

## **EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY**

### **BY H.E. SMITH**

#### **In A Tunnel**

The old lady had traversed all this distance safely, enjoying every hour of the journey, and was now turning her face homeward to a farm nestled among the hills.

“My son lives on the other side of the house, and does all the chores about the farm. I take care of myself,” she explained, with the curious simplicity of a nature that confided all its private affairs to strangers, never dreaming of doubting that their interest equaled her own in discussing their personal history.

Ruth’s sympathy was aroused. This sympathy cost her dear. Three hours later she was standing alone on the crowded platform of a large railway terminus, where locomotives were dashing frantically about, and anxious passengers vociferated loudly, with her own train disappearing in the distance, and a string of gold beads in her hand.

It happened thus: Ruth and her new friend hobnobbed delightfully. The old lady was particularly pleased to discover that among the many good things; prepared for the other’s journey by friendly hands were crisp turn-overs, generous slices of dried-apple pie, and doughnuts.

“Seems like hum,” she declared, with a sigh of satisfaction. “Couldn’t git any cake nor pie in Canady. They said that they had plenty of beef and beer, but I don’t need nothin’ quite so hearty.”

Born of the same race, subjected to the same influences of a harsh, cold climate, the English resident of Canada supplies generous fuel for the machinery of life, while the Yankee resident of New England most grudgingly lubricates the busy mechanism of his economy, at the same time extorting the greatest possible amount of labor from his slave-the body.

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**Judy Lambert**  
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The train paused at the station, and a young man strolled into the car. Miss Ruth's attention became instantly centered in him. It was not because of the beauty of his black mustache that she observed him, nor his oily ringlets, flashy waistcoat and resplendent watch-chain. It was simply because his evil.

His snaky eye, wandering carelessly over the passengers, pounded on our unconscious old lady. "You will bear watching," thought the younger woman. Then she talked warningly of thieves and pickpockets, at which the old lady looked simply bewildered.

The train rushed into a tunnel a dark, chilly hole that seemed to open a yawning mouth, itself stationary and soulless, to enshroud life and motion. A tiny blue flame crackled; the old lady had lighted a bit of tallow candle, using her hand for a candle-stick.

"I git scared in these tunnels," she said, and held the candle so that Ruth and herself were framed in a vivid radiance. The former, keeping her eyes steadfastly fixed on the snaky young man seated behind, detected a stealthy movement of his hand toward the old lady's neck, where hung the family gold beads.

A sudden draught (emanating from the snaky young man) flared out the candle, a scuffle and rush ensued amidst confused exclamations, and Miss Mayhew launched into active combat with the foe. "Thieves!" she shrieked. "Oh, murder!" gasped the old lady, first receiving a blow over the head that crushed her bonnet awry, and then feeling as if a great many shawls had tumbled over her.

"What is the matter?" echoed on all sides in the terrible darkness. "Oh, oh!" screamed Ruth. "The wretch! The scamp! Help me to hold him. He is twisting my hand horribly." "Let me go," growled the snaky young man, and giving himself a serpentine screw, adroitly eluded the nervous clutch of his captor's fingers.

"He's gone! Do catch him," she panted.

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The wildest commotion ensued. Everybody else feeling that it devolved upon each as men and brothers to do something, and succeeding only in creating inextricable confusion. None of the passengers had the vaguest idea what had happened. Each man grappled with his neighbor, suspecting him of some deadly villainy in that obscure night.

"I have got him," cried a cheerful voice from the door, proceeding from a stout and valiant traveler, who, indeed, held in an iron grip a slender, writhing form that indignantly rebelled against his assault. But when light dawned to a comforting brightness again the stout gentleman was found to hold captive an innocent and much injured newspaper and pop-corn boy who had entered the car just in the nick of time to be made prisoner, while the thief slid noiselessly away to vanish forever.

Then each passenger was morally certain that the thief had crept past him while he was pursuing the gentleman opposite, and the newsboy was surest of all that he had been propelled into their midst by some unseen power on the platform. The inevitable result of so much excitement was a chilling doubt if Miss Mayhew's alarm had not been only a woman's scare, after all.

"Look at her for yourselves," she said indignantly, reading scepticism on every side. The old lady's appearance was certainly dilapidated and battered, while her beautiful beads were lying in her lap. Ruth replaced them preparatory to her getting out at the crowded terminus where she changed cars. The old lady fluttered away almost before the train had stopped, and when she had been gone fully five minutes, Miss Mayhew rattled the beads on the floor with a sudden crash. The thief had loosened the clasp in his effort to secure them. Something must be done.

Again she appealed to selfish men; they were not going to leave their places. Much good but vague advice was volunteered about keeping the necklace until she could forward it sometime, which she cut short with a decisive.

"I will go myself." The emergency required prompt action and she was equal to the emergency. Without a moment's hesitation she rushed out. "How long do we stop?" she inquired, of a brakeman, who exhaled hot oil from his very countenance.

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"Twenty minutes," replied the brakeman, surely incited by the Evil One. Where, oh, where will that brakeman go when he dies? Was his conscience deadened as well as his outer ear by the kin of his life; or did he view with indifference the possibility of any future state being worse than the pandemonium of his present existence? Our traveler was immediately beset by a crowd of clamorous hackmen desirous of driving her out of her wits, if not to the end of the earth. Escaping this snare, she fell into another of babies and dusty parents.

How many tender innocents she upset in her haste, thus increasing the general uproar, Ruth, although naturally humane, never knew.

Everywhere a hopeless blockade of baggage, trunks, and struggling humanity-everywhere insane panic of hurry in the fear of being left behind. The bewildered woman could not approach within ear-shot of the perspiring ticket-master, whose suffused face glared vengefully through his pigeon-hole as he snapped short the incoherent questions of distracted passengers. If she could only ascertain where the old lady had gone.

"Which is the Locust Valley train?" she asked of a baggage-man who was pausing to take breath after lifting a Saratoga trunk of huge dimensions. The baggage-man, with agonizing deliberation, rested his great hands on his hips, thrust a quid of tobacco into his cheek, started at his interlocutor, and said:

"Hey?" Miss Ruth repeated her question with the energy of despair. "Where do you want to go to?" inquired the baggage-man, warily. Then it became a painfully evident fact that where Miss Mayhew wanted to go and where she was going were two widely sundered matters, for she beheld her train in motion. To rush toward it, to signal blindly-as if the insensate monster would stop!-to be held back from jumping on the board in a gentlemanly fashion, and then to be left gazing blankly into space-that was her experience. A voice came back on the wind: I will keep your things for you."

To inveigh bitterly against the deceitfulness of brakemen was an impulse which our unfortunate lady checked with true dignity of character. "I will find the old lady at all events," she decided, "even though she should prove the proverbial lady in that haystack of a depot."

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There never were so many trains looking exactly alike, and apparently headed in the same direction, with their engines prancing aimlessly up and down. Oh, the satisfaction of a length beholding a familiar old face, spectacles on nose, beaming behind a window! Miss Mayhew dashed frantically forward, waving the necklace aloft. The old lady started, felt instantly at her throat, and began to fumble no less frantically at the closed sash. Varnish and springs defied her. Horrors!! The train, after dawdling any length of time, at this inauspicious moment continued to move. It was a pleasant sight to behold Miss Mayhew racing along the platform, casting dignity to the winds, and the old lady on the verge of apoplexy, within the car in her efforts to raise the window. How the people stared, to be sure! But Miss Mayhew did not care. She was long past personal sensitiveness; and when the sash finally yielded, just as she reached the extreme edge of the platform, she threw in the beads, and retiring, seated herself on a carpet-bag to burst into tears.

Her courage completely failed her; the weak, silly, feminine sobs would come. A gentleman had approached to claim the carpet-bag. He was tall, bronzed, and bearded, and he wore a scarf about his throat of some curious Eastern fabric. Miss Mayhew, the tension of excitement having snapped, was left as weak as an infant. Her pocket has been cut, and her portemonnaie was gone. Had she, in securing her companion's safety, fallen a victim to the snaky young man herself?

She now rose, making some confused apology for the condition of her late throne, the carpet-bag. "Ruth Mayhew!" exclaimed the stranger. "I cannot be mistaken. Surely you wear my gift, the little brooch, silver and pearls.

With a startled expression of wonder she looked up into his face, and read joy in the eyes of her once young missionary; locomotives shrieked, and the human tide surged to and fro, yet these two saw nothing of the confusion about them. He was journeying toward the white house on the hill, which was to be his first pilgrimage in his native land, and would have missed her had she not pursued the old lady with the gold beads. "How did you recognize me!" said Ruth Mayhew, flushed, and tremulous, all the independence of later years utterly gone. "I should have known you any where in the world," said the Rev. John Atherton, from Algiers. Entre nous, I believe he recalled the familiar brooch before he did the wearer. However, that is none of our affair, since she was perfectly satisfied with his reply. The result of this meeting was that Aunt Harriet lost her nurse, and the Foreign Missions gained a cheerful, earnest worker, after all.

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## **EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY**

### **BY H.E. SMITH**

#### **My Night in A Stage Coach**

The year was 1856-the month December –the place Tamaqua. I was a young man then, and a strong one. I did a good deal of traveling through the State of Pennsylvania, going from county town to county town from the beginning of the year to the close. It was pleasant business enough, for there was less rail-roading to be done then than now, and more staging, and not infrequently long rides on canal boats in the summer time. I was not often hurried on my trips, and took my own time. My exact business at the county seats consisted of hunting up titles to obscure, wild lands, paying taxes upon them, and getting them in good condition for immediate sale.

In consequence of the nature of this business, I knew a good deal about the topography of Pennsylvania, and a good deal that, at the time, was worth knowing about its roads and its inns. All of the latter were bad, but some were better than others. One of the worst of them was at Tamaqua, and possibly it is there yet, though when I last slept under its roof, it was in altogether such a lamentable condition of decay, and its roof was such a very leaky roof indeed, that I doubt not it long ago disappeared out the sight of men, and possibly out of their memories also-Tamaqua having achieved a railroad since, and, of course, grown as only railroad towns do grow.

I arrived there in that December of 1856, on Monday afternoon, which was quite as cold and disagreeable a Monday afternoon as I remember ever to have known, though, when compared with the Tuesday that followed, it might be considered rather warm than otherwise. I was half frozen when I got there, and I was not quite thawed out when I left, for I had yielded to a burning curiosity to visit a coal mine, and I fancy that Tamaqua is nothing but a coal mine, with a thousand mouths that every morning swallow so many thousand miners and disgorge them every night.

It was then, and I think it is now, a very black and sooty place, with a canal in front of it, a hill behind it, and the huge mine I have spoken of under it. It was not only black and sooty itself, but its people were similarly black and sooty; and so were its horses, or rather its mules, for it seemed to have few of the former and a great many of the latter. Even its dogs and cats partook of the general sootiness, and were evidently greatly depressed by it. I was very cold when I went down into the mine-which had its shaft just behind the hotel-and I was colder still when I came of it. I went to bed cold, and got up cold, so cold indeed that I thought I would never be warm anymore. When I went down into the frozen breakfast-room, I looked out of the window, and saw that the ground was covered deep with snow, and that it was still snowing as if it meant to exhaust the whole winter's supply in five minutes or so, being very greatly pressed to do it immediately, I drank my cold, black coffee and ate my cold, tough beef-steak in gloomy silence, thinking more than I had done for a long time before of home, of its pleasant cheer and warmth, and of the loving boys and girls in it who were even then no doubt, expecting my speedy coming, for this was already the morning of Tuesday, and Thursday would be Christmas Day.

