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Rain-Song.

"O the beautiful, beautiful rain!
Sing praises! Sing praises!"
The little brown wren leaned out of her nest
And sang it with the daisies.

"O, the beautiful, beautiful rain!
Sing praises! Sing praises!"
The brook sang over her pebbly lane
In wonderful alto phrases.

From brooks and banks, from fields and flowers,
The lovely chorus raises:
"O, the beautiful, beautiful rain!
Sing praises! Sing praises!"

"Battle with Life."

Bear thee up bravely,
Strong heart and true;
Meet thy woes gravely,
Strive with them too!
Let them not win from thee
Tears of regret,
Such were a sin from thee,
Hope for good yet!

Rouse then from drooping,
Care-laden soul;
Mournfully stooping
'Neath grief's control!
Far o'er the gloom that lies,
Shrouding the earth,
Bright from eternal skies
Show us thy worth.

Nerve thee yet stronger,
Resolute mind!
Let care no longer
Heavily bind,
Rise on thy eagle wings
Gloriously flee!
Till from material things
Pure thou shalt be.

Bear ye up bravely
Soul and mind too!
Droop not so gravely
Bold heart and true
Clear rays of streaming light
Shine through the gloom,
God's love is beaming bright
E'en round the tomb.

DANDY FERGUSON.

THE HERO OF THE CHAPARAL SHAFT.

I do not believe that Quasimodo was a more pitiably deformed creature, or Quilp a more hideously unnatural looking object, than was Dandy Ferguson when I saw him for the first time, that calm summer afternoon, laughing and joking with crowd of boon companions in the cool shade of an awning at Quartz Mountain. His face was seamed and distorted by peculiarly glossy scars—the inevitable evidence of close and long contact with that shriveling element, fire. His body was bent, and he walked with a sidling movement. He was a sickening spectacle at first sight, suggesting fearful suffering in the past, and my curiosity in regard to him was thoroughly aroused.

"Who is that man?" I asked, accosting a tall, blue-shirted miner who was standing in front of the post-office.

"Don't you know him?" answered the man; "why, that's Dandy Ferguson. I thought ev'rybody knew Dandy Ferguson."

"Why do you call him Dandy Ferguson?"

"Because—well, because he used to be a dandy—a reguler out-an'-out sport. When Dandy Ferguson first came to this camp he was a gilt-edged gentleman, an' no mistake. He wore a plug, an' flashed a spark in his biled shirt-front as big as a peanut. He put on more airs'n a mine superintendent, an most all the boys was down on him from the start. That was about three years ago, an' he came up here from the Bay to git a whiff o' fresh air, an' make nature an' the pines give him back what he'd lost spreein' 'round with them stock sharps and young bloods o' 'Frisco. No, he don't look like he was more'n half human, that's a fact; but I'd rather have them scars o' his than wear the clothes of the richest man in California—thet is, ef I'd gone through what he has an' suffered what he did. Proud of 'em! Mister, thar a'n't a man in this yer country—no, sir, nor in this yer State—as is prouder'n Dandy Ferguson of what other men might grieve over an' sigh about, an' no man's got a better right to be proud, either. When he fust came to Quartz Mountain he used to parade the streets with his nose cocked up—so; he'd hydraulic himself with patchouly an' smell-water till you couldn't git within a mile of him.

"He was a delicate-looking cuss, an' his hands were as soft as a barber's. The boys used to bet that if big Bridget Sullivan—our washerwoman—was to take it into her head to jump him, she'd knock spots out o' him in short order. Thet was our opinion of him when he played his small cards in this yer camp—but he showed down both bowers an' the ace before he quit the game, you bet yer life. D'ye see thet quartz mill over thar on the side hill? Thet's the Chaparal Mine, ye know, an' it's thar thet Dandy Ferguson showed us what sand was. One night, about a month after Ferguson got here, somebody out there yelled 'Fire!' an' the camp turned out. The h'istin' works was in a light blaze, an' the flames shootin' high up in the dark. We all rushed to the spot like a pack o' mad animals—you know how a fire stirs men up an' excites 'em. Of course, nobody knowed what to do, an' for a minute we all stood round lookin' at the fire creepin' long the eaves, an' the burning shingles droppin' down the shaft. Purty soon some one says: 'What!' kinder sharp an' fierce like. Then there was a little movement in the crowd, an' a man with a face as pale as death sprang away from the mouth of the shaft yellin' frantic: 'Water! Water! For the love o' God, turn on the water—the night shift's in the lower drift.' There was an' awful agony in thet man's voice; he had jist remembered thet his brother was down there, an' thet the fire under the biler of the engine was banked, thet the cage was too heavy to work by hand, an' the timbers in the shaft pitch pine, an' dry as a bone with great sparks droppin' down like flakes in a snow storm. You've heard how fast a man thinks in times of danger. Jim Slocum thought of his brother, the dry timbers, the engine, the cage, an' water, all in a second, but that was all. He didn't hev time to think of the fact thet thar wasn't a bar'l of water within a mile of the mine. Somebody rushed to the tank—ther was about a tubful there. The fire was playin' round the biler, an' the engineer hed turned the safety cocks to let thet out. We all rushed ev'ry which way yellin' fur ropes, ladders, anything—as of ladder could reach down about two hundred feet to where the men was. They were clean gone with excitement, an' didn't know what to do, an' the fire roarin' and crackelin' like the devil's own blaze,

