

The Weight of Metal

freeze me out I'll go to the man that grub-staked you and split. Then you'll get a quarter

staked you and split. Then you'll get a quarter share."

"You won't have no cause to do anything but take the same size share as I get, Red; that's if you keep your mouth shut. Now let's pack up and pull out," Peter answered quietly.

quietly.

Looking up suddenly as they packed, he saw Meekins transferring something from beneath his shirt to his blankets. "Hold on, Red!" he commanded angrily. "You ain't goin' to pack that silver out!"

"You bet I just am! Half of all the silver in that mine belongs to me, an' why can't I take them pieces?" Meekins retorted.

"'Cause first time you got drunk you'd show 'em an' blab. Throw 'em in the lake, Red."

Red."
"I'll see you dead first, Peter Wright, an'
then I won't!" Meekins swore.

A red flush of anger suffused the tawny face
of Wright; the blue eyes turned to steel gray.
It was the first time Red had felt the presence
of passion in his partner, and, facing the tall,
lithe Peter, so close that he felt the other's hot
breath, Red dropped his eyes to the big sinewy
hands, the fingers of which were stretched like
the talons of a hawk. An instinctive knowledge
flashed through his mind that unless he complied the fingers would be at his throat, and he
was afraid.

is afraid.

"You're carryin' things with a high hand, ite; but I don't want to have no row," Meeks said sullenly. He threw the pieces of silver rout into the waters of the lake.

"It's for your good as much as mine," Wright clared. "We can't afford to take no chance."

LEAN of stomach to the edge of starvation, the prospectors found their way back to the land of food. And for months Wright lived a season of apprehension. In his dreams he saw men and machinery on the Pink Eye taking out carloads of silver, each carload in itself a fortune. Meekins was a leech, a vampire, bleeding him for money; more than once, when under the influence of liquor, threatening to raise money, on the mine if Peter did not give it to him.

Some work had been done on the Dufferin aims and several letters written to Haskell to eep him quiet. In one of these Peter, as salve his conscience, wrote that it would give him y to be able to send Haskell a check for ten tousand dollars; that if he did strike it rich any time he would see that Haskell lost no oney over his mining venture. At this time eter really meant it. Daily he was making ental bargains with Haskell; figuratively tting aside a sum for him when he had cleaned pover the Pink Eye. ome work had been done on the Dufferin

the spring, when the ice of the rivers broke up with a remonstrative crackling like the of musketry, Wright and Meekins went up Montreal and staked the mine. Not until claim was filled in their joint names did ekins feel safe.

eekins feel safe.

The staking of the Pink Eye, and the samples own, caused a stampede to Gowganda. Prosectors rushed in, followed by capitalists look-g for plums with which to float huge com-

anies.

The Pink Eye was sold for a million dollars; we hundred thousand paid down when it was beard in instalments.

When Haskell read this item of mining news that make him gasp; then it made him think, and its thoughts left him suspicious. He had been wondering why he could not come face to face with Wright. And Peter's letters had been paring of detail in the extreme, tryingly apahetic as to the future development of the Dufferin claims. And the finding of this rich nine had come so quickly after Peter was levilly clear of Haskell.

"I believe Wright's a crook," he declared.

"I believe Wright's a crook," he declared. His lawyer was of the same opinion.
"I'll make him pony up if he's done me," askell declared.

askell declared.
But making Peter pony up shaped somewhat to an impossibility as Haskell sought for the scessary evidence. His lawyer sent an agent hark back over Wright's trail for the last veral months The agent returned declaring at all miners were a gang like unto the forty lieves; they were banded together to shield ich other in their dishonesty.
"It looks like a bad case," the lawyer adsed. "We'll have to wait till we get some idence."

That very day Haskell almost had his evidence. By chance he was introduced to Red Meekins in a hotel. Meekins was now a distinguished citizen, one of the new millionaires, a man to introduce other men to. He was also, at that moment, most certainly under the influence of liquor. Meekins, sober, could carry in his mind only the material benefit of Peter's having acted square by him; drunk, his mind missed the main point, and retained an unreasoning hatred of the man who had mastered him standing face to face in the bush.

IT had taken Haskell half an hour to get to the point where Meekins, leaning over the table, bleared at him and said, "Pete's a crook, Mr. Hashkell. He did you up right enough, an' you didn't know it. That's why I sold out—I was afeered of him. But if he'd tried his bunko on me, d'you know what I'd a done?" Red hung on his query and knitted his heavy red brows.

asked, trying to mask his eagerness in a subdued

tone.
"I'd a put Tom Gilder at him. He'd 've tied him up for forty years, an' then made Pete toe

him up for forty years, an' then made 'cce' the mark!"

Red brought his fist down as an accompaniment to a fierce oath. It came in contact with his glass; the fingers opened and closed on it; he gulped the liquor down. His mind flitted at a tangent, and he fell to cursing the whisky. He had forgotten all about the mine.