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**My Night in A Stage Coach**

In that home I was St. Nicholas himself, for it was I that brought home in the night the brave tree with it spreading green branches; it was I that planted it firmly in the middle of the wide parlor; it was I that found the infinite variety of toys, cakes, bon-bons, and glittering baubles which covered it; it was I that placed the ever-beautiful image of the Christ-Child on the topmost bough; I that lighted the many-colored tapers; and I that, at the auspicious moment, suddenly threw open the folding-doors and let in the children to behold the glory of that wondrous Christmas miracle.

In my frequent journeyings through the State, I had seen many places which I wanted to get away from quickly, but I never saw another that I wanted to turn my back upon so much as Tamaqua. It was not in any manner a pleasant place, and besides, if these nephews and nieces of mine were to have a Christmas tree at all in this year, 1856, I thought I must go home as fast as I could travel. I had come to Tamaqua in a stage-not to Philadelphia, exactly, but to the next railroad town, and that was distant I knew not how far.

I arose shivering from the dreary breakfast, and hunted up the landlord of the inn. He was easily found, and was no better or warmer looking a man than his accommodations promised him to be. I paid his extravagant charges, and then informed him that I wished to reach as quickly as possible the nearest railroad station, and to take the first train for the east.

"The nearest station is at Ilium; Ilium is 22 miles distant; you cannot get there before night, if at all." All this was spoken reflectively, and with deliberation.

"If I get there by 10 o'clock to-night can I make the eastern express!" "You can, but I doubt if you can get there at all." "Why?" I asked. He was not a man to waste words. He only said: "The state won't go-on account of the storm.

"Are you sure of that?" I ventured to ask. "Quite sure," and he closed his lips with a snap, as if he knew all about it. "Who owns the stage?" "I do," he replied. "And I won't let it go, because the road lies over that mountain yonder; it runs close to the edges of precipices several hundred feet high, it is rough and slippery, the snow is deep now, and getting deeper every minute, and I don't believe any horse could pull through it.:

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**EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY**  
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**My Night in A Stage Coach**

I thought of the little children waiting for my yonder; of their bitter disappointment if I did not come. Then I did not come. Then I said: "I am very anxious to go, and I am willing to pay well for being taken." The landlord leaning over the bar, asked:

"How much?" I told him what I was willing to pay. "I'll go and get the stage ready," he said. After all, it was only the higher price-he had been waiting for.

In five minutes the stage was at the door. It was an ordinary box wagon on good strong springs, having a cotton cover open in front. The horse was a half-starved, jaded-looking beast. I took all this in as I stood on the porch waiting for the driver. Getting impatient at last, I asked:

"Where is the driver?" The landlord, without speaking, pointed to an ill-clad boy standing at the horse's head. I looked closely at him. He might be, I thought, fifteen years old, or he might be not more than ten. His eyes were clear blue, and he, hearing my question, turned them full upon mine, a frank, boyish smile rebuking the distrust my words implied, and lighting up every feature of his delicate face. His complexion was like that of a girl, his mouth small and tender, his hair yellow, his figure slight and sinuous.

I looked at him, standing there shivering with the cold, out through the driving storm, along the snow-covered mountain road we were to travel together and asked: "Are you not afraid to go?"

The landlord interrupted:

"it don't matter if he is afraid. He belongs to me. He shall go." "No," I said; "he shall not go, if he is not quite willing." "I am not at all afraid," the boy replied, "and I am quite willing to go. I have gone often and often, through worse storms than this."

There was an earnest, manly grace even in the way he shook the gathered flakes from his tattered cap, and in his voice there was such a hearty, cheery ring, that from that moment I trusted and loved the boy.

I jumped into the stage, took the back seat, drew my great frieze coat close about my legs, and we drove off among the gaping, sooty crowd of miners into the lonely mountain road; into the cruelest storm of wind and snow that I ever say.

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#### **My Night in A Stage Coach**

The boy sat on the front seat, waiting to be spoken to, looking straight ahead. When we were quite clear of the straggling huts of the miners on the outermost limits of town, I asked him his name.

"They call me Lewis Shively," he said. "How old are you, Lewis," was my next question. "Fourteen, next April, sir." "Do you live at home, with your father and mother?" "That man yonder is all the father or mother I have, and his stable loft is the only home I have had since he took me from the poor house. That was better than the stable though, for they taught me something there."

There were no complaining chords in the tones in which these bitter words were said, and while he was speaking he was drawing the whip gently across the horse's back, brushing off the snow that had fallen on it. "Have you been driving on this road long?" I inquired.

"Going on three years. It will be three years in March." "Is it could out there? Colder than in here, I mean?" "I think it is," he replied; the wind and snow cut so-but I don't mind it, sir! We get used to rough weather up in these hills." "I wish you would come in here; my coat will cover us both." "No, I can't" he said. "I must watch the road now. We have to go pretty close to the precipices, sometimes.

"How close?" I asked. "With in a few inches. I can't see now five yards ahead, the snow falls so heavily." "Do you think it safe, then, to go on?" "Quite safe, sir! And I don't mind the cold." But his teeth chattered as he said it, and the ruddy glow was all gone from his cheeks. I did not talk more then. There were, I discovered, wide cracks in the bottom of the stage, through which the wind poured mercilessly. I was chilled through to the heart in less than an hour after starting. I do not know how far we had gone, or how long we had been upon the road, when I heard the boy's voice, cheery and bright, asking;

"How are you now, sir? Feeling comfortable, sir?" I nodded my head, and crept closer into the corner. But he was wiser than I, and would not let me have the sleep I coveted. "You are in a hurry to get home," he said, for want of something better to say with which to rouse me.

"Yes," I replied. "I want to be at home on Christmas Eve." "The best days I ever knew were Christmases-a good while ago." He said it as if he were ever and ever so old, and what was saddest of all, as if he were done with Christmas forever. I told him of the tree I was to get, and how Christmas Day was kept in the great cities. He was most interested in the tree, making me tell him again and again about it. But after awhile, as if he were tired of it, he said;

"I never saw a tree like that. I know about Christmas, though-about the star and the shepherds, and the Christ-child you spoke of-that they laid in a manger." "Then you know all that anyone in the world need ever to know," I said.

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**EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY**  
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**My Night in A Stage Coach**

It may have been an hour, or two hours, but it seemed but a minute after this that the boy shook me roughly by the shoulder.

"We are to get out here," he said. I was very stiff in my joints, but I could get up and climb out of the stage, and no more. If I was cold I did not know it; my limbs were numb, yet otherwise I was comfortable enough. I crawled out and followed the boy into a miserable-looking shanty by the roadside, in front of which we had stopped.

There was a rough bar running across the room; there was a thick, black haired, brawny-looking man behind it, and there were two or three kegs of liquor behind him. There was an iron stove in the middle of the room, a bench along the wall, and that was all. The boy asked for some brandy, drank a glass of it after handing one to me, which I drank, and felt so much better for drinking that I called for another and got it; but the boy refused to take the glass I offered him. "I have had enough," he said.

"We were going out, when the land lord opened the door before us. Looking out into the storm, he asked incredulously; "Are you going on?" "Yes!" said the boy, "I was told to drive this gentleman to Ilium tonight, and I'm going to do it."

"If you get there at all, it will be night sure enough," the landlord said. "I will get there all the same," was the boy's reply. "Let us stop here tonight," I said; "we can go on in the morning." "I would rather take you on, sir! There's no danger. I can't put my horse up here, and my master would kill me if anything happened to him."

That decided me to go on. Beside, I did not care to talk. I was beginning to feel cold again standing in the wind, so we got into the stage. It was not snowing any faster than before, simply because not. But the roads were heavier, and when we tried to start, the jaded horse balked and struggled through the drift, for the stage had frozen fast where it stopped.

It was 3 o'clock, the light in the west growing dimmer and dimmer-the gloom of the mountains and the bare woods coming nearer to us, making their meaning felt in our souls, filling mine with an awful dread of the snow-covered road beyond. Ten miles to go yet, the night coming quickly on, the cold growing more intense, the road rougher, more precipitous, the horse evidently giving out! But the boy took up the lines, the bright, frank smile upon his face, the cherry word upon his tongue. "Good bye," he said, to the man in the doorway.

The man stood for an instant in the door way looking after us, "Good-bye," he said. We went on along the road that from the beginning of time it was ordained we were to go. I crept back into my corner.

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**My Night in A Stage Coach**

"Do not go to sleep," the pleasant voice warned me from the front. "Thank you," I replied, cheered and warmed by its hearty glow. "I will not sleep." Then followed a long silence, in which I had views of the falling snow, the white hills above us, the white hills still below us, in which I heard sounds from creaking, crooning, branches, from the wind sweeping savagely past us. Then unconquerable drowsiness, fast coming darkness-then night.

I felt a hand on my face, then on my shoulder, shaking me roughly; a sweet cheering voice in my ears, calling me back to life. "If you go to sleep now, you won't wake up again," it said.

I woke with a sudden start, for an instant, to a full consciousness of time and peace. I was not cold, only sleepy. "I am quite awake," I replied. "Have we far to go?"

"Five miles," and the voice was still the same cheery voice that I had heard from the first. He spoke to me often after that; then I saw him as in a dream, fixing a blanket that he had taken from the horse's back, to the hickory bows overhead, to keep the snow from driving in upon me, for I was covered with it to my knees. As God is my judge I did not then clearly know what he was doing, or I would have stopped him.

I did not feel cold, though I knew afterward that I was then freezing, and I did not think he was cold. I did not think at all. I was far past that. I had begun a longer journey than I started upon. In that longer journey I dreamed of home of the wondrous Christmas miracle, the lighted tree; of the glad faces of children, whose voices I heard; I heard one of them repeat two or three times, with startling distinctness, "We are lost." I was conscious that the child who said it had thrown herself into my arms, and was lying there a dull, heavy weight. But, aside from the cry, it was all bright and pleasant-this real, terrible journey through the snow, over the rough dangerous mountain road, in that far off December. The dream lasted a long while, through all that night, and the day following, and the night following that.

When I awoke from it, I was in a large room, which I had never seen before. There were piles of the softest blankets upon me, there was a great wood fire blazing on the hearth, and I had never felt so warm and comfortable in all my life. There were two strangers in the room, a man and a woman, whose faces were kindly ones, but sorely troubled.

When I stirred, and they saw I recognized them, they came and stood by my bed. "Where am I?" I asked of them. "At Ilium, in the house of the Methodist minister." "How long have I been here?" "Since night before last. You came in the stage, and the horse stopped before our door," the man said.

"What day is this?" "It is Christmas Day," the woman replied, taking my hand in hers. "I have been ill, then?" "Yes!"

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**My Night in A Stage Coach**

"There was a boy brought me here. Where is he?" "He is here too." The voice that said it was husky with tears, and the hand that held mine shook. "Has he been ill, too?" "Yes!" "Is he better now?" "He will never be ill again." I looked into the face of the woman who said this, and I saw that her eyes were red with weeping.

I disengaged the hand she held, and turned my face to the wall. The woman laid her hand upon my arm. "You must not feel like that. It is better so. He had only one friend, and he is with him this beautiful Christmas morning. He had no home here. It is Christmas day, and he is at home there." I took in mine the comforting hand that lay upon my arm.

"I would like to see him," I said. "He gave his life for me." They took me down afterward to what had been the family sitting room. There were warm, red curtains at the windows; a bright glowing carpet on the floor; there were bunches of holly and laurel scattered here and there, and over all was the atmosphere of home.

They left me at the door, I went in, and stood by the side of the couch on which they had laid him. The eyes of tender blue were closed forever, the yellow hair was parted over the boyish brows, and still about the brave, sweet mouth the bright smile played as it did at the first moment of our meeting, when my implied doubt of him called it there. He lay before me dead, in all the glow and promise of his youth.

