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LAW NOTICE.—Alexander H. Coffroth has resumed the practice of the Law in Somerset, Office in Mammoth Building. feb. 25, '75.

DR. J. K. SHILLER has permanently located in Berlin for the practice of the profession—Office opposite Charles Kreisinger's store. sept. 22, 1875.

DR. S. SHOMAKER, tenders his professional services to the citizens of Somerset and vicinity. Office in residence, the door west of the Mansion House.

DR. E. M. KIMMEL will continue to practice Medicine, and tenders his professional services to the citizens of Somerset and surrounding country. Office at the old place, a few doors east of the Glade House.

DR. WM. COLLINS, DENTIST, Somerset, Pa., Office in Cantner's Block, up stairs, where he may at times be found prepared to do all kinds of work, such as filling, regulating, extracting, &c. Artificial teeth of all kinds, and the best material inserted. Operations warranted.

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DR. A. G. MILLER, after twelve years' active practice in Shanksville, has now permanently located at Somerset for the practice of medicine, and tenders his professional services to the citizens of Somerset and vicinity.—Office in his Drug Store, opposite the Herbert House, where he can be consulted at all times unless professionally engaged. Night calls promptly answered. dec. 13, 74-y.

JOHN BILLS, DENTIST. Office in Colflesh & Noff's new building, Main Cross Street, Somerset, Pa. may11

ARTIFICIAL TEETH!! J. C. YUTZY. DENTIST *DALE CITY, Somerset Co., Pa.* Artificial Teeth, warranted to be of the very best quality. Little like and handsome, inserted in the best style. Particular attention paid to the preservation of the natural teeth. Those wishing to consult me by letter, can do so by enclosing stamp. Address as above. feb22-72

HILL HOUSE, DIAMOND, SOMERSET, PA., JOHN HILL, Proprietor. The proprietor is prepared to accommodate guests in the most comfortable and satisfactory manner. The traveling public and permanent boarders furnished with the best of food, accommodations.—The tables will continue to be furnished with the best the market affords. Large and commodious stabling attached. jan12

THE SOMERSET HOUSE. Having leased this magnificent and well known Hotel property from Mrs. E. A. Flick, the undersigned takes pleasure in informing his friends and the public generally that he will spare neither pains nor expense to make this house all that could be desired. Accommodating clerks and obliging waiters will attend to the wants of guests, and the table will at all times be laden with the best the market affords. Mr. G. H. Tayman may at all times be found in the office. D. LAVAN. may3

DIAMOND HOTEL, STOYSTOWN PA. SAMUEL CUSTER, Proprietor. This popular and well known house is at all times a desirable stopping place for the traveling public. Table and Rooms first-class. Good stabling. Hacks leave daily for Johnstown and Somerset. march.

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HOMES FOR ALL. I have for sale, on terms within the reach of every sober, industrious individual, houses, lots, farms, timber lands, mineral lands, building lots, &c., in different parts of this county, in parcels of from one-fourth of an acre up to 1,000 acres. Titles warranted. Terms—one fifth in hand and the balance in ten equal annual payments, properly secured. None need apply who is not of sober and industrious habits. Call soon, as some of the properties will be for rent if not sold soon. feb24 D. WEYAND

ADMINISTRATOR'S SALE. Estate of Sarah A. Moon, late of Lower Turkeyfoot Tp., deceased. Letters of administration having been granted to the undersigned, by the proper authority, on the above estate, notice is hereby given to all persons indebted to said estate to make immediate payment, and those having claims against said estate will present them duly authenticated for settlement and allowance. THOMAS BEAM, feb22 Administrator.

Banks.

JOHNSTOWN SAVINGS BANK, 120 CLINTON STREET, JOHNSTOWN, PA. Chartered September 12, 1870. Deposits received of all sums not less than one dollar. Present rate of interest six per cent. Interest is due in the months of June and December, and if not withdrawn is added to the deposit thus compounding twice a year without troubling the depositor to call or even to present the deposit book. Money loaned on real estate. Preference, with liberal rates and long time, given to borrowers offering first mortgages on farms worth four or more times the amount of loan desired. Good references, perfect titles, &c., required. This corporation is exclusively a Savings Bank. No commercial deposits received, nor discounts made. No loans on personal security. Blank applications for borrowers, copies of the rules, by-laws and special law relating to the bank sent to any address requested. TRUSTEES.—James Clooser, David Dibert, C. R. Ellis, A. J. Hawes, F. W. Hay, John Lowman, I. H. Lapsley, Daniel McLaughlin, D. J. Morrell, Lewis Pitt, H. A. Boggs, Conrad Supper, Geo. T. Swank, James McMillen, James Morley and W. W. Walters. Daniel J. Morrell, President; Frank Dibert, Treasurer; Cyrus Elder, Solicitor. nov24.

