OUR deeds determine us as much as we determine our deeds.—*George Eliot.*

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When to Lock the Stable

By HOMER CROY

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(Continued from last week)

REWARDS were posted and nearly every day came word that the missing body had been found, or that a suspicious character had been picked up in a neighboring county, only for a later word to contradict everything. Slowly Curryville settled back into its routine; that is, all except one. This was Rencie Ford.

He became more alert and agile than ever. This was the opportunity he had been waiting for all his life; all his studying and piecing together of torn letters could now be utilized.

He went to see Miss Pointer, and swung the conversation around to Clem's early life. "Do you think, Miss Pointer, that at any time Mr. Pointer ever had trouble with anybody who'd store it up and hold it against him all their life?"

"No, Rencie, no. He never harmed a kitten. There wasn't a person in the world that wouldn't walk around a block to shake hands with him and talk weather. Do you know how long it took him sometimes to walk seven blocks from the post-office to this house? Mostly an hour, and never under forty-five minutes."

"But didn't he ever have any trouble with anybody so that it could smolder in the other person?" insisted Rencie hopefully.

"Yes, he did," replied Hulda thoughtfully, while Rencie leaned forward expectantly. "One time he took a girl to a box social where they auction off the lunch boxes and you don't know whose you are getting. Hig Beamer got an old maid's instead of the one he wanted and he threw it out the window right in front of her. Clem—I can see him now, the way he rose up and motioned his forefinger like this, and got Hig Beamer outside. Clem's tongue was sticking out and I'd never seen him do that before. After a bit Clem come back; his eye was bleeding and he kept one hand in his pocket, but Hig Beamer didn't come back at all. Nobody saw him for a week and finally he moved to another town."

"Oh!" exclaimed Rencie. "Did Mr. Beamer have a mean disposition that'd harbor up a thing for years and years?"

"Yes, he did, but I mustn't say that—poor man, he was killed in that Kirksville cyclone."

Rencie sank back, all hope of finding an old enemy gone. He was putting on his hat when Miss Pointer burst into sobs.

"I don't know what to do," she said, bringing in a corner of her apron to her eyes. "My mind's in such an unsettled state that I don't know where I'm at. Just this morning Doctor Fordyce was around wanting me to sign up and let him have the lots in the Bellows Bottom—for his medicine factory, you know. He says he's got options on all the rest and that I'm holding back the development of the city by not letting him have them. Clem, he'd know what to do in a minute." She picked up the corner of her apron again and Rencie turned his eyes aside.

Half-way down the block Rencie suddenly came to a full stop with an idea. Where had he seen that hemisphere charm before? . . . On Doctor Fordyce! The idea made his head whirl, but he steadied in a moment and told himself that a detective must always be prepared for everything and suspect everybody until proved innocent.

"I suspicioned him from the very first time he put his arm around me and called me 'sonny,'" said Rencie, who could see through any guise of innocence. He had graduated from a correspondence detective course and was their agent for that county. He had a star to prove it. A gold star, too, that looked pretty well when you polished it with soap and water. The company was going to turn over all its cases in that neighborhood to him, and he was a regularly licensed detective with a grade of ninety-seven per cent. in the final examinations. The company hadn't had any cases in his territory since he had graduated, but they might have any day. A queer thing about crime is that you can't tell when it's going to break out; there might be a perfect crime wave at any moment in his district, and of course he alone would get to handle all the cases.

Never suspecting that a licensed detective was watching his every movement, Doctor Fordyce went and came with freedom. Even had he known that his steps were being watched he could have foretold the consequences. Many an hour he stood at his hotel window hoping to catch sight of a trim and sprightly figure coming down the street. It was not until after several days of waiting that he got to speak to Mary Mendenhall.

"Why do you keep me away so effectually?" he asked.

She did not look toward him. He kept pace at her side for a block.

"He didn't care anything for you, and here you are with tears still in your eyes for him, when he never gave you a second thought."

Mary Mendenhall turned to him, her eyes flashing. "I never said that he cared for me, and I don't see what difference it makes to you if he did. He was a good noble man, and that's more than can be said for some people."

The doctor laughed as he opened the gate of her front yard. "That's the quickest way in the world to find out what's going on in a woman's heart—just prod up the fellow that she's thinking about."