But the smile, which triumphed above death's ruin, rebuked me, and as I stooped to kiss the lips of the beautiful boy, I knew, as well as man could know, that he was not dead; that he who had given more life to the dead girl and the widow's son had given it also to him; and that he had only gone farther on his journey than I-into a sweeter, fuller, more gracious life than he had ever known. And I also knew that I should see him again if I but only made my own life as brave, unselfish, and true as his had been.

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**Mad In Spite Of Himself**

"Everything goes wrong," said Mr. Tripler, laying down his knife and fork with the face of a martyr. There are some people in the world with whom "everything" seems chronically to go wrong; there are some whose first infantile wail is uttered in the minor key and who go on lamenting through life, and of this much abused class Mr. Nathan Tripler was a burning and shining light.

"What's the matter, dear?" questioned Mrs. Tripler, who sat opposite her husband with a round-eyed baby on her knee, and two or three little ones clamoring for their share of the matutinal meal on either side of her.

Mrs. Tripler was a trim, neatly-made little woman, with blue eyes and flaxen hair-a woman who might have been pretty could she have divested herself of a certain frightened, apprehensive look that came over her face whenever her liege lord spoke or even looked toward her. Not that Dorothy Tripler was actually afraid-her husband had never beaten her nor used coercive measures, but when a man begins to find fault a woman never is easy in her mind lest some domestic screw should be waxing loose.

"I can't eat a single mouthful, Dorothy," croaked Mr. Tripler, dolefully. "Such cooking and such food! You may as well turn that new cook of yours into the street at once."

"But, Nathan, I-I am very sorry, but I cooked the breakfast myself, dear, this morning. Isn't it nice?" "Nice? Yes-very nice for those can digest leather and drink dishwater."

"The biscuits are fresh and hot, Nathan." "I don't want to be poisoned with hot bread." "And I thought the steak was unusually tender." No reply. Mr. Tripler had folded his arms and was gazing with an expression of abstracted despair at the ceiling.

"Will you have another cup of coffee?" timidly questioned his wife. "Coffee?" Is that coffee? Really I thought it was hot water that had got into the urn by mistake!" "I will order some fresh made," said Mrs. Tripler, with her hand on the bell rope.

"You will do no such thing, ma'am if you please," said Mr. Tripler, shortly. "My appetite is completely destroyed." "Will you have an egg boiled?" "No" "There's some very nice ham in the pantry." "I dare say-there always is when I don't it."

"I dare say-there always is when I don't want it." "I am very sorry, Nathan," said poor little Mrs. Tripler, despairingly.

Register of Deeds  
Judy Lambert  
(continued)



## EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

By H.E. Smith

### Mad In Spite of Himself

Yes she was sorry, this faithful, much-enduring wife; nor did the frequent repetition of this domestic storm at all abate her penitence and sense of guilt. Some women would have got accustomed to the Daily disturbance and thrown it off as the robin casts the dewdrops from her wing. Not so with Dorothy Tripler. She was too sensitive, too conscientious, too delicately organized to laugh off her troubles as some surface-deep characters would have done. So when her husband had departed, still grumbling under his breath as he slammed the door, she leaned her throbbing head upon one weary little hand and murmured softly to herself.

"Oh, I wish Nathan was different!" Then, as if she had uttered high treason, she started to her feet, checking the sensation of repining, and began industriously to prepare the three apple cheeked, tow-headed little Triplers for school.

"It's Monday morning and Nathan don't like them to be late," "What do you mean" "Dear me," suddenly interrupted his uncomfortable companion, "what a very nice hat you have. Now, what do you say to exchanging hats? Mine is a very nice straw, but I find it's somewhat heating to the brain."

"You are quite welcome, sir," faltered the tremulous Nathan, speaking all the more rapidly in that the freakish maniac had already deftly effected the change. "And your coat, too-nice cool linen. Upon my word, now, that coat is infinitely preferable to this swallow-tailed concern of mine, with the brass buttons. Yes-it fits me very nicely. I hope you don't object, sir, to the accommodation?" "N-no!" faltered Mr. Tripler.

"Well, good morning," said the stranger, looking round with a bewilder air. "I don't really see where my chief orderly is-I told him to be here precisely at nine o'clock-and everything will be in confusion if I don't attend to it persistently."

He plunged into the green, dense fastness of the woods, talking restlessly to himself as he went, and Mr. Nathan Tripler was solus in a coarse straw hat and coat of coarse blue cloth, garnished with huge metal buttons, whose brilliance was considerably tarnished.

"Dear me, what a figure I cut," groaned Mr. Tripler, eyeing himself with disgust. "I must go directly home and get on something decent. A man would be hooted through the streets of New York if he ventured to make his appearance in such a costume as this."

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Judy Lambert

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## EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

By H.E. Smith

### Mad In Spite of Himself

It was lighted and ventilated by an iron grating in the door, with a corresponding window high up on the wall, and furnished with only a narrow couch and a stand built into the wall; and there, Mr. Nathan Tripler, released from his confining bonds, was left to enjoy the uninterrupted society of his own cheerless meditations.

"It can't be possible! I must be asleep and dreaming!" thought Nathan. But it was possible, and he never was wider awake in his life. Toward evening a pitcher of water and a piece of bread were dealt out to him. Mr. Tripler ate it under a sort of mental protest, to relieve the gnawing sensation of faintness that was at his vitals.

"What would I not give for one of Dorothy's hot biscuits," thought the wretched captive. "My poor little Dorothy! I have been too hard upon the straight waistcoat-it was his keeper instead, accompanied by two or three gentlemen-all profuse in apologies and sympathetic ejaculations. "Such a mistake!" said one old gentleman with a balk head.

"So awkward for you, my dear sir!" said another middle-aged gentleman with a Roman nose. "But entirely unintentional, I assure you, sir," chimed in a third. While Mr. Tripler looked vaguely from one to the other he said; "Then I am not mad, it seems?" "Not a particle, sir!" cried the three committee men in chorus. "Oh!" said Mr. Tripler, "I'm glad to hear it. Then the committee proceeded to inform their involuntary guest how the mistake had happened by which his identity had been confounded with that of his mysterious acquaintance of the woods. "We are very sorry," said the first committee man, shaking Mr. Tripler's hand as if it had been the town pump. "So am I," said Mr. Tripler, laconically.

"Here is your hat and coat, sir," said the second committee man. "We had great difficulty in getting them away from our poor friend in the incurable ward, who fancied that they were the last dying bequest of President Lincoln." "Anything we can do to make any atonement for the awkward mistake would be a pleasure," said the third, while the keeper eyed Mr. Tripler dubiously, as if not altogether certain that he was not a little mad after all.

When Mr. Nathan Tripler reached his home all was the wildest grief and confusion there. Dorothy had the woods search, the river dragged, and the whole vicinage ransacked, and was now in hysterics in the nursery. Nathan walked straight in and put both arms around her.

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Judy Lambert

(continued)

## **EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY**

**By H.E. SMITH**

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"What would I not give for one of Dorothy's hot biscuits," thought the wretched captive. "My poor little Dorothy! I have been too hard upon her. Suppose I should die without being able to tell her how ashamed I am of having been such a brute. It was not the dry bread that choked Nathan Tripler just then—it was the humiliating sense of his own sins and short comings.

Next mornings it was bread and water again. Nathan thought of Dorothy's despised coffee and grumbled-at steak.

"I've deserved it," thought Nathan; "there is no mistake about that. Poor darling little Dorothy! How her heart is aching for me now. I wish I could stroke down her hair just once. Oh, it's hard to be treated so, even though I know I'm served exactly right. If I ever get out of this hole alive Dorothy will find me a changed man."

The confused current of his thoughts was just eddying vaguely through his mind when there was a sound of steps and voices in the corridors without.

"I suppose they're going to put on a straight waistcoat now," thought Mr. Tripler, with a resigned air. "Well, there is nothing left for me but to endure. I don't think I'm mad; but how long I shall hold out sane under this interesting concatenation of circumstances is rather a doubtful question."

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**Judy Lambert**

**(continued)**

## **EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY**

**By H.E. Smith**

### **Mad In Spite Of Himself**

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## **EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY**

### **BY H.E. SMITH**

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"Here I am, Dottie! Don't cry any more!" But Mrs. Tripler cried more than ever.

"It's only a dream," she sobbed forth. "Nathan is dead."

"No, I'm not dead," said Mr. Tripler, with a grim sense of humor, "only I've been mad." And quieting his wife's sobs after a while, he told her all his adventures. "And now is dinner ready?" he asked, "for I'm as hungry as a bear."

"I haven't a thing in the house to eat, Nathan dear," wailed his wife.

"I don't care if it's nothing but dry bread and molasses, Dottie," said the husband. "I can tell you that asylum took some of the nonsense out of me. I shall never grumble again, don't be afraid."

Dorothy brightened up. It was the first time he had called her "Dottie," or spoke so tenderly since their honey-moon was in its crescent glow.

He adhered to his good resolutions-he never did grumble again. The asylum had done him genuine good.

**Register of Deeds**  
**Judy Lambert**

## **EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY**

### **BY H.E. SMITH**

#### **Serving The Writ**

The small dapper figure of Squire Butterfield was seated in his office one cold winter morning and the Squire was vainly trying to comprehend a pile of law books. These books had been left by opposing attorneys in some case tried before him, and from the cases therein cited he was expected to make up his decision. Had it been any other question geography, astronomy, mechanics, or what not-the Squire would have settled it at once. He had the most thorough confidence in the ability of Squire Butterfield to settle anything, but now he was perplexed. The more he studied, the more he became convinced that the plaintiff, had all the law on his side; and so had the defendant; and that both sides had amply proved their case. In this bewildering state of mind he concluded to take a sort of middle course, at once satisfactory to himself if to no one else, and he had just written upon his docket, "Case dismissed for want of jurisdiction," when the tall, thin, somber figure of Mr. Grimp appeared in the doorway.

Now Mr. Grimp was an awfully solemn man. Arrayed in the blackest of broad-cloths, the stiffest of neckties, the whitest of shirt fronts and standing collars, with features cold, austere, and severely serious, Mr. Grimp somehow ever suggested unpleasant thoughts of funerals, grave clothes and coffins. He was a very religious man, too-very. In prayer meeting, class meeting, and on other occasions, his monotonous, sepulchral, metallic voice was frequently heard speaking of the "shortness of life," the "certainty of death," and about "becoming food for the worms," and such other cheerful subjects. Cold and passionless himself, he had no mercy for the weakness or frailty of his fellow, exacting the most formal religious observance in others and the last penny due him by his debtors. And he was rich.

"I have called, Brother Butterfield," began Mr. Grimp in slow measured tones-"I have called to see you about a little matter that has been on my mind for some time; a matter I hesitated bringing before the courts, as I think the Scriptural rule should be generally followed about "going to law before the unjust," and-"

Humph!" And the Squire straightened himself on his chair and ran his hand through his thin locks until each individual hair stood out a bristling protest. "I reckon I ain't a bit more unjust than any on'em. If you're hintin' that way, afore some spiritooal court, and done with it?"

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## **EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY**

### **BY H.E. SMITH**

#### **Serving The Writ**

Mr. Grimp colored slightly. "I think you misunderstand me, Brother Butterfield; I only used the expression in a general sense, without allusion to you, whom I know to be a man with clear ideas of justice, or else the community had not placed you in so responsible a position."

The Squire's testiness at once disappeared, the smile came back, and he bowed in complacent acquiescence. "But to return to my business," continued Mr. Grimp. "You doubtless know Mrs. Barney!" "What, Widow Barney?" and the complacent look immediately gave place to an unusual flush on the questioner's face.

