"But we have. We are the city authorities. Miss Emily. Didn't you get notice from the sheriff, signed by him?"

"I received a paper, yes,' Miss Emily said. 'Perhaps he considers he self the sheriff... I have no taxes in Jefferson."

"But there is nothing on the books to show that, you see. We must go, by the-"

"See Colonel Sartoris. I have no taxes in Jefferson."

"But, Miss Emily..."

"See Colonel Sartoris, (Colonel Sartoris had been dead almost ten years.) I have no taxes in Jefferson. Tobe!' The Negro appeared. "Show these gentlemen out."

II

So she vanquished them, horse and foot, just as she had vanquished their fathers thirty years before about the smell. That was two years after her father's death and a short time after her sweetheart--the one we believe would marry her-had deserted her. After her father's death she went out very little; after her sweetheart went away, people hardly saw her at an. A few of the ladies had the temerity to call, but were not received, and th4 only sign of life about the place was the Negro man-a young man then-going in and out with a market basket.

"Just as if a man-any man-could keep a kitchen property," the ladies said; so they were not surprised when the smell developed. It was another link between the gross, teeming world and the high and mighty Griersons. A neighbour, a woman complained to the mayor, judge Stevens, eighty years old.

"But what will you have me do about it, madam?" he said.

"Why, send her word to stop it," the woman said. "Isn't there a law?"

"I'm sure that won't be necessary," judge Stevens said. "It's probably just a snake or a rat that nigger of hers killed in the yard. I'll speak to him about it."

The next day he received two more complaints, one from a man who came in diffident deprecation. "We really must do something about it judge. I'd be the last one in the world to bother Miss Emily, but we've got to do something." That night the Board of Aldermen met-three grey-beard and one younger man, a member of the rising generation.

"It's simple enough," he said. "Send her word to have her place cleaned up. Give her a certain time to do it in, and if she don't..."

"Damn it, sir," judge Stevens said, "will you accuse a lady to her face of smelling bad?"

So the next night, after midnight, four men crossed Miss Emily's lawn and slunk about the house like burglars, sniffing along the base of the brickwork and at the cellar openings while one of them performed a regular sowing motion with his hand out of a sack stung from his shoulder. They broke open the cellar door and sprinkled lime there, and in all the outbuildings. As they recrossed the lawn, a window that had been dark was lighted and Miss Emily sat in it, the light behind her, and her upright torso motionless as that of an idol. They crept quietly across the lawn and into the shadow of the locusts that lined the street. After a week or two the smell went away.

That was when people had begun to feel really sorry for her. People in our town, remembering how old lady Wyatt, her great-aunt, had gone completely crazy at last, believed that the Griersons held themselves a little too high for what they really were. None of the young men were quite good enough for Miss Emily and such. We had long thought of them as a tableau; Miss Emily a slender figure in white in the background, her father a spraddled silhouette in the foreground, his back to her and clutching a horsewhip, the two of them framed by the back-flung front door. So when she got to be thirty and was still single, we were not pleased exactly, but vindicated; even with insanity in the family she wouldn't have turned down all of her chances if they had really materialized.

When her father died, it got about that the house was all that was left to her; and in a way, people were glad. At last they could pity Miss Emily. Being left alone, and a pauper, she had become humanized. Now she too would know the old thrill and the old despair of a penny more or less.