

THE WILDCATTERS

A Tale of the Cobalt Country.
By S. A. White

A NEW SERIAL STORY

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS

CARL GLOVER, "The Prince" of college football days, is called from a study of art to take charge of a Cobalt mine, owned by an uncle who has been injured in a railway accident.

He is initiated into mining and into Cobalt by Freeman, the foreman of the mine, and forthwith becomes entangled in certain mysteries.

Carl was by heredity a gambler—though in the earlier part of the story his gambling proclivities are well concealed under a mask of almost boyish candor and enthusiasm.

CHAPTER V.

THE places of rendezvous for the miners at night were the hotels and tobacco stores, and these were about the only places where men of Freeman's class judged anything was to be seen; so they found themselves, after a short walk, in which the foreman did the piloting, opposite a certain saloon which was named Cobalt Clan, in part of which a blind pig was located.

"Ever drink?" Freeman asked, nodding toward its brilliantly lighted windows.

"Not at all," said Carl.

"Have a cigar, then?"

"Never smoke!" Carl said again, half laughing.

"You don't? Why, I thought all college men smoked."

"Well, nearly all—but I am an exception."

"Queer!" Freeman commented. "I must get some weed, though, for to-morrow. Come along!"

They entered the Clan and found its sitting-room full of various types gathered from many camps. Silver was the prevailing topic for conversation. The smoke saturated air held nothing but Hudson Bay, Foster, King, Crown Reserve, Trethewey, Silver Leaf, Nipissing, Contact, etc., etc. Merits of one location, deficiencies of another, shares, companies, directors, stock, investment, all formed a babel of sound as voiced by men talking in pairs, threes, or larger groups.

Comparatively unknown, Carl passed a greeting with but a few whose acquaintance he had made, and, while waiting for Freeman, fell into conversation with Ridgeley, an owner on the shore of a little lake two miles out. Carl had met him before, and eagerly inquired how he was progressing.

"Fine!" was Ridgeley's answer. "We have three veins uncovered. Good native silver, too! How is yours?"

"Not much reward yet," said Carl.

"How many shafts have you sunk?"

"Two."

"How deep?"

"Fifty feet."

"Any signs?"

"There were fair signs on Number Two, but we haven't found any veins."

"Ever have any experience before?"

"No! I'm absolutely new, but Freeman's a practical man."

Robert Ridgeley winked a knowing eye at Carl. "Sure?" he inquired.

"He is my uncle's choice as boss. He ought to be all right."

"Well," said the mine owner, lighting a cigar, "I have my opinion."

"What is it?" asked Carl.

"Candid?"

"Candid!"

"He isn't worth his salt!"

Carl stared.

"You see," Ridgeley went on, "I know a mining man when I see him at work. I've seen this Freeman down in Arkansas at the lead and zinc game, and I've seen him here, before you came. Take my word—he's a figurehead!"

"But how," Carl objected, "how did he get on foreman with Uncle?"

"Can't say," Ridgeley answered with what Carl thought was studied indifference.

"And it is up to me, an inexperienced man, to develop the place?" he said, rather anxiously.

"Help is scarce. You can't get a boss or even a hand for months yet. I am two men short myself. All you can do is to peg along. When will Graham be fit?"

"Four or six weeks yet."

"Hem! Better go ahead the way you are doing till he can take control. I wouldn't advise bouncing the foreman on your own hook. Anyway you can't get another just at this season. Besides, you have a blind chance of striking it."

"Stone blind," Carl said, bitterly.

"Look here!" Ridgeley said, suddenly conceiving what failure meant to a man of Glover's calibre. "I'll look over this place with you. Say we take a walk through it to-morrow?"

"Thanks!" we will," the nephew assented. "Freeman will object, but he can go on objecting."

"Very well. I shall come round early. Good-night!" Ridgeley went out to seek his lodging near-by, for he was a keen business man of strictly temperate habits.

Carl looked for his foreman. The latter was not in sight, but Giles, the proprietor, said he had just gone into the billiard-room.

"If you are Mr. Glover," Giles ventured, "I am glad to see you. I know your uncle well."

"Ah! I suppose you were both among the first here?"

"Yes. You have been up but a short time?"

"Two weeks. I am trying to manage till my uncle got back to form."

