ABNER DANIEL

By . . .
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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. IV.—Bishop has bought 20,000 acres of mountain land in all and mortgaged his plantation. Abner tells Alan to consult Rayburn [illegible] land speculator. V.—Miller tells Alan [illegible] at Darley. Alan's sweetheart, [illegible]y, will be there. Frank Hillhouse [illegible] Dolly. Craig, the banker. VI.—Dolly tells Alan that her father objects to his love quest. Barclay has also been caught on mountain land. VIII.—Miller gives Alan cynical advice on love. Dolly's mother talks to her of her own love experiences. Dolly unhappy.

CHAPTER IX.

THERE is a certain class of individuals that will gather around a man in misfortune, and it differs very little, if it differs at all, from the class that warms itself in the glow of a man's prosperity.

Horses were hitched to the fence from the front gate all the way round to the side entrance. The mountain people seemed to have left their various occupations to subtly enjoy the spectacle of a common man like themselves who had reached too far after forbidden fruit and lay maimed and torn before them.

Their disapproval of the old man's effort to hurry Providence could not have been better shown than in the failure of them all to comment on the rascally conduct of the Atlanta lawyer. They even chuckled over that part of the incident. To their minds Perkins was a sort of faroff personification of a necessary evil, who, like the devil himself, was evidently created to show mortals their limitations.

The Rev. Charles B. Dole, a tall, spare man of sixty, who preached the first, second, third and fourth Sundays of each month in four different meeting houses within a day's ride of Bishop's, came around as the guest of the farmhouse as often as his circuit would permit. He was called the "fightin' preacher" because he had had several fearless hand to hand encounters with certain moonshiners whose conduct he had ventured to call ungodly because unlawful.

On the second Saturday after Bishop's mishap, as Dole was to preach the next day at Rock Crest meeting house, he rode up as usual and turned his horse into the stable and fed him with his own hands. Then he joined Abner Daniel on the veranda. Abner had seen him ride up and purposely buried his head in his newspaper to keep from offering to take the horse, for Abner did not like the preacher "any hurt," as he would have put it.

Dole did not care much for Abner either. They had engaged in several doctrinal discussions in which the preacher had waxed furious over some of Daniel's views, which he described as decidedly unorthodox. Daniel had kept his temper beautifully and had the appearance of being amused through it all, and this Dole found harder to forgive than anything Abner had said.

"You all have had some trouble, I heer, sence I saw you last," said the preacher as he sat down and began to wipe his perspiring brow with a big handkerchief.

"Well, I reckon it mought be called that," Abner replied as he carefully folded his newspaper and put it into his coat pocket. "None of us was expectin' of it, an' it sorter bu'sted our calculations. Alf had laid out to put new high back benches in Rock Crest, an' new lamps an' one thing another, an' it seems to me"—Abner wiped his too facile mouth—"like I heerd 'im say one day that you wasn't paid enough fer yore thunder an' that he'd stir around an' see what could be done." Abner's eyes twinkled. "But, lawsy me! I reckon ef he kin possibly raise the scads to pay the tax on his investment next yeer he'll do all the Lord expects."

"Huh, I reckon!" grunted Dole, irritated, as usual, by Abner's double meaning. "I take it that the Lord hain't got much to do with human speculations one way or other."

"Ef I just had that scamp that roped 'im in before me a minute, I'd fix 'im," said Abner. "Do you know what denomination Perkins belongs to?"

"No, I don't," Dole blurted out, "an', what's more, I don't care."

