

MASTER OF THE MINE

By Robert Buchanan.

CHAPTER VIII.—(Continued.)

She paused a moment outside; then she hurried away—I, rather aimlessly, following her. She crossed the high road and took a narrow footpath which led by a short cut to the mine. Wondering what could be taking her that way, I continued to follow her. When she had got about half-way to the mine, she turned off again, and hastened along with increased speed toward Greystock Tower. Greystock Tower was a ruin, consisting of three dilapidated ivy-covered walls and a buttress; it stood on an eminence a few hundred yards from the seashore, and by the superstitious inhabitants of the village was supposed to be haunted. I was astonished to see her going to ward it, alone, on a dark night, and as if her very life depended upon her speed. Having reached the ruin, she paused, and stood as if listening. I crept up in the shadow of the ruin. Presently I heard a peculiar whistle. Annie said softly: "Yes—I am here." Then a figure, that of a man, emerged from the darkness and joined her.

My astonishment at all this was so great that for a time I was utterly unable to move. They stood close together, talking earnestly; but I could not catch a word of what they said. Presently they began to move away, and I deemed it time to interfere.

In two strides I was between them—Annie uttered a scream. The man stood his ground, and looked into my face. It was now my turn to utter an exclamation. It was young Redruth, the master of the mine.

"What are you doing here, Trelawney?" he asked, curtly.

"I am here to take my cousin home, sir," I replied.

"Indeed," he sneered; "I should have thought you were here to play the spy!"

"Even that would be better than playing the villain," I returned.

"Hugh, dear Hugh!" said Annie, plucking at my sleeve.

"Don't agitate yourself, Annie," said Redruth, coolly, while I was ready to knock him down. "And you, sir, stand out of the way; I have business with this young lady, and I request you to leave us."

"And if I refuse?"

He raised a small cane which he carried and struck me across the shoulders. In a moment I had wrenched it from his hand, and with one well-placed blow I would have made him measure his length upon the ground, but, with another scream Annie rushed forward and stood before us.

"You shall pay for this, you scoundrel!" said my master; and, without another word, he disappeared into the darkness.

Annie, still frightened and trembling, rushed forward to follow him, but in a moment I was beside her.

"You'll come with me, Annie," I said, taking her hand firmly in mine.

By this time she was crying bitterly.

"Oh, Hugh," she sobbed, "what have you done? You will ruin us all—yourself, father, and all of us!"

I kept my hold upon her, and led her back across the meadows to the cottage. During the walk, no word passed between us. I was silent, expecting she would give some explanation of the scene. When we reached the cottage gate, she paused, and spoke.

"Hugh," she said, "you won't tell mother or father—"

"No, no," I interrupted her. "Don't fear for me, but I mean to look after you in the future, Annie."

"Don't be hard on me, Hugh," she said, pitiously. "I meant no harm. But it will be better for you and father if I speak to the young master sometimes."

"You'd best let us manage our own affairs, Annie, and keep yourself to the house; always remember that."

She dried her eyes and composed herself a bit, and we went in together. The old couple were astonished, but not ill pleased at seeing us in company. They noticed Annie's pallor, too, and exchanged looks, the meaning of which I now knew full well. I dreaded to be questioned; so when Annie had gone to her room, which she did pretty quickly, I explained that I had returned for certain little account books. Then I hurried back to the office to finish my night's work.

CHAPTER IX.

The next morning Annie attended at breakfast as usual. She looked a little pale, and now and again glanced uneasily and rather questioningly at me. When I rose to go, she put on her bonnet, saying:

"I am going a bit of the way with Hugh, mother;" and then, somewhat to my surprise, she came along with me into the road. "Hugh, dear Hugh, I have been out before this morning. I have seen the young master," she said.

"You must not get angry—indeed, you must not. I did it for the best. I was afraid, after what happened last night, that he would dismiss you; and he would have done, but I have interceded."

"You have interceded for me?" I said. "Then you were wrong, Annie; if he wishes to dismiss me, let him. I have other means of earning my bread."

For answer to this Annie employed a stronger medium than words—she cried. Now, tears always disarm me; all I could do was what I did; soothe my cousin, kiss her pretty cheek, call myself a brute, and avow that she was the dearest, sweetest little woman in the world. Under this process, Annie came round, and smiled sadly up at me through her tears.

"You promise," she said, "to go on just the same as usual, and to take no notice of what occurred last night?"

