

**DEEP DOWN: A
TALE OF THE
CORNISH MINES**

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Deep down: a tale of the Cornish mines by R. M. Ballantyne

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R. M. BALLANTYNE

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1944

THE BROTHERS OF THE COAST

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Deep Down

A Tale of the
Cornish Mines

BY

R. M. BALLANTYNE

Author of "The Coral Island" "Ungava" &c.



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PREFACE

It is a matter of importance to an author that the object of his work should be understood. Let it be understood, then, that this book has been written, *not* with the view of giving a complete description of the mines, the fishings, or the social condition of Cornwall, but, for the purpose of exhibiting, as graphically as may be, some of the most interesting and picturesque scenes, incidents, and facts, connected with mining life in the west of that county.

To Cornishmen who may do me the honour to peruse these pages, I have to prefer the request that they will bear in remembrance that they read a book which is not a record of facts, but a story founded on facts, in the composition of which I have, to a considerable extent, transposed time, place, and circumstance, as the exigencies of the case required—always, however, endeavouring to convey a truthful impression both when treating of fact and playing with fancy. Particularly would I beg of them to believe that I have endeavoured to avoid giving unintentional offence, and that, in the names used and the characters introduced, no one now alive is directly pointed at, although some of my friends of St. Just will probably recognize incidents that occurred to themselves, saddled on the shoulders of some of the actors in the tale.

I take this opportunity of returning my grateful acknowledgments to the Messrs. James of Botallack for their kindness in affording me every opportunity of acquiring information in regard to their celebrated mine, and to the various "captains" who have guided me so often and so obligingly through the dark labyrinth of the regions "under ground". I have also to thank those kind and hospitable friends in Cornwall who have aided me in my efforts; especially Mr. N. B. Downing of Penzance, to whom I am deeply indebted for his friendly assistance and useful introductions.

R. M. BALLANTYNE.

1868.

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DEEP DOWN

CHAPTER I

BEGINS THE STORY WITH A PECULIAR MEETING

NECESSITY is the mother of Invention. This is undoubtedly true, but it is equally true that Invention is not the only member of Necessity's large family. Change of scene and circumstance are also among her children. It was necessity that gave birth to the resolve to travel to the end of the earth—of English earth, at all events—in search of fortune, which swelled the bosom of yonder tall, well-favoured youth, who, seated uncomfortably on the top of that clumsy public conveyance, drives up Market-Jew Street in the ancient town of Penzance. Yes, necessity—stern necessity, as she is sometimes called—drove that youth into Cornwall, and thus was the originating cause of that wonderful series of events which ultimately led to his attaining—but hold! Let us begin at the beginning.

It was a beautiful morning in June, in that period of the world's history which is ambiguously styled "Once-upon-a-time", when the "Kittereen"—the clumsy vehicle above referred to—rumbled up to the "Star Inn" and stopped there. The tall, well-favoured youth leaped at once to the ground, and entered the inn with the air of a man who owned at least the half of the county, although his much-worn grey shooting costume and single unpretentious portmanteau did not indicate either unusual wealth or exalted station.