



THE BELLE OF BLACKVILLE

by E. JOSEPH ASTOR.

A few groups of grimy cottages huddled more or less together; a single blackened street making its zig-zag way through the midst of them...

That was Blackville, externally. For the rest it was an assemblage of humanity which laughed and wept, roared like horses and drank like fishes...

Jessie Graythorpe was the belle of Blackville. She was the goddess in whose temple all the young men...

In consequence of this attitude of the belle the other lasses were having a bad time just then. Even a girl who had a "chop" half-dressed...

Not, altogether, that these considered Jessie so bad as to encourage married men to desert their fathers' business required. But if she did no more, she kept many husbands away from the wives of their bosoms...

One day, instead of taking his turn at the mine as usual, Ned spent the time at the "Dun Cow," drinking hard. He was surly and gruff to all who spoke to him...

Half an hour or so later, he was lying concealed in a hollow on Eickshaw corner, four feet from a rough wooden bench, with a servicable coalhammer in his pocket...

But there was an old silence just now between the lovers, and he wanted to hear one of them speak. Jake broke the silence abruptly, and his first words hastened the sobering-up process which had already begun in the listener.

"Yes, I know," he answered cheerily, and with a sickly smile which the dullest-witted in Blackville could see through. "Jake's aw' rect, an' Jess'll ha' a good'un."

Nobody could understand this attitude. It was only morally proper that a fight should come out of the affair. Therefore, to most matters, somebody kindly suggested that Jake had not won the girl fairly.

rogatives of any belle, or course, is to be fickle. Thus far the hopes of the two groups were utterly dashed to pieces. They were compensated in some measure by a beautiful little "side" mill...



HE CAUGHT THE SOUND OF VOICES DRAWING NEAR.

What had happened soon became known, and some relief was felt. It was not an explosion, but the supports of a new gallery had given way, and those working in it—Ned amongst them—had become entombed. The engineer had been down. Now, while he called for rescue parties, he gave his opinion frankly. Examination showed the whole of that part of the workings to be in so rotten a state that it seemed little short of certain death to any...

"Jake, owd lad," he said in a whisper, "Jess belongs to thee. I'm nobbut the stranger to her. Tell her, lad—tell her Ned—was—true—Lancashire." He never spoke again. When they called him to the top he was dead.



JAKE, OWD LAD, JESS BELONGS TO THEE.

in the quiet little churchyard of Blackville you will, if you care to look, find Ned's grave, with a small stone placed over it, and on the stone you may read a brief narrative of the part he took in the mine accident, ending with these words: "He was true Lancashire."

SOME LIVING PRETENDERS. An Amusing Spanish Duke with a Herald and an Enormous Fortune. The profession of the royal pretender is a very much overdone in Europe just now. A Madrid editor has found six men who think they have claims to the crown of France, besides any number who think they have paramount rights to the throne of Spain and the purple of some Italian principalities.

Ned Walton was among the first to crawl through the hole. As he saw Jake he pressed his hand in silence, then passed on. Others followed and were taken to the top. Two men were missing still, however, and the rescuers worked on. Round after round of Ned Lancashire cheering greeted the arrival of the rescued men at the pit's mouth. Ned's old mother rushed at him and, probably for the first time since he was a baby, hugged him and kissed some of the coal dust off his cheek.

less troublesome pretender than Don Carlos. This chief of Spanish pretenders was once impoverished that, with the help of his secretary, he tried to turn into coin the gold chain of his Order of the Golden Fleece. By the death of Count Chambord and some luck eventually lay up a fortune against a rainy day and keep his decorations away from the goldsmiths and pawn-brokers.

A group of pretenders, who are chronically bankrupt, afflict the Italian provinces. At almost any time one may find in the continental newspapers brief paragraphs concerning the difficulties which a count of Aquila, or Trani, or Syracuse, is having with the sheriffs. A census of pretenders has not been taken. A partial list of those who think they have valid claims to the throne of France was published recently, however. They are: Don Carlos, duke of Madrid; Alfonso XIII., king of Spain; Francis, sometime king of both Sicilies; Francis, Sebastian's son by his second wife, an aunt of the dead king; Robert, once duke of Parma; Louis Philippe of Orleans. All of these gentlemen are descendants of Louis XIII. of France. The last one to announce his pretensions to the world is Gen. Francis of Bourbon, who suddenly began calling himself the duke of Anjou after the count of Paris' death, and sent out a manifesto concerning his claims. This course has been rather disastrous to him, for he has been deprived not only of his command in the Spanish army, but also of the salary that went with it. He can spare the command, but will miss the salary, for he is poor.—N. Y. Sun.

PAY OF CHINESE SOLDIERS. They Receive Their Wages in Silver and Exchange It for Coin.

The Chinese soldier receives his pay once a month only, and Chinese months, it may be remembered, are much longer than those we are accustomed to reckon by. On the eve of the payday the captain of a company, together with his sergeant-major, goes and receives the amount of money requisite to pay his company from his next superior officer. This is not paid to him in jingling coins, but in pure silver, which, however, has been broken into somewhat irregular pieces. The whole of the night preceding payday is occupied in weighing out for each man the required quantity of silver, and this occupation, as may be imagined, is a very tedious one and only successfully accomplished by infinite care, for here a piece the size of a pin's head has to be chipped off, and there a piece of large dimensions has to be added to make up or the other means the loss of perhaps a day's pay or more to some poor defender of the Celestial empire.

When the process of meting out is accomplished the silver is carefully wrapped in paper, upon which is written the name of the intended recipient. On the following afternoon the company is mustered, and the sergeant-major divides the money, commencing with the first man in the company and going on to the last. When this division is concluded the question is asked in stentorian tones: "Has any one else a claim?" and the customary "No" having promptly been given, the men are dismissed.

Each one now repairs to the nearest tradesman's shop, where he exchanges his silver. For one tael he receives sixteen hundred small coins called "cash," performed in the center so as to allow of being threaded on a string, and having received the proper amount, turns homeward with a cheerful mien, but nearly sinking beneath this burden. The private receives three and a half taels, equal to nineteen shillings, monthly, out of which he has to provide himself with clothes and food. This, to us, no doubt, seems a very insignificant sum, but we must remember that the whole of a Chinese soldier's subsistence only costs him about one tael, for he lives on rice, absolutely nothing but rice. His clothes, too, also cost but a trifle.—Chicago Tribune.

MUTUAL CAUSE FOR SECRET. "What's the difference between conceit and self-esteem, anyhow?" "A great deal. Conceit is the self-esteem belonging to somebody else."—Chicago Tribune.



She—Say, don't tell anyone you saw me home, Ephraim. He—You needn't worry. I'm as much ashamed of it as you are.—Judge.

A New York woman recently in Paris confessed to a great interest in the woman bootblacks whom she saw there. "They wear a peculiar uniform," she says, "not unlike that of the sisters of mercy, but their coquettish manners quite nullify the religious association of their dress. Most of them wear white gloves and handkerchiefs, and are wonderfully neat and dexterous at their calling."

An Ancient Superstition. To get rid of a disease by giving it to somebody else is common among all primitive races. It cannot be said that in 1894 we are not just as selfish, since we dump our neighbors the filth of sewage. To get rid of certain insanities, and to fasten the disease on a plaster, or something of the kind, was considered by the burying of the plaster. Then, if anybody dug it up he caught the disease and the ill man was freed of his malady. This is an old Roman fancy, and is carried out, according to Capt. Bourke, by the Mexican Indians today. It is probably of Sogdian origin.

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