"Well, I acknowledge it sorter interests me," went on our philosopher in an inscrutable tone, "beca'se, Brother Dole, you kin often trace a man's good ur bad doin's to his belief in Bible matters. Maybe you don't remember Jabe Kynan that stold Thad Wilson's stump suckin' hoss an' was ketched an' put up. I was at the courthouse in Darley when he receized his sentence. His wife sent me to 'im to carry his pipe an' one thing or other—a pair o' socks an' other necessary tricks, a little can o' lye soap, fer one thing. She hadn't the time to go, as she said she had a patch o' young corn to hoe out. I found 'im as happy as ef he was goin' off on a excursion. He laughed an' 'lowed it ud be some time 'fore he got back, an' I wondered what could 'a' made 'im so contented, so I made some inquiries on that line. I found that he was a firm believer in predestination an' that what was to be was foreordained. He said that he firmly believed he was predestinated to go to the coal mines fer hoss stealin', an' that life was too short to be kickin' ag'in the Lord's way o' runnin' matters. Besides, he said, he'd heerd that they issued a plug o' tobacco a week to chawin' prisoners, an' he could prove that he was one o' that sort ef they'd look how he'd ground his jaw teeth down to the gums."

"Huh!" grunted Dole again, his sharp gray eyes on Abner's face as if he half believed that some of his own theories were being sneered at. It was true that he, being a Methodist, had not advocated a belief in predestination, but Abner Daniel had on more than one occasion shown a decided tendency to bunch all stringent religious opinions together and cast them down as out of date. When in doubt in a conversation with Abner, the preacher assumed a coldness on the outside that was often not consistent with the fires within him. "I don't see what all that's got to do with Brother Bishop's mistake," he said frigidly as he leaned back in his chair.

"It sets me to wonderin' what denomination Perkins belongs to, that's all," said Abner, with another smile. "I know in reason he's a big Ike in some church in Atlanta, fer I never knowed a lawyer that wasn't foremost in that way o' doin' good. I'll bet a hoecake he belongs to some hifalutin' crowd o' worshipers that kneel down on saft cushions an' believe in scoopin' in all they kin in the Lord's name, an' that charity begins at home. I think that myse'f, Brother Dole, fer thar never was a plant as hard to git rooted as charity is, an' a body ought to have it whar they kin watch it close. It'll die a heap o' times ef you jest look at it, an' it mighty nigh always has bad soil ur a drought to contend with."

Just then Pole Baker, who has already been introduced to the reader, rode up to the fence and hitched his horse. He nodded to the two men on the veranda and went around to the smokehouse to get a piece of bacon Bishop had promised to sell him on credit.

"Huh!" Dole grunted, and he crossed his long legs and swung his foot up and down nervously. He had the look of a man who was wondering why such insufferable bores as Abner should so often accompany a free dinner. He had never felt drawn to the man, and it irritated him to think that just when his mental faculties needed rest Abner always managed to introduce the very topics which made it necessary for him to keep his wits about him.

"Take that feller thar," Abner went on, referring to Baker. "He's about the hardest customer in this county, an' yet he's bein' managed right now. He's got a wife an' seven children an' is a holy terror when he gits drunk. He used to be the biggest daredevil moonshiner in all these mountains, but Alan kept befriendin' 'im fust one way an' another tell he up one day an' axed Alan what he could do fer 'im. Alan ain't none o' yore shoutin' kind o' Christians. He shakes a nimble toe at a shindig when he wants an' knows the ace from a tenspot, but he gits thar with every claw in the air when some'n' has to be done. When Pole axed 'im that Alan jest said, as quiet as ef he was axin' 'im fer a match to light a cigar, 'Quit yore moonshinin', Pole.' That was all he said. Pole looked 'im straight in the face fer a minute an' then said:

"'Alan Bishop, you don't mean that!'

"'Yes, I do, Pole,' said Alan. 'Quit! Quit smack off!'

"'You ax that as a favor?' said Pole.

"'Yes, as a favor,' said Alan. 'An' you are a-goin' to do it too.'

"Then Pole begun to contend with 'im. 'You are a-axin' that beca'se you think I'll be ketched up with,' he said, 'but I tell you the' ain't no man on the face o' the earth that could find my still now. You could stand in two feet of the door to it all day an' not find it if you looked fer it with a spyglass. I kin make bug juice all the rest o' my life an' sell it without bein' ketched.'

