

# YORKVILLE ENQUIRER.

ISSUED SEMI-WEEKLY.

L. M. GRIST'S SONS, Publishers.

A Family Newspaper: For the Promotion of the Political, Social, Agricultural, and Commercial Interests of the People.

TERMS—\$2.00 A YEAR IN ADVANCE.  
SINGLE COPY, FIVE CENTS.

ESTABLISHED 1855.

YORKVILLE, S. C., FRIDAY, AUGUST 21, 1903.

NO. 67.

## ABNER DANIEL

By WILL N. HARBEN, Author of "Westerfelt."

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CHAPTER XVI—CONTINUED.

Wilson laughed again as he fished the desired article from his pocket and gave it a match to Pole. Then he leaned against the heavy railing of the banisters. "I may as well tell you," he said, "I'm a dealer in lumber myself, and I'd like to know what kind of timber you have out there."

Pole pulled at the cigar, thrust it well into the corner of his mouth, with the fire end smoking very near his left eye, and looked thoughtful. "To tell you the truth, my friend," he said, "I really believe you'd be wastin' time to go over that."

"Oh, you think so?" It was a vocal start on the part of Wilson.

"Yes, sir; the truth is old man Bishop has simply raked into his dern clutch ever' acre o' fine timber out that way. Now, ef you went east, over t'other side o' the mountains, you mought pick out some good timber; but, as I said, old man Bishop's got it all in a bag out our way. Sawmill?"

"No, I don't run a sawmill," said Wilson, with an aviarious sparkle in his eye. "I sometimes buy timbered lands for a speculation; that's all."

Pole laughed. "I didn't see how you could be a sawmill man an' smoke cigars like this an' wear them clothes. I never known a sawmill man to make any money."

"I suppose this Mr. Bishop is buying to sell again," said Wilson tentatively. "People generally have some such idea when they put money into such property."

Pole looked wise and thoughtful. "I don't know whether he is or not," he said, "but my opinion is that he'll hold on to it till he's in the ground. He evidently thinks a good time's a-comin'. There was a fellow out thar t'other day with money to throw at cats. He's been tryin' to honeyfuzzle the old man into a trade, but I don't think he made a deal with 'im."

"Where was the man from?" Wilson spoke uneasily.

"I don't really know, but he ain't a-goin' to give up. He told Neil Folmore at his store that he'd fill 'em home to see his company an' write the old man a proposition that ud fetch 'im ef thar was any trade in 'im."

Wilson pulled out his watch.

"Do you happen to know where Mr. Rayburn Miller's law office is?" he asked.

"Yes; it's right round the corner. I know whar all the white men in this town do business, an' he's as white as they make 'em an' as straight as a shingle."

"He's an acquaintance of mine," said Wilson. "I thought I'd run in and see him before I leave."

"It's right round the corner an' down the first side street toward the courthouse. I ain't got nothin' to do; I'll 'plint it out."

"Thank you," said Wilson, and they went out of the house and down the street together, Pole puffing vigorously at his cigar in the brisk breeze.

"Thar you are," said Pole, pointing to Miller's sign. "Good day, sir; much obliged for this smoke," and with his head in the air Pole walked past the office without looking in.

"Good morning," exclaimed Miller as Wilson entered. "You are not an early riser like we are here in the country. He introduced Wilson all round and then gave him a chair near his desk and facing him rather than the others.

"This is the gentleman who owns the property, I believe," said Wilson suavely as he indicated Bishop.

Miller nodded, and a look of cunning dawned in his clear eye.

"Yes. I have just been explaining to Mr. and Mrs. Bishop that the mere signing of a paper such as will be necessary to secure the loan will not bind them at all in the handling of their property. You know how cautious older people are nowadays in regard to legal matters. Now, Alan here, their son, understands the matter thoroughly, and his mind is not at all disturbed."

"Wilson fell into the preliminary trap, 'Oh, no; it's not a binding thing at all," he said. "The payment of the money back to us releases you—that is, of course," Wilson recovered himself.

"If we make this loan,"

"Several hearts in the room sank, but Miller's face did not alter in the slightest. "Oh, of course, if the loan is made," he said.

Wilson put his silk hat on the top of Miller's desk and flicked the ashes from his cigar into a cuspidor. Then he looked at Mrs. Bishop suddenly—"Does the lady object to smoking?"

"Not at all," said the old lady; "not at all."

