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PALE ALE

on the track with perhaps some ship-
 ping being done. Do you know where
 it is got?"

"No."
 "Shipped in! Bought by the syn-
 dicate behind the scheme! Two or
 three cars is plenty, for it is no sooner
 shipped out than it is returned again."
 "Great Scott!" ejaculated Carl, "and
 can't the people see through this
 thing?"

"The people are blind. The fields
 to them are mythical, dream-like,
 laden with riches for the picking up.
 Their mine is the reliable newspaper
 they gaze upon in their comfortable
 cushioned chair, pipe in mouth and
 feet upon the hearth. A few dollars
 will make them wealthy in the way
 they conjure up the picture. Hark!
 young man, fortunes were never made
 that way. Not by a long sight! Pin
 your faith to the man who starves out
 on the ridges and lone stretches with
 short rations and stony lodgings.
 Stake your dollars on the man who
 slaved and fought his way to the sil-
 ver veins. Then you have a miner,
 and a mine!"

Carl could not help but be convinced
 by the sincerity of Ridgeley's words
 backed by his reputation. "But there
 might be a chance," he said, despair-
 ingly.

"True!—there is a chance. Some-
 thing is often struck accidentally in
 a wildcat. Some of the finest mines
 to-day started out as that. However,
 that doesn't change the principle of
 the thing. Should they pan out rich,
 the stock is bought back and former
 shareholders never get it. First they
 water their stock; then they drain it
 dry when fertile spots are discovered
 and the syndicate reaps the harvest.
 Was your uncle rich, Mr. Glover?"

"Not before he made this strike."
 "Will you show me what has made
 him rich since?"

Carl could not answer, and Robert
 Ridgeley continued. "He hasn't got a
 dollar from his mines. Instead of that
 it has taken thousands of dollars to
 carry on the developing that has been
 done, and it will take thousands more.
 From where is the money coming?"

The question was as unanswerable
 as the last.

Despite his fixed resolve never to
 entertain the thought that his uncle,
 the uncle who had cherished his young
 life, was involved in a scheme of this
 nature, Carl felt the evidence was in-
 disputable. Everything pointed that
 way. The only saving element would
 be the belief of real value in the prop-
 erty. His uncle might have faith in
 it, might think the moneyed men, who-
 ever they might be, had the same opin-
 ion, and were backing him for that
 reason. This was the saving hope, and
 Carl clung to it. Jacob Graham must
 be the tool of others, being innocently
 involved.

"I judge," Ridgeley said, interrupt-
 ing the nephew's thoughts, "that it is
 a veteran acquirement."

"Yes, a reward for service—real ser-
 vice it was, Mr. Ridgeley—in the Fen-
 ian raid. As chance had it the farm
 happened to be right in the heart of
 the silver district. When one was
 struck in this vicinity, he waited.
 Mines sprang up all round, some of
 them now the richest. Then when
 there was no reason to doubt but his
 claims would carry the same riches as
 neighbouring ones, he came on to de-
 velop. You know the rest."

"Well, it is too bad, but I am afraid
 it is worthless. Wildcats are having
 a great outing this spring."

While they parted after leaving the
 mine, Carl said: "I am confident that
 my uncle believes his claims are
 wealthy. If they are not, he is un-
 wittingly being used as a tool."

"I have neither the ability nor the
 wish to discuss that point with you,"
 was Ridgeley's reply.

However, had Carl known where
 Freeman was at the time, and his
 errand, he would not have felt quite
 so sure. As it was, one explanation
 was given him later. A letter which
 Mong Loo had forgotten to give him
 in the morning was from the fore-
 man. He had suddenly decided to run
 down to see the uncle about some
 points concerning the third shaft, and
 would be back immediately.

(To be continued.)



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