"'I want you to give it up,' said Alan, an' Pole did. It was like pullin' an eyetooth, but Pole yanked it out. Alan is workin' on 'im now to git 'im to quit liquor, but that ain't so easy. He could walk a crack with a gallon sloshin' about in 'im. Now, as I started to say, Alan 'ain't got no cut an' dried denomination an' don't have to walk any particular kind o' foot log to do his work, but it's a-goin' on jest the same. Now I don't mean no reflection on yore way o' hitchin' wings on folks, but I do believe you could preach yore sermons—sech as they are—in Pole Baker's yeers till Gabriel blowed his lungs out, an' Pole 'd still be moonshinin'. An' sometimes I think that sech fellers as Alan Bishop ort to be paid fer what they do in betterin' the world. I don't see why you fellers ort always to be allowed to rake in the jack pot unless you'd accomplish more'n outsiders that jest turn the'r hands to the job at odd times."

Dole drew himself up straight and glared at the offender.

"I think that is a rather personal remark, Brother Daniel," he said coldly.

"Well, maybe it is," returned Abner; "but I didn't mean fer it to be. I've heerd you praise up certain preachers fer the good they was a-doin', an' I saw no harm in mentionin' Alan's method. I reckon it's jest a case o' the shoe bein' on another foot. I was goin' to tell you how this misfortune o' Alf's had affected Pole. He's been like a crazy man ever since it happened. It's been all Alan could do to keep 'im from goin' to Atlanta an' chokin' the life out o' Perkins. Pole got so mad when he wouldn't let 'im go that he went off cussin' 'im fer all he was worth. I wonder what sort of a denomination a man ud fit into that 'll cuss his best friends black an' blue beca'se they won't let 'im fight fer 'em. Yes, he'll fight, an' ef he ever does jine the ranks above he'll do the work o' ten men when thar's blood to spill. I seed 'im in a row once durin' election when he was leggin' fer a friend o' his'n. He stood right at the polls an' wanted to slug every man that voted ag'in 'im. He knocked three men's teeth down the'r throats an' bunged up two more so that they looked like they had on false faces."

Here the preacher permitted himself to laugh. Being a fighting man himself, his heart warmed toward a man who seemed to be born to that sort of thing.

"He looks like he could do a sight of it," was his comment.

At this juncture the subject of the conversation came round the house, carrying a big piece of bacon wrapped in a tow grain bag.

"Say thar, Pole," Abner called out to the long, lank fellow. "We are a-goin' to have preachin' at Rock Crest tomorrow. You'd better have a shirt washed an' hung out to dry. They are a-beatin' the bushes fer yore sort."

Pole Baker paused and brushed back his long, thick hair from his heavy eyebrows.

"I've been a-waitin' to see ef meetin' ever 'd do you any good, Uncle Ab," he laughed. "They tell me the more you go the wuss you git to be. Nell Filmore said t'other day ef you didn't quit shootin' off yore mouth they'd give you a trial in meetin'."

Abner laughed good naturedly as he spat over the edge of the veranda floor to the ground.

"That's been talked, I know, Pole," he said, "but they don't mean it. They all know how to take my fun. But you come on to meetin'. It will do you good."

"Well, maybe I will," promised Pole. And he came to the steps, and, putting his bacon down, he bent toward them.

"It's a powerful hard matter to know exactly what's right an' what's wrong in some things," he said. "Now, looky heer." Thrusting his hand down into the pocket of his trousers, he drew out a piece of quartz rock, with a lump of yellow gold about the size of a pea half imbedded in it. "That thar's puore gold. I got it this away: A feller that used to be my right bower in my still business left me when I swore off an' went over to Dalonega to work in them mines. T'other day he was back on a visit, an' he give me this chunk an' said he'd found it. Now, I know in reason that he nabbed it while he was at work, but I don't think I'd have a right to report it to the minin' company, an' so I'm jest obleeged to receive stolen goods. It ain't wuth more'n a dollar, they tell me, an' I'll hang on to it, I reckon, ruther 'n have a laborin' man discharged from a job. I'm tryin' my level best to live up to the line now, an' I don't know how to manage sech a thing as that. I've come to the conclusion that no harm will be done nohow, beca'se miners ain't too well paid anyway, an' ef I jest keep it an' don't git no good out of it I won't be in it any more 'n ef I'd never got hold o' the blamed thing."

