The Free Press Short Story

The Humblest of Them All

PRINCILLA HOLTON

the store. Jean Sparry's going to the iniversity, his rether's measurem, those were not his handicans. No, it was the hopelesmess of his own future. At twenty, buried already in this small town, he lacked the chance at any real career. Instead, he would have to carry the burdens of the whole town on his back as his father had done until the load broke his spirit.

Having reached the store, Homes glanced longingly at the rival grocery across the street. Rivers, being a stranger here, had started his store on a cash basis. It worked, too.

"It's about time I stopped gasing at town?" the debit side of my books. 'Boared of folks. I am: fust as Jean said." Homer s jaw settled. This young man had never realized how much he cared for Jean until that last night they were together down by the lake, gasing at a natural stone face. They had discovered it tong ago and often came to study its strong

"That's the kind of man I'd like to he." Homer had told Jean, "self-controlled and allent." Jean had smiled. "That isn't every-

"Wall then?"

"Getting on with people around you counts more." She turged at his arm. "Oh, Homer, if you'd only let some of the grandness that is inside of youout!" She had run swiftly away before he could answer. Well, in a month she would be home again, and she was going to be disappointed in him.

Homer was unlooking the cash register when a sudden determination stopped him short. "I will do it!" he spoke aloud. 'We'll forget family custom. We've got to be on a paying basis." A few minutes later he had tacked up

a newly-lettered sign: STRICTLY CASH BASIS

He turned to see Mrs. Rudgers bustling in with her usual Monday morning list. She rattled it off quickly. 'Charge it, and mind you're prompt, Homer " "Sure, but say, did you see this?"

Her instinctive surprise on following this pointed finger, changed to indigna-"Well, afte, all the years your has truited us! Don't send my order. If that's the case!" She was out of the store and across the street bouncing into the cash store before Homer could speak. He grinned ruefully realiring how her telephone would buss with the news.

Still, he never dreamed the town would take him so literally. For a week scarce ly a soul came or telephoned an order Only Mrs. Beals, a widow who had just come to town, gave daily orders. They were small enough, but she always paid

vegetables, "not to-day. I haven't the momey." "That doesn't matter." Homer flushed "That sign won't work, here."

She leaned across the counter. "Twi too, if you'll only be more friendly and less scared You can win."

He was too discouraged to go home that night but sat for a long time staring at the figures. How many of these people his father had befriended, and this was their gratitude! He was storing dismally ahead of him until the oute day banged, and Justish Brown who on sed the bank, came the

h'm. Homer You're the task of the town even if you did have to write cut your own ideas. How goes it?" 'Oone, I guess. I never dreamed of

But look at these debta." Brown scowled at the figures. "Roberts, don't you cal'hate with an adding

machine?" "Can't afford one."

"Can too. Come get the old one

don't use at the bank. And look here. I've been through this. It's a hard pull but you can do it. A joke or two gets you more than steady allence." He arose heavily "What's your hobby?" Homer shook his head.

"Need one; no matter if it's as rotten

as my fishing." The adding machine helped, as did the advice about joking, nevertheless in June, on the Saturday before Jean's return, despair conquered Homer. He locked up and started out to take Mrs. Beals some potatives she had refused to but Eunshine filtered through the foliage everhanging the backwood road stopped his motor to let the peace engul! him, and suddenly he began to sire.

"Why did you leave grand opera?" sirl in overalls confronted him. "I Viola Shelby, only a counselor from the Y. W camp here. Aren't you the storeprecher ...

Hother needed and smiled at the girl the eyed him coolly. "No doubt you could boot us, bringing all our noisy

GOOD SHOES

"Correctly Fitted" B. D. RACHLIN, Acton

white the company of the last

****** TORMAN him med That word was girls into this quiet." driving him mad, Homer Roberts | "Well, I'm about to make it worse. decided as he trudged down to need a song leader for Sunday afternoons. No pay-but we can promise our

> Here was a hobby all right. Jean could play for the singing, too! "Sure," he drawled, finally. "I'll come Sundays."

Homer was more allent than ever when he drove into Mrs. Beals' yard. He hauled the heavy sack down the cellar way while she expostulated. "You shouldn't

you anyway," laughed the girl.

