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Or a word exchanged with a passer by;
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A picture painted with memory's hand,
And we lose the old for the new ideal;
A chance remark or a song's refrain,
And life is never the same again.

A friendly smile and love's embowering
spark
Leaps into flame and illumines the dark;
A whisper "Be Brave" to our fellowmen,
And they pick up the thread of hope
again.
They smile as they act or a word or thought,
But that with unguessed importance is
fraught:
For small things build up eternity
And bless the ways for destiny.

The Master of the Mine.

BY ROBERT BUCHANAN.

CHAPTER XXXV.—Continued.

The sea had entered the mine. There was only one chance for those below, if by any possibility they survived. Some one must descend and make an inspection, even at the risk of his life; and, without a moment's hesitation I determined to volunteer for the task. Strange to say, my head became quite cool and clear directly my resolve was made.

"Listen, lads!" I said, "There's hope yet, and I'm going down."
A faint cheer, mingled with a terrified murmur, greeted my announcement.

"It be no use, Measter!" cried Michael Pennmaur. "The ladders be clean gone."
"I know that," I answered, "but if we can get safely down to the middle platform, I can descend from there by a rope. Run down to the office, some of you, and bring all the ropes and candles you can find."

They rushed off cheering; and, turning to those who remained, I explained my plan. Several of them, Michael Pennmaur, and I, decided to descend with me to the platform, and to lower me thence down the bottom shaft. In less time than it takes to write these lines, the messengers returned with several coils of rope, and candles; I stacked several of the latter about my person, and two or three in my side-walk hat. Then I was ready.

I had set my foot on the first rung of the ladder, and was about to descend, when Madeline bent over me.

"God bless you," she cried, "and bring you safe back!"

I reached up, and taking her hand pressed it to my lips. "If he lives," I said, "I'll restore him to you, and to his mother. Don't cry, Miss Graham. There's a chance yet!"

I thought her tears fell for him, and yet, strange to say, she had my sympathy; all my wild-romances seemed to have fallen from me like a discarded garment. What was my amazement when, bending over me, she took my face between her two trembling hands, and kissed me on the forehead!

"God will bring you back I am soothed, and turned away.

Scarcely realizing the significance of what had occurred, I descended rapidly, followed by Michael and the volunteers. As I went, the roar from below increased, and the solid rock on which the ladder was set seemed to shake as with earthquakes. In pitch darkness I reached the first platform.

Here I paused, and, striking a light, lit the candles on my person. My companions did the same. The lurid light lit up their pale, anxious faces, and showed faint rays down into the mine.

"Now, then, lads!" I cried, descending the second stage of ladders. Some of these were very shaky, and I had to use great caution; but I knew the way blindfold, and all my old experience of the place stood me in good stead.

At last, with no harm done to anyone, we reached the central platform. Here the roar was deafening, and the solid rock seemed splitting with the sound.

I bent over the abyss, and held down the light, using my hand as a reflector. Sure enough, several of the ladders had broken away, leaving only the precipitous shaft, steep as the sides of a well. I strained my eyes into the darkness, and fancied I discerned, far beneath something like the gleam ofashing water! Then I leaped—my shout was drowned in the subterranean tumult.

On the central platform was a windlass, with a portion of an old derrick crane. Round this I passed one of the ropes, instructing the men to hold one end and gradually give way or draw in as I should direct. Then I took the other end, and fastened it securely under my arm-pits.

"It be now use, Measter Hugh!" cried Michael Pennmaur. "Dew's 'ee go. It be going to your death!"

But finding that I was not to be persuaded, the brave fellow swung my hand, and promised to do his best to help me; nor were the others less kindly and sympathetic. As they lowered me over the platform, I partially supported myself against the slimy rocks; but the next moment I was suspended in air. Slowly, carefully, they let me down, the candles on my person flickering and flaming, and lighting up the damp and oozy walls. At last, some twenty yards down, my foot rested on a ladder, descending which I reached the lowest platform of all.

Looking up, I saw far above me, as in a narrow frame, the faces of the men. I shouted to them, but they could not hear; but I waved a signal to them, and they answered back. Then I released myself from the rope, and prepared to look around.

Suddenly my foot struck against something soft, like a body; and, stooping down, light in hand, I saw two of the miners lying among the debris of the broken ladder, stone dead, and dreadfully disfigured. One was Jim Treegar, a colossal young fellow from Pessano, six feet high, and weighing over fifteen stone. The fall had smashed him like an egg, and death had been instantaneous.

Full of a new horror, I leant over the platform and looked down. As I did so, my head went round, and I should have fallen had I not clutched again at the rope, which swung loose close to my hands.

Of the mine, roared the sea, boiling backward and forward with wild pulsations along the shafts and galleries through which it had broken in. A salt spume rose from it and the walls of the shaft were dripping and drenched with oles of foam. From the point where I stood, the last ladders had been entirely washed or broken away.

The roar was deafening, but I shouted with all my might. I paused and listened; no answer came.