"But the law, Brother Baker," said Dole solemnly. "Without the law we'd be an awful lot o' people, an' every man ort to uphold it. Render the things that are Cæsar's unto Cæsar."

Pole's face was blank for a moment, and Abner came to his rescue with a broad smile and sudden laugh.

"I reckon you don't remember him, Pole," he said. "He's dead. He was a nigger that used to belong to old man Throgmartin, in the cove. He used to be sech an awful thief during slavery days that it got to be a common sayin' that everything lyin' round mought as well be his'n, fer he'd take it sooner ur later anyways."

"I've heerd o' that nigger," said Pole, much to the preacher's disgust, which grew as Pole continued: "Well, they say a feller that knows the law is broke an' don't report it is as guilty as the man who does the breakin'. Now, Mr. Dole, you know how I come by this nugget, an' ef you want to do your full duty you'll ride over to Dalonega an' report it to the right parties. I can't afford the trip."

Abner laughed out at this and then forced a serious look on his face. "That's what you railly ort to do, Brother Dole," he said. "Them Cæsars over thar ud appreciate it."

Then Mrs. Bishop came out to shake hands with the preacher and invited him to go to his room to wash his face and hands. As the tall man followed his hostess away Abner winked slyly at Pole and laughed under his long, scrawny hand.

"Uncle Ab, you ort to be killed," smiled Pole. "You've been settin' heer the last half hour pokin' fun at that feller, an' you know it. Well, I'm goin' on home. Sally's a-goin' to fry some o' this truck fer me, an' I'm as hungry as a bear."

A few minutes after he had gone Dole came out of his room and sat down in his chair again. "That seems to be a sorter bright young man," he remarked.

"As bright as a new dollar," returned Abner in a tone of warm admiration. "Did you notice that big, wedge shaped head o' his'n? It's plumb full o' brains. One day a feller come down to Filmore's store. He made a business o' feelin' o' heads an' writin out charts at 25 cents apiece. He didn't waste much time on the rest o' the scabs he examined, but when he got to Pole's noggin he talked fer a good hour. I never heerd the like. He said ef his talents had been properly directed Pole ud 'a' made a big public man. He said he hadn't run across sech a head in a month o' Sundays. He was right, you bet, an' every one o' the seven brats Pole's got is jest as peert as he is. They are a-growin' up in idleness an' rags too. I wisht I could meet some o' them durn big Yankees that are a-sendin' the'r money down heer an' buildin' fine schools to educate niggers an' neglectin' the'r own race beca'se it fit agin' 'em. You cayn't hardly beat larnin' into a nigger's head, an' it ud be only common sense to spend money whar it ud do the most good. I ain't got nothin' agin' a nigger bein' larnt to read an' write, but I cayn't stomach the'r bein' forced ahead o' deservin' white folks sooner 'n the Lord counted

"Say thar, Pole," Abner called out.

on. Them kind o' Yankees is the same sort that makes pets o' dogs an' pampers 'em up when pore white children is in need of food an' affection."

"Pole looks like he had natural capacity," said Dole. He was fond of conversing with Abner on any topic except that of religious matters.

