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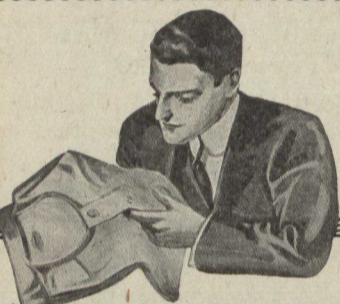
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## WILD OATS

CONCLUDED FROM PAGE 16.

neatly folded parcel had fallen from the papers in Gray's hand.

"Praps that's a diamond pin present for you," Red opined as he picked it up. "But first see if there ain't a check there, an' what Bloater says."

Gray opened the papers and discovered the preliminary agreement he had signed earlier in the day.

"That's the old one back," Red advised. "He's got the new ones all drawn up. What does Bloater Jones say, Jack?"

Gray ran his eyes slowly down a typewritten letter, and Meekins saw his face turn to an ashy hue and his heavy lip stiffen to hard lines.

"What does he say, Jack? Old man, there ain't nothin' gone wrong? He ain't squealin', is he?"

"Gimme that little package, Red!"

Gray with trembling fingers opened the package and Meekins saw nestling in the white paper half a dozen grains of discoloured oats.

"I don't understand, Jack!" he gasped. "What's it all about? What's that got to do with Bloater Brown an' your mine?"

GRAY passed the letter to Meekins, and sat, his head hanging heavily on a limber neck, while Red perused the contents aloud. The letter explained that the assayer had found the samples of ore very rich in silver; the writer might add "suspiciously rich." He had also discovered, in the process of pulverizing the ore, probably half a pint of oats. This curious blend of agricultural product with silver, hitherto unknown in mineralogy, had caused him to examine closely the conglomerate carrying the silver, and he had classed it as manufactured cement, mixed with loose gravel. These startling inconsistencies had induced Mr. Boulbee Downs to decline the purchase of the Little Star mine, and he was returning enclosed the preliminary agreement.

The letter fell from Red's hand. He sat staring helplessly at Gray.

The latter roused himself to say, "I knew I never could have no luck!"

"The oats was in the feed bag!" Red moaned. "Twenty thousand bucks! If I'd only had a clean bag!"

## "Wullneritis" the Latest

WITH reference to singing—which gets a new turn every little while from some new faddist, either in voice-production or interpretation, of which latter Herr Ludwig Wullner, at present touring the United States and soon to visit Canada, is an eminent example: the *Musical Leader and Concert-Goer* of Chicago alleges that we are all in danger of a new infection. Nothing to do with dog rabies or Halley's comet cyanogenic poisoning; but quite as fatal as either so far as it goes. The paper in question calls the epidemic "Wullneritis"; which will be better understood when it is known that Herr Wullner is a singer who interprets all sorts of songs without much voice, but with a great deal of interpretation. So the *Musical Leader* says:

"Especially has it attacked the younger singers, although conductors, pianists, readers, violinists, and vocalists generally, have a mild form of the disease, symptoms of which are found in the rolling of the eyes, spasmodic gestures, frenetic waving of the hair, and a generally disordered imagination. We are having a large dose of temperamental display and every little whippersnapper of a school singer is giving himself the airs of a tragedian. That which Dr. Wullner does with impunity, others may not dare. It is his expression of his art, but his imitators are really his detractors, for in

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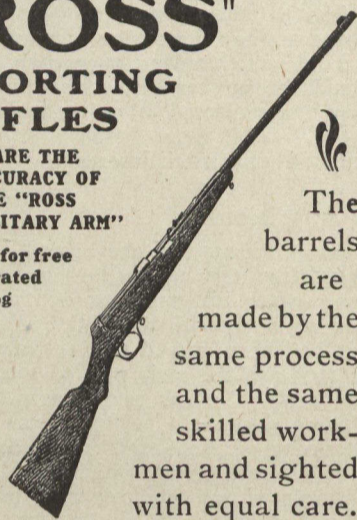


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