

prepared at any time to break up housekeeping and seek another abode. But, as a rule, a coal mine never gives out. From year to year the great drifts and shafts run a little deeper into the earth, requiring longer haulage, but the coal is always there, so that the coal miner becomes a fixture, working year after year in the same mine.

Our guide was an old employee of the mine known as "The Fire Boss." It was his business to walk through every part of the mine a couple of times each day, and report the condition of affairs to the manager. The principal danger to be feared in a coal mine is the accumulation of gas. Occasionally explosions have taken place, which have sometimes resulted in serious loss of life. About nine years ago a terrific explosion was caused through the carelessness of a Chinaman who carried an open lamp into a room which contained a quantity of gas. About 180 men were killed, and the bodies of some of them still remain in the mine, it being impossible to recover them. Our friend "The Fire Boss" carried in his hand a little lamp covered with wire, known as the "Safety Lamp." By the use of this valuable device any part of the mine can be entered in safety. Sir Humphrey Davy conferred an inestimable boon upon the miner when he invented the "Safety Lamp," for it has doubtless saved thousands of lives. Of course, it has been greatly improved and perfected since then.

The subterranean passages of a coal mine are laid out very much like the streets of a city, usually with one main passage, seven or eight feet high and about eighteen feet wide. From this side streets radiate in various directions, and some of the men work at considerable distances from the main thoroughfare.

"The modern coal mine possesses a mechanical equipment

of considerable proportions. Apart from all the devices of modern engineering there are sanitation, drainage, and electric lighting systems of great perfection, telephone, electric conveying systems that would reflect glory on any navy, and a fire department that would reflect glory on many an incorporated city. The introduction of machinery has changed the whole aspect of the subterranean community."

From what has been said, we can well understand that the problem of ventilation is the one that gives the miner the greatest difficulty. Mechanical ventilation is, of course, necessary. The air is admitted to the mine through a special opening, and by means of powerful machinery, such as fans and blowers, is forced into the various rooms and passages. The greatest possible care is taken in the management of the ventilating system, as many lives depend upon it.

A personal visit to a coal mine cannot fail to enlist sympathy for the men who work so hard, under such unpleasant surroundings, to supply us with fuel. Anything that can be done to improve their condition by means of shorter hours, better homes, etc., should receive the earnest attention of the legislature.



MINER WITH SAFETY LAMP

Keep the One String Sounding

BY EDGAR L. VINCENT

THEY tell a pretty story of an old musician who in his latter days became blind and almost deaf. No longer able to go before the public as in days of old, the old man would sit in his room, with his harp tucked up close to his ear, striking the notes as he had been wont to do long ago. One by one the strings became loose at the ends and no longer gave out the sweet tones the old man loved. At last only one single cord was left, but he still went on fingering that, his soul lost in what seemed to him the sweetest melodies. That one string bore away to heaven the songs of his heart and satisfied his every longing.

I know an old man whose feet are now slipping over the brink. Once he was a man of power to move men. He had a splendid position, and used his talent to the best possible advantage. He surely made the world better. Then came losses which stripped him of health. The store he had laid by in the days of his early manhood little by little melted away. He could no longer work as he had done. His hearing became so dull that it was only by the greatest effort that he could converse with the friends who came to see him. But through it all the dear old man kept a sweet heart. His love of books and papers still was left, and every day he would go up into his study and read on and on, making many notes of what he found and saving little piles of clippings from the current prints just as he had in days of old. It seemed almost pitiful to see how faithfully he went on with his work, just as if to-morrow he might be called upon to go out and do some work in the open field once more. I am sure God sees how faithful is his effort. He hears the song that is breathed out upon the one lone cord of the harp that is left, and it is counted unto him for good.

Have you not more than once seen men who seem to have lost all interest in the world? Once they had strength, place, honor among men. Now the strings of the harp are all broken save one or two, and those are silent. No more music from the harp. Only a sad sitting in the shadow waiting for the sunset.

It is a terrible thing to drop thus out of the world while

yet a part of it. In the world, still not of it. The one strand might give out some note to cheer and help those who pass by on life's highway. At least it might bring peace and rest to the man who used to finger the strings if he were to go on day by day playing the old-time hymns and songs.

It is not often that youth bows the head to discouragement. Only some heavy grief or pressing sorrow can bring that about. But sometimes we do meet those who seem to be holding in their hands harps, every string of which has been broken save one. I think God never leaves His children without at least one string upon which to play the harmonies of the soul. But He does now and then snap all the rest.

Just now there comes to me the case of a sweet young lady who had for many years been working toward a finished education. When almost in sight of the goal of her ambition health suddenly gave way and she found herself unable to go a single step farther. Can you think what that would mean? Stop for a moment and try to understand the weight of such a blow. But through it all that young lady has gone straight on, making the sweetest music she can on the one poor little string that is left to her and waiting for what may come next. Brave, true, consecrated, blessed heart!

You cannot see how it can be that God can use one thus situated for good? In a thousand ways. Who is not won by patience as shown in another? Does not brave endurance of suffering lift the heart up whenever and wherever seen? Is it not true that a cheery smile, even when it comes from a heart that knows the very deepest sorrow, is a winsome thing to look upon?

Have the cords of your life harp been one after another snapped until there is just one left? Make the most of that! Its music will not be lost. He who listens to the faintest note of the weakest birdling will hear and make note of the lightest sound your harp sends out, and hearing He will gather up the tones and make them to grow until their melodies shall resound through all eternity.

Keep the one string sounding always.