ABNER DANIEL

By... WILL N. HARBEN

Author of "Westerfelt"

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Synopsis.

CHAPTER I.—The story opens with Alfred Bishop, a Georgia planter, closing a trade of $5,000 in mill stock for 5,000 acres of mountain land. Mrs. Bishop and their son Alan object to the trade. Mrs. Bishop's brother, Abner Daniel tells a story. II.—The sale over. Bishop boasts that his land is on a prospective railroad. Tompkins, the former owner, has just unloaded a tract of 2,000 acres adjoining Bishop's. III—Bishop goes to Atlanta to see Lawyer Perkins, who told him about the railroad. He has been deceived. The old man is so cast down that he returns home without seeing his brother William or his daughter Adele, who is at her uncle's in Atlanta.

"You didn't finish about Samson tyin' all them foxes' tails together," said Abner Daniel as he knocked the hot ashes from his pipe into the palm of his hand and tossed them into the chimney. "That sorter interested me. I wondered how that was a-goin' to end. I'd hate to have a passle o' foxes with torches to the'r tails turned loose in my wheat jest 'fore cuttin' time. It must 'a' been a sight. I wondered how that was a-goin' to end."

"You'll wonder how you're a-goin' to end if you don't be more respectful," said his sister.

"Like the foxes, I reckon," grinned Abner—"with a eternal torch tied to me. Well, ef I am treated that away I'll go into the business o' destruction an' set fire to everything I run across."

"Ain't you goin' to tell us what you did in Atlanta 'fore you have prayer?" asked Mrs. Bishop, almost resentfully.

"No, I hain't!" Bishop snapped. "I'll tell you soon enough. I reckon I won't read this mornin'. Let's pray."

They all knelt reverently and yet with some curiosity, for Bishop often suited his prayers to important occasions, and it struck them that he might now allude to the subject bound up within him.

"Lord, God Almighty," he began, his lower lip hanging and quivering, as were his hands clasped in the seat of his chair, "thou knowest the struggle thy creatures are makin' on the face of thy green globe to live up to the best of the'r lights an' standards. As I bend before thee this mornin' I realize how small a bein' I am in thy sight an' that I ort to bow in humble submission to thy will, an' I do. For many yeers this family has enjoyed thy bounteous blessings. We've had good health an' the influence of a Bible readin', God fearin' community, an' our childern has been educated in a way that raised 'em head an' shoulders above many o' the'r associates an' even blood kin. I don't know exactly whar an' how I've sinned, but I know I have displeased thee, fer thy scourge has fallen hard an' heavy on my ambitions. I wanted to see my boy heer a good, obedient son an' my daughter thar in Atlanta able to hold the'r heads up among the folks they mix with, an' so I reached out. Maybe it was forbidden fruit helt out by a snake in the devil's service. I don't know—thou knowest. Anyways, I steered my course out o' the calm waters o' content an' peace o' soul into the whirlpool rapids o' avarice an' greed. I 'lowed I was in a safe haven an' didn't dream o' the stormclouds hangin' over me till they bust in fury on my head. Now, Lord, my Father, give them hearts of patience an' forgiveness fer the blunders of thy servant. What I done I done in the bullheaded way that I've always done things, but I meant good and not harm. These things we ask in the name o' Jesus Christ, our blessed Lord and Master. Amen."

During the latter part of the prayer Mrs. Bishop had been staring at her husband through her parted fingers, her face pale and agitated, and as she rose her eyes were glued to his face.

"Now, Alfred," she said, "what are you goin' to tell us about the railroad? Is it as bad as brother Ab thought it would be?"

Bishop hesitated. It seemed as if he had even then to tear himself from the clutch of his natural stubbornness. He looked into all the anxious, waiting faces before he spoke, and then he gave in.

"Ab made a good guess. Ef I'd 'a' had his sense or Alan's, I'd 'a' made a better trader. It's like Ab said it was, only a sight wuss, a powerful sight wuss!"

"Wuss?" gasped his wife in fresh alarm. "How could it be wuss? Why, Brother Ab said"—

"I never have told you the extent o' my dealin's," went on Bishop in the current of confession. "I never even told Perkins yesterday. Fust an' last I've managed to rake in fully twenty thousand acres o' mountain land. I was goin' on what I 'lowed was a dead shore thing. I secured all I could lay my hands on, an' I did it in secret. I was afeerd even to tell you about what Perkins said, thinkin' it mought leak out an' sp'ile my chances."

