

The Fireside.

THE ENGINEER'S STORY.

No, children, my trips are over,
The engineer needs rest;
My hand is shaky; I'm feeling
A tugging pain in my breast;
But here as the twilight gathers,
I'll tell you a tale of the road,
That'll ring in my head forever,
Till it rests beneath the sod.

We were lumbering along in the twilight,
The night was dropping her shade,
And the "Gladiator" labored,—
Climbing the top of the grade;
The train was heavily laden,
So I let my engine rest,
Climbing the grading slowly,
Till we reached the upland's crest.

I held my watch to the lamplight—
Ten minutes behind the time!
Lost in the slackened motion
Of the up-grade's heavy climb;
But I knew the miles of the prairie
That stretched a level track,
So I touched the gauge of the boiler,
And pulled the lever back.

Over the rails a-gleaming,
Thirty an hour, or so,
The engine leaped like a demon,
Breathing a fiery glow;
But to me—a hold of the lever—
It seemed a child a-way,
Trustful and always ready
My lightest touch to obey.

I was proud, you know, of my engine,
Holding it steady that night,
And my eye on the track before us,
Ablaze with the Drummond light.
We neared a well-known cabin,
Where a child of three or four,
As the up train passed, oft called me,
A-playing round the door.

My hand was firm on the throttle
As we swept around the curve,
When something afar in the shadow,
Struck fire through every nerve.
I sounded the brakes, and crashed
The reverse lever down in dismay,
Groaning to Heaven—eighty paces
Ahead was the child at its play!

One instant—one, awful and only—
The world flew round in my brain,
And I smote my hand hard on my forehead
To keep back the terrible pain;
The train I thought flying forever,
With mad, irresistible roll,
While the cries of the dying, the night
wind
Swept into my shuddering soul.

Then I stood on the front of the engine,
How I got there I never could tell,
My feet planted down on the cross-bar,
Where the cow-catcher slopes to the rail;
One hand firmly locked on the coupler,
And one held out in the night,
While my eyes gauged the distance and measured
The speed of our slackening flight.

My mind, thank the Lord! it was steady;
I saw the bright curls of her hair,
And the face that, turning in wonder,
Was lit by the deadly glare.
I know little more, but I heard it,
The groan of the anguished wheels,
And remember thinking—the engine
In agony trembles and reels.

One rod! To the day of my dying
I shall think the old engine reared
back,
And as it recoiled with a shudder
I swept my hand over the track;
Then darkness fell over my eyelids,
But I heard the surge of the train,
And the poor old engine creaking,
As racked by deadly pain.

They found us, they said, on the gravel,
My fingers enmeshed in her hair,
And she on my bosom a-climbing,
To nestle securely there.
We are not much given to crying—

We men that run on the road—
But that night, they said, there were
faces,
With tears on them, lifted to God.

For years, in the eve and the morning,
As I neared the cabin again,
My hand on the lever pressed down-
ward
And slackened the speed of the train.
When my engine had blown her a greet-
ing,
She always would come to the door,
And her look with a fulness of heaven
Blesses me evermore.

—Selected.

DAVE WARNER'S ANNIVERSARY.

BY CHARLES W. HAWTHORN.

It was Saturday night, and pay day at Black Diamond, a fair-sized coal town along the Carbon river. The town of Black Diamond was principally inhabited by miners and their families—the only exceptions being a few mine operators, of whom James Mason, of the Mason & Son's Coal Co., was one, and what business and professional men were necessary to meet the requirements of the town.

An exceedingly dull season was anticipated at Black Diamond this year, as the mines had been running poorly since July, and an exceptionally dull anniversary was in store at the home of David Warner, a hard working, sober, industrious Christian coal miner.

Dave Warner was the sole support of what was left of the Warner family, and although but twenty-three years of age, he had been the provider for a loving mother, two small brothers of six and eight, and a sister of eighteen, his father and an elder brother having lost their lives five years before in a mine explosion.

