

# The Madman of the Mines

by George Albert Leddy

You've never heard the story, man? Well, that seems mighty queer;  
I reckoned's how 'twas known to all, for miles and miles 'round here;  
I reckoned's how each tongue that speaks, had told it o'er and o'er;  
And how each rough old-heart that beats, has softened to the core.  
I reckon's how you've just arrived, or else you would have known;  
    The saddest story ever told, throughout the miners home;  
    And if you mean to settle here, for any length of time;  
You sure should know, the story of—The Madman of the Mines.

So if you have the time to spare, just step inside with me;  
Excuse the roughness of the place, 'tis the best I have, you see.  
I've lived alone here twenty years—ah yes, 'twas built for two.  
    There used to be a little Lad, with eyes of Heaven's blue;  
With smiles that cheered my lonely heart, when life was dull and sad;  
    And oft' I'd welcomed death's cold-hand, but for that little Lad.  
The golden curls that crowned the brow, I've kissed them many times;  
    And now, my God, to think my boy—The Madman of the Mines.

    You see far back in '63, my life was filled with joy;  
    A cozy Home, a loving Wife, our Little Baby Boy.  
Till that sad day, the Master called, from that Eternal Home,  
And broken hearted, Babe and I, must face this world alone.  
I watched them lay her in her grave, I prayed to God that He;  
    Might find a place in Heaven soon, for Little Babe and me.  
    To hide my grief, I came out here, and later just to find;  
A sorrow that's far worse than death—The Madman of the Mines.

For sixteen years we lived as pals, I toiled the whole time through;  
    The little Lad was like his Mother; gentle, kind, and true.  
And 'though he'd never known the joy, of that fond mother's love;  
I'd taught him how she watched o'er him, from Heaven up above.  
    Each time I looked into his eyes, or stroked the sunny hair;  
    I seemed to hear her gentle voice, in love and sacred prayer.  
And now when e'er I kneel to pray, I know her prayers and mine;  
    Are asking God to watch and love—The Madman of the Mines.

Well, Stranger, hand me that old pipe, that lays there by your hand;  
And fill yours too, you'll find the weed in that old powder can.  
It sort'o seems to stay my nerve, when my heart's feeling queer.  
My poor old brain is pretty weak, I've taxed it hard I fear.  
I guess I'm getting pretty old, I'm not much at my best;  
But God of mercy, let me live, to see him laid at rest.  
I could not rest within my grave, if he were left behind;  
No one to love or care for him—The Madman of the Mines.

Well, Neighbor Jones, my dearest friend, he had a little girl;  
The bright face of an Angel shown, beneath her sunny curls.  
They grew together, he and she, as playmates, then as friends;  
Until at last their lives were blest, by love that Heaven sends.  
To her, he was a noble King; and she to him, a Queen.  
A brighter, gayer, happier pair, this world has never seen.  
He loved her better than his life, but fate was most unkind;  
It was this love that wrecked the life—of The Madman of the Mines.

Well, on that day the whistle blast, had named the mid-day meal.  
We saw them coming with our pails, across the sunburned field;  
He carried both, while she walked close, her bonnet on her arm.  
So happy did they look that day, no thought of any harm.  
We heard him say, as they drew near, in voice so sweet and low:  
"I love you, as my Daddy, loved my Mother, long ago."  
She seemed to like to look at him, she watched him all the time;  
That day, so handsome, and today—The Madman of the Mines.

We told him that he "dare not steal, a tiny little kiss."  
She puckered up her pretty lips, the saucy little Miss.  
And as he turned to kiss her lips, in their fond childish way;  
She quickly turned and says, "You can't!" and scampered fast away.  
She ran into the yawning mine, as oft' she'd done before;  
My God! that noise, I hear it yet; like a thousand cannons roar.  
The very air seemed filled with dirt, and rocks and smoke combined.  
That moment changed my handsome Lad—to The Madman of the Mines.

And when the angry roar had ceased, a silence worse than death;  
Prevailed throughout the mining camp, and each one held his breath;  
For well we knew her soul had gone back, to the One-who-gave;  
That God had called her Home to Him—the Mine must be her grave.

With breaking hearts, we knelt and prayed, "Oh God, Thy will be done."

Then I arose, "Oh God!" I cried, "Oh, spare to me my Son!"

I clasped his hand, he knew me not; from grief his brain was blind.

Oh God! that he had died that night—The Madman of the Mines.

He stood and stared, his eyes were wild, and filled with deadly light;

A moment, and his golden hair—had turned to snowy white.

He tried to speak, instead there came, one most unearthly yell;

One moment, changed his young life—from a Heaven, to a Hell.

We tried to take him from the scene, we tried to take him home;

He'd only say, "I'll wait awhile—I know that she will come."

And so we built a cabin there, and fixed it up quite fine;

It's called "The Home of Love and Tears—of The Madman of the Mines."

And there he's been awaitin', Friend, for nigh on twenty years;

Each day I bring him food, and sit, and watch him through my tears.

But he's growing feeble fast, his life is nearly done;

And soon he'll meet his Loved-ones, in that bright and happy Home.

And when he's gone, I'll pray to God, to find a place for me;

Unite us all in Heaven above, for all eternity;

Where Father, Mother, Sweetheart, Son, in Heaven joy will find.

My Friend, that ends the story of—The Madman of the Mines.

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