

**WHITE UPON BLACK; OR, SHORT  
NARRATIVES BY A DWELLER IN  
THE REGION OF WHITE CHALK OF  
HIS DESCENTS INTO THE REGIONS  
OF BLACK COAL**

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White upon black; or, short narratives by a dweller in the region of white chalk of his descents into the regions of black coal by George Newman

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**GEORGE NEWMAN**

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# WHITE UPON BLACK;

OR,

SHORT NARRATIVES BY A DWELLER IN  
THE REGION OF WHITE CHALK

OF HIS

DESCENTS INTO THE REGION OF BLACK COAL.

BY

GEORGE NEWMAN,

OF GRAVESEND,

AUTHOR OF POEMS, "AFFECTION'S ERIBUTE," ETC.

"Come out of your hole,  
Or else I will beat you as black as a coal."  
NURSERY RHYMES.

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ST. JOHN'S SQUARE, CLERKENWELL.

1884.

19855 . . .

## P R E F A C E.

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THE following correspondence forms an appropriate and sufficient preface to Mr. Newman's narrative.

His descriptive power comes from his simple language, and it will be an abiding satisfaction to me, in securing the publication, to have afforded to his neighbours and the public the same pleasure which I derived from my perusal of the MS. of this "Gravesend" author.

GEO. M. ARNOLD.

MILTON HALL, GRAVESEND.  
*1st February, 1884.*

137, MILTON ROAD, GRAVESEND,  
*22nd May, 1883.*

G. M. ARNOLD, Esq.

SIR,

As an apology for trespassing upon your time, kindly permit me to say I had not seen your "Life of Robert Pocock" until a few days ago, and I cannot forbear writing to thank you for the very kind reference to my poor Muse.

I have been much interested in the "Life of Pocock," which in some respects resembles mine. I was brought up as a botanist, and naturally take a great interest in

flowers. I have written in prose as well as in verse, and if you would like me to do so I will send you one of my prose MSS., to show that I have not confined myself wholly to the cultivation of the Muse.

Again apologizing for this intrusion, I beg to remain, with many thanks,

Your very obedient servant,

G. NEWMAN.

DEAR SIR,

I am much pleased with the prose narration of your visits to the great coal-mine of Cinder Hill. I should be pleased to preface it, and have it published, so that the public and your neighbours should have an equal opportunity of reading the interesting and well-expressed narrative. You will rejoice to hear that, at the request of the Editor of the *Journal of Botany*, the remains of "Pocock's Herbarium," in seven vols., have been handed by me to the Trustees of the British Museum, where they have found a honoured home.

Yours faithfully,

GEO. M. ARNOLD.

MR. G. NEWMAN.

137, MILTON ROAD,  
GRAVESEND.

G. M. ARNOLD, Esq.

SIR,

I hardly know where to begin in answer to your kind note. Your kind offer to preface my account of

“Coal-mines” seems to me an honour greater than my poor work deserves. I have never supposed it would do for publication, but if you think it would, and if any magazine editor will insert it, I will willingly give it to him with the understanding that he sends me a few copies when printed.

That is the only way in which it could appear, as (although I know I need not tell you) I cannot afford to bring it out in volume form myself.

I can safely say I never spent half a day’s business time in my life in writing anything, but it has been done by denying myself other recreation or enjoyment after business hours,

And remain, sir,

With best thanks,

Yours very obediently,

G. NEWMAN.





## WHITE UPON BLACK.

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### COAL.

"Gregory, o' my word, we'll not carry coals. No; for then we should be colliers."—*Romeo and Juliet*, Act. i. Scene 1.

THERE seems nothing inviting in the word COAL, and to the major part of mankind nothing lovely is associated with the term. On the contrary, it is blackness personified, and lies hid in its caverns of darkness and gloom. And yet most of us can recollect sitting in days gone by—when even youth was young—watching the tiny jets of gas as they flickered and fluttered between the bars of the old-fashioned grate, and conjuring up forms and figures and faces among the glowing fuel in the long winter evenings; but the young days, alas! too soon were gone, and all the associations connected with them. Later on many of us can remember the days of early manhood when we came home, responsive to the inner call as dinner-time approached, with freshened appetites, stimulated by the savoury fumes from the kitchen, in which the hidden energy of coal consumed bore so prominent a part; but even *then*, apart from these reminiscences, coal in the abstract, obedient servant that it is, never claimed a niche in our affections. Never, till within the last few years, had I

any idea of the vast undertakings of which coal is the object; the wonderful ingenuity, the immense capital, or of the courage, skill, and perseverance required to furnish the material with which to secure warmth and comfort in winter, to cook our meals; and to keep in motion the vast and varied machinery of this busy nineteenth century.

In the early summer of 1875 I was asked to accompany two of the children of a deceased relative to Cinder Hill, near Nottingham; and while there I became acquainted with the practical working of a coal-mine.

The friend at whose house I was staying was a farmer, and, as he lived close to the mine, was intimately acquainted with the manager, and, indeed, with nearly all the *employés*. On my expressing a wish to see the mine, he at once asked the manager (Mr. Vardy) for permission, which was readily and kindly granted; and as the latter would be from home on the following day, he told his deputy<sup>1</sup> (Mr. Rigley) that he might take me down and show me all I wished to see.

So far everything being propitious, it was arranged that the descent should be made at six o'clock on the following morning; and, true to his time, the deputy was in waiting before the clock struck. Being Whitsun-week the mine was not at work, and there were only three men going down with us—the stable-man, the furnace-man, and another in attendance on the deputy to see that all was right in the mine. My friend, Mr. Stapleton, having resolved to accompany us, brought out a couple of old coats and hats, with which we

<sup>1</sup> The proper designation of a man holding this post is, I believe, deputy-underviewer.