There was a pause as Wilson re-lighted his cigar and pulled at it in silence. A step sounded on the sidewalk and Trabue put his head in at the door. Miller could have sworn at him, but he smiled. "Good morning, squire," he said.

"I see you are busy," said the inquirer hastily.

"Just a little, squire. I'll see you in a few minutes."



"Thar you are," said Pole.

may have been wrong in giving such advice, but it was the way I felt about it."

Without realizing it, Wilson tripped in another hole dug by Miller's inventive mind.

"They couldn't do half as well with it," the Boston man said. "In fact, no one could, as I told you, pay as much for the property as we can, considering the railroad we have to move somewhere and our gigantic facilities for handling lumber in America and abroad. Still I think, and our directors think, a hundred thousand is a big price."

Miller laughed as if amused. "That's five dollars an acre, you know, but I'm not here to boom Mr. Bishop's timber land. In fact, all this has grown out of my going down to Atlanta to borrow twenty-five thousand dollars on the property. I think I would have saved time if I hadn't run you down there, Mr. Wilson."

Wilson frowned and looked at his cigar.

"We are willing," said he, "to make the loan at 5 per cent per annum on two conditions."

"Well, out with them," laughed Miller. "What are they?"

"First," said Wilson slowly and methodically, "we want the refusal of the property at one hundred thousand dollars."

Miller's indifference was surprising. "For what length of time do you want the refusal of the property at that figure?" he asked, almost in a tone of contempt.

Wilson hung fire, his brow wrinkled thoughtfully.

"Till it is decided positively," he got out finally, "whether we can get a charter and a right of way to the property."

"That's entirely too indefinite to suit my clients," said the lawyer. "Do you suppose, Mr. Wilson, that they want to hang their property up on a book like that? Why, if you didn't attend to pushing your road through—well, they would simply be in your hands, the Lord only knows how long."

"But we intend to do all we can to shove it through," said Wilson, with a flush.

"You know that is not a businesslike proposition, Mr. Wilson," said Miller, with a bland smile. "Why, it amounts to an option without any limit at all."

"Oh, I don't know," said Wilson lamely. "Mr. Bishop will be interested just as we are in getting a right of way through. In fact, it would insure us of his help. We can't buy a right of way, we can't afford it. The citizens through whose property the road runs must be persuaded to contribute the land for the purpose, and Mr. Bishop, of course, has influence up here with his neighbors."

"Still he would be very imprudent," said Miller, "to option his property without any limit. Now here's what we are willing to do. As long as you hold Mr. Bishop's note for \$25,000 unpaid you shall have the refusal of the land at \$100,000. Now, take my advice—Miller was smiling broadly—"let it stand at that."

Wilson reflected for a moment, and then he said: "All right. Let that go. The other condition is this—and it need be only a verbal promise—that nothing be said about my company's making this loan nor our securing the refusal of the property."

"That will suit us," said Miller. "Mr. Bishop doesn't care to have the public know his business. Of course the mortgage will have to be recorded at the courthouse, but that need not attract attention. I don't blame Mr. Bishop," went on Miller in a half-confidential tone. "These people are the worst gossips you ever saw. If you meet any of them, they will tell you that Mr. Bishop has busted himself wide open by buying so much timber land, but this loan will make him as solid as the Bank of England. The people don't understand his dealings, and they are trying to take it out on him by blasting his reputation for being one of the solidest men in his county."

"Well, that's all, I believe," said Wilson, and Miller drew a blank sheet

of legal cap paper to him and began to write. Half an hour later the papers were signed, and Miller carelessly handed Wilson's crisp pink check on a New York bank to Mr. Bishop.

"There you are, Mr. Bishop," he said, with a smile. "You didn't want any one else to have a finger in that big pie of yours over there, but you needed money, and I'll tell you as a friend that a hundred thousand cash down will be about as well as you can do with that land. It takes money, and lots of it, to make money, and Mr. Wilson's company can move the thing faster than you can."

"That's a fact," said Wilson in a tone that betrayed self-gratification. "Now we must all pull together for the railroad." He rose and turned to Miller. "Will you come with me to record the paper?"

"Certainly," said Miller, and they both left together.

The Bishop family were left alone, and the strain being lifted, they found themselves almost wholly exhausted.

"Is it all over?" gasped the old woman, standing up and grasping her son's arm.

