ABNER DANIEL

By . . . WILL N. HARBEN

Author of "Westerfelt"

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CHAPTER II.

ALAN found his uncle on the back porch washing his face and hands in a basin on the water shelf. The young man leaned against one of the wooden posts which supported the low roof of the porch and waited for him to conclude the puffing, sputtering operation, which he finally did by enveloping his head in a long towel hanging from a wooden roller on the weatherboarding.

"Well," he laughed, "yore uncle Ab didn't better matters in thar overly much, but what could a feller do? Yore pa's as bullheaded as a young steer, an' he's already played smash anyway. Yore ma's wastin' breath; but a woman seems to have plenty of it to spare. A woman's tongue's like a windmill—it takes breath to keep it a-goin', an' a dead clam 'ud kill her business."

"It's no laughing matter, Uncle Ab," said Alan despondently. "Something must have gone wrong with father's judgment. He never has acted this way before."

The old man dropped the towel and thrust his long, almost jointless fingers into his vest pocket for a horn comb which folded up like a jackknife. "I was jest a-wonderin'," as he began to rake his shaggy hair straight down to his eyes—"I was jest a-wonderin' ef he could 'a' bent his skull in a little that time his mule th'owed 'im ag'in the sweet gum. They say that often changes a body powerful. Folks 'll

"It's no laughing matter, Uncle Ab."

think he's off his cazip on the land question, an' now that he's traded his best nest egg fer another swipe o' the earth's surface I reckon they'll talk harder. But yore pa ain't no fool. No plumb idiot could 'a' managed yore ma as well as he has. You see, I know what he's accomplished, fer I've been with 'im ever since they was yoked together. When they was married, she was as wild as a buck an' certainly made our daddy walk a chalk line, but Alfred has tapered 'er down beautiful. She didn't want this thing done one bit, an' yet it is settled by this time"—the old man looked through the hall to the front gate—"yes, Trabue's unhitchin'. He's got them stock certificates in his pocket, an' yore pa has the deeds in his note case. When this gits out, mossbacks from heer clean to Gilmer 'll be trapsin' in to dispose o' land at so much a front foot."

"But what under high heaven will he do with it all?"

"Hold on to it," grinned Abner; "that is, ef he kin rake an' scrape enough together to pay the taxes. Why, last yeer his taxes mighty nigh floored 'im, an' the expenses on this county he's jest annexed will push 'im like rips, fer now, you know, he'll have to do without the income on his factory stock. But he thinks he's got the right sow by the yeer. Before long he may yell out to us to come he'p 'im turn 'er loose, but he's waltzin' with 'er now."

At this juncture Mrs. Bishop came out of the dining room wiping her eyes on her apron.

"Mother," said Alan tenderly, "try not to worry over this any more than you can help."

"Your pa's gettin' old an' childish," whimpered Mrs. Bishop. "He's heerd somebody say timber land up in the mountains will some day advance, an' he forgets that he's too old to get the benefit of it. He's goin' to bankrupt us."

"Ef I do," the man accused thundered from the hall as he strode out, "it'll be my money that's lost—money that I made by hard work."

He stood before them, glaring over his eyeglasses at his wife. "I've had enough of yore tongue, my lady. Ef I'd not had so much to think about in thar jest now, I'd 'a' shut you up sooner. Dry up now—not another word. I'm doin' the best I kin accordin' to my lights to provide fer my children, an' I won't be interfered with."

No one spoke for a moment. However, Mrs. Bishop finally retorted, as her brother knew she would in her own time.

"I don't call buyin' thousands o' acres o' unsalable land providin' fer anything except the porehouse," she fumed.

"That's beca'se you don't happen to know as much about the business as I do," said Bishop, with a satisfied chuckle, which to the observing Daniel sounded very much like exultation. "When you all know what I know, you'll be laughin' on t'other sides o' yore mouths. I reckon I'll jest have to let you all know about this or I won't have a speck o' peace from now on. I didn't tell you at fust beca'se nobody kin keep a secret as well as the man it belongs to, an' I was afeered it 'ud leak out an' damage my interests, but this last 5,000 acres jest about sweeps all the best timber in the whole Cohutta section, an' I mought as well let up. I reckon you all know that ef—I say ef—my land was nigh a railroad it 'ud be low at five times what I paid fer it, don't you? Well, then, the long an' short of it is that I happen to be on the inside an' know that a railroad is goin' to be run from Blue Lick Junction to Darley. It'll be started inside of the next yeer an' 'll run smack dab through my property. Thar now! You know more'n you thought you did, don't you?"

The little group stared into his glowing face incredulously.

"A railroad is to be built, father?" exclaimed Alan.

"That's what I said."

Mrs. Bishop's eyes flashed with sudden hope, and then, as if remembering her husband's limitations, her face fell.