J. O. KIMMEL & SONS, BANKERS, Successors to Schell & Kimmel, SOMERSET, PA. Accounts of Merchants and other Business People Solicited. Drafts negotiable in all parts of the Country for sale. Money loaned and Collections made. jan11

Cambria County BANK, M. W. KEIM & CO., No. 236 MAIN STREET, JOHNSTOWN, PA., Henry Schnatle's Brick Building. A General Banking Business Transacted. Drafts and Gold and Silver bought and sold.—Collections made in all parts of the United States and Canada, interest allowed at the rate of six per cent. per annum, if left six months or longer. Special arrangements made with Guardians and others who hold moneys in trust. april 1875.

JOHN DIBERT. JOHN D. ROBERTS. JOHN DIBERT & CO., BANKERS, CORNER MAIN AND FRANKLIN STREETS, JOHNSTOWN, PA. Accounts of Merchants and other business people solicited. Drafts negotiable in all parts of the country for sale. Money Loaned and Collections Made. Interest at the rate of Six Per cent. per annum allowed on Time Deposits. Savings Deposit Books issued, and Interest Compounded Semi-annually when desired. A General Banking Business Transacted. Feb. 10.

Tobacco and Cigars, WHOLESALE AND RETAIL, J. H. Zimmerman, Main Cross St., Somerset, Penna. The best of cigars of different brands, manufactured by himself, of the choicest of tobacco.—These cigars cannot be excelled by any in the market. One of the best stocks of chewing tobacco ever brought to Somerset. Prices to suit the times. jan26

New Firm. SHOE STORE, SNYDER & UHL Having purchased the Shoe Store lately owned by H. C. Beerits, We take pleasure in calling the attention of public to the fact that we have new and experienced workmen, and that we will spare neither pains nor expense to make this house all that could be desired. Accommodating clerks and obliging waiters will attend to the wants of customers, and the table will at all times be laden with the best the market affords. Mr. G. H. Tayman may at all times be found in the office. D. LAVAN. may3

Boots, Shoes and Gaiters BOTH OF Eastern and Home Manufacture as can be had anywhere. We also will have on hand constantly a full supply of SOLE LEATHER, MOROCCO, CALF SKINS, KIPS, AND LINING SKINS Of all kinds, with a full line of Shoe Findings. The HOME MANUFACTURE DEPARTMENT will be in charge of N. B. Snyder, Esq. Whose reputation for making Good Work and Good Fits is second to none in the State. The public is respectfully invited to call and examine our stock, as we are determined to keep goods as good as the best and sell at prices as low as the lowest. SNYDER & UHL.

Miscellaneous.

