

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

Light at Last

The months and the years rolled on, and it was known that the ship Fides had been long at the bottom of the sea, and not a word had been heard from any of her crew. That they had all been lost was beyond a doubt.

In time Mary's mother fell sick and died, and Mary was left alone with her crippled brother. She kept the little cottage, but it was not all her own. There was a mortgage upon it, and upon Mary the mortgage lay heavily. Percy, the cripple, could eat, but he could do no work. He was a constant care, and he repaid his sister in love when he could repay her in no other way. She found work at dress-making, and so she labored on, praying for strength to perform her duty to the living and to the dead.

Years, years, years with little of sunshine, with much of gloom, and with much, very much, of care and labor!

Years four-and-twenty since that night when Paul went away so resolute and so hopeful. And Mary Archer was now forty-four. The care and the labor had made their mark, but they had not detracted from her beauty. The freshness and the bloom were faded, but the ripeness of her true womanly nature, in faith and resignation, had come with a beauty that cannot fade-the beauty of goodness and Christian devotion.

It was growing dark without. Percy had been very sick, with need of more care and more medicine. The interest on the mortgage was two years over-due, and the man of calculating business who held it had foreclosed and sued for possession. The cottage could not be much longer her home. Of herself she thought not at all; but what would become of her helpless brother?

In this strait John Lettrell came to her once more, and offered both herself and her brother a comfortable home for the rest of their days. What would she tell him?

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Only that she had no heart to give him. And yet he pressed his suit. He would teach her to love him in time. And he left her weeping with the indecision that had grown from the one weak spot-duty to her brother. He told her that he would come again, for he thought he saw his way to hope.

"Mary, dear," whispered Percy, as she bent over his couch, and smoothed his pillow, "why don't you accept the home he offers? Mr. Lettrell is a good man. O, my sister, not for sake-not for mine-but for your own!" "Hush, Percy! Not now-not now. O, my poor heart!"

And she went out to the little sitting room, and sat by the window where she had sat long, long years ago, while the man whom she must ever love, either living or dead, walked on his way to the great city to go forth upon the sea. The grand words Paul Winship had then spoken sounded again in her ears; she saw him again, as then, put the blue ribbon about his neck, and kiss the little locket, and then hide it away in his bosom close to this true heart. It was her gift-her hair in that locket-and if the lifeless form had sunk in the sea the precious memorial of her love had gone down therewith. Her hands were clasped, and her face lifted heavenward.

"No, no, no-John Lettrell-never! I will be true to him, as I know he would have been true to me!"

She turned from the window, and saw by the clock in the corner that midnight was near. She was upon the point of arising when she heard a step upon the sidewalk-a step as of a heavy man, approaching the cot. Nearer and nearer, until it stopped at her gate. A pause, and then the gate was opened, and presently a rap upon the door. She had no thought fear. A stranger, probably, who wished direction on his way. She took up the lamp, and went to the door, and she saw, by the flickering light, a middle-aged man, large and strong, dressed in the garb of the sea.

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“Does Mrs. Archer live here?” the man asked, in a voice scarcely audible, “Miss Archer lives here, sir.” “It is late, I know,” the man said, after a long pause; “but I have walked out from the city, and as I came this way, and saw a light in the window, I ventured to stop, as I had an errand to do.”

The man had the odor of the sea about him, and Mary was not afraid. There was something to her sacred in those habiliments-and she bade him come in.

He followed her into the sitting-room, but he did not sit down in the proffered seat, nor did he remove his hat. It was a chill autumnal night, and he wore his pea-jacket buttoned close up.

“You said you had an errand, sir?” Mary at length ventured. “Yes, yes,” said the man, with a start. He had been looking at her from the shadow of his hat-rim. “Yes-I have an errand. It was given to me years ago. At one time-for a long time-I thought I should never bring it; but fate has been kinder than I dared to hope. You know-none should know better-that there are mortal dangers on the deep. I was wrecked as others had been before and have been since.

I was cast, alone on a raft, upon an island, where savages were for long years my only companions. I taught them many useful things, and they were kind to me. Of gold and precious stones I gathered a great store, useless there, but to me of value should I ever again find my native land. The time came at length, after weary years, and my feet once more tread the soil of my own country. And, lady, I have come to fulfill a trust. I knew who you were before I came here. They told me in the city of your situation.”

The man unbuttoned his pea-jacket and drew something out from his bosom, and slipped something from around his neck. The former was a locket, scarred and worn and blackened, and the latter was a soiled and frayed and knotted remnant of dingy ribbon.

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In the locket, beneath the abraded glass, was just discernibly a braid of brown hair. He handed it to Mary.

“Do you know that?”

The words were spoken huskily, and with an effort.

She caught the precious memento, and clasped it with both her hands to her bosom.

The man seemed to be growing weak. He sat down and removed his hat, and the wealth of nut-brown curls, with just a touch of silver here and there, fell over his temples and clustered upon his broad, frank and manly brow.

Mary saw, and her heart leaped. The long dark years were gone as by the touch of a magician’s wand, and the old evening of that far-gone time lifted its blessed light upon her.

“Paul!”

That cry told to the man from over the sea all he would know. He stood again upon his feet, with his arms out-stretched, and in a moment more the faithfully-loved and the faithfully-loving one was clasped to his bosom.

“Yes, Mary-after all these years. O! thank God, it is light at last! No more trial, darling, no more sorrowing. We can forget the darkness and the agony in this blessed hour. O, once more-thank God, it is light at last!”

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The Adventures of Marquette

Nearly three hundred and fifty years ago, in April, 1541, De Soto, in his adventurous march, discovered the majestic Mississippi, not far from the southern border of the State of Tennessee.

No white man's eye had ever before beheld that flood, whose banks are now inhabited by busy millions. The Indians informed him that all the region below consisted of dismal, endless, inhabitable swamps. De Soto, world-weary and woe-stricken, died upon the banks of the river, and in its fathomless depths his body found burial.

These cruel adventurers, insanely impelled in search of mines of gold, founded no settlements, and left behind them no traces of their passage, save that by their cruelties they had excited the implacable ire of the Indians against the white man. A hundred years of earth's many grief's lingered slowly away, while these vast solitudes were peopled only by wandering Indian tribes whose record must forever remain unknown.

In the year 1641, some French envoys from Canada, seeking to open friendly trade with the Indians for the purchase of furs, penetrated the northwest of our country as far as the Falls of St. Mary, near the outlet of Lake Superior. The most friendly relations existed between these Frenchmen and the Indians, wherever the tribes were encountered. This visit led to no settlement. The adventurous traders purchased many furs, with which they loaded their birch canoes; established friendly relations with these distant Indians, and greatly extended the region from which furs were brought to their trading posts in Canada.

Twenty more years passed away, over the silent and gloomy wilderness when, in 1659, a little bank of these bold and hardy explorers, in their frail canoes, with Indian guides, paddled along the lonely, forest-fringed shores of Lake Ontario, ascended the Niagara river to the falls, carried their canoes on their shoulders around the rapids, launched them again on Lake Erie, traversed that inland sea over two hundred and fifty miles, entered the magnificent strait, passed through it to Lake St. Clair, crossed that lake, ascended the St. Clair river to Lake Huron, and traversing its whole length, a distance of three hundred miles, reached the Falls of St. Mary.

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Here, at the distance of more than a thousand miles from the least vestiges of civilization, and surrounded by numerous and powerful bands of savages, these hardy men passed an inclement winter. A midst rocks and gloomy pines they reared their hut. Game was abundant, fuel was at their door, the Indians were hospitable, and they wanted for nothing. One event only darkened these wintry months. The leader of the band became lost in the woods and perished.

In the spring the men returned rejoicing to Canada, with their canoes laden with the richest furs. They also brought such reports of the docility and amiability of the Indians as to inspire the Christians in Canada with the intense desire to establish missionary stations among them. Five years passed away, when Father Claude Allouez, with a small band of Christian heroes, penetrated these wilds to proclaim the glad tidings of the gospel. Two years after, he was followed by Father James Marquette, a noble man, whose name will never die.

Marquette established a mission about forty miles below the Falls of St. Mary, at a point on the main land, which he named St. Ignatius, just north of the Island of Mackinaw. Here he gathered a little band of loving disciples. His gentle and devoted spirit won, not merely the friendship of the Indians, but their ardent affections. He was just as safe among them as the most beloved father surrounded by his children. Three years this good man remained in these lonely wilds, peacefully and successfully teaching these benighted children of the forest salvation through an atoning Savior. During all this time his mind had been much exercised with the thought of exploring the limitless and unknown regions south and west.

He had heard rumors of the Mississippi, the Father of Waters, and his devout mind peopled the vast realms through which it flowed with the lost children of God, whom he perhaps might reclaim through the gospel of Jesus, who had come from heaven for their redemption. The Governor of Canada was desirous, for more worldly reasons, of exploring these regions, where future empires might be reared.

In the spring of 1673 the Governor of Canada sent M. Joliet, a gentleman of Quebec, with five boatmen, to Point St. Ignatius, to take Marquette and set out in search of the much-talked-of river.

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On the 13th of May this little band of seven men, in two birch canoes, commenced their adventurous voyage. They took with them some Indian corn and jerked meat, but were to live mainly upon such food as they could obtain by their way.

On the northwest of Lake Michigan there is a sheet of water running south called Green Bay. It is one hundred miles long by twenty or thirty broad. The boatmen paddled their frail canoes along the western border of this lake until they reached its southern extremity, where they found a shallow river flowing into it from the south, which they called Fox river. They could propel their canoes about thirty miles a day. Each night they selected some propitious spot for their encampment. Upon some dry and grassy mound they could speedily with their axes construct a hut which would protect them from the weather. Carefully smoothing down the floor, they spread over it their ample couch of furs. Fish could be taken in abundance. The forest was filled with game. An immense fire blazing before the open side of the hut gave warmth and illumined the sublime scene with almost the brilliance of noon-day. Here they joyously cooked their suppers, with appetites which rendered the feast more luxurious to them probably than any gourmand at Delmonico's ever enjoyed.