"Alfred," she asked skeptically, "how does it happen that you know about the railroad before other folks does?"

"How do I? That's it now—how do I?" and the old man laughed freely. "I've had my fun out o' this thing, listenin' to what every crank said about me bein' cracked an' so on, but I was jest a-lyin' low waitin' fer my time."

"Well, I'll be switched!" ejaculated Abner Daniel, half seriously, half sarcastically. "Geewhilikins! A railroad! I've always said one would pay like rips an' open up a dern good, God fersaken country. I'm glad you are a-goin' to start one, Alfred."

Alan's face was filled with an expression of blended doubt and pity for his father's credulity. "Father," he said gently, "are you sure you got your information straight?"

"I got it from headquarters." The old man raised himself on his toes and knocked his heels together, a habit he had not indulged in for many a year. "It was told to me confidentially by a man who knows all about the whole thing, a man who is in the employ o' the company that's goin' to build it."

"Huh!" The exclamation was Abner Daniel's. "Do you mean that Atlanta lawyer, Perkins?"

Bishop stared, his mouth lost some of its pleased firmness, and he ceased the motion of his feet.

"What made you mention his name?" he asked curiously.

"Oh, I dunno. Somehow I jest thought o' him. He looks to me like he mought be buildin' a railroad ur two."

"Well, that's the man I mean," said Bishop, more uneasily.

Somehow the others were all looking at Abner Daniel, who grunted suddenly and almost angrily.

"I wouldn't trust that skunk no furder 'n I could fling a bull by the tail."

"You say you wouldn't?" Bishop tried to smile, but the effort was a facial failure.

"I wouldn't trust 'im nuther, Brother Ab," chimed in Mrs. Bishop. "As soon as I laid eyes on 'im I knowed he wouldn't do. He's too mealy mouthed an' fawnin'. Butter wouldn't melt in his mouth. He bragged on ever'thing we had while he was heer. Now, Alfred, what we must git at is, what was his object in tellin' you that tale."

"Object!" thundered her husband, losing his temper in the face of the awful possibility that her words hinted at. "Are you all a pack an' passle o' fools? If you must dive an' probe, then I'll tell you he owns a slice o' timber land above Holley creek, j'inin' some o' mine, an' so he let me into the secret out o' puore good will. Oh, you all cayn't skeer me. I ain't one o' the skeerin' kind."

But, notwithstanding this outburst, it was plain that doubt had actually taken root in the ordinarily cautious mind of the crude speculator.

Abner Daniel laughed out harshly all at once and then was silent. "What's the matter?" asked his sister in despair.

"I was jest a-wonderin'," replied her brother.

"You are?" said Bishop angrily. "It seems to me you don't do much else."

"Folks 'at wonders a lot ain't so apt to believe ever'thing they heer," retorted Abner. "I was just a-wonderin' why that little, spindle shanked Peter Mosely has been holdin' his head so high the last week or so. I'll bet I could make a durn good guess now."

"What under the sun's Peter Mosely got to do with my business?" burst from Bishop's impatient lips.

"He's got a sorter roundabout connection with it, I reckon," smiled Abner grimly. "I happen to know that Abe Tompkins sold 'im 2,000 acres o' timber land on Huckleberry ridge jest atter yore Atlanta man spent the day lookin' round in these parts."

Bishop was no fool, and he grasped Abner's meaning even before it was quite clear to the others.

"Looky heer," he said sharply, "what do you take me fer?"

"I 'ain't tuck you fer nothin'," said Abner, with a grin. "Leastwise, I 'ain't tuck you fer $5,000 wuth o' cot-

"You mean to say"—

ton mill stock. To make a long story short, the Atlanta jack leg lawyer is akin to the Tompkins family some way. I'd bet a new hat to a ginger cake that Perkins never owned a spoonful o' land up heer an' that he's jest he'pin' the Tompkins folks on the sly to unload some o' the'r land, so they kin move west, whar they've always wanted to go. Peter Mosely is a man on the watch out fer rail soft snaps, an' when Perkins whispered the big secret in his yeer, like he did to you, he started out on a still hunt fer timbered land on the line of the proposed trunk line due west vy-ah Lickskillet to Darley, with stop over privileges at Buzzard Roost an' fifteen minutes fer hash at Dog Trot Springs. Then, somehow or other, by hook or crook—mostly crook—Abe Tompkins wasn't dodgin' anybody about that time. Peter Mosely could 'a' run agin 'im with his eyes shut on a dark night.

