

pitted steadfast courage and hardened muscle against the vast primeval forces of untrammelled Nature. Laura felt deeply stirred as she glanced at them. They were simple men, but they had faced and beaten roaring flood and stinging frost, caring little for the hazard to life or limb as they played their part in that tremendous struggle with axe and drill.

Suddenly Laura became conscious that Nasmyth, who held up a little box from which trailed a couple of wires, was speaking.

"Our last dollars bought that powder. Wish us good luck," he said.

Laura stretched out her hands for the box, and standing upon the rock shelf, with one shoe burst and her skirt badly rent, raised her voice as she had done in that spot once before.

"Boys," she said, "you have stood fast against very heavy odds. May all that you can wish for—orchards, oat-fields, wheat, and cattle—be yours. The prosperity of this country is founded on such efforts as you have made."

With a little smile in her eyes, she fitted in the firing-plug, and in another moment a streak of flame that seemed to expand into a bewildering brilliancy flashed through the spray of the fall. The flash of light was lost in rolling smoke and a tremendous eruption of flying rock that rang with deafening detonations against the side of the cañon. The smoke rolled higher, and still great shattered fragments came whirling out of it, striking boulder and shingle with a heavy crash, until the roar of the liberated river rose in tumultuous clamour and drowned all other sound.

A great foaming wave swept forward, washing high along the bank, and poured seething down the rapid. Shingle and boulder were lost in it. It drove on tumultuously, and a mad turgid flood came on behind. Then it slowly fell away again, and a man, clambering out, in