

A SON OF THE FORGE

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649064946

A Son of the Forge by Robert Blatchford

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ROBERT BLATCHFORD

**A SON OF
THE FORGE**

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A SON OF THE FORGE

BY
ROBERT BLATCHFORD

LONDON
A. D. INNES & CO.
BEDFORD STREET

—
1894.

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TO

MY OLD FRIEND AND COMRADE

JOSEPH NORRIS

LATE SERGEANT 103RD FUSILIERS

PKS-702444, 400

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A SON OF THE FORGE.

CHAPTER I.

HOME.

I WAS born at Halesowen, in the Black Country. My father was a chain-maker, and I worked with him from the earliest time I can remember until the day of his death. He was an ignorant man, violent in temper, and given to drink. Every Saturday he would come home half mad, and would thrash me without mercy. Sometimes he would thrash my sister also ; but he never neglected me, and I was glad to get into the coal-hole, or any other place of refuge, when I heard his step.

“

Many a time my sister crept upstairs to the garret to console me after he had waled me all over with the buckle-end of his strap. She used to sit on my bed, and take me in her arms and cry over me; and if she could find a crust of bread or a cold potato she would bring it to me, pressing me to eat it, while she whispered such words of hope as her simple heart could prompt.

We had no mother. She died in child-bed, and I only know of her from my sister's telling. My sister described her as a little frail woman, silent, and submissive to my father, though his evil ways and evil passions rendered her very unhappy. Only once did my mother resent his violence, and then not on her own account.

It was one Sunday night, while my sister was still a child. My mother, who was very religious, sat at the table reading her Bible, when my father came home in one of his most fiendish humours, and cursing her for a canting hypocrite, threw the Bible into

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