"He'd make a bang up detective," laughed Abner. "One day I was at Filmore's store. Nell sometimes, when he's rushed, gits Pole to clerk fer 'im, beca'se he's quick at figures. It happened that Pole had the store to 'imse'f one day when Nell had gone off to cut down a bee tree with a passle o' neighbors, an' a triflin' feller come in an' begun to nose about. An' when Pole's back was turned to weigh up some cotton in the seed he stole a pocketbook out o' the showcase. I reckon Pole didn't like his looks much nohow, fer as soon as the skunk had gone he begun to look about to see ef he'd tuck anything. All at once he missed the pocketbook an' told Nell that night that he was mighty nigh shore the feller lifted it, but he couldn't railly swear to it. About a week after that he seed the same feller comin' down the road headed fer the store on his gray mule. Me an' Nell was both thar, an' Pole hustled us in the back room an' told us to stay thar. He said he was a-goin' to find out ef the feller stold the book. Nell was afeerd of a row an' tried to prevent 'im, but he jest shoved us back an' shet the door on us. Nell got 'im a crack in the partition, an' I found me a knothole.

"The feller hitched an' come in an' said howdy do an' started to take a cheer nigh the door, but Pole stopped 'im.

"'Come heer to the showcase,' ses he. 'I want to show you some'n'.' The feller went, an' I seed Pole yank out the box 'at had the rest o' the pocketbooks in it. 'Look y' heer,' Pole said in a loud, steady voice—you could 'a' heerd 'im clean to the creek—'look y' heer. The regular price o' these books is fifty cents; that's what we sell 'em fer; but you've got to run yore hand down in yore pocket an' give me a dollar fer one quicker'n you ever made a trade in yore life.'

"'What do you mean?' the feller said.

"'I mean exactly what I said, an' you are a-losin' time,' said Pole, talkin' louder an' louder. 'The price is fifty cents; but you got to gi' me a dollar fer one. Haul 'er out, my friend; haul 'er out! It'll be the cheapest thing you ever bought in yore life.'

"The feller was as white as a sheet. He gulped two or three times 'fore he spoke; then he said: 'I know what you think. You think I took one t'other day when I was lookin' in the showcase, but you are mistaken.'

"'I never said a word about you takin' one,' Pole yelled at 'im, 'but you'd better yank out that dollar an' buy one. *You need it.*'

"The feller did it. I heerd the money clink as he laid it on the glass, an' I knowed he was convicted.

"'They are only wuth 60 cents,' he said kinder faintlike.

"'Yo're a liar,' Pole yelled at 'im, 'fer you've jest paid a dollar fer one on yore own account. Now I'll jest give you two minutes to straddle that mule. Ef you don't, I'll take you to the sheriff myself, you thief.'

"'I've always done my tradin' heer,' said the feller, thinkin' that 'd sorter pacify Pole, but he said: 'Yes, an' yore stealin', too, I reckon, you black livered jailbird. Git out, git out!'

"Me 'n' Nell come in when the feller 'd gone, but Pole was actually too mad to speak. 'He got off too durned light,' he said after awhile. 'I could 'a' sold 'im a big bill o' goods at 100 per cent profit, fer he had plenty o' money. Now he's ridin' off laughin' at me.'"

CHAPTER X.

NEIL FILMORE'S store was about half a mile from Bishop's house, at the crossing of the Darley road and another leading into east Tennessee. Alan had gone down there one day to engage white labor to work in his growing cotton, negroes being scarce owing to the tendency of that race to flock into the towns. With the aid of Pole Baker, who was clerking that day for Filmore, he soon employed the men he wanted and started to walk back home. On the way he was overtaken by his uncle, who was returning from Darley in his wagon.

"Hold on, thar!" the old man called out. "Ef you are a-goin' home, I'll rest yore legs."

Alan smiled as he climbed up into the seat by the old man.

"I shall certainly appreciate it," he said. "I'm tired out today."

"I sorter thought you looked flabbergasted," returned Abner as he swung his whip over the backs of his sleek horses. "Well, I reckon I could afford to give you a ride. I hauled that cuss Dole three miles goin' t'other way. He had the cheek to yell at me from Habbersham's ginhouse an' axed me ef I'd haul 'im. Then he kept me waitin' till he'd helt prayer an' read to the family."

"You don't seem to like him," said Alan. "I've noticed that for some time."

