

# MASTER OF THE MINE

By Robert Buchanan.

## CHAPTER I.

In a large wooden building not far from the seashore, a building attached as school house to "Munster's Boarding Academy for Young Gentlemen," I, Hugh Trelawney, then scarcely ten years old, was moping alone. I had only arrived two days before from London, where I had parted from my father, a traveling lecturer in the cause of what was then known as the New Moral World. My mother had long been dead, and I had led a somewhat neglected life, sometimes accompanying my father on his wanderings, more often being left to the care, or carelessness, of strangers. At last I had been sent to Southampton to complete a very perfunctory education.

It was afternoon, and a half-holiday; my new school fellows were playing close by. I was too used to loneliness to be very miserable. I merely felt an outcast for the time being, and took no interest whatever in my new associations.

As I sat thus, I must have fallen into a brown study, from which a slight sound startled me, and looking up, I met the flash of two dark eyes which were intently regarding me.

"Are you the new boy?" said a clear voice.

I nodded, and stared at my interrogator, a girl about my own age, whose black eyebrows were knitted curiously. Her arms and neck were bare, and she was fondling a kitten, whose feline movements seemed to have something in common with her own beauty.

"What is your name?" she continued, in the same clear questioning tone, altogether with the manner of a superior who was not to be trifled with.

"Hugh Trelawney."

She continued to regard me with the same keen scrutiny, and then said, "Why don't you go out and play with the other boys?"

"I don't care about play. I am tired." "Tired with what?" she questioned, quickly.

I made no reply, I had meant to imply that I was low-spirited and dull. She understood me, and troubled me with no more questions.

Glad to direct her attention from myself, for her bright eyes troubled me, I stroked the kitten, which she had placed upon the floor, and I began to question in my turn.

"Are you the schoolmaster's daughter. At this she laughed with such a good-humored sympathy with my blunder, that my first impression of her began to improve, and I saw that, besides being a rather imperious, she was a very pretty, young lady.

"I am a stranger here, like yourself," she said. "My people live far away in South America, and are very rich. My mother is dead, and I don't remember her. My father has sent me here to be taught; but I shall soon go back to him. He is a great man, and when he gave me these earrings, he told me my mother had worn them before me, and he kissed them. We live far away from here, in a brighter place. Don't you hate England?"

This was rather a startling query, but being in a state of mind bordering on disgust for life in general, I readily assented. Her eyes gleamed.

"It is a dreary place," she cried; "dull and miserable, and it rains nearly every day. But it is different where I come from. It is always bright there, and there are flowers everywhere, and the trees are full of fruit; and there are bright insects, and beautiful snakes without stings, that can be taught to twine round your neck, and feed out of your hand."

It seemed that I was transported to the land of which she spoke; her eyes were so sparkling, her face so bright and sunny, her form so foreign in its slender beauty—and her earrings glistened, and her beautiful ivory teeth gleamed—and I saw her walking in that land, a wonder among all wonders there, with fruits and flowers over her head, and brilliant insects floating round her, and luminous snakes gleaming harmless in her path, and dusky slaves waiting upon her, for for I had been a studious boy, fond of reading wild books of travel and adventure, and of picturing in my mind the wonders of foreign lands.

When she next spoke, her clear, impetuous tone was greatly changed and softened, and a kinder light dwelt on her face.

"If you will come with me," she said, "I will show you the place. There is not much to see but the garden."

I rose awkwardly, as if at a word of command, and followed her. Ashamed, yet pleased, to be chaperoned by a girl, I wondered what my school fellows would think of it. They were playing cricket. They paid no attention to me, but looked at my companion with a curious and not too friendly expression. She passed along imperiously, without deigning to cast a single look in their direction; and I noticed that her dark brows were knitted with the former unpleasant expression.

Our first visit was to the top of a high knoll behind the house, whence we could see the surrounding country, and, some miles to the southward, the distant sea, with a white frost of billows on the edge of silver-colored sands. The girl looked at the passing sails with much the same peculiar expression she had worn on our first encounter.

"Are you clever?" she asked, suddenly. "I mean, do you know much?"

I explained to her that my acquirements were very slender, and merely consisted of the stray crumbs of knowledge which I had been enabled to pick up at

day schools. I could read and write, of course, and knew arithmetic as far as the rule of three, and had got through the first four declensions in the Latin grammar; but all was a chaos, and I had no accomplishments.

