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"We kept workin' and waitin' until we got money to build this house, and I'll tell you it felt mighty good when we moved in a nice two-storey house, with big porches and everthing han-

"We've never been in debt a dollar, and this place is a good place to live. Seems like ma loves every posey and apple tree on the place, and I guess I ain't much better that way than her."

"Say, Mr. Carter, I want to ask you, for her sake, if not for mine, to

rue back. Let us off." Carter tried to reassure Billy, but Billy still persuaded. At last out of

"I cant do it. That is not my way of doing business. The trade is made and it stands, whether it suits you or

"All right then said Billy, quietly. He arose and went innto the house. Directly he came back.

"By the way, Mr. Carter, your board is due to-day."
"Very well," he said crisply. "What is the bill?".

"Bout twenty, I guess, for you and

Carter hesitated, then pulled out two for tall timber, nothin' more will be

Carter saw there was trouble ahead and began bluffing. Billy waited quietly until he had sworn himself out of

"It ain't worth while to get excited, Mr. Carter," he said. "It ain't a very serious crime to sell a patent right you don't own. The only trouble is, it takes a feller before the United States

Court, and they are a little hasty in disposin' of such cases."

"I've got you cinched on the note, anyway," snarled Carter.

"The only drawback about that," said Billy, "is, there's a couple of constables meanderin' around the place. stables meanderin' around the place, kinder hankerin' for a signal. They're both purty fair on foot, and don't often miss a squirrel on a hundred yards.

Then the sheriff tole me yesterday he'd call up the government marshal as quick as we 'phoned him."

Carter's tone changed instantly, and he began to beg abjectly.

"What will you take to let me off?"
"Oh I don't know," said Billy, "I hardly reckon I'd be hard on a feller as penitent as you are. I guess if you'll turn over them papers and scoot



"There's a couple of constables meanderin' around this place."

bills, and handed them to Billy indiff- | said, so long as you stay outside of

"I guess we might start on sellin' the rights to-day," said Billy at break-

"We will have to wait until to-mormeet a man on business at Cedarville

"Will you hitch up my team," he said, after breakfast. Billy hesitated. They were in the yard.
"I'm real sorry Mr. Carter, but Tom

Summers got your horses and wagon yesterday. "Who is Tom Summers?" demanded

Carter, flaring up. "He's the constable."

"What do you mean?"

(repancy?"

"I had 'em attached to satisfy a board bill." "The deuce you did! Haven't I paid

my board bill"
"This was one you owed over at Savis Point. Fifteen Dollars, the Widow Thomas said, I traded her a fat

shote for it." "And say, Mr. Carter," said Billy, squinting his left eye nearly shut, "you signed over the patent of J. A. Carter, and I see after I rubbed up the iron works on that churn, it was patented by Eli Simmons. What's the little dis-

these twenty-four counties I bought.

The papers were turned over hastily and J. A. Carter went down the road on foot, neither looking to the right nor to the left.

"Well what on earth did you do it for, Billy?" asked his wife, as they sat on the steps that evening.

"For two or three reasons," and Billy chuckled in a satisfied way. "Well what," she insisted.

"For his'n and your'n and the preacher's," he answered. "For goodness sake, I don't see how it done any of us any good.

"Well, now you wait. He had just started out to beat some pore farmer out of his home. He needed a lesson powerful bad, I seed that when he first landed. And I reckon he's satisfied," and Billy chuckled again.
"But what good did it do to have

me all stirred up and worryin' the life cut o' me for two weeks.

"Just this. I'm tired of you goin' into jiminny fits every time a book agent starts for the field, for fear we are goin' to be beat out of house and home. I wanted to learn you that I don't need a guardeen yet, hardly yet," and again he laughed mildly.

"What did you say about the preacher," asked Mrs. Houck, meekly.