"I reckon I don't to any great extent," said Abner, clucking to his tired horses, "but it ain't rally to my credit. A feller's wrong som'er's, Alan, that allows hisse'f to hate anything the Lord ever made. I've struggled agin that proposition fer twenty-five yeer. All this talk about the devil makin' the bad an' the Lord the good is talk through a hat. Bad things was made 'fore the devil ever jumped from his high estate, ur he'd never preferred a fork to a arp. I've tuck notice, too, that the wust things I ever seed was sometimes at the root o' the best. Manure is a bad thing, but a cake of it will produce a daisy bigger 'n any in the field. Dole makes me gag sometimes, but as narrer as he is twixt the eyes he may do some good. I reckon that hell fire sermon he gave us last August made some o' the crowd sweat out a little o' the'r meanness. I'd 'a' been more merciful on sech a hot day though. He mought 'a' reserved that harangue fer some cold day in December when the stove flues wouldn't work. Ef I'd 'a' been a-goin' to tell about future torment that hot day, I'd 'a' said that every lost soul was made to set on a cake o' ice in a windy spot through all eternity, an' I'd 'a' started out by singin' 'On Greenland's Icy Mountain.' But that ain't what I axed you to git in my wagon fer."

"You didn't intend to try to convert me, then?"

"No, I didn't, fer you are jest my sort of a Christian—better'n me, a sight, fer you don't shoot off yore bazoo on one side or t'other, an' that's the habit I'm tryin' to quit. Ef I could hold in when Dole gits to spoutin', I'd be a better man. I think I'll do better now. I've got a tenpenny nail in my pocket, an' whenever he starts in I'm goin' to bite it an' keep my holt on it till he stops. Yes, you are jest my sort of a Christian. You believe in breathin' fresh air into yore windpipe, thankin' God with a clear eye an' a good muscle an' takin' what he gives you an' axin' 'im to pass more of it's handy. You know the Lord has sent you a invite to his table, an' you believe in eatin' an' drinkin' an' makin' merry, jest like you'd have a body do that was stoppin' over night with you. Yes, I wanted to say some'n' else to you. As I got to the Widder Snowden's house, a mile this side o' Darley, she came out an' axed me ef I'd object to deliverin' a couple o' smoke cured hams to a feller in town that had ordered 'em. Of course that's what a old bach like me 's heer fer, so I let 'er fling 'em in the back end."

The speaker paused and smiled knowingly, and Alan noticed that he slowed his horses up by drawing firmly on the reins as if he feared that their arrival at the farmhouse might interrupt what he had to say.

"Well," said Alan, "you delivered the hams?"

"Yes." Abner was looking straight ahead of him. "They was fer Colonel Seth Barclay. I driv' up to the side gate, after I'd helloed in front till I was hoarse, an' who do you reckon come trippin' out o' the dinin' room? It was her. Ef you hain't never ketched 'er off'n her guard round the house, you've missed a treat. Durned ef I don't like 'er better without a hat on than with all the fluffy flamdoodle that gals put on when they go out. She was as neat as a new pin, an' seemed powerful glad to see me. That made me bless the Widder Snowden fer sendin' me thar. She said the cook was off som'er's, an' that old nigger Ned, the stableman, was in the garden patch behind the house, so she was thar by 'erse'f. She actually looked like she wanted to tote in the hams 'erse'f ruther'n bother me, but you bet my old bones hopped off'n this seat quicker'n you could say Jack Robinson with yore mouth open.

"I was afeerd my team wouldn't stand, fer fellers was a-scootin' by on bicycles, but I tuck the hams to the back porch an' put 'em on a shelf out'n re'ch o' the dogs. Then I went back to my wagon. She follered me to the fence, an' I noticed that some'n' was wrong with 'er. She looked so funny an' droopy about the mouth, an' kept a-talkin' like she was afeerd I'd fly off. She axed all about Adele an' how she was a-makin' out down in Atlanta, an' said she'd heerd that Sis was mighty popular with the young men, an' from that she axed about my craps an' the meetin' goin' on at Big Bethel. Finally she got right white about the mouth an' said kinder shaky that she was afeerd you was mad about some'n' her pa'd said about you, an' I never seed a woman as nigh cryin' as she was without doin' of it.

