

strangest of all, and let us see how you like it. I don't ask you to believe it, because I know that when you put these sort of things into books people laugh, and talk of Baron Munchausen, and all that. I've read the Baron," he went on, noticing my look of surprise, "and many other books that you'd never give me credit for; but in a book this story I'm going to tell you would be impossible; and it's just *because* it seems impossible that it is true."

"So says Byron," interrupted I, speaking lightly, in order to dissipate the effect involuntarily produced upon me by the terrible emphasis of the man's tone and manner,

"I've read Byron too," he rejoined, "though you mayn't think it. That description of the sunset in Greece was always a favorite bit of mine.

"But I must get to my story. You remember how those two fellows robbed my tent, and how I fired all the six barrels of my revolver into them as they ran off? Well, it was just after that job that I shifted my tent away from the rest, thinking I'd be more comfortable by myself for a bit. You'll say this was rather venturesome, after I'd been robbed once already; but then, you see, these beauties that I fired at thought that they'd fairly cleaned me out. Nobody knew that I'd got lot more buried under a big gum tree some two hundred yards off; so the whole camp thought I was dry, and you may be sure that I did not undeceive them. Well, I moved my tent up to the tree where the gold was, and there I stayed; but I still stuck to my digging, to make up for what I'd lost. I got a middling lot of dust every day, but I took care to let nobody see more of it than I could help; so folks got to think I was down on my luck, and left off minding about me at all.

"One night I'd been working pretty late, and got chilled right through; and, though I rolled my blanket well around me after turning into my hammock, I couldn't get warm anyhow; and so I shivered away till I fell asleep. Then I fell to dreaming that I was in a trance, like some man I once read about in America, and that they thought me dead, and were going to bury me. I tried my hardest to move, or scream out, or something, but no good; and I heard the coffin-lid slap to, and the first spadefull of earth fall on it, and then I awoke.

"It was a fine bright morning, and through the opening of the tent I could see the sun shining, and hear the picks and cradles getting to work as usual. But my dream wasn't *all* fancy, for I felt as if I were bound down and couldn't move an inch; and yet it wasn't quite that either; it was more as if I had no substance left, but was all air and shadow. If ever a man felt like a ghost, I did then.

"Well, I didn't think of being frightened just at first; I felt more put out and foolish, like a man who's had a tumble, or splashed all over by a cart. It seemed so queer for a great strong fellow like me to be laid by the heels that way, and at first the thought of it almost made me laugh; so there I lay like a great log ever so long, listening to all the noises from the camp, till at last (about noon it must have been, by the sun) I began to feel hungry, and commenced looking very hard at my 'damper' and cold mutton, which lay upon a log t'other side of the tent. 'Well,' thought I, 'it's a queer thing for a man to be starved this way, with food before his eyes!' But the moment I thought it, something cold seemed to clutch my very heart and squeeze it all together. I tried to put it away by saying to myself, 'This'll go off soon,