

DREAMS.

If a good little child be ever so good, As good as a child can be; Wee Willie Winkie comes over the hill With his sack of dreams—comes he. One little dream of a trolley train, One little dream of a candy cane, One little dream of a woolly sheep, One little dream of a doll to keep, One little dream of a tub-a-dub drum, One little dream of a top that hums, One little dream of a trumpet red, One little dream of a brand new sled, One little dream of a chocolate drop— Dream upon dream, and they never stop. If a good little child be ever so good, As good as a child can be; Wee Willie Winkie—why, here he is! "Shut your eyes, quick," says he. —Carolyn S. Bailey, in The Congregationalist.

THE STAYING HAND.

The brakeman, swinging his lantern, peered back into the darkness; the slow-moving, heavy freight had side-tracked, with a lurch, to let the express go by. "Hear anything, Gus?" The engineer, leaning out of his cab, called, lazily. "Thought we had a good haul—guess it was cats." He glanced at a coupling and retraced his steps, yawning. As he passed the third car something slipped silently from the bumpers and dropped to the roadbed below. "Gee!" It was no more than a hoarse whisper, but he took it for a sign. The unbooked passenger crouched lower under the car, motionless, inanimate, till a new terror stiffened his form. What if these wheels should grind again, back-ward—forward? What would he be, afterward, when they found him? It was moonlight, but he took his chances and stepped cautiously from underneath, his eyes on the far track. He had just reached it when a red eye flashed upon him—the snort of the engine, the rush of its hot, oncoming breath; he shrieked, and the thing went by. Ten minutes later he opened his eyes. "I have been asleep," was his first thought. He felt no pain. He sat up, running his hand down his limbs. Suddenly he realized it—why, it was fear, a nightmare, that was all! He had not been run over at all—he was ten inches beyond the wooden ties, absolutely safe and whole! He staggered to his feet. He was used to this thing, fear, and yet every time it stunned him; as a small boy he had been afraid in the dark. It was elemental, overpowering, the thing that kept him under. He peered around him; he saw nothing but tracks and level fields that stretched off into the moonlight, sweet with the odor of dew-saturated grass. He drew in his breath deeply. Lord, it was good! It was the only pleasure left in life to such as he. He stumbled down the ditch to where, a few yards off, a road picked out its way, a village road, worn smooth and even. He was hungry, therefore he must go on. Once on the road, he plodded steadily, a mile, two miles—it was no matter. An hour later, he struck a row of blackened shanties and knew he was in the region of the mines. Across the way a light streamed from two windows; it was the thing he was looking for—a saloon. He wasn't a drinking man, he was just a failure, and saloons are the places where failures go. He pushed his way through the narrow door, meeting words in a strange tongue. "Ugh! Polaks!" he muttered, and made out the bar. "I'm hungry," he said, briefly. Got anything to eat? The proprietor nodded. "Sure—you get him for money." "I ain't asking it for love." He fumbled in his pocket and threw a dime on the counter—his last coin. In a half-hour, refreshed, he put some questions. "Where's this place on the map, anyway—Russia?" "Naw—United States! Pottsville—de mines." "Huh—you fellers miners?" "Sure." "Any jobs floating about—or only stars?" The proprietor spoke, concisely. "You want a job, eh? You go to Hemmel, the boss, tomorrow morning. Now I close up. Git out—all of you!" The man was the last to move. "All right. Save your hurry—you'll live longer," he answered. At the door he turned, with a wry smile. "Say," he said, "if anybody asks where Rick Anderson is stopping, tell 'em the Sky View Hotel!" He slept on a bed of coal-dusted leaves till gray morning, and harsh, foreign voices called him to a new day. He watched, from blackened cabins, men issue forth with tin pails and disappear in the direction of a long brick building where an engine made incessant clamor; later, women blocked the doorways with shapeless, burden-bearing shoulders, and children overflowed on the steps below. He rose, stretching, and shook himself. "Gee!" he said, and wondered if he should go on. "I guess I better stay a while—no more private cars for mine!" He slouched across, slowly, to follow a man with a pick on his shoulder. "Hi! where's Hemmel, the boss, hang out?" The other man pointed, with grimy forefinger, to the brick building. "All right. Thanks—in Polish or Yiddish, or whatever lingo you speak!" Anderson, hands in pockets, went on. "Gee, I'm going to work," he said. "What you think of that? I'm lookin' for Mr. Hemmel, the boss of this dug-out." "Well, I'm Hemmel." "I want a job." "Ever work in a coal-mine before?" The man hesitated. "No." "Well, we can't bother with folks who don't know!" "I'll be anything—fill lamps—hand out picks—" "What's your trade?" "Decent hobbing." "Well, that's great!" "I never stole—more'n a ride." The boss called over his shoulder. "I say, Riley—still short-handed? Take this man on. If he's no good, chuck him at the end of a week!" Hemmel nodded. The transaction was closed. It was the beginning, for the man who knew fear, of many things. In the first place, he slept and ate somewhere; it is something to sleep somewhere. For the first time in two years Rick Anderson had three meals a day. He boarded with a man on his shift, named McGarry, in one of the company's blackened cabins—