"I was at Neil Filmore's store when the two met, an' ef a trade was ever made quicker betwixt two folks it was done by telegraph an' the paper was signed by lightnin'. Abe said he had the land an' wouldn't part with it at any price ef he hadn't been bad in need o' money, fer he believed it was chuck full o' iron ore, soapstone, black marble an' water power, to say nothin' o' timber; but he'd been troubled so much about cash, he said, that he'd made up his mind to let 'er slide an' the devil take the contents. I never seed two parties to a deal better satisfied. They both left the store with a strut. Mosely's strut was the biggest, fer he wasn't afeerd o' nothin'. Tompkins looked like he was afeerd Mosely 'ud call 'im back an' want to rue."

"You mean to say"— But old Bishop seemed unable to put his growing fear into words.

"Oh, I don't know nothin' fer certain," said Abner Daniel sympathetically, "but ef I was you I'd go down to Atlanta an' see Perkins. You kin tell by the way he acts whether thar's anything in his railroad story or not. But, by gum, you ort to know whar you stand. You've loaded yorese'f from hind to fore quarters, an' ef you don't plant yore feet on some'n you'll go down."

Bishop clutched this proposition as a drowning man would a straw. "Well, I will go see 'im," he said. "I'll go jest to satisfy you. As fer as I'm concerned I know he wasn't tellin' me no lie, but I reckon you all never 'll rest till you are satisfied."

He descended the steps and crossed the yard to the barn. They saw him lean over the rail fence for a moment as if in troubled thought.

"Poor father," said Alan to his uncle as his mother retired slowly into the house. "He seems troubled, and it may mean our ruin—absolute ruin."

"It ain't no triflin' matter," admitted Daniel. "Thar's no tellin' how many thousand acres he may have bought. He's keepin' somethin' to hisse'f. I remember jest when that durn skunk of a lawyer put that flea in his yeer. They was at Hanson's mill an' talked confidential together mighty nigh all mornin'. But let's not cross a bridge tell we git to it. Let's talk about some'n else. I hain't never had a chance to tell you, but I seed that gal in town yesterday an' talked to 'er."

"Did you, Uncle Ab?" The face of the young man brightened. His tone was eager and expectant.

"Yes. I'd hitched in the wagon yard an' run into Hazen's drugstore to git a box o' axle grease an' was comin' out with the durn stuff under my arm when I run upon 'er a-settin' in a buggy waitin' to git a clerk to fetch 'er out a glass o' sody water. She recognized me, an' fer no other earthly reason than that I'm yore uncle she spoke to me as pleasin' as a basket o' chips. What was I to do? I never was in such a plight in my life. I'd been unloadin' side meat at Bartow's warehouse an' was kivered from head to foot with salt and grease. I didn't have on no coat, an' the seat o' my pants was non est—I don't think thar was any est about 'em, to tell the truth. But I knowed it wouldn't be the part of a gentleman to let 'er set thar stretchin' 'er neck out o' socket to call a clerk when I was handy, so I wheeled about, hopin' an' prayin' ef she did look at me she'd take a fancy to the back o' my head', an' went in the store an' told 'em to git a hustle on the'r-se'ves. When I come out, she hauled me up to ax some questions about when camp meetin' was goin' to set in this yeer an' when Adele was comin' home. I let my box o' axle grease drap, an' it rolled like a wagon wheel off duty an' me after it, bendin'—bendin' of all positions—heer an' yan in the most ridiculous way. I tell you, I'd never play croquet ur leapfrog in them pants. All the way home I thought how I'd disgraced you."

"Oh, you are all right, Uncle Ab," laughed Alan. "She's told me several times that she likes you very much. She says you are genuine—genuine through and through, and she's right."

"I'd ruther have her say it than any other gal I know," said Abner. "She's purty as red shoes, an' ef I'm any judge she's genuwine too. I've got another idee about 'er, but I ain't a-givin' it away jest now."

"You mean that she"—

"No," and the old man smiled mischievously. "I didn't mean nothin' o' the sort. I wonder how on earth you could 'a' got sech a notion in yore head. I'm goin' to see how that black scamp has left my cotton land. I'll bet he hain't scratched it any deeper 'n a old hen would 'a' done lookin' fer worms."

CHAPTER III.

THE next morning at breakfast Alfred Bishop announced his intention of going to Atlanta to talk to Perkins and incidentally to call on his brother William, who was a successful wholesale merchant in that city.

"I believe I would," said Mrs. Bishop. "Maybe William will tell you what to do."

"I'd see Perkins fust," advised Abner Daniel. "Ef I felt shore Perkins had bunkoed me, I'd steer cleer o' William. I'd hate to heer 'im let out on that subject. He's made his pile by keepin' a sharp lookout."

"I hain't had no reason to think I have been lied to," said Bishop doggedly as he poured his coffee into his saucer and shook it about to cool. "A body could hear his deathknell rung every minute of he'd jest listen to old women an'"—

"Old bachelors," interpolated Abner. "I reckon they are alike. The longer a man lives without a woman the more he gits like one. I reckon that's beca'se the man 'at lives with one don't see nothin' wuth copyin' in 'er an' vice-a-versy."

