

that they have forgotten what a baby looks like, who have had experience of humanity only in its roughest, foulest form, this little mite, sweet and clean, was like an angel fresh from heaven, the one link in all that black camp that bound them to what was purest and best in their past.

'And to see the mother and her baby handle the miners!

'Oh, it was all beautiful beyond words! I shall never forget the shock I got one night when I found "Old Ricketts" nursing the baby. A drunken old beast he was; but there he was sitting, sober enough, making extraordinary faces at the baby, who was grabbing at his nose and whiskers and cooing in blissful delight. Poor "Old Ricketts" looked as if he had been caught stealing, and muttering something about having to go, gazed wildly round for some place in which to lay the baby, when in came the mother, saying in her own sweet, frank way: "O Mr. Ricketts" (she didn't find out till afterwards his name was Shaw), "would you mind keeping her just a little longer?—I shall be back in a few minutes."

'But in six months mother and baby, between them, transformed 'Old Ricketts' into Mr. Shaw, fire-boss of the mines. And then in the evenings, when she would be singing her baby to sleep, the little shop would be full of miners, listening in dead silence to the baby-songs, and the English songs, and the Scotch songs she poured forth without stint, for she sang more for them than for her baby. No wonder they adored her. She was so bright, so gay, she brought light with her when she went into the camp, into the pits—for she went down to see the men work—or into a sick found in that back room cheer and comfort miner's shack; and many a man, lonely and sick for home or wife, or baby or mother, and courage, and to many a poor broken wretch that room became, as one miner put it "the anteroom to heaven."

He put his face in his hands and shuddered.

Mr. Craig paused, and I waited. Then he went on slowly—

'For a year and a half that was the happiest home in all the world, till one day—'

'I don't think I can ever forget the awful horror of that bright fall afternoon, when "Old Ricketts" came breathless to me and gasped, "Come! for the dear Lord's sake," and I rushed after him. At the mouth of the shaft lay three men dead. One was Lewis Mavor. He had gone down to superintend the running of a new drift; the two men, half drunk with Slavin's whiskey, set off a shot prematurely, to their own and Mavor's destruction. They were badly burned, but his face was untouched. A miner was sponging off the bloody froth coozing from his lips. The others were standing about waiting for me to speak. But I could find no word, for my heart was sick, thinking, as they were, of the young mother and her baby waiting at home. So I stood, looking stupidly from one to the other, trying to find some reason—coward that I was—why another should bear the news rather than I. And while we stood there, looking at one another in fear, there broke upon us the sound of a voice mounting high above the birch tops, singing—

"Will ye no' come back again?
Will ye no' come back again?
Better lo'ed ye canna be,
Will ye no' come back again?"

'A strange terror seized us. Instinctively the men closed up in front of the body, and stood in silence. Nearer and nearer came the clear, sweet voice, ringing like a silver bell up the steep—

"Sweet the lav'rock's note and lang,
Liltin' wildly up the glen,
But aye tae me he sings ae sang,
Will ye no' come back again?"

'Before the verse was finished "Old Ricketts" had dropped on his knees, sobbing out brokenly, "O God! O God! have pity, have pity!"—and every man took off his hat. And still the voice came nearer, singing so brightly the refrain,

"Will ye no' come back again?"

'It became unbearable. "Old Ricketts" sprang suddenly to his feet, and, gripping me by the arm, said piteously, "Oh, go to her! for Heaven's sake, go to her!" I next remember standing in her path and seeing her holding out her hands full of red lilies, crying out, "Are they not lovely? Lewis is so fond of them!" With the promise of much finer ones I turned her down a path toward the river, talking I know not what folly, till her great eyes grew grave, then anxious and my tongue stammered and became silent. Then, laying her hand upon my arm, she said with gentle sweetness, "Tell me your trouble, Mr. Craig, and I knew my agony had come, and I burst out, "Oh, if it were only mine!" She turned quite white, and with her deep eyes—you've noticed her eyes—drawing the truth out of mine, she said, "Is it mine, Mr. Craig, and my baby's?" I waited, thinking with what words to begin. She put one hand to her heart, and with the other caught a little poplar-tree that shivered under her grasp, and said with white lips, but even more gently, "Tell me." I wondered at my voice being so steady as I said, "Mrs. Mavor, God will help you and your baby. There has been an accident—and it is all over."