"I will promise," I said, "if you can show me the good of it."

"The good of it will depend upon whether or not you care anything about me!" she replied. "Just think, Hugh, if you two quarrel again, and you are dismissed, everybody will know why it all came about—and my mother and father, too. Ah, Hugh, dear Hugh, for my sake!"

She folded her little hands over my arm, and looked up into my face like a supplicating child.

"All right, Annie," I said; "don't worry yourself, little woman. I won't do a thing that will injure you."

For a couple of days or so the master kept away, and things went on at the works pretty much the same as usual; but on the fourth day he strolled down. He talked a good deal to Johnson, but never addressed one word to me. He looked at me, however, and the look he gave made me wonder what strange influence Annie possessed when she could induce him to keep in his employment one whom he so cordially hated.

One day my aunt, having a little shopping to do, determined to go to Falmouth. She started off in the morning in John Rudd's wagon, and left my cousin to keep house.

Now, it had seemed to me that Annie had looked particularly dull that morning; so, towards afternoon, I determined to take an hour and to hurry back to the cottage to see how she was getting on. As I drew near to the cottage door, I was astonished to hear voices—the one loud and angry, the other soft and pleading. When I entered the kitchen my amazement increased tenfold.

An elderly lady—none other, indeed, than old Mrs. Redruth, George Redruth's widowed mother—was standing in the middle of the room, while my cousin Annie, crying bitterly, was actually on her knees before her!

Mrs. Redruth had two characteristics, her confirmed ill health and her iron will. Her power in the village was great; but she was feared, rather than beloved. She was a tall, thin woman, with powerful aquiline features and a face of ghastly pallor.

"Your tears don't deceive me," she was saying. "I am not a man and a fool. I am a mother, and I know when danger threatens my child, and I say that you are doing your best to entangle my son. But take care, George Redruth shall not be sacrificed."

"Oh, my lady!" sobbed Annie, "will you listen?"

"No," she returned, "I will not! Listen to you—when every word you utter must be a lie! I have seen you with my son. Cease to follow him, or I will expose you before every soul in the village!"

She turned to leave the cottage, and came face to face with me. She paused abruptly, opened her lips, as if about to speak; then she changed her mind, and without uttering a word passed out.

As for myself, I had been too much stupefied to say a word, and I stood now, like a great bear, looking at my cousin, who, sobbing piteously, had sunk into a chair. I went up to her, raised her and folded her in my arms.

"Annie," I said, "Annie, my dear, let there be an end to this. Give me the right to protect you from all this trouble that has come upon you lately. Become my wife."

She stared and stared at me like a frightened child.

"Your wife, Hugh?" she said. "Your wife?"

"Yes, Annie," I answered. "My wife—that is, if you care for me enough, my dear!"

At this she fell to crying afresh, and clung to me tenderly.

"Ah, Hugh, dear Hugh!" she sobbed. "You are the kindest and best man in all the world, and it is your kindness which makes you ask me this now. No, Hugh; be what you have always been—my own dear brother."

I looked into her eyes, and I thought I read their meaning. Annie did not care for me; her heart was with another man, and that man far above her.

CHAPTER X.

After this I watched Annie a good deal, and I soon discovered she had a great and growing trouble on her mind. She was restless and ill at ease, and once or twice, while I observed her quietly, I saw tears suddenly start to her eyes.

Her mother and father noticed this, too, but they attributed the change to quite another cause. They were good, honest folk, who could only consider one project at a time; and as for several months past their minds had been occupied solely with the idea of a marriage between Annie and myself, they naturally assumed disagreements between us two to be the cause of their daughter's depression.

One afternoon I was standing at the mouth of the mine when I was startled by the sudden appearance of my aunt. She looked pale; rather alarmed; but ready to become very angry.

"Hugh!" she said, before I had time to open my lips, "where be Annie?"

Had I been able at that moment to produce my cousin, she would certainly have been rated very soundly; whereas, I shook my head and said, "I don't know!" the rising anger entirely disappeared, and her face grew paler.

She broke down, and moaned between her sobs, "Oh, Hugh! she's gone, gone!"

I was fairly stunned, and all I could do just then was to comfort my aunt, who was weeping bitterly. When she was more composed I asked for an explanation. The facts were simple enough. After my uncle and I had left for the mine, my aunt rose, expecting to find the kitchen fire alight as usual, and Annie busy. She called Annie, but got no answer; she searched the cottage, but failed to find her. Several hours passed away. She went down to the village and made several inquiries, but with no result. Annie had not been seen by anyone that day.

