

agitated, as by the swift passage of some ponderous body. Then there came a crash and a concussion, which nearly deprived him of his breath and his senses at the same time. Springing to his feet, Arthur essayed to pass out from his resting place, but was horrified to find that he was barred in, at the distance of less than six feet in front, while on either side he could only move a few steps before he became tightly wedged between the cliff and something unyielding as itself. Looking upwards, he could only discern a thin line of sky; and at once the horrors of his situation broke upon him with all their alarming reality. A huge mass of rock had fallen from the cliff and buried him in a living tomb. Cold as was his narrow chamber, the perspiration burst from his forehead, and trickled down his face, while his imagination became busy with the future of his sojourn in this dismal den, including the closing scene—the wasting body and the fluttering breath.

O, it were horrible to think of his dying thus—that his bones should whiten on that rock—that no eye should rest upon his remains until the last dread trump should call the dead to life!

By degrees his courage revived, and having once stared death full in the face, he began to look with more calmness on the matter; and at length resolved to wait patiently for the return of daylight. Wearily, however (for although he might have slept but for the chill that crept over his limbs, he had enough to do to keep his blood in circulation), the hours of the night wore on. What was his delight, therefore, on awakening, or rather shaking off a sort of stupor that fell upon him towards morning, to perceive the daylight struggling through the crevices of his narrow prison-house. As soon as he could see with sufficient distinctness, he commenced a close inspection of his narrow domicile, in hope of discovering some hole or fracture in the rock, through which he might escape, but a brief examination convinced him that his hopes in that direction were groundless.

Instead, however, of giving himself up to despair, as one less fruitful in resources, or less self-reliant might have done, Arthur sat down to consider what he might yet do. Many plans of

escape presented themselves, all of which were rejected as impracticable, without the aid of more muscular or mechanical power than he had at his command. At last the idea occurred to him, that the floor of his prison might not be solid. Springing once more to his feet, he commenced removing the leaves and loam, and at the distance of about a foot from the surface, he came to the rock, and to his inexpressible delight, discovered that the floor was composed of stones which could be easily removed. After a good deal of labor, he succeeded in raising one of them; another followed, and another, until he had cleared a passage four-fifths of the way, as he judged, to the outer edge of the fallen rock. He now began to congratulate himself upon the success of his experiment, and already looked upon his escape as certain, when, alas! he discovered that the only stone that still stood between him and freedom was wedge-shaped, with the edge turned inward, so that it could not be drawn towards him; and as it was held in its place by other stones behind it, and those that were too large to be removed on each side, there was no possibility of getting it out of the way. It was now mid-day; his nails had been torn, and the ends of his fingers worn off with his work, and he felt incapable of making any fresh exertion, and for the first time a feeling of despair took possession of him.

But his was not the mind to give up while a chance of escape remained. After eating a small piece of meat, which he happened to have in his knapsack, and slaking his thirst as best he could, with the scanty water that trickled down the rock, he began to work on the side of the cavern opposite to that in which he had been excavating, but met with no encouragement. After that he tried the front, but with no better success.

At length, weary and dispirited, he threw himself on the ground, and gave himself up to torturing thoughts, until sleep—blessed sleep—came to his relief, and he wist not that the long shadows were darkening the valley, or that the golden sheen was withdrawing from the mountain tops, or that night had settled down on his mystic abode. How sad to think of the waking!