"We've got his money," Alan told her, with a glad smile, "and a fair chance for more."

The pink check was fluttering in old Bishop's hand. Already the old self-willed look that brooked no interference with his personal affairs was returning to his wrinkled face.

"I'll go over to Craig's bank an' deposit it," he said to Alan. "It'll take a day or two to collect it, but he'd let me check on it right now fer any reasonable amount."

"I believe I'd ask him not to mention the deposit," suggested Alan.

"Huh! I reckon I've got sense enough to do that."

"I thought you intended to pay off the mortgage on our farm the first thing," ventured Mrs. Bishop.

"We can't do it till the note's due next January," said Bishop shortly. "I agreed to keep the money a year, an' Martin Doe'll make me hold to it. But what do you reckon I care as long as I've got some'n' to meet it with?"

Mrs. Bishop's face fell. "I'd feel better about it if it was clear," she faltered.

"But the Lord knows we ort to feel thankful to come out as we have. If it hadn't been fer Alan—Mr. Miller said that Alan—"

"Ef that old hadn't made such a eternal row," broke in Bishop testily, "I'd a had more timber land than this. Colouel Barclay was as fine a strip as any I got, an' he's bantered me for a trade time an' agin."

Abner Daniel seldom sneered at anybody, no matter what the provocation was, but it seemed impossible for him to refrain from it now.

"You've been lookin' fer the last three months like a man that needed more land," he said. "Jest no further back an' last night you 'lowed ef you could git enough fer yore felle to make the debt off'n yore farm you'd die happy, an' now yore a-frettin' beca'se you didn't buy up the sides o' the earth an' give nobody else a foothold. Le's hurt me the truth, even ef it does hurt a little. Ef Alan hadn't thought o' this here railroad idea, you'd a' been the biggest human pancake that ever lay flat in its own grease."

"I ain't said nothin' to the contrary," admitted Bishop, who really took the reproof well. "Alan knows what I think about it."

Then Bishop and his wife went to Craig's bank, and a moment later Miller returned, rubbing his hands with satisfaction.

"We got through, and he's gone to catch his train," he said.

"It worked as smooth as goose grease. I wonder what Pole Baker said to him, or if he saw him. I have an idea he did, from the way Wilson danced to our music."

"Heer's Pole now," said Abner from the door. "Come in here, you triflin' loafer, an' give an account o' yore-self."

"I seed 'im makin' fer the train," laughed Pole, "an' so I sneaked in to see what you uns done. He walked 'tween through like lightning, without a hitch or a bobble," Abner told him.

"You did noble," said Miller, while Pole and Alan were silently clasping hands. "Now I told you we wouldn't forget you. Go down to Wimbley's and tell him to give you the best suit of clothes he's got and to charge them to me and Alan."

Pole drew himself up to his full height and stared at the lawyer with flashing eyes.

"Blast yore soul!" he said. "Don't you say a thing like that to me agin. I'll have you know I've got feelin's as well as you or anybody else. I'd cut off this right arm an' never wince to do Alan Bishop a favor, but I'll be danged ef anybody kin look me over after I've done a little one an' pay me for it in store clothes. I don't like that one bit, an' I ain't afeard to say so."

"I didn't mean any offense, Pole," apologized Miller most humbly.

"Well, you wouldn't a' said it to some men," growled Pole. "I know that. When I want pay fer a thing like that, I'll jest go to that corner o' the street an' look down at that rock pile whar Alan found me one day an' paid me out jest to keep me from bein' the laughin' stock o' this town."

Alan put his arm over his shoulder. "Rayburn didn't mean any harm," he said gently. "You are both my friends, and we've had a big victory today. Let's not have hard feelings."

Pole hung his head stubbornly and Miller extended his hand. Abner Daniel was an attentive listener, a half smile on his face.

"Say, Pole," he said, with a little laugh, "you run down to Wimbley's an' tell 'im not to wrap up that suit. I'm a-owin' him a bill, an' he kin jest credit the value of it on my account."

significantly, and then they all roared at Pole's expense.

The next day Alan received the following letter from Dolly Barclay:

Dear Alan—Rayburn Miller told me in confidence of your wonderful success yesterday, and I simply cried with joy. I knew—I felt that you would win, and this is, as he says, a glorious beginning. I am so proud of you, and I am so full of hope today. All our troubles will come out right some day, and now that I know you love me I can wait. Rayburn would not have confided so much to me, but he said while he would not let me tell father anything about the prospective railroad, he wanted me to prevent him from selling his tract of land near yours. You know my father consults me about all his business, and he will not dispose of that property without my knowing of it. Oh, wouldn't it be a fine joke on him to have him profit by your good judgment.