Having told her tale, my aunt looked at me, hoping that I might be able to say her fears for her child were unfounded. I could not; the utmost I could do was to counsel silence, and to try to buoy her up with hope. I persuaded her to return home. But the day was finished for me. I could do nothing but think of Annie; the worst fears struggled to take possession of me, but I diligently thrust them away. I would not believe ill of my cousin.

About five o'clock my uncle came up from the mine, and I proposed that we should knock off work for the day. He was in singularly good spirits. As we drew near to the cottage, my heart beat painfully, and when we went in I looked anxiously about me.

"What be the little woman?" asked my uncle, as we sat down to our meal.

I saw my aunt's face grow very pale, but she turned her head and answered as carelessly as possible.

"She be gawn out!"

When the meal was over my uncle, according to his usual custom, went to his seat beside the fire and lit his pipe. He had been smoking for an hour or more, when a knock came to the kitchen door; then the door was opened, and in came John Rudd. He had a parcel for my aunt, which he delivered; he chatted for a few minutes, then he prepared to go. His hand was on the latch of the door, when he paused and looked back. "Say, missus," said he, "what be Miss Annie gawn to?"

My uncle looked up curiously; my aunt's cheeks grew as white as new-fallen snow.

"What be she gawn to?" she repeated, helplessly.

"Ist!" continued Rudd, "I seen her this mornin' I Falmouth, but she were in a hurry and didn't see me. She were down on the jatty, and she went aboard the steamer for Portsmouth."

Mr. Rudd paused, thunderstruck at the effect of his words. My aunt, thoroughly exhausted by the strain that had been put upon her that day, sank, sobbing and moaning, into a chair; my uncle, who had risen from his seat, stood glaring from one to another. Presently he spoke.

"What be all this about my Annie?" he cried. "Speak, some 'un. If there be aught wrong wi' my little woman," he cried, "tell me, I ain't a child to be petted, nor a fool to be kept i' the dark. Speak, tell me what 'tis all about!"

So we told him all we knew, and putting this and that together, he gathered at least one idea—that his child had, for some reason or other, voluntarily left her home. He stood like a man stupefied, scarcely gathering the sense of the situation, and dimly wondering why his wife received the news so violently.

But when John Rudd was gone, and we were left to ourselves, I told them my suspicions of George Redruth. To my surprise they were received with blank amazement, then with indignation. My uncle averred that I had always disliked the young master. I determined to go up to Redruth's house and ascertain if he were from home.

The moment my uncle heard of my determination he resolved to accompany me. On asking for the master, we were shown into the library; five minutes later the young man himself walked into the room. He had just been dining, wore evening dress, and had never looked handsomer or more thoroughly at his ease in his life.

"Well!" he said, glancing at us pleasantly—he was evidently in an after-dinner mood—"is there anything I can do for either of you?"

"Master Jarge," said my uncle, earnestly, "we're in trouble, sir; in sore trouble. My daughter, my little Annie, she be run'd away!"

"What!" he exclaimed. "Run away from home, do you mean? But why come to me? What can I do?"

"Naught, you can't do naught at all," said my uncle, "that's just it."

"The fact is, sir," I said, "there is some villain at the bottom of it, and we want to find out who that villain is."

"And so you come to me! Really, I don't see the force of all this, and I have more important matters to detain me!"

He opened the door, and we, seeing that further conversation would be useless, left the room and the house. During the walk home my uncle never spoke. When we reached the cottage he sank down into a chair, and hid his face in his hands.

Nothing more could be done that night, so we all went to bed; but not to sleep. During the night I frequently heard my uncle walking with measured step up and down his room, and in the grey of the morning he came out to the kitchen to kindle a fire.

I looked at him and scarcely knew him; his face was white and lined like that of an old man. He was quite calm; but there was a sad look in his eyes which spoke of deep-set pain.

Several days after that sad night a letter came from Annie; it bore the London postmark, and ran as follows:

"My Dear Parents:

"Do not grieve about me, for I am quite well and in want of nothing. Do not attempt to find me, it would be useless; but I shall soon come back, with God's blessing, and then you will learn why I left without a word. I am sorry, so sorry, for any trouble I have given you, and hope you will forgive me, for the sake of the happy days that are gone away. Your loving daughter,

"ANNIE."

