

the earth put on her flaming funeral shroud. Whenever we could, we felt the rock at our side, or under our feet; and with our previous acquaintance with the way, having been over it so often before, we knew within a few yards where we were.

But now we had to pass a shaft, where the footway was not more than three feet wide, which yawned under us some two hundred fathoms deep. There was no chain, or rope, or railing around it, or security of any kind. It was useless to strain our eyes to try to catch a gleam of light; we might as well have kept them closed, for the great gloom was as perfect as that in the house of the dead. This shaft was the most dangerous part of the way; and I cannot tell the reader how slowly we passed it. Sometimes a loose stone, disturbed by our movement, would roll into the void, and go sounding down the dreadful depths, until we could hear it no longer. Thus we stole onward, with the thought of home, wife, and children in our minds. Could we cross this cruel gulf hope would revive, for then the ladders would almost be in a direct perpendicular line to the top. At last we got over, and Uncle Will and his guide were again ascending. We felt now comparatively safe. This was the regularly-used way up and down the mine, and we might, perhaps, soon meet some one with a light; and if not, we felt almost certain of reaching the top. Up we go, up, up, ladder after ladder, ladder after ladder, each round bringing us nearer to liberty and home. By-and-bye, when looking upward, we saw a speck of light like a distant star in the firmament, and as we ascended higher, it became larger and larger, until its cheering rays shot down upon the ladder steps, gladdening our hearts more than the sweetest music. Grasping the last ladder, we felt the tears of thankfulness stealing into our eyes; and reaching the topmost round, and stepping into the dazzling light, we had to wipe them away with the sleeve of our flannel dress. We were saved by the guiding hand of our Father out of the darksome dungeon into the blessed air and glorious