"Yes, I believe she is a widow. Her husband-poor man-became somewhat involved before he died; but may we hope in a better world he has discovered the things of earth to be but vanity and vexation of spirit. Like us all, Brother Butterfield, he brought nothing into the world, and it is certain he carried nothing out."

"I suppose not, as you got the hull on't," answered the Squire, altogether misinterpreting Mr. Grimp's moralizing. "Ahem! Ah, yes! I presume you allude to the foreclosing of a mortgage I held on his place. It was truly unpleasant for me to do it, but duty to my children, so lately deprived of a mother, impelled me. As the Scripture says, "If any provide not for his own, especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel.'"

"Better had some keer for other folks' orphans as well," muttered the Squire; but Mr. Grimp did not hear, and proceeded.

"Well, at the sale of Mr. Barney's place I bought it in and since then I have let Mrs. Barney have it at a nominal rent-at a mere nominal rent, I assure you Brother Butterfield. It is as about that I have called.

"The long and short on't is she hain't paid the rent and you want her put out?" "Well-yes and no. I wish steps taken in that direction, but not to extremes. I would like process issued, but have final measures kept in abeyance, as I think the matter may be amicably arranged.

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## **EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY**

### **BY H.E. SMITH**

#### **Serving The Writ**

“That is, you want some scarecrow to hold over her to bring her to terms?” suggested the Squire, looking keenly at his visitor.

Mr. Grimp nodded “You will attend to it, Brother Butterfield?” he said. “I’ll tend to it,” said the Squire. Then Mr. Grimp bowed solemnly, said “Farewell, Brother Butterfield, and passed out into the sunshine- his figure almost to thin and dried up to east a shadow in the bright sunlight, yet sufficient to cast moral shadow and unhappiness over homes and lives around and about him.

For a moment following Mr. Grimp’s departure the Squire’s face was full of conflicting emotions. He arose from his chair, and his small boot-heels clattered on the office floor as he paced hurriedly to and fro.

“The old skinflint!” he muttered, “Jest as if I didn’t see through him like a book! He wants to convert the widow into Mrs. Grimp number two, an’ if she ain’t willin’-maybe she’s refused him already-he wants me to make her think she’d better be. That’s what he wants. Ha! Ha! I reckon there’s a widower that Widow Barney or any other woman would jest be proud to git; he’s not a thousand miles off neither”-and the Squire paused smilingly before a small mirror, adjusted his collar, an smoothed the few hairs carefully over the bald spot on his head. “Not so old after all; and a slight better looking than old Grimp! Guess he didn’t know who he was comin’to, did he? An’ he wants me to stave a writ on Widow Barney. George! I’ll save it myself an’ git in ahead of him! Big joke it’ll be on Grimp! Ha, ha!”

In the main the Squire was correct in his cogitations. To secure the lively, pretty, sensible young widow as a help-meet in the place of the “late lamented” was precisely what Mr. Grimp desired. He had at different times made advances in that direction, but receiving only negative replies he concluded to try a mild coercion, and “bring her to her senses,” as he inwardly called it. Now, singularly enough, the Squire also was a widower, and he, too, was matrimonially inclined toward the Widow Barney. He had never made any proposition to that lady, thinking, in his conceit, he had only to offer himself to be accepted at once, and she be glad of the opportunity.

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## **EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY**

### **BY H.E. SMITH**

#### **Serving The Writ**

There was incentive to immediate action. There was a chance-it might happen-that the widow, being ignorant of the Squire's intentions, might possibly throw herself away on Mr. Grimp? The Squire did not like the thought, and, as above intimated, he resolved to serve the writ and "pop the question" at the same time. He would not delay about the matter either. He would do it that very evening-that he would; and then see the longitude Mr. Grimp's face would assume. The idea pleased him greatly.

He chuckled over it all through the day; chuckled over it on his way home in the evening, and at ten-time chuckles interspersed themselves throughout the meal, much to the wonderment of the old housekeeper. Indeed her looks betokened so much curiosity that the Squire noticed it at last, and after he had swallowed the last morsel, and laid down his knife and fork, he said;

"Mrs. Crandal, I'm goin' to git married." "Well, now, raily!" exclaimed the old woman, almost dropping the tea-cups in surprise. "May I be so proud as to ask who she may be?"

"Widow Barney."

"What! Widder Barney? Sakes, now! When ye goin' to be married?" I don't know yet; haven't asked her. Goin' to do it, though, to-night." "Mebbe she won't have ye," observed Mrs. Crandal rather doubtfully.

"Won't have me?-Squire Butterfield?" exclaimed the Squire, surprised out of all measure at so extraordinary a suggestion. "I'd like to see that woman that wouldn't jest jump at the chance-just jump at the chance."

"I dunno." Said the old woman, shaking her head with mournful credulity; "these 'ere widders are very on sartain-'specially the young ones-an' there's no tellin' what they'll do. Sides, there's that young lawyer, Tom Hardwood, seein' her about a good deal"

"Oh, that amounts to nothin', said the Squire complacently. "He boards at her house, and takes her to meetin' an singin' school just out of politeness.

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## **EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY**

### **BY H.E. SMITH**

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## **EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY**

### **BY H.E. SMITH**

#### **Serving The Writ**

"There!" muttered the Squire in disgust after making this discovery; "I never thought of him;; Why in Sam Hill didn't I remember he was here, and saved all this trouble? Nearly spilled my clothes, too !"

He turned about and was preparing to go back, when a movement down in the shrubbery arrested his attention and downward progress at the same time. For a minute or two he remained perfectly still; then he peered carefully over the roof's edge. He saw a man standing below among the trees, but who he was the Squire couldn't make out. Howbeit, whoever he might be he seemed to be scanning the upper front window very closely. Indeed, this view did not seem to satisfy him, and like his "illustrious predecessor" he, too, passed round back of the little kitchen. The Squire became alarmed. He would be discovered now certainly! What should he do? He glanced about hopelessly until he caught sight of the chimney-a large, old fashioned one, running up from the kitchen close against and on the outside of the main building. With a quick movement he scrambled to his feet into the shadow of its deep corner and stood close against the wall.

"Maybe," he thought, "the man will go 'way pretty soon, confound him!"

But the stranger seemed in no hurry to leave; on the contrary he moved about a few minutes, and then, to the consternation of our friend on the roof, he began to ascend the ladder. It ever Squire Butterfield perspired in his life, he did then. Although it was a cold night, he was in a profuse sweat from head to foot. He gritted his teeth, clenched his hands, bit his lips until the blood came, but nevertheless the intruder made his way slowly but surely up the slippery incline.

"Goodness gracious! What in Sam Hill shall I do? Murmured the Squire in his desperate fear. "I'd give anything, yes, anything, if I was safe at home. I wish all the widow were in Guinea. I wish-"

But the sentence never was completed. The ice-alas the treacherous ice on the roof! Unexpectedly, suddenly, without premeditation or malice aforethought, the Squire's feet shot forward from under hi, and with accuracy of aim and swiftness of motion seldom surpassed, he bore down upon the stranger. That individual's hold was very weak and uncertain at best, and he was ill prepared for such an onslaught. Therefore when the Squire struck him, he, too, assumed an unexpected momentum, and both passed over the roof together, the stranger descending feet foremost into the rain barrel and the Squire making sad havoc with the widow's grapevines and arbor.

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## **EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY**

### **BY H.E. SMITH**

#### **Serving The Writ**

For a moment the stranger remained within the barrel and the Squire among the vines where he had fallen, both too amazed and confounded to know what to do. But only for a moment; then they extricated themselves and stepped out into the moonlight, the Squire with coat torn clear to the back, and the stranger very wet and dripping. And thus and there, face to face, they met.

“Brother Butterfield!”

“Mr. Grimp!”

There was a momentary silence after these exclamations of astonished recognition. Mr. Grimp was the first to break it. “Will you allow me to inquire, Brother Butterfield, what you were doing on the roof of my house at this late hour?”

“Certainly you may, Mr. Grimp. I came-because-that is- I came to sarve that writ of yourn,” answered the Squire, relieved to find some excuse.

“Ah!”

“Yes; an’ I’d like to know what business you had up there, Mr. Grimp?” “I came to see you serve it,” said Mr. Grimp, with a perceptible tightening of his thin lips. “Well,” said the Squire, rapidly recovering his composure, “If your writ don’t stick bettr’n you did on that ‘ere roof, it won’t amount to nothin’, that’s all.”

What reply Mr. Grimp would have made to this request in not known, for just then the door opened, and Tom Harwood and the widow, alarmed by the noise, came out. Both the Squire and Mr. Grimp would gladly have avoided an interview; indeed they they turned to hasten away, but were too late. The widow recognized them at once.

“Why, Mr. Grimp! And Squire Butterfield, too!” she exclaimed with the most charming of smiles. “Why I thought it was burglars, or horse-thieves, or something, and I was so frightened. And, why, Mr. Grimp! You are real wet, arent’ you? Is it raining or snowing?” And she held out her little hand to catch the falling drops

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## **EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY**

### **BY H.E. SMITH**

#### **Serving The Writ**

"No, marm, 'taint snowin', or rainin' either. Ye see, Mr. Grimp was jest showin' me the water privileges about the place, an' tryin' to see how much a rain bar'l would hold," responded the Squire sarcastically, pointing toward the aforesaid barrel.

"Brother Butterfield, will you be so kind as to attend to the business on which we came?" said Mr. Grimp sternly.

"Certainly I will. Here, Widow Barney, is a writ from Mr. Grimp, notifyin' you to give up these 'ere premises. "I will take charge of that," said young Harwood, rather haughtily. "I will call upon you tomorrow, Squire, and settle the matter. I would say, also, Mr. Grimp, that the time for redemption not having expired, the mortgage and costs on this lady's place have been paid in to the County Clerk, and you will not be troubled in caring for it further."

After that-will, Mr. Grimp made some indistinct reply, and the Squire very profuse and incoherent apologies; then they took their leave as best they could, feeling very awkward, mortified and humiliated.

They did not go home together, either, nor ever after speak of the evening's experience to each other. However a month later, when Tom Harwood married the widow, the Squire was observed to shake his head mournfully and murmur;

"If it hadn't been for Old Grimp comin' jest as he did that night, things would have been different. Widow Barney never would have married that conceited young Harwood-never!"

As for Mr. Grimp, his face and his prayers grew longer day by day, and the Sunday following the marriage he spoke feelingly of "this vale of tears," the "vanity of human expectations," and the "uncertainty of earthly things," and when the collection was raised for the poor he sadly gave a torn piece of currency his grocer had refused the day before.-Hearth and Home.

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##### **Judy Lambert**

## **EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY**

### **BY H.E. SMITH**

#### **The Heroine Of The Curfew**

It lacked but half an hour of curfew toll. The old bell-ringer came from under the wattled roof of his cottage stoop, and stood with uncovered head in the clear, sweet-scented air. He had grown blind and deaf in the service, but his old arm was as muscular as ever; and he who listened this day marked no faltering in the heavy, metallic throbs of the cathedral bell. Old Jasper had lived through many changes. He had tolled out his notes of mourning for Good Queen Bess; and with tears scarcely dry he had rung the glad tidings of the coronation of James.

Charles the First had been crowned, reigned, and expiated his weaknesses before all England in Jasper's time; and now he who under his army held all the Commonwealth in the hollow of his hand ruled as more than monarch, and still the old man with the habit of a long life upon him, rang his matin and curfew.

Jasper stood alone now, lifting his dimmed eyes up to the softly dappled sky, gathering but a faint sense of the lovely scene or of the incense-freighted air.