My aunt read the letter aloud; then my uncle took it from her, looked at it for a long time, and finally, without a word, placed it on the fire—watching it till it was consumed. After that, for a long time to come, he never spoke of Annie again; but he drooped daily, like a man under the weight of some mortal pain.

The Century Plant.

The "century plant" was so named because of the popular idea that it blooms only once in a hundred years, says the Scientific American. It need hardly be said that this idea is erroneous. In the genial climate of California the plant blooms in from fifteen to twenty years, but in colder climates from forty to fifty years may be necessary to bring it to maturity. The botanical name of the plant is *Agave Americana* variegata, and was given to it because of its splendid appearance. The agave is a native of Northern Mexico, where it is named the *maguey*, and furnishes pulque, the national drink of Mexico. In Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, the sandy soil is specially favorable to the agave, of which there are about twenty species in various stages of existence. When the plant begins to bloom, it throws up a single stalk, from which the tassel-like flowers sprout forth on either side. The great flower stalk draws all the sap and vigor from the broad leaves of the plant, which, after it has reached its perfection, droops and dies. But at the base of the fleshy, glossy, dark-green leaves are found little suckers, each with a root, which, when planted, at once begins to grow. Though a century plant in flower is not a very uncommon sight in California, it is sufficiently so to attract considerable attention; while to most Europeans it is a very rare and wonderful occurrence.

Vigilance is watching opportunity.—Austin Phelps.

MANY SHIRT WAISTS.

THEY ARE NOW SEEN IN GREAT VARIETY.

May Be as Plain or as Fanciful as You Please—Thin Dresses for Summer Afternoon Wear—Old Fashions Revived and Embellished.

New York correspondence:



and don't, yet it that the greatly to phinely made shirt waists is the perfection tailor grade. That means an accuracy and nicety of cut, fit and hang

HIRT waists are as plain or as fanciful as you like, but on the average they are more set off than they have been for several summers. The retirement from the list of really fashionable sorts of the severely plain white waists of last year is one factor toward the general appearance of greater dressiness, and the restored employment of colors in both goods and trimmings makes toward the same end. Shirt waist styles are so diversified that it would be a daring comment who laid down positive musts should be apparent

FOR SUMMER AFTERNOONS.

that authorize completely all absence of embellishment. But such waists always are comparatively expensive, and the season is no exception to the rule. So the trimmed waist, one at least ornamented at cuffs, collar and front, is usually more satisfactory. These can be gotten up inexpensively, yet to be speak newness and stylishness. Economising schemers will find detachable trimmings an excellent medium, and the

be altogether cruel to insist that there is nothing whatever new under the sun, and the fact is that in reviving some of the fashions of seventy years ago, the up-to-date dressmaker adds quite as much that is new as is taken from the bygone fancy. So the final test becomes not to discover what is new or transferred from the middle of last century or earlier, but to search out what is tasteful and beautiful. With regard to the gowns of the accompanying pictures the search will not be arduous. Here, in the initial, is a gown of biscuit voile trimmed with self-bands corded with brown velvet and set off with brown buttons. First in the next sketch is a green taffeta, its self bands covered with a fancy design in black silk cord. Next is a white organdie showing pink lines and dots and trimmed freely with pink ribbon rosettes. In full length in and trimmed freely with pink ribbon rosettes, and last in this group is a gray silk pongee trimmed with shirred bands. Then in full length in the concluding sketch is a white silk pongee trimmed with embroidered straps of the goods. Each of these gowns would pass as fine and new anywhere, yet none of them is at all elaborate according to current standards for afternoon dress-ups.

In house dresses the feature of embellishment that is away to the fore is the fancy collar. These are added to simple gowns, or are simply placed upon them, or they are made parts of dresses that are of elaborate character. More often than not the handsome collar is a conspicuous feature of the gown's ornamentation, and not infrequently it dominates the trimming of the get-up. One or two examples are shown in today's concluding picture by the artist. In both front and rear view is shown one of heavy white silk embroidered freely with white, and above this is a white silk collar embroidered in blue, thus on a simple blue soft silk bodice.

Meanwhile a blinding blizzard blew up, sweeping over the prairie at the rate of fifty miles an hour, and piling up the snow in drifts from eight to ten feet deep. As the wind increased both myself and my oxen became chilled to the marrow, says the minister, and I knew that it was certain death for man and beast to stay out any longer.

