

month, men who would not move a muscle if the earth were to explode suddenly like a bomb, but there was not one of them who was disposed to have an hour of his time wasted. This had been their own fear in coming, for, after all, even Lloyd sometimes got on a wrong track. It was possible that this young fellow might have got on to some old chimera—a scheme perhaps for irrigating the Sahara and turning it into fruit-farms. This tunnel idea wasn't as bad as that. Even the silent and morose individuals breathed a sigh of relief.

Allan, for his part, had not expected to take his listeners captive in a sentence, and he was not at all dissatisfied with the effect produced by his announcement. He might have paved the way for it, but he had thought it better to sling it at them as though from a catapult. This seemed the best way to attack the inevitable phlegm of such an audience. It was essential that he should arrest their attention. And after all, despite their impassive countenances, he felt that he had succeeded. The arm-chairs creaked. Some of the men leaned forward, one or two of them lit fresh cigars. Mrs. Brown sat grasping her ear-trumpet. Mittersteiner, of the New York Central Bank, whispered something into the ear of J. D. Morse, the "Copper King."

And Allan proceeded, with increased courage and self-confidence.

The tunnel would have its entrance on the coast of New Jersey, some seventy miles south of New York; it would touch Bermuda and the Azores and the North of Spain, and end in France on the Biscayan coast. Both Bermuda and the Azores were necessary as oceanic stations from a technical point of view; with the one American and two European openings, they gave in all five starting points for the construction of the Tunnel. They were of the utmost importance also from the point of view of the profits. Bermuda would absorb all the passenger-traffic and the postal service from Mexico, the West Indies, Central America and the Panama Canal, while the Azores would have all that from South America and Africa. These two oceanic stations would become as important centres of the world's traffic as London and