"If you are not clever, and know so little," observed the girl, thoughtfully, "take care of the other boys. Why don't you make friends with them? Why do you like to sit alone, and be sullen? If there were girls here, I should make friends, I know. But boys are different; they have cruel ways, and they hate each other. The boys hate me," she pursued, "because they think me proud. I am not proud, but I am quicker and cleverer than they are, and I come from a better place. I beat them in the class, and I have helped the biggest of them sometimes, when they were too stupid to understand."

We were soon wandering side by side in the quiet garden in the neighborhood of the school house. Ever and anon, I heard the shouts and cries of my playmates; but they were wafted to me as from some forsaken life.

A spell had been passed upon me, and I was in a dream. As I write, the dream surrounds me still. Years ebb backward, clouds part, the old horizons come nearer and nearer, and I am again wandering in the quiet shade of trees with the shining young face at my side.

What I remember last is a sudden sound dissolving a spell. A bell rang loudly from the house, and my companion uttered an exclamation—

"That is the bell for tea," she exclaimed. "You had better go."

And she ran before me up the path. She was nearly out of sight among the garden bushes when, urged by curiosity, I took courage, and called after her.

"What is your name?" I cried.

"Madeline," she replied. "Madeline Graham." With that she was gone. For a moment, I stood bewildered, and then, with quite a new light in my eyes, I made the best of my way into the house and joined the boys at the tea table.

## CHAPTER II.

Munster was a feeble-looking but talented little man, with a very high forehead, which he was constantly mopping with cold water, to subdue inordinate headaches; and Mrs. Munster was a kind creature, with an enormous respect for her lord, and quite a motherly interest in us boys, she having no children of her own.

The manner of these good people was kind towards all; but their treatment of Madeline Graham was blended with a sense of restraint almost bordering on fear. It was obvious that they had been instructed to treat her, with more than ordinary solicitude, and it was equally obvious that they were liberally paid for so doing.

When she broke from all restraint, as was the case occasionally, their concern for her personal welfare was not unmingled with a fear lest open rupture might rob them of the installments derived from their wealthiest pupil. Madeline, on her side, was perfectly conscious of this; but, in justice, it must be said that she seldom took undue advantage of her position.

The more I saw of Madeline Graham, the more the thought of her possessed me, and blended with my quietest dreams. After that first interview, she held somewhat aloof for many days, but her eyes were constantly watching me in school. She seemed desirous of keeping me at a distance. Gradually, however, we came together again.

Madeline had not exaggerated when she boasted of excelling the other scholars in brightness and intelligence. Her memory was extraordinary, and tasks which taxed all the energies of boyhood were easily mastered by her quick and restless brain.

It so happened that I myself, although in many things dull and indifferent, was also gifted with a memory of uncommon tenacity. In all tasks which demanded the exercise of this function I took a foremost place. Madeline was my most formidable rival, and we began, quietly at first, but afterwards with energy, to fight for the mastery.

The competition, instead of severing, brought us closer to each other. Madeline respected the spirit which sometimes subdued her, and I, for my part, loved her the better for the humanizing touches which my victory frequently awakened.

We had been friends six months, the quiet round of school life had become familiar and pleasant to me, when, one day, at breakfast, I noticed that Munster wore a very troubled expression, as he broke open the largest of a number of letters lying before him. Within the letter was a smaller one, which he handed to Madeline silently.

With impetuous eagerness, she opened and read it. It was very short. As she glanced over it, her bosom rose and fell, her eyes brightened and filled with tears. To hide her trouble, she rose and left the room.

A whisper had passed round the school—"Madeline Graham is going away." Going away? Whither? To that far-distant, that mysterious land whence she had come, and whither I might never follow her? Going away forever! Passing westward, and taking with her all that made my young life beautiful and happy. Could this be?

I shall never forget the agony of that day. I have had blows since, but none harder. I have felt desolation since, but none deeper. After school, I hung round the house, haunted every spot where she might be expected to appear. I yearned to hear the truth from her own lips. I

paced to and fro like a criminal awaiting his sentence. I could not bear the sight of the other boys, but kept to the secret places, moody and distracted.

Quite late in the evening I wandered into the garden—a favorite resort of ours. The sun had sunk, but his slowly fading light was still tinting the quiet place, and the shadows of trees and bushes were still distinct upon the ground.

