

reappeared, and the two men were back with mandrels, bars, wedges, and sledge-hammers. Their clothes dripped.

"We had to wade through it," said Rees.

"It's at the bottom of this road."

"Ris'n' up here, I s'pose," said Yanto, calmly.

"Yes."

"Oh. Then you'll have to cut more coal in the next few hours than you ever cut in your worthy lives. Now tamp," said he to the men, meaning "hurry." They leaped to the coal. Yanto organized them. He put two to cut, two to draw the loose stuff out of the way, and one to hold the light.

"Change about when you want to," he added. "But cut only a hole big enough to crawl through. And, mind, above all things, cut on the slant to the right."

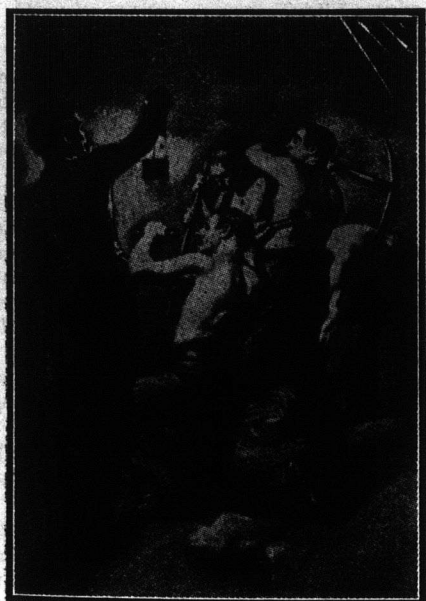
The work began briskly. He picked up four lamps out of the five, and deliberately extinguished them.

"The oil won't hold for long," he explained. "If you burn um all, they'll all go out. But if you burn one at a time they'll last longer. The wind is strong and there's no gas, so we can light one from the other."

The men, by the solitary light, cut and hammered for their lives; choking with the dust, shining with the sweat of their labor, trembling with fear that the water would rise and drown them like rats in a hole. Yanto, after a mere glance at the operations, went back to the place where he had put young Prince to rest. He found the boy lying in the dust fast asleep, tired out with all the marching and counter-marching.

"He'll get cold," said Yanto. "The water is forcing all the air of the pit up to this road. I'll get some bedcloths for him."

He went to the men, picked up the



"The men, by the solitary light, cut and hammered."

clothes they had thrown off—they worked with bare bodies—came back and put the garments carefully over young Prince. Then he lay down beside the sleeping lad, took him in his arms, and with the ring of the hammer and mandrels in his ears he went to sleep himself.

You will notice that in organizing the cutting-out operation Yanto left nothing for himself to do. Yanto, a real leader, hated real work: he used his brain and left the labor of carrying out his ideas to lesser mortals. So while the others worked frantically, Yanto forgot all about the danger, and slept as peacefully as if in bed in his lodgings with no work next day to harass his slumber.

He woke up at the sound of the boy, crying. He sat up shivering in the cold, abnormally strong wind.

"What's up, wassy?" he inquired.

"I'm hungry," sobbed the boy.

"Oh, you're hungry, are you? Well, where do you think we're going to get any grub for you—before the shops are open?"

"I'm as hungry as—as anythin'," said the boy, crying more piteously. Yanto grumbled.

"Well, I s'pose I must ask um to pull the shutters down somewhere," said he, rising. He took up a dark lamp, went to the man who held the lighted one and lit his own.

The men worked without a moment's stopping, like lost souls trying to cut their way out of hell. Yanto muttered

something in a dissatisfied tone as he looked at the work.

"I'll have something to say to them when I get back," said he to himself.

But, as if the mission of getting something to eat for the boy exceeded all other things in importance, away he went down the road, his lamp swinging its light on the rough sides and top. He felt certain of finding some scraps of bread in the victuals-boxes left behind by colliers in their rush to escape the water. He came back soaking from head to foot. The water streamed from his hair—from his neckerchief—from every particle of his clothing. But under both armpits he carried a small tin box full of bread.

"I had a nice long swim for um," said he, putting down the lamp, and opening a tin for the boy, who pounced on the food greedily.

The wind was blowing up the road with terrific force. The water, after closing all other outlets, drove all the air up this last opening with the fierceness of a gale. Yanto shivered with cold; his clothing clung to him as if he were swathed in ice-folds.

"I shouldn't be surprised if I ketch my death of cold," said he, laughing as he walked up in the dark toward the men.

"Funny them blows sounds," he said, listening to the dull thuds coming from the "cut." "Seems as if they're just through."

"The water's ris'n' quick—not twenty yards from us now," said he, affably, as he joined the other five.

"Oh, anwyll!" they exclaimed in consternation. And under the horrible incentive, the two men then using the cutting tools picked and hammered faster than ever.

Yanto listened to the sound of the blows carefully. They struck dull and heavy. He looked puzzled.

"Stop a bit," said he, very quietly.

"Stop!—with the water just on us!" cried the men.

"Stop, I tell you," said Yanto, still quietly, "or, if I don't make a mistake, you'll be blown to pieces up against the coal."

This alarmed them more than the water. They dropped their tools.

"Come out," said Yanto.

The four men shuffled back. Sweat poured from them in spite of the intense cold in which they worked. Yanto took the light and examined the face of the coal. In front and on the right it shone under the light. But on the left side he noticed that the coal wore a feathery, dull black look and gave no reflection from the lamp rays.

"Ah," said he.

He touched it: the soft coal crumbled and fell like mould down to his feet. He struck his knuckles against it: it sounded hollow.

"Ah," said he again.

He looked back at the men, who watched every one of his movements.

"Measure," said Yanto.

One man paced the length of the gap made.

"Six yards."

"Good goin'," remarked Yanto. "But I told you to slant to the right. You have slanted to the left."

"It cut easier that way."

"Oh. And was it easier to make the cut so big? You've made it big enough for a horse and tram to go through."

"It kept falling."

"Oh."

"We've done our best."

"Oh, indeed."

His tone wounded their feelings. One said, complainingly:

"Anyhow—you didn't do much more."

"No, I s'pose. Only, machgen I, you've made this hole big enough to be my grave. Good job it isn't yours, too. I s'pose there was somethin' in the boy wakin' me up."

"What do you mean, Yanto?" they asked, bewildered.

"Light the other lamps from this one and—keep back," answered he, once more sounding the coal on the left side.

They took the lamp from his hand. The wind blew so strongly—they felt its unlifting pressure as if it were a solid force thrusting itself upon them. With such a breeze no gas could exist; therefore, protecting the flame, they opened the lamp and succeeded in lighting two of the others.

"Now," said Yanto, with his back to the coal at the extreme end of the cut, "the pillar wasn't so thick as any-

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