greatly elated in contemplating our future comfort.  

The spring I brought my wife to Paradise the season had been very backward; the snow had held on late into May in every sheltered ravine and upon all the higher spurs of the mountains; and the chilly breezes from the white fields prevented vegetation from starting in the valleys below. Finally, however, on the 3d of June, I think, or it may be on the fourth, a warm wind from the south drew through the cleft in the mountains below us, and spring was begun. A very common and easily explained phenomenon ensued. The rising of the rivers consequent upon the melting of the snows was accompanied by a gentle and continuous fall of rain. It was the first rain we had had. All the snow that had fallen since the addition to my house, I had kept carefully swept from my new roof.  

My wife had already been with me several days, and was becoming accustomed to the solitude and strangeness. She had ceased to fear the winds, against which I explained to her I had managed so efficient a protection.  

During the whole of that day I had been out in the rain, working with the men to get things into such order that we might begin serious operations as soon as possible. When I got home, about six o'clock, I found my wife as usual. My supper was waiting for me. When we had finished I was surprised at my wife’s saying,—  

"Let us stay here by the fire this evening, Henry, instead of going into the other room."  

I acceded to her request, of course, though it seemed a little strange, as the sitting-room was much the pleasanter of the two. My wife had arranged there many charming little things, which gave quite an air of refinement to the rough interior. Half an hour afterwards, when some of the men came in to consult me about some work, my wife left us alone, but I noticed that she came back to the kitchen in a few moments. It was still raining outside when I let the men out; and on coming back from the door I said, thoughtlessly,—  

"Shall we go into the other room now, where it is cozy?"  

"I’d rather stay here, I think," she answered, with a queer expression, it seemed to me.  

"You are not nervous, Emma?" I asked.  

"A little, Henry," she admitted; so we remained in the kitchen. But I was tired and sleepy and soon went off to bed, leaving her sewing in the outer room. I was just losing consciousness when I felt her hand on my shoulder; I roused myself. She turned away as if she had been going to speak, but had thought better of it.  

"You’d better not sew any more to-night, Emma," I said; but she went back, leaving the door open; I could hear her adjusting the cloth on her lap from time to time as I went to sleep.  

I suppose it must have been an hour after that that I was again awakened, this time from a sound sleep, by my wife’s hand on my shoulder, and her saying, "Henry, Henry." "Well, what’s the matter?" I asked, somewhat irritated, I dare say. "I wish you’d come into the other room, Henry," she replied; "it’s nothing,—only I’m nervous to-night,—a little. It’s lighter and larger out there. You might lie on the lounge there." Not so comfortable as a bed, thought I; but I had not as yet got over feeling that my wife was my guest in Paradise, and was therefore more indulgent to her whims than, if I must confess it, I might otherwise have been.  

I wrapped a blanket round me and strode after my wife.  

The instant in which I entered the kitchen had not elapsed, when, with a sickening thud, the roof of the room I had left fell in. The green clay which coated the roof a foot in thickness had absorbed an enormous quantity of the rain which had been falling since morning, and without a warning, without a premonitory cracking of the timbers, the heavy mass had collapsed by its own weight. It is frightful to think of the fate that had been so near overtaking us. As I stood dazed and felt the cold damp air from the rain outside and smelt