Mrs. Bishop had never been an appreciative listener to her brother's philosophy. She ignored what he had just said and its accompanying smile, which was always Abner's subtle apology for such observations.

"Are you goin' to tell Adele about the railroad?" she asked.

"I reckon I won't tell 'er to git up a' excursion over it 'fore the crossties is laid," retorted Bishop sharply, and Abner Daniel laughed, that sort of response being in his own vein.

"I was goin' to say," pursued the softly treading wife, "that I wouldn't mention it to 'er ef—ef—Mr. Perkins ain't to be relied on, beca'se she worries enough already about our pore way o' livin' compared to her uncle's folks. Ef she knowed how I spent last night, she'd want to come back. But I ain't a-goin' to let Brother Ab skeer me yet. It is jest too awful to think about. What on earth would we do? What would we, I say?"

That afternoon Bishop was driven to Darley by a negro boy who was to bring the buggy back home. He first repaired to a barber shop, where he was shaved, had his hair cut and his shoes blacked; then he went to the station half an hour before time and impatiently walked up and down the platform till the train arrived.

It was 6 o'clock when he reached Atlanta and made his way through the jostling crowd in the big passenger depot out into the streets. He had his choice of going at once to the residence of his brother, on Peachtree street, the most fashionable avenue of the city, or looking up Perkins in his office. He decided to unburden his mind by at once calling on the lawyer, whose office was in a tall building quite near at hand.

It was the hour at which Perkins usually left for home, but the old planter found him in.

"Oh, it's you, Mr. Bishop," he said suavely as he rose from his desk in the dingy, disordered little room, with its single window. He pushed a chair forward. "Sit down; didn't know you were in town; at your brother's, I reckon. How are the crops up the road? Too much rain last month, I'm afraid."

Bishop sank wearily into the chair. He had tired himself out thinking over what he would say to the man before him and with the awful contemplation of what the man might say to him.

"They are doin' as well as can be expected," he made answer. But he didn't approve of even that platitude, for he was plain and outspoken and hadn't come all that distance for a mere exchange of courtesies. Still, he lacked the faculty to approach easily the subject which had grown so heavy within the last twenty-four hours and of which he now almost stood in terror.

"Well, that's good," returned Perkins. He was a swarthy man of fifty-five or sixty, rather tall and slender, with a bald head that sloped back sharply from heavy, jutting brows, under which a pair of keen black eyes shone and shifted. "Come down to see your daughter," he said; "good thing for her that you have a brother in town. By the way, he's a fine type of a man. He's making headway too.

"You are a scoundrel, Perkins," he said.

His trade is stretching out in all directions; funny how different you two are!"

"I 'lowed I'd see William 'fore I went back," said Bishop rather irrelevantly. Then, seeing that Perkins was staring at him rather fixedly, he said—it was a verbal plunge:

"I bought some more timber land yesterday!"

"Oh, you did? That's good." Perkins' eyes fluttered once or twice before his gaze steadied itself on the face of the man before him. "Well, as I told you, Mr. Bishop, that sort of a thing is a good investment. I reckon it's already climbing up a little, ain't it?"

"Not much yet." It struck Bishop that he had given the lawyer a splendid opportunity to speak of the chief cause for an advance in value, and his heart felt heavier as he finished. "But I took quite a slice the last time—5,000 acres at the old figure, you know—a dollar a acre."

"You don't say! That was a slice."

Bishop drew himself up in his chair and inhaled a deep breath. It was as if he took into himself in that way the courage to make his next remark.

"I got it from the Tompkins estate."

"You don't say! I didn't know they had that much on hand."

"Sence I bought the land I've accidentally heerd that you are some kin o' that family."

Perkins started slightly and raised his brows.

"Oh, yes! On my wife's side, away off, some way or other. I believe the original Tompkins that settled there from Virginia was my wife's grandfather. I never was much of a hand to go into such matters."

"When I heerd that, Perkins, it was natural fer me to wonder why you, you see—why you didn't tell them about the railroad."

The sallow features of the lawyer seemed to stiffen. He drew himself up coldly and a wicked expression flashed in his eyes.

"Take my advice, old man," he snarled as he threw down his pen and stared doggedly into Bishop's face. "Stick to your farming and don't waste your time asking a professional lawyer questions which have no bearing on your business whatever. Now, really, do I have to explain to you my personal reasons for not favoring the Tompkins people with a—I may say—any piece of information?"

Bishop was now as white as death. His worst suspicions were confirmed—he was a ruined man; there was no further doubt about that. Suddenly he felt unable to bridle the contemptuous fury that raged within him.

"I think I know why you didn't tell 'em," was what he hurled at the lawyer.

"You think you do?"

