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Life or Death.

A TRUE STORY OF THE NATURAL BRIDGE OF VIRGINIA.

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HE scene opens with a view of the great Natural Bridge, in Virginia. There are three or four lads standing in the channel below, looking up with awe to the unheven rocks, with the almighty bridge over their everlasting abutments, built by the Great Architect when the morning stars sang together. The little piece of sky, spanning those measureless piers, is full of stars, although it is midday. It is almost five hundred feet from where they stand, up these perpendicular bulwarks of limestone, to the key-rock of the vast arch, which appears to them only the size of a man's hand. The silence of death is rendered the more impressive by the little stream that falls from rock to rock, down the channel. The sun is darkened, and the boys have unconsciously uncovered their head, as standing

in the presence-chamber of the Majesty of the whole earth. At last this feeling begins to wear away—they begin to look around them. They see the names of hundreds cut in the limestone abutments. A new feeling comes over their hearts. "What man has done, man can do," is the watchword, while they draw themselves up and carve their names a foot above those of a hundred full-grown men, who had been there before them.

They are satisfied with this feat of physical exertion, except one whose example illustrates perfectly the forgotten truth, that there is no royal road to intellectual eminence. This ambitious youth sees a name just above his reach, a name that shall be green in the memory of the world, when those of Alexander, Cæsar, and Bonaparte, shall rot in oblivion. It was the name of Washington. Before he marched with Braddock to the fatal field, he had been there and left his name a foot above all his predecessors. It was a glorious thought of a boy to write his name side by side with that of the great Father