Again I shouted; again I passed and listened.

Suddenly, from the darkness beneath I heard a faint voice answering me.

My heart stood still. Then, with an effort, I shouted again.

The faint cry was repeated.

"Who's there?" I called; but the sound of my voice was blown away, and only the same faint cry came in answer.

I seized the rope, and, looking up to the men above me, pointed downward; they signalled, and seemed to understand. Then I secured the rope again under my arm-pits, and, signalling to them to give way, swung over the platform.

My instructions to the men had been simple. When I tugged once at the rope they were to lower away, when I tugged twice they were to stop lowering when I tugged three times, sharply, they were to haul in. The further I descended, the greater grew my peril; for the ropes were not a strong one, and many of the out-jutting points of rock were sharp enough to sever it by friction; add to which, that the long swing at such a distance rendered it liable to break should there be anywhere a weak or rotten strand.

As I went down, I was conscious of flying spray and splashing water; and when I had descended some fifteen yards, my feet touched the sea. However, I made no sign, but, entering the water, found myself waist-deep, but touching the bottom. Then I tugged twice at the rope, and looked about me.

The spot where I stood formed a sort of submerged shoals, sloping down to the deeper portions of the shafts and galleries. On every side the sea rushed and boiled. As I stood there, I surged up to my breast and extinguished the lights I carried on my person—only those ceasing which were stuck in minor fashion in my belt.

I shouted again, almost despairing of answer. To my amazement, voices were close by, and straining my eyes

I saw, crouching on a ledge of rock just flush with the water, two human figures. One sat recumbent, with his head against the wall; the other lay motionless, resting his head on the first one's lap. More like gnomes or wild beasts they seemed, dripping wet, and covered with filth and ooze. But even in the faint light I recognized them.

The man sitting was my uncle, John Pennmaur. The man lying senseless was George Redrath.

"CHAPTER XXXVI.
"Hugh, my lad!" said my uncle, stretching out his hands.

I waded through the water till I came close to him.

"Ay, here I am!" I answered. "Thank God you are safe; but he—
he dead or living?"

"Lard knows!" was the reply. "He he's like that these two hours, and I thought the waters were rising to wash us away."

So loud was the thunder on every side of us, that we had to shout at each other in order to be heard; and even our shouts sounded like mere whispers, though we were so close together.

I took a light from my hat, and reached out of the water, looking into the young master's face. It was ghastly pale, but there was a mark on the temple, as of blood. I put my hand upon his heart, and discovered that it was faintly beating.

"He lives still," I said; then, without more parley, I disengaged myself from the rope, and proceeded to make it fast to the senseless man. As I did so the water almost swept me away, but I held on to the rock and kept my place. When the rope was firmly secured under George Redrath's armpits, I shook him sharply, and, to my joy, he opened his eyes, partially recovering from his torpor.

Then I touched the rope and pointed upward, making signs that he was to understand, and, using my arms, I placed him in position, and then tugged three times, as a signal for the men to haul in.

There was a momentary pause; then the rope tightened, and the light body began slowly to ascend. Still, waist-deep in the sea, I watched it journey upward—lax and loose as a dead thing now rasping against the damp walls, now quivering and turning round and round, till it passed the first platform. Far, far above it, I saw the faint gleam from the spot where the men were gathered. At last it disappeared from sight, and I knew that if life lasted, George Redrath was saved!

Then I clambered on the ledge beside my uncle, who was still lying in the same position, with his head leaning back against the dripping wall.

I took his hands in mine, and pressed them eagerly. As I did so, I saw, to my horror, that the breast of his lining-shirt was saturated with blood, and that his face was ghastly white, and that there was on his lips a light stain of red.

"Are you hurt?" I said, with my lips close to his ear.

"He inclined his head gently, and groaned as if in great pain.

It was neither the time nor the place to question him further; but I pressed his hand again in token of sympathy. Our eyes met, and his were full of some strange speechless sorrow.

Presently, I saw the rope descending, weighted with a small bar of iron; down it came till it touched the water's edge. I leapt down, and, wading out, drew it towards the ledge.

"Uncle," I cried, "see!—it is your turn!"

And I pointed upward.

He shook his head feebly.

"No, no, lad," he said, "I'm here to die!"

It was not to be thought of. Wildly, in dumb show, I besought him to make an effort to ascend, and at last he assented.

"I'll try, lad; I'll try!" he said. "But I doubt my back be broke. A jump o' rock fell on me as I were carrying young master here."

I looked at him in surprise. To tell the truth, I had had a wild suspicion, ever since the news of the accident, that it might have been caused by foul play on my uncle's part. I knew him to be mad with trouble, and

if by any chance he had discovered Redrath's guilt, God alone knew what he might have done. But if he spoke the truth, and I knew well that he was not a man to lie, I had deeply wronged him. Instead of attempting to destroy, he had actually imperilled his own life to save the betrayer of his daughter's honor.