The walls of his memory seemed so written over-so crossed and re-crossed by the annals of the years that had gone before, that there seemed little room for anything in the present. Little recked he that Cromwell's spears-men were camped on the moor beyond the village-that Cromwell himself rode with his guardsmen but a league away; he only knew that the bell that had been hung in the tower when William the Conqueror made curfew a law, had been spared by Puritan Roundhead, and that his arm for sixty years had never failed him at eventide.

He was moving with slow step toward the gate, when a woman came hurriedly in from the street and stood beside him; a lovely woman, but with face so blanched that it seemed carved in the whitest of marble with all of its roundness and dimples. Her great solemn eyes were raised to the aged face in pitiful appeal, and the lips were forming words that he could not understand."Speak up, lass. I am deaf, and can not hear your clatter."

The voice raised, and the hands clasped and unclasped, and wrung themselves together, palm to palm. "For Heaven's sake, good Jasper, do not ring curfew tonight." "What, na ring curfew! Ye must be daft, lassie." "Jasper, for sweet Heaven's sake, for my sake, for one night in all your long life forget to ring the bell! Fail this once and my lover shall live, who Cromwell says shall die at curfew toll.

Do you hear?-my lover, brave Richard Temple. See, Jasper, here is money to make your old age happy, I sold my jewels that the Lady Maud gave me; and the gold shall all be yours for one curfew."

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## **EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY**

### **BY H.E. SMITH**

#### **The Heroine Of The Curfew**

“Would ye bribe me, Lily De Vere? Ye’re a changeling. Ye’ve na the blood of the Plantagenets in ye’re veins as your mother had. What! Corrupt me, bell-ringer under Her Majesty, Good Queen Bess! Not for all the gold that Lady Maud could bring me! What is your lover to me? Babes have been born, and strong men have died before now to the ringing of my bell. Awa’, awa’!”

Out on the village green, with the solemn shadows of the lindens lengthening over it a strong man awaited the curfew to toll for his death. He stood handsome, and brave, and tall-taller by an inch than the tallest pikeman who guarded him.

What had he done that he should die? Little it mattered in those days, when the sword that the great Cromwell wielded was so prone to fall, what he or others had done. He had been scribe to the late Lord up at the castle; and Lady Maud, forgetting that man must woo, and woman must wait, had given her heart to him without the asking; while the gentle Lily De Vere, distant kinswoman, and poor companion to her, had without seeking, found the treasures of his true love, and held them fast. Then he had joined the army and made one of the pious soldiers whose evil passions were never stirred but by sign or symbol of Popery. A scorned woman’s hatred had reached him even there. Enemies and deep plots had compassed him about and conquered him. To-night he was able to die!

The beautiful world lay as a vivid picture before him. The dark green wood above the rocky hill where Robin Hood and his merry men had dwelt; the frowning castle with its drawbridge and square towers. The long stretch of moor with the purple shadows upon it; the green, straight walks of the village; the birds overhead, even the daisies at his feet he saw. But, AH vividly than all, he saw the great red sun with its hazy veil lingering above the trees as though it pitied him with more than humid pity!

He was a God-fearing and God-serving man. He had long ago made his peace with heaven. Nothing stood between him and death-nothing rose pleading between him and those who were to destroy him, but the sweet face of Lily De Vere, whom he loved. She had knelt at Cromwell’s feet and pleaded for his life. She had wearied Heaven with her prayers, but all without avail.

Slowly now the great sun went down. Slowly the last red rim was hid behind the green wood. Thirty seconds more and the curfew would ring. Thirty seconds more and his soul would be with his God. The color did not forsake his cheeks. The dark rings of hair lay on a warm brow. It was his purpose to die as martyrs and brave men die. What was life that he should cling to it? What was death that he should shrink from it? He almost felt the air pulsate with the first heavy roll of the death knell. But no sound came. Still facing the soldiers with his clear, gray eye upon them, he waited.

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

## **EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY**

### **BY H.E. SMITH**

#### **The Heroine Of The Curfew**

The crimson banners in the west were paling to pink. The kine had ceased their lowing, and had been gathered into the rick yards.

All nature had sounded her curfew; but old Jasper was silent. The bell-ringer with his gray head yet bared had traversed half the distance that lay between his cottage and the ivy-covered tower, when a form went flitting past him, with pale, shadowy robes floating around it, and hair that the low western lights touched and tinted as with a halo.

“Ah Huldah, Huldah!” the old man muttered; “how swift she flies! I will come soon, dear. My work is almost done.” Huldah was the good wife, who had gone from him in early womanhood, and for whom he had mourned all his long life. But the fleeing form was not Huldah’s, it was Lily DeVere, hurried by a sudden and desperate purpose toward the old cathedral.

“So help me God, curfew shall not ring to-night! Cromwell and his dragoons come this way. Once more I will kneel at his feet and plead.” She entered the ruined arch. She wrenched from its fastenings the carved and worm-eaten door that barred the way to the tower. She ascended with flying and frenzied feet the steps; her heart lifted up to God for Richard’s deliverance from peril. The bats flew out and shook the dust of centuries from the black carvings. As she went up, she caught glimpses of the interior of the great building, with its groined rood, its chevrons and clustered columns, its pictured saint and carved image of the Virgin, which the pillagers of all ages had spared to be dealt with by time, the most relentless Vandal of all.

Up-still up-beyond the rainbow tints thrown by the stained glass across her death-white brow; up-still up- past open arcade and arch, with griffin and gargoyle staring at her from under bracket and cornice, with all the hideousness of mediaeval carving; the stairs, flight by flight, growing frailer beneath her young feet; but a slender fretwork between her and the outer world; but still up.

Her breath was short and gasping. She saw, through an open space, old Jasper cross the road at the foot of the tower. Oh, how far! The seconds were treasures which Cromwell, with all his blood-bought Commonwealth, could not purchase from her. Still up-ah-there, just above her, with its great brazen mouth and wicked tongue, the bell hung!

A worm-eaten block for a step, and one small, white hand clasped itself above the clapper-the other prepared, at the first tremble, to rise and clasp it’s mate, and the feet to swing off.; Jasper was old and slow-but he was sure, and it came at last. A faint quiver, and the tender young feet swing from their rest, and the tender hands clasped for more than their precious life, the writhing thing. There was groaning and creaking of the rude pulleys above, and then the strokes came heavy and strong.

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



## **EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY**

### **BY. H.E. SMITH**

#### **The Heroine Of The Curfew**

Jasper's hand had not lost its cunning, nor his arm its strength. The tender, soft form was swung and dashed to and fro. It was bruised by the brazen sides and tortured by the unshapely tongue. But she slung to and caressed the cold, cruel thing. Let one stroke come and a thousand might follow-for its fatal work would be done. She writhed her white arm about it, so that at every pull of the great ropes it crushed into the flesh. It tore her, and wounded and bruised-but there in the solemn twilight, the brave woman swung, and fought with the cruel curfew; and God gave her the victory.

The old bell-ringer said to himself, "Aye, Huldah, my work is done. The pulleys are getting too heavy for my old arm. My ears, too, have me at last. I dinna hear one stroke of the curfew. Dear old bell, it is my ears that gone false and not thou. Farewell, old friend."

And just beyond the worn pavement a shadowy form again went flitting past him. There were drops of blood upon the white garments, and the face was like the face of one who walked in her sleep; and the hands hung wounded and powerless at her side.

Cromwell paused with his horsemen under the dismantled Maypole before the village green. He saw the man who was to die at sunset standing up in the dusky air, tall as a king and beautiful as Absalom. He gazed with knitted brown and angry eye, but his lips did not give utterance to the quick command that trembled on them, for a young girl came flying toward him. Pikemen and archer stepped aside to let her pass. She threw herself upon the turf at his at his bleeding and tortured hands to his gaze, and once more poured out her prayer for the life of her lover; with trembling lips she told him why Richard still lived-why the curfew had never sounded.

Lady Maud, looking out from her latticed window at the castle, saw the great Protector dismount, lift the fainting form in his arms and bear her to her lover. She saw the guards release the prisoner, and she heard the shouts of joy at his deliverance; then she welcomed the night, that shut the scene out from her envious eyes, and sepultured her in the gloom. At the next matin bell old Jasper died; at curfew tell he was laid beside the wife who had died to his youth, but the memory of whom had been with him always.

## **Register of Deeds**

### **Judy Lambert**

## **EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY**

### **BY H.E. SMITH**

#### **The Lost Wager**

The trunks were all packed and corded, and the carpet-bags were piled up in the corner of the capacious, old-fashioned hall.

How melancholy they looked, those emblems of parting and adieux. Not even the merry laughter of the two or three young girls, who were gathered around a stalwart, handsome fellow of about twenty-five, could entirely banish an impalpable something of sadness from the scene. Cousin Jack was going away, the general mischief maker, torment and tease of the whole family, and Mr. Chester, sitting by the distant window, wiped his spectacles every five minutes, and declared, pettishly, that the type of the evening paper was a terrible trial to old eyes.

"Aye, you may laugh, girls," said Jack, applying himself vigorously to the refractory lock of a portmanteau. "perhaps you may one day discover that isn't such a laughing matter. Think of the loss the family is going to sustain in my excellency."

"But you'll come back soon, Jack dear," coaxed Minnie Chester, the prettiest and most roguish of all cousins, and the one who kept up a perfect fire of practical jokes and girlish tricks at his expense.

There she sat, on the biggest trunk of collection, her brown curls hanging about her round face, and her eyes sparkling with a curious mixture of fun and tears.

"I'm not at all certain of that, Miss Minnie," said Jack, decisively, "If I succeed in finding a location to suit me, I shall probably decide to settle permanently at Thornville and turn landed proprietor on my own account."

"Only imagine our Jack a gentleman of property!" laughed Minnie, appealing to her sisters. "I don't see anything so very ridiculous in the idea," remarked the young man, rather piqued at the amusement of his relatives. "At all events, there's one incalculable advantage that will result from my departure."

"And what is that, Mr. Oracle?" "That fact that you've played your last freak on me, you tormenting little minx!" "Don't be so certain of that, Cousin Jack!" said Minnie, shaking her long curls. "What will you venture I don't bestow a parting trick on you yet? Ah! I haven't settled with you for several little pieces of impertinence; but pray don't imagine they are forgotten, sir!"

**Register of Deeds**  
**Judy Lambert**  
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## **EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY**

### **BY H.E. SMITH**

#### **The Lost Wager**

"My diamond sleeve buttons to you coral necklace that you don't impose on me within the next three months, Minnie," said Jack gaily.

"Done!" said Minnie, "Girls, you all the wager, don't you? I always covered Jack's diamonds." "But you won't have them, mademoiselle! How dark it is getting in this cavernous old hall. Shall I ring for lights, Uncle Chester? And, by the way, have you written that letter of introduction to Mr. Thorne?"

"All in good time, my boy-all in good time," said the old gentleman, depositing his huge, silver-bound spectacles in their case. "You young men are all in such a desperate hurry. Tell Betsy to carry a lamp into the library, girls. Minnie, where is my gold pen? I won't be very long about it, and then we will have a nice long evening to gossip over Jack's prospects."

While Mr. Chester sat in his cosy, red-curtained library, revising the letter which he had been writing to his old friend Jabez Thorne, of Thornville, to the effect that his nephew, John Lacy, was in search of an eligible piece of land, and wished to settle down in that vicinity, and requested Mr. Thorne's aid and co-operation in the selection of the same, Minnie opened the door.

"Papa, there is some one down stairs who wishes to see you immediately for a minute." "Very annoying!" said the old gentleman, "just as I was finishing this letter of Jack's. However, I can seal it afterward. Minnie, suppose you glance over it and dot the I's and cross the t's; I'm not so much of a penman as I used to be."