he got tobacco and a suit of mining togs from the company's store on credit. But there were other things. To go down daily and bury oneself in that blackness. His first descent was stored in the mental strong-box that locks up tragedy he would carry it with him forever! Going down in the lift he turned pale; it was nothing new, but the lift-hand saw it and laughed. Rick Anderson clenched his fists—an oath, hurtled to his lips, caught in his throat and stayed there; fear closed his fingers about it and clung to him grimly. Then they struck bottom. As he picked his tortuous way through the under-ground of dusk and damp he prayed, hoarsely, in his soul for the things shut out—light and air! Good Lord! air—this thing that made him conscious of breath and lungs and a pounding heart. Need for speech made him stumble ahead, abreast of McGarry. "How long can a feller live down here?" he asked. "Oh, anywhere from fourteen to a hundred! It's an easy way of bein' dead and buried, without the expense of a tombstone!" "Well, why don't you chuck it?" "Aw, chuck it? when a man goes through hell to getta job, it stands to reason he'll keep it!" The word finished Rick Anderson. He did not try to find another. Besides, in the struggle he met hourly he had sharp work to do. Fear he was used to, but panic—he must steer clear of that. Once it rushed upon him, he would go down. He did everything, those first days, except fool the men on his shift. They knew him, and made clear in a hundred ways that he was not of their brotherhood. The Polaks, stolid, stupid, did not care—to them it was so many hours in the under world for so much to spend in the upper; they worked without feeling. As he watched them, stealthily, their expressionless faces, his chin dropped. Gee! he wasn't as good as a Polak! He wondered sometimes what made him stick—perhaps the sight of the small boys, old of face, hunched of shoulder, who picked slate from the dumps for the company for \$2.50 a week; perhaps the fact that the men on his shift, most of them miners with a realistic experience, treated him as a transient—a man who would quit after he had worked out his clothes. At the end of a week he was still "sticking." He worked as McGarry's "butty," in a room eight feet wide; to reach it he went, "at dawn" to the mouth of the West Shaft, where a "lift" on strong cables lowered them to a wooden platform three hundred feet below the surface; the lift was used, indiscriminately, for loaded and empty cars and men. They walked down a narrow wooden gangway, to the main entry, and from there to the "room." McGarry took the lead, with the peculiar loping stride of the habitual miner, bending his shoulders to avoid the low-hanging mass above. Anderson followed blindly. Once in the room, his task was simple—to assist, with his pick, McGarry and the other men with the undercut, and when the charge had been rammed and sent home and the coal had fallen to help load the little four-wheeled cars and push them along the heading to the rails outside. That was all—yet every time the explosion came and he hurtled with the others to safety he could have cried out had not his breath caught for a single suffocating instant! By that time McGarry was back again, bending to his task. McGarry was the one human being he passed daily speech with; although some times, in the lamp-room, where he surrendered the small torch that is as necessary as air to the miner, the men loafing for a few minutes before the ascent talked at him. Already they knew him as the "Green Guy," and poured out, with immobile faces, tales of fire-damp and burning, or fascinated him with a version of that white, luminous globe, faintly breathing of violets, that floats between the eyes only to burst with its silent, instant annihilation. "Seen one of 'em once, a comin' straight for my whiskers; you kin bet I ducked an' run! The boys scattered like mice, an' when we got to the lift we didn't want to talk any. Only a Pole named Zinski was missing—somehow he'd tripped right in the way of it. They couldn't git him for a week—then they found him on his face—Went out like his lamp, instant!" Rick, paling, went up into the outer air. "Gee! if a thing like that should happen here!" He voiced, faltering, the idea to McGarry, to see his face twist into a grin. "You're raw, that's what, an' Bud he's rubbin' it in! Sure—of course there's accidents—ain't they happenin' every day on the trolleys? And the swells that smash their automobiles—tain't fire-damp kills them, is it? Looka here, Rick, my own skin is the best that 'I ever fit me. Well, I ain't takin' chances with no little air-bubble—see?" Rick took heart of grace—until the next grim tale made him feel again the flutter in his throat that he had died. When his first week's pay was handed him he put just \$1.60 in his pocket, but he had paid for his suit of clothes! Hemmel, passing into the engine-room, paused, taking him in. "Stuck it out a week, have you?" "Yes." "Like it better than hobbing?" Rick smiled his wry smile. "They're both—pretty rotten!" But Hemmel had already turned on his heel. Rick heard him calling to the track boss—"I say, Ned, come, read this dispatch; the Big B, sidetracks here tomorrow!" Rick joined McGarry where he drank deeply from a water-pail by one of the dumps. "Who's the Big B, anyhow?" "Big boss, owner of the outfit. What's got him in yer noodle?" "Hemmel says he's comin' here." "Git out! Well, here's where we do a lively!" When Rick descended the next day the stir had already reached every shaft; little loaded cars were running along the gurgling tracks, a heap of coal-dust had been cleared, the lamps were trimmed and burning. Rick adjusted his still awkward fingers. Ahead he could hear McGarry's rolling laugh. "Hurry up, boys, Hemmel's worried. Orders is, wash up!" And a Polak grunted, twinkling his small ferret eyes. Rick shouldered his pick and overtook him. They were working on a new shift, with two Russians and the bully of the camp, a man named Larson. The man kept his eye on Rick with a bright, blinking insolence. When he spoke, after the manner of his kind, it was to give with each word a chance for battle. But Rick wouldn't fight! Strangely, it was the one thing he could do without fear. He just saw red and pitched in; afterward nausea overcame him, and he never did

