

GRANNY'S BAIRN.

A Pathetic Story of a Strike.

It was a desolate scene as I wandered among the pitfalls and abandoned workings of the Beaver Meadow Coal Mines. In a hollow of an old and useless stripping lay tons of slaty waste, among which gleamed bits of coal here and there. The mineral had long gone its way to the market and only the refuse remained; but even these bits the poor about the district were forbidden by the owners to glean.

The Winter had been a severe one and the coal strike for a few pence more a day had augmented the sufferings of the poor, not only in and about the great city, but extending out to the coal regions as well.

The place looked deserted and dreary enough, but I walked on, musing over the fate which doomed the generality of men to toil and poverty, when suddenly the figure of a child arose from one of the heaps and stood before me, trembling in every limb and a piteous, scared expression upon his wan, pinched little face.

"Don't be alarmed," I said, touched by his evident fear; "I wouldn't harm you."

"Ben't you come to take me for pickin' up the coal?" he inquired, falteringly; "didn't the maisters send ye?"

At his feet I now spied a pail half full of the precious stuff.

"We hain't got no fire," he said, grasping the pail with his little blue, half-frozen fingers, "and poor granny has been shiverin' and moanin' and huggin' the baby awful close, sir. She thinks that keeps it warm, you know."

A wan smile flitted over his face as he said it, but something in his tone brought a lump to my throat.

"And what is your name?" I next inquired.

"Jemmy, sir."

"And your father—where is he?"

"I dunno," answered the boy.

"Dead?" I queried.

"Mobbe, I dunno."

"And your mother?"

His little lip quivered.

"Mother went to work afore daylight, sir. She goes out a-washin' and scrubbin' when she can get it. We'll have some supper when she gits home—granny and me will, and I'll have a fire, 'cause you know mother'll be awful cold and tired."

"Well," I said, struggling with my emotion, "let us fill the pail and I will carry it."

It was soon done and before long we stood upon the threshold of a miserable shanty which the boy called "home."

He hesitated a moment before opening the door.

"You ben't one of the maisters now, be ye?" he asked solemnly.

"God forbid," I answered seriously.

"And ye ain't come to turn us out o' the cabin?"

"Never fear," I smiled; "I come as a friend, not as an enemy."

For answer he opened the door.

Home! A carpetless floor, a bed, a chair or two, a fireless stove.

Cowering close to the latter sat an old woman, crooning to a baby which she held in her arms, swathed in rags.

"Be still, my bairn," she murmured, startled by the opening of the door; "be still—the maisters shall nae touch ye, never fear."

Oh! those hollow cheeks, those trembling hands, those struggling locks, that bent, shivering form.

She gazed at me curiously at first with a vacant, dazed stare; then a shudder shook her frame.

"Be ye one o' the maisters?" she inquired in a husky voice.

"No," I replied smiling; "no."

the hope that by holdin' out their future would be bettered. It was bitter cold and Sandy had gone out to get the trust of a pail of coal. He was very white sir, when he came back and there was that in his eyes which made me shudder."

"Why, Sandy, I cried, 'my man, why do you look so?'"

"For answer he pointed to the empty pail. 'They would gie me nae,' says he, 'slow-like and husky; they will nae trust us more.'"

"They mean to turn us out of the house to-morrow," he answered, bitterly. "New men, my lass, are comin' to take our places at lower wages the day."

"But the bairn, our sick bairn?" I cried. "She has been cryin' for a sup of broth since early mornin'. She is dyin', Sandy—dyin' for the lack of nourishment."

"Sandy groaned. He was a big, brawny man, sir, willin' to work, and he well-nigh worshiped the little one which lay there moanin' and cryin' for the broth which he couldn't give her."

"Ye maun get a chicken, Sandy," cried granny; "try it, mon. The darlin' is starvin'; ean ye no see?"

"A chicken!" cried Sandy, with a bitter laugh. "Ye maun as well ask me for the keys of heaven, granny. They would nae gie me the trust of a pail of coal the morn. A chicken! They would call me mad an' I should ask for it—mad!"

"Well, sir," continued the woman after a painful pause, "the next day was cold and raw. A fine, drizzling rain set in, which froze as it fell. The little one was worse. She lay quite still now and moaned no more."

"They will not turn us out in this storm, Sandy, with a sick bairn," I said; "they can never be so cruel as that."

"The new men must have homes," he answered, despairing like.