And old Mr. Chester pushed back his chair and rose from the antique table to attend the claims of his urgent guest. Olive Chester was brushing out the heavy braids of her luxuriant hair before the dressing-mirror of her own apartment, two hours later, when Minnie ran in, with a countenance comically divided between dismay and delight.

"My dear Minnie, what has happened?" exclaimed the elder sister, dropping her hair brush and letting all the raven tresses ripple down unheeded over her shoulders.

"I've won the diamond sleeve-buttons, Olive! But oh! I didn't mean to. What would papa say if he only knew it-and Cousin Jack, too?"

**Register of Deeds**  
**Judy Lambert**  
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## **EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY**

### **BY H.E. SMITH**

#### **The Lost Wager**

"Sit down, you wild little elf," said Olive, gently forcing her sister into a chair, "and explain this mysterious riddle!"

"Well, you know papa left me to look over his letter to Mr. Thorne-and he was detained longer than he expected-almost an hour in fact, and I couldn't help amusing myself by writing a parody on the letter." "A parody?" "Yes-you remember somebody was telling us what a beautiful daughter Mr. Thorne had-so-I wrote that Jack was in scarce of a wife, and had heard of Miss Thorne, and wanted to settle in life, and all that sort of thing, In short, wherever papa had written land, or estate, I wrote wife! Wasn't it fun?" said the little maiden, her eyes dancing with diablerie. You know I never once thought of sending the letter; I only wanted to read it to Jack when I went downstairs.

Well, I signed it, with a great flourish of trumpets, and just then who should come in but papa and the stranger. Of course I fled-and when I came back the letter was sealed and safe in Jack's pocket-book, and Olive, it was the wrong letter."

"it was rather a dim light-and papa's eyes are not as keen as they were wont to be, and my impertinent missive was gone, while the real bona fide letter lay there, amongst a heap of discarded papers. I hadn't courage to confess my misdemeanors, papa is so opposed to my innocent little jokes-and Jack is off with that indescribable letter!

I shall certainly win the sleeve buttons, Olive, but what a tornado there will be, when my mischief leaks out." Minnie looked so bewitchingly lovely in her alternate paroxysms of terror and laughter, that Olive, grave old sister though she was, had not the heart to lecture her as roundly as she deserved.

The crimson sunset of the very next evening shone radiantly into the special sanctum of the worthy old Jabez Thorne, of Thornville, Justice of the Peace, and chairman of all the agricultural meetings for ten miles around. It was no scholarly-looking library, like that of his ancient comrade Chester, but a square, light room, with four un-curtained windows and ornamented with numerous black-framed engravings of prize cattle and giant turnips. He was seated in a feather-cushioned arm-chair, looking over the files of an agricultural journal, to find some coveted information on the subject of "phosphates" and "superphosphates," when a servant brought him a card and a letter.

"The gentleman is in the parlor sir." Jabez Thorne laid aside his newspaper, glanced at the card, which bore the simple inscription, "John Lacy"-then at the letter, which purported to be the introductory to that individual.

**Register of Deeds**  
**Judy Lambert**  
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## EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY BY H.E. SMITH

### The Last Wager

"How-ha-from my old college chum, Chester, as I live. Remarkable change in his hand-writing, but time alters us all. Haven't heard from him in twenty years, and-hallo! What is this? A pretty cool request, upon my word-nephew wants a wife, and has heard that I possess a daughter-has lots of money-wants me to aid him with my well-known experience in such matters. What does the rascal mean?" Jabez, the fringe of gray hair that surrounded his bald head standing absolutely erect with indignation. "I'll send Jeffers to kick the impudent young scamp out of the house.

With a moment's reflection came calmness. "Well, after all, I don't see what there is in the matter to make me so foolishly angry. Guess I'll see what Mary says. An excellent family these Chesters-and this letter is just like Zebedee Chester-he always was singular in his notions. Rather unlike the ordinary method of coming to an understanding on such matters, but there's nothing like a dash of originality in this world, and if the boy is rich and Mary don't object---At all events I'll see him on this subject."

Jabes Thorne thrust the letter in to his pocket and strode determinedly into the parlor, where young Lacy was quietly awaiting his appearance. The old gentleman's face was scarlet with embarrassment; he was half disposed to be angry with his guest's cool self-pose with old Zebedee Chester-I won't turn the puppy out of doors quite yet."

"I suppose it is healthy?" asked Lacy, blandly. "What is healthy?" "Your property. Sometimes in these low grounds diseases are apt to prevail, and-" "Does he expect my Mary has the fever and ague?" thought old Thorne, leaping briskly out of his chair as if an insect had stung him. "I'll send my daughter to you, young man-that will settle the business at once."

Before Lacy could express his surprise his choleric host had banged the door behind him and disappeared. Mary Thorne's astonishment was even greater than her father's had been. She was attired in white muslin, with a bouquet of crimson moss rose-buds in her hair, for some rural party or picnic, and at first absolutely refused to enter the parlor.

"What an idea!" she exclaimed, blushing to the very tips of those tiny shell-like ears. "To be put on exhibition like one of your prize cattle! No, indeed! Let the young go back from where he came from. A pretty impression he must have of the ladies in this quarter of the globe!"

"But, my love, Zebedee Chester is one of my oldest friends, and the young man is really a very fine looking fellow, and rich into the bargain. Go in and talk to him a little while, there's a good girl! I can't stand it a minute longer." Old Jabez wiped his forehead, on which the perspiration was standing in big beads. Mary burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter.

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## **EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY**

### **BY H.E. SMITH**

#### **The Lost Wager**

“The whole affair is so ridiculous!” she exclaimed. She adjusted the moss roses nevertheless and tripped demurely into the parlor. Now, if there was a determined point in Jack Lacy’s character it was his aversion to women in general, and if there was any one thing on which he prided himself it was his decided old bachelorism. Imagine his vexation and dismay, therefore, when, after a formal introduction, old Mr. Thorne withdrew, leaving him with the pretty creature in white muslin and roses. It was embarrassing enough, particularly as Mary blushed every time he looked at her, and evinced an exceedingly great disposition to laugh.

“Well,” thought Jack, “the manners and customs of this locality are rather odd, to say the least of it. I came to consult an old man about purchasing land of him, and he bounces out of the room, and sends in his daughter. What on earth am I to say to her, I’d like to know?”

Mary, glancing shyly in the direction of her companion, came to the conclusion that he had “beautiful Spanish eyes,” and a mustache decidedly superior in style to the hirsute adornments of the young gentleman at Thornville.

Mr. Lacy looked up at the ceiling and down at the carpet, and wondered what the consequences would be were he to escape incontinently through the open French window. That would not be a very dignified proceeding, however, so he resigned himself to destiny by making some original remark on the weather.

It had the much desired effect of breaking the ice, however, and he was agreeably surprised with the arch vivacity of Miss Thorne. Only once did she seem confused; it was when she had been describing a fine grove of cedars that belonged to her father’s land, regretting at the same time that he had contemplated the sale of it.

“I believe I should like to become the purchaser,” said Jack. “Your father has told you that I had some idea of setting here?” Mary grew scarlet, and murmured some sentence or other. The conversation was effectually checked, and Jack, perplexed at the effect, for which he could perceive no visible cause, rose to take leave.

“Will you mention to your father, Miss Thorne, that I shall call to see him about this matter tomorrow morning?” he asked. All the moss roses in Mr. Thorne’s rose-garden could not have rivaled the hot glow on Mary’s cheeks as she fled out of the room without a word of reply. “Very singular family this,” muttered Jack, slowly drawing on his gloves and walking down the broad garden path.

“But she is an uncommonly pretty girl – and I shall certainly take an early walk through that grove of cedars tomorrow morning, before breakfast.

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**Judy Lambert**  
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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY  
BY H.E. SMITH

The Lost Wager

He dreamed of blue-eyed Mary Thorne that night, and arose decidedly pleased that he should have reasonable excuse for calling at her father's house so soon. "I certainly can't be in love!" quoth he, mentally. "How Minnie would tease me if she thought I was in danger of suing for not only a farm but a wife."

Old Jabez Thorne was busily engaged of lance of wrath which he found impossible to shape into words. "upon-my-word-sir!" he began; "you talk as if this was a mere matter of business!" Jack was puzzled enough. "It is the way in which I have always heretofore been accustomed to treat such affairs, sir."

## **EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY**

### **BY H.E. SMITH**

#### **AN ENGINEER'S YARN**

I am a practical mechanical engineer. Not one of these youngsters who go to a scientific school for a few years, who take a C.E.M.E. or something of the kind, and then put on airs about it. They always affect to snub us practical men, but we rather get into them when it comes to real work. Of course, these chaps are well enough in their way (and that isn't mine) in getting up artistic drawings and models, and all that sort of thing. Sometimes they are of some account. There was young Hoppin, who helped me with that toggle-joint. I originated the idea; he put it into shape. I made enough to retire on it, and I did the square thing by him, if he was a "scientific man," so I feel perfectly free to speak my mind about the lot, always excepting my friend Hoppin.

But this isn't telling my story. There's my wife Bessie (bless her dear little heart), always saying that I can't come to the point without as many twists and turns as my own old machinery. Perhaps she is right. But then, this is the first time I ever tried to express myself in print, and I don't exactly know how to go about it, so you must excuse me. That's reasonable, isn't it? And besides, I am getting so stout and logy-like, and I ain't as sharp as I use to be. My young acquaintance, who is an editor, has roped me into this scrape, and ought to help me out; but he doesn't. All he says is, "Fire away, old man, and make it short and sweet." I'm afraid this isn't telling my story, either. Prolixity (that's the word) comes sort of natural-like to me now.

Let me see. It was sixteen years ago this summer that I came to New York in search of employment. I had been running an engine in a big tannery in the western part of the State, and doing first rate, till the company failed and I was thrown out of work. I was looking about town for something to do. Money-gauge so low that I was ready for anything after a fortnight of searching and waiting. I happened to be walking through a down-town cross street, when I saw a placard in the window of a paper-box factory—"Engineer Wanted, Good Salary." "That's just me," says I, so I went into the office and asked if I would do. The manager said he would try me. He did try me, and it seems I must have satisfied him, for he told me to stay.

**Register of Deeds**  
**Judy Lambert**  
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## **EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY**

### **BY H.E. SMITH**

#### **AN ENGINEER'S YARN**

Now, it is about this manager and this paper-box factory that my story, such as it is, will be; and to make things all straight and plain (a sort of oiling up at the start), let me attempt to describe them both.

First, then, the manager, Mr. Samuel Harkness, also sole owner of the factory. This Mr. Samuel Harkness was the greatest villain I ever came across. He's dead now, poor man, and I hate to speak of those who are gone, 'cause, you see, it's much the same as chinning behind a man's back' but he was a villain all the same. Not one of your story-book villains, either. I have read lots of novels, romances and such stuff lately, but I haven't seen anything about their villains that applies to my villain. Theirs are invariable thin, dark men, of lithe, serpentine motion, with yellow faces, straight black hair, and deep-set, fugitive eyes. Something of the evil one cropping out at every point. Why, Lord bless you, you'd recognize this kind of villain soon as ever you clapped eyes on him, just as you would a patent machine, with every bit of metal labeled. My villain wasn't tall, wasn't dark at all; was tolerably stout, in fact, and well-to-do looking; didn't squirm a bit; and to cut this description short, was just like most anybody else you meet.

When I engaged under him, of course I didn't know anything about his villainy. How could I? He wasn't labeled.

Now for the factory itself. It was a somewhat dilapidated five-story brick concern. Engine in cellar (most every manufacturer had his own power then, instead of just belting on to the one big engine of the block, as they do now); office and samples, first floor; clipping and folding machines, second floor; girls pasting, sorting and trimming on the third floor; stock of all sorts on the fourth and fifth. We used to turn out an immense deal of work with very few hands. There were about twenty-five or so girls, the manager, his clerk and office-boy a man to hoist and do odd jobs, the fireman, and myself.