APPLETONS' AMERICAN CYCLOPÆDIA NEW REVISED EDITION. Entirely rewritten by the ablest writers on every subject. Printed from new type, and illustrated with several thousand engravings and maps. The work originally published under the title of THE NEW AMERICAN CYCLOPÆDIA was completed in 1863, since which time the wide circulation which it has attained in all parts of the United States, and the signal developments which have taken place in every branch of science, literature, and art, have induced the editors and publishers to submit to an exact and thorough revision, and to issue a new edition, entitled THE AMERICAN CYCLOPÆDIA. Within the last ten years the progress of discovery in every department of knowledge has made a new work of reference an imperative want. The movement of political affairs has kept pace with the discoveries of science, and their fruitful application to the industrial and useful arts, and the convenience and refinement of social life.—Great wars and consequent revolutions have occurred, involving national changes of peculiar moment. The civil war of our own country, which was at its height when the last volume of the old work appeared, has happily been ended, and a new course of commercial and industrial activity has been commenced. Large accessions to our geographical knowledge have been made by the indefatigable explorers of Africa. The great political revolutions of the last decade, with the natural result of the lapse of time, have brought into view a multitude of new men, whose names are in every one's mouth, and of whom every one is curious to know the particulars. Great battles have been fought and important sieges maintained, of which the details are as yet preserved only in the newspapers or in the transient publications of the day, but which ought now to take their place in permanent and authentic history. In preparing the present edition for the press, it has accordingly been the aim of the editors to bring down the information to the latest possible dates, and to furnish an accurate account of the most recent discoveries in science, of every fresh production in literature, and of the newest inventions in the practical arts, as well as to give a succinct and original record of the progress of political and historical events. The work has been begun after long and careful preliminary labor, and will be the most ample resources for carrying it on to a successful termination. None of the original stereotype plates have been used, but every page has been printed on new type, forming in fact a new Cyclopædia, with the same plan and compass as its predecessor, but with a far greater pecuniary expenditure, and with such improvements in its composition as have been suggested by longer experience and enlarged knowledge. The illustrations which are introduced for the first time in the present edition have been added not for the sake of pictorial effect, but to give lucidity and force to the explanations in the text. They embrace all branches of science and of natural history, and depict the most famous and remarkable features of scenery, architecture and art, as well as the various processes of mechanics and manufactures. Although intended for instruction rather than embellishment, no pains have been spared to insure their artistic excellence; the cost of their execution is enormous, and it is believed they will find a welcome reception as an admirable feature of the Cyclopædia, and worthy of its high character. This work is sold to subscribers only, payable on delivery of each volume. It will be completed in sixteen large octavo volumes, each containing about 800 pages, fully illustrated, with several thousand Wood Engravings, and with numerous colored Lithographic Maps. PRICE AND STYLE OF BINDING. In extra Cloth, per vol. $ 9. In Library Leather, per vol. 8. In Half Turkey Morocco, per vol. 8. In Half Russia, extra gilt, per vol. 8. In full Morocco, antique, gilt edges, per vol. 10. In full Russia, per vol. 10. Fourteen volumes now ready. Succeeding volumes until completion, will be issued once in two months. **Specimen pages of the American Cyclopædia, showing type, illustrations, etc., will be sent gratis on application. First class canvassing agents wanted. Address J. H. WILLIAMSON, Agent, No. 108 Sixth St., Pittsburgh, Pa. dec8

Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. (PITTSBURG DIVISION.) 75 MILES THE SHORTEST LINE BETWEEN PITTSBURGH and WASHINGTON CITY! This is the ONLY DIRECT ROUTE TO WASHINGTON CITY AND BALTIMORE. Persons purchasing Tickets by this Road TO BALTIMORE, PHILADELPHIA, NEW YORK, BOSTON, &c. Have the privilege of visiting WASHINGTON CITY FREE. Pullman Palace Cars, Air Brakes, and all Modern Improvements. BAGGAGE CHECKED THROUGH TO DESTINATION. 2 THROUGH EXPRESS TRAINS From Depot, cor. Grant and Water Sts. AT 9:45 A. M. DAILY, " 8:00 P. M. DAILY, (Except Sunday.) For time of Local Trains, see Pittsburgh Daily Papers. Save many hours time by patronizing the "SHORT LINE." Central Ticket Office, 55 5th Ave., Pittsburgh, Pa. E. K. HYNDMAN, Gen. Sup't. CONNELLSVILLE. November, 10, 1875.

CURLING, FOLLANSBEE & CO. Merchant Tailors, And Manufacturers of Gent's, Youth's and Boys, Fashionable Clothing and Furnishing Goods. 121 Wood Street, corner Fifth Avenue, PITTSBURGH. apr1.

SLATE ROOFS. Those who are now building houses should know that it is cheaper in the long run to put on Slate Roofs than tin or shingles. Slate will last forever, and no repairs are required. Slate gives the purest water for cisterns. Slate is fire proof. Every good house should have a Slate roof. The undersigned is located in Cumberland, where he has a good supply of Peachbottom & Buckingham SLATE for roofing—the very best article. He will undertake to put Slate Roofs on Houses, public and private, spires, &c., either in town or country at the lowest prices, and do warrant them. Call and see him or address him at his Office, No. 110 Baltimore Street, Cumberland, Md. Orders may be left with NOAH CASEBEER, Agent, Somerset, Pa. Wm. H. SHIPLEY. April 4th, 1875.

What Shall it Be.

[A rich man who had no children proposed to his poor neighbor, who had seven, to take one of them, and promised, if the parents would consent, that he would give them property enough to make themselves and their other six children comfortable for life.]

Which shall it be? Which shall it be?
I looked at John, John looked at me,
And when I found that I must speak
My voice seemed strangely low and weak:
"Tell me again what Robert said;"
And then I, listening, bent my head—
This is his letter:

"I will give
A house and land while you shall live,
If, in return, from out your seven,
One child to me for aye is given."
I looked at John's old garment worn;
I thought of all that he had borne
Of poverty, and work and care,
Which I, though willing, could not share;
I thought of seven young mouths to feed,
Of seven little children's need,
And then of this.

