

TWO DREAMERS.

Under a tree two dreamers lay, And unto one did the wind's voice say, "Castle Pleasure is building fast; I heard the hammer as I flew past." But to the other the wind's voice said, "Hill Endeavor lies just ahead." The dreamers rose. The years sped by, And the wind blew out of the changing sky.

He who wrought for his brother well Came to the castle of Joy to dwell; He who turned from the toilsome hill, Seeking his castle—is seeking still.

JAMES BUCKHAM.

OUT OF THE DEPTHS.

A TALE OF THE MINES.

"Is that your last word, Kate?"

"My last."

"You have no love to give me?"

"How many times must you ask me?"

"But it seems that I have looked into your eyes and that they have given me a different answer than your tongue. Deny it not, Kate, your eyes have looked into mine and told me that I had a small place in your heart. I have seen it, say what you may, and though your voice was silent, your eyes, my bonnie Kate, have whispered soft promises that caused my temples to throb and blood to rush to my head, until I seemed half mad with joy."

She, a stalwart English lass, brown as a berry, as handsome an example of a working woman as ever lived, laughed. It was a musical, bewitching laugh, but it sounded like a death-knell to the man who stood before her, with face aflame with passion. He was a tall specimen of the Anglo-Saxon type of miner, with arms like blacksmiths and the legs and thighs of an athlete. Kate was the daughter of the captain of the mine, and came from the same part of England to America when the mining industry here was almost in its infancy; when there was no over-production of any ore, and fortunes were more easily made than now. For some time Geoffrey had been suitor for her hand, and Kate had played fast and loose until at times the demon of jealousy raged so furiously that he was almost beside himself. To see his Kate, upright as a sapling—Kate, whose every movement was the majesty of motion—with the figure of a woman, and the heart and caprices of a maid; with the soft eyes of a deer and the tongue of a shrew—to see Kate, the embodiment of noble physical development, in the arms of another at the dance, with no word for him, was torture, keen and exquisite. And then when he approached her, the angry flush upon his face, there was "balm in Gilead" in the soft glance she shot at him, and he forgot his resentment in the contemplation of her face. And now at twilight time they two stood just without the door of her father's cottage. The sun was going down in a haze like that seen on the ocean. It was not a golden sun, though so near its resting place, but a sun of silver, bright and shining, in harmony with the snow-covered surface of the earth and the gray sky. Above the hills the shaft-houses were sharply defined against the sky, and in the distance the forests—those noble Michigan forests—seemed like a dark fringe around the pallid landscape. The man drew nearer to the woman.

"Can you deny, Kate, that your eyes have told me you might care for me?"

"Pshaw! A woman's eyes, Geoffrey! They may say many things they do not mean."

"You mean you have been playing with me."

"Oh, I do not say so."

"Kate, take care."

"Of what?"

"You are playing with fire, lass. My love must have its way—you must be mine."

"Must?" Indeed! You have a pleasant manner of winning a woman. Surely I may love whom I choose."

"Yes; and you love that Norwegian. At the dance I saw how you looked at him—how you encouraged him, while I stood aside with the rage in my heart to kill you both. Before that scoundrel came between us two—"

"You forgot yourself to defame a man behind his back. It is cowardly—if he were here—"

"You defend him. You love him?"

Defiantly: "And if it were true?"

He grasped her arm with a cry.

"It cannot be, Kate. You must love no one but myself. You belong to me, lass, and I—"

"Let go my arm."

"I will not."

"Coward!"

"Perhaps."

"I shall hate you."

"It is as well since you do not love me."

"At last I understand you. I despise you now that I know you. Let go of my arm."

"No."

"It is the part of a man to exert brute strength over a woman. I believe you are coward enough to strike a woman."

"What!"

He released her arm and stood before her, pale as death. One hand he passed nervously through his hair, while his features worked convulsively. She with figure erect and blazing eyes, confronted him.

"If that is your last word, goodbye," he said. "Tell your Norwegian to look out or I will kill him."

"Perhaps he's a better man than you."

"Don't drive me too hard with your tongue."

"Next time you think to win a sweetheart, learn how to treat her."

"Kate, something oppresses me. Something is going to happen on the morrow. Should you care if I met my death in the mine?"

She laughed lightly.

"Not at all."

Without a word he turned and walked away. She watched his figure vanishing in the light of the silver sun.

"Fool!" she said. "Has he not yet learned that no man on earth may drive me?"

Then she went into the house and stood thoughtfully near the window where were many flowers. She heard a step behind her and began to hum softly.

