

* THE LITTLE GOLDEN DOOR *



One stormy night, to my utter consternation, I realized I had lost my way, and was wandering blindly in a steep mountainous region bordered on all sides by formidable precipices. The knowledge was appalling, the situation fraught with such peril, that hardy traveller as I was, I shuddered with fear, nevertheless the fierce determination that instantly took possession of me to save myself, overcame every other emotion, and led me to follow what seemed an extra narrow bridle-path, but which on further progress, I found as great a peril as any I was trying to escape, on account of its being liberally strewn with sharp pieces of rock, detached from the massive boulders by the torrential rains.

Peal after peal of thunder, each one seeming to my unstrung nerves louder and more racking than the last, rent the air, the wind blew a regular hurricane uprooted trees and swept them before it like playtoys, and worse still, overpowered me and compelled me to continue my way on knees already feeling the effects of many a fall since I had entered on the deceptive path.

Still as this narrow path was my only salvation, I dragged myself along by great efforts, keeping as close to the mountain as possible, especially, when the blinding flashes of lightning, that lit up the inky darkness revealed the cruel precipice ready to devour me as it had already trees, rocks, and everything else hurled into its capacious mouth by the furious elements. . . . Every moment I thought would be my last. . . Suddenly a steady bright light shone in the sky, and its reflexion disclosed a mountain peak, not far distant, and wonder of wonders, in its hollow a little golden door.