"Come, John," said I,
"We'll choose among them as they lie
Asleep." So, walking hand in hand,
Dear John and I surveyed our band;
First to the cradle lightly stepped
Where Lillian, the baby, slept,
Softly the father stooped to lay
His rough hand down in a loving way,
When dream or whisper made her stir,
And huskily he said: "Not her!"

We stooped beside the trundle bed,
And one long ray of lamplight shed
Athwart the boyish faces there,
In deep so beautiful and fair.
I saw on James' rough, red cheek
A tear undried. Ere John could speak,
"He's but a baby, too," said I,
And kissed him as we hurried by.
Pale, patient Robbie's angel face
Still in his sleep bore suffering's trace.
"No, for a thousand crowns not him!"
He whispered, while our eyes were dim.

Poor Dick! bad Dick! our wayward son—
Turbulent, restless, idle one—
Could he be spared? Nay; He who gave
Bade us behold him to the grave;
Only a mother's heart could be
Patient enough for such as he;
"And so," said John, "I would not dare
To take him from her bedside prayer."
Then stole we softly up above,
And knelt by Mary, child of love.
"Perhaps for her 'twould better be,"
I said to John. Quite silently
He lifted up a curl that lay
Across her cheek in a wilful way,
And shook his head: "Nay, love, not then!"
The while my heart beat painfully.

Only one more our eldest lad,
Trusty and truthful, good and glad,
So like his father. "No, John, no!
I cannot, will not, let him go."
And so we wrote in a courteous way
We could not give one child away;
And afterward toil lighter seemed,
Thinking of that of which we dreamed,
Happy in truth that not one here
Was missed from its accustomed place;
Thankful to work for all the seven,
Trusting the rest to One in heaven.

"CHISPA."

THE MYSTERIOUS NOTE.

CHAPTER I.

In 1865 I was working on the south fork of the Yuba, at a point two or three miles below Sierra City. I was at work alone in a ravine making down into the river. Half a dozen other miners had cabins not far from mine, and were at work in gulches or on bars in the rivers. All of our cabins were on the south side of the river, and mine was at least half a mile further south than any of the others, which carried it well up toward the main ridge or range of hills walling in the stream.

One day at noon I went home to get my dinner, and on opening the door of my cabin saw in the middle of the floor a small scrap of white paper folded in the form of a note. I thought this not a little curious, as my door was secured with a padlock of peculiar construction, and no man could have entered unless through the "cat-hole" at the bottom of the door.

As I took up the note I saw that there were three spots of blood on it. The note alone was sufficient to startle me, but when I saw the blood a chill ran through my veins, and I said: "Here is some villainy afoot! Somebody has been murdered, perhaps!" My next thought was that some of the boys might be playing a trick on me. Instead of at once opening the note to read it I began looking into all corners of the room; even stooped and peeped under my bed.

No one was to be seen. My cat, old "Chispa," was the only living thing in the place. He came purring about my legs, as was his habit when I came home; though often he was out on his own hook, hunting and prospecting about for he was not one of your home-staying, lazy kind of cats.

After speaking a kind word or two to old "Chispa" I opened the note, and as I read began to open my eyes. The little note—merely the folded leaf of an ordinary memorandum book—read as follows:

June 9, 1865.

This is to inform the person into whose hands it may come tha I am in the old Maldanado shaft. By the breaking of a ladder, I fell to the bottom of the shaft about three days ago. I am almost starved. For God's sake come to my assistance at once.

JACOB PRITCHARD.

When I had read the note—scrawled with a very dull lead pencil—I hardly knew what to think. My brain was in a whirl, and I made no headway in trying to think. As I turned the paper in my fingers I observed that the blood come off it and stained my hand; I saw, in fact, that it was quite fresh.

This astonished me not a little, "for," thought I, "if he fell into the shaft three days ago and hurt himself how does it happen that the blood on this note is still fresh and almost warm?"

My next thought was this: "If he is in the bottom of the Maldanado shaft—more than a hundred feet below the surface—as he says, how could he leave me this note?" Clearly the thing was improbable, and I could make neither head nor tail of the business. Who, Jacob Pritchard was I did not know. I did not remember having ever heard his name."

I sat down on a stool and tried to think. "Here," thought I, "is a man in the bottom of a shaft, where he has been for three days, and where he is now supposed to be starving, who leaves a note on my cabin floor asking me to come and get him out. There is blood—fresh blood—on this note, which makes things still worse!"

I sat and thought and thought till things got so mixed up in my head that I was no more capable of forming an opinion in regard to the business than a born idiot.

I talked to the cat—to old "Chispa"—about it, and the old fellow seemed willing to assist me, and he got upon my knee and snuffed at the note as though he knew that the cause of my trouble lay in that. He then jumped down and running to the corner of the room and brought me the remains of a little crippled squirrel which he had lately caught, as I could see, just as if he thought I might be in trouble on the grub question, and as much as to say: "Here, old pard, eat and be merry?"

"Chispa, old fellow, you mean well," said I, but your kind of grub is not to my mind."

"Chispa" looked disappointed when he found that I could see nothing in the "wreck" of the little squirrel. He seemed to be of the opinion that this ought to bring all my troubles and doubts to an end.

The more I pondered on the matter the more it puzzled me. At one time I thought that a man might have been murdered and thrown into the shaft, and that his murderers might then have left the note at my cabin. This would not do, however, as, if the murderers wished the body of their victim to be found, there was no need of throwing it into the shaft alive, and not wishing him to perish there might have left the note for me to find. There appeared to be some little sense in this; yet I had no desire to go to the shaft alone; it might be a trick to get me out to murder or maltreat me. Again, there was no reason for trying to entice me to any particular spot, as I was living alone at my cabin and might easily be caught there at any time.

Being unable to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion in regard to the mysterious affair, I made up my mind to see some of the "boys" on the river and lay the matter before them.

Having got four or five of the neighbors together, I produced the note, told them where I found it, and asked what they thought of the "business."

They all said at once that the note was an "infernal lie on its face."

Said they: "If the man is in the shaft how in the thunder is he able to leave a note on your table telling you so?"

This was rather more than I had myself thought of in the start. After much talk we all concluded that there was in it a trick of some kind; however, we would see it out.

We determined to visit the shaft named, the whereabouts of which was well known to us all, we having seen in scores of time. It was decided that each man should be armed with a six-shooter and that we should take with us two or three candles and a long rope; also a canteen of water and some food, though these last-named articles were mainly intended for our own comfort and sustenance. Happen what might, we would thoroughly examine the shaft.

About 3 o'clock in the afternoon all was in readiness and we set out—set out on what seemed one of the wildest of wild-goose chases.

The Maldanado shaft is situated (as many of my readers well know) on the steep ridge of a high and steep hill, nearly a mile south of the north fork of the Yuba; also it was—which is not so well known—about half a mile above where my cabin stood. The shaft was sunk by General Maldanado, a man well known to all the early silver mipers of the Comstock lode, but now some years dead. The shaft was sunk on a small but very rich vein of gold-bearing quartz. The ore extracted was taken down to the river on the backs of pack-mules over a long, zigzag trail, and was there worked in arastras. At one time there was quite a village of Mexicans the river at the place where the ore was worked—a village in which fandangos, fights, and romantic love affairs were of frequent occurrence. The shaft at the mine was sunk after the old Mexican fashion. It was about eight feet by fourteen in size, and in it ladders of notched poles were used instead of rope and windlass or other hoisting apparatus, the miners walking up and down the poles and carrying the ore poised on their heads in rawhide sacks. These poles were placed in the shaft in such a position that they formed a zigzag line, like a worm fence, from top to bottom, there being a little platform on which rested the foot of one ladder and the top of the next below. Thus, in descending the shaft, one passed from platform to platform, and from side to side of the opening until the bottom was reached. When the news of the discovery of silver in Washoe reached Maldanado he abandoned this mine—which was hardly paying expenses at the time—and crossing the Sierra Nevada Mountains came to the Comstock lode, and brought that segregated portion of the Ophir mine which was thereafter known, as the "Mexican," and which proved so immensely rich. All of his Mexican followers left Sierra County, Cal., and the gold mine there was completely deserted, the buildings at and about the shaft were crushed in by the heavy falls of snow which occur in that elevated region, and soon all about the place went to ruin.

Such was the old Maldanado shaft at the time I found the note on my cabin floor; nothing was left at the place but a few shakes about the blacksmith's forge and a section of a shake roofe that had fallen across and covered about half the mouth of the shaft. It was a lonesome, dreary old place.

The nearer our little party came to the old shaft the more certain we all felt that we were on a fool's errand; for how was a man in the bottom of that shaft to send a note stating the fact to a place full half a mile away! It was nonsense to think of such a thing; yet there we were toiling up the steep face of the mountain for the purpose of finding the man—the man calling himself Jacob Pritchard. Several times we halted and laughed at the ridiculousness of our mission.

