

sure vein, which is always vertical, and inexhaustible, a bonanza of untold riches would be his. The thought was so stupendous that it threw him into a fever of excitement, at the very moment when steadiness of nerve and coolness of judgment were paramount to success. He felt that he had only to stretch out his hand and clutch his treasure.

He sat down on a piece of bowlder and wiped the perspiration from his forehead; yet the early morning air was chilly at this altitude. In a little while the man was himself again, cool and ready for action, pale, but resolute. He sprang to his feet and grasped his pick and gad. After a critical examination of the rocks, he placed the gad at a given point, and with a few well-directed blows, laid bare an inner cavity, disclosing a vertical mass of highly crystalline quartz, down the center of which ran a bright, yellow comb, or plate, an inch thick.

"By the Holy Mary, boys! I've won her!" he cried, which was taken up and echoed along the line.

That night, they all gathered at the "Hell an' Brimstone," in honor of the event. Hepworth was to treat handsomely all round. The proprietor of the "Hell an' Brimstone" was an Englishman, who had crossed the seas to retrieve his fortune. He was called "Foxy Jim," and had a habit of winking at one in a companionable sort of way, which was very grateful to a stranger. He would get into the confidence of the newly-fledged miner with amazing alacrity, and in less than a month, that miner would cut his eye-teeth and be shorn of his valuables, without even suspecting that his newly-found friend had a hand in his skinning. Foxy Jim did the honors of host in excellent style. He had a roaring fire, and plenty of that which was hotter and more to their taste. He "frothed his bumpers to the brim," and said:

"Gentlemen miners, we will first drink the 'ealth of the guest of the evening, the 'Horseshoe's bonanza king.' The bumpers were drained and three rousing cheers given with a will.

"An' now," cried a stalwart miner, lifting his glass high in air, "here goes for our 'Rose o' the Sierras.'" Every hat was lifted and every glass quaffed in decorous silence.

Leaning against the bar, aloof from the rest, stood a man with light, closely-cut hair, eyes of a nondescript hue, and a braggadocio manner. He looked blasé, and wore a profusion of showy jewelry. This was Wilson Edwards, a "crack professional," who had been loafing about the Horseshoe for more than a month. He broke the stillness with his drawling, insolent tones:

"I say, Hepworth! Blast my boots, if it ain't hard that all the luck should fall to you! A rich strike, and—you ought, at least, to give the rest of us a chance to git that pretty heifer o' yours."

"Take that back! or in one minute I'll send you to Hell!" shouted Hepworth, thrusting the muzzle of a six-shooter under his nose, while the miners shouted, with one voice:

"Rip out his heart!"

"String 'im up, an' let the crows pick his durned hide!"

"Riddle his white-livered carcass!"

Wilson Edwards knew the men meant business. He covered with fear, but made a ghastly effort to appear indifferent. As the seconds flew by, with his brain in a whirl, he could almost see the seething fires and smell the sulphurous fumes of the realm of the damned. The thought even came to him, that perhaps the devils would shout for joy to see him coming. Escape was impossible, with the bar at his back, the muzzle of a six-shooter held to his face, and eternity just ahead. In utter desperation, he finally gasped out: