

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY BY H.E. SMITH

IN BUSINESS HOURS

What had been said about the danger of confusing the mind by drink in business hours lingered in his thoughts, and the more he pondered it the more its significance grew upon him. In the evening he called upon Mr. Clarkson as he had promised.

“Glad to see you, my young friend,” was the kind greeting he received. “I knew your father years ago, and there are many things in my memory of him that I recall with pleasure. He was a true man, Mr. Howard, and the world is better off for his having lived in it. It was the thought of him that led me to speak as I did this morning. I might almost say it was a voice of warning from your father through me.”

“I cannot but feel a little surprised at this,” said Howard, frankly. “My father used wine. I have often seen him take a glass at his own table when he had company. He set it before his guests, and partook of it on such occasions. At my sister’s wedding reception, which occurred during his lifetime, wine was served as at the reception this morning.”

A shadow passed over Mr. Clarkson’s face. After a little silence he replied:

“I know all this. And your father never used wine to excess-did not care much for it-was only in accord with a social habit. And yet, temperate as he was, you are poorer today by many thousands of dollars than you would have been if he had not taken a few glasses of wine at your sister’s wedding reception!”

“You cannot mean what you say, Mr. Clarkson!” the young man exclaimed, his face flushing and paling by turns.

“It is true, my young friend,” he answered. “And I, too, was hurt beyond recovery by the wine I drank in health to the bride on that occasion. It was in business hours, and it robbed my mind of the clear sight needed at a time when to blunder was next to ruin.”

**Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)**