

The Buried Treasure of Cobre

moving freely. At the farther end, at a distance of a hundred yards, it opened into a great vault, also hollowed from the rock and, as they saw to their surprise, brilliantly lighted.

For an instant, in black silhouette, the figure of Peabody blocked the entrance to this vault, and then, turning to the right, again vanished. Monica felt an untimely desire to laugh. Now that they were on the track of Peabody she no longer feared the outcome of the adventure. In the presence of the American minister and of herself there would be no violence; and as they trailed the archæologist through the tunnel she was reminded of Alice and her pursuit of the white rabbit. This thought, and her sense of relief that the danger was over, caused her to laugh aloud.

They had gained the farther end of the tunnel and the entrance to the vault, when at once her amusement turned to wonder. For the vault showed every evidence of use and of recent occupation. In brackets, and burning brightly, were lamps of modern make; on the stone floor stood a canvas cot, saddle-bags, camp-chairs, and in the centre of the vault a collapsible table. On this were bottles filled with chemicals, trays, and presses such as are used in developing photographs, and apparently hung there to dry, swinging from strings, the proofs of many negatives.