it unless some other fellow insisted. They backed at their undercut in silence till it reached clear to the far wall, then McGarry braced his auger and rammed home the cartridge with the tapping needle, a thin iron rod with a slender point. As soon as the fuse was set they scattered. Rick, this time, impelled by the old clutch on his throat, stumbled far down the heading. When he came back the others were already loading the car. Larson, looking up, laughed full in his face. Rick stood, his hand on his hip. "What's the joke?" His lips were twitching. Larson winked. "Say," he said, "why don't you mine for potatoes? They're deep enough underground for you! Hey, fellers?" But nobody paid attention. Rick stared, then slowly he came around to Larson's side of the car. "Say that again, will you?" he said, calmly. Larson grunted. He threw a pick across to McGarry. "Here, Mac, hand him his hoe. I'm busy!" Rick, white-faced, listened. "I'll tell you something," he said after a minute. "In just two seconds you gotta swallow those potatoes or my fist; take your choice!" Larson stood grinning against the wall. "Do you think I'll fight with a white-livered Yankee?" he bawled, and threw a ten-pound lump into the car. In a moment Rick was upon him! "Man—his lamp!" McGarry shot forward, twisting the peaked cap from Larson's huge head. "Look here, you can't fight here; taint safe!" The two men were rolling in the debris of the coal. "Hi, you fellers!" Helplessly they stared. "And it took the three of them to cover Larson's form. He lay for a moment, panting, while Rick shook the hair out of his eyes. "You sure can fight!" said one of the Russians, springing across at him. But Rick shivered. He saw that the other, his physical unfitness and nausea was upon him! "I never thought," he stammered, "of—of the lamps!" A voice was calling from somewhere down the heading: "Hello, you fellers in Room 10! I send some one quick to the lift; Hemmel is bringing down the Big B, and some ladies!" McGarry sent out a decisive hand. "hear what he says, Rick? Run on out to Hemmel; you ain't doin' such a much here!" And as Rick hung back, he added more loudly, "Go on, boy; if 'I cool you off!" And Rick stumbled on out to the main entry. Five yards from the lift-platform he paused. Hemmel and a man with an iron-gray mustache were handing down a girl—a girl into this blackness! "What do you mean?" he said, "old block, hey?" Hemmel was saying, "Yes, sir, I'll get the shift boss. He can see you all right in the lamp-room. Where's that man I sent for?" "That man?" Rick stepped forward. "Yes, you'll do. Hemmel's manner was brief. "Show this lady down the main entry; let her see one of the headings, and how the shift is working in Room 6. She's safe there from explosions—and mind you are careful. She's this gentleman's daughter!" Rick instinctively put his hand to the peak of his cap and straightened. His eyes, under the coal-gime, took in the fairness of his charge. "I'll bring her back all right!" he said. "You are not afraid?" Her father was looking across at her. "Fag O' Coats—not in your mine!" Hemmel threw out his hands. "She will go through it, you see. If you'd rather, I'll just leave you in the lamp-room and show her round myself." "Certainly not!" She was smiling. "Take you away from papa when he's comin'?" "Go on, boy; if 'I cool you off!" Hemmel? Besides—this—she—paused, blushing, then added, steadily—"this gentleman will take care of me, I know." She turned to him. "Shall we be long?" "About fifteen minutes, lady." She caught the lapels of her father's coat. "I'll hunt you up in your little lamp-room, so hurry, dear, and get through!" She waved her hand, smiling, as she followed Rick down the gangway. A moment later he heard her, gasping. "It's pretty dark," she said. "Would you mind just—my putting my hand on your arm?" He stepped back at once, thrilled to the soul of him. "Sure not, lady!" And he walked with a pride he did not analyze. "These," he said, "are what they call the headings—sort of side-streets." "I've learned against the wall to let an empty car go by." "It'll come back full," he explained, and led her on into Room 6. She watched the men work in silence. Little explosive sounds rumbled to them, dulled by distance; she asked what they were and he told her. "You undercut, then you ram the charge and light a fuse; after that it explodes and the coal falls." "Oh," she whispered, "I think—I think it is the bravest thing I know!" She looked at him. "Do you ram the charges?" He took her hand. "No, lady, I ain't first-class enough for that." "You look as if you could do anything," she said, "that other brave men do." He smiled his wry smile into the darkness. "Oh," she said, softly, "you shouldn't say that! Why, you don't know! I think you could be one, if you had to, right this minute." He was very still at her side. "Besides," she went on, "even if you never do anything else, it's the work of a man—to live down here in the dark for the sake of the others above you—to give them light and fire. Oh, I think you are brave right now!" Something in his breast sprang into being—a light that flickered, like the lamp he wore. "Suppose," he said, hoarsely, "you are just doing it to—git a living—good an' clothe an' a place to sleep?" But she only laughed sweetly. "Well, it's brave, anyhow. You can't help yourself—all the time you are doing something for the men and women and little children who live on top—don't you see?" He whistled softly. "Gee! and then he said, swiftly, "I'll think about that, lady, some more!" She had turned, her hand still resting, in its little sooty glove, on his arm. "Please take me back now to my father," she said. And he took her back! It was strange that afterward, in the close, damp room with McGarry and Larson and the two Russians, he still felt that hand on his arm! A woman's hand—Gee! And it stayed! He didn't define it, as he knelt there, close to the rock-bed, unpercipient with his pick, but the inexplicable had happened—all the diseases of his sordid, effortless life were being healed, one by one. It was as if all over the dulled surface of his soul had run the quickening fingers of some bright spirit.

