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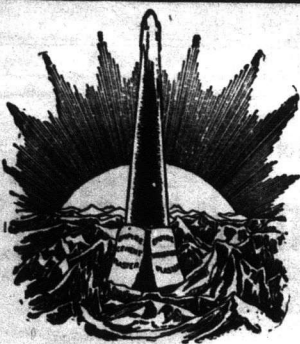
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One of the men put a lamp into his hand.

"Ah—somebody's got a bit of sense then," remarked Yanto, as if highly gratified by the discovery. "Come on with me, Rees," he added to the man.

With the light he took the lead and started up the heading. His right hand held the lamp; his left still held young Prince; and the boy clung to him with perfect faith in Yanto's omnipotence. Rees followed with equal confidence. But the other three held back, doubting.

"You can come if you like," Yanto shouted back by way of invitation.

"But what can you do going that way?"

"I don't promise nothin'."

"But tell us—tell us," they pleaded.

"What's your plan?"

"Get behind the water an' see if we can't scheme into the return to the upcast."

A revelation of the other world would cause less excitement among the three doubters than did Yanto's words. The men ran up and joined him, following him with childlike eagerness and delight, talking—babbling—as if they had just had an invitation to heaven.

The leader laughed. He drew the boy level with him, and bent down to say quietly in his ear:

"I knew they'd come. Now, we'll make these beauties work for their escape—and ours."

The boy laughed because Yanto seemed to consider the matter quite an excellent joke.

They came to an opening on the right hand side and Yanto turned briskly up the heading, and after some minutes stopped before a door which opened from him.

"Hah!" said he. They stopped. Silence of death fell upon them all.

"No water comin' through," he announced.

He put his hand to the door. He pushed gently. The door yielded. It opened slightly.

The lights sent yellow rays into the black space.

"No sign of water. First class!"

He flung the door wide and went through. The others followed. The last man gave the plank door a push. It closed with a hollow bang, and the black dust of the road, disturbed by the rush of air, rose up around the men's lights in red rings.

A little way on, a road turned to the left, going down hill now, in consequence of a fault or break in the coal seam.

"Now we can cut into Prince's place, and get behind the water," said Yanto, and he began to sing. He took up his Welsh love-song from the point where the water first interrupted him by drowning Warrior. And the boy sang with him; because, hearing Prince's place mentioned as their destination, he thought Yanto intended taking him straight to his father.

Yanto went steadily down a little way, and soon they stood in Prince's place.

"Here's where it broke through."

The men, with much excitement and many exclamations, examined the great gap in the coal. Everything dripped yellow water.

"It's all flowed into the lower roads," said Yanto, "and blocked the way out. Come on—try my way."

"Where's my father?" demanded the boy. His father's dead body lay in the mire not fifty yards away.

"Waiting for you on top," said Yanto, lying with ease for the good of the boy's health. "You ought to have gone with him."

"I couldn't, indeed," stammered the lad.

"Most likely you'll get it when he catches you," added Yanto.

This convinced young Prince. The others mercifully held their tongues.

They went back along the track of the flood, Yanto leading till they came to a sheet of water which flashed into golden flames under the lamps. He stopped. The water rolled sluggishly toward him and rose under his feet.

"Oh," said he, with his careless inflection. He apostrophized the water. "Comin' back, are you?"

"What?" cried his companions, with angry surprise.

"The world is turnin' upside down, I s'pose, and the water's havin' a run round for the fun of it," explained Yanto. But he made a grimace to himself that expressed neither fun nor in-

difference, and he shook his fist at the water.

"What's the meanin'—?" asked the others, in a fluster.

"It's the reeyaction," said he. "We've bin a long time gettin' here, and the water's comin' back to say she's sorry for intrudin' so 'bruptly."

"Don't make sport," said a grave voice from the tail.

"An' can't we go on to the return?"

"No, indeed," Yanto answered, with too much earnestness—like a boy promising his teacher not to "mitch" any more.

"What can us do now?" the men asked in a panic.

"Best us can," said Yanto, laughing.

"Shame!" they cried. "Mockin' us like this, when we might all die in here."

"They are only pretendin'," said Yanto, soothingly, to the boy who clung to him terrorstruck when the men spoke of death. Yanto's declaration made him laugh. The boy believed in the man to an alarming extent.

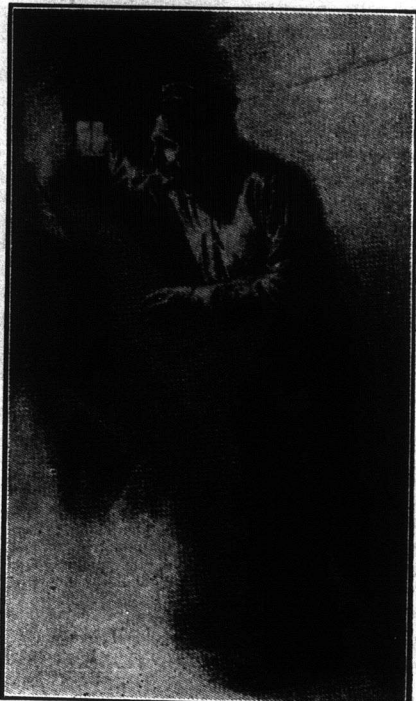
But the others held Yanto responsible for their lives.

"You brought us here," they cried. "Get us out of it."

"Oh," said Yanto, "I'm God Almighty, am I?"

"More like the devil himself," blurted out one of the men under the shock of Yanto's inquiry.

The others laughed at the incongruity—a little wildly and hysterically, perhaps; yet they laughed; and the ring of their laughter among the hollows and the timber did them good. In good-humored remonstrance one said:



"The swinging lamp threw grotesque shadows."

"Now, Yanto, machgen i [my boy], whats' the next move?"

He made no answer but led them down a new heading which terminated in a wall of coal.

"You'll have to cut through into Jimmy Preece's place," he said, coolly, as he examined the face of the coal with his lamp.

"What!" came a chorus of mingled doubt and faith. "Can we do it?"

"It's not far, I should think. When they stopped work here they left a pillar of coal—the surveyors said about twenty yards. But they never know what they are talking about."

"Or they wouldn't have let Prince cut into Jerry's Deep," put in one of them, furious.

"I reckon," Yanto said, his light still on the shining coal, "it's not ten yards. Then from Jimmy Preece's old stall we can get in the return and go home, boys—in a couple of weeks," he added, dropping his voice, like a man who feels that his company will not care about the joke which he can't help making.

"You an' Rees go down to Prince's road an' the other places and pick up what tools haven't washed away," he continued, turning to the man nearest him. "An' be quick, or the water'll cut you off an' leave us here with nothin' to do but starve for a bit."

Nothing but swift obedience could follow this. Away they went. The others watched the two lights swinging, and growing smaller, till they vanished at the bottom of the road. They quickly