

ment's fall of the storm, came three rapid shots, faint, but distinct, in the direction of the gorge. It was a signal for help. A dozen miners, led by himself, hurried down the gulch. A half mile from camp, rounding a sudden bend in the trail, they came upon a mule and his rider, and behind, still another mule and rider.

"Holy Moses, and the prophets to boot, boys!" cried the messenger. "get down there and look for her."

"Her?" they echoed, mystified and astonished.

"The woman, boys! You see, I overtook this chap," jerking his thumb over his shoulder, toward the rear mule, "with his woman and gal at the foot of the gulch, on his way to camp. The storm was already on us. I offered to pilot 'em in, and took the woman behind me, to lighten their load. A short distance back, she complained o' being faint. I told her to keep up heart, that we'd soon be there. As we reached this spot, I spoke to her again; she didn't answer. I put my hand behind me—she was gone. Holy Moses! In the racket of the storm, she'd slipped off and made no cry. She must ha' had a clean fall to the flood yonder, an' been swept down among the rocks."

The rider of the rear mule gave a low, despairing outcry. The trail here wound along the brink, which fell abruptly ten or twelve feet.

"Follow the messenger to camp," said Hepworth, to the stranger, "you can be of no use here, and would only hinder the work. I promise we will not come back without her. Joe, take him to my cabin."

The company of miners divided; six followed the trail, while the rest clambered down the rocks and searched the angry waters. A quarter of a mile below, two boulders jutting cut into the chasm and formed a little cove. Here,

a dark object was lodged under a ledge of rock. The pitiless waters had caught her and hurled her to her rocky bed. Every head was bared to the storm. A miner flung off his great-coat, and with reverent hands, they wrapped it about her and bore her back to camp. They buried her in the Horseshoe, under the shadow of a great pine. The husband seemed crushed by the sudden awfulness of his bereavement. He took no notice of his daughter, a grave, shy child of six, but spent the most of every day beside his dead. The little Keith, thus bereft, in a measure, of both parents, clung timidly to Hepworth, who petted and amused her in an awkward, but hearty, fashion.

They soon became inseparable companions. One morning, a month later, her father went, as usual, to his sad tryst. Not returning at noon, Hepworth went to call him. He found him half lying, half sitting, against the grave, his head resting on his arm. He thought him sleeping, and gently shook him. The form was rigid and cold. "Died of a broken heart," the miners said, and so the legend is told to this day. One head-board marks their resting place, on which is inscribed,

ROBERT AND MARY CONWAY.

The clock on the mantel struck the hour of midnight. Hepworth awoke with a start. The fire was chill upon the hearth, and the candle burned low in its socket. He had been asleep, living over again that terrible night and the weeks that followed, when life's responsibility first came to him, as he took the orphan to his heart and to such a home as he had to give.

In six months, Hepworth had taken enough gold from his mine to justify him in putting into execution his long-cherished plan.