

of the place, not nervous, but afraid. Suddenly, with a terrible rumbling, the cars broke loose, and thundered down into the hideous blackness. It seemed as if a horrible catastrophe were occurring. Gradually getting familiar with the darkness, your eyes saw again—saw fitfully the black, leaning roof, the glistening walls, the cavernous workings, the strange side streets of this underground city. Down with you a thousand feet or more, and then a sudden stop in these earth-bowels, where you with your eye of a lamp looked a goblin, like the other shifting, passing figures—a woman-goblin, out of place among these men-gnomes.

"There goes our last hope," said Mr. Farnworth, cheerfully, as the cars rumbled up the incline again, making eerie echoings. We were stranded in the deeps, and presently were stumbling further down into the blackness. The mine is laid out like a checker-board, in squares, with side cuttings. When a square is dug out, the wooden props are removed, and the roof falls in with a noise like a thousand thunders. The wooden props are giant beams placed as close together as working will permit, but the roof of coal is two feet thick and smooth and hard as glass. Stooping, we walked down the main seam, turning into sidings to avoid the train of wagons that rushed to the surface laden with coal, and descended in a few minutes empty. These coal wagons are run on the endless-rope system—the rope being of steel. Far down the slope was a bobbing of lights, showing where there were men at work. The miners employed in pushing or shunting wagons, or leading horses, wore their lamps dangling from belts or slung around the neck. The old headlight is not used in these mines. The lamps are closed—no open lights being permissible—and the light they give is puny. The effect of a number of lamps—you cannot see the men until you come upon them—is weird in the extreme. It is as if a hades of will-o'-the-wisps had broken loose and were fiendishly luring men on to destruction in those black, unsightly depths, bobbing impishly, now high, now low, glimmering faintly in the deeps of coal

caverns, vanishing abruptly behind dismal corners, then suddenly flashing out upon you from some dark archway.

Seven hundred men work daily and nightly in the Drummond Pit. They make good wages, averaging three dollars a day. The men who load the wagons get twenty-five cents per load of 1,200 lbs. for mining, and loading trucks. Sometimes a careful and quick-working man earns a hundred dollars per month—some, in fact, make over a hundred. The average is ninety. So that perilous as the life is, the men make a fair living; and it is indeed perilous. Sometimes a huge clump of coal dislodges from wall or roof and smashes a leg or shoulder; sometimes death comes from the wagons that "run away" down those terrible inclines; sometimes from a cave-in. And there are the risks of explosion, or flooding, or choke-damp. But habit makes the men indifferent to these dangers; they become accustomed to this working in the blackness, and lose sight of the risks. You will hear them whistle and sing in the depths here, as the pick drives into the black walls and the big chunks come hurling down. Even "Two Little Girls in Blue" found their way down a coal mine. One would have imagined these wandering damsels would be content to own the top of the earth without burrowing under the crust of it.

Twenty years ago an explosion killed a large number of men in this colliery. "Some of them are in there yet," said the manager, pointing behind a shining wall of black. Two years back another explosion shook the place, though every precaution is taken in these mines. Still there is no telling where a pocket of gas may collect, and the miner's lamp, closed and guarded as it is, warns him of that. When a blue cap gathers over the yellow flame to any extent, the quicker you make for the entrance the better. There is always a blue speck more or less over the light, and we watched our lamps with interest. In event of explosion, there does not seem to be room for much hope at the bottom of the Drummond Pit. We, for instance, had by this time walked fully 3,000 feet below where we left the car. If an explosion took place now, this minute, there would be no