"I wish you luck, Mr. Glover. It is rather an upsetting of his plans and a new duty for you, I presume. Still, you are fortunate in having such an excellent foreman as Freeman. Oh! yes, you were wanting him. Come this way! He went in for a game with one of the Dolly Varden men."

Freeman was not to be seen in the billiard-room, but the proprietor led him along a narrow hallway and opened a panel in the wall. It swung, upon pressing a certain point. The sight that met Carl Glover's eyes was one to amaze him. Here was a miniature Monte Carlo, fitted up in a cleverly disguised part of the hotel. The game was in full swing. Women as well as men crowded round the long tables, staking their faith and earnings on the red or black. In luxury of appointment this place was one to extend a strong invitation. The upholstering, fretwork, paneling, decorating, gilding of ceiling, and carpeting of floor was so done as to blend in a harmony of colours. The animated, well-dressed assembly gave out an aspect of cordiality and good social feeling that was hard to resist. It was like Paris after the mine and shaft-house. Carl felt an uncontrollable desire to enter just to enjoy being with the throng, and when his host touched his arm and went in before as if taking for granted that Glover knew the hall existed, he followed without intimating that he saw it for the first time.

"I don't see him here, either," Giles said. "He must have gone out altogether. However, you can pass an hour among the gathering. You know some, do you not, or shall I introduce you?"

"No, no, don't trouble, thanks! I'll make out. Some I know."

"You will find them all agreeable. We believe in sociability up here in Cobalt. I must leave you, though, for I have a few matters which need attention before closing. You are sure you will be quite content?"

"Quite," Carl answered. "I shall watch the flights of chance."

"Do you never play?"

Carl shook his head and edged through the crowd where he could get a clearer view of the tables.

Luck seemed to favour the public, and they were causing a heavy run on the bank. One English capitalist was trying his utmost to take everything they had just for the triumph of it, then he would lend them funds to begin afresh. While Carl watched, he very nearly succeeded, but suddenly luck changed in a most unaccountable manner, and he was back again where he started. It was now the bank's turn to win, and several dropped away, having tried their last dollar without result. The sight of the green cloth littered with gold, paper money, bank-notes, and even silver nuggets was fascinating. Carl threaded in closer still until he could command a view of the whole stretch of tables.

"By all the gods, if here isn't The Prince," said a loud voice at his right. "Hello!, Prince. Good Lord, it's a long time since I saw you. Shake!"

Carl turned and recognized Whitmore, who had failed to finish his college course, at the time Carl himself was

OUR NEW SERIAL

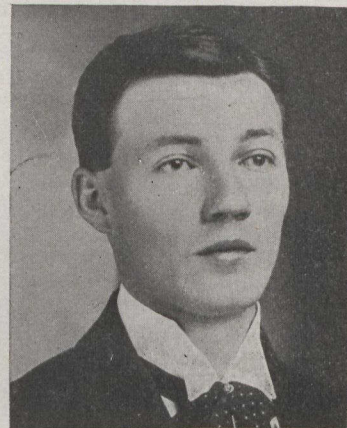
The Wildcatters

A Tale of the Cobalt Country

By S. A. WHITE

Author of "The Stampeder," etc., etc.

Love and life in the mining districts of Northern Ontario is the theme of the new story which is to run in the CANADIAN COURIER during the next fourteen weeks. Rita Theodore, "The Lady of the Clan" is as strong a character as ever has appeared in native fiction, while Carl Glover, "The Prince," is a typical young Canadian with the bloom of a college career still showing. These two and the "wildcatters" of Cobalt are the leading figures in a most original and stirring romance.



A Lover of the Out-of-Doors

S. A. White, the author, was in the first rush to Cobalt and knows the mining life fairly well. His previous story "The Stampeder" described the mining life of the Yukon in its early days. For a number of years he has been contributing outdoor stories to the leading publications of Canadians. His first book appeared last year. His father is a prominent Canadian naturalist, and a brother is lecturer on Forestry at the University of Toronto. Like W. A. Fraser, his literary work is done in a small Ontario village, and fame is rapidly coming that way. For a time, he was both pedagogue and writer; now he devotes all his time to articles and stories of Canadian life.

The Wildcatters

is a strong story and should prove popular with the readers of THE CANADIAN COURIER. It has plenty of sentiment, is full of action, and radiates a sustained interest. The people whom the author creates are real flesh and blood. No anæmic puppets whine in this northern country—only strong, keen, passionate men and women.