Each night Father Marquette held a religious service, which all reverently attended. Prayers were offered, and their hymns of Christian devotion floated sweetly through those sublime solitudes. The boatmen were men of a gently race, who had been taught from infancy to revere the exercises of the church.

They came upon several Indian villages. The natives were friendly as brothers. Many of them had visited the station at St. Ignatius, and all of them had heard of Father Marquette and his labors of love. These children of the forest begged their reverend friend to desist from his enterprise.

"There are," they said, "on the great river bad Indians who will cut off your heads without any cause. There are fierce warriors who will try to seize you and make you slaves. There are enormous birds there whose wings darken the air and who can swallow you all with your canoes at a mouthful. Worst of all there is a malignant demon there who, if you escape all other dangers, will cause the waters to boil and whirl around you and destroy you."

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To all this good Marquette replied, "I think you dear friends, for your kind advice, but I cannot follow it. There are souls there to save for whom the Son of God came to earth and died. Their salvation is at stake. I would joyfully lay down my life if I could guide them to the Savior."

They found the navigation of Fox River impeded with many rapids. To surmount these it was necessary often to alight from their canoes, and, wading over the rough and sharp stones, to drag them up against the swift current.

They were within the limits of the present State of Wisconsin, and found themselves in a region of lakes, sluggish streams and marshes. There were Indian trails, which had been trodden for uncounted generations, leading West. These they followed, often painfully carrying their canoes and their burdens on their shoulders, for many miles, from water to water, over what the Indians called The Carrying Places.

At length they entered a region of remarkable luxuriance, fertility and beauty. There were crystal streams and charming lakes. Magnificent forests were interspersed with broad and green prairies. God seemed to have formed in these remote realms an Eden of surpassing loveliness for the abode of his children. Three tribes, in perfect harmony, occupied the region- the Miami's, Mascoutins, and Kickapoos. There was a large village with abundant corn-fields around. River and lake, forest and prairie were alike alive with game.

To their surprise they found that a French missionary, Father Allouez, had reached this distant spot, preaching the gospel, eight years before. The Indians had received him with fraternal kindness. He had left in the center of the village a cross, the emblem of the crucified Son of God.

"I found," Marquette writes, "that these good people had swung skins and belts and bows and arrows on the cross, an offering to the Great Spirit, to thank him because he had taken pity on them during the winter and given them an abundant chase.

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No white man had ever penetrated beyond this region. These simple, in offensive people seemed greatly surprised that seven unarmed men should venture to press on to meet the unknown dangers of the wilderness beyond-wilds which their imaginations had peopled with all conceivable terrors

On the 10th of June these heroic men resumed their journey. The kind Indians furnished them with two guides to lead them through the intricacies of the forest to a river, about ten miles distant, which they called Wisconsin, and which they said flowed westward into the Father of Waters. They soon reached this stream. The Indians helped them to carry their canoes and effects across the portage. "We were then left," writes Marquette, "alone in that unknown country in the hand of God."

Our voyagers found the stream hard to navigate. It was full of sandbars and shallows. There were many islands covered with the richest verdure. At times they came upon landscapes of enchanting beauty, with laws and parks and lakes, as if arranged by the most careful hands of art. Down this stream they floated, day after day, encamping upon its banks at night, until on the 19th of June, "with a joy that I cannot express," they entered the broad, deep, rapid current of the majestic Mississippi.

Easily they could be swept down by the rapid current into the sublime unexplored solitudes below. But to paddle back against the swift rolling tide would try the muscles of the hardiest men. Still the voyagers pressed on. It was indeed a fairy scene which now opened before them. Here bold bluffs, hundreds of feet high, jutted into the river. Here were crags of stupendous size and of every variety of form, often reminding one of Europe's most picturesque stream, where

**"The castled crags of Drachenfels,
Frown o'er the wide and winding Rhine."**

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Again the prairie would spread out its ocean-like expanse, embellished with groves, garlanded with flowers of gorgeous colors waving in the summer breeze, checkered with sunshine and the shade of passing clouds, with roving herds of the stately buffalo and the graceful antelope. And again the gloomy forest would appear, extending over countless leagues, where bears, wolves and panthers found a congenial home.

Having descended the river nearly two hundred miles they came to an Indian trail, leading back into the country. It was so well trodden as to give evidence that a powerful tribe was near. It speaks well for the Indians-for the reputation which they then enjoyed-that Marquette, with his French companion, M. Joliet, far away in the wilderness, seven hundred miles from any spot which a white man's foot had ever before trod, should not have hesitated alone to enter this trail in search of the habitations of this unknown tribe. They left all their companions, with the canoes, on the bank of the river.

For six miles they followed the narrow track, when they came in sight of a large Indian village. It was on an open plain, so that the Indians saw them approaching when at quite a distance. They knew, of course, that two strangers unarmed, could not be advancing with any hostile intent. Four of the patriarchs of the village immediately came forward, bearing a pipe of peace, which was highly ornamented with brilliantly colored plumes. As these chiefs drew near they saw, to their surprise and delight, that the strangers were pale faces. Though none of them had ever before seen a white man, the knowledge of his arrival had spread widely through all the tribes. The French had pursued such a course of justice and friendliness with the Indians that, wherever they went they were hospitably received.

One of these gentlemen of the barbarian school, as he led the guests into his cabin, said "How beautiful is the sun, Frenchmen, when it shines upon you, as you come to visit us. Our whole village greets you with a welcome. You shall find a home in all our dwellings."

The strangers were entertained with the utmost hospitality. As they were about to take their leave, a venerable chief approached Marquette and suspending, by a cord, a richly decorated pipe about his neck, said.

"This is the sacred calumet. It signifies that, wherever you bear it you are the messengers of peace. All our tribes will respect it, and will protect you from every harm."

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We cannot record this friendly reception without emotion. How beautiful is peace! How different would the history of this world have been but for man's inhumanity to man. On reaching their boats the little band of voyagers continued their journeying down the lonely and silent river. They floated beyond the mouths of the turbid Missouri and the beautiful Ohio. Carefully they observed these important points, but they made no attempt to explore either of these streams. The Ohio was then, and for some years after, called the Wabash.

Still they floated on, several hundred miles further, until they reached the mouth of the Arkansas. Here again they found a large Indian village. They were received by the natives with the same hospitality which had marked their intercourse with the Indians during the whole of their route.

They now turned back and laboriously rescinded the majestic Mississippi, slowly forcing their way against the swift current. Their upward voyage was commenced the 17th of July, 1673. Instead of continuing their upward course to the Wisconsin river, they entered the Illinois river, and again reached Green Bay by way of Lake Michigan. They had been about two months upon this voyage. During this time the devoted missionary had lost no opportunity of proclaiming to the Indians the Christian's God, and the way of salvation through faith in an atoning Savior.

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Even then Marquette had no conception of the true grandeur of that valley he had entered, extending from the Allegheny ridges to the Rocky Mountains. Still, when the tidings of his wonderful discoveries reached Quebec, the exciting intelligence was received with the ringing of bells, with salvos of artillery, and, most preeminent and important of all, by nearly the whole population, led by the clergy and other dignitaries of the place, going in procession to the cathedral where the Te Deum was sung in thanksgiving to God.

In Marquette's account of this voyage he writes, "Nowhere did we see such grounds, meadows, woods, stags, buffaloes, deer, wild cats, bustards, swans, ducks, parquets' and even beavers, as on the Illinois river.

By the earnest request of the Illinois Indians Marquette returned to them and continued with them, revered and beloved, preaching the gospel for two years. On the 18th of May, 1675, as he was ascending Lake Michigan, with his boatmen, he proposed landing, at the mouth of a small stream, for the celebration of mass. He left his men in the canoe while he went a short distance into the solitude of the forest to pray. As some time passed and he did not return, they called to mind that he had said, before he left them, that he felt that the hour of his death was near at hand. They went to seek him. He was lying upon a green mound dead, with his hands folded as in prayer. The boatmen silently and sadly dug his grave, and left his mortal remains in the solitude of the forest on the banks of the stream which now bears the name of Marquette.

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EXPERIENCES IN THE CITY

Young man, resident of country, hamlet, town, or smaller city please give me your attention for a few moments while I detail some of the experiences of one who, like yourself, perhaps, had for a long time harbored the idea that the best place to develop his particular faculty for business, and to achieve that position in life, which he felt by natural right belonged to him, was New York city; and let me say right here I am not writing this article to make a good story, but shall stick exactly to the truth in every particular; and if such simple relation of my own true story will service to deter any young man from taking the step which might result in placing him in circumstances equally bad, if not exactly the same as mine are, I shall feel – I was about to say – fully paid for the trouble of this writing, and under ordinary circumstances that would be true; but just now I am inclined to think that the hope, destined quite likely to disappointment of receiving some remuneration of a more material kind has quite as much to do with the motive that prompts this article, as has the wish to do good to others.

In the spring of this year, after quite a number of applications and negotiations by a business man, who took some interest in me, and who occasionally visited New York, I was at last, through his influence, provided with a situation as sort of a man-of-all-work in a wholesale provision store, at a salary of \$8 per week, which I have since found was very liberal for a new man, who knew nothing of the business.

