

IN EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY BY H.E. SMITH

IN BUSINESS HOURS

"I knew that your father was sorely crippled; and when I thought of him it was with a concern made acute by my own sense of danger. One day, in passing a large auction house, I saw him step forth and stand for a moment looking bewildered and agitated. I crossed over to see him and said:

"Good morning, Mr. Howard. Nothing wrong, I hope." "Ruin! That is all! He answered, with a forced calmness.

"Oh, no!" I returned. "Not so bad as that! "He drew his arm in mine, and we walked away. After a little while he spoke, his voice less steady than before. "Yes, my friend, ruin-and the cause you know too well. To save myself, I forced a sale of my property on Walnut Street, and it has just been struck down at a little over half what I would have taken for it a month ago! And that means ruin! The sum to be received will not meet my wants, and I shall be forced to suspend after all with assets and resources diminished by the amount lost in this disastrous sale!"

"And all this," I could not help saying, with bitter emphasis, 'comes as the result of a glass or two of wine taken in business hours!'

"He caught my arm with a sudden grip. There was a wild, desperate, half angry look in his face. It went off slowly, and his fingers as slowly relaxed their hold upon my arm.

"We parted without another word, and the subject was never referred to again. Your father went through his painful ordeal and came out with a small remnant of property after paying his debts. I lost everything, and have been a poor man ever since. He was moderately successful in new business enterprises. At his death he left an estate worth at least a hundred thousand dollars less than it would have been if he had not tasted wine in business hours."

**Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert**