

men; and there too stood the engine that drew up the waggons and pumped out the water. Between the engine and the kilns the hillside had all been mined and exhausted; the quarrymen having gradually excavated their way southwards to where we saw the smoking chimney of the engine-house. We made for a point midway in the excavations; and great indeed was our delight, on climbing a long bank of grass-grown rubbish, to see below us a green hollow, and beyond it a wall of rock, in the centre of which yawned a dark cavern, plunging away into the hill far from the light of day. My companions rushed down the slope with a shout of triumph. For myself, I lingered a moment on the top. With just a tinge of sadness in the thought, I felt that though striking and picturesque beyond anything of the kind I had ever seen, this cavern was after all only a piece of human handiwork. The heaps of rubbish around me, with the smoking kilns at the one end and the clanking engine at the other, had no connection with beings of another world, but told only too plainly of ingenious, indefatigable man. The spell was broken at once and for ever, and as it fell to pieces, I darted down the slope and rejoined my comrades.

They had already entered the cave, which was certainly vast and gloomy enough for whole legions of gnomes. The roof, steep as that of a house, sloped rapidly into the hillside beneath a murky sheet of water, and was supported by pillars of wide girth, some of which had a third of their height, or more, concealed by the lake, so that the cavern, with its inclined roof and pillars, half sunk in the water, looked as though it had been rent and submerged by some old earthquake. Not a vestige of vegetation could we see save, near the entrance, some dwarfed scolopendriums and pale patches of moss. Not an insect, nor indeed any living