Homer assured Mrs. Beals that he was not bothered by any neighborhood talk. without giving her remark much thought. The light of gratitude in her eyes had taken away his own blues ...

involcing during the days and his song practicing at night. Trade was slowly returning, even though he had begun to "carry" several of the oustomers' socounts again. Mrs. Brown had giving Homer her orders and they were big. Best of all. Jean was coming home. The men who hung around the store evenings kept teasing him about that. He had put them to work on his shelves. "Geting ready for Jean!" they chaf-

The's getting ready for camp trade." Then he turned to the side door as his father appeared at the other store entrance. 'He was too late.

machine?" asked Marsh Hardy, a regular

frequenter of the store. "Sure," another interrupted, "my wife the doorway scratching his head. It was save Homer hasn't got his growth yet, going to be slowbut he's made some improvements on this place and she prefers to trade here."

that this comment held pith, "Rivers is cr." sore about the Browns trading here. busted, he is." explained Hardy

called that the men were listening attentively to his remarks. He had noticed more and more lately this marked mor respect for his comments. He had never dreamed that such a simple tob as his would call for so much stability and strength. Not for worlds would be have held her quietly, his eyes on the stars his mind turned to other small-town would fill many of his days. Only a Surely he had conquered any dislike he in the store ledger and in his own heart, and immortal. might have had for it before going into his greater ministry. He wanted his followers to do their utmost wherever they might be. He never allowed selfah ambition to spoil his service. It was more his understanding of other lives which had enabled him to perceive their needs Homer realised more and more how important that was having faith in friendly fellowship. Why, it made common living an adventure, even.

His first experience as camp song leader was that. Jean had arrived in time to help, but the girls' energy left him limp even so.

"Try the 'Whiatling Parmer.'" urged Jean, as she struck the chords. Homer sent up a silent prayer to his Maker before he conquered his panic Before the end he sang well enough to

leave shricks of delight behind him. Jean mentioned his success on their way home. "You've changed, Homer I'm almost afraid of you. You're you're

You're quite a maid yourself, Jean. When he finally went home, Homer was still thrilled by the warmth of their mutual understanding.

He looked up at the porch to see Joseph Brown with his father. They both looked so subdued that Homer sensrd a crista.

'Hope the bank hasn't burned down!' Brown's face darkened, "Bank's about!

What!" Homer exclaimed blankly. Rivers has apread the idea until now He | the whole town believes him. Just this week when special notes must be met, people are likely to withdraw their sav-

> ings. Rivers has me all right." "But why?" As neither man answered the question, Homer remembered that Rivers was jealous of him, of that adding machine.

Mr. Roberts was speaking. "Oldfashioned friendliness can cure most scares." Homer nodded, as he remembered the infantile paralysis panic which Mr. Roberts had driven out just by restoring the faith of each customer who came into the store. In those days, everyone traded with Roberts. Now. Homer realised, his turn had come to carry the burdens of the town on his back as one might carry a pounded soldier from No Man's Land into the dugout of safety. He winced. "Rivers must

deeples me." He met his father's steadying eyes above the droop of the banker's shoulders.

"Ah." Homer drawled, "that bank's roing to stay open. To-morrow's Monday and we're starting bargains at the

He did not stay awake that night planning, but he was down to the store early enough to put up his signs before anyone was stirring. Soap sales for women; rakes for the men; a round of sods pop for any who happened by in the evening. Homer was counting stock at the bank entrance when Junior Rivers rushed in.

"Whittakers," he groaned, "it's peaceful here. Breakfast at home is just jawlaw-pawing." "What's the trouble?"

"We had planned to buy our stuff from What he really did was to launch a cam-

departed feeling as hoarse as though he incurable stage in a few weeks. Conse-June passed quickly enough with stock had given a speech at the White House. Folks came in a body and Homer dealt | delayed.

> been square with us, hasn't he?" he was are found by the doctor to have advancsaying. Busy consuming free pop ed cancer. As long as the growth is through the straws, the men agreed. well-nourished and does not interfere Well, yes, Joseph was square. He had with any body function it may give never failed yet, Listening to them early sign of its existence. Progressive loss on the conversation, he had started, strength, ansemis and loss of weight Homer wondered if all important actions persons of middle life may be the only took their beginnings from fust such symptoms of internal cancer such as

"No. sir." Junior Rivers piped up. Rivers toting your adding machine over age is immune from cancer. Cancer in

"Come home, Junior," barked Mr. directly into the store where Homer fol-"Rivers still sore about your adding "Thanks." He marched swiftly out. As usual, words had falled when he needed-them most. He stood at

A farmer was eveling young Roberts quistically. "Going to make friends with "Oh, the truth is," and Homer knew him, ch? Chip off-the old block, Hom-

With her head against his shoulder h talked about the source of it all. When He had no illusions about the future now he had been down by the lake thinking. Small-town problems like this last one

The Cancer Crusade

"That adding machine. No-it's because peoble like you and Dad get sore," Homer could not forget those words or the hurt of the man who felt so alone, as he hurried through his morning mice. paign of trust for the bank. His selfgossipy pessimism grew monotonous. No one thanked him or seemed to have a change of heart. By noon he was his arms, he strode over to Rivers' store. "Say, don't you want to use this for in diagnostis procedures. The case

out the pop. "Joseph Brown's always

Homer said nothing but nodded to the the condition is obvious. newcomer and motioned him a place on the steps. The grocer, however, strode lowed him to the desk. Rivers spoke.