'She was a miner's wife, and there was no need for more. I could see the pattern of the sunlight falling through the trees upon the grass. I could hear the murmur of the river, and the cry of the cat-bird in the bushes, but we seemed to be in a strange and unreal world. Suddenly she stretched out her hands to me, and with a little moan said, "Take me to him."

"Sit down for a moment or two," I entreated.

"No, no! I am quite ready. See," she added quietly, "I am quite strong."

'I set off by a short cut leading to her home, hoping the men would be there before us; but, passing me, she walked swiftly through the trees, and I followed in fear. As we came near the main path I heard the sound of feet, and I tried to stop her, but she, too, had heard and knew. "Oh, let me go!" she said piteously; "you need not fear." And I had not the heart to stop her. In a little opening among the pines we met the bearers. When the men saw her, they laid their burden gently down upon the carpet of yellow pine-needles, and then, for they had the hearts of true men in them, they went away into the bushes and left her alone with her dead. She went swiftly to his side, making no cry, but kneeling beside him she stroked his face and hands, and touched his curls with her fingers, murmuring all the time soft words of love. "O my darling, my bonnie, bonnie darling, speak to me! Will ye not speak to me just one little word? O my love, my love, my heart's love! Listen, my darling!" And she put her lips to his ear, whispering, and then the awful stillness. Suddenly she lifted her head and scanned his face, and then, glancing quond with a wild surprise in her eyes, she cried, "He will not speak to me! Oh, he will not speak to me!" I signed to the men, and as they came forward I went to her and took her hands.

"Oh," she said with a wail in her voice; 'he will not speak to me.' The men were sobbing aloud. She looked at them with wide-open eyes of wonder. 'Why are they weeping? Will he never speak to me again? Tell me,' she insisted gently. The words were running through my head—

"There's a land that is fairer than day,"

and I said them over to her, holding her hands firmly in mine. She gazed at me as if in a dream, and the light slowly faded from her eyes as she said, tearing her hands from mine and waving them towards the mountains and the woods—

"But never more here? Never more here?"

'I believe in heaven and the other life, but I confess that for a moment it all seemed shadowy beside the reality of this warm, bright world, full of life and love. She was very ill for two nights, and when the coffin was closed a new baby lay in the father's arms.

'She slowly came back to life, but there were no more songs. The miners still come about her shop, and talk to her baby, and bring her their sorrows and troubles; but though she is always gentle, almost tender, with them, no man ever says 'Sing.' And that is why I am glad she sang last week; it will be good for her and good for them.'

'Why does she stay?' I asked.

'Mavor's people wanted her to go to them,' he replied.

'They have money—she told me about it, but her heart is in the grave up there under the pines; and besides, she hopes to do something for the miners, and she will not leave them.'

I am afraid I snorted a little impatiently as I said, 'Nonsense! why, with her face, and manner, and voice she could be anything she liked in Edinburgh or in London.'

'And why Edinburgh or London?' he asked coolly.

'Why?' I repeated a little hotly. 'You think this is better?'

'Nazareth was good enough for the Lord of glory,' he answered, with a smile none too bright; but it drew my heart to him, and my heat was gone.

'How long will she stay?' I asked.

'Till her work is done,' he replied.

'And when will that be?' I asked impatiently.

'When God chooses,' he answered gravely; 'and don't you ever think but that it is worth while. One value of work is not that crowds stare at it. Read history, man!'

He rose abruptly and began to walk about. 'And don't miss the whole meaning of the Life that lies at the foundation of your religion. Yes,' he added to himself, 'the work is worth doing—worth even her doing.'

I could not think so then, but the light of the after years proved him wiser than I. A man, to see far, must climb to some height, and I was too much upon the plain in those days to catch even a glimpse of distant sunlit uplands of triumphant achievement that lie beyond the valley of self-sacrifice.

(To be continued.)

Go.

Over and over the cry is heard,
'Come and bring us the saving word,'
Over and over the message rings,
From the loving lips of the King of Kings,
'Go, and tell them, 'tis My command,
Go, and tell them in every land,'
And while one soul of the sons of men,
Waits for the word from the lips or pen,
We who have heard it, must tell it again.