

ABNER DANIEL

By... **WILL N. HARBEN**

Author of "Westerfelt"
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CHAPTER VI—Continued.

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 rosebud 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, tired 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."

He was still totally at sea as to the cause of her strange distress. "Perhaps you'd rather not tell me at all," he said sympathetically. His tone never had been so tender. "You need not, you know."

"But it's a thing I could not keep from you long anyway," she said tremulously. "In fact, it is due you—an explanation, I mean. Oh, Alan, papa has taken up the idea that we—that we like each other too much, and—"

"The life and soul seemed to leave Alan's face. "I understand," he heard himself saying; "he does not want me to visit you any more."

She made no reply. He saw her catch a deep breath, and her eyes went down to her flowers. The music struck up. The mulatto leader stood waving his fiddle and calling for "the grand march" in loud, melodious tones. There was a scrambling for partners. The young men gave their left arms to the ladies and merrily dragged them to their places.

"I hope you do not blame me—that you don't think that I— But the clatter and clamor engulfed her words. "No, not at all," he told her. "But it's awful; simply awful! I know you are a true friend, and that's some sort of comfort."

"And always shall be," she gulped.

"You must try not to feel hurt. You know my father is a very peculiar man and has an awful will, and nobody was ever so obstinate."

Then Alan's sense of the great injustice of the thing rose up within him, and his blood began to boil. "Perhaps I ought to take my name off your card," he said, drawing himself up slightly. "If he were to hear that I talked to you tonight, he might make it unpleasant for you."

"If you do, I shall never—never forgive you," she answered in a voice that shook. There was, too, a glistering in her eyes as if tears were springing. "Wouldn't that show that you who harbored ill will against me, when I am so helpless and troubled?"

"Yes, it would, and I shall come back," he made answer. He rose, for Hillhouse, calling loudly over his shoulder to some one, was thrusting his bowed arm down toward her.

"I beg your pardon," he said to Dolly. "I didn't know they had called the march. We've got some ice cream laid out upstairs, and some of us are going for it. Won't you take some, Bishop?"

"No, thank you," said Alan, and they left him.

CHAPTER VII.

ALAN made his way along the wall, out of the track of the promenaders, into the office, anxious to escape being spoken to by any one. But here several jovial men from the mountains who knew him intimately gathered around him and began to make laughing remarks about his dress.

"You look for the world like a dirt dauber." This comparison to a kind of black wasp came from Pole Baker, a tall, heavily built farmer, with an enormous head, thick eyebrows and long, shaggy hair. He lived on Bishop's farm and had been brought up with Alan. "I'll be darned if you ain't nimble on yore feet, though. I've seen you cut the pigeon wing over on Mossy creek with them big, strapping gals 'fore you had yore sights as high as these town folks."

"It's that thar vest that gits me," said another. "I reckon it's cut low so you won't drape soft victuals on it, but I guess you don't do much catin' with that collar on. It don't look like yore Adam's apple could stir a peg under it."

With a good natured reply and a laugh he did not feel, Alan hurried out of the office and up to his room, where he had left his lamp burning. Rayburn Miller's hat and light overcoat were on the bed. Alan sat down in one of the stiff backed, split bottom chairs and stared straight in front of him. Never in his life had he suffered as he was now suffering. He could see no hope ahead; the girl he loved was lost to him. Her father had heard of the foolhardiness of old man Bishop and, like many another well meaning parent, had determined to save his daughter from the folly of marrying a penniless man who had doubtless inherited his father's lack of judgment and caution.

There was a rap on the closed door, and immediately afterward Rayburn Miller turned the knob and came in. His kindly glance swept the face of his friend, and he said, with forced lightness:

"I don't want to bore you, old man, but I just had to follow you. I saw from your looks as you left the ball-room that something was wrong, and I am afraid I know what it is. You see, Captain Barclay is a rough, outspoken man, and he made a remark the other day which reached me. I wasn't sure it was true, so I didn't mention it; but I reckon my informant knew what he was talking about."

Alan nodded despondently. "I asked her to go to church with me tomorrow night. She was awfully embarrassed and finally told me of her father's objections."

"I think I know what fired the old devil up," said Miller. "You do?"