"Just then came a knock at the door. Granny looked out the window, then turned with white face and set lips and grasped Sandy by the arm."

"Be a mon, Sandy, in a low, deep voice "be a mon, Sandy, and dinna let them turn us out this awfu' day. Think o' your dyin' bairn and be a mon."

"Sandy shook in every limb, but answered not a word. There was a louder rap now at the door. Granny wrung her hands in agony, for just then from the bed came a low moan."

"Broth!" cried the bairn; "granny; broth!"

"Open the door, Sandy," said granny; "open the door;" and taking the little one in her arms, she stood like a figure turned to stone in the middle of the floor.

"Jemmy, hardly more than a baby, clung weeping to my skirts, as I knelt in prayer by the fireless stove, asking aid from One greater and richer than the owners of the coal mines."

"There was silence for a moment when the door was opened, then one of the men laughed."

"Come," he said, "make ready to be out of this by noon. You had your orders yesterday, Sandy, and we mean to enforce 'em."

"But the bairn is near to dyin'," answered Sandy, choking like, "and sure ye will not turn us out in the storm?"

"Well if the brat be near dyin'," said an officer, brutally, "she may as well die outside as in."

"Then," continued the woman, shielding her eyes with one hand, "I heard a growl like as from a wild beast, then a cry as of mortal agony, and then—"

Her voice broke and she half arose from her chair and looked with a fixed stony gaze straight before her.

"And then, I queried, after a painful pause. "And then, she resumed, with white lips, "the man who had uttered that cruel speech flung up his arms, swayed to and fro and fell at Sandy's feet without life or motion. Then the rest sprang upon Sandy, who stood there dazed and horror-stricken, white as the dead man at his feet."

"I did nae mean to kill him," he said, solemnly, with uplifted hand; "God above knows I did nae mean to kill him. But the bairn is the light o' my eyes, and if any of ye be fathers, ye maun know how—how—"

"He could say no more, sir, for the tears which choked him; tears wrung from his great noble heart—a heart as tender as a woman's."

"Come," said the dead man's friends, savagely, "come. We don't want any more of your whining. You'll get a halter for this day's work, never fear."

"A halter!" exclaimed granny, dazed like—"a halter for my Sandy!"

"Then she looked at the dead man's face and laughed, such a horrid laugh, sir, that it curdled the blood in our veins."

"The child no longer moaned, but lay quiet within her arms. Sandy shook off the hands which held him and stooped to kiss the bairn."

"She's dead," he said quietly; "my Jenny, our pretty bairn is dead; and, without another word turned and went out of the door, never to enter it again."

"Surely," I stammered, "he was not, not—"

I could not bring myself to utter the horrible word.

"No, sir," said she, quietly; but he was sent to prison for life."

"And you and the boy and granny," I inquired—"what did you do?"

INDIAN BALL GAMES.

The Choctaws Were the Champions—A Muffer Game by Sioux Squaws.

The greatest ball players among the North American Indians were the Choctaws. The rule of the game as regarded dress was very strict. No player was allowed to wear moccasins. There was no such thing as "spiking" another player unless the foul was done by some fellow with extraordinary long and strong toe nails. The only clothing was the breech cloth around the loins and a bead belt. A tail of white horse hair or quills projected behind like a steering apparatus. A collar or mane of horse hair was worn around the neck.

The game embraced the skillful features of lawn tennis and the brute force of football. Catlin says that after seeing two or three games of Indian ball he made it a rule never to miss one. He would ride thirty miles any day for the sport. The game was usually called about 9 o'clock in the morning, and from that time till sundown the contest was a series of exciting and ludicrous scenes without any intermission. It was nothing unusual for from 600 to 1,000 Choctaw youths to engage in a game. Two leaders were selected, and they chose alternately until there were from 300 to 500 on each side. Several old men of the tribe acted as judges. They measured off the ground and set up the goals. For each goal two posts about 25 feet high were

FIRMLY PLANTED IN THE GROUND six feet apart. Across the tops of the upright posts was fastened a horizontal pole. These goals were fifty rods apart. Midway between them was a small stake. From this point the ball, at a given signal, was tossed in the air by one of the judges. And then the game began.

There were some curious preliminaries. When the judges had set the goals they drew a line from one goal to the other. To this line the old men, the boys, and the women of the tribe came and bet across it whatever they wanted to stake on the result. Anything which had value was included in the betting. Knives, dresses, blankets, dogs, horses, and a hundred other possessions were delivered across the line to be wagered on one side or the other. The stakeholders receive the stakes collected at a little distance from the ball ground, and kept guard over them until the end.