"Doctor Fordyce, I have a headache and I am going in. I shall bid you good-evening."

"A headache's as good as any other excuse. And this is the way you treat me after all I have done for you. Why is it you treat me this way?"

"Because I know too much about you, and because I don't like you—that's why." Her head went up splendidly and her eyes fastened on him unwaveringly.

"Yes, but I love you, Mary." His voice dropped pleadingly, and in it was every art of the trained reader. "That makes up for everything. When that comes all else goes. You hate me on account of my past; you do not see the new man budding in me. I have been short in the past, but I have repented bitterly. I am a new man all over. I must say it again, Mary, simply, plainly, as all great and wonderful things should be said. I love you."

"It is not love. It is fascination. You are a man of pursuit only. Possession to you is loss of interest. I don't believe that a true emotion ever touched your heart."

Doctor Fordyce bent over her. "Mary, there is one thing I wish to say to you." He spoke slowly as if thinking several sentences ahead. "You are going to love me. It is just and right that you should. It was so intended. Now that he is gone, your mind will settle down and you will see the earnestness of my appeal. Love can't go long unanswered."

Doctor Fordyce was laying his plans well. His psychology took into consideration that greatest of factors in making a rebellious heart say "yes"—that of environment. He knew that with her interest gone—Clem—she would seek another. Her work could not be all. By being thrown with her he would come to interest her gradually. Each day the fight against him would be less and less hearty—his faults would be ironed out by his virtues, which he would bring to her attention from day to day. Fordyce was planning well.

"I have something more to say to you. It is not in defence of myself, but I am saying it as a friend—a very dear friend—to warn you. It is about Pointer. I hate to say it—if there were any other way in the world, I would not—but I could have killed him myself. Don't look at me that way—you don't know what I do. He has been talking about you. When he was with other men he made little remarks about you that often maddened me. You know what those things are—little nothings—things that one can hardly put a finger on, but things that eat deep through subtle suggestion. But there, I mustn't say anything against him—now that he is gone."

Fordyce had unerringly taken the quickest way to rid a woman's heart of love by making her believe that her idol was speaking of her lightly and unfaithfully.

Mary's hands went slowly up to her bosom and she bit her lips, while her eyes were fixed and staring.

Fordyce saw his opportunity. "You know that I love you, love you only as a big hearty, healthy man could. Now may I ask you just one thing—if he doesn't come back soon, will you give me another chance, that we may be friends?"

She kept her eyes on the ground for a moment. Her hands trembled slightly, and something near a smile flashed across Fordyce's face. Her eyes came up to his with more light and trust in them than they had ever shown before.

"Yes," she answered softly, "if he doesn't come back—"

"—Soon?"

"Yes, soon."

The two sat in the swinging seat and Clara, the maid, brought out refreshments. Then they talked. Fordyce was in high mood and soon Clara heard her mistress laughing.

CHAPTER IX.
SHORTCAKE

The clown was leaning against the scuffed chariot half asleep when Clem came up.

"I'd think you'd be in there watching what was going on," said Clem, hitching a heel over the hub.

The clown's lips parted, but the kindest heart couldn't call it a smile. "I've been watching it for twenty years. They tried to educate me to be a priest, and now I'm driving the dunce cart. I hope you aren't starting in with us."

"Yes," returned Clem proudly, "just joined. The beds ain't much to speak of, are they?—but there's lots of excitement. I wish the cook'd strain the coffee."

"Last week we didn't have any coffee and the week before the cook was drunk. We hardly ever get them both the same week."

The music inside the tent rolled higher and higher, hung silent an awful moment and came down with a crash.

"Red Weaver's doing the triple somersault," announced the clown. "His brother missed the net last year in Topeka."

"Did it hurt him?"

(Continued on page 14)

An Approach That Lends Beauty and Dignity to a Farm Home.

The planting of this driveway on the farm of Mr. L. Chisholm, Halton Co., Ont., and many similar driveways throughout the country, is a tribute to the taste of the last generation of our Ontario farmers. We sometimes fear that the present generation is not doing so much to beautify our rural districts as did the last. Are there as many trees being planted to-day as formerly?
—Photo by an Editor of Farm and Dairy.