CHAPTER II.

AT THE SHAFT.

Arrived at the tod of the hill and at the mouth of the shaft, one of the men said: "Well, here we are! Now to make known our presence to the man in the shaft—to Jacob Pitchard!"

"Well, call down to him," said another, laughing; for now that we stood at the mouth of the shaft, we felt quite silly, and half expected to see some one peep out from behind a tree or rock and "raise the laugh" on us.

She man who had first spoken stooped over the shaft and shouted; "Jacob are you down there?"

Almost instantly there came up from the shaft a faint cry that was half moan, half shout. We all heard it, and were thrilled and startled.

Most of the faces about the shaft suddenly grew pale. We all stood silent for some seconds, when some one said: "Sure as fate there is a man down there!"

"Who are you? Who is down there?" again called out our men, stooping close down to the dark mouth of the shaft.

"Jacob Pritchard?" was the answer that came up the shaft. The name was so distinctly uttered that all heard it, and hearing it all turned a shade paler than before.

"It beats the devil!" said one of the men, breaking a somewhat protracted silence. "That was the name signed to the note, and here is the fellow still in the shaft!"

"Ask him about the note," said one of our party.

"Did you—write a note—and send it out—asking for help?" cried our spokesman, stooping over the shaft and sending the message down in sections, much as the sailors on rivers call to each other from vessel to vessel.

"I did," was the prompt response from the bottom of the shaft, and again we all gazed at one another in amazement.

"It is either the devil himself or the biggest liar in the mountains!" said Bill Wallace.

"How—could you—send out—a letter?" asked Bill.

"Get me out. I can't tell now!" came from the dark in a vexed and gasping voice.

"He is right," said Bill: "we ought to be ashamed to stand here questioning the poor devil when there are enough of us to to eat him up without either salt or pepper! Light a couple of candles and get the rope ready. Two of us will go down and see how he can be got out. Some of the bottom ladders must be broken, or he could come out himself—that is, if his legs are both sound. Mike Murphy, you are stout and active, come with me and we'll go and see that fellow."

"B—but h—how could he bring up the, the letter?" stammered Mike, shaking his head and looking anything but ready to descend the shaft.

"Blow the letter!" said Bill, "he'll tell us all about that when we get him out. Are we to keep the poor devil there all day while we stand here parleying like cowards?"

"I—I'm not afraid to go down there, ov course," said Mike, "but we all know that this here is a queer kind of business, from first to last—that is, as far as we've got in it."

"Well, then, Mike, you and I go," said Bill. "Just drop the end of the rope into the shaft and we'll work it along to the bottom as we coon it down the ladders. Take your candle Mike."

Mike took the candle into rather an unsteady hand, and then waiting until Bill was down a few feet, got upon the top of the notched pole and began descending backwards, as a crawfish travels. As his head was descending below the level of the shaft he halted and cast a lingering look on all the bright world he was leaving. He looked like a man whose hours on earth are numbered. His pride carried him where his legs did not want to go.

Slowly and steadily the two men descended the shaft, slipping from notch to notch in the long slender poles. As we stood at the edge of the wide opening and eagerly gazed down into it we could distinctly see our two companions and mark their slow descent by the flickering light of their candles. Now they were passing over the west side of the shaft; soon they turned and were seen coming back to the east side, on which we stood; anon they took another ladder, and again they moved to the west. Each time when they thus crossed the shaft they came to a little platform on which rested the foot of one ladder, and from which started the top of that next below; and so they toilsomely zigzagged their way down, the light of their candles growing smaller till all we saw resembled two little stars.

Finally the two twinkling stars went over to the west side of the shaft and stopped side by side. A murmuring, as of the voices of persons in conversation, then came up the shaft.

"Pay out more rope!" shouted Bill from somewhere down in the bowels of the earth.

The rope was slowly run out.

"All rights! That's enough!" cried Bill.

Again a hum of voices was heard, then came the order from Bill: "Haul up; haul slowly and carefully! Slowly—slowly—slowly! Hold! Hold on now; that will do!"

There was more buzzing of voices, then Bill called out: "Hello, up there!"

"Hello!" cried we.

"I am going to—bring him up—the ladders," said Bill, sending his message up in sections, so that it would not become tangled on the way. "I shall leave—the rope around him. Keep the slack hauled up—but don't pull hard. Do you understand?"

"All right!" cried I. "We know how it is."