Arrived in the city, I found that board in a respectable place would cost about six or seven dollars per week, and in as much as that included only two meals a day, on the ground of economy I concluded to do as very many other young men are doing, that is, hire a furnished room, and take my meals at a restaurant; but it is a lonely, joyless manner of existence, and I pity any poor human being who has any social element in his nature, who is obliged to live so. I paid \$2.50 per week for my room, and thought with the remaining \$5.50 I could get along very well, and perhaps lay aside a dollar or two a week towards buying clothing when needed, but I soon found that one unfortunate enough to possess as good an appetite as I, could easily expend \$1 every day at even the cheapest eating saloon in the city, and not be extravagant in the matter either; and that the half-dollar a day, which I had calculated for the purpose, I could live on but very unsatisfactorily; so at the end of the first week, after paying room, board, washing, and a few little incidental expense, I found I had spent. \$8.82.

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This, of course, would not do, so I gave up my room, and took one at \$1.75, which was much more gloomy and cheerless than the other, which was bad enough in that respect, certainly, for it must be remembered that good, plainly furnished rooms, in a respectable location, with nothing elaborate in their appointments, cost from \$4 to \$6 a week, so high is the price of real estate – and consequently rents – in this great city. So you can imagine what mine was; enough to say that it was up many stairs, and the bedstead was short and narrow, the bed cloth; few and thin. I then took table-board at a place kept by a German, near my place of business, at \$4 per week but the food was cooked in a way I was not used to, and did not very well like – however, I was living within my income, and looking forward to better times. But my greatest hardship during this time was want of society; for a young man of any refinement of feeling and not possessing to any great degree that quality denominated “brass,” might live in this city for years without being brought in that friendly, neighborly contact with people congenial to him, without which existence become little better than a blank. After a few months, a change occurring in the firm that employed me, I was told that, not doing the amount of business they anticipated, they should decrease store expenses by reducing the salaries of the other clerks, and, as I was the last employed, they should try and get along without my services; not that they were dissatisfied with me at all – would recommend me, etc.

I felt very sorry for this, for I had got used to my business, and could perform it without the half fear of not doing it right that I had at first, and I liked my employers very well, and did not like the idea of having to begin in a new place; however, I did not think it a very serious matter, for I supposed I could easily get a situation before the end of the week (this was on Wednesday) by personal application, or by answering some of the many advertisements which I had noticed in the papers under “Help Wanted.” I looked in the papers in which the wants are principally published, and, selecting two or three which I thought I might perhaps be successful with, I wrote the advertisers in the best manner I was capable of, and was somewhat surprised as the next day passed, and the next also, at not receiving any reply; however, I looked over the papers again, and selecting some more promising offers answered them – some by letter, as directed, and others in person at time and place specified; and although at the first one I visited I was on hand before the appointed time, I found twenty applicants ahead of me.

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What number was considerably augmented in the time I staid, which was not long, for as soon as the merchant arrived he said: "Gentlemen, are there any among your number who have ever occupied a position of this kind in this city? Naming a vacancy he wished to have filled, "if there are, they will please come in the office." Five intelligent looking young men immediately stepped forth from whom to select; of course, the rest of us had no chance, and a repetition of this is what occurred every day, for business is done here in New York in specialties more than anywhere else in the country; that is, a firm does business in one or a few separate articles, and the employment runs in the same way. If a merchant wishes to engage an entry clerk, he not only wants one who has served in that capacity, but if he is a dealer in fancy goods he wants an entry clerk who has been employed in that particular branch of business, and in this city; or, if he does not make this last condition absolutely essential, he will give the preference to such a one certainly, as I so it is in all branches of business, whether wholesale or retail; for instance, a retail shoe dealer on Sixth Avenue advertised for a clerk, and a young man with whom I had become acquainted applied. The dealer saw that the young man understood the business thoroughly, but told him he had an application by a clerk from another store on the same avenue, and he thought he might influence some trade; at any rate, other things being equal, he must of course give him the preference.

Before the end of two weeks' fruitless search for employment, my money was exhausted, and I had done what cost me a great mental effort, applied to my former employer for the loan of two dollars, which was given me, but in a way which I construed to mean-it must be the last. I still had shelter for another week, but nothing more. I received answers to some of my communications during this time, but they all ended in nothing.

At one place, where a gentleman had advertised for a rapid penman, good at figures, I was well received, and the gentleman seemed to take quite an interest in me; now my penmanship could not be called elegant, though good enough for ordinary purposes; as an accountant, I am correct.

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I had strong hopes of getting employment here, but when he showed me samples of penmanship that had been submitted by other applicants, my heart failed me; one man in particular had left a sample of writing which I have never seen excelled; it was like copper-plate—"the corresponding clerk," the gentleman said, "of a large house—been affected by the panic; he wants to earn \$10 per week, but would work for less."

I had now been unemployed for three weeks, during the last of which, to satisfy the cravings of hunger, I had sold a few articles of clothing that I could possibly get along without, and now had come Saturday, when the rent of my room for the ensuing week must be paid. I dreaded asking for trust in a matter of this kind, especially from a lady; but the thought of being turned into the street at length overpowered other considerations, so, putting on an indifferent air, I carelessly remarked to my landlady that I did not get any money that day, but would pay her the first of the week. She looked at me wonderingly, but answered me kindly.

Monday I renewed my efforts with re-doubled earnestness, but it was of no use. There are plenty of places where agents are wanted to sell superfluous articles by canvassing city or country, and the most glowing inducements are held out, but even these require the investment of some capital. The business is very distasteful to me, but I resolved to try it if I could get a chance. I found a man who was willing to let me have a sample of his wares without paying for until sold. At first I did not think very favorably of the article he had to sell (patent razor strops), but after hearing him explain all the qualities and advantages of his strops over all others, in an argument of a quarter of an hour's duration, backed up by his statements of what agents had actually done and were doing, was led to believe that I could dispose of at least one strop in every barber shop in the city.

Enough to say, I did not sell any strops that day, and at night went creeping to my room like a condemned criminal, hungry and faint.

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BY H.E. SMITH

EXPERIENCES IN THE CITY

When I came down the next morning, my landlady was waiting for me. "I had been thinking," she said, "that perhaps you intended giving up your room, and if so I should like to know it." I acknowledged I had some thought of so doing, and might as well leave that day.

Again I tried the razor strops, but they would not sell. Weak and discouraged, I returned to my employer; he thought perhaps I was not adapted to that particular business; I thought so too. Finding I had no money, he handed me a ten-cent stamp, and the nearest baker sold one loaf of bread more than he otherwise would.

After quite an extended experience among them, I am forced to say that many of the concerns who make great promises to "agents" are what might be termed humbugs.

Now the shades of eye began to come slowly down. How shall I describe the feeling of utter desolation that began to come over me?-no money, no friends, no home. I envied the brute beasts, the truck-horse with his dray, as he contentedly wended his way to his stable up town-even the dog that followed behind; then came a feeling of angry rebellion against the laws of society and of God, followed by one of despair. Oh the misery of that long night, walking, walking. I could not stop long to rest-the policemen seemed to be everywhere present, and loiterers at night are looked upon with suspicion and closely watched. When you see a short item in the newspapers to the effect that a stranger, name supposed to be so and so, last night committed suicide, probable cause poverty, do you ever think of the hopes formed, only to be broken, the yearnings, the longings, the expectations never realized, the long continued mental agony that preceded the last desperate, fatal, mad resolve? I have never seriously thought of ending my own life, but I can easily see how people of a certain temperament and disposition can be brought to take such a step.

I next tried the book business, and the first day was fortunate enough to sell one; that night I procured lodging, but the next day was not successful, and of course out again; and so time passed on-sometimes with shelter at night, but oftener without.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(Continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

EXPERIENCES IN THE CITY

Sometimes going a whole day with absolutely nothing to eat. Now cold weather had begun to set in, and it was not until nature had become completely exhausted I could manage to sleep in some unfinished building in process of erection, or covered wagon in the street; and then the sleep I got under such circumstances was not of that refreshing kind that you are accustomed to, reader; besides, there was the continual fear of being molested in my wagon by policemen; in my house, by those having charge of it. One night, in a new building on Hudson street, I had just composed myself in a corner of an up-stairs room for a little rest, when I heard the heavy tramp of a man hurriedly approaching; in a moment he angrily appeared at my door with a big club in his hand, and I was ignominiously expelled. But in my nightly wanderings I soon found on arriving at what I considered the most eligible spots for retirement that they were preoccupied by some poor unfortunate like myself; indeed, if it were not so, I should hardly have courage to pen this sketch, for I should consider that my being reduced so low must be owing to some fault or deficiency peculiarly my own. I had been informed by a fellow cosmopolitan that lodgings were furnished at the station-houses gratuitously to homeless wanderers; but there was something in the idea that made me recoil from making the trial

One night, when the sleet was coming down, half rain, half snow, I concluded any shelter preferable, and walking into a station-house on the east side, I made known to the officer in attendance what I would like. He remarked that it was rather a late hour to come for lodging, but I told him that in my ignorance I did not know that it made any difference; he then required my name, age, occupation, and where I was born, my answers to which were all recorded in a book.

He then turned me over to the door-keeper, a rough, surly fellow, who conducted me to the den.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(Continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

EXPERIENCES IN THE CITY

One glance was enough for me to decide not to accept the proffered hospitality, but I begged the doorman to allow me a moment for observation. To give an adequate description of the scene, I am not able; nothing less than the pen of Dante or the pencil of Dore could do the subject justice. The stench and mixture of stenches that rose on the air, the gibes and blasphemies, prayers and curses from many of the half drunk or crazy inmates, the occupation of one or two in the corner picking the vermin from their bodies, and the general appearance of extreme filth, the yells and moans of the women in the next room-all these made an impression on me which I shall not soon forget.