"Yes; it was beca'se you knowed no road was goin' to be built. You told Pete Mosely the same tale you did me, an' Abe Tompkins unloaded on 'im. That's a way you have o' doin' business."

Perkins stood up. He took his silk hat from the top of his desk and put it on. "Oh, yes, old man," he sneered; "I'm a terribly dishonest fellow, but I've got company in this world. Now, really, the only thing that has worried me has been your un-Christian act in buying all that land from the Tompkins heirs at such a low figure when the railroad will advance its value so greatly. Mr. Bishop, I thought you were a good Methodist."

"Oh, you kin laugh an' jeer all you like," cried Bishop, "but I can handle you fer this."

"You are not as well versed in the law as you are in fertilizers, Mr. Bishop," sneered the lawyer. "In order to make a case against me you'd have to publicly betray a matter I told to you in confidence, and then what would you gain? I doubt if the court would force me to explain a private matter like this where the interests of my clients are concerned, and if the court did I could simply show the letters I have regarding the possible construction of a railroad in your section. If you remember rightly, I did not say the thing was an absolute certainty. On top of all this you'd be obliged to prove collusion between me and the Tompkins heirs over a sale made by their attorney, Mr. Trabue. There is one thing certain, Mr. Bishop, and that is that you have forfeited your right to any further confidence in this matter. If the road is built, you'll find out about it with the rest of your people. You think you acted wisely in attacking me this way, but you have simply cut off your nose to spite your face. Now, I have a long car ride before me, and it's growing late."

Bishop stood up. He was quivering as with palsy. His voice shook and rang like that of a madman.

"You are a scoundrel, Perkins," he said—"a dirty blacksnake in the grass! I want to tell you that!"

"Well, I hope you won't make any charge for it."

"No; it's free." Bishop turned to the door. There was a droop upon his whole body. He dragged his feet as he moved out into the unlighted corridor, where he paused irresolutely. So great was his agony that he almost obeyed an impulse to go back and fall at the feet of Perkins and implore his aid to rescue him and his family from impending ruin. The lawyer was moving about the room, closing his desk and drawing down the window shade.

"It's no use," sighed Bishop as he made his way downstairs. "I'm ruined! Alan an' Adele hain't a cent to their names, an' that devil"— Bishop paused on the first landing like an animal at bay. He heard the steady step of Perkins on the floor above, and for a moment his fingers tingled with the thought of waiting there in the darkness and choking the life out of the subtle scoundrel who had taken advantage of his credulity.

But with a groan that was half a prayer he went on down the steps and out into the lighted streets. At the first corner he saw a car which would take him to his brother's, and he hastened to catch it.

William Bishop's house was a modern brick structure, standing on a well clipped lawn which held a Gothic summer house and two or three marble statues. It was in the best portion of the avenue. Reaching it, the planter left the car and approached the iron gate which opened on to the granite steps leading up the terrace. It was now quite dark. Obeying a sudden impulse, the old man irresolutely passed by the gate and walked farther up the street.

"Somehow I don't feel one bit like it," he mused. "I couldn't tell William. He'd think I wanted to borrow money an' 'ud git skeerd right off. He always was afeerd I'd mismanage. An' then I'd hate to sp'ile Adele's visit, an' she could tell thar was some'n wrong by me bein' heer in sech a flurry. I reckon I do show it. How could a body he'p it? Oh, my Lord, have mercy! It's all gone, all—all me'n Betsy has saved."

He turned at the corner of his brother's property and slowly retraced his halting steps to the gate, but he did not pause, continuing his way back toward the station. A glance at the house showed that all the lower rooms were lighted, as well as the big prismatic lamp that hung over the front door. Bishop saw forms in light summer clothing on the wide veranda. "I'll bet that tallest one is Sis," he said pathetically. "I jest wish I could see 'er a little while. Maybe it 'ud stop this awful hurtin' a little jest to look at 'er an' heer 'er laugh like she always did at home. She'd be brave; she wouldn't cry an' take on, but it would hurt 'er away down in 'er heart, especially when she's mixin' with sech high fliers an' money spenders. Lord, what'll I do fer cash to send 'er next month? I'm the land porest man in my county."

Reaching the station, he inquired about a train to Darley and was told that one left at midnight. He decided to take it and sat in one of the iron armed seats without moving till he heard his train announced. Then he went into the smoking car and sat down in a corner.

He reached Darley at half past 3 in the morning and went to the only hotel in the place. The sleepy night clerk rose from his lounge behind the counter in the office and assigned him to a room, to which a colored boy, vigorously rubbing his eyes, conducted him. Left alone in his room, he sat down on the edge of his bed and started to undress, but with a sigh he stopped.

"What's the use o' me lyin' down almost at daybreak?" he asked himself. "I mought as well be on the way home. I cayn't sleep nohow."