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## **EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY**

### **BY H.E. SMITH**

#### **AN ENGINEER'S YARN**

When stock was taken in, or work sent out, there was nobody else in the building. I generally kept to my own business, and stayed down in the cellar, nursing the old engine. She sadly needed it, being as rickety and patched up a contrivance as one cares to stay alongside of.

She always reminded me of some old people you see, who are always in need of a pectoral for a cough, or a liniment for rheumatism, or something or other. This engine of mine was in such a state that she always wanted easing somewhere, a rivet here, a plug there, new stuffing, more felting, or a band around the whole boiler. From boiler to fly wheel she was rickety, rickety. There was no present danger to be apprehended-all was safe enough with proper care and attention. There was the rub. I had to exercise the same proper care and attention all the time. If I was so occupied, I could not help meeting the girls now and then in the passage-way. Most of them were of the common sort-coarse, vulgar creatures, that I never could abide.

There was one little pale faced girl I took to straight off. She wasn't a bit like the others, and seemed as nice and quiet and lady-like, as they were noisy and common. As I said, I took to her, and she-well, she didn't altogether snub me. We got to be fast friends soon. She told me the tale of her sad life; how her father had been a prosperous mechanic, and they had lived in such a dear little home; how the father died, and left her, a mere mite of a thing, in charge of her feeble mother and baby sister; and how she contrived to get along and keep grim famine from the door on the pittance of her earnings. Whenever I could, without making a fuss, I helped them along a little. When we got well acquainted, I used to hurry through my work so as to be able to see her home every day after six o'clock. Sometimes, too, we used to go to concerts and lectures together; and very often I found time to visit them all of an evening.

I hadn't said a word of love to her yet, but was waiting till my wages were increased enough to enable me to keep a home of my own, and then ask her to fill it. Of her state of feeling toward me I knew nothing, except that she looked upon and trusted me as a brother.

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## **EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY**

### **BY H.E. SMITH**

#### **AN ENGINEER'S YARN**

One thing used to rile me, though, and that was the sneaking sort of liking that Harkness seemed to have for her; and, worse, he showed it plainly enough by the way he persecuted her with his odious attentions whenever he got the chance. She told me she would leave the place if she could only get another.

I have said that it was sixteen years ago that I entered the box factory. If you will take the trouble to subtract, you will find that makes 1857. It puts us just in the year of the great financial crash. I had been in the factory about three months, and was getting used to the general run of things; and though it was out of my line, and none of my business, I could not but notice how slack trade seemed to be.

Rumors of failures up the street, down the street, on the corner, at Nos. 35 and 37 over the way, met my ears. Rumors of failures past and failures to come. Rumors of distress East, West, and South. Rumors of a threatened general smashup. Money men tell me that when the market is tight, it only needs such a wholesale panic to bring down everyone. It is the apprehension, not the reality, that does the work. This is not telling my story, either.

Well, old Harkness kept on with his manufacturing, though I could see that day by day fewer calls for work were made. He always wore a cheerful smile through those troublous times, as much as to say, "Look at me, if you want to see a model man of business. I don't speculate.

I don't get involved. Mark my consequent prosperity." Now when I see a man a good deal of bluster and swagger about him, I always make up my mind that he is a coward at heart. When some people parade their financial soundness, the Wall street animals snuff rottenness somewhere. It must have been on this principle that I began to suspect that Harkness wasn't so safe after all.

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## **EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY**

### **BY H.E. SMITH**

#### **AN ENGINEER'S YARN**

One night I was delayed by an unexpected bread-down in gearing, and stayed in my cellar long after the girls, the clerk and the fireman had gone, hard at work tinkering at the engine. No one was in the factory but Harkness and myself. I do not think he suspected my presence. As I was taking off my overalls and fixing up, I heard a heavy dray come up to our door. There were four or five men with it, who were not our regular cartmen. They jumped out, were let in through the half-closed doors of the main floor above me, and were led up stairs by Harkness. Presently they reappeared, bearing cases of various kinds of stock, fancy paper, gilding stuff, light machinery, and different odds and ends, with which they loaded the dray and then drove off again.

All was done in such a quiet, mysterious way, that it was evident that something wrong was being done. What could it be? The men were not robbers, for there was Mr. Harkness, and he sole owner of the factory. A man does not commit a larceny on his own property. I couldn't make it out at all.

I started to go. Just as I entered the office from below, Harkness came in by the passage-way door from the floor above. He started perceptibly when he saw me, but instantly regained his composure, and said, as cool as you please.

"Ah! You're late, Bill, What's wrong today? Hope you won't blow us up for a week or so yet. We're doing a staving business, Bill." (I think I see him now "washing his hands with invisible soap in imperceptible water," with that self-satisfied, hypocritical leer on his face.) "Just sent a load of fine boxes down to the Winged Arrow. She sails to-morrow, so we had to ship in a hurry. Fine boxes; and a beautiful vessel, Bill, Good night to you."

"Good night, sir," said I, and left.

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



## **EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY**

### **BY H.E. SMITH**

#### **AN ENGINEER'S YARN**

As I went up the street, another dray passed, driven toward the factory. I had the curiosity to turn and watch to see whether it, too, stopped there. It did, and when I reached the corner of Broadway, I stopped and looked back once more. There, in the darkening twilight, the same process of hurried loading was being repeated. It seemed to be all right. Harkness was there, but, somehow, I wasn't quite satisfied.

Trimming machines are not fine assorted gilt edged boxes, by any manner of means, you know. And I knew it too, though, very likely, old Harkness didn't give me credit for being so well posted. Well, if I couldn't settle the question, the next best thing was to give it up. And give it up I did.

Next morning I went over, as usual, to the factory. Jim, the stoker, opened the doors always, as he had to be early to tend to the fires, which we banked every night. I expected to see Jim, but was much surprised when I saw Harkness. This time it was he who came up through the cellar door and I through the other. As before, we met unexpectedly. Now it was my turn to be surprised. He was intensely pale, and seemed much agitated.

With a strong effort of the will he strove to conceal his strange manner. He endeavored to speak calmly, and half succeeded.

"Bill," said he, "Jim has tended to the engine, it's all right; come outside with me-I want to talk to you." He turned to the cellar door and shouted.

"Jim, come up, come up at once. Run over to Mr. Brent's private house-you know where that is-and tell him not to discount that bill to-day. Be quick!"

Yes sir, coming," sang out Jim, leisurely.

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

## **EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY**

### **BY H.E. SMITH**

#### **AN ENGINEER'S YARN**

Suddenly he tore up the cellar steps. His face was ten shades paler than Harkness' an expression of horror was fixed on his features-an expression of agony and fear that I shall never forget. It haunts me still, It will stay by me till my dying day. Poor fellow, he's one, too, since then."

Jim hardly stopped in his wild flight, as he hoarsely whispered, rather than whispered, rather than cried. "Hundred and ten on the steam gauge! Safety valves clogged!! Run for your lives!!!"

I took in the situation at once. Terrible the danger was. The old boiler was registered at eighty pounds to the square inch, but we never dared run higher than thirty. A hundred and ten! We are standing directly over it, and while I hesitated, the pressure must be steadily rising. It flashed upon me that there might be no more danger in jumping down and pressing the safety valve than in running away, and in spite of the awful panic, I had a prejudice against running.

I looked down from the doorway upon the trembling, panting, struggling steam demon beneath. The safety value apparatus was in plain sight. From the end of the lever hung several huge links of chain. I don't think I'm a coward-usually, at least, I know I am not, but that evidence of villainy took me all aback. I staggered and clung feebly to the lintel for support. The words seemed forced out of me, and not uttered with my volition:

"You scoundrel. You'd steal your insurance, would you?" A sudden vindictive push sent me headlong. As I fell I heard a demoniac laugh. "Peach if you want to !" The door swung to with a click of the spring lock. At the foot of the steps an open trap, the sub-cellar hatch. The distance was so great that I had time to notice all this. Would it hurt me much when I struck? Would it kill me outright? That was all.

When I came to, I found myself in a well-remembered room. Bessie, my Bessie now, hung tenderly over me, waiting for the light of recognition to appear in my fevered eye. All was soon told. The boiler must have burst the very instant I struck. Harkness was killed by a flying piece of machinery; the would-be-murderer had exchanged places with his victim, for I, strange as it may seem, was dug out of the ruins alive, and got off with only a broken arm. God forgive him.

Bessie insists that if it hadn't been for the accident, I should never have "spoken out" so, after all, it was a blessing in disguise.

**Register of Deeds**  
**Judy Lambert**

## **EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY**

### **BY H.E. SMITH**

#### **An Old Man's Story**

We were twin brothers, Jasper and I. Our mother had left this world of grief, and sorrow at the moment of our birth, and we never knew her love; but her place was in part supplied by our father's old housekeeper, Dame Watson, who was a good, well-meaning soul, yet showing none of that tender care one's own mother can feel.

Our father was engrossed by his business, and devoted but little time to his motherless boys. He was a merchant, and carried on trade in New York, some half an hour's travel by the railway. We lived in a grand old mansion by the Hudson river. The Morton Homestead was well known throughout the country for its antiquated and venerable appearance, having been built before the Revolutionary War, by our English ancestor, Sir Greenville Morton, who had emigrated to this country and adopted it for his own.

Time sped on, and when we were eighteen, ill-health, together with advancing age, caused our father to retire, with a competency, from business. We had received a good education from private tutors, and at the age of twenty we were ready to accede to our father's wishes and to enter into mercantile business, he furnishing us with a good capital to start with.

So far our lives had known only joy and happiness, we having scarcely a thought that was at variance with brotherly feelings; yet we were very different in disposition. I had inherited my father's stern will and hasty temperament, while, on the contrary, Jasper was gentle and slow to anger, with calm, loving disposition. But even with such different traits of character, we had never yet quarreled since our first childish years.

A sad change was to come over the spirit of our dreams, and this is how it came about. An aunt, our mother's sister, living in an adjoining State, had, before leaving this vale of tears, requested our father to take charge of only daughter, as he was her nearest of kin then living. As father was only too glad to befriend the orphan, in a few days our cousin was an inmate of Morton Homestead.

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

## **EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY**

### **BY H.E. SMITH**

#### **An Old Man's Story**

Never shall I forget the surprise with which I first beheld Myrtella Warren. Had an angel suddenly burst upon my view, I could not have been more astonished. Instead of, as I thought her, a little girl in pantalets, a lovely young lady of seventeen years of age took my proffered hand in the library, and gave me a cousinly salute with her rosy lips. Never can I forget the thrill of that kiss. My heart was taken by storm. I was irrevocably in love at first sight.

She must have noticed something of my admiration in my entranced gaze, for her eyelashes fell, and her cheeks were suffused with a lovely crimson; but whether from modesty or a reciprocal feeling I could not tell, but would have given worlds to have been assured that her first impressions of me were as favorable as mine of her.

Jasper was not at home, and I wondered, with my first twinge of jealousy, how he would be impressed with her appearance; for in my heart I had already resolved upon winning her, if possible, for a bride.

I didn't sleep much that night, and in what little I did I was haunted by disagreeable dreams, in which my brother's sad face was present, pleading, in a sorrowful voice, for a share in the affections of Myrtella. Then, when I refused his earnest pleading, he disappeared from my sight, and his lingering remark. "You are your brother's murderer," appeared to be taken up and echoed by thousands of voices, until, in a terror, I awoke, and was glad the night was past, and that I had only been dreaming. I never placed any faith in dreams or warnings. If I had, I should have interpreted mine to mean that something bad was to happen to me or my brother.