"Art light-hearted, lass?" said her father's voice, and the next moment she was in his arms. He looked at her proudly, with her noble figure, her strong arms and her broad, handsome face—true woman of the people, a daughter of the mines.

"Weel, thou art no featherweight, lass," he remarked, and then escaping from him, she went into the kitchen, where he heard her moving about, still humming to herself. There was a knocking on the window. Turning she saw the Norwegian and smiled pleasantly. Then he came in and asked permission to sit down and watch her preparations for supper. This she granted and his eyes brightened as he followed her with his gaze. The light fell upon her hair and there was a strange look upon her face.

"Will you not stay to supper?" she asked.

He assented eagerly. Half an hour later Geoffrey, passing by, saw them all three sitting together, chatting gaily. With a curse he turned away and for hours tramped over the snow in the darkness.

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On the day following, Geoffrey and the Norwegian were working on the footwall on the third tier from the level mining out the fourth tier underneath. This portion of the mine had caved in the year previous and the rooms were filled and the posts more or less crushed, so that great care was necessary in taking out the pillars. They had worked out one lot of sets on the east side of the pillar and were engaged on the one next to it. In mining these crushed pillars, sets of smaller dimensions are used in order that very little ground should be opened at one time without timber. Here the ground was so soft that laths were driven to support the back until the timber could be put in. This particular set was nearly out and a prop and head board had been erected to support the laths, this prop resting on a plank laid across the lagging of the set below. Geoffrey and the Norwegian were working silently, but now and then they gazed furtively at each other. The heart of the Englishman was full of insatiate jealousy and he was not himself that morning. After his long walk the evening before he had drunk until daylight, and now with the liquor working in his brain, madly whistling one after the other through his mind and he regarded the Norwegian with the glance of a wild beast—a look that impelled the latter to the greatest caution. Never once did he turn his back to the Englishman; never once was his attention detracted from his danger. Like two dumb brutes, filled with savage impulse, the primal wish of man to kill, they worked side by side in the narrow place. The Norwegian moved to the other end where work was necessary, when suddenly he slipped. With a hoarse cry the Englishman sprang forward with uplifted implement to brain his fallen antagonist, when suddenly there was a crashing behind them; the framework gave way; huge masses of ore and rock descended with a rumble like an avalanche. The Englishman stood stock still, thinking his last day had come; in a moment he was frozen like a statue. When he recovered his senses he heard the groan of the Norwegian and saw that he was pinned to the earth by masses of ore. Hastening to him, as best he might, he removed the ore from the crushed body, which he took in his arms and bore to the other end of the chamber in which they were literally entombed. The Norwegian was groaning in the greatest pain and Geoffrey lifted his head and pressed his flask to the lips of the dying man, whose eyes never even in his agony left those of the other. While before the picture was that of primal man, born to kill, to slay, to annihilate, now it was a picture of that human brotherhood which lies deep down beneath all evil desires and toward which the young world is struggling and struggling. Into the eyes of the Norwegian the Englishman was gazing. Both were members of the same fraternal working order. The breath of the dying man came in gasps, shorter and shorter; the light faded from those deep-set eyes and the form became stiff. Geoffrey's rival was dead.

The Englishman, shut up in that horrible prison, threw himself upon the body and wept. How long he remained thus he never knew, for what are periods when anguish annihilates time—when the lines of the poet, "out of space, out of time," give a certain divinity to human nature. Geoffrey did not suffer from suffocation. Although shut out from the world by what seemed a solid wall, a draft of air was apparent, and it was evident there were crevices somewhere.

Meanwhile the news of the disaster had spread far and wide. The captain was busy over his books in his little office and near him sat bonny Kate. Why did she come? Was it to catch a glimpse of the Norwegian as he emerged from the shaft? Was love, then, so impatient? A man covered with dirt and grime rushed into the office.

"An accident, captain—"

"Where?"

"On the third tier. The Norwegian, Borngson, and Geoffrey were working there."

Kate gave a cry. Her face was the color of the pallid landscape now, and she sprang up like a deer shot to the heart, while with quivering lips she gazed at the messenger of evil.

"Is he— are they killed?" she asked, the words falling slowly.

"There isn't much chance."

Now in the mine the men were working with a will, clearing away the enormous masses of ore and rock. The only chance for the men was that they were imprisoned, not crushed, and that was a faint hope at the best. Among the throng of workers was Kate, who herself worked until her strength was exhausted. Gang seemed relieved and still the great mass seemed to become but the more impregnable. On the second day the men paused, for they thought they heard something. They listened intently. It was a faint rapping on a timber.

"They are alive—at least, one of

them," shouted a miner. "To work with a will, men."

Then Kate, aroused from her stupor, took her place among the workers.

