

## Chapter II - Through the Tunnel

THEY examined the door carefully, and at last found near the center of it a small hole. Twinkle put the golden key into this and found that it fitted exactly. But it took all of Chubbins's strength to turn the key in the rusty lock. Yet finally it did turn, and they heard the noise of bolts shooting back, so they both took hold of the ring, and pulling hard together, managed to raise the iron door on its hinges.

All they saw was a dark tunnel, with stone steps leading down into the mountain.

"No treasure here," said the little girl.

"P'raps it's farther in," replied Chubbins. "Shall we go down?"

"Won't it be dangerous?" she asked.

"Don't know," said Chubbins, honestly. "It's been years and years since this door was opened. You can see for yourself. That rock must have covered it up a long time."

"There must be something inside," she declared, "or there wouldn't be any door, or any steps."

"That's so," answered Chubbins. "I'll go down and see. You wait."

"No; I'll go too," said Twinkle. "I'd be just as scared waiting outside as I would be in. And I 'in bigger than you are, Chub."

"You're taller, but you're only a month older, Twink; so don't you put on airs. And I'm the strongest."

"We'll both go," she decided; "and then if we find the treasure we'll divide."

"All right; come on!"

Forgetting their basket, which they left upon the rocks, they crept through the little doorway and down the steps. There were only seven steps in all, and then came a narrow but level tunnel that led straight into the mountain-side. It was dark a few feet from the door, but the children resolved to go on. Taking hold of hands, so as not to get separated, and feeling the sides of the passage to guide them, they walked a long way into the black tunnel.

Twinkle was just about to say they'd better go back, when the passage suddenly turned, and far ahead of them shone a faint light. This encouraged them, and they went on faster, hoping they would soon come to the treasure.

"Keep it up, Twink," said the boy. "It's no use going home yet."

"We must be almost in the middle of Sugar-Loaf Mountain," she answered.

"Oh, no; it's an awful big mountain," said he. "But we've come quite a way, haven't we?"

"I guess mama'd scold, if she knew where we are."

"Mamas," said Chubbins, "shouldn't know everything, 'cause they'd only worry. And if we don't get hurt I can't see as there's any harm done."

"But we mustn't be naughty, Chub."

"The only thing that's naughty," he replied, "is doing what you're told not to do. And no one told us not to go into the middle of Sugar-Loaf Mountain."

Just then they came to another curve in their path, and saw a bright light ahead. It looked to the children just like daylight; so they ran along and soon passed through a low arch and came out into--

Well! the scene before them was so strange that it nearly took away their breath, and they stood perfectly still and stared as hard as their big eyes could possibly stare.