"I told 'er I was at the fust of it, but I'd noticed how worried you've looked heer of late, an' so I told 'er I'd been afeerd some'n' had come betwixt you two. Then she put her head down on the top rail o' the fence an' helt it thar fer a good minute. After awhile she looked up an' told me all about it an' ended by axin' me ef I thought she was to blame in the matter. I told 'er no, but her old skunk of a daddy had acted sech a fool that I couldn't hold in. I reckon I told 'er jest about what I thought o' 'im, an' the more I raked up agin 'im the better she seemed pleased. I tried to pin 'er down to what she'd be willin' to do in a pinch e[illegible] pa continued to hold out agin you, bu[illegible] she was too sharp to commit 'erse'f. It jest looked like she wanted to make up

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with you an' didn't want no row nuther."

The horses stopped to drink at a clear stream of water which ran across the road on a bed of brown pebbles. The bridles were too tight to allow them to lower their heads, so Alan went out on the heavy tongue between the pair and unfastened the reins. When he had regained his seat, he told the old man in detail all that had happened at the dance at the hotel, ending with the advice he had received from Rayburn Miller.

"I don't know about that," Abner said. "Maybe Miller could call a halt like that an' go on like nothin' had happened. I don't say he could nur couldn't; but it's fool advice. You mought miss it, an' regret it to yore dyin' day."

Alan looked at him in some surprise. He had hardly expected just that stand on the part of a confirmed old bachelor like his uncle. The old man's glance swept dreamily over the green fields on either side of the road across which the red rays of the setting sun were streaming. Then he took a deep breath and lowered the reins till they rested on the backs of the horses.

"My boy," he began, "I'm a good mind to tell you some'n' that I hain't mentioned fer mighty nigh forty yeer. I don't believe anything but my intrust in that town gal an' you would make me bring it up. Huh! Ray Miller says you kin pass 'er over jest as ef you'd never seed 'er, does he? An' go on an' pick an' choose agin. Huh! I wasn't as old as you are by five yeer when the one I'm talkin' about passed away, jest a week after me an' her'd come to a understandin'. I've seed women, women, women, sence I seed 'er corpse that day amongst all that pile o' wild flowers that old an' young fetched from the woods whar me an' 'er used to walk, but ef I live to be as old as that thar hill I'll never forget my feelin'. I kin see 'er right now as plain as I did then, an' sometimes my heart aches as bad. I reckon you know now why I never got married. Folks has poked a lots o' fun at me, an' I tuck it as it was intended, but a lots o' times what they said made me suffer simply awful. They've picked out this un an' that un, from spring chickins to hags o' all ages, shapes an' sizes, but the very thought o' givin' anybody her place made me sick. Thar never was but one fer me. I may be a fool, but I believe I was intended fer her. Shucks! Sech skip abouts as Miller may talk sech bosh as that, but it's beca'se the Lord never give 'em the glory o' the other thing.

"It larnt me the truth about the after life. I know thar's a time to come, an' a blessed one, ur the Lord never would 'a' give me that taste of it. She's som'er's out o' harm's way, an' when me 'n' her meet I'll not have a wrinkle an' I'll be able to walk as spry an' hopeful as I did when she was heer. Thar ort to be punishment reserved fer hard headed fools that separate lovin' young folks beca'se one ur t'other hain't jest so many dollars tied in a rag. Don't you listen to Miller. I don't say you ort to plunge right in an' make the old man mad, but don't give up. Ef she's what I think she is, an' she sees you ain't a-goin' to run after no fresh face, she'll stick to you like the bark on a tree. The wait won't hurt nuther one of you either. My wait ain't a-hurtin' me an' yore'n won't you. I never seed a young woman I liked better 'n I do the one you selected, an' I've sent up many a petition that you'd both make it all right."

The old man raised his reins and clucked to his horses.

