

mountains ; but as I have already informed you, only there. Before reaching the plains, it had sunk into oblivion, as it were, becoming thenceforth subterranean ; entirely lost to view, wholly estranged from the sunny surface of the sun-burnt desert above. The thirsty farmers well knew of the existence of these streams, but their exact locality was not easy to find. This then was the task before us.

We set out one day in June, fully equipped with all the comforts necessary to luxuriant campers life. It was a beautiful spot, that in which we had pitched our tent. There, on the grassy slopes of the Mariposa, beneath the leaf-laden bows of majestic acorn-oaks ; the giant sequoia close besides ; there, amid the wilderness of ferns and blossoming underbrush, the rocky borders of the romantic creek on the one hand, the rugged hills on the other, sat we down to dream. Aye, dream is the word. No work could have been half so pleasurable. No toil so light, as was our daily labour of scrambling over these rugged sun-bleached hills, peering here and there, into every nook and crevice ; in hopes of finding some strange hole, some mystic sink, wherein the sought-for quantities of water might be expected to leave its picturesque way on the surface of the ground, for a more dark and dismal down below. Not over a half mile below us, the stream became no more ; not, however, to disappear into a gigantic hole, as one might expect, but to gradually, for the last quarter of a mile, soak in little by little, as though some freak of nature had replaced the ancient solid rocky bed with one of sponge or sponge-like matter. Beyond this, the water vanished from sight. The pathway of the stream still remained, and extended on out of the hills, across the plains many miles further, until it finally kissed the

ripple of the San Joaquin. This pathway, or gulch, was put into requisition during the winter months, when the rain-falls became so heavy as to completely choke up the under-ground tunnel, and render the surface conductor necessary. Our duty was to locate the precise spot where the stream disappeared ; if possible, trace its course, and thus find a suitable place to dig an outlet in the plains below.

This gradual sinking of the water over a long stretch of gravelly bed, would have discouraged the ordinary mind into concluding that there really was no under-ground stream, in the usual acceptance of the word. That, more probably, the water becoming dispersed, spread itself about, over a larger territory, thus losing its defined limits, and becoming mere seepage below. One of our adventurous spirits, however, suggested that we strike a point just below the finish ; dig a vertical shaft ; and, in plain words, explore.

Tearing ourselves away from the peaceful repose of noon-day camp life, where, buried in the friendly shade of a mass of mighty breaks, some of us had busied our minds with anything but scientific thoughts, we shouldered arms and instruments, and sallied forth to the chosen spot. The first turn of the spade found for us naught but poor success. The water was just beneath the surface, and apparently diminished in flow, showing that it had indeed spread about and lost its right to the title of stream. This was, however, peculiar only to this particular spot. We went a little farther down. For many feet, we found no trace whatever, of the wandering rivulet. Down, down, down, fifty feet beneath the surface. The bottom of our pit had passed through a number of changes, from gravel to rock, from rock to gravel. We had now found a layer of rock, which seemed determined to resist our efforts for a