"But, father," said Alan, "you didn't have enough money to buy all that land."

"I got it up"—Bishop's face was doggedly pale, almost defiant of his overwhelming disaster—"I mortgaged this farm to get money to buy Maybry and Morton's four thousand acres."

"The farm you was going to deed to Alan?" gasped his wife. "You didn't include that?"

"Not in that deal," groaned Bishop. "I swapped that to Phil Parsons fer his poplar an' cypress belt."

The words seemed to cut raspingly into the silence of the big room. Abner Daniel was the only one who seemed unmoved by the confession. He filled his pipe from the bowl on the mantelpiece and pressed the tobacco down with his forefinger; then he kicked the ashes in the chimney till he uncovered a small live coal. He eyed it for a moment, then dipped it up in the shovel, rolled it into his pipe and began to smoke.

"So I ain't a-goin' to git no yeerly pass over the new road," he said, his object being to draw his brother-in-law back to Perkins' action in the matter.

"Perkins was a-lyin' to me," answered Bishop. "He hain't admitted it yet, but he was a-lyin'. His object was to he'p the Tompkins sell out fer a decent price, but he can't be handled. He's got me on the hip."

"No," said Abner. "I'd ruther keep on swappin' gold dollars fer mountain land an' lettin' it go fer taxes 'an to try to beat a lawyer at his own game. A courthouse is like the devil's abode, easy to git into, no outlet an' nothin' but scorch while you are thar."

"Hush, fer the name o' goodness!" cried Mrs. Bishop, looking at her husband. "Don't you see he's dyin' from it? Are you all a-goin' to kill 'im? What does a few acres o' land ur debts amount to beside killin' a man 'at's been tryin' to help us all? Alfred,

"Wuss!" gasped his wife.

it ain't so mighty awful. You know it ain't! What did me an' you have when we started out but a log house boarded up on the outside, an' now we've got our childern educated an' all of us in good health. I railly believe it's a sin agin God's mercy fer us to moan an' fret under a thing like this."

"That's the talk," exclaimed Abner Daniel enthusiastically. "Now you are gittin' down to brass tacks. I've always contended"—

"For God's sake, don't talk that way!" said Bishop to his wife. "You don't mean a word of it. You are jest a-sayin' it to try to keep me from seein' what a fool I am."

"You needn't worry about me, father," said Alan firmly. "I am able to look out for myself and for you and mother. It's done, and the best thing to do is to look at it in a sensible way. Besides, a man with 20,000 acres of mountain land paid for is not broken by a long jump."

"Yes, I'm gone," said Bishop, a wavering look of gratitude in his eye as he turned to his son. "I figured on it all last night. I can't pay the heavy interest an' come out. I was playin' for big stakes an' got left. That's nothin' to do but give up. Me buyin' so much land has made it rise a little, but when I begin to try to sell I won't be able to give it away."

"Thar's some'n in that," opined Abner Daniel as he turned to leave the room. "I reckon I mought as well go haul that tan bark. I reckon you won't move out 'fore dinner."

Alan followed him out to the wagon.

"It's pretty tough, Uncle Ab," he said. "I hadn't the slightest idea it was so bad."

"I wasn't so shore," said Daniel. "But I was jest a-thinkin' in thar. You've got a powerful good friend in Rayburn Miller. He's the sharpest speculator in north Georgia. Ef I was you, I'd see him an' lay the whole thing before him. He'll be able to give you good advice, an' I'd take it. A feller that's made as much money as he has at his age won't give a friend bad advice."

"I thought of him," said Alan, "but I am a little afraid he will think we want to borrow money, and he never lets out a cent without the best security."

"Well, you needn't be afeerd on that score," laughed the old man as he reached up on the high wagon seat for his whip. "I once heerd 'im say that business an' friendship wouldn't mix any better'n oil an' water."

CHAPTER V.