They then started up the ladders. They halted to rest at each platform. As they crossed the shaft in their slow ascent we could see, after a time, that Bill was ahead, keeping the rope properly taut; that Mike was "boosting" in the rear, while a dark lump was moving upward between the two. Gradually they worked their way up, resting and climbing.

All this time we at the top of the shaft were on the tip-toe of expectation, and were puzzling our brains in regard to what manner of man we should, shortly see brought up out of the "depths."

Finally, as they approached the top, we were able to catch occasional glimpses (over Bill's shoulders) of a pale face and a black, bushy beard. Then, when they reached the last ladder, sloping up toward us, there was added to the picture a pair of black and eager-looking eyes—hungry-looking is probably the better expression.

We at the top became so much excited that we came near "yanking" the man up to the top of the shaft at a single haul—would have done so, perhaps, but for the warning cries from Bill, whom we were in danger of dislodging from the notched pole on which he had a precarious footing.

The man was at last safely landed at the top of the shaft. He was a stranger to us all. A tall young fellow, apparently about 36 years of age—stood before us. He wore a black felt hat and ordinary miner's garb. The man was weak, and tottered as he opened the noose at the end of the rope, dropped it to his feet, and stepped out of it.

Suddenly he sank upon his knees. We were about to go to his assistance, thinking he had fainted, when he raised his hands, and we saw, by the motion of his lips, that he was doing a thing we did not often see done in the mines.

We took off our hats and stood by in silence.

When the young man attempted to raise from his knees he fell over on his side, and came near falling into the shaft again, for he had fainted. Some water from the canteen revived him, and a spoonful of brandy soon gave him strength to stand, and even to walk slowly, supported on either side by one of our men.

We were all dying of curiosity, and as we moved down the side of the mountain toward my cabin we could not refrain from asking a few questions, weak and sick as the young man looked.

"Your name is Jacob Pritchard?" asked one of the men.

"It is," said the stranger.

"Did you write this note?" said I, exhibiting the scrap of writing I had found.

"I did," said the man; "but there is blood on it! How came that? I am not hurt!"

"It is as I found it on my cabin floor, where you left it," said I.

"Where I left it! How could I?" said the young man giving me a reproachful look.

"Well," said I, "that is what I want to know—and you all the time in the shaft!"

"Was it really brought to your cabin?

"Of course; how else would I have got it?" said I.

"It is a miracle!" cried the young man.

"But how could you send the note up out of the shaft?" asked one of the men.

"The story is too long to be told now; besides, what you want to know is so simple—I might say so silly—that you will be inclined to laugh at me when I tell you. But when I am rested I will tell you all."

This was gasped out a little at a time and so feebly that we all saw that the young man was in no condition to tell a long story, such as his promised to be. Bill, who felt proud of his part of the business of the rescue, swore that the man should not say a word until he had swallowed something in the shape of food and till he felt himself able to speak.

As the two men assisted the stranger down the steep face of the mountain—much of the time almost carrying him—some of us fell behind to discuss the words he had let fall. But we could make nothing out of anything he had said.

After we had reached my cabin, and after the stranger had partaken of such food as we thought suitable for him in his weak state, we asked him to tell us his story.

"I ought to ask you to tell me your story," said he, "as there are things that puzzle me not a little, and which you ought to be able to explain. I think you have said you found my note here on the floor of your cabin?"

"I have said so," I replied, "and cannot understand how it was left there."

"The circumstance cannot astonish you more than it does me," said the young man. "The hand of God is in it! When you shall have heard my story you will probably be able to tell me how the note was brought to you; indeed, that is a mystery which it will remain with you to explain—it is what I do not understand."

"Then it will never be explained," said I.

"We don't know that," the young man said.

"But I will tell you all I know about this curious business!"

"Good! Let us have it!" said all hands.

CHAPTER III.

THE STRANGER'S STORY.

"Well," said the young man, "to begin; I have been mining about Downieville—up the river along Sailor Ravine and off that way—for some months making little more than grub. I had often heard of the shaft abandoned by Maldanado at the time of the Washoe silver excitement, and I thought that where so much gold had been found some must have been left. I managed to get a description of the location of the shaft from a man who had not the slightest idea of the use I intended making of the information he was giving me. Three days ago I stole out of Downieville and came up here alone, determined to descend the shaft and examine the vein for myself.

"I was provided with a candle and matches, and when I found the shaft, after a long search, I unhesitatingly entered it and began to descend by means of the notched poles. I never once thought it possible that any accident could happen to me.

