

reported by a prospector, only yesterday returned from the Hoosall River district. So eager were they in their discussion as to whether coal so far from the railway could possibly be worth the working, that neither of them took the slightest notice of the strident blast of a siren somewhere close at hand, or heeded the way in which men were running to cover, and backing horses away from the neighbourhood of the foundations, which were being dug for the shipping offices. Some one shouted in a warning fashion, but that even made no difference to the two men who were so busy wrangling on the best way to make a fortune.

Then a second blast rang out, there was a furious rush of the few remaining workmen from the danger area, a few seconds pause, followed by a violent trembling of the ground.

"Earthquake?" gasped Bob Townsford, turning pale.

"No, blasting; look out!" shrieked the other man, making a frantic dash along the street, as a tremendous bellowing roar filled the air with sound, and was accompanied by clouds of smoke, dust, and debris.

Bob Townsford started to run also, but he was not so nimble as his friend, nor yet so alert. He had not gone a dozen steps, before a huge rock fragment hurtling through the air, caught him by the side of the head, bowling him over into a heap of refuse, and leaving him senseless, while a shower of dust and stones pelted down upon him, half-covering him as he lay.

The locksmith had done his work, and gone, and Elgar was in a state of fuming impatience waiting his