On the street I again met the policeman who had directed my way to this place; he kindly loaned me a quarter. Lately I have staid for a new nights at a place in the lower part of the city, which is maintained for the aid of the homeless by the munificence of a well-known citizen of this city.

At the present moment I imagine my prospects for the future are a little brighter than they have been. I pray it may not be only imagination. And in closing I have only to say: Youngman, unless you are possessed of money enough to be independent, or have appositive engagement with a responsible firm, don't come to the great city. I arrive at this conclusion not only from my own experience, but from that of many others whom I have either come in actual contact with or had knowledge of; men who have been merchants and lawyers, as well as clerks and artisans, and men of all degrees of ability, for low medium to high, don't come here to wait for something to turn up.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

A Night In A Signal-Box

I am the wife of an ex-signalman on the Uniform railway. His signal-box stands high up, white and solitary, above a charming country.

It is a very hot in summer, when the sun shines on the glass, and very cold in winter, when the northeast wind howls around it, and whistles aerial music through the telegraph.

It was an important lookout, for, within a mile of it, numerous lines intersected each other, over which, day and night, trains were ever crossing and re-crossing, with hairbreadth escapes of collisions.

When John was courting me, he often made me tremble about it by saying "Jane, that place is a trouble to me; one day I know there will be a crash; I feel it. A man can't be always in health. Even a signalman's brain will sometime become dazed and muddled; and then, if he makes a mistake, a smash must come."

We were married, and John grew brighter and more cheerful, and I trusted he had forgotten that wretched presentiment of his about collision.

After six months, however, it returned, worse than ever. He used to read all the accidents; and, when any of the officials were convicted for man-slaughter or discharged for negligence, he would say, "That may be my case tomorrow, Jane; then what's to become of you?"

I am aware most men would not have thought, like him, but he had the kindest, most sensitive heart. "John," I said at last, "why don't you quit the situation, and get something else?" "Because a married man should never give up one employment before he's sure of another."

"Well, then, dear, don't say any more, or you'll make me as nervous as yourself." I had begun to think about the cross lines and the mail expresses as much as John himself, though I wouldn't let him know it. The signal box began to haunt me, and I used frequently to go up to the turn of the road and look at it for nothing at all. That idea of a collision was a monomania with John-it was becoming so with me.

A year went by safely, and, except for that miserable thought, no two persons could be happier than John and I, especially as we now had a little daughter, who, for a while, banished John's dread, and we talked hopefully of the future. Our prospects were better, for my husband unexpectedly heard from an uncle in Australia, who had made a comfortable fortune, and intended to return and live with his relations.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

A Night In A Signal-Box

"Who knows, Jane? He was ever kind, and he may start me in something," said John, one evening, when I had taken tea to the signal box, and was amusing Maude with the colored lamps. "I certainly will try," he added, looking thoughtfully up and down the lines, "Nothing happens before."

"For goodness sake, John, don't talk like that? All has gone safely for four years; surely it will continue to do so, with care."

"I don't know that," he responded, gloomily. "It's the confounded Wyoming express I fear. Within a space of a few minutes it crosses the Hens her mail, and often it's five minutes before it's time." "What do you do then, John?" I asked, hushing Maude. "Why, then I turn the colored lamp; then the express, knowing the mail train hasn't passed, slackens speed until it has." "And if you were not to show that light?" "It would come on, get into the same line with the mail, and the carriages would go into Lucifer matches." "Oh, John, please don't. You make my blood run cold."

After that there was another fascination for me besides the signal box-the colored lamps, by mistake or omission in the use of which I knew not how many lives might be hurled to eternity. I regarded them with awe, and over again and again asked John their use.

Weeks slipped by and we got another letter from Uncle Thompson. The ship which brought him from Australia had been delayed by a severe gale in the Atlantic, but now he was safe in England, and intended to come and see us.

"Safe!" remarked John; "no one now-a-days can reckon on that, with a long railway journey before him."

John slightly exaggerated, of course, but that autumn the collisions and accidents of all kinds were something fearful. Not a day passed but fresh collisions were recorded, and, with a morbid interest, John used to read them, and make my soul quiver by the remarks, "Such might just have been my case, Jane. No doubt the fellow was dead-beat. Only the mercy of Providence saves me from manslaughter, or a discharge through negligence."

One oppressively warm evening he had, while at tea, been reading about a more than usually terrible accident, owing, it was stated, to the signalman, who had been on the lookout for sixteen hours, making an error in the signals.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

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

A Night in A Signal-Box

Putting the paper down, he exclaimed, "Jane, how often have I felt as he described, knowing how many lives might be dependent on me. How I pray Uncle Thompson may help us, and I may give the whole thing up!"

Rising, he put on his hat; he went on duty at six. I watched him anxiously. Never had I felt more nervous, for I observed him nodding unconsciously to himself over his tea. Indeed, he looked so depressed I was half inclined to ask to go with him. But I knew he wouldn't consent, as it was against the rules; while independent of which, the man who temporarily filled his place was the greatest enemy John had, and would be sure to tell of him if he did so. I knew Richard Malin bore a bitter enmity to my husband, and would gladly do an ill turn to one whose rival he had been. I was aware he never forgave my accepting John and rejecting him. So I held my tongue, spoke cheerfully as I could as I walked with him to the corner of the road, and waited until I saw him appear in the signal box, when I retraced my steps.

I never felt as nervously restless as I did that night. I could settle to nothing, so I sat down before the fire. I kept a light for John's return, and tried to divert myself with my baby, but the child soon slumbered, and I sat thinking until I, too slept.

The whole time I dreamt of nothing but railways. They were everywhere rushing about me, their shrill whistle deafening my ears. I beheld the express, and the mail, with a noiseless horror, rushing toward each other, with lights seeming to laugh with fiendish mirth. Then there was an awful cry-a crash, and a scene of destruction. I was awakened by my own cries.

Irritated at being so startled, I bustled about to forget the scene, put Maudie to bed, and again sat down by the fire and dozed.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

BY H.E. SMITH

A Night in A Signal-Box

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Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

A NIGHT in A Signal-Box

Scarcely had I done so, however, when arose before me a shadowy figure of indefinite form, pointing in the direction of a signal box.

I moved restlessly, and put my hands before my eyes to shut it out. Finally, I started, rose to my feet, and I could have declared the figure stood on the hearth-rug in the fire-light, only if gradually melted into air.

Just then the clock struck half-past ten. In half an hour the Wyoming express and Hensher mail would be due. At that I began to tremble violently, and throwing on my shawl, I determined to go and look at the signal box, and see if it was right.

White mists had risen since I was last out; and above them, rising as from a billowy sea, about a mile distant, raised the "look-out," distinct in the moonlight.

But where was John? Generally I could see him moving about; now, the place was apparently empty. What did it mean? There was but one answer-John was asleep.

Never shall I forget the sensation that ran through my veins at that thought. The crown of my head seemed to literally lift up. Then-why, I could never explain-I ran back, seized Maudie, and afterwards hurried to the signal box.

Rapidly I ascended the steps to the "look-out." I tried the door; it was fastened on the inside; and what a sight met me within, through the glass.

John sounds asleep, his head on his arms. Calling him loudly, I shook the handle. He did not stir. All was silent, save for the monotonous tick of the clock beating out the fatal minutes above his head. I dared not delay. I dashed in the glass, put in my hand, turned the key, and entered. Even this did not arouse him.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

A Night in a Signal-Box

“John!” I called, shaking his shoulder, “What is the matter with you? Wake up! It’s eleven; the express is coming!”

He breathed heavily, but made no sign. What was the matter with him? He appeared in no natural sleep. In my alarm at the flying moments, fond mother as I was, I forced Maudie to cry, hoping that might awaken him. It did. Slowly he looked up heavily; but only to sink back to sleep. At the same moment I heard in the distance the faint whistle of the express train. It was coming, and the Hensher mail had not yet passed. The terror of a whole life was condensed in those few minutes. The collision John had foretold had come at last. All my efforts to arouse him were futile. I stood alone; the trains were rushing to their fate. I saw the awful sight of my dream realized;; I saw men, women and children in one fearful heap, amid broken carriages. My head reeled; I turned sick; thence the intensity of my fright apparently cleared my brain.

Why should I not save them? As the question occurred, the whistle of the advancing mail sounded. Looking right and left, I perceived the glowing lights of each engine coming nearer, for the line was clear. I waited no more. I recalled what John had told me, and turned the signal lantern for the express to slacken speed. Eagerly, breathlessly I watched. Had I, after all made a mistake? Yes-the lights still approached. No-they had stopped.

The next moment the signal box was shaken to its base by the rush of the mail train beneath it. I watched it fly off in the distance, turned the light, heard the Wyoming express in its turn wheel under me, and knew, as I fell insensible on the floor, that nearly two hundred people had been on the brink of the grave, and that I had saved them.

My baby’s cries, however, soon recalled my senses, when fetching water, I dashed it over John, and at last brought him to. I shall ever remember his look when I told him what had occurred. He could not believe the mail had passed; but I proved it to him beyond a doubt.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

A Night in a Signal-Box

"I can't make it out, Jane," he exclaimed. "I have not the slightest recollection of going to sleep. In fact, I was doing all I could to keep awake. It must be my cold."

"What is that?" I asked, abruptly, pointing to a glass.

"Part of a tumbler of beer Dick Malin left me," he answered. I saw it all. The beer had been drugged to work our ruin. John would not hear of it.

There being no more trains, we went home, I taking the beer with me.

"John," I said, when there, "I'm going to show I am right about Richard Malin. See!" And, before he could prevent me, I had drunk the contents of the glass.

A quarter of hour after, I was in a dead sleep as he had been. This act had destroyed any proof we had against Richard Malin; who, however, confirmed our belief by dis-charging himself from his situation.