As Dave Warner came down the snowy slopes of the coal hills on this Saturday evening with his meagre pay in his pocket, his heart was heavy with the thought of those at home and the coming Monday evening, when he had hoped to make the day bright for all. He could picture in his mind the children of James Manson, romping in their sumptuously furnished home; he could see the bright painted toys, strewn about the room, almost unappreciated after the first few hours of play; he could see the older folks drawn around the bright glowing fire in the huge grate and watch the children; he could see them as they sat down to the dinner, the snowy table linen, the mirror-like silverware, the dainty china; he could see the big brown turkey and the hot steaming pudding; he could see this and all the other things which go to make up a dinner in the homes of the luxurious. He could hear the laughter and song of the afternoon, the conversation of happy by-gone days of the evening, and he saw their retirement to their downy beds at night. Then the picture changed to another home of bared walls and floors, well-worn common table and chairs, a thinly clad, but kind and tender woman; two boys dear to his heart, and a beautiful young girl whose beauty was in face and manner, not clothing and jewelry. There were no toys here, no turkey and pudding. Coal that had to be used judiciously was about the only luxury to be seen, and when the lights were lit here it was the one solitary oil lamp. This was

his destination this night, for this was his home.

As he walked along, he remembered of hearing Nell, his sister, telling of the conversation at school the day before when all the scholars had been taking their turns at naming the pretty things they had at home and presents they expected on their anniversaries.

Some expected much, others little, but when Nell Warner, the last one to speak, was called, she modestly lowered her eyes and spoke the one word, "nothing."

A bitter feeling came over Dave as he was saying to himself, "To some these occasions bring joy, to others sorrow, joy to the rich, sorrow to the poor. One man sits by the warm, bright fire in his easy chair and watches his family's enjoyment, the other man huddles over a few dying coals in a broken stove and listens to mournful winds and watches his family shivering with cold and starving for food, while outside the sleigh bells jingle by." Such were his thoughts.

As Dave walked down the main street on his way home, the dazzle and sparkle and brightness of the display in the store windows only made him feel worse, and a sleepless night was staring him in the face.

Far up the street he could see a crowd of people, and as street brawls were exceedingly common at Black Diamond on pay day night, Dave came to the conclusion that such was the attraction, and as he came within hearing distance of the crowd, his conclusions were strengthened, as the language he heard was of a nature to make demons blush; and Dave was right, but the fight was over.

A drunken negro with a cut on his cheek was just being led away by two of his comrades, and there, on the sidewalk, unconscious and with blood streaming from his head, lay, not another negro, not a poor coal miner, but Arthur Mason, son of James Mason, the wealthy coal man. A saloon with a shattered door told the story. A sleigh with merry ringing bells was drawn rapidly up the street by two spirited bays, and stopped, where the man lay. It was his father's sleigh, and his father who had received word of the affair was driving. The injured man, or I should say what should have been a man, was tenderly placed in the sleigh, and accompanied by the merry jingle of bells was taken home, and Dave Warner said to himself, "No music in those bells."

The picture came again to Dave in a new light. The true home lights were not the lights of tallow candles and electric bulbs, but were the lights within one's own self. Dave could still see that mansion on the hill; he saw the children and the toys, he again smelled the savory odor of the dinner, and now he heard the sleigh bells come up the driveway, he saw the door fly open, a heart-broken mother rush forth, and tearfully bend over the prostrate form of her disgraced boy, and Dave was now sorrowing for that home which a while ago he envied. And likewise the other picture, under the same true light, changed, and instead of bare floors and walls and dying coals, he saw the door of his home fly open at the sound of the tramp of his footsteps on the boardwalk, and instead of being greeted with tears, only smiles and embraces awaited him. So as Dave Warner entered his home that night, an extra ring was in his voice, and an extra strength was in his embrace; and as Dave laid his earnings in his mother's hand, he said: "Here it is, mother; it isn't much, but



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let us thank God, after what I have seen to-night, that in his wisdom he has withheld from us that which might have led me the same way." And so that night when Dave lay down the bed had an extra softness and he slept soundly.

When he awoke on Sabbath morning, and looked from his window, every limb and twig, in fact everything was bared down with a layer of snow. And such an emblem of purity! and what a picture of beauty for rich and poor alike! In possession of this all men were equal.

After breakfast the first church bell rang, and Dave thought how clear and sweet a melody for all; how great the goodness of God.

At church that morning everything seemed more joyous, and when the text was announced, which was, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth

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