Haskell, unwisely too eager, said, "How did Wright do me up, Meekins? Tell me, and I'll make it worth your while."

Red stared at the speaker, a glimmer of intelligence stealing into his eyes. "Say, Mr. Haskell, anythin' I say when I'm full don't go, see? Let's take a walk. I feel sorter uncomfor able," he said.

It had filtered into Red's mind that Haskell

see? Let's take a for'able," he said.

It had filtered into Red's mind that Haskell was after evidence. That meant a suit, and a suit meant tying up the mine and stopping of

suit meant tying up the mine and stopping of payments.

Meekins started off tortuously for the desired walk. Haskell purposely lost him in the rotunda of the hotel. Then he sat down to recast the little scene that had just been enacted. The name Tom Gilder lingered with vivid insistence. If Gilder had the power to bring Wright to account, he must know all about the Pink Eye. Haskell determined to find this man Gilder.

DO I know Tom Gilder?" replied the first man Haskell asked this question of. "I should say so! Everybody does."
"Who is he?"
"Well, he's the limit, if you ask me. He was a pretty clever lawyer once. Is still, really; but now he's a kind of Sherlock Holmes in the mining game. If he got after any of my claims, I'd just tell him to go out and select what he wanted."

This vivid description of Gilder explained the great faith of Meekins and suggested to Haskell the wisdom of at least having an interview

with Gilder.

He found him in a dingy office sitting at a little oak desk against a background of leather covered law books. A pair of pale blue eyes, set so close together that there seemed scarcely room for the thin high-bridged nose, peered at Haskell with questioning intensity.

Haskell had come with the idea of sizing up Gilder; but he found himself almost at once explaining his position down to the minutest detail.

detail.

Gilder's first question was, "Have you any

Gilder's first question was, "Have you any papers?"

He read the letters of Peter Wright without comment. The contract he perused twice; then, peering over his glasses, said, "That contract isn't fit to govern the working plans of a pair of owls! But it cooks your goose in a hearing before a Judge."

Haskell gave a sigh of resignation. "Looks as if I'd got to stand for being done up by that crook," he said. "Haven't I got a chance to make him pay back that fifteen hundred he did me out of?"

The shadow of a mirthless smile played about Gilder's thin lips. "Would you be willing to take a hundred thousand dollars from Wright in settlement?" he asked.

Haskell gasped in astonishment. He stared into the placid eyes, so like little knobs of blue china, wondering if he had heard aright.

"I think I could make him settle for that amount," Gilder added.

"Then, by jinks, go ahead!" and Haskell slapped his knee as though he had stamped an agreement.

"My fee will be one-third of whatever amount."

we accept," Gilder advised.

"But you said I had a weak case; that a Judge would give it against me on that contract."

"You have no case at all, really," Gilder answered calmly; "but we're not going before a Judge, not if I can help it. You can leave the matter in my hands."

THEN Haskell went back to his somnolent village, and the subtle power of Gilder fell on Peter the unjust. Writs, and injunctions, and cautions against issuing of a patent for the Pink Eye, and summonses to appear for examination for discovery, blew upon him a veritable paper blizzard.

The English syndicate that had bought the mine was served with notice of Haskell's claim. And Wright soon received letters of strong protest from the British Isles, instead of Bank of England notes.

test from the British Isles, instead of Sendand notes.

Red Meekins drank to drown his sorrow and wept copiously. He assailed Peter morning, noon, and night to settle. "If this Gowganda boom busts," he wailed, "we'll never catch another sucker to buy the Pink Eye, an' if the vein peters out we'll be on our uppers again, an' what's worse our reputations'll be wore to a frazzle!"

what's worse our repair a frazzle!"

When Peter learned that Tom Gilder was after him, he knew it was a hold-up, a sure sign after him, he knew it was a hold-up, a sure sign after him, he knew it was a hold-up, a sure sign after him, he knew it was a hold-up, a sure sign after him him in the case on for hearing before the Mining

Commission.

But the Mining Commission said it was a case for the courts, and the court declared it was a question of evidence. Gilder proved that he had two men out in the wilds looking for witnesses who knew all about it; also intimated that Wright had bribed the witnesses to keep out of the way.

Gilder chuckled when the case was thrown over to the next sitting of the court, and went

Your Choice for 98c

Allover Embroidered Waist or Pure Irish Linen Tailored Waist

Our advice is to buy both, and send in your order to-day. We pay all mail or express charges. Simply send us the price of the waists, and if you do not consider them the greatest calues you have ever seen, return them to us at our expense and we will refund your money. Read the detailed descriptions carefully.





of allover embroidery used in making this waist

BELLASHESS&O 3 sizes 32 to 44 98c

Free Catalogue