Alan was at the little postoffice in Filmore's store when he received the letter, and he folded it and restored it to its envelope with a heart filled with love and tenderness. As he walked home through the woods it seemed to him that everything in nature was ministering to his boundless happiness. He felt as light as air as he strode along. "God bless her dear, dear little soul!" he said fervently.

"We've got his money," Alan told her, with a glad smile, "and a fair chance for more."

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Pole laughed heartily and thrust his big hand into Miller's.

"Uncle Ab," he said, "you'd make a dog laugh."

"I believe yore right," said Abner

### Miscellaneous Reading.

#### EASY WEALTH FOR FARMERS.

##### Prof. Holden's New Idea About How to Plant Corn.

"Let every farmer in the seven great corn states give a few winter evenings and 480,000,000 bushels will be added to the annual crop of the corn belt." In these words Prof. P. G. Holden of the Ames Agricultural college summarizes the results to be expected of the campaign instituted by himself and the Iowa Corn Growers' association.

It isn't increased acreage that Prof. Holden wants; it is better results from the present acreage. It is not by any artificial culture that he would bring about these results. He promises that they shall be realized if the farmer does the simple thing of putting a hundred live kernels of corn in every thirty hills.

Entirely new in agriculture is the experimental work of Prof. Holden, and throughout Iowa he has convinced meetings of farmers that for once a professor in an agricultural college has a reform that is thoroughly practical. In a word, his plan requires only the sorting by hand of seed corn and the filing of plates in corn planters in such a way as to drop the required number of grains of corn in each hill.

To find how much the farmers of Iowa are losing each year by not properly planting corn, Prof. Holden last year sent 1,000 letters to all parts of Iowa asking the number of stalks in each hill in corn fields. He found that the stand was but 75 per cent of what he has demonstrated will produce the largest yield, and last year's corn crop was considered a good stand. The other day he himself inspected twenty-four of the best corn fields he could find.

"I found," he reported to a meeting of the Iowa Corn Growers' association in Sioux City, "from 39 to 86.2 per cent of a perfect stand. The average loss was 27.7 per cent."

"I do not mean by this that the field that has five stalks in each hill is better than one with four and that hills of six stalks are better than hills of five. I have found that the best results are obtained from an average of about three and a third stalks to a hill."

"I have found one stalk in a hill will produce but one-third as much corn as a proper number of stalks, two stalks three-fourths of a yield and five stalks three-fourths of a yield. In making my tables I counted either three or four stalks a 100 per cent stand."

"For ten years the average yield of corn in Iowa has been approximately 35 bushels. A yield of thirty-five bushels with a 70 per cent stand, which is the average found in a number of years, would become fifty bushels with a 100 per cent stand."

The acreage planted in corn in the seven states growing over 100,000,000 bushels of corn in 1902 was: Illinois, 9,623,680; Iowa, 9,302,688; Nebraska, 7,817,962; Kansas, 7,451,693; Missouri, 6,775,198; Indiana, 4,520,937; Ohio, 3,200,224.

The combined acreage was about 48,000,000. A gain of ten bushels an acre, or a 90 per cent stand, which Prof. Holden thinks is easily attainable, would mean an increase in the annual yield of these states of 480,000,000 bushels.

On the big Funk farm at Bloomington, Ill., Prof. Holden's theory was carried out last year. Several thousand acres were planted with seed sorted by hand, through planters adjusted to drop the proper number of kernels.

Previously, the best yield was fifty-eight bushels an acre. Last year the average was seventy-two bushels. Of the gain, Prof. Holden estimates 80 per cent was due to the stand and 20 per cent to the excellent germinating power of the seed. In the experimental fields under Prof. Holden's control the yield has never been less than 60 bushels since 1896.

The owner of 4,000 acres of corn ground at Osceola, Ia., this spring bought six corn planters and put them to work hurriedly. He has examined his field and found a stand of 133 stalks to each hill. He estimates his loss at \$20,000. He has told that hereafter he will plant according to the Holden method.

"Aw, that isn't practical," objected a farmer in one of Prof. Holden's meetings. "The idea of my sorting grains of corn by hand. I have something better to do."