"Back, lass," said her father. "A stronger arm is needed here."

"My arm is strong, father," she said.

They gazed at her and let her have her way.

"Her sweetheart's there," said one of the men.

"Yes; the Norwegian."

On the third day the tapping was fainter and then it ceased. Next morning they reached the men. The Englishman was dead, apparently. Both bodies were taken to the surface. At the word "dead," Kate, worn out, had fallen unconscious. Suddenly one of the men who had been bending over the Englishman shouted:

"There's life here."

The captain knelt by his side and heard the faint beating of the heart.

"Carry the lad to my house," he commanded.

When Geoffrey came to himself he was lying in a small room near the window. Upon the window sill were flowers. Bending over him was a woman. Someone held his hand; lips were pressed to his forehead; kindly, sympathetic eyes gazed into his, and their tender light bewildered him.

"Kate!"

"Geoffrey!"

"It is you, sweetheart?"

"It is I, dear."

What did this mean? His head was now resting on her bosom, the broad, womanly bosom, of this woman of the people. Her lips close to his whispered:

"How do you feel, dearest?"

"In heaven, Kate. I have had a bad dream—"

"Hush, dear heart. Get well, for my sake."

"For yours, Kate?"

"Yes, yes, for mine—for mine."

"Then you—"

"Love you? Yes, yes."

"My sweet lass! But why—"

"Geoffrey, sweetheart, did you know that you were so little you thought to drive her? You could not command me—your jealousy could not force me to be yours—but you may lead me to the end of the world. There, close your eyes. You are worn and weary. You have nearly passed from me and my life would have been misery. Think how I suffered, darling, while you were in that tomb. Then I knew what my love for you was and I prayed that you might be saved, that I could hold you in my arms and beg you to take me and cherish me. I prayed that you might be saved so that my devotion could undo the harsh words of the past. Do you forgive me, my own, my treasure?"

"Lass, lass, pray God I might die again to hear such words."

"There, there! Speak no more, Geoffrey. Rest, rest. The doctor said you must sleep. Close your eyes, for your Kate is watching over you."

"As I may some day watch over you, Kate?"

"While this life lasts, if you will."

"Kiss me, dear."

For the first time she pressed her lips to his, and then he slept peacefully, with a flush upon his cheek. When her father entered he looked at them in surprise.

"Is it so, lass?"

"Aye, father."

"I thought it was the other."

But she only smiled and gazed fondly at the sleeping man.

The silver sun went down that night again in a silver haze. Over the hills in solemn procession the miners, with bowed heads; carried the Norwegian to his grave. No funeral hearse, no carriages were there. Sadly the silver sun sank out of sight. More vividly the shaft houses were defined, marking the places where human beings went down seeking that which is in the earth, where they are born and where they must die. There is no happiness not tinged with sorrow. But in the small room a woman, whose face was touched with silver light, bent over the man with the solicitude that a mother displays while looking at her slumbering child. Sink, silver sun; fade, light, from the hills; come, darkness, with ebon shroud; murmur, gloomy voices, through the whispering Michigan pines! There is no night when comes the day-dawn of the soul! For mines may give out, external things may change, but there is that which endures forever.

Detroit Free Press.

A QUESTION.

"Time and tide wait for no man,"

I've a question apropos

Of that: I would like to know—

Don't they have to wait for a woman?"

—[Puck.

A LONG SIEGE.

"I'm ready now," called Mrs. Swizzles, down the balustrade, to her husband, who had been waiting half an hour to start for the theatre. "I'm ready, all but my hat."

"Well, tell Maria," shouted back Mr. Swizzles, as he stretched himself out at full length on the sofa and composed himself for a nap, "tell Maria to wake me at 9 o'clock, anyway."

—[Chicago Record.

HOPE AT LAST.

"I told the minister you were troubled with insomnia," said Mrs. Manchester to her husband; "that you were nearly dead from loss of sleep, and he said he'd come and see you."

"Well," replied Mr. Manchester, with a sigh of relief, "if he only thinks to bring one of his sermons along, I will get some sleep at last."

—[Pittsburgh Chronicle Telegraph.

WHAT HE LEARNED.

Mother—Well, Georgie, have you learned anything new to-day at school?

Georgie—Yep.

Mother—What was it, my son?

Georgie—Tom Harper has the measles an' I've been playin' with him all the afternoon.—[Chicago Inter-Ocean.

A REGULAR THING.

The Hostess (apologetically at luncheon)—This being Friday, Mr. Castleton, we don't have as much as on other days.

Castleton—Neither do I, as a rule.

The Hostess—Why, do you fast on Friday because you think it right to do so?

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