



The Great Stone of Sardis

Frank R. Stockton

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A double adventure written at the end of the 19th century, somewhat in the theme of Jules Verne's *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* and *Journey to the Center of the Earth*, telling of a submarine trip in the year 1947 to reach the North Pole and a project to examine the center of the Earth by boring a deep shaft. What they find at the core of the planet surprises the enterprising explorers. Since the book was set about 50 years into the future from when it was written, it includes some speculations on the advancement of science and technology, as the author explains in his introduction. A literary reviewer has said about this novel: "The conception was bizarre and grotesque enough, but the author developed it into a fascinating tale, incidentally injecting into it a good deal of drollery and fun. The tale shows that aspect of Stockton's genius that is inclined to the whimsical and chimerical, as well as the mechanical turn of his invention." Frank Richard Stockton (April 5, 1834 – April 20, 1902) was an American writer and humorist, best known today for a series of innovative children's fairy tales that were widely popular during the last decades of the 19th century and for his short story "The Lady, or the Tiger?" (1882) which has been called the most famous riddle mystery of all time. Stockton avoided the didactic moralizing common to children's stories of the time, instead using clever humor to poke at greed, violence, abuse of power and other human foibles, describing his fantastic characters' adventures in a charming, matter-of-fact way in stories like "The Griffin and the Minor Canon" (1885) and "The Bee-Man of Orn" (1887), which was published in 1964 in an edition illustrated by Maurice Sendak. "The Griffin and the Minor Canon" won a Lewis Carroll Shelf Award in 1963. His 1895 adventure novel *The Adventures of Captain Horn* was the third-best selling book in the United States in 1895.

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