He straightened a moment, staring at the black, damp wall. Gee! she had called him a gentleman! Well, it was a mistake. He was just an ordinary, no-account bloke, a hobo-miner—but he wasn't dead yet, and things could happen! He started. Larson was standing over him, snarling, with red-rimmed eyes. "Look here, you! That little matter of potatoes ain't finished—you gotta dig some more—understand?" Rick moved slowly on his haunches, then he turned back, wordless. Larson laughed. "Did I say white-livered? Well, I guess!" Rick, on his feet with a hoarse cry, had his fingers ready for the man's throat, then his arm dropped heavily. The woman's hand was there restraining him! He saw red, red—yet he sank again to his task! It wasn't fear this time—it was faith in her vision of himself! Somewhere in the back McGarry was using his auger, the little, twisting sound eating its way into the heart of the coal. "Hi, there, Larson, cut that out! I'm tired. Hand me a cartridge." Already he was something else. "My lamp's going out!" "The Russian's mouth drooped. "I told you to wait," McGarry, running back, was twisting the man's arm. "God!" he groaned, "he's done it!" They rushed, crowding through the entrance, into the heading. Rick stumbling here, there in the dark, McGarry yelled, as he ran. "Fire-damp, can't we die?" "I told you to wait," McGarry, running back, was twisting the man's arm. "God!" he groaned, "he's done it!" They rushed, crowding through the entrance, into the heading. Rick stumbling here, there in the dark, McGarry yelled, as he ran. "Fire-damp, can't we die?" "I told you to wait," McGarry, running back, was twisting the man's arm. "God!" he groaned, "he's done it!" They rushed, crowding through the entrance, into the heading. Rick stumbling here, there in the dark, McGarry yelled, as he ran. "Fire-damp, can't we die?" "I told you to wait," McGarry, running back, was twisting the man's arm. "God!" he groaned, "he's done it!" 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