



ADVERSITY is the trial of principle. Without it a man hardly knows whether he is honest or not.

—Fielding.

When to Lock the Stable

By HOMER CROY

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(Continued from last week)

"I REPEAT it, who is that man?"

The finger travelled once more over the crowd. "The man is well known," filled in Mr. Kiggins, searching everywhere, "I might say he is well known to every citizen in Curryville—yes, to every man, woman, and child in our fair city. He stands for fairness, honesty, progress. It is the city of homes, education, and refinement. If her fame

Doctor Fordyce appeared in the door.

"There, there he is!" exclaimed Mr. Kiggins excitedly, while the whole audience turned on the new arrival. "His name is—is—" He stammered and colored while his hand swung back to its corner. The name wouldn't come. "His name is—known to every man, woman, and child in our fair city. It is useless for me to repeat it. He is the man who is going to make the name of Curryville heard round the world. When all his factories get going turning off his medicine and trucks backing up and derricks loading them on, every bottle will be an advertisement for our fair city. On the wrapper of each one will be 'Dr. Fordyce's Herb Specific—Made in Curryville—Accept no Substitute.' These bottles will set on people's pantry shelves year in and year out and the name of Curryville will be constantly before 'em. Every time they go into the kitchen or take a dose of medicine they will think of our fair city. Papers will write it up; they'll put pictures of it on post-cards and property'll double in value. We'll vote on it and the country seat of Nodaway County will be moved to Curryville and mebbe a sky-scraper will go up where the White Front now is."

Cheers burst forth, led perceptibly by Mrs. Kiggins. Mr. Kiggins' speech was a success; the White Front had been mentioned. Under a fire of admiring eyes Mr. Kiggins grasped the glass with his heavy fingers, gulped a drink and sat down.

During the applause Rick Oody slipped out unobserved.

Mr. Ford was introduced to answer Mr. Kiggins, but plainly his was not the popular side. Hardly a ripple of applause helped him to his seat. Curryville wanted the Fordyce factories.

Reverend Sadnow was presented by Judge Woodbridge to answer Mr. Ford and back up Mr. Kiggins.

"Brethren and sisters," greeted the Reverend Sadnow, and taking his position squarely behind the table, both hands out of sight in his sleeves, "all things must change. Grass withers before the morning sun. The

temples of yesterday are dust under our feet to-day. No one knoweth whither we goeth no one knoweth whence we came. We are alive to-day and buried to-morrow. Still, while we hover as a shadow on this terrestrial footstool it behoves us to do all we can to advance. We are as a breath on the window-pane, but we can strive higher, even during that brief moment. The potentate of to-day feeds



"It's Clem Pointer!"

the worms of to-morrow, but we can live this hurried hour so that when we lie down on the couch and draw the counterpane over us we can go into that unknown void from which no pilgrim returns without a tremble or the quiver of an eyelid."

One little gleam of hope flickered through the clouds. If the good citizens of Curryville would vote favorably on the morrow and all should get to work at once building a bigger, better, brighter Curryville, taking care to see that the church was re-roofed, they possibly might get something done before the breath faded. Still it must be remembered that all flesh was grass and that Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed in the twinkling of an eye and that no time was to be lost—especially about fixing up the church.

Mr. Knabb tried to bolster up Mr. Ford's attack, but those against the condemnation were fighting uphill.

Mr. Kiggins was allowed a few minutes for rebuttal.

"To-morrow will go down in history," said Mr. Kiggins from behind the table. "In years to come it will be a holiday and there will be

speeches in honor of the man who came here a stranger and we took him in. A bronze tablet may be erected on this very spot to commemorate our great victory. Our schools will be the best, our factories the busiest, our fire department the most up-to-date in the whole state of Missouri. There is one person to whom—

Mr. Kiggins thought a moment and went back to the word with pride—"to whom most of the honor is due. Had he not been snatched from our midst things would never have come to a focus. It is to him the bronze tablet should be erected. If anybody wants to take up a collection, the White Front will be the first one to throw in." Hulda loosened her black-bordered handkerchief from her belt and lifted it to her face under shelter of the palm leaf. "Need I mention the name?"

"No, Mr. Kiggins, we all know the brother you mean," said Reverend Sadnow in his deepest voice. "Two months ago well and happy, now only a blessed memory."

"What would he say about the election if he was here?" demanded Mr. Kiggins, swinging a thick thumb toward the fire house. "He owned lots there and stood for fairness, honesty and progress in this city of homes, education, and refinement. What would he say?"

There was a commotion at the back end of the hall, just under the stuporous blacksmith, and Rick Oody, in

breaking the news to the others. "Just like he allus was."

CHAPTER XVIII. JUST LIKE HIM.

The silence that pressed over all in the court room broke, and the hall was in an uproar, everybody talking at once. As Clem passed slowly down the aisle, bowing and smiling, the people drew back in their seats; and once when he reached out his hand the person drew back as if demanding that the proffered palm be proved earthly.

Slowly Clem worked his way to the front, until he reached the long upright bench where Hulda sat. In a moment his arm was around her waist, and under the pressure her eyes opened. "Is it really you, Clem?" she whispered, patting him on the cheek.

"Yes, Hulda, dear," his answer so slow that even Mrs. Kiggins heard nothing.

When he released her he turned expectantly toward Miss Mendenhall. By this time the hall was in an uproar, people calling his name, crying out messages of welcome to him, words of surprise and sentences of wonder that he was still alive. Half a hundred were asking him questions to which there was no answer and as many more were reaching out hands to welcome him back. But to all this Clem gave no heed. He was looking steadily at Mary Mendenhall.

The girl's face colored and she swayed slightly, but soon recovered herself. Doctor Fordyce's poison had eaten in. Remembrance of all that he had said against Clem came rushing upon her; if Clem had made those insinuations against her she wanted nothing to do with him.

Both of Clem's hands went out to her and his eyes grew large before her. Then she turned her back on him.

The clamor died away, away as if it were on the far side of a hundred hills. He almost regretted that he had come back. Something besides love of his city and the desire to save it in its hour of trouble had brought him back to Curryville. Now this something had deliberately struck at him.

Gradually he realized that somebody was speaking to him. There was a far-away familiar look about the figure. It was talking to him. At last his eyes came to a focus on it and he saw that it was Doctor Fordyce.

"We're glad to welcome you back," the doctor was saying. "Although you have made me suffer much and brought much sorrow upon me, all is forgiven. Without the comfort of Miss Mendenhall's strength, I don't know how I could have stood it. She has been such a help to me."

This was salt to the wound. Doctor Fordyce watched the effect of his words. As he turned aside he smiled slightly. He was satisfied.

The people thronged around Clem, asking a hundred questions and satisfied with one answer. Where had he been? What was the matter? How was he feeling and did he know about the fire in the livery barn?

Judge Woodbridge worked his way down the aisle. "Isn't he a sight for sore eyes?" he asked Hulda, standing delightedly near her. "Clem's an awfully nice boy. He's old to this town—it hasn't run right since he left."

Hulda beamed and in response slipped her hand into her brother's arm.

Judge Woodbridge, after a smile, equally divided between Hulda and Clem, edged down to the platform