Turning the heads of my oxen homeward in the very teeth of that blinding storm, I urged them on across the open space between the timber and my house. But oxen, however willing, are never rapid, and the one mile seemed ten to me as the heavy beasts pushed onward. Feeling that I should surely freeze to death in a short time, I jumped down from my load, plunged homeward through the snow, and reached my barn in half an hour.

I knew that my oxen could feel their way home, and fully expected them to appear at the barn by nightfall if, perchance, they were not blinded by the storm or lost in the increasing drifts. But night came on, and no oxen.

The storm abated, and I started out with my hired man to find my missing cattle and my load of wood.

We floundered through the snow toward the timber, but the oxen were nowhere to be seen. We hunted all night long, and arrived home just in time for breakfast, puzzled and mystified. After breakfast out we started again, helped this time by some of our neighbors; but after a fruitless search we came back, vanquished. No neighbor had seen the oxen, and their disappearance became the sensation of the neighborhood.

They had either been lost for good, frozen to death in the deep snow, or else had wandered off across the prairie to some distant farmer's barn.

We advertised in the country papers, offering a reward of two hundred dollars for the return of the oxen and the wood. One week, two, three passed by, but still no solution.

It was the thirty-first day of January. There had been a thaw for several days, and much of the snow on the prairie had disappeared, leaving only about one foot in depth, except in the deep hollows of my ranch. I was driving a team of heavy farm horses over to the timber to get another load of wood, when, on passing through a small ravine a little to one side of the ordinary road, I noticed a movement in the snow.

Drawing in my reins, I alighted, walked about ten feet from my horses, and lo! there were my oxen, alive, still yoked together, standing in four feet of snow, with just enough of their bodies above the snow to make a movement visible.

They had been caught between the stumps of two trees, and there they had been for thirty days, unable to move, and saved from freezing to death only by the deep snow that so mercifully had covered them. They had eaten everything within reach, including the leather harness, most of the wood of the sled-pole, the bark of the tree trunks, the twigs and sticks lying round, and the roots of the trees to a depth of three feet. There they had stood for thirty days. They were living skeletons. Every bone was visible. Yet they were able to walk home, and after careful feeding for another thirty days they were as strong as ever, and were faithful animals on my farm for ten years afterward.

Public Interest in Forestry.

Through the teachings of intelligent forestry it has been made plain that in our Western localities ruinous floods and exhausting droughts can be largely prevented, and productive moisture in useful degree and at needed periods secured, by a reasonable and discriminating preservation of our forest areas; the advocates of irrigation have been led to realize that it is useless to provide for the storage of water unless the sources of its supply are protected; and all those who, in a disinterested way, have examined these questions concede that tree growth and natural soil on our watersheds are more valuable to the masses of our people than the footprints of sheep or cattle.

The opportune time has arrived when effective public interest in forestry and forest preservation should be persistently aroused and stimulated.—Grover Cleveland, in the Century.

Two Prices for Berries.

Marketer—How much are the strawberries?

Strawberry Merchant—Eighteen a box an' turn 'em out an' let ye look at 'em; 12 a box an' not turn 'em out.—Baltimore American.

Just What It Meant.

Unsupersituated Cook—If you please, mum, the butcher says I shall get 5 per cent on all the orders that I give him. What does that mean?

Missus—It means, Mary, that we shall have a new butcher.—Tit-Bits.

prices of many of these are hardly considerable.

The summer afternoon dresses of women provided with stylish wardrobes are remarkable for the novelties shown in trimmings and the schemes for their employment. It is hard for ordinary shoppers to believe that all this ingenuity and fine taste is a hand-down from some past generation or generations. The underlying main ideas may in a great many cases be echoes of the more or less dim past, but designers and makers should have much credit for their skillful manner of effecting restoration. It would

On the jacket of the princess negligee pictured in half length was a collar of white silk and gold cord embroidery, the dress goods being white crepe de chine. Flower designs are numerous in the embroideries put on such collars, as indeed, they are in all manner of trimmings. Real or artificial, as permanent trimmings or as temporary ornaments, flowers are being used much more than usual. Faddish employment of them

CURRENT FORMS OF ORNAMENTAL COLLARS.

Elaboration is the keynote of the season in dressdom.

Shoulder trimmings droop in pseudo grandmammas style.

Nets printed in cloudy Dresden effects are very attractive.

Paradise plumes are a feature of the new millinery and cherries hang temptingly from many a delightful headpiece.

Fashion Notes.

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