Blowing out his lamp, he went downstairs and roused the clerk again. "Will I have to pay fer that bed ef I don't use it?" he questioned.

"Why, no, Mr. Bishop," said the clerk.

"Well, I believe I'll start out home."

"Is your team in town?" asked the clerk.

"The team I'm a-goin' to use is. I'm goin' to foot it. I've done the like before this."

"Well, it's a purty tough stretch," smiled the clerk, "but the roads are good."

CHAPTER IV.

IT was a little after sunrise. The family had just left the breakfast table when Bishop walked in. His shoes and trousers were damp with dew and covered with the dust of the road. His wife saw him entering the gate and called out to him from the hall:

"Well, I declare! Didn't you go to Atlanta?"

He came slowly up the steps, dragging his feet after him. He had the appearance of a man beaten by every storm that could fall upon a human being.

"Yes, I went," he said doggedly. He passed her and went into the sitting room, where his brother-in-law stood at the fireplace lighting his pipe with a live coal of fire on the tip of a stick. Abner Daniel looked at him critically, his brows raised a little as he puffed, but he said nothing. Mrs. Bishop came in behind her husband, sweeping him from head to foot with her searching eyes.

"You don't mean to tell me you walked that heer this mornin'," she cried. "Lord have mercy!"

"I don't know as I've prepared any set speech on the subject," said her husband testily, "but I walked. I could 'a' gone to a livery an' ordered out a team, but I believe thar's more'n one way o' wearin' sackcloth an' ashes, an' the sooner I begin the better I'll feel."

Abner Daniel winked. The Scriptural allusion appealed to his fancy, and he smiled impulsively.

"That thar is," he said. "Thar's a whole way an' a half way. Some folks jest wear it next to the skin whar it don't show, with broadcloth ur silk on the outside. They think ef it scratches a little that'll satisfy the Lord an' hoodwink other folks. But I believe he meant it to be the whole hog or none."

Mrs. Bishop was deaf to this philosophy. "I don't see," she said in her own field of reflection—"I don't see, I say, how you got to Atlanta, attended to business, seed Adele an' got back heer at sunrise. Why, Alfred"—

But Bishop interrupted her. "Have you all had prayers yet?"

"No; you know we hain't," said his wife, wondering over his strange manner. "I reckon it can pass jest this once, bein' as you are tired an' hain't had nothin' to eat."

"No; it can't pass, nuther. I don't want to touch a mouthful. Tell the rest of 'em to come in, an' you fetch me the Book."

"Well!" Mrs. Bishop went out and told the negro woman and her daughter to stop washing the dishes and go in to prayer. Then she hurried out to the back porch, where Alan was oiling his gun.

"Somethin's happened to yore pa," she said. "He acts queer an' says sech strange things. He walked all the way from Darley this mornin' an' now wants to have prayers 'fore he touches a bite o' breakfast. I reckon we are ruined."

"I'm afraid that's it," opined her son as he put down his gun and followed her into the sitting room. Here the two negroes stood against the wall. Abner Daniel was smoking, and Bishop held the big family Bible on his quivering knees.

"Ef you mean to keep it up," Abner was saying argumentatively, "all right an' good, but I don't believe in sudden spurts o' worship. My bosses is hitched up ready to haul a load o' bark to the tannery, an' it may throw me a little late at dinner, but ef you are a-goin' to make a daily business of it I'm with you."

"I'm a-goin' to be regular from now on," said Bishop, slowly turning the leaves of the tome. "I forgot whar I read last."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

You are busy fooling others; others are busy fooling you. It's all a waste of time. A straightforward course would be better for everybody.—Atchison Globe.

Notice of Special Assessment for Sewer.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Notice is hereby given that at a meeting of the Council of the City of Manchester, Iowa, regularly held Monday evening, June 22, 1903, the sewer contracted to be built in and along the alley between Butler and Howard streets, extending from the center of Franklin street westward along the alley and through Lot K to a line connecting the western boundaries of Lots 3 and 14 of Block 4 of Toogood & Bethell's subdivision of a part of Lot I of the Iowa Land Company's subdivision of a part of the village (now city) of Manchester, Iowa having been completed by the contractor was duly accepted by sa'd Council.

That there is now on file in the office of the Clerk of said City, and subject to public inspection, a plat of the streets, alleys, and grounds in which the aforesaid sewer has been made, showing the separate parcels of ground subject to assessment for such sewer the names of the owners thereof as far as practicable, and attached thereto, and made a part thereof is a schedule showing the amount proposed to be assessed against each of said parcels of ground.

You are further notified that there is now pending before said Council a Resolution levying special assessments, as set forth in the aforesaid plat and schedule, against the property abutting on the said sewer, to aid in the cost of the construction thereof, and that said Resolution will be considered for its adoption at a meeting of said Council to be held in the Council chamber of said City on the 23rd day of July, 1903, commencing at eight o'clock, p. m.