"Yes. It was that mistake of your father. As I told you, the colonel is as mad as a wet hen about the whole thing. He's got a rope tied to every nickel he's got, and he intends to leave Dolly a good deal of money. He thinks Frank Hillhouse is just the thing. He shows that as plain as day. He noticed how frequently you came to see Dolly and scented danger ahead and simply put his foot down on it, just as fathers have been doing ever since the flood. My dear boy, you've got a bitter pill to take, but you've got to swallow it like a man. You've reached a point where two roads fork. It is for you to decide which one you'll take."

Alan made no reply. Rayburn Miller lighted a cigar and began to smoke steadily.

"It's none of my business," Miller burst out suddenly, "but I'm friend enough of yours to feel this thing like the devil. However, I don't know what to say. I only wish I knew how far you've gone into it."

Alan smiled mechanically. "If you can't look at me and see how far I've gone, you are blind," he said.

"I don't mean that," replied Miller. "I was wondering how far you had committed yourself—oh, hang it!

made love and all that sort of thing." "I've never spoken to her on the subject," Alan informed him gloomily. "Good, good! Splendid!" Alan stared in surprise. "I don't understand," he said. "She knows—that is, I think she knows—how I feel, and I have hoped that—"

"Never mind about that," interrupted Miller laconically. "There is a chance for both of you if you'll turn square around like sensible human beings and look the facts in the face."

"You mean—"

"That it will be stupid, childish idleness for either or both of you to let this thing spoil your lives."

"I don't understand you."

"Well, you will before I'm through with you, and I'll do you up brown."

"It's none of my business," Miller burst out suddenly.

There are simply two courses open to you, my boy. One is to treat Colonel Barclay's wishes with dignified respect and bow and retire just as any European gentleman would do when told that his pile was too small to be considered.

"And the other?" asked Alan sharply.

"The other is to follow in the footsteps of nearly every sentimental fool that ever was born and go around looking like a last year's bird's nest or, worse yet, persuading the girl to elope and thus angering her father so that he will cut her out of what's coming to her and what is her right, my boy. She may be willing to live on a bread and water diet for awhile, but she'll lose flesh and temper in the long run. If you don't make as much money for her as you cause her to lose, she'll tell you of it some day or, at least, let you see it, and that's as long as it's wide. You are now giving yourself a treatment in self hypnosis, telling yourself that life has not and cannot produce a thing for you beyond that particular pink frock and yellow head. I know how you feel. I've been there six different times, beginning with a terrible long first attack and dwindling down as I became inoculated with experience till now the complaint amounts to hardly more than a momentary throbbing when I see a fresh one in a train for an hour's ride. I can do you a lot of good if you'll listen to me. I'll give you the benefit of my experience."

"What good would your devilish experience do me?" said Alan impatiently.

"It would fit any man's case if he'd only believe it. I've made a study of love. I've observed hundreds of typical cases and watched marriage from inception through protracted illness or boredom down to dumb resignation or sudden death. I don't mean that no lovers of the ideal, sentimental brand are ever happy after marriage, but I do believe that open eyed courtship will beat the blind sort all hollow and that in nine cases out of ten, if people were mated by law according to the judgment of a sensible, open eyed jury, they would be happier than they now are. Nothing ever spoken is truer than the commandment, 'Thou shalt have no other God but me.' Let a man put anything above the principle of living right, and he will be miserable. The man who holds gold as the chief thing in life will starve to death in its cold glitter, while a pauper in rags will have a laugh that rings with the music of immortal joy. In the same way the man who declares that only one woman is suited to him is making a god of her, raising her to a seat that won't support her dead, material weight. I frankly believe that the glamour of love is simply a sort of insanity that has never been correctly named and treated because so many people have been the victims of it."

"Do you know," Alan burst in almost angrily, "when you talk that way I think you are off. I know what's the matter with you—you have simply frittered away your heart, your ability to love and appreciate a good woman. Thank heaven, your experience has not been mine! I don't see how you could ever be happy with a woman. I couldn't look a pure wife in the face and remember all the flirtations you've indulged in—that is, if they were mine."