THE following Saturday Alan went to Darley, as he frequently did, to spend Sunday. On such visits he usually stayed at the Johnston House, a great, old fashioned brick building that had survived the civil war and remained untouched by the shot and shell that hurtled over it during that dismal period when most of the population had "refugeed farther south." It had four stories and was too big for the town, which could boast of only 2,000 inhabitants, one-third of whom were black. However, the smallness of the town was in the hotel's favor, for in a place where no one would have patronized a second class hotel opposition would have died a natural death. The genial proprietor and his family were of the best blood, and the Johnston House was a sort of social clubhouse where the church people held their affairs and the less serious element gave dances. To be admitted to the hotel without having to pay for one's dinner was the hallmark of social approval. It was near the ancient looking brick car shed, under which the trains of two main lines ran, and a long freight warehouse of the same date and architecture. Around the hotel were clustered the chief financial enterprises of the town—its stores, postoffice, banks and a hall for theatrical purposes. Darley was the seat of its county, and another relic of the days before the war was its courthouse. The principal sidewalks were paved with brick, which in places were damp and green and sometimes raised above their common level by the undergrowing roots of the sycamore trees that edged the streets.

In the office of the hotel, just after registering his name, Alan met his friend Rayburn Miller, for whose business ability, it may be remembered, Abner Daniel had such high regard. He was a fine looking man of thirty-three, tall and of athletic build. He had dark eyes and hair and a ruddy, outdoor complexion.

"Hello!" he said cordially. "I thought you might get in today, so I came round to see. Sorry you've taken a room. I wanted you to sleep with me tonight. Sister's gone, and no one is there but the cook. Hello, I must be careful. I'm drumming for business right under Sanford's nose."

"I'll make you stay with me to make up for it," said Alan as the clerk behind the counter laughed good naturedly over the allusion to himself.

"Blamed if I don't think about it," said Miller. "Come round to the office. I want to talk to you. I reckon you've got every plow going such weather as this."

"Took my horse out of the field to drive over," said Alan as they went out and turned down to a side street where there was a row of law offices, all two roomed buildings, single storied, built of brick and bearing battered tin signs. One of these buildings was Miller's, which, like all its fellows, had its door wide open, thus inviting all the lawyers in the "row" and all students of law to enter and borrow books or use the ever open desk.

Rayburn Miller was a man among ten thousand in his class. Just after being graduated at the state university he was admitted to the bar and took up the practice of law. He could undoubtedly have made his way at this alone, had not other and more absorbing talents developed within him. Having had a few thousand dollars left him at his father's death, he began to utilize this capital in "note shaving" and other methods of turning over money for a handsome profit furnished by the unsettled conditions, the time and locality. He soon became an adept in many lines of speculation, and as he was remarkably shrewd and cautious it is not to be wondered at that he soon accumulated quite a fortune.

"Take a seat," he said to Alan as they went into the office, and he threw himself into the revolving chair at his littered desk. "I want to talk to you. I suppose you are in for some fun. The boys are getting up a dance at the hotel, and they want your dollar to help pay the band. It's a good one this time. They've ordered it from Chattanooga. It will be down on the 7:35. Got a match?"

Alan had not, and Miller turned his head to the open door. An old negro happened to be passing, with an ax on his shoulder.

"Heigh, there, Uncle Ned!" Miller called out.

The negro had passed, but he heard his name called, and he came back and looked in at the door.

"Want me, Marse Rayburn?"

"Yes, you old scamp. Get me a match or I'll shoot the top of your head off."

"All right, suh; all right, Marse Rayburn!"

"You ought to know him," said Miller, with a smile as the negro hurried into the adjoining office. "His wife cooks for Colonel Barclay. He might tell you if Miss Dolly's going tonight, but I know she is. Frank Hillhouse checked her name off the list, and I heard him say she'd accepted. By the way, that fellow will do to watch. I think he and the colonel are pretty thick."

"Will you never let up on that?" Alan asked, with a flush.

"I don't know that I shall," laughed Rayburn. "It seems so funny to see you in love, or, rather, to see you think you are."

"I have never said I was," said Alan sharply.

"But you show it so blamed plain," said Miller.

"Here 'tis, Marse Rayburn. Marse Trabue said you could have a whole box of you'd put up wid sulphur ones."

Miller took the matches from the outstretched hand and tossed a cigar to Alan. "Say, Uncle Ned," he asked, "do you know that gentleman?" indicating Alan with a nod of his head.