"Uncle Ab," said Alan, "you've made a better man of me. I've had a lot of trouble over this, but you make me hope. I've tried to give her up, but I simply cannot do it."

"She ain't a-goin' to give you up nuther," replied Abner; "that's the purty part about it. Thar ain't no give up in 'er. She ain't that sort. She's goin' to give that daddy o' her'n a tussle."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Maxims do the self made millionaire a great deal of good. It is such a diversion to formulate them after success has been achieved!—Norfolk Landmark.

Perfect Respiration.

For perfect respiration two things are necessary—chest capacity and breath control. The average individual, woman especially, uses but a limited portion of the lungs and upper chest in ordinary breathing. Whenever a little unusual physical effort makes demand for an extra breathing capacity, note how she puffs and pants, almost to a point of gasping. The reason for this is that the muscles of the lower chest, waist and abdomen have become well nigh atrophied through neglect and abuse. They are stiff and unresponsive and have now to be coaxed back to a condition of activity and obedience.

It is quite as possible to educate these muscles so that they shall respond to our slightest demand as it is that our hands are trained to do our bidding. Different teachers will advocate different forms of breathing—upper chest, side chest, lower chest and abnormal breathing—but what we most want is absolute control, such control of the muscles as shall enable us to make use of any desired form of breathing at the word of command, for all forms have special values. Full upper chest breathing is used most, but lower chest and abdominal breathing are very valuable in cases of nervousness, indigestion, stomach and bowel troubles.

The Truthful Pioneer.

"One day," said the truthful pioneer, "I was whacking up some wood down by the creek, and ten Indians loomed up. They were pretty thirsty even for Indians, and they said they knew I had a jug somewhere, and they wanted to sample it. I had a log about half split at the time, and the ax was sticking in it. I told them if they would help me get that log in two I would show them where the jug was. So they took hold, five on one side and five on the other, and pulled. And when I took the ax out the log sprung together and held them all by the fingers. Then I walked away to the house and loaded the shotgun and three or four pistols and then went back and argued with them, and they reformed right away." This story, says the Nebraska State Journal, was originally told of Daniel Boone or Davy Crockett and has done good service ever since. It is not copyrighted, however, and there is no good reason why Nebraska pioneers should not use it.

The Wild Giraffe.

Perhaps the most difficult of all wild animals to capture is the giraffe. In addition to being very rare giraffes are exceedingly timid and are very swift footed. There is no special way to capture a giraffe, as almost every way has been tried, and all have been almost equally unsuccessful. The method which has occasionally resulted in a capture is by using a long cord, at each end of which is a round weight. This cord is thrown by the hunter in such a manner as to wind round the animal's legs, either bringing it to the ground or rendering it incapable of escaping before it is made a prisoner. Most of the giraffes in captivity have been caught by chance when young.

Lovemaking In Mexico.

In northwest Mexico the courting is all done by the lady. The young people meet at the feasts, and there the damsel who has fixed upon a member of the opposite sex whom she wishes to become her husband tries to attract his attention by dancing before him, persistently keeping her back turned toward him. Eventually she may sit down near him and pull his blanket and sing to him in a gentle, low voice. When she desires to bring matters to a focus, she begins to throw pebbles at the chosen one. If he throws them back at her, they are betrothed.

Eyes With Double Pupils.

Cicero says that "the glance of all women with the double pupil in the eye is noxious, blighting and withering." Cadmus tells us that such persons would not drown. Still others say that if they did drown the body would never sink, neither would it decay. They could cure the disease of the chest—consumption—by rubbing their perspiration on the affected parts of the individual, and in case the double pupils were red instead of black they could cure the lepers and the blind.

Politician and Statesman.

"Maw, what's de difference between er politician and er statesman?"

"Well, honey, a mushroom's good ain't it?"

"Yes, 'um."

"And a toadstool is pizen, ain't it?"

"Yes, 'um."

"And dey bof look alike?"

"Yes, 'um."

"Des same difference from a statesman to a politician."—Exchange.

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

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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, 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.

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