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brought all this trouble to Silver City."

THE death of Hanson was the first that had occurred in Silver City, and no plot of ground had been set aside as a burial place. This contingency had been entirely overlooked now it was thrust prominently before the notice of the citizens. There was a gathering of this body to discuss the matter. It was Red Meekins who originated the plan that was finally adopted.

Peloo had stated an anticipated trouble in the future over such cases. "If we jus' bury Hanson promiscuous like, some feller's sure to come along an' jump the claim. S'posin' a feller finds mineral close by, he'll want to stake an' go minin', an' the town'll have to dig Hanson up an' plant him some other place."

"There ain't nobody found mineral up on Boulder Hill yet," Red offered, "though more'n a dozen fellers has prospected it. We best stake a claim of twenty acres an' just assign it over to everybody as dies in Silver City; then nobody can jump it. How's that, men?"

"Whose name'll you stake it in?" the constable asked. "You got to have a permit."

Red scratched his head reflectively. That was a puzzler. It was simply impossible to get, at present, the names of those who were going to die in the future. "Why can't we stake it in Dick Hanson's name? He's the first," he queried.

"That can't be did legally," Peloo declared judicially. "You can't stake in the name of a man that's dead, I know."

"I got a permit for forty acres left," Red declared presently. "I'll stake twenty acres on that, an' transfer it over to Billy—I mean the widder."

"That'll do fu'st rate," Peloo replied. "She can hold it in trust, so to speak. Then she'll know that nobody can never jump the claim an' make the town dig up her husband."

The difficult matter thus adjusted satisfied everyone present; in fact, Meekins was congratulated upon the brilliance of his idea.

ORDINARILY a funeral is unpicturesque in its dark solemnity; but the cortege that wound its slow way from the Trout House up Boulder Hill was strikingly out of the ordinary. There was not a single horse in Silver City, not a conveyance to be drawn by a horse if there had been one; so the body was placed on a rough prospector's toboggan, drawn by six train dogs. The ground being bare, progress was more than conventionally slow. Everybody in Silver City followed this unusual hearse; everybody except Meekins and Slack, who were up in the newly staked cemetery digging a long narrow chamber to receive the body of the man who had created this strong ripple of excitement in the camp.

When the procession reached the place of burial they found Meekins in a condition of distress. He had selected a spot that promised a sufficient depth of clay; but perverse rock had met his pick and shovel, and the party found him labouring with perspiring brow in a trench barely two feet deep.

Peloo took in the situation with one scrutiny. "Gen'leman," he began, "we got to try a fresh place. You never can make it without dynamite!" He turned with rough gentleness to Mrs. Hanson, adding, "I guess, lady, you'd best go back to the hotel, 'cause we got to dig again. It'll be jus' the same's your bein' here, 'cause we'll see that it's all correct."

THERE'S a danged vein of something hard here!" Red growled, as he swung his pick viciously in resentment of his failure. The steel point buried itself in a mass of decomposed

calcite and clung tenaciously as Meekins wrenched with his powerful arms at the handle. With a sudden loosening the pick broke away, carrying with it a slab of calcite, the snap of the strain throwing Red on his back. The mourners found it difficult to resist a smile of glee at Red's mishap.

The latter scrambled to his feet, grumbling at the cussedness of rock, and stood eyeing crossly the part he had uncovered. Suddenly he stopped and ran his hand over the spot; then in feverish eagerness with his hat brushed away the debris of earth. Holy smoke, Peloo!" he cried excitedly next instant, "Here's a solid vein of silver, four inches of it!"

In his excitement Red had forgotten, for the instant, his solemn occupation of grave digger; he was oblivious to everything but the delicate grey metal of precious worth that spoke of riches.

It wasn't in human miners' nature to resist the call of a strike, and, shameful to relate, the men who a minute before had stood in dejection about the shallow pit now hopped eagerly into its hollow, like boys scrambling for a handful of tossed pennies. Meekins, as author of this discovery, stood back wiping the perspiration from his forehead, listening to the enthusiastic confirmation of his announcement. He was the first to remember the somewhat sacrilegious divergence.

"Gen'lemen," he said, with impressive solemnity, "there's a lady present, and a—" Red checked his utterance, and coughed apologetically; he had been going to say "a body." He stepped out of the trench, followed shamefacedly by the others.

"Things is kinder diff'rent," Peloo said. "We're terrible sorry, Mrs. Hanson, that the depositin' of your late husband is not so agreeable as it should order be."

"Oh, please do—do—I don't blame you. It can't be helped; but—"

RED spoke up in relief to the agitated widow. "As Peloo said, lady, you best come along with me back to the hotel." He turned to the group of men. "So's to prevent any misunderstandin' over this strike an' our neglected dooty, this claim was staked on my permit, all legal an' accordin' to law, an' also I guess I'm the man that made the strike."

Red was interrupted by a bustle of discontent, a cough or two from the men; even Peloo turned and looked at him half angrily. But he continued in an uneventful voice:

"What I was goin' to say is, said stakin' was done for Mrs. Hanson, an' that goes. This claim, an' all the silver therein, belongs to the lady as has met with so much sorer. Gen'lemen, I jus' ask you to agree to that as witness."

Peloo held out his big paw, saying, "Shake Red!" He was followed by the others, each one grasping Red's hand in solemn appreciation.

"The transfer papers'll all be made out proper an' accordin' to law, an' the claim'll be recorded in due course," Red added with a great burst of technical expression.

The widow, overcome by the strain of waiting and this sudden alleviating good fortune, burst into tears. Peloo nodded to Red and then down the hill, and Meekins, going awkwardly up to Mrs. Hanson said with rough tenderness:

"I guess we'd best get back to the hotel. You're mighty tired."

The group of men watched the two go slowly down the hill on the little trail, and presently Peloo spoke. "Well, fellers, we got to finish this job. Red's—well, Red was always square; this don't count nothin'. An' square; as for the husband here, I guess it's about the fu'st an' las' time that he ever done that little lady a good turn."

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Printed notices containing further information as to conditions of proposed Contract may be seen and blank forms of Tender may be obtained at the Post Office of Oakville and Trafalgar and at the office of the Post Office Inspector at Toronto.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT,
MAIL SERVICE BRANCH,
Ottawa, 4th March, 1910.

G. C. ANDERSON,
Superintendent.



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