The laying out of the ground and the betting was all arranged the afternoon before the game. When night came on the ground was lighted by torches and the ball-play dance was given. The players crowded around their respective goals, held up their sticks and rattled them together. The women formed in two rows between the goals, according to the side they were betting on, and danced while they sang to the Great Spirit in favor of their respective interests. At a little distance on one side the four judges, who were to have the tossing of the ball, and who were to decide the result, sat and

SMOKED AND PRAYED to the Great Spirit that they might be able to judge impartially and escape being mobbed by the losers. This dance was given at intervals of half an hour all night. Nobody thought of going to bed.

The game opened at 9 o'clock in the presence of the whole tribe. A gun was fired. The ball was tossed up. In an instant the hundreds of players were in motion. Each player had two sticks with hooped ends. Thongs were stretched across the hoops so that the ball could not slip through. The game was to catch the ball between the netted ends of the two sticks and throw it toward the goal. When the ball passed through the space between the high posts and below the cross pole the side to which that goal belonged scored a point.

There were no such things as fouls in the Choctaw ball game. Players jumped over each other's heads. They crawled between each other's legs. They tripped and kicked and scuffed. For many minutes the confused mass would be pushing and crowding toward a common point, and not a glimpse of the ball could be had. Then the ball would be slipped outside of the crowd, which would keep on struggling and crowding without discovering that the ball was gone. Clouds of dust arose. Every player made all the noise he possibly could. Occasionally

TWO BITTER PARTISANS dropped out of the melee and began to settle a misunderstanding with their fists. That was all right. But perhaps before half a dozen blows had been exchanged the fortune of the game sent the crowd down upon the scene of fistcuffs, and in an instant the fighters were swallowed up in the wild stampede. One inviolable rule of the game was that all weapons must be left in the camp. No player, however angry he might become, was allowed to leave the ground to get a weapon. All difficulties must be settled on the spot and with the fists. But this was the only restriction on fighting, and before the game was over bloody noses and bruised shins were numerous.

The two bodies of players were distinguished by those on one side painting themselves white with clay. When the ball was driven through a goal there was a brief rest for a minute. Then the ball was tossed again from the centre stake, and the wild struggle was repeated. When one side had driven the ball through its goal 100 times the game was won. Usually the sides were so well matched that the contest was not decided until sundown.

Catlin says he often sat on his horse for eight or ten hours at a stretch watching these exciting contests. But he confessed that when he tried to reproduce

THE SPIRIT OF THE SCENES his pencil failed him. When the ball was "up"—that is, flying through the air—everybody was running and reaching for it. But when it was "down"—that is, on the ground—the players flung themselves together, each side pushing and crowding toward its own goal. The 100 points having been scored by one side or the other, there was a general distribution of whiskey, and then the stakes were awarded.

The games were not played without much practice and preparation. Choosing of sides began several weeks before the day set for the game. As the leaders chose their players they sent runners through the village. The runners carried ball sticks decorated with ribbons. The player signified his acceptance by touching the stick of the champion who had chosen him, and from that time on he was engaged for the game. This gave the rest of the tribe plenty of time to decide which side they would bet on. It also gave the leaders time to train their followers for the grand event.

The Sioux had a favorite ball game. The women played it. When the warriors were full of whiskey and wanted something to make them laugh they arranged a tournament for the women. Usually the game took place when the Sioux were flush with goods received in their annual bargains with the fur traders. Calicoes, ribbons, and other things dear to the feminine mind, tutored or untutored, were hung on a pole which rested on crooked sticks. These were the prizes.

Two balls were tied together by a string a foot and a half long. With a short stick the player was expected to stop the balls by the string and throw them. The players were divided into two parties, and the aim of each side was to throw the two balls over its own goal. The women crowded and scuffled and tumbled over each other, while the warriors rolled upon the ground and laughed until their sides ached.

Our Two Opinions.

Us two wuz boys when we fell out, Nigh to the age uv my youngest now: Don't rec'lect what 'twuz about, Some small diff'rence I'll allow.

Lived next neighbors twenty years, A-hatin' each other, me 'nd Jim! He havin' his opinyin uv me, 'Nd I havin' my opinyin uv him!

Grew up together 'nd wouldn't speak, Court'd sisters, 'nd marr'd 'em, too; Tended same meetin' house onct a week, A-hatin' each other, through and through!

