

ascended until I arrived at a smooth, flat, perpendicular space without the slightest projection, which extended some five or six feet above my head. This, however, was soon overcome by cutting several niches for my feet about a foot apart, and I rose higher and higher. While digging out the upper one my blade struck against a metal substance and brought to light an old-fashioned iron handle strongly welded to a flat iron plate.

Fate was kind, I thought: it was the one thing necessary to assist my ascent. It was rusty and deeply encrusted with earth, but it afforded sufficient hold for my purpose, and I clutched it, thinking of it only as a means of deliverance from a wet skin at least. As I did so, the flat block to which it was attached moved and the soil broke away in all directions, revealing a surface about a foot and a half square, confined at the sides by heavy iron bands studded with strong bolts. My surprise was great, but nothing convincing entered my mind. Its whole appearance denoted great age the rust and discoloration suggesting many restful years in its novel grave.

Another wrench to prove if the handle would bear my weight showed me that the rusty bolts were all loose in their rotten sockets, from which a heavy pull would part them, and perhaps hurl me into the roarin sea. Simultaneously with this thought came another, and I realized to what I was clinging. My heart gave a great jump as the stories I had heard rushed through my mind—"Abel's Cape," "Divining rods," "Moonlight diggings," "Kidd's Treasure." Yes, the old-fashioned handle was attached to a wooden chest. Time and moisture had weakened the boards and loosened its bindings, and here it was reserved for me to find.

I tore away the iron from the rotten wood, and let it fall with heavy splashes into the sea, disclosing the interior of the chest filled with objects that made me giddy with joy. I hardly realized I was standing on almost nothing, but knocked away the dirt above it and clung heavily to its lid while investigating its contents; delicious thoughts flying through me, the like of which until now had been