I had not been here long when I heard the foot I knew, and turning, I beheld my little friend hastening toward me. She was pale, but otherwise composed, and said at once,

"Have you heard that I am going away? I have just got a letter from my father. I am to go back home immediately. See!"

So saying, she placed in my hand the small inclosure which she had received from Munster in the morning. I remember every word of it now. It was written in a large, bold hand, and ran as follows:

"My Own Darling Little Madeline:—You will hear from the good people with whom you are living that you must come home at once. Wish a kind good-bye to all your friends in England; perhaps you may never see them again. Come without delay to your loving father. RODERICK GRAHAM."

Prepared as I had been for the blow, it did not fall so heavily as it might have done. I struggled with my feelings, and choked down a violent tendency to cry. She perceived my consternation, and was herself moved. But there was a quick, strange light in her eyes, as if she were contemplating something far away.

"I have prayed many a night that my father would send for me," she said, thoughtfully; "and now he has done so, I scarcely feel glad. Shall you be sorry, Hugh, when I go?"

At this open question I broke down utterly, and burst into a violent sob. She put her hands in mine, and looked earnestly into my face.

"I thought you would be sorry. None of them will miss me so much as you. We have been great friends; I never thought I could be such friends with a boy. I shall tell my father of you, and he will like you, too. Will you kiss me, Hugh, and say good-bye?"

I could not answer for tears; but I put my arms round her neck, and I did kiss her—a pure, true, loving boy's kiss, worth a million of the kisses men buy or steal in the broad world. My tears moistened her cheek as I did so, but she did not cry herself.

She was altogether calm and superior, bowing down to my boyhood, compassionating and cherishing me. She was nearer womanhood than I to manhood; and she took my worship in gentle state. A queen, kissed by a loyal subject, could not offer her cheek more royally than little Madeline offered her cheek to me.

"There is a ship to sail in two days," she said, "and I must go away to Liverpool to-morrow, early in the morning."

As I write, recollection darkens, the sun sinks behind the little garden; the little shape fades away, and it is dark night. I have been in a very disturbed sleep, and am awakened by a harsh sound in the distance. It is the sound of carriage wheels.

I hear the hum of voices in the house below. I creep to the window, and look out. A traveling carriage stands at the door, and a sleepy-eyed coachman yawns on the box.

From the house porch comes Mrs. Munster, and by her side the little figure that I love.

The proud spirit is broken this morning, and the little eyes look soft and wet. Madeline clings to her protectress, and nods adieu to the servants. The coachman cracks his whip, the horses break into a trot, the little one leans out, and waves her handkerchief until the carriage rounds the corner and is hid from view.

Madeline! Little Madeline! I have fallen upon my knees by my bedside, and am passionately kissing the lock of hair I begged from her last night. My heart seems breaking. All the world has grown dark for me in a moment.

(To be continued.)

## Peking's Monasteries.

Of monasteries and lamaseries in Peking the number is endless. The lamas and bonzes who dwell therein can be counted by the thousands. They are mostly Tibetans and Mongolians, supposed to be studying Buddhism under the direction of an authenticated lineal descendant of Buddha himself. Indeed, in one particular monastery three lineal descendants are to be seen for a consideration. They are regarded as semigods and treated as such. Of the three so favored, fed and flattered, one is a youngster of twelve years, a bright, lively Mongolian boy, fully alive to his own importance, high dignity and destiny, yet not averse to the filling of his baggy little pockets with the dollars of such "foreign devils" as afford him the opportunity of so doing. The lamas and bonzes are a greasy, grimy, dirt-incrusted lot. The denser the dirt the greater the reputation for sanctity and close spiritual affinity with Buddha. Their whole time seems to be passed in eating, extracting dollars from strangers and sleeping.

Balance Still on the Wrong Side. "Do you chaps know you lynched the wrong man?"

"Well, you've got to make some allowance for the boys. Two or three fellows we ought to have lynched got away from us."—Chicago Tribune.

Her Instructions. "Sister told me to entertain you till she comes down."

"Oh! She did, eh?" "Yes—and not to let myself get pumped."—Puck.

# SOCIETY WRECKED HER LIFE.



Mrs. Finn.

In Society.

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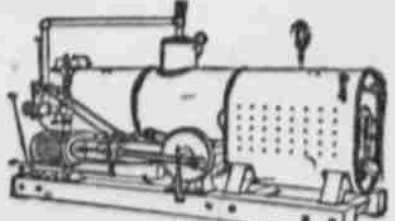
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