The next few days passed pleasantly to me, in the company of Myrtella, of whom my first impressions had not dimmed; but the more I got acquainted, the more I found to love and admire. We took many rides and drives, and I was her constant companion and escort; yet I could not say that my wooing was prospering as well as I could wish. She was ever kind and loving yet she seemed to regard me rather in the light of a brother than a lover; and whenever I broached the subject of love, she was suddenly impressed with the importance of some object entirely foreign to my feelings, which was very aggravating to my impetuous nature.

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

## **EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY**

### **BY H.E. SMITH**

#### **An Old Man's Story**

However, I resolved to persevere and hope for the best. Thus time rolled onward; days lengthened into weeks, and I seemed to be no nearer the object of my hopes than at first, when my father received notice from a distant firm with whom he had business relations that required his immediate presence to prevent a heavy loss. As he was now a confirmed invalid, and the inclement season of the year having arrived, he could not take the journey to attend to it himself; so I necessitated, though much against my will, to go as his agent. As the business admitted of no delay, in two hours I was ready; so, without time to say a parting word to the object of my fondest love, I stepped into a train bound for the Southern city Mobile.

I consoled myself with the thought that in a short time I would return, and then, with the first opportunity, I would press my claim, and know my fate, for this suspense was consuming torture to me.

I arrived safe at my destination, but soon learned that the affairs of the firm were in such a complicated condition that possibly some time would elapse before I could settle my father's business with it and return.

I had written to my father as to whether I was obliged to stay until the business of the firm was all settle. He wrote that by all means I must stay; nothing about Myrtella, only that she was well, and that Jasper was at home. This last was the feather that was about to break the camel's back.

But everything must come to an end. My stay finally terminated, after nearly two months' absence, and I again entered Morton Homestead. I was warmly welcomed by Jasper and Myrtella. They seemed to my jealous eyes, to be on very loving terms; but whether Jasper regarded our cousin in any dearer light brotherly affection, I could not satisfactorily then determine. I resolved, however, that I would not long be a prey to uncertainty, and, with this resolve, I sought Myrtella alone.

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**Judy Lambert**  
**(continued)**

## **EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY**

### **BY H.E. SMITH**

#### **An Old Man's Story**

After some desultory conversation, I told her of my intense love, from the moment that I beheld her, and entreated her to give me some hope; if not now, to give me some prospect of happiness in the future. On my knees I besought her love.

She seemed thunderstruck at my abrupt proposal, and, taking me by the hand, begged me to rise, while a look of mingled pity and pain passed over her face as she answered, "Oh, Thomas, my dear cousin, you do not know how you have pained me, for I little thought of this; but I can never love you other than a sister should a dear brother."

"Myrtella, do not say so. Have you a prior engagement?-for surely I have a right to ask."

"Oh, Thomas, indeed I am sorry for you, but I am the affianced wife of your brother.

"Perdition seizes the black-hearted rascal." I cried, in uncontrollable anger, as I strode from her presence. Then like a mad man, I rushed from the house.

The last spark of brotherly affection died out of my heart; anger and revenge took complete control of me, and I resolved that if he possessed her heart he should never possess her hand. I strode along the highway, my brain nearly crazed, not knowing or caring whither I went. I met a young man of my acquaintance, who accosted me.

"Good evening, Tom. Why, what's the matter? You look as if you had lost all your friends."

I evaded his query, and put on as unconscious a look as I could, as I replied, "Oh, there's nothing wrong; only a little out of sorts this evening, that's all."

"Well, I'm glad I've met you, as it will save me the trouble of going up to the homestead. The fact is, we young fellows down below have got up a skating party, and I was going to the homestead with invitations, for we count largely upon your company."

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

## **EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY**

### **BY H.E. SMITH**

#### **An Old Man's Story**

I being a good skater and fond of the sport, promised to be there. So, leaving me a card of invitation, also one for Jasper and Myrtella, he passed on his way.

My sober reason having in a measure returned, I went back to the homestead, resolving to invent or await some means of revenge. I assumed a gaiety that I was far from feeling, as I handed the cards of invitation to my brother and cousin.

The latter exclaimed, with delight, "Oh, I am so glad! I dearly love skating, and we'll be sure to be there." So it was decided that we would add ourselves yes to the number on the morrow; and, after a night of confused and horrid dreams, I joined my brother and cousin on the way to the scene of our anticipated sport.

We were soon upon the broad, smooth surface of the Hudson River. A race was proposed between Jasper and James Burnham, who were reputed to be the best skaters on the ground; the distance to be three miles; the winning post to be a point of rocks a short distance above Morton Homestead; the prize to be a pair of silver-mounted skates. The judges were to be the three ladies, of whom my cousin Myrtella was one.

The preliminaries being settled, away flew the skaters, myself included, followed as fast as we could go, to note the race; but after the half-way point was passed nearly all had been distanced except myself and three or four others. The contestants had up to this, kept well together, neither seeming to have advantage over the other; but now Jasper was perceptibly falling to the rear. When two-thirds of the distance had been accomplished, there was a sharp bend, or curve, in the river, and, in order to gain on his opponent, Jasper took the inside of the curve, near the bank, and was straining every nerve in the race, when, with a cry of horror that I shall remember to my dying day, he disappeared from sight! He had skated into an air-hole in the ice.

#### **Register of Deeds**

**Judy Lambert**

**(continued)**

## **EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY**

### **BY H.E. SMITH**

#### **An Old Man's Story**

Myself, with three or four others, were close behind, and, with cries of alarm, we rushed to the spot. He was nowhere to be seen. A large crowd was soon gathered, while I, with the demon of revenge in my heart, secretly rejoiced at the accident, with the hope that he never would be discovered.

We searched, but it was fruitless; we never saw him again. The strong current had undoubtedly carried him quickly far beyond our help.

All now was confusion and distress; our pleasant party had ended in sorrow. Our lady judges, hearing that something had occurred to prevent the fulfillment of the race, now came up to where the crowd was assembled. Upon hearing the dreadful news, Myrtella fell into a death-like swoon, and, in this condition, was carried to the homestead, where she lay a long time at death's door. When she finally recovered her reason had fled, and it was deemed advisable to confine her in a lunatic asylum.

My father, already weakened by age and disease, soon fell a victim to this double sorrow, and in one short month was sleeping with his fathers. And I-O, heavens! What had I gained? To be sure, I was now a rich man, for I inherited all my father's wealth; but a reaction had taken place.

I mourned for my lost brother. I cursed myself for being his murderer; for in my heart I felt guilty of his death, and of my cousin's sad condition.

My own love, Myrtella-heaven bless her pure spirit!-is with the angels. Her reason never returned. She would pace her narrow cell, and cry,"O, Jasper, my love! My lost, lost love!"-until her Maker said, "It is enough; come up higher." I am now a lonely old man. I shall soon see those that have gone before; for, with my peace made with heaven, I shall welcome the summons.

**Register of Deeds**  
**Judy Lambert**



## **EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY**

### **BY H.E. SMITH**

#### **Light at Last**

Paul Winship and Mary Archer sat in the small, comfortable sitting-room of a humble cottage not far from the great city. It was late in the evening of a spring day, and they had not been long in from a stroll in the by-ways by the glimmer of a quartering moon. Paul had seen only a week of life since leaping the bound self-owned manhood-that is, he was just a week beyond one-and-twenty. Mary was one year younger. They were both of that mold and that temperament which nature bestows upon those who are to be made thereby capable of great enjoyment. Their sympathies were quick and active; their appetites natural and healthful; their affections true and strong; their aspirations worthy and honorable; and their hearts warm and generous, and steadfast as the mountain behind which the moon was dipping.

As these two had been schoolmates and companions for years. They had loved each other while yet children, and their love had gone on growing stronger from day to day. Paul's father and mother had both died while he was yet an apprentice, and he had been left with only the love of Mary Archer to give bright sunshine to his life.

Mary had lost her father, and now labored with a hearty and healthful cheerfulness to assist her mother in gaining livelihood. And she labored the harder because a poor crippled brother depended upon her for a support. He was not able to help himself.

Paul Winship had resolved that he would go to sea. An uncle was captain of a large ship bound for the East Indies, and had offered him a good position, with promise of promotion. He thought he could do better so than to delve at a trade which could never yield more than a bare support. He and Mary had talked the matter over, and she had at length become reconciled to the step, believing it might be for his good.

And on the morrow the ship was to sail, and this was to be their last evening together for a long, long time. They knew now how strong and yearning their love was, and how dependent they were, and must be, upon each other for joy and blessedness; and they tried to look across the chasm of separation to the full fruition beyond.

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

## **EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY**

### **BY H.E. SMITH**

#### **Light at Last**

Mary had worked into a fanciful braid a slender tress of her glossy dark-brown hair, and while they talked, she fixed it into a small golden locket, and shut down upon it a glass cover.

"There, Paul," she said, when the work was done-" there is the lock of my hair, as you wished. It is a poor thing, but you will think of me when you look upon it." Paul took the locket, and pressed it to his lips.

"I shall look upon it often, darling, and think, while I look of the dearest treasure for me this earth can hold.

"O,Paul!"

"Darling, don't weep. A few short months, and we will be happier than ever. I know I shall prosper. We shall suffer this separation as the seed is hidden in the ground. It is to be the germ of better things to come."

"I shall try and think so, Paul. I will think so." Paul found a piece of blue ribbon in Mary's work-basket, with which he suspended the locket about his neck, and when he had placed it once more to his lips, with a murmured blessing, he hid it away in his bosom.

By and by, they stood at the door locked in the parting embrace. Until long past midnight, Mary sat by the window and gazed out upon the stars. She knew that Paul was on his way, on foot, to the city, and that it would take him two hours to walk the distance. So she sat there until she thought he had reached his ship, and then she went up to her chamber, and sought her pillow, but not to sleep. Her heart was too heavy and sad.

Mary Archer was young, and healthful, and strong, and ere long she brought reason to the aid of hope, and was content to look and pray for the good to come.

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

## **EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY**

### **BY H.E. SMITH**

#### **Light at Last**

At the end of three months a letter came to her from the sea, brought by a homeward-bound ship which Paul had met on the trackless deep. It was a letter full of love and hope and promise. He spoke brave words, and he was pleasantly situated.

The weeks and the months passed on, and another letter came. It was written from Calcutta, and Paul was well and in glorious spirits. From there they were going to Canton.

Again at Canton he wrote, and the letter came home, by way of England, after many a weary month. All was hopeful still. They were going to some of the Pacific islands for spices.

And then the months dragged on heavier and more heavy. Two years had gone since Paul had written. Oh! How dark and drear! Mary remembered the shadows and the forebodings of that first sleepless night. Two years without a word, and then came a word that stunned her. She found it in a newspaper. The American ship *Fides*, which had sailed from Canton for Borneo, had not been heard from, and fears were entertained that she had been lost in a typhoon which swept over the Chinese sea with terrific force shortly after she had sailed.

Weeks, months, years-and no more from Paul. That the ship had been lost was now known. And could any of her crew have been saved? Old sailors to whom the question was put, shook their heads sadly. Not many men could be saved from a ship that went down in a typhoon!

When the news of the loss became known men who had thus far held aloof came to smile upon Mary Archer, and to seek her smile in return. She was known to be as good and true as she was beautiful, and men of sense knew that she would do her part toward making an earthly heaven of the home over which fortune might lead her to preside. Among them was John Lettrell, a man older than Mary, and a man of wealth. He offered her a home, and asked her to become his wife; but she had no heart to give him.

#### **Register of Deeds**

**Judy Lambert**

**(continued)**