A PIT STORY.

Poor Jack Wood. It's a sad little tale, as sad as any I ever read in a book, but it's true, every word of it.

You see, Jack was a lad that I'd known ever since he was a nipper, and when he grew to be a man and came to work in th' old pit we was neighbors, and he used to call round of nights and smoke a pipe with me.

At first I thought it was my company he so open for, but soon I found that it was Mary Ann, th' lass I loved, that he wanted to flirt with. He was the outspoken, forward, mostly young chap, and Lucy, though I say it, was as pretty and as good a lass as you'd wish to see. Well, I'm old and crabbed now, and we was younger, so for three years I put up with it, and I'd have put up with it longer, so fond I was of th' lass, but one night Jack was said aye. "Fetch, I'm minded to be married to Lucy next month. Are ye willin'?"

"Well," says I, whistle in th' air and stare out holes in Lucy, who was sitting by th' fire, "I'm willin' if so be th' lass is willin'. What d'ye say, Lucy?" And Lucy, she's my pretty—she just ran to me and there I've often stood out back, and found her head on my shoulder and laughed and cried all together.

"Lucy's willin," said I, with another serious wink at th' old woman, "and so am I, so. And then to bed."

Jack sobbed hard at my heart and shook it like a giddy lunatic, and Lucy gave me a look that made th' tears come, and then she went to bed, leaving us—we three, and he got sober, drink, or cider enough. Ah, we was all very happy that night.

Well, th' wedding day came round th' day given and we kept it back for the wedding—Jack had pressed hard to have it sooner, so he thought to have it, and he was fairly beside himself the morning, and Lucy looked after th' wedding breakfast herself.

Two days before th' wedding, when I went home at night, I found the whole place in an uproar. Th' parents and Lucy were long years on th' mourning stone, and both eyes as bright as bright as gems my lass mostly. It appear th' lad's wife was already pretty well on in life, so it didn't take long to make him a widow.

He got up to some New York, and it was pretty trade Lucy, in Sunday school days, took a fancy with that and thought, the up to Lou and was taken in behalf. I thought th' lass had my wife then, and it was about every time I'm thought so it stop.

I remember I was jolly lad, who went and, and, rolling and roaring, and rolling he was when he was married, and we spent all the time drink and bought.

"Dad's broke yourself, father," says he. "Lucy's worth that. I don't get no such chance that is good for me after the wedding."

* * * * * *

Th' next day—th' day after the wedding—I went down to pit as usual. All in day I worked hard—pick! pick! pick! It's not th' pleasantest work I do, work, for, living, stone hard, and I'm not th' lightest of th' lot, but I'm strong, and th' work suits me. Anything not th' real second, you, place by place, so I weren't sorry when th' time came to knock off and go home. I put on my shirt and coat, took up my buttons and started off toward th' shaft. I was walkin' nearer to th' shaft than any of th' other men, so I got there some minutes before any one else. It was about 4 o'clock, as a mind, not day in November, and was already quite dark, while almost gloomy. There was a thick fog over all. I looked up th' shaft and could hardly distinguish th' top, which seemed to be wrapped in a heavy cloud of mist.

I was about to signal for the cage to be let down, when I suddenly noticed a dark object lying at th' bottom of the shaft a few yards away from me. In th' darkness I could not at once see whether it was a man or a sheep. I raised my lantern and turned my light upon it. With a shudder, I saw that it was a man lying huddled up in a long, lean document, in the middle of a pool of blood, with a great gaping wound in his head, into which I could have put my fist.

He lay perfectly still. I opened the front of his shirt and laid my hand upon his heart, but it had ceased to beat. Th' pore chap was quite dead.

I turned him over upon his back and held th' lantern to his face. Good God! It was Jack!

Jack—my bonnie lassie's lover—th' bridegroom of two days—lying there, cold and stark and still! Jack, whom but a few hours before I had seen strong and bright and merry; and now—dead.

Dead—th' young and happy—young! Dead—th' joy of my poor Lucy's life!

I stood like one petrified and turned him to th' side of th' shaft. I then examined for th' cage to be lowered, and with the aid of some other men, who had just come up, I lifted him into it, and we were drawn up to th' mouth of th' pit.

I don't know how I got him home and broke the news to his old father. I seemed to be in a fever. All th' time I was thinkin' of my poor lass, whose life's happiness had been wrecked just as it seemed to be beginning to unfold.

I staggered home and crept furtively into th' house by the back door, fearin to meet my Lucy's gaze, but she should see the bottle in my eye.

I was glad to find that she was not in th' kitchen. I called th' old woman and told her of it, and she broke it down gently—as only a [illegible] can—to our little lass.

She never shed a tear, so far as I know. She never moved, and she kept down her work just as before. Her cheek, my eye grew pale and sunken, until at last—as you see that little graveyard on th' hill side? Well, that's where my Lucy lies now.

* * * * * *

This held an inquest on Jack's body, and it came out in evidence that he had missed his way in th' fog (he was not working that day, you know) getting early for his medical and as there was no guard round th' pit mouth, he had stepped over the edge an fallen down unseen.

We say there ought to have been a guard! Aye, but that's our Boss, and he's now from to sleep somewhere in sunny England.—Yankee Blade.

Irritating.

"It irritates me always," says my schoolmate Brown, "to have the man who sits in the seat with me in a crowded car take up more than his half of the seat. If he has his time or his fare paid over half of the seat and I have to be crowded himself uncomfortably, just with perhaps disregard of my rights and comfort, I can't help thinking that he is a mean and disagreeable person, and if, as we sometimes see, he has to resort to rudeness or ugliness to get his fair share, he can not help showing it in his manner and appearance. I'm sorry for such people, and I don't like to sit by them."—Youth's Companion.

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