"There you go," laughed Miller. "Make it personal. That's the only way the average lover argues. I am speaking in general terms. Let me finish. Take two examples—first, the chap crazily in love, who faces life with the red rag of his infatuation—his girl. No parental objection, everything smooth and a carload of silverware, a clock for every room in the house. They start out on their honeymoon, doing the chief cities at the biggest hotels and the theaters in the three dollar seats. They soon tire of themselves and lay it to the trip. Every day they rake away a handful of glamour from each other till, when

they reach home, they have come to the conclusion that they are only human, and not the highest order at that. For awhile they have a siege of discontent, wondering where it's all gone. Finally the man is forced to go about his work, and the woman gets to making things to go on the backs of chairs and trying to spread her trousseau over the next year, and they begin to court resignation. Now, if they had not had the glamour attack they would have got down to business sooner, that's all, and they would have set a better example to other plungers. Now for the second illustration: Poverty on one side, huddle on the other; more glamour than in other case because of the gulf between. They get married; they have to. They've inherited the stupid idea that the Lord is at the bottom of it and that the glamour is his smile. Like the other couple, their eyes are finally opened to the facts, and they begin to secretly wonder what it's all about. The one with the spondylic wonders harder than the one who has none. If the man has the money, he will feel good at first over doing so much for his affinity, but if he has an eye for earthly values—and good business men have—there will be times when he will envy Jones, whose wife had as many rocks as Jones. Love and capital go together like rain and sunshine; they are productive of something. Then if the woman has the money and the man hasn't there's tragedy—a slow cutting of throats. She is irresistibly drawn with the rest of the world into the thought that she has tied herself and her money to an automaton, for such men are invariably lifeless. They seem to lose the faculty of earning money—in any other way. And as for a proper title for the penniless young idiot that publicly advertises himself as worth enough, in himself, for a girl to sacrifice her money to live with him—well, the un-abridged does not furnish it. Jack Ass in billboard letters would come nearer to it than anything that occurs to me. I'm not afraid to say it, for I know you'd never cause any girl to give up her fortune without knowing at least whether you could replace it or not."

Alan arose and paced the room. "That," he said as he stood between the lace curtains at the window, against which the rain beat steadily—"that is why I feel so blue. I don't believe Colonel Barclay would ever forgive her, and I'd die before I'd make her lose a thing."

"You are right," returned Miller, re-lighting his cigar at the lamp, "and he'd cut her off without a cent. I know him. But what is troubling me is that you may not be benefited by my logic. Don't allow this to go any further. If her alone from tonight on, and you'll find in a few months that you are resigned to it, just like the average widower who wants to get married six months after his loss. And when she is married and has a baby she'll meet you on the street and not care a rap whether her hat's on right or not. She will tell her husband all about it and allude to you as her first, second or third fancy, as the case may be. I have faith in your future, but you've got a long, rocky row to hoe, and a thing like this could spoil your usefulness and misdirect your talents. If I could see how you could profit by waiting, I'd let your fame burn unmoles- ted; but circumstances are against us."

"I'd already seen my duty," said Alan in a low tone as he came away from the window. "I have an engagement with her later, and the subject shall be avoided."

"Good man!" Miller's cigar was so short that he stuck the blade of his penknife through it that he might enjoy it to the end without burning his fingers. "That's the talk! Now I must mosey on downstairs and dance with that Miss Fewclothes from Rome—the one with the auburn tresses that says 'delighted' whenever she is spoken to."

Alan went back to the window. The rain was still beating on it. For a long time he stood looking out into the blackness. The bad luck which had come to his father had been a blow to him, but his later offspring had the grim, cold countenance of death itself. He had never realized till now that Dolly Barclay was so much a part of his very life. For a moment he almost gave way to a sob that rose and struggled within him. He sat down again and clasped his hands before him in dumb self pity. He told himself that Rayburn Miller was right; that only weak men would act contrary to such advice. No, it was over—all, all over.

CHAPTER VIII.

AFTER the dance Frank Hillhouse took Dolly home in one of the drenched and bespattered hacks. The Barclay residence was one of the best made and largest in town. It was an old style southern frame house, painted white, and had white columned verandas on two sides. It was in the edge of the town and had an extensive lawn in front and almost a little farm behind.

Dolly's mother had never forgotten that she was once a girl herself, and she took the most active interest in everything pertaining to Dolly's social life. On occasions like the one just described she found it impossible to sleep till her daughter returned, and then she slipped upstairs and made the girl tell all about it while she was disrobing. Tonight she was more alert and wide awake than usual. She opened the front door for Dolly and almost stepped on the girl's heels as she followed her upstairs.

