WILL N. HARBEN

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



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

he do with it all?"

is, of he kin rake an' scrape enough to-gether to pay the taxes. Why, last yeer his taxes mighty nigh floored 'im, an' the expenses on this county he's jest annexed will push 'im like rips, fer now you know, he'll have to do with out the income on his factory stock. But he thinks he's got the right sow by the yeer. Before long he may yell out to us to come he'p'"im turn 'er lcose, but he's waltzin' with 'er now." At this juncture Mrs. Bishop came out of the dining room wiping her eyes

en her apron. "Mother," said Alan tenderly, "try

not to werry over this any more than

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

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

lie stood before them, glaring over his eyeglasses at his wife. "I've had enough of yore tongue, my lady. Ef thar jest now, I'd 'a' shut you up soon-er. Try up now-not another word. 'm doin' the best I kin accordin' to my lights to provide fer my children, an' I won't be interfered with." ne spoke for a moment. How-

ever, Mrs. Bishop finally retorted, as ther knew she would in her own time.

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

"That's beca'se you don't happen to know as much about the business as I do," said Bishop, with a satisfied chuckle, which to the observing Daniel sounded very much like exultation. "When you all know what I know, you'll be laughin' on t'other sides o' yore mouths. I reckon I'll jest have to let you all know about this or I won't have a speck o' peace from now on. I didn't tell you at fust beca'se nobody kin keep a secret as well as the man it belongs to, an' I was afeered it ud leak out an' damage my interests, but this last 5,000 acres jest about sweeps all the best timber in the whole Cohutta section, an' I mought as well let up. I-reckon you all know that ef-I say ef-my land was nigh a railroad it ud be low at five times what I paid fer it, don't you? Well,

The old man dropped the towel and houst ble long an short of it is that houst ble long almost jointless fingers. I happen to be on the inside an know. that a railroad is goin' to be run from Blue Lick Junction to Darley. It'll be started inside of the next yeer an' 'll run smack dab through my proper-ty. Thar now! You know more'n you thought you did, don't you?"

The little group stared into his glowing face incredulously. "A railroad is to be built, father?" exclaimed Alan.

"That's what I said." Mrs. Bishop's eyes flashed with sudden hope, and then, as if remembering her husband's limitations, her face fell. "Alfred," she asked skeptically, "how does it happen that you know about the railroad before other folks

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

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

pression of blended doubt and pity for his father's credulity. "Father, said gently, "are you sure you got your information straight?"

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

lanta lawyer, Perkins?" Bishop stared, his mouth lost some of its pleased firmness, and he ceased the motion of his feet.

"What made you mention his name?" he asked curiously. "Oh, I dunno. Somehow I jest thought o' him. He looks to me like he mought be buildin' a railroad ur

"Well, that's the man I mean," said Bishop, more uneasily. Somehow the others were all looking at Abner Daniel, who grunted sudden-

"I wouldn't trust that skunk no fur-der 'n I could fling a bull by the tail." "You say you wouldn't?" Bishop tried to smile, but the effort was a facial failure.

ly and almost angrily.

"I wouldn't trust 'im nuther, Brother Ab," chimed in Mrs. Bishop. "As soon "How with it all?"

"Hold on to it," grinned Abner; "that is, of he kig rake an' scrape enough towe had while he was Leer. Now, Alhis object in tellin' you that tale.'

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

But, notwithstanding this outburst, it was plain that doubt had actually taken root in the ordinarily cautious

mind of the crude speculator.

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

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

"You are?" said Bishop angrily. "It seems to me you don't do much else."
"Folks 'at wonders a lot ain't so apt o believe ever'thing they heer." retorted Abner. "I was just a-wonderin' why that little, spindle shanked Peter Mosely has been holdin' his head so high the last week or so. I'll bet I could make a durn good guess now."
"What under the sun's Peter Mosely got to do with my business?" burst from Bishop's impatient lips.

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

Bishop was no fool, and he grasped Abner's meaning even before it was quite clear to the others.
"Looky heer," he said sharply, "what

do you take me fer?" "I 'ain't tuck you fer nothin'," said 'ain't tuck you fer \$5,000 wuth o' cot-

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"You mean to say"-

ton mill stock. To make a long story

short, the Atlanta jack leg lawyer is

akin to the Tompkins family some way. I'd bet a new hat to a ginger

cake that Perkins never owned a spoonful o' land up heer an' that he's

jest he'pin' the Tompkins folks on the

to unload some o' the'r land.

they kin move west, whar they've al-

ways wanted to go. Peter Mosely is a man on the watch out fer rail soft

snaps, an' when Perkins whispered the big secret in his yeer, like he did to

you, he started out on a still hunt fer

posed trunk line due west vy-ah Lick-

skillet to Darley, with stop over privi-leges at Buzzard Roost an fifteen min-

utes fer hash at Dog Trot Springs.

Then, somehow or other, by hook or

crook-mostly crook-Abe Tompkins wasn't dodgin' anybody about that time. Peter Mosely could a run agin

'im with his eyes shut on a dark night.

the two met, an' ef a trade was ever

made quicker betwixt two folks it was

done by telegraph an' the paper was

signed by lightnin'. Abe said he had the land an' wouldn't part with it at

any price ef he hadn't been bad in need

full o' iron ore, soapstone, black marble

an' water power, to say nothin' o' tim-

ber; but he'd been troubled so much

about cash, he said, that he'd made up

his mind to let 'er slide an' the devil

take the contents. I never seed two parties to a deal better satisfied. They

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Indications of

Mrs. Harrison

money, fer he believed it was chuck

"I was at Neil Filmore's store when

timbered land on the line of the

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both left the store with a strut. Mose

y's strut was the biggest, fer he wasn't

he was afeerd Mosely 'ud call 'im back

thar's anything in his railroad story or

whir you stand. You've loaded yore-

you don't plant yore feet on some'n

the yard to the barn. They saw him

Daniel. "Thar's no tellin' how many

member jest when that durn skunk of

a lawyer put that flea in his yeer. They

was at Hanson's mill an' talked confidential together mighty nigh all morn-

I hain't never had a chance to tell you.

the young man brightened. His tone was eager and expectant.

an' run into Hazen's drugstore to git a

box o' axle grease an' was comin' out

with the durn stuff under my arm

when I run upon 'er a-settin' in a bug-

gy waitin' to git a clerk to fetch 'er

out a glass o' sody water. She recognized me, an' fer no other earthly rea-

son than that I'm yore uncle she spoke

to me as pleasin' as a basket o' chips.