You are further notified that if you have any objection to the levy of said special assessments as proposed in said Resolution plat, and schedule, or to any of the prior proceedings relative to the construction of said sewer, on account of errors, irregularities, or inequalities, or for any other reason, such objection must be made in writing, and filed with the Clerk of said City prior to the date of said meeting so to be held on the 23rd day of July, 1903.

Dated at Manchester, Iowa, this 22nd day of June, 1903.

S. A. STEADMAN, Mayor.

Attest: R. R. ROBINSON, City Clerk.

Notice of Special Assessment for Sewer.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

Notice is hereby given that at a meeting of the Council of the City of Manchester, Iowa, regularly held Monday evening, June 29th, 1903, the sewer contracted to be built in and along the alley between Fayette and Butler streets, extending from the center of Franklin street eastward along said alley, and terminating at a line connecting the eastern boundaries of lots 52 and 65 of said City, having been completed by the contractor, was duly accepted by said Council.

That there is now on file in the office of the Clerk of said city, subject to public inspection, a plat of the streets, alleys and grounds in which the aforesaid sewer has been made, showing the separate parcels of ground subject to assessment for such sewer, the names of the owners so far as practicable, and attached thereto, and made a part thereof, is a schedule showing parcels of ground.

You are further notified that there is now pending before said Council a resolution levying special assessments, as set forth in the aforesaid plat and schedule, against the property abutting on the said sewer, to aid in the cost of the construction thereof, and that said resolution will be considered for its adoption at a meeting of said Council to be held in the Council chamber of said City, on the 23rd day of July, 1903, commencing at eight o'clock P. M.

You are further notified that if you have any objection to the levy of said special assessments, as proposed in said resolution, plat, and schedule, or to any of the prior proceedings relative to the construction of said sewer, on account of errors, irregularities, or inequalities, or for any further reason, such objection must be made in writing, and filed with the Clerk of said City prior to thetime of said meeting so to be held on the 23rd day of July, 1903.

Dated at Manchester, Iowa, this 29th day of June, 1903.

Attest: R. R. ROBINSON, City Clerk.

S. A. STEADMAN, Mayor.

26-2w.

FARM LANDS!

If you are looking for a home or an investment, do not forget that the best farm lands in the Northwest are along the line of The Minneapolis & St. Louis R. R. where crop failures are unknown. Good soil, good climate, good people there. Farm values are rising rapidly and the time to buy is NOW.

Low excursion rates from point on Iowa Central and Minneapolis & St. Louis Railroads, if you wish to investigate. For particulars address,

A. B. CUTTS,
G. P. A., Ia. Cent, and M.& St. L. R. R.
20tf Minneapolis, Minn.

Farm For Sale.

A fine Stock and Dairy farm of 200 acres 5 miles south of Manchester, 1 mile from railroad station, and creamery. Comfortable house, good horse and cow barn, hog house, corn cribs and other out buildings, a fine well of water with wind mill attached, 10 acres of splendid timber 3 miles east of farm will be sold with same if desired. For terms inquire of

ABNER DUNHAM OR
O. A. DUNHAM,
Manchester, Iowa.
36tf

Notice of Probate of Will.

STATE OF IOWA, } ss
Delaware County }

To all whom it may concern:

You are hereby notified that the last will of Maria Letts deceased, has been filed, opened and read, and Monday, the 5th day of October, A. D. 1903, fixed as the time, and the Court House in Manchester the place for hearing and proving the same.

Witness my hand and seal of said Court this 22nd day of June, 1903.

[L. S.] JOHN GEORGEN,
25-w3 Clerk District Court.

A Thousand Dollars Worth of Good.

A. H. Thurnes, a well known coal operator of Buffalo, O., writes "I have been afflicted with kidney and bladder trouble for years, passing gravel or stone with excruciating pain. I got no relief from medicines until I began taking Foley's Kidney Cure, then the result was surprising. A few doses started the brick dust like fine stones and now I have no pain across my kidneys and I feel like a new man. It has done me a $1000 worth of good." Denton & Ward

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When does a farmer double up a sheep without hurting it? When he folds it.

Was Wasting Away.

The following letter from Robert R. Watts, of Salem, Mo. is instructive. "I have been troubled with kidney disease for the last five years. I lost flesh and never felt well and doctored with leading physicians and tried all remedies suggested without relief. Finally I tried Foley's Kidney Cure and less than two bottles completely cured me and I am now sound and well. Denton & Ward.

When did Moses sleep with five in bed? When he slept with his forefathers.

The Foundation of Health.