"All right," answered Prof. Holden. "We will say that you have the work done by a man to whom you pay \$2 a day. He will sort at least a bushel of shelled corn every day."

"That bushel will plant seven acres of ground. The fact that it has been sorted will add at least ten bushels to the acre yield. At an average price of 30 cents a bushel that would mean a return of \$21 for the \$2 you invested in having the corn sorted."

"But you can do it as well on winter evenings when it will have cost you nothing."—Sioux City, Iowa, Letter.

A BANK TELLER'S TALE.—The Bismarck Quarry company had an option on three acres of land belonging to Sam Dunseth, good for one year, the price being \$1,000 an acre," said the bank teller.

"Before the expiration of the time the company offered payment, which Dunseth refused. He wanted more. The man could not legally demand it, but the company, wishing to avoid a lawsuit, asked my opinion in the matter. I suggested payment in one-dollar bills."

"I obtained a large coin sack, and counted out the 3,000 ones. Sorting them separately and crumpling them all up, I thrust them into the sack, which I looked like a bag of feathers. The president of the company, together with a lawyer and a clerk as witness, proceeded to the house of Dun-

seth and again proffered payment, which was again refused. Walking over to the large table in the center of the room, the president cut the string and dumped the contents of the sack in a huge pile on the table.

"Here is your three thousand dollars! Will you take it?"

"The farmer was amazed at the pile of money, more than he had ever seen before. He stammered out:

"I guess I'll take it."

"In less than three minutes his signature was on the deed, witnessed by the lawyer's clerk."—New York Times.

#### PUTNAM AND THE WOLF.

Descended Thrice Into Den and Killed Pernicious Beast.

Of the great number of summer residents in Pomfret, Hampton, and others of the beautiful Windham county towns, it is doubtful if many ever heard the complete story of Gen. Israel Putnam's adventure with a wolf, and his descent into the "darksome den," in which the monster had taken refuge, his dispatching of the beast, and the curious manner in which both Gen. Putnam and the wolf were brought together from their terrifying depths. This "den" is a well-known object of interest in Pomfret to this day and to those who never heard the story, this account of the exploit, taken from the American Preceptor, a famous old Hartford Imprint of the date of 1810, by Caleb Bingham, author of "The Columbian Orator, Child's Companion," etc., will be found interesting:

1. When Gen. Putnam first moved to Pomfret, in Connecticut, in the year 1739, the country was new, and much infested with wolves. Great havoc was made among the sheep by a she wolf, which, with her annual whelps, had for several years continued in that vicinity. The young ones were commonly destroyed by the vigilance of the hunters; but the old one was too sagacious to be ensnared by them.

2. This wolf at length became such an intolerable nuisance that Mr. Putnam entered into a combination with five of his neighbors to hunt alternately until they could destroy her. Two, by rotation, were to be constantly in pursuit. It was known that, having lost the toes from one foot by a steel trap, she made one track shorter than the other.

3. By this vestige, the pursuers recognized in a light snow the route of this pernicious animal. Having followed her to the Connecticut river, and found that she had turned back in a direct course toward Pomfret, they immediately returned, and by 10 o'clock the next morning the bloodhounds had driven her into a den about three miles distant from the house of Mr. Putnam.

4. The people soon collected with dogs, guns, straw, fire, and sulphur to attack the common enemy. With this apparatus, several unsuccessful efforts were made to force her from the den. The hounds came back badly wounded and refused to return. The smoke of blazing straw had no effect. Nor did the fumes of burned brimstone, with which the cavern was filled, compel her to quit the retirement.

5. Wearyed with such fruitless attempts, (which had brought the time to 10 o'clock at night), Mr. Putnam tried once more to make his dog enter, but in vain; he proposed to his Negro man to go down into the cavern and shoot the wolf. The Negro declined the hazardous service.

6. Then it was that their master, angry at the disappointment and declaring that he was ashamed of having a coward in his family, resolved himself to destroy the ferocious beast, lest she should escape through some unknown fissure of the rock.

7. His neighbors strongly remonstrated against the perilous enterprise; but he, knowing that wild animals were intimidated by fire, and having provided several strips of birch bark, the only combustible material which he could obtain which would afford light in this deep and darksome cave, prepared for his descent.

8. Having accordingly divested himself of his coat and waistcoat, and having a long rope fastened around his legs, by which he might