What was I to do? I never was in

such a plight in my life. I'd been un-

loadin' side meat at Bartow's ware

house an' was kivered from head to

foot with salt and grease. I didn't

pants was non est-I don't think thar

was any est about 'em, to tell the truth. But I knowed it wouldn't be the

part of a gentleman to let 'er set thar stretchin' 'er neck out o' socket to call

a clerk when I was handy, so I wheel-

ed about, hopin' an' prayin' ef she did

look at me she'd take a fancy to the back o' my head', an' went in the store

an' told 'em to git a hustle on the'r-

se'ves. When I come out, she hauled

me up to ax some questions about

when camp meetin' was goin' to set in

this yeer an' when Adele was comin'

drap, an' it rolled like a wagon wheel

off duty an' me after it, bendin'-bendin' of all positions-heer an' yan

in the most ridiculous way. I tell you,

I'd never play croquet ur leapfrog in

She says you are genuine—genuine through and through, and she's right."

"I'd ruther have her say it than any other gal I know," sald Abner. "She's purty as red shoes, an' ef I'm any judge she's genuwine too. I've got another idea there is but I ally the given."

other idee about 'er, but I ain't a-givin'

"No." and the old man smiled mis-chievously. "I didn't mean nothin' o' the sort. I wonder how on earth year

could 'a' got seen a notion in gothead. I'r goin' to see how that blace

scamp has left my cotton land. I'll

bet he latest sees shed if any decree

thought how I'd disgraced you "Oh, you are all right, Uncle Ab," laughed Alan. "She's told me several times that she likes you very much.

them pants.

it away jest now. "You mean that she"-

I let my box o' axle grease

All the way home I

have on no coat, an' the seat

"Yes. I'd hitched in the wagon yard

an' want to rue."

are satisfied."

afeerd o' nothin'. Tompkins looked like

for this offer may not appear again. Fill of the blanks and mail it to the Liquid Ozo Co., 221-229 Kinzie St., Chicago. My disease is

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Liquozone costs 50c. and \$1.

T Alfred Bishop announced his intention of going to Atlanta to talk to Perkins and inci-"You mean to say" - But old Bishop dentally to call on his brother William,

HE next morning at breakfast

CHAPTER III.

seemed unable to put his growing fear | who was a successful wholesale merchant in that city. "I believe I would," said Mrs. Bish-op. "Maybe William will tell you what "Oh, I don't know nothin' fer cer-ain," said Abner Daniel sympathetically, "but ef I was you I'd go to do." down to Atlanta an' see Perkins. You "I'd s "I'd see Perkins fust," advised Abner kin tell by the way he acts whether Daniel. "Ef I felt shore Perkins had

bunkoed me, I'd steer cleer o' William.

not. But, by gum, you ort to know I'd hate to heer 'im let out on that subject. He's made his pile by keepin' a se'f from hind to fore quarters, an' ef |sharp lookout." "I hain't had no reason to think I you'il go down."

Bishop clutched this proposition as a drowning man would a straw. "Well, saucer and shook it about to cool. "A

I will go see 'lm," he said. "I'll go jest to satisfy you. As fer as I'm concerned ery minute ef he'd jest listen to old I know he wasn't tellin' me no lie, but I reckon you all never 'll rest till you women an' "-"Old bachelors," interpolated Abner. "I reckon they are alike. The longer a man lives without a woman the more He descended the steps and crossed he gits like one. I reckon that's beca'se the yard to the barn. They saw him the man 'at lives with one don't see as if in troubled thought.

the man 'at lives with one don't see nothin' wuth copyin' in 'er an' vice-a-

as if in troubled thought.

"Poor father," said Alan to his uncle Mrs. Bishop had never been an apas his mother retired slowly into the house. "He seems troubled, and it may preciative listener to her brother's philosophy. She ignored what he had just mean our ruin—absolute ruin." losophy. She ignored what he had just "It ain't no triffin' matter," admitted said and its accompanying smile, which was always Abner's subtle apology for thousand acres he may have bought. He's keepin' somethin' to hisse'f. I resuch observations.

"Are you goin' to tell Adele about the railroad!" she asked. "I reckon I won't tell 'er to git up a'
exeursion over it 'fore the crosstles is

laid," retorted Bishop sharply, and Abner Daniel laughed, that sort of respense being in his own vein. "I was goin' to say," pursued the

in'. But let's not cross a bridge tell we git to it. Let's talk about some'n else. but I seed that gal in town yesterday softly treading wife, "that I wouldn't meution it to 'er ef-ef-Mr. Perkins an' talked to 'er."
"Did you, Uncle Ab?" The face of ain't to be relied on, beca'se she worries enough already about our pore way o' livin' compared to her uncle's folks. Ef she knowed how I spent last night, she'd want to come back. But I ain't a-goin' to let Brother Ab skeer me yet. It is jest too awful to think al What on earth would we do? What would we, I say?"

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

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

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

To re cort nued.



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