



# ATHABASCA BILL

## CHAPTER I

### OLD MAN ARLO'S DOGS

**T**HE three Crawford boys, on their way home from school, paused as usual at Deerfoot Corner to listen to the deep-throated baying of old man Arlo's bloodhounds, and to peer through the narrow openings in the high staked-fence with the hope of seeing the bent, wizened old fellow out with the dogs, practising their trade of man-hunting.

It was always a mystery to the boys, that old man Arlo should devote so much time and trouble to the training of his two bloodhounds, since no one in the district ever needed their services in tracking down thieves, or finding runaways, for he lived in a miserable fashion, and was always pleading poverty, yet spent enough on his dogs to have maintained himself in decent comfort.

The baying was coming nearer—plainly the hounds were on the trail, so in order to avoid accidents, they swarmed up into the lower boughs of some roadside trees to see the fun. As a rule, especially if Ella were with them, they took to their