A quizzical look dawned in the old negro's eyes, and then he gave a resounding guffaw and shook all over.

"I reckon I know his boss, Marse Rayburn," he tittered.

"That's a good one on you, Alan," laughed Miller. "He knows your 'boss.' I'll have to spring that on you when I see you two together."

As the negro left the office Mr. Trabue leaned in the doorway, holding his battered silk hat in his hand and mopping his perspiring face.

He nodded to Alan and said to Miller, "Do you want to write?"

"Not any more for you, thanks," said Miller. "I have the backache now from those depositions I made out for you yesterday."

"Oh, I don't mean that," the old lawyer assured him, "but I had to borrow yore ink just now, an', seein' you at yore desk, I thought you might need it."

"Oh, if I do," jested Miller, "I can buy another bottle at the bookstore. They pay me a commission on the ink I furnish the row. They let me have it cheap by the case. What stumps me is that you looked in to see if I needed it. You are breaking the rule, Mr. Trabue. They generally make me hunt for my office furniture when I need it. They've borrowed everything I have except my iron safe. Their ignorance of the combination, its weight and their confirmed laziness are all that saved it."

When the old lawyer had gone, the two friends sat and smoked in silence for several minutes. Alan was studying Miller's face. Something told him that the news of his father's disaster had reached him and that Miller was going to speak of it. He was not mistaken, for the lawyer soon broached the subject.

"I've been intending to ride out to see you almost every day this week," he said, "but business has always prevented my leaving town."

"Then you have heard"—

"Yes, Alan, I'm sorry, but it's all over the country. A man's bad luck spreads as fast as good war news. I heard it the next day after your father returned from Atlanta, and saw the whole thing in a flash. The truth is, Perkins had the cheek to try his scheme on me. I'm the first target of every scoundrel who has something to sell, and I've learned many of their tricks. I didn't listen to all he had to say, but got rid of him as soon as I could. You must not blame the old man. As I see it now, it was a most plausible scheme, and the shame of it is that no one can be handled for it. Your father will have to grin and bear it. He really didn't pay a fabulous price for the land, and if he were in a condition to hold on to it for, say, twenty-five years he might not lose money. But who can do that sort of thing? I have acres and acres of mountain land offered me at a much lower figure, but what little money I've made has been made by turning my capital rapidly. Have you seen Dolly since it happened?"

"No; not for two weeks," replied Alan. "I went to church with her Sunday before last and have not seen her since. I was wondering if she had heard about it."

"Oh, yes; she's heard it from the colonel. It may surprise you, but the thing has rubbed him the wrong way."

"Why, I don't understand," exclaimed Alan. "Has he"—

"The old man has had about 2,000 acres of land over near your father's purchases, and it seems that he was closely watching all your father's deals and, in spite of his judgment to the contrary, Mr. Bishop's confidence in that sort of real estate has made him put a higher valuation on his holdings over there. So you see, now that your father's mistake is common talk, he is forced to realize a big slump, and he wants to blame some one for it. I don't know but that your father or some one else made him an offer for his land, which he refused. So you see it is only natural for him to be disgruntled."

"I see," said Alan. "I reckon you heard that from Miss Dolly?"

Miller smoked slowly.

"Yes"—after a pause—"I dropped in there night before last, and she told me about it. She's not one of your surface creatures. She talks sensibly on all sorts of subjects. Of course she's not going to show her heart to me, but she couldn't hide the fact that your trouble was worrying her a good deal. I think she'd like to see you at the ball tonight. Frank Hillhouse will give you a dance or two. He's going to be hard to beat. He's the most attentive fellow I ever ran across. He's got a new buggy—a regular hug-me-tight—and a high stepping Kentucky mare for the summer campaign. He'll have some money at his father's death, and all the old women say he's the best catch in town because he doesn't [illegible], has a Sunday school class and [illegible] have money. We are all going to [illegible]ear evening suits tonight. There are some girls from Rome visiting Hattie Alexander, and we don't want them to smell hay in our hair. You know how the boys are. Unless all of us wear spiketails no one will; so we took a vote on it, and we'll be on a big dike. There'll be a devilish lot of misfits. Those who haven't suits are borrowing in all directions. Frank Buford will rig out in Colonel Day's antebellum toggery. Did you bring yours?"

