

The pitman foremost to see the sight  
Had shrieked out wildly, and swooned with fright ;

His comrades heard, for the shrill scar'd cry  
Rang through each gallery, low and high,

So they clutched their picks, and they clustered round,  
And gazed with awe at the thing they found,

For never perchance since the world began,  
Had sight so solemn been seen by man !

It lay alone in a dark recess,  
How long it had lain there, none might guess.

They held above it a gleaming lamp,  
But the air of the cavern was chill and damp,

So they carried it up to the blaze of day,  
And set the thing in the sun's bright ray.

'Twas the corpse of a Miner in manhood's bloom,  
An image, dismal in glare or gloom.

Awful it seemed in its stillness there,  
With its calm wide eyes, and its jet-black hair,

Cold as some effigy carved in stone,  
And clad in raiment that matched their own,

But none of the miners, who looked, could trace  
Friend, Son, or Brother in that pale face.

What marvel ? a century's half had roll'd  
Since that strong body grew stiff and cold,

In youth's blithe summer-time robb'd of breath  
By vapors wing'd with electric death.

Many, who felt that their mate was slain,  
Probed earth's deep heart for his corpse, in vain,

And when nought was found, after years had fled,  
Few, few still wept for the stripling dead,

Save one true maiden, who kept the vows  
Pledged oft to Willie, her promised spouse.