Nourishment is the foundation of health—life—strength. Kodol Dyspepsia Cure is the one great medicine that enables the stomach and digestive organs to digest, assimilate and transform all foods into the kind of blood that nourishes the nerves and feeds the tissues. Kodol lays the foundation for health. Nature does the rest. Indigestion, dyspepsia, and all disorders of the stomach and digestive organs are cured by the use of Kodol. Sold by Smith Bros.

Why is a newspaper like an army? Because it has leaders, columns and reviews.

A Surgical Operation

is always dangerous—do not submit to the surgeon's knife until you have tried DeWitt's Witch Hazel Salve. It will cure when everything else fails—it has done this in thousands of cases. Here is one of them: I suffered from bleeding and protruding piles for twenty years. Was treated by different specialists and used many remedies, but obtained no relief until I used DeWitt's Witch Hazel Salve. Two boxes of this salve cured me eighteen months ago and I have not a touch of the piles since—H. A. Tisdale, Summerton, S. C. For Blind, Bleeding Itching and Protruding Piles no remedy equals DeWitt's Witch Hazel Salve. Sold by Smith Bros

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Why are the pages of a book like the days of man? Because they are all numbered.

Just About Bedtime.

take little Early Riser—it will cure constipation, billousness and liver troubles. DeWitt's Little Early Risers are different from other pills. They do not gripe and break down the mucous membranes of the stomach, liver and bowels, but cure by gentle arousing the secretions, and give strength to these organs. Sold by Smith Bros.

Catarrh of the Stomach.

When the stomach is overloaded; when food is taken into it that fails to digest, it decays and inflames the mucus membrane, exposing the nerves and causes the glands to secret mucin, instead of the natural juices of digestion This is called Catarrh of the Stomach, For years I suffered much with catarrh of the stomach, caused by indigestion. Doctors and medicines failed to benefit me until I used Kodol Dyspepsia Cure.—J. R. Rhea, Coppell, Tex. Sold by Smith Bros.

Why is an acquitted prisoner like a gun? Because he has been charged, taken up and then let off.

Notice to Patrons of the Manchester & Oneida Railway Company at North Manchester Ia.

I wish to call your attention to the fact that a great number of passengers are boarding our trains at that point without procuring tickets at our down town office, and thereby causing a great loss of revenue to our Railway.

This is to notify you that unless you procure your through tickets from this station, which may be done by calling here or telephoning us to send tickets with conductor for your destination, I will be obliged to discontinue that point as a stop for our trains to pick up passengers.

This I do not wish to do, but unless you co-operate with me in this matter it will be necessary to come to our station to board our train.

JNO. L. SULLIVAN,
Gen. Mgr.

TIRRILL & PIERCE

are Loaning Money as cheap as any person or corporation.

A Burning Question

at present is that of

Coal

We have on hand a choice assortment of the most desirable grades of soft coal at the lowest prices consistent with the market. All coal promises to be scarce later in the season and prices will rule higher.

HOLLISTER LUMBER COMPANY.

M. F LEROY Prest. H. A. GRANGER Cashier
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H. C. HAEBERLE, 2nd. V. President,

First National BANK,

MANCHESTER, IOWA.

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Compound Vapor and Shampoo Baths.

Baths Vapor and Shampoo.

Most all diseases are caused by poisonous secretions, which clog the wheels of NATURE.

The name and the symptoms may be different but the cause of disease can usually be traced to the imperfect action of the millions of pores of the human body. A bath in accordance with scientific requirements is the best preventative and remedy known. The methods employed by me are the most scientific ever invented or discovered for dispelling disease. Results tell the story. Give me a trial. This is the Conant system of baths. A competent lady attendant in charge of the ladies department.

Office and bath rooms on Franklin street, opposite Globe Hotel.

6tf G. D. GATES.

W. N. BOYNTON,

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Ladies and Gents Gold Watches in all sizes kinds and styles, Ladies, Gents and Childrens Rings from DIAMONDS, OPALS, EMERALDS, PEARLS, ETC., down to PLAIN GOLD BANDS.

WEDDING RINGS.

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Also large line of Best Brands of—

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CARVING KNIVES and FORKS, LADIES GUARD CHAINS, GENTS VEST CHAINS, EMBLEM RINGS, CHARMS, LOCKETS, GOLD SPECTACLES, MANTEL CLOCKS, SILK UMBRELLAS, GOLD PENS.

Come and see the many things we have not space to list.

W. N. BOYNTON.

Delaware County STATE BANK

Manchester, Iowa.

Capital and Surplus $90,000.

—OFFICERS—

WM. C. CAWLEY,	President.
R. W. TIRRILL,	Vice President
CHAS. J. SEEDS,	Cashier.
C. W. KEAGY,	Ass't. Cashier.

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A general banking business transacted in all branches. Drafts sold, payable anywhere in the United States, England, Ireland and Europe.

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