"It happens to be at Parker's shop, being pressed," said Alan.

"I've had three in the last six years," laughed Miller. "You know how much larger Todd Selman is than I am. He burst one of mine from collar to waist last summer at the Springs. I can't refuse 'em, God bless 'em! Jeff Higgins married in my best Prince Albert last week and spilled boiled custard on it, but he's got a good wife and a fair job on a railroad in Tennessee now. I'd have given him the coat, but he'd never have accepted it and been mad the rest of his life at my offer. Parker said somebody had tried to scrape the custard off with a sharp knife and that he had a lot of trouble cleaning it. I wore the coat yesterday and felt like I was going to be married. Todd must have left some of his shivers in it. I reckon that's as near as I'll ever come to the hitching post."

Just then a tall, thin man entered. He wore a rather threadbare frock coat, unevenly bound with braid, and had a sallow, sunken and rather long face. It was Samuel Craig, one of the two private bankers of the town. He was about sixty years of age and had a pronounced stoop.

"Hello!" he said pleasantly. "You young bloods are a-goin' to play smash with the gals' hearts tonight, I reckon. I say, go it while you are young. Rayburn, I want to get one of them iron-

"Hello!" he said pleasantly.

clad mortgage blanks. I've got a feller that is disposed to wiggle, an' I want to tie him up. The inventor of that form is a blessing to mankind."

"Help yourself," smiled Miller. "I was just telling Mr. Trabue that I was running a stationery store, and if I was out of anything in the line I'd order it for him."

The banker laughed good humoredly as he selected several of the blanks from the drawer Rayburn had opened in the desk.

"I hope you won't complain as much of hard times as Jake Pitner does," he chuckled. "I passed his store the other day, where he was standin' over some old magazines that he'd marked down. "'How's trade?' I asked 'im. 'It's gone clean to the dogs,' he said, and I noticed he'd been drinking. 'I'll give you a sample of my customers,' he went on. 'A feller from the mountains come in jest now an' asked the price of these magazines. I told him the regular price was 25 cents apiece, but I'd marked 'em down to five. He looked at 'em for about half an hour an' then said he wasn't goin' out o' town till sundown an' believed he'd take one if I'd read it to him.'"

Craig laughed heartily as he finished the story, and Alan and Miller joined in.

"I want you to remember that yarn when you get to overcheckin' on me," said Craig jestingly. "I was just noticin' this mornin' that you have drawn more than your deposit."

"Overchecked?" said Miller. "You'll think I have when all my checks get in. I mailed a dozen today. They'll slide in on you in about a week, and you'll telegraph Bradstreet's to know how I stand. This is a fine banker," Miller went on to Alan. "He twits me about overchecking occasionally. Let me tell you something. Last year I happened to have $10,000 on my hands waiting for a cotton factory to begin operations down in Alabama, and, as I had no idea when the money would be called for, I placed it with his nibs here 'on call.' Things got in a tangle at the mill, and they kept waiting, and our friend here concluded I had given it to him."

"I thought you had forgotten you had it," said Craig, with another of his loud, infectious laughs.

"Anyway," went on Miller, "I got a sudden order for the amount and ran in on him on my way from the postoffice. I made out my check and stuck it under his nose. Great Scott! You ought to have seen him wilt. I don't believe he had half of it in the house, but he had ten million excuses. He kept me waiting two days and hustled around to beat the band. He thought I was going to close him up."

"That was a close shave," admitted Craig. "Never mind about the overchecking, my boy. Keep it up, if it will help you. You are doing altogether too much business with the other bank to suit me anyway."

CHAPTER VI.

THE young people assembled slowly at the dance that evening. Toward dark it had begun raining, and, according to custom, two livery stable carriages, called "hacks," were engaged to convey all the couples to and from the hotel.

Everything in life is relative, and to young people who often went to even less pretentious entertainments this affair was rather impressive in its elegance. Lamps shone everywhere, and bunches of candles blazed and sputtered in nooks hung about with evergreens. The girls were becomingly attired in light evening gowns, and many of them were good looking, refined and graceful. All were soft spoken and easy in their manners and either wore or carried flowers. The evening suits of the young men were well in evidence and more noticeable to the wearers themselves than they would have been to a spectator used to conventional style of dress. They could be seen in all stages of inadaptability to figures too large or too small, and even after the dance began there were several swaps and a due amount of congratulation on the improvement from the appreciative fair sex. The young lady accompanying each young man had pinned a small bouquet on his lapel, so that it would have been impossible to tell whether a man had a natural taste for flowers or was the willing victim to a taste higher than his own.