"All went well till I was on the last ladder from the bottom. I was about the middle of the pole or ladder when, without the least warning, it broke in the centre and I fell a distance of about ten feet, to the bottom of the shaft. I was not at all hurt. The upper part of the ladder fell across my thigh but did not hurt me. I felt at once that I was completely trapped. The pole had become quite rotten, besides the middle notch had by accident been cut a little too deep.

"In falling my candle was extinguished, but I had a good supply of matches and soon lighted it again. Holding the candle aloft I found to my dismay that to the first platform and to the foot of the nearest ladder the distance was nearly twenty feet. To this height on all sides I was shut in by a smooth and solid wall of rock.

"I next looked about the bottom of the shaft. The space was about eight feet in width by fourteen in length.—it having been evacuated in this shape in order to give room for planting the ladder at a proper angle. Only half the bottom was dry ground. The east side of the shaft, into which the vein dipped, had been sunk about three feet lower than the west side, and contained over two feet of water.

"When I had made these observations I again looked aloft and carefully examined the walls on all sides. They afforded not a chink by means of which I could hope to climb to the platform above. I planted two pieces of the broken ladder against the wall, climbed to their top, and again looked for chinks in the rock in which I might gain a hold for my fingers and toes. All was solid and smooth.

"I then placed one piece of the ladder against the wall, and, carrying the other, climbed up and tried to plant it upon the first section. I could not make it stand, and to have attempted to climb it, even thought it had stood, would have been folly, as it was quite vertical. I tried planting its base in some of the notches in my first section, but they were not deep enough, and I could not make it stand. When I stood my first section against the shaft at a smaller angle I could plant my second in the notches, but then it would not reach higher than within six or eight feet of the platform I wished to gain.

"All this time my candle was stuck into a bit of clay at the bottom of the shaft. It was fast being consumed, which I could not afford, therefore I blew it out and sat down in the dark. My feelings may perhaps, be imagined, but I cannot describe them. I wanted to think—to do some good strong thinking—but my thoughts and my brain seemed to spit around in a circle, and all I did was to repeat over and over the one word, 'Lost! lost! lost!' Lost was all I could say—all I could get my brain to comprehend.

"I lay down and rocked myself to and fro on the ground, not remaining still for a moment, save when I paused occasionally to gaze up at the little square of light that marked the top of the shaft. Once in thus tossing about I struck my head against the wall of the shaft. This gave me an idea that I stopped for a time to consider; it was that I might at least dash out my brains against the rocks when there seemed to be nothing else left to do.

"This did me some good and I began to think again. It appeared to me that I had seen something floating in the water in the other part of the shaft during the time my candle was burning. I tried to remember what it was. There were several objects. They were not bits of wood or bark, but something else—just what I could not reccollect. This bothered me so much that I determined to light my candle and see what was in the water. I found two dead rabbits—all bloated and green—three or four small striped squirrels, one tolerably large gray squirrel of a burrowing kind, and half a dozen mice.

"All these were partly decayed, but I considered that it might yet become necessary for me to eat them; therefore I fished them out and placed them in a corner of the dry part of the shaft, where I could find them if my candle was all gone when the time came that I must eat them. This done I blew out my candle and again lay down to roll and toss, to gaze at the speck of day far above me and groan.

"Some one might pass that way and hear me. The moment this thought came into my head I arose, and, leaning against the wall and looking upward, I began shouting. Hour after hour I did nothing but shout. I shouted till hoarse and till I could hardly stand. Finally, completely exhausted, I fell asleep.

"When I awoke it was all dark above, and I said it is now dark—no use of shouting. When daylight came again I resumed shouting, and kept it up until I became very hoarse and weak, when I gave it up as worse than useless.

"I studied all manner of combinations to be made with my two pieces of ladder, and two or three times lighted my candle to look at them, but soon blew it out again, as I saw they could not be made any longer than they actually were. The bit of daylight above did not reach me, and did me no good except to let me know when it was day and when night.

"It is useless to prolong this part of my story. I soon suffered the pangs of hunger and thirst. It was not hard to bring myself to crawl to the water and drink of it, foul as it was, but it was hard to undertake to eat of the dead animals. Several times I attempted it but gave it up, feeling that the time had not yet arrived.

"I found myself taking naps at all times of the day and night. On waking from one of these short naps I thought I heard something on the bottom of the shaft—there was a slight rattling of the little quartz pebbles or broken fragments of rock. I listened for some time and finally became satisfied that there was something moving about in the shaft. I struck a match and lighted my bit of candle, when I saw near me a little striped squirrel. I was delighted to find that I had some live thing in the shaft with me. I advanced and took up the little animal, which