"Was it nice?" she asked.

"Yes; very," Dolly replied. Reaching her room, she turned up the low burning lamp and, standing before a mirror, began to take some flowers out of her hair. Mrs. Barclay sat down on

the edge of the high posted mahogany bed and raised one of her bare feet and held it in her hand. She was a thin woman, with iron gray hair, and about fifty years of age. She looked as if she were cold, but for reasons of her own she was not willing for Dolly to remark it.

"Who was there?" she asked.

"Oh, everybody."

"Is that so? I thought a good many would stay away because it was a bad night, but I reckon they are as anxious to go as we used to be. Then you all did have the hacks?"

"Yes; they had the hacks." There was a pause, during which one pair of eyes was fixed rather vacantly on the

image in the mirror. The other pair, full of impatient inquiry, rested alternately on the image and its maker.

"I don't believe you had a good time," broke the silence in a rising tentative tone.

"Yes; I did, mother."

"Then what's the matter with you?" Mrs. Barclay's voice rang with impatience. "I never saw you act like you do tonight—never in my life."

"I didn't know anything was wrong with me, mother."

"You act queer; I declare you do," asserted Mrs. Barclay. "You generally have a lot to say. Have you and Frank had a falling out?"

Dolly gave her shoulders a sudden shrug of contempt.

"No; we got along as well as we ever did."

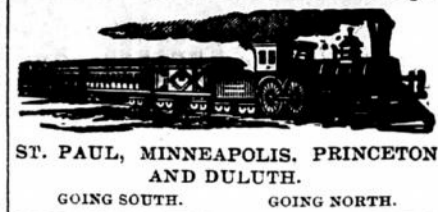
"I thought maybe he was a little mad because you wouldn't dance tonight, but surely he's got enough sense to see that you oughtn't to insult Brother Dillbeck that way when he's visiting our house and everybody knows what he thinks about dancing."

"No; he thought I did right about it," said Dolly.

"Then what in the name of common sense is the matter with you, Dolly? You can't pull the wool over my eyes, and you needn't try it."

Dolly faced about suddenly. "I reckon you'll sit there all night unless I tell you all about it," she said sharply. "Mother, Alan Bishop was there."

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GOING SOUTH.	GOING NORTH.
Leave Duluth 6:30 a.m.	Leave St. Paul 2:35 p.m.
Brook Park 9:30 a.m.	Minneapolis 3:05 p.m.
Mora 9:50 a.m.	Anoka 3:45 p.m.
Ogilvie 10:03 a.m.	Elk River 4:11 p.m.
Milaca 10:23 a.m.	Zimmerman 4:23 p.m.
Pease (f) 10:40 a.m.	Princeton 4:46 p.m.
L. Siding (f) 10:50 a.m.	Brickton (f) 4:51 p.m.
Brickton (f) 10:53 a.m.	L. Siding (f) 4:55 p.m.
Princeton 10:55 a.m.	Pease (f) 5:05 p.m.
Zimmerman 11:15 a.m.	Milaca 5:30 p.m.
Elk River 11:35 a.m.	Ogilvie 5:41 p.m.
Anoka 12:00 a.m.	Mora 5:54 p.m.
Minneapolis 12:40 p.m.	Brook Park 6:15 p.m.
Ar. St. Paul 1:06 p.m.	Ar. Duluth 9:25 p.m.

ST. CLOUD TRAINS.	
GOING WEST.	GOING EAST.
Le. Milaca 10:23 a.m.	Ar. St. Cloud 4:30 p.m.
Ar. Briggeman 10:30 a.m.	Le. Briggeman 5:12 p.m.
Ar. St. Cloud 11:23 a.m.	Ar. Milaca 5:10 p.m.

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Greenbush—R. A. Ross	Princeton
Hayland—Alfred F. Johnson	Milaca
Ile Harbor—Otto A. Haggberg	Ile
Milaca—Ole Larson	Milaca
Milo—R. N. Atkinson	Foreston
Princeton—Otto Henschel	Princeton
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South Harbor—Eos Jones	Cove
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Onamia—Arthur Wiseman	Onamia
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