Rayburn Miller and Alan sat smoking and talking in the room of the latter till half past 9 o'clock, and then they went down. As a general rule, young men were expected to escort ladies to dances when the young men went at all, but Alan was often excused from so doing on account of living in the country, and Miller had broken down every precedent in that respect and never invited a girl to go with him. He atoned for this shortcoming by contributing most liberally to every entertainment given by the young people, even when he was out of town. He used to say he liked to graze and nibble at such things and feel free to go to bed or business at will.

As the two friends entered the big parlor Alan espied the girl about whom he had been thinking all day. She was seated in one of the deep, lace curtained windows behind the piano. Frank Hillhouse was just presenting to her a faultlessly attired traveling salesman. At this juncture one of the floor managers with a white rosette on his lapel called Miller away to ask his advice about some details and Alan turned out of the parlor into the wide corridor which ran through the house. He did this in obedience to another unwritten law governing Darley's social intercourse—that it would be impolite for a resident gentleman to intrude himself upon a stranger who had just been introduced to a lady. So he went down to the ground floor and strolled into the office. It was full of tobacco smoke and a throng of men, some of whom were from the country and others from the town drawn to the hotel by the festivities. From the office a door opened into a bar and billiard room, whence came the clicking of ivory balls and the grounding of cues. Another door led into the large dining room, which had been cleared of its tables that it might be used for dancing. There were a sawing of fiddles, the twanging of guitars, the jingle of tambourines and the groaning of a bass viol. The musicians, black and yellow, occupied chairs on one of the tables, which had been placed against the wall, and one of the floor managers was engaged in whittling paraffin candles over the floor and rubbing it in with his feet. Seeing what he was doing, some of the young men, desirous of trying their new patent leather pumps, came in and began to waltz singly and in couples.

When everything was in readiness, the floor manager piloted the dancers downstairs. From the office Alan saw them filing into the big room and taking seats in the chairs arranged against the walls on all sides. He saw Frank Hillhouse and Dolly Barclay sit down near the band; the salesman had disappeared. Alan threw his cigar away and went straight to her.

"Oh, here you are!" laughed Frank Hillhouse as Alan shook hands with her. "I told Miss Dolly coming on that the west wind would blow you this way, and when I saw Ray Miller just now I knew you'd struck the town."

"It wasn't exactly the wind," replied Alan. "I'm afraid you will forget me if I stay on the farm all the time."

"We certainly are glad to have you," smiled Miss Barclay.

"I knew she'd say that—I knew it, I knew it," said Hillhouse. "A girl can always think of nicer things to say to a feller than his rival can. Old Squire Trabue was teasing me the other day about how hard you was to beat, Bishop, but I told him the bigger the war the more victory for somebody, and, as the feller said, I tote fair and am aboveboard."

Alan greeted this with an all but visible shudder. There was much in his dignified bearing and good appearance to commend him to the preference of any thinking woman, especially when contrasted to Hillhouse, who was only a little taller than Dolly and was showing himself even at a greater disadvantage in his unrefined allusions to his and Alan's attentions to her. Indeed Alan was sorry for the spectacle the fellow was making of himself and tried to pass it over.

"I usually come in on Saturdays," he explained.

"That's true," said Dolly, with one of her rare smiles.

"Yes"—Hillhouse took another header into forbidden waters—"he's about joined your church, they tell me."

Alan treated this with an indulgent smile. He did not dislike Hillhouse, but he did not admire him, and he had never quite liked his constant attentions to Miss Barclay. But it was an acknowledged fact among the society girls of Darley that if a girl refused to go out with any young man in good standing it was not long before she was left at home oftener than was pleasant. Dolly was easily the best looking girl in the room—not perhaps the most daintily pretty, but she possessed a beauty which strength of character and intellect alone could give to a face already well featured. Even her physical beauty alone was of that texture which gives the beholder an agreeable sense of solidity. She was well formed, above medium height, had a beautiful neck and shoulders, dark gray eyes and abundant golden brown hair.