"Some rushed one way an' some another, while some of them stood starin' into the hot, black smoke an' yaller fire, dazed, scared, helpless. Quicker'n it takes me to tell it a man jumped through the door of the his tin works an' caught hold of the chains. His coat an' hat was gone, an' he looked like an angel—almost—as he swung over the shaft in his white frilled shirt an' his long yallar hair. It was dandy Ferguson. He didn't wait for nobody, but jamed a big scantlin' thet two men couldn't slifted, down over the shaft. Then he yelled fur a rope, an' told some near the door to fetch him the ol' win'lass thet was lyin' outside, near the dummy. You never see men work like they did as soon as ther was a head. The rope an' the win'lass was brought into the works on the jump an' fastened to the scantlin'. Down went the rope and Ferguson shouting after it. 'I'm here, boys, an' I stay till I roast.' Then he grabbed the crank, an' spun the rope round the bar'l faster'n it ever was rolled before. He used one hand first, an' when she tightened he laid the other on. Si Holden wanted to help him but he wouldn't hev no interference. 'Time enough,' says Ferguson, 'when I drop.' It wasn't long before a half-naked body came up. They got the rope off as quick as they could, draggin' Harry Miller out of the works more dead'n alive, tremblin' like a leaf. They thought at the time thet he was scared at the danger he'd been in an' didn't notice how much exhausted he was; but they found out afterwards thet he'd played it down in thet shaft as mean as one man can play it on another at sich a time. You see there was five of 'em in the lower drift, an' when the burnin' timbers of the upper works began to drop down they all made a rush for the main shaft. The cage was on an' they couldn't get out till a rope came down. They could see a flicker of light up above, an' yelled till they was hoarse watchin' thet glimmer growin' brighter ev'ry minute, an' knowin' thet the shattin' timber'd blaze mighty soon an' cut off all hope of their ever gittin' out. It was a terrible thought an you can't blame Bill Slocum fur grabbin' the rope as soon as it dropped down to 'em. Harry Miller jumped 'long side of him, yellin'—

"'Let go, darn ye, let go! They can't lift two of us.' 'Let go yerself,' shouts Slocum, turnin' round on him like a tiger.

"'My old mother's up there,' yelled Slocum, pointin' up the shaft.

"'My wife's waitin' fur me,' howls Miller.

"An, with thet he knocks Slocum down in the drift an' goes up the rope hand over hand before the others could stop him—they'd killed him on the spot ef he hedn't climbed the rope as he did. Served him right? Kerrect, mister, they'd served him mighty well right an' no mistake, but he beat thet game. He'd jist strength enough to tie the slack 'round his waist w'en he give way all at once an' hung to the end of the rope like dead weight, an' Dandy Ferguson a haulin' him out o' death. Down went the rope agin, an' Slocum was tied on an' hauled up, Ferguson workin' the win'lass like a giant. The cords stood out on his neck like black-snake whips, an' the sweat poured off of him like a sluice stream. Two Cornishmen stood by him tryin' to make him let them roll up the rope while he rested, but he cussed 'em and told 'em to dry up; he said he was at the wheel, an' he'd stay there ef he died fur it. W'en Slocum came up, the fire was all around an' over the win'lass, an' the two Cornishmen grabbed Bill an' carried him out—they couldn't stan' the heat, Ferguson sent down the rope agin, an' up come Sam Hildreth, with jist strength enough to make for the door.

"The roof over the biler and the pitch on the door-posts was smokin'. Jest as the rope went down fur the fourth time, an' we loafin' round on the outside watchin' Dandy Ferguson standin' there like a man at the stake, expectin' every minute to see him drop, an' not a