The most singular part of the affair was, in that very express train traveled Uncle Thompson, who had come down to see us. When he heard of his narrow escape, and how I had saved him, he vowed he never would forget it. He kept his word. He started John in business, lived with us, and made his will in our favor. Now express and mail trains no longer give us sleepless nights, though we never travel by rail without thinking of that fearful night in the signal box.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

The Great Gold Secret

I'm a gold digger-that's about what I am. You wouldn't take me for an Englishman, would you now? No, nor yet anyone else that knows me; but I am, though.

How old, about, should you take me for? "Fifty-five, eh?" Well, they all guess somewhere near that; but I'm just thirty-seven last month. I dare say you don't believe it; and perhaps wouldn't believe it, either, if I told you that all this wrinkling and turning grey was done in one week. Well, it was, and when I think over it all now, and think that here I am, alive after it all, I can hardly believe it myself. Would you like to hear about it? Well, sit down and make yourself comfortable, and I'll tell you.

It's nine years ago last Valentine's day (I remember all the dates well enough, I warrant you) that I was at 'Frisco with a Yankee, name of Seth Hickman. We'd met down in Denver, and stood by each other in a row that happened there, and of course that drew us together a bit; and the end of it was, we agreed to go prospecting together and "share and share alike."

Seth was a sharp fellow and knew all the likeliest spots, and I could do a day's work with any man in those days, though I ain't much to brag on now; and the end of it was we made a pretty good haul.

When we got to 'Frisco I thought of nothing but banking some of the stuff for a rainy day and having a spree with the rest, and then starting off again; but Seth didn't seem to see it all. I noticed that he looked serious-like, as if he had something on his mind, for the first two days after we got into the town; and on the second evening, as we were sitting over our grog, he spoke out:

"Jim, old hoss, I'm a-gwine to tell yew something that nary soul in creation knows about but myself; for if yew hadn't been some smart with your Derringer when the three skunks went for me down in Denver they might ha' wrote 'Gone up' over this child; and no man ever did Seth Hickman a good turn, nor a bad turn neither, but what he got cocoanut for you yew bet yure life on that!

"When I was in Africa last year I went up country a bit with my rifle, and thar I happened on an old Indian critter, as old as George Washington's nurse, livin' in a hut all by himself among the spurs o' the Andes, and I camped in his hut for the night.

Register of Deeds

Judy Lambert

(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

The Great Gold Secret

“Wal, the aguardiente (whiskey) in my flask war a leetle tew strong for him, and he got reg’lar slewed; and when his tongue got loosened by the lick he kim out wi’ stich a yarn as whipped everything in Prescott all to fits. He said that when the Peruvian chiefs stampeded from Cuzco a’ter Pizarro took it, a lot on ‘em got up among the mountains, carrying their gold with ‘em, till they kim out on the plateau of Lake Titica; and thar, findin’ the Spaniards close on their trail, they chucked all the gold into the lake and skedaddled nobody knows where. He said that if anybody took the trail from his hut, north and by east, till they hit the southern end of the lake, and then looked out for a big three-cornered rock like a pyramid upside down, they’d jest got to scoop in the mud of the lake whar that rock’s shadow fell on it at sunrise, and they’d find ‘nuff gold to buy up all Wall street. Now, we’ve got money enough to put that job through, and if yew feel like tryin’ it, I’m in.”

I said “done” at once, and we got our money together, and slipped down the coast to Africa as fast as the Pacific steamer could carry us. The minute we got there, Seth went off into the hills to try and get hold of his old Indian for a guide, while I hunted about’ for workmen-for this was a job that needed more hands than our own. At last I got hold of two Spaniards-two sturdy fellows they were, and honest enough as Spaniards go-and then a Portigee and two black men. We weren’t long in buying our stores and working tackle, and by the time Seth came back with his guide, all was ready and away we went.

Seth was much too knowing a bird to let on what his real game was as long as we were within hail of the town, for if you say “gold” there only in a whisper those blessed Gambesons (gold-finders) will hear it a hundred miles off. So all that we told our gang was that we were going prospecting among the lower ranges, as lots of fellows did every day; but when we were past the old Indian’s hut and well up among the hills, so that our chaps couldn’t easily turn back if they wanted, he up and told them the whole story. They were rather taken aback, as well they might be, for Lake Titicaca’s a good many day’s journey to the nor’east, among some very awkward mountains and a good thirteen thousand feet above the sea, if it’s an inch. However, a Spaniard (or any other man, for that matter,) will go pretty nearly anywhere if he once gets on the scent of gold; to our fellows they spoke up stoutly enough, and said they were ready to go up to the lake, and down to the bottom of it into the bargain, after such a haul as that; and off we set again.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

The Great Gold Secret

I've seen a good many wonders in my time, knocking about the world as I've done; but anything like that climb up the Andes I never saw yet. Rocks that seemed to go up into the very sky, straight as a plumb-line; beds of moss three or four deep, and soft as a velvet cushion; trees two hundred feet high, all one blaze of flowers from top to bottom; leaves big enough to wrap you up like a blanket; tree-ferns big as a tablecloth, all glittering like the finest silver lace; humming-birds and monkeys and parrots, and butterflies as broad as the palm of your hand; waterfalls sheer down over great black precipices a thousand feet high; and far away behind the everlasting mountains, piled one above another till they seemed to go right up to heaven. Among all these enormous things we eight men, big and strong as we were, seemed of no more account than a lot of ants crawling on a blade of grass; and I think I never felt so small in my life as I did then.

However, I hadn't much leisure to think about it at the time, for you can't expect a fellow to have much of an eye for scenery when he's hacking his way through a great cobweb of branches too thick for the light to get through, with his boots full of ants and his mouth full of gnats, and the damp vapor-bath heat of the woods melting him away bit by bit, fifty prickles going into him at once, a thorn-bush scalping him from above, and a creeper tripping him up down below.

And so we hammered along, till at last we worked up to the plateau and saw the great lake spreading away before us as far as ever we could see. We weren't long of making out the three-cornered crag, nor the shadow neither, for it was just sunrise when we got there, as if o'purpose for us; and once we'd made it out we hardly waited to take breath before we were at it tooth and nail.

The first day was a regular blank one till just toward sundown, and then the Portigee screeched out suddenly that he'd got something heavy. I helped him to haul up the pan, and there, sure enough, was a bar of gold over a foot long, and pretty nigh as thick as my two fingers here. At that we all shouted at once, and went at it harder than ever; and I really think our chaps would have worked all night, but Seth stopped 'em. He told 'em that the gold wouldn't run away, and that if they put on too much steam at first they'd just knock themselves up before they were half through, and that they'd better just light a fire and get fried, and have some supper, and fix up some kind of shelter against the dew, and then start fair next morning. And so they did.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

Early History of Cloud County

By H.E. Smith

The Great Gold Secret

The next day and the next and the next after that we kept bringing it up in handfuls-gold circlets and chains and necklaces and ingots without end. But on the fifth day I found the provisions getting so low that I was rather scared, for up here there was no game of any sort, there being no vegetation at that height for the game to love on. So we held a council of war. Our chaps had got the gold-fever so into their blood by this time that I verily believe they'd have kept digging on till they died of hunger; but Seth and I, who were a little cooler, talked them over at last. We told 'em that we'd got enough already to make us all as rich as Jews; that we must all starve if we didn't replenish our stock somehow; that ten to one the "find" was played out (and, indeed, none of us had taken a grain all that morning); and that, in any case, the lake was always there, and they could come back and try again whenever they liked.

So, but by bit, we worked 'em round, and all started to go back together. We'd hard work of it the first part of the way, for our loads were pretty heavy, and stumbling in and out of the great rocks was no joke, let alone that the five days' work had taken it out of us more than we expected. One of the Spaniards got a bad fall and not one of us but had his bruise to show. But at last we got over the barren bit and found ourselves fairly down among the wood again; and then I began to be jolly, thinking this was the end of it. But it wasn't-it was only the beginning.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

The Great Gold Secret

Chapter II

One afternoon, when we'd got well down among the lower ranges, we were just looking about for a place to camp (for the Spaniards who had got hurt was beginning to give up), when one of the black men said suddenly-

“Senor, man watch us!”

I looked up, and thee, sure enough, was a man (a savage-looking fellow enough, but evidently no Indian) watching us from the top of a ridge, a little to the left. He kept looking after us for a little while, and then disappeared as if the earth had swallowed him.

“Don’t like that,” says Seth, “that critter’s seen that we carry a heavy swag, and he’s gone to tell some of his chums, you bet! “When one has found a pumpkin-pie,
He goes and tells the others!

“I feel like campin’ in a strong place tonight, I do!” And so we did-with a deep canon (gorge) behind us going sheer down nearly a hundred feet and a thick clump of trees in our front that made cover, while beyond it the ground was smooth and level for a good eighty yards, so that no living thing could come near us without being seen and fired at.

Just as we'd lit our fire, and were beginning to cook, we saw first one man and then another, till we'd counted fifteen in all, come zigzagging in and out of the bushes, down the face of the opposite ridge. They halted just at the edge of the thicket, and took a look at the smoke of our fire rising above the trees; and then two of them laid down their rifles, and were coming across the clearing to us, looking as friendly as they could, when old Seth shoves his head through the leaves, and says in Spanish;

“Gentlemen, we’re talking over a little business of our own, and wish to be private, so you’ll oblige us by keeping your own side, and we’ll keep ours; for we have a way of shooting things that come too near us, and we should be sorry to lift you by mistake!”

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

The Great Gold Secret

Back the two beauties went, looking as silly as a ha'porth of treacle in a two-gallon jug, and Seth rubbed his hands and gave a chuckle.

