole."

"Yo' stood up to him free enow, I warrant," said Tummy. "Th' gentle folk dunnot offer hear such free speakin' as yo' g' em, Sammy."

"Well, I had to be a bit independent; it wud nat'ral. It would na ha' done to be so soft, if he ever th' mester an' me th' man. But he's a man o' sense, as I say, an' he wud civil enow, an' friendly enow. He's gotten gumption to see as polyticks is polyticks. I'll tell yo' what, lads, I'm comin' to th' opinion as happen there's more sense i' some o' th' gentry than we g' em credit fur; they ha' not much but look lammin' i' their leads, it's true, but they're na so bad—some on 'em—if yo're charitably w' out."

"Who was th' friend i' court, Sammy?" was asked next.

Sammy's fist went down upon the table with a force which made the mugs dance and rattle.

"That's th' friend i' court," he said. "I'm na say as I wud look by that little wench o' the parson's. "I wud look by her."

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without knowing it. Surely there never was a passion—if it is really a passion—if it had so little to feed upon."

"So little," echoed Grace.

Derrick got up and began to walk across the floor.

"I have nothing—nothing, and I am beset on every side."

There is something extraordinary in the blindness of a man with an absorbing passion. Absorbed by his passion for one woman, Grace was blind to the greatest inconsistencies in his friend's speech and manner. Absorbed in his passion for another woman, Derrick forgot for the hour everything concerning his friend's love for Anice Barholm.

Suddenly he paused in his career across the room.

"Grace," he said, "I cannot trust myself; but I can trust you, I cannot be unfaithful to this—you can. Tell me what I am to do—answer me this question, though God knows, it would be a hard one for a man to answer. Perhaps I ought not to ask it—perhaps I ought to have decision enough to answer it myself without troubling you. But how can I? And you who are so true to yourself and to me in other things, will be true in this, I know. This feeling is stronger than all else—so strong that I have feared and failed to comprehend it. I had not even thought of it until it came upon me with fearful force, and I am conscious that it has not reached its height yet. It is not an ignoble passion, I know. How could a passion for such a woman as this be ignoble? And yet again, there have been times when I have felt that perhaps it was best to struggle against it. I am beset on every side, as I have said, and I appeal to you. Ought I used to be stronger than all else? I used to tell myself so, but then it came upon me—and now I can only wonder at myself and tremble to find that I have grown weak."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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HOLMAN LIVER PAD.

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Derrick marched into the Barholm's said.

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