

trifle longer than its brethren we had already conquered. Blast after blast was put in, the cruelly crumbled sandstone quickly hoisted to the surface, and cast upon the pile of waste at the mouth of the opening. It might be just as well to remark here, that we, each and every one, had had a touch of the gold fever. We were not noticeably enthusiastic, to be sure. We knew that, in early days, the locality had been quite productive; and that, in all probability it still yielded much of the wonted precious soil. We oft and anon turned our eyes curiously upon the heavily laden buckets, as they ascended from the shaft. Just at this point, one of the more enthusiastic, went down to the bottom of the pit, and falling upon his knees peered closely at the rock, which had just been torn asunder by a heavy blast of giant powder. A shout of joy greeted us. We were told to descend the ladder and do likewise. It was not gold, however, that he had found. It was the eagerly sought for subterranean river. The indication of its presence was honest enough. By bending the head close to the rock, one could distinctly hear the rumbling of the waters. We were not far distant. Another blast or two would decide. We set to work with a vim that was astounding.

Boom! boom! The powerful cartridges rent the brittle stone into a thousand minute pieces. Crash. All hands ran to the edge of the opening. A loud rushing, roaring sound, as of a gigantic fall, accompanied the last explosion. The thin layer of remaining rock had been broken through, and the gurgling, rushing stream beneath exposed to view. It was a magnificent sight; this mystic river. I was the first to descend. The opening was a large one. I passed through, using the rugged edges of tough stone as a ladder. Darkness,

darkness. Nothing but darkness, and a frothing gushing river flowing out of and again into it. Only for a moment to permit the sun to smile upon it, and then as though ashamed of its own mighty self to rush headlong once more into the impenetrable darkness beyond.

Here, then, we had found our subterranean river. All that was necessary now, was to carefully explore its tunnel; map out its course; measure its length and flow; and locate some suitable place for an outlet in the valley, where, excellent use could and would be made of it, by parched and eager land-owners. So far, we had met with trifling, if any, difficulties. Our wits must now be put to their severest test. This underground stream very nearly filled its tunnel. It would be impossible to go down it in a boat; nor was it feasible to wade, or climb along the rocks. We held a consultation, forthwith. Verily, the only course, would be to tap the plains by sinking just such a shaft as we had then completed. We divided our little party into two. I was sent in charge of that division, which was to dig for the sunken channel in the prairie. Again we hurled bag and baggage, rod and gun; and, lastly, and more reverentially, transit and level into the cumbersome vehicles which had borne us into the mountains, and whose heavy iron tires had been well nigh rusted through with the heavy dew. Again, we rumbled over those time-worn pathways of the old pioneer miners make; whose gravelly surface crumbled musically a welcome at each advancing step of the sprightly little mountain mustangs. Once more we sallied forth from the rounded foot-hills, out upon the vast wilderness of scorching desert.

Our destination was the farmhouse of a not very prosperous, but exceedingly hopeful rancher; whose only want seemed to be that