But when Abe Linkern asked the West, 'Fr soldiers, we answered, me and Jim, He havin' his opinyin uv me, 'Nd I havin' my opinyin uv him!

But down in Tennessee one night Ther was sound uv firin' on' away, 'Nd the Sergeant allowed there'd be a fight With the Johnnie Reds some time nex' day: 'Nd I wuz thinkin' uv Lizzie 'nd home, Jim stood afore me, long 'nd slim; He havin' his opinyin uv me, 'Nd I havin' my opinyin uv him!

Seemed like we knew ther wuz goin' to be Serious trouble 'Fr me and him; Us two schuck hands, did Jim 'nd me, But never a word from me or Jim!

He went his way 'nd I went mine, 'Nd into the battle roar went we, I havin' my opinyin uv Jim, 'Nd he havin' his opinyin uv me.

Jim never come back from the war again, But I hain't forgot that last, last night, When waitin' 'fr orders, uz two men Made up and schuck hands, afore the fight; 'Nd after all it's soothin' to know That ther here I be 'nd yonder's Jim; He havin' his opinyin uv me, 'Nd I havin' my opinyin uv him!

JAMES WHITCOMBE RILEY.

The Advance in Diamonds.

The extraordinary rise in the price of diamonds—in many cases over 50 per cent.—is exciting considerable attention. Both at Antwerp and Amsterdam several thousand cutters are out of work, as most of the merchants firmly decline any dealings at the present prohibitive rate. The truth is that a powerful syndicate has obtained, till May 15, an exclusive right over all the stones which may be found in South Africa, and its members are consequently able to regulate the prices at will. Although this daring operation has been carried out under the aegis of New Court, the principal names which figure in the combination are those of Messrs. Benato, Donckerspieler, Porges, and Shwabacher. It is doubtful whether any considerable pecuniary advantage will accrue from the transaction, for the diamond syndicate already finds itself overlaid with merchandise which it is utterly unable to dispose of. A few days ago it was forced to make sales at a sacrifice, so that, if the buyers maintain their present attitude, the much-coveted stones will soon be again procurable at the normal rate. One of the indirect consequences of the syndicate has been a proportionate rise in the price of pearls, rubies, and emeralds. Under these circumstances, the outside public will do well to imitate the judicious reserve of the professional dealer.

Refuse to Shave Widows' Heads.

The agitation among the barbers of Bombay is likely to result in their refusal to shave widows' heads. Of course, those who are acquainted with native views in India will recognize that this intimation is not so comical as it sounds, but has a very serious meaning and reflects great credit on the cruel barber. It is a relic of a system of native treatment of native widows that they should have their hair shorn off at the moment of their affliction. Native journals have recently been denouncing the cruel practice in spite of the opposition of the Brahmins, who have themselves threatened to cut the hair of the widows if the barbers refuse. This, however, it is said the Brahmins could not do without losing caste.

The revolt in Bombay is due to the excessive cruelty practiced toward widows there. Up country, says an Indian contemporary, the practice of shaving the widow's head is not so persistently enforced as in Bombay. The hair is allowed to grow again, and the widow is only expected to submit to a renewal of the unwelcome operation when she visits a shrine of special sanctity. In Bombay widows are shaved regularly once a week, and this causes them deep distress.

German Drummers and English.

We are continually hearing of German commercial travelers in neutral countries cutting out representatives of English houses, or doing business simply because English houses have no representatives able to speak the language and introduce their goods. But a letter to a German newspaper deprecates the inaction of German financiers, compared with the energy of English houses. It appears that Mr. John Baring, member of the firm of Baring Brothers & Co. of London, had arrived at Buenos Ayres last January on what the correspondent calls an "information journey"—one of those round trips which Englishmen of position are credited with undertaking just to make themselves acquainted with commercial men and manners abroad. A dinner was given, of course and toasts were drunk to the continual prosperity of the city of Buenos Ayres. Beyond that nothing is said, but the lesson set by this correspondent, in his anxiety to keep German merchants and financiers up to the mark, is that Berlin and Frankfurt should also send representatives of their best firms to South America, and have dinners given them there.

LATEST BY CABLE.

Stanley's Return to England—The German Kaiser Still Busy—England and the United States Pressing Portugal for a Settlement of the Delagoa Bay Affair—The Turkish Debt.

Henry M. Stanley has returned to England after his long absence in the "Dark Continent." He reached Dover the other afternoon by a special steamer which had been placed at his disposal by the King of the Belgians.

Dover seemed to expect something out of the common and every citizen who was able to do so wended his way toward the pier in the hope that something would come to a head there. Thousands were there, and they stood for more than an hour looking at the surroundings with which they were on the most intimate terms and talking about the curious career of the man of whom they were waiting so patiently to catch a glimpse. There were more flags than usual on the pier, and they were thrown to the breeze in honor of Stanley.

As the vessel was being berthed alongside the pier very one in the thousands on shore was gazing with might and main at the little party of men on the upper deck. "Where is Stanley?" was an exclamation heard on all sides.

WELCOME, STANLEY!

Just before the landingstage was reached a broad smile was observed on the handsome face of Captain Nelson. He smiled because, on seeing the assemblage ashore, Stanley had dived under cover. From his shelter the African explorer was compelled to come forth to meet the Mayor of Dover, who presented an address of welcome.

There was a far larger crowd in London to welcome Stanley than there had been at Dover; but as the police arrangements were perfect he suffered no inconvenience. The moment he appeared on the platform he was cheered, and cheered as he took his seat in the open carriage of Lady Burdette-Coutts, and he felt constrained to stand up and bow many times to show his appreciation of the splendid welcome given to him.

He drove from the station, accompanied by Lady Burdette-Coutts and Mr. Burdette-Coutts and met with something very much like an ovation from the immense crowd that filled every thoroughfare in the vicinity of the Victoria station.

The Kaiser did plenty of work last week, on sea and land. Frenchmen have been gnashing their teeth over the brutal disregard of their feelings involved in his visit to Alsace, but the people of that conquered province seemed pleased enough to see the German Emperor, and the flouts and gibes of the French press will not serve to hide the fact that Strasburg, supposed to lie writhing beneath the iron heel of the invader, was splendidly decorated and illuminated in his honor, and the enthusiasm of the crowds could not have been surpassed even in Berlin.

Something has evidently happened at the Russian court. The Czar and his family had settled down comfortably at Gatchina with the intention of staying a month, when early last week telegraphic orders were received to repair the St. Petersburg palace for their reception, and next day the entire court returned unexpectedly to the capital. The censor sent out a paragraph which the newspapers, of course, published, saying that the change was due to cold and rainy weather; but from a climatic point of view St. Petersburg just now is not more favored than Gatchina.

The United States and the British government have made an imperative demand that the Delagoa railway question should be settled by arbitration. The United States and British Ministers had a long interview last week with the Foreign Minister, who has the affair under careful consideration.

In consequence of the Caisse of the public debt having accepted the scheme for the conversion of the debt without awaiting the presence of the German delegate, who was absent from Constantinople at the time of acceptance, the delegate has now raised objections to the final issue of the conversion bonds despite the fact that the Sultan has issued an irade sanctioning the scheme. The matter now rests with the German syndicate, which is negotiating conversion.

Aphorisms.

When thou art obliged to speak, be sure to speak the truth; for equivocation is half way to lying, and lying is the whole way to eternal destruction.—(William Penn.)

Life is a quarry, out of which we are to mold and chisel and complete a character.—(Goethe.)

There is nothing like a fixed, steady aim, with an honorable purpose. It dignifies the nature and insures success.—(Stopford Brooke.)

Kind words produce their own image in men's souls, and a beautiful image it is. They soothe and comfort the hearer. They make him ashamed of his unkind feelings. We have not yet begun to use them in such abundance as they should be used.—(Pascal.)

Enthusiasm is the genius of sincerity, and truth accomplishes no victories without it.—(Bulwer-Lytton.)

He who is truly at peace never suspects others. But he who is ill at ease and discontented is disturbed by various suspicions.—(Thomas a Kempis.)

With firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us stand by our duty fearlessly and effectively.—(Abraham Lincoln.)

Hasty words often rattle the wound which injury gives; but soft words assuage it, forgiving cures it and forgetting takes away the scar.—(Tupper.)

Sick Woman—"I'm so apprehensive, dear doctor, about being buried alive." Doctor—"You shan't be if I can prevent it."

Depended on the Result.

Passer-by (to Tommy, who has just been fighting).—"Wouldn't your father whip you if he knew you had been fighting?"

Tommy.—"Well, that depends. If the other boy whipped me, pop would whip me too; but if I licked the other boy, pop would just say, 'I wouldn't fight, if I were you, Tommy.'"