Gently and tenderly I secured the rope around him, but he moaned with pain as I raised him to launch him upward. As the rope tightened, he uttered a cry of agony. However, it was too late to avoid the risk, and it was the last chance.

Supporting him in my arms as long as possible, I saw him drawn upward. When his full weight fell upon the rope his agony grew terrible, and I think he fainted away, for he hung in the air like a dead man, with limbs and arms pendant. I watched him rise slowly, and felt no little anxiety lest the rope should yield beneath his weight; for he was a heavy man, compared to whom George Redrath was a very feather.

However, the rope stood the test, and he was drawn safely up the abyss. After a long interval, during which I waited in sickening terror, with the waters thundering and the rocks quaking around me, the rope again descended. I seized it, secured it under my arm-pits, and, giving the signal, was drawn upward.

On reaching the bottom platform, I rested a moment; then I signalled again, and rose once more into the air. By this time the lights in my hat were extinguished, and I was in total darkness; but as I gained the middle platform, half a dozen hands were stretched out to grasp me, till, tottering and trembling, I stood upon my feet.

Wildly and joyfully the men surrounded me, almost kissing me in their rapture at my reappearance. I looked around for George Redrath, but he was not to be seen. I looked up to the mouth of the mine. But lying on the platform, his head supported on Michael Pennmaur's knee, was my uncle, white and bleeding, like a man whose time had come.

I knelt by his side, and took his hand. He looked up into my face; and I saw that his eyes were filmy and dim. The air of the mine, even up there, was fetid and foul, and I saw that he breathed with difficulty.

"Hugh, my lad!" he said, faintly. "Come close—I want to whisper to 'ee. Can you forgive me?"

"Forgive you?" I cried, greatly moved. "What have I to forgive?"

"Listen, lad, and I'll tell 'ee!"

He paused, his head fell back, and I thought that he was gone; but the next moment he recovered, and gazed into my face again. Just then the two men who had gone up with George Redrath descended, and one of them held out to me a flask of brandy. I took it eagerly, and held it to my uncle's lips. He drank a little, and the spirit seemed to revive him.

"Hugh! are you there, my lad?"

"Yes," I answered, fairly sobbing.

"Is that your hand in mine?"

"Yes, yes!"

"Put down your head, and listen. I be dying, sure enough, and afore I die I would like to hear your forgiveness. They would ha' hung 'ee, lad, for what I did. 'Twas I that killed the overcoat!"

I had guessed as much, but when the truth came from my uncle's own lips, I started in horror. He clutched my hand, as if fearing that I would shrink away.

"'Twere all on account o' my Annie, my poor little lass. We met out on the cliff beyond the mine, and I tazed him wif bringing her trouble upon her, and he said summat that made me murdering mad. He said she were a light lass, light and bad; and, lard forgive me! afore I had time to think, I struck at 'er wif my knife! Then he staggered back—'twere on the very edge of the crag—and the earth seemed to give way under him, and he went o'er—screaming—he went o'er to his death, on the rocks below. That was how it came about! I didn't mean to kill 'er, but 'twere dose like a flash o' lightning—and the next morning—the next morning—they found 'er lying, dead and bloody, on the shore."

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The confession came in stifled whispers, often so faint that I could scarcely hear; but other ears heard and understood it as well as mine, and when he ceased, a horrified murmur passed from man to man.

"May God forgive you!" I murmured, still bending over him.

He did not seem to hear me. His eyes were fixed on vacancy, his hands clutched mine like a vice. Suddenly he leant forward, drew his hand from mine, and pointed.

"See there!" he cried. "Tis hisself all bloody, and beckoning wif his finger. And who be that standing by 'em, all in white? Annie! Annie my lass! speak to father! speak to... speak to... father!"

The last word died away in his throat, where it met the death rattle; there was a struggle, a last convulsion, and he fell back like a lump of lead.

I think I too must have lost my senses for a time. The next thing I remember was standing in the open air, and staggering like a drunken man, with kindly arms supporting me on either side. I looked round wildly. An excited crowd of women and men surrounded me; and close by, not far from the mine-mouth, the dead body

of my uncle lay in the sunlight with Annie and my aunt bending over it and bitterly weeping.

I sank down upon a rock, and hid my face. When I looked up again, I saw George Redrath and his mother standing near me, and with them Madeline.

The young master seemed quite himself, though greatly agitated.

"Trelawney," he said, "this is a sad affair. Well, I owe you my life." I looked him coldly in the face; his eyes sank beneath my gaze.

"No, sir," I replied. "You owe your life to the poor martyr lying yonder, and you know best what cause he had to love you!"

"You are right," he said. "He began the task which you completed. When the outer rock gave way, and the sea rushed in upon us, I must have fainted; and Fendragon here me to the place where you found me. I will take care that those he leaves behind are well rewarded."

Again I looked him in the face.

"Too late for that," I answered. He returned my look, with something of the old dislike. All my spirit revolted against him, thinking of the sorrow he had wrought.

CONTINUED NEXT WEEK.