"They'd got a bottle in each hand, them two," says he; they war gwine to make us slewed, and then clean out our swag; but they don't fool this child, no how. Naow, ye see, they'll wait till dark, and then go for us with a rush-that's what's the matter with them-but I guess we'll be 'not at home' when they call."

He whispered to me to cut down three or four of the longest creepers and twist them into a rope; and I, guessing what he was up to, did it with a will. In a few minutes we had a rope that would have stood anything; and then I hitched one end round a tree, and let drop the other down the ravine-the rest making a great shouting and singing meanwhile, by way of a blind. Then the old Indian (who was as nimble as a cat) slid down to the bottom, and we lowered our packs to him, one by one.

"That's all right," says Seth; "and now we'll just take it easy till dark, and then take passage by this new overland line of ourn."

But one don't take it very easy when there's a gang of blood thirty rascals, twice your strength and armed to the teeth every man Jack of 'em, sitting waiting barely eighty yards off to cut your throat, and I think I never found any time go so slowly as those two last hours before sundown.

"Naow," says Seth at last, when the darkness had fairly closed in, "I guess we'll begin to leave." But just then, as if this had been a signal, there came a flash and a bang from the other side of the clearing, and half a dozen bullets came peppering in among the trees. I felt something warm spurt over my hands, and the black man who stood beside me fell all of a heap. Like lighting I up piece and let fly, and I heard somebody give a yell that sounded as if that letter had gone to the right address, and then, for a few minutes, it was just flash, flash! Bang, bang! Like a firework—Seth and I kept 'em in play while the rest slid down one by one. And mighty ugly work it was, too, I can tell you, blazing away in the dark with nothing to aim at, and hear the bullets come rattling about you without ever seeing who sent them. But the rope was soon clear, and then Seth stuck up the dead black man against a tree, with his gun across the fork of it, that they might see the glint of the barrel, and think we were still on the watch. Then he slid down, and I after him.

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

The Great Gold Secret

The first thing we did was to take the gold out of the poor old black man's pack, and part it among us. The rest of the things we threw away, as we had thrown away our tools long before (for our only chance now was to march as light as possible) and then we set forward along the gully. For some time we could hear the rascals banging away overhead, but that died away by degrees, and there was a silence as if the world had just been created and no life come into it yet.

All that night we stumbled along the bottom of the ravine like men groping in a tunnel, sitting down every now and then to rest; but when day came we saw the rocks on each side getting lower and lower, and the great black pit spreading out broader and shallower, till at last, a little after sunrise, we came out into the forest again. Just then the other black man sat down and put his hand to his side.

"No can go farther, senior!"

I ran up to him, and blest if he hadn't got a big bullet-wound in his side from last night's scrimmage, and the brave fellow had actually dragged on all night without saying a word about it, lest he should keep us back! I sat down and took his head on my knee, and he died as quietly as a child; and we covered him and leaves and left him lying there in the bright morning sunshine, and went forward on our weary tramp again.

It was harder than ever for us now, for we had eight loads among six men, and already I could see one of the Spaniards beginning to stagger and the old Indian trembling like a leaf. Then a horrible kind of fear crept over me that we should keep dropping that way, man after man, till there was only one left; and then-but at that thought I threw up my arms and gave a sort of yell like a man starting up from a bad dream. But Seth punched me in the ribs with his elbow, and whispered.

"Sh!" don't frighten the rest." And I set my teeth and chocked it down. It may have been an hour or two after this-I was beginning to lose all count of time now-that Seth, who had got a little ahead of the rest, suddenly sang out.

"Hurrah!"

We all looked up.

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

The Great Gold Secret

“Here’s somethin’ civilized at last by hoe-cake!” says he. “Guess we’ve struck the right track without knowin’ it. Look here.”

Just in front of us was a gully about forty feet deep, through which ran a small stream, and across it lay a abridge-not one of the rope bridges you see in Lower Peru, but good solid wood-two long beams from bank to bank, with cross-pieces lashed to them, just like the sleepers on a railway. Then we all shouted at once and stepped out to cross it; but, all in a moment, the poor old Indian, who was one of the hindmost, lurched over the edge and went slap down into the water, and the gold he carried just sunk him like a stone.

Whether he’d got hurt in the fight, too, or whether he was just tired and dizzy like the rest of us, I can’t say-but down he went, and we never saw him more. So now we were cut down to five, and had lost our guide into the bargain.

“That’s a bad job,” says Seth’ “but never mind, boys-we must jest steer by the light of natur’ now. Whar thar’s a bridge like that thar oughter be a trail somewhar.”

Sure enough there was a trail, and we tried to follow it, but we soon lost it again, and tramped on all day at hap-hazard, trying to steer by the sun.

Toward evening we halted to eat, and then pushed on again hot foot; for that was the last of our provisions.

Just as the moon rose we came upon a gully with a bridge across it, and there we all stopped dead and looked at each other-a look I shall never forget. It was the same bridge that we had crossed twelve hours before!

That minute’s one of the things I never like to think of. There we were, lost in a tropical forest, our guide gone, every man of us as weak as a child, and not a morsel of food left!

“Well, boys,” says old Seth (who was our mainstay throughout), “we’re in a kind of fix, thar ain’t no denyin’ it. Naow, I calc’late this bridge ain’t bin long built by the look of it, and so, in stead o’ losin’ ourselves outter everybody’s way, I guess we’ll jest stick here till some party picks us up-it won’t by long, I reckon. That’s my idee; how does it strike yew?”

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

The Great Gold Secret

We all agreed at once; and, indeed, we were too far gone now for any more marching. So we sat down there for three days, bearing it as well as we could, and trying to shoot game between whiles. But our eyes were too dim and our hands too shaky for that; and the birds and monkeys scurried past, chattering and screaming as of in mockery. And at last we couldn't keep it off any longer, and it came.

The Spaniards died first, and no wonder, poor fellows! For though some of them as brave men as ever stepped, they haven't the pith and fiber of an Englishman. The Portuguese held out longer, for he had the heart of a lion; but at last he went too, and old Seth and I were left alone. If they're left lying here, and our hunger gets worse, we might be driven to-you know!"

So we wrapped the poor fellows in their blankets, with a heavy stone in each, and rolled them over the edge of the ravine down into the water. We buried the gold, too, and marked the spot, in case anything should turn up to save us at the last; and then we lay down again, as if we had nothing left to do but to die.

After that everything seems blurred and hazy, like an ugly dream. The trees and the rocks and the sky seemed to go round and round in a whirl, and old Seth stood up as tall as a steeple, and great black things came out of the bushes and made faces at me; and then I was sitting under the old tree in the churchyard at home, and heard my old mother's voice (who's been dead this five and twenty years) as plain as print; till all at once there were men's faces and men's voices all around us, and I felt somebody lifting my head and pouring something into my mouth, and then I fainted right off.

We had been picked up by a party coming back from the mines, and they carried us down with them to Arica; and when we got round again we went back and dug up the gold, and gave a lumping lot of it to the wives and children of the poor fellows that had died for us.

When I got back after that last week's work my hair was quite gray-as gray as you see it now. That's all the story.

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

PETER RAYMOND'S SON

Twenty years ago Peter Raymond owned a hard, stony farm eighteen miles from Hartford. One September evening about 9 o'clock, as he returned home from a neighbor's, he suddenly recollected that he had left his bridle hanging on a bar-post by his sheep barn when he turned his old white mare in the pasture that afternoon. He sprang over the wall and struck across lots, hoping to secure it before any greedy-mewed bovine should make it forever useless for bridle purposes. As he drew near the barn he thought he heard voices inside. What any one should be there for he could not conjecture. He stepped as lightly as he could on the unmoved Rowen and slipped in behind the big door, which was standing ajar, and listened.

Philip, his eldest son, was there, and Clinton Dexter, a son of the man at whose house he had been to call. The lads were about of an age-both nearly fifteen. Philip was talking when his father went up to the barn, but he finished what he was saying just as Mr. Raymond got into position to catch the words, and young Dexter commenced to reply. He said:

"Well, Phil, my father is just as inconsiderate as your father is. I don't think he remembers he ever was a boy. There is scarcely a day in the year that he does not ride out-he rides more than he used to before he was selectman, and you may be sure that he always has something on hand to be done, just as your father does. Soon as the frost is out of the ground in the spring, he tells me before he rides off that I may pick up stones or spread manure till it is time to milk and fodder; a little later in the season he tells me to hoe corn or potatoes, or weed the garden till it is time to get up the cows; and if he is at home when I take the pails to go out and milk, he always tells me to be sure and strip the cows clean, just as though he thought I should be lazy and dishonest enough to leave half the milk in their bags if he did not tell me so; and he would be just as likely to tell me that before a dozen visitors as any-makes a fellow feel mighty uncomfortable, you know.

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

PETER RAYMOND'S SON

In winter I have to chop wood most of the time that I am not at school; and I don't think my father ever feels quite satisfied if I don't chop quite as much, and hoe as much, and plow as much as a full-grown man could do in the same time. I did not know till the other day how it was with you, Phil. I don't wonder that your patience is worn out; and I assure you that I am quite as tired of living in this way as you are."

"I hesitated a good while, Clint," Phil replied, "before I decided to speak to you about it; but I made up my mind in haying time that it was the last summer that I should stay at home and help hay it and fare as I did then. Father is always ready to find fault-he generally says when he gets home, 'I don't think you've hurt yourself working to-day, 'Philip!' And sometimes he asks me if my back doesn't ache, I've chopped so much or hoed so much; and no matter if I work as hard as I can from sunrise till sundown, I never heard anything more encouraging-never get one word of praise. I feel sorry to clear out on mother's account. I love her, for I believe she loves me; but if father loves me he never shows it-never speaks a tender or loving word to me.