"May I see your card?" asked Alan. "I came early to secure at least one."

At this Frank Hillhouse burst out laughing, and she smiled up at Alan. "He's been teasing me all evening about the predicament I'm in," she explained. "The truth is, I'm not going to dance at all. The presiding elder happened in town today on his way through and is at our house. You know how bitter he is against church members dancing. At first mamma said I shouldn't come a step, but Mr. Hillhouse and I succeeded in getting up a compromise. I can only look on. But my friends are having pity on me and filling my card for what they call stationary dances."

Alan laughed as he took the card, which was already almost filled, and wrote his name in one of the blank spaces. Some one called Hillhouse away, and then an awkward silence fell upon them. For the first time Alan noticed a worried expression on her face.

"You have no buttonhole bouquet," she said, noticing his bare lapel. "That's what you get for not bringing a girl. Let me make you one."

"I wish you would," he said thoughtfully, for as she began to search among her flowers for some rosebuds and leaves he noted again the expression of countenance that had already puzzled him.

"Since you are so popular," he went on, his eyes on her deft fingers, "I'd better try to make another engagement. I'd as well confess that I came in town solely to ask you to let me take you to church tomorrow evening."

He saw her start. She raised her eyes to his almost imploringly, and then she looked down. He saw her breast heave suddenly as with tightened lips she leaned forward to pin the flowers on his coat. The jewels in her rings flashed under his eyes. There was a delicate perfume in the air about her glorious head. He had never seen her look so beautiful before. He wondered at her silence at just such a moment. The tightness of her lips gave way, and they fell to trembling when she started to speak.

"I hardly know what to say," she began. "I—I—you know I said the presiding elder was at our house, and"—

"Oh, I understand," broke in Alan; "that's all right. Of course, use your own"—

"No, I must be plain with you," she broke in, raising a pair of helpless, tor-

"I hardly know what to say," she began.

tured eyes to his. "You will not think I had anything to do with it. In fact, my heart is almost broken. I'm very, very unhappy."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

His Trial.

"Ah, Sam, so you've been in trouble, eh?"

"Yes, Jim."

"Well, cheer up, man. Adversity tries us and shows up our better qualities."

"Ah, but adversity didn't try me. It was a solemn old judge, and he showed up my worst qualities."

Something In the Filling.

"Do you know you can tell a man's disposition by his 'teeth?'" asked the girl who believes in signs, bumps and palm reading.

"How interesting!" said her companion, who did not believe in anything. "Then Jack must have a golden disposition."

Those Who Roost.

Newcome—They tell me hens never lay eggs at night. Did you know that?

Subbubs—Oh, yes.

Newcome—Strange, isn't it?

Subbubs—Not at all. All the hens are roosters at night, you know.—Philadelphia Press.

The life of every man is a diary in which he means to write one story and writes another.

I. C. R. R. Excursion.

On July 20th, the Illinois Central R. R. will sell excursion tickets to Minneapolis and St. Paul and return at the rate of $5.00 for the round trip, limited to return July 25th, to be sold for special train leaving Manchester at 10.37 noon and arriving at Minneapolis at 9.05 p. m. and at St. Paul at 9.40 p. m.

J. F. MERRY,
A. G. P. A. I. C. R. R.

Lidderdale and Lanesboro are bright new towns on the Chicago Great Western Railway. For particulars write Edwin B. Magill, Mgr., Townsite Dep't., Fort Dodge, Iowa. 25w4

The new town of Ludderdale, Carroll County, on the Omaha extension of the Chicago Great Western Railway will be opened to the public by an auction sale of lots about the middle of July. For particulars address Edwin D. Magill, Mgr., Townsite Dep't., Fort Dodge, Ia. 25w4

Homeseekers Excursions.

One-way rate with two dollars additional, for round trip tickets on sale the first and third Tuesdays of every month, with limit for return 21 days from date of sale. See ticket agents of Minneapolis & St. Louis for information as to rates, etc, or address A. B. Cutts, G. P. & T. A. 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,
26tf Manchester, Iowa.

Notice of Probate of Will.

STATE OF IOWA, Delaware County } ss

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

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

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, biliousness 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.

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Baths
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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.

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

W. N. BOYNTON.

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Manchester, Iowa.
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