

## A HERO OF THE MINES.

From a boy Michael Verran had lived and worked in the dark mines.

One day he was engaged with two others sinking a shaft. They had bored a hole in the usual way for blasting, and then, according to a rule, one of the three had ascended the shaft, leaving the others to finish the preparations for firing the charge. The hole was filled with powder and securely tamped, and all that was left to do was to cut the fuse and then for one man to ascend the shaft and let down the bucket for the last, so that he who fired the fuse might have time to be drawn up to the surface before the charge should explode.

Michael and his companion had become familiar with danger. They were careless, and, while the fuse was attached, they set to work to cut it through with a stone and an iron drill. In doing it, the iron gave out a spark, and in a second the hissing of the fuse told them that in a few minutes the charge would explode.

Both dashed to the shaft, and, holding on to the bucket, gave the signal to be drawn up; but, alas! the strength of the man at the windlass was not equal to lifting two; he could wind up only one man at a time.

To remain was death to both, and it was Michael Verran's turn to ascend. He looked at his companion, stepped from the bucket, and quietly said:

"Escape, lad, for thy life; I shall be in heaven in a minute."

Swiftly the bucket ascended, and the man saved leaned over the pit's mouth and listened—listened for what? For the great roar and boom that told of the sudden destruction of the brave comrade who had given up his life to save him.

Up came the smoke and rubbish, blinding and sickening. There could be no doubt of the miner's fate, close shut against that fearful hole. Yet down they hurried, and among the scattered blocks of rock at the bottom of the shaft they shouted, in falter-

ing tones, his name, "Michael! Michael! where are you?"

And the strong answer came, "Thank God, I am here."

Eager hands dragged away the rubbish and rock, and there, underneath a huge slab of stone that had blown across him, and lodging against the end of the shaft, protected him from all the rest, they found him safe; not a scratch upon him nor his clothes torn. He had set himself down in the corner of his rocky prison, placed a shield of rock before his eyes, and commended his soul in prayer to God, and the God who cared for Daniel in the rocky dungeon had delivered him and saved him from death.—"Forward."

## A HERO IN SCHOOL.

Jamie Pettigrew and Willie Hunter were the clever boys in Mr. Howatt's school class, and used to run "neck and neck for the prizes." Examination day came again. Jamie and Willie were left last in the field. Jamie missed question after question, which Willie answered, and got the prize.

"I," says Mr. Howatt, "went home with Jamie that night, and instead of being cast down at losing the prize, he seemed rather to be mighty glad. I can't understand it.

"'Why, Jamie,' I said, 'you could have answered some of those questions.

"'Of course I could!' he said, with a laugh.

"'Then why didn't you?' I asked.

"He wouldn't answer for awhile; but I kept pressing him, till at last he turned round with such a strange, kind look in his bonnie brown eyes.

"'Look here,' he said, 'how could I help it? There's poor Willie—his mother died last week, and if it hadn't been examination day he wouldn't have been at school. Do you think I was going to be so mean as to take a prize from a poor fellow who had just lost his mother?'

"Bravo, my lad! A good speech that; and second was a good place, if not the noblest of any, in all the school that day.