My mind is fully made up, Clint. I am going to run away; and I want to get off to-night. Never mind about your clothes-I've got shirts and stockings and handkerchiefs enough put up, and I'll divide with you till we can earn more. Last week I thought it over, and I thought it would grieve mother so I pretty much decided to give it up; but I got so provoked the day that father went to Hartford I determined I would go anyway. You see, here I've lived ever since I was born, within eighteen miles of Hartford, but never was there, nor in any other city. I asked father if I might go with him, last June, when he was going, and he said that I couldn't go very well then, but I should go with him the first time that he went after haying. Well, when he spoke of going, last week, I asked him if he was going to take me along, and he answered pretty crabbedly, 'No, sir; pretty time for you to think of going, when the hired man is gone!'

I told him that I would get you to come and do the chores, and that you would be as faithful in doing them as I would be; but he wouldn't hear a word about it.

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

PETER RAYMOND'S SON

I didn't feel light hearted after he was gone, but I tried to brave it out the best I could; and I worked hard all day. That afternoon was a dark, cloudy afternoon; and I got up the cows and milked them a little earlier than I supposed that I did; but I don't think the sun was five minutes high when I got the chores done. I took the newspaper and sat down in the floor, so as to be on hand to take care of the horse when father came; and I hadn't read a quarter of a column, when he drove up. Well, as true as I live and breathe, after his promising me that I should go to Hartford with him the first time that he went after haying and then breaking his word, leaving me to feel disappointed and to work hard all day, the first thing he said to me when he drove up was 'What are you sitting there a reading for? – why aren't you doing your chores? It galled, I tell you, but I replied as calmly as I could that the chores were all done, and he said; "Oh, oh, that is it, is it? You do the chores the middle of the afternoon when I am gone, and then sit down and read, do you? It was so confounded cutting, if he had stuck a knife into me he wouldn't have hurt me any worse. I vowed then that I would see Hartford on my birthday, and I shall be much mistaken if I am not there tomorrow morning; and if my father sees me again for one year he'll see more'n I think he will. I will be here at the barn at just midnight. My bundle of clothes is here now in the oat bin. Don't fail to be on time, Clint. We must get to Hartford by sunrise. I want to get a little glimpse fo the city before the steamboat goes out. I don't know what the fare is to New York. I doubt if we have money enough to take us there. If we haven't we can stop at some of the landing places on the way."

What a variety of feelings? Peter Raymond had in the fifteen minutes he stood behind the barn door and listened. At first he was so utterly surprised he could hardly believe his own ears; but as he took it all in-as he comprehended what his son contemplated doing, he was in high dudgeon; he unconsciously closed his teeth very firmly and clenched his right fist tightly. He could hardly refrain from pouncing upon his then and there and giving him a sound drubbing, but he decided that it would be wise to hear the boys' talk out, and learn all their plans, and then confront them. As Philip talked on, Raymnd's teeth were less firmly closed, and when Philip said in a half sad tone, "I doubt if my father loves me at all," a dozen different feelings strove for the mastery.

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

PETER RAYMOND'S SON

"Don't love him?" He repeated to himself, "the ungrateful rascal! Haven't I been scrubbing along savingly as possible, and privately putting little sums into the savings bank so that I could send him away in a year or two, and give him a better chance for an education than I ever had? Haven't I often said to my friends that he was one of the most faithful, trusty boys in the world, and that I could leave home at any time, day or night, and never worry about things as long as he was there to take care? If he does doubt my love, up to this time I have loved him and have been proud of him. I haven't been very demonstrative about it, to be sure. I never thought it wise to pet and praise children. Perhaps I have been a little too unsocial and straight-laced with him. Maybe I'd better not let them know that I've heard this talk about their running away; but I shall, of course, do something to prevent their going. I'll go up to the house and think over what course to take."

Peter Raymond crept away from the barn as though he were a sneak-thief, and then hurried home as fast as he could, not once thinking of his bridle. He had hardly got seated in his usual place in the big arm-chair before Philip came in. Philip expected his father would say, gruffly; "It is high time that you were in bed," And so he was taken by surprise when his father said, gently:

"Won't you hand me the almanac before you sit down, Philip?" Philip's mother raised her eyes from her sewing, and glanced at her husband as though she wondered what had called forth such unusual gentleness. Raymond opened the almanac at September, and, after glancing down the page, he turned to his wife and asked; "Is today the third or fourth Tuesday of the month?"

"The fourth," she replied. "Tomorrow is the last day of the month."

"Are you quite sure about it?" He queried. "If you are correct, I am a week behind hand in my reckoning. I've had so many things crowded upon me lately, I've hardly known which way to turn first."

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

PETER RAYMOND'S SON

I promised Mr. Skidmore that I would take that two-year-old heifer away that I bought of him before the first of October. She must be got home tomorrow."

Philip got up to go to bed. Raymond said;

"Don't hurry, Philip; I'm thinking how to get that heifer home. I believe I will take you down there early in the morning, and leave you to drive her up. It is nine miles there, but you can come back leisurely and feed alongside the road. You'd like it as well as to stay at home and work, wouldn't you Philip?"

"Yes, sir."

Philip replied in an absent-minded way. He was in a quandary. Perhaps he had better stay at home a little longer and see if things didn't seem more agreeable to him. Maybe he had judged his father a little too harshly-Clinton Dexter could come to the barn at midnight to meet him, and-

Philip was arrested in his cogitations by his father saying:

"I have so many cares, so many things to think of, that I can hardly keep track of my children's ages. I believe, Philip your birthday comes the thirtieth of September, doesn't it?"

"Yes, sir."

"And so you will be fifteen years old tomorrow. Well, well, it does beat all how time flies. Fifteen years? It doesn't seem more than half that time since you were a baby. Let me see. I believe I promised to let you go to Hartford this fall, didn't I? We shall be half way there when we get to Skid-more's, and, seeing tomorrow is your birthday, perhaps we had better keep on. I don't know as we have any better time to leave. We can take an early start-have breakfast at half-past five, and get off by six, and by nine, if we have good luck, we shall be there. We can stay there till three o'clock in the afternoon, and you wouldn't be late home. It will be good light tomorrow evening there is a good moon now. Well, you may as well go to bed and get all the sleep you can. I shall call you at four o'clock."

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

PETER RAYMOND'S SON

Philip started the second time to go, but just as he got his hand on the latch his father said; "Wait a minute, Philip. If you had someone to keep you company from Skidmore's and help you to drive the heifer, I wouldn't mind staying tell nearly night before we left the city. Perhaps Clinton Dexter would be willing to walk up from there with you and help drive her, if he could go with us to Hartford and spend the day. If you think that he would, and you would like to have him go, you may run over to Mr. Dexter's and tell him that if it is convenient for him to spare Clinton I would like to have him go to Hartford with us tomorrow, and walk home from Skidmore's with you in the evening. And be sure and tell Clinton, if his father consents to his going, that we will call for him as early as six o'clock."

Philip said; "Yes, sir," and took up his hat and went into the hall; but before he got to the outside door his father called out;

"One thing more, Philip. I left my bridle hanging on a bar-post down by the sheep barn this afternoon. If you'll come back across lots and bring it up, it'll save going for it in the morning. I intended getting it myself when I came home from Mr. Dexter's, but it slipped my mind."

"Lucy thing it did," Philip said to himself as he stepped out of the door, "If he had come round that way home I guess he wouldn't be in quite so gently a mood to-night. He would have given me 'Hail Columbia' right and left; and Clint would have fared worse than I, for when his father's back is up he's as savage as a tiger. Strange what has come over father to-night! I noticed that mother was surprised to see him so much more social and gentle than common."

On his way over to Mr. Dexter's Philip had as great a variety of feelings and as great a conflict with them as his father had while standing behind the barn door; but before he got there the summing up was that he was a ungrateful scamp, and that his father was all right; only he had so many cares and anxieties that it sometimes made him a little stern and crabbed.

Mr. Dexter was always ready to oblige his neighbor Raymond, and he cheerfully gave his consent to Clinton's going. Clinton did not know what to make of this sudden turnoff affairs. As he went with Philip to the door, he whispered;

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

PETER RAYMOND'S SON

"What's up, Phil?" what has happened? Has your father found out anything?

"Not a thing-not a thing," Philip hurriedly whispered back. "You don't suppose, Clint, he'd be taking us to Hartford, tomorrow, if he had. It's all right but it's the strangest thing that ever happened – I'll tell you all about it tomorrow – can't stay long enough now."

"Mr. Raymond took up a newspaper and bowed his head over it as soon as his son started for Mr. Dexter's; but if his wife had observed him closely she would have seen that he did but very little reading, and that there was a troubled expression on his countenance. He did not raise his eyes from the paper when he heard returning footsteps, but he listened very intently, and he knew that Philip stole softly and hurriedly to the back end of the hall and opened the chamber door before he came over to the sitting room. A look of relief came into his face and he straightened up as if a great burden had been lifted from him. He had no doubt but that the bundle of clothing had been brought up from the oat-bin and left on the chamber stairs till Philip should go to bed. That is what he hoped his boy would do when he asked him to come around by the barn and get the halter. He had no further fear that he would attempt to give him the slip that night.

Mr. Raymond and Philip rode up to Mr. Dexter's door for Clinton, the next morning, just as the sun was peeping over the hills. It was as delightful a September morning as they could desire. As soon as they were on the road, Mr. Raymond said;

"Now, boys, you must keep your eyes open-see all there is to be seen, and get all the enjoyment out of going that you can. We don't have holidays very often, and we must make the most of them. Philip and I have worked pretty hard lately, and I guess, Clinton, that you have. I believe a play-day will do us all good. I made up my mind this morning, to leave all my cares and business behind me for once; so you need have no fears if you talk to each other all you please, and ask me as many questions as you wis

h, that it will disturb me at all."