No more was said. A week later when Spreading word that the bank is going it was clear that the bank would not fail. Homer neither received nor expect-"Don't believe a word of it!" Homer ed a vote of thanks. He did know his malignant disease. exploded and to his utter amasement he town better, and he was powerfully weary. He admitted that much to Jean when they were down by the lake, rest-

"But I am so proud of you." she whis-

Fighting the Great Sceurge with Knowledge—A Campaign to Wine Out Ignerance, Fear and Neglect

J. W. S. McCullough, M.D., D.P.H.

The visit to the doctor is a critical

THE DOCTOR AND THE CANCER PATIENT

moment for the cancer patient. An earl visit and a correct diagnosis is likely to save a life. A late visit and a correct diagnosis spells tragedy. Some of th types of cancer reaching the doctor office are: A lump in the breast or hard unhealing sore of the tongue. patient may have persistent pain in stomach, in a long bone or blood from the mouth or an unhealed sore on the sign of cancer, and yet cancer may exist

weakening. At his ledger when he was made by the doctor, there must be no going? I hope you aren't paying any trying to concentrate on figures rather hesitation as to the proper procedure. attention to the silly goasin going around than people, his real inspiration came. It will not do to say to the patient. "Come back in a month." In a suspected case of cancer, there must be no delay monthly accounts? Don't need it myself | cancer or it is not cancer. If cancer delay is dangerous. Some cancers of Leaving a dumbfounded man, Homer the tongue, breast and uteros reach an quently treatment cannot with safety be

Some patients in apparent good health that of the stomach. Often such cases One of the men sat upright. "What's are treated as pernicious anaemia. No children is frequently overlooked unti

These marks thust not be taken as reflecting on the ability of the doctor Some errors are due to lack of experiknowledge, but rather because of lack of complete examination. "Diagnosis of the line disease is difficult and judgment fallaclous according to as old an authority as Hippocrates."

The family doctor has the best opporcarliest stage. He is the real outpost, at recess the interpreter, the exponent and the chief herald of disease prevention. Mindalert for the carliest manifestations of

NO ENCOURAGEMENT

men of history. He remembered the steady hold on friendliness could keep He had friends. He had, most of all, humblest of them all, Jesus. He had him ahead of the despair and drudgery the knowledge of that other small-town come out of Nazareth. Had he disliked he must meet. Like his father before Man who had realized and revealed the the carpenter's trade at first? Perhaps. him, he too would be carrying the town way to make life grow to be abundant



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PLYWOOD UTULEATION

The production of plywood in Canada and the United States has been practically doubled during the past five years as a 'feault of improvements in wood glues and the consequent extension of the uses of plywood. Tests of waterresistant glues carried out at the Forest Products Laboratories of the Department of Mines and Resources at Ottawa revea that when sections of plywood, assembled with such adhesives, were submerged in cold running water for fourteen hours there was no apparent deterioration of the bond. By using this water-resistant hond, plywood may be used for the construction of walls, houses, railway freight caré, concrete forms or any purpose necessitating exposure to almospheric

conditions. For interior decoration, rotary out yellow birch from Eastern Canada and Douglas fir from British Columbia are two of the most popular plywoods because of their natural beauty. unusual grain, and the case with which they take commercial stains.

To obtain the thin strips of wood or plies, a log is atripped of its bark and soaked and steamed until it is softened. It is then put into a machine like a turning lathe and set revolving against

the difficulties experienced in the use of plywoods in construction and other rades, plywood is by no means a product of our modern age. Centuries ago, in fact, 1,400 years before the Christian era, thin sheets of wood were used for decoration, but how these veneers were held together remains a mystery. Modern plywood is made by glueing together, thin sheets or plies of wood with the grain of alternate plice at right angle. Wood assembled in this manner is of nearly equal strength parallel to and across the grain of the outer plies This equalization of strength permits the use of plywood for boxes and crates t place of the heavier strips of sawn wood resulting in reduction of weight and saving of transportation costs

HITCH-HIKING ST. BERNARD GOES TO SCHOOL BY TRAIN

From Planders, in Northern Ontario. comes this story of a hitch-hiking St Bernard dog which became a regular passenger on the C.N.R. train between Flanders and La Reine, eight miles down

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