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

PETER RAYMOND'S SON

Mr. Raymond spared no pains to have the boys enjoy their first trip to Hartford. He called their attention to everything that he thought would interest them on the way. He told them who owned such and such a farm when he was a boy; what the land was worth an acre then, and what was its market value now; who built this house and that; and he pointed out where General---was born, and where Hon.---lived till he went to college. He was no less pains taking when got to the city. He took them past Trinity College, the State House, the High School; he pointed out the different churches, and told them who preached in them; he went with them to the Athenaeum and spent an hour with them there.

Sometimes Philip looked at his father in dumb bewilderment and wondered if they were really in Hartford or if it were all a dream. How social and interesting his father was! He felt as if he never was acquainted with him before. What a delightful time he would have had if he had not been planning to do so mean a thing. If his father knew it, how he would despise him; he looked at him so earnestly, sometimes he was afraid that he saw guilt tinge his countenance. If he could only get up the courage he would confess the whole to his father and implore his forgiveness.

Thus the day wore away, and Philip was not sorry when it was time to start for home. After Mr. Raymond left the lads to follow on with the heifer, they talked over the event of the past twenty-four hours together, and they were both very decidedly of the opinion that they had had a very narrow and providential escape from committing a very disgraceful act; and they both agreed, after a little discussion on that point, that they would never divulge to a human being that they had ever dreamed of running away.

It was about half-past nine when Philip drove the heifer into his father's barnyard. After he had his supper his father asked him to step out the shed and get the package that was under the wagon seat. When he brought it Mr. Raymond opened it and took from it "Webster's Unabridged Dictionary," and sat down to his desk and wrote on the fly leaf.

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

PETER RAYMOND'S SON

"Presented to Philip C. Raymond, on his fifteenth birthday, by his affectionate father, Peter Raymond." Then without closing the book, he passed it to Philip.

Philip could bear no more. The tears that had come to his eyes twenty times during the day, and as many times had been forced back, now overflowed his eyelids and ran down his checks. He stammered:

"You are too kind to me, father. I do not deserve this."

"Don't deserve it, Philip!" exclaimed Mr. Raymond, with much apparent surprise. "I think you'd better leave that to my judgment. I should like to know what boy does deserve kindness from his father, if you don't? If I had a dozen sons I could not ask them to be more faithful and industrious than you have been. There, there! Don't shed any tears over it-you're tired-better go to bed as soon as you can, so as to feel-fresh in the morning. If it's a good day tomorrow we must secure that rowen."

"Thank you, father," Philip said, with a quivering voice, and went immediately up stairs. If he had been a little less overcome himself he would have noticed that his father's voice was slightly shaky, and if he had looked back as he passed out of the door he would have seen his father brush a tear or two from his own eyes.

Henceforth there was no lack of confidence, sympathy and affection between Mr. Raymond and Philip; and by reason of a private interview that Mr. Raymond had with Clinton Dexter's father, Clinton's home life was much more agreeable than heretofore.

Philip has always looked back to his fifteenth birthday as a remarkable epoch in his life; and he never ceased-until his aged father recently visited him and heard him speak rather harshly to his own little son-to marvel this wonderful change that came over his father, himself, or both, at that time. Then his father took him aside and told him the whole story, and cautioned him against growing into the habit of speaking that way to his children.

"Always remember, Philip," he said, "that crustiness and harshness are no more agreeable to child's feelings than they are to a grown person's; and that they are more likely to lead any one out of the right path than into it; and that they never will forget love."

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

MARK DILLON'S BOLD GAME

"I'm getting into terribly bad habits, Dora. Breakfast at half-past nine! Just fancy my indulging in such hours three years ago, darling, before the world made up its mind that I painted respectable pictures, and chose to pay me accordingly."

Young Melville Austin rose from the daintly-spread breakfast table at which he and his wife were sitting.

"I hope you are going to remain at home this morning," Dora said, in a soft, coaxing tone, that well become her petite figure and blonde-haired, girlish beauty. "Do you know, Austin, that you have not painted an atom of canvas this week? There's your new picture of Anthony and Cleopatra—".

"Yes, my love," the young artist interrupted, "I plead guilty to have shamefully neglected Anthony and Cleopatra; but this morning's engagement will not occupy much time and I shall be home in an hour, I trust, ready to begin work. In the meanwhile Dora if that model of whom I was speaking should make her appearance, just ask her to wait in the studio."

"I am anxious to see this divinity, Melville. Is she so very beautiful?"

"After a certain, type, yes." The husband answered, carelessly. Then, while his handsome face lit up with a sudden brightness, he added, in lower tones, "You know there is but one woman in the world, Dora, whose beauty can thoroughly satisfy me." For some time after her husband's departure that morning, Dora Austin remained buried in what, judging from the happy smile that played about her mouth, and danced in the blue depths of her tender eyes, must have been thoroughly agreeable thoughts.

"Was ever woman so blessed?" she murmured presently, as if asking the question of her own heart. "Three years tomorrow since we were married, and still the same devoted love from dear Melville. How foolish I was ever to dream that his worldly success would cool the ardor of that love! Nothing can ever change him-nothing!"

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

MARK DILLON'S BOLD GAME

"The young woman has called ma'am, and is now waiting outside. Shall I show her into Mr. Austin's studio?" Dora's meditation had been abruptly broken by the voice of the stately butler who stood at her elbow.

"Oh! You mean Mr. Austin's model?" she said a little confusedly. "Yes, James, I believe your master wishes her to wait in the studio till his return. By the way, James, you may manage to let her pass through this room. I wish to see her."

The man bowed, and departed to execute Mr. Austin's order, returning presently, followed by a poorly-clad woman, of whose face Dora merely caught a momentary glimpse as she hurried toward the adjoining studio.

"How beautiful!" the young wife murmured; "what a face for Cleopatra! She seemed anxious to escape my notice, poor woman! I wonder if she is ashamed of her vocation? You told her James, did you not?"-addressing the butler, who returned at this moment-"that Mr. Austin would return very shortly?"

"Yes ma'ma."

James was not absent from the breakfast room five minutes before he again made his appearance there. A rather shabby man desired to see Mrs. Austin. Should he admit him?

The ceremonious butler had scarcely finished speaking when a gruff voice sounded from the entrance of the room.

A rough-looking, heavily-bearded man was standing on the threshold, directly opposite to Dora, who was seated near one of the windows.

"You may go, my good fellow," the man said. "I've particular business with Mrs. Austin."
"Yes-James-you-may-go."

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

MARK DILLON'S BOLD GAME

The words were gasped forth somehow from Dora's white lips. If the servant observed the agitation which had suddenly overpowered his mistress, he was too well trained to manifest the least surprise, and quietly withdrew from the room, closing the door after him.

"Oh, God, can this be true?"

The words seemed wrung from the very depth of Melville Austin's agonized soul. Starting first at his wife, and then at the moody, crestfallen man beside her, his face expressed the keenest intensity of mental suffering. And now the icy calmness with which Dora had spoken melted to a passion of sobs.

Stealing toward her husband's side, she murmured, brokenly; "Before we part, Melville, say that you forgive me for being the cause of so much future wretchedness-for having brought to your noble heart a sorrow it has so little deserved."

"Part Dora? We must not-we shall not part!" He had drawn her to him with a wild impulsive movement. At the same instant the door of the studio was suddenly unclosed, and woman's voice cried out in clear, ringing tones, "Mark Dillon lays, Mrs. Austin, when he dares to call himself your husband! I-wronged, deserted, outraged as I have been, am none the less his lawfully-wedded wife, married to him seven years ago in Manchester. Let him deny it if he dares. You need not scowl and glare at me," the woman went on, hotly; "what I speak is the truth, and I do not fear to utter it."

A low cry of rage escaped Dillon's lips, as he sprang toward the woman who had spoken. With a blow of iron Melville Austin's hand hurled him backward. For a moment the villain stared at his wife's protector with a tigerish fierceness in his dark, dangerous eyes, and then, like the coward he really was, slunk from the apartment.

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MARK DILLON'S BOLD GAME

From the house, too, never entering it again. An hour afterward his wife, Ellen Dillon, followed him, against the earnest entreaty of Melville and Dora.

"He will beat me when I return to him, perhaps," she said, with a mournful smile on her exquisite face, "but I must go, nevertheless. It seems like a curse, sometimes, that in spite of his brutality and wickedness, I cannot hate Mark. But whenever I think of our child at home, I believe that this weakness is all for the best. I can guard him against imitating his father; and who knows what a son's influence may do in future years?"

Her sad words left Dora and Melville grave and thoughtful for a long time after her departure.

"That woman loves him, Melville," the wife murmured, at length, in slow, musing tones-" loves him in spite of his villainous treatment. What a marvelous mystery love is!"

"Marvelous, indeed, Dora!"

"Did you really mean, Melville, that nothing should part us-not even the knowledge of being another's wife-when you spoke passionately just before Ellen Dillon entered from the studio?"

Her soft hand had stolen into his, her tearful eyes were fixed upon his own, with eager questioning their blue depths. Melville Austin's answer was spoken with unhesitating fondness; "I meant that, if all the world had striven to separate us, Dora. I should still have struggled to regain you. Until to-day I never have known the strength and power of my love."

His arms were clasped about her now, and she was sobbing forth her thankfulness upon his faithful breast.

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

A TRANSACTION IN STOCKS

“Well,” drawled Silas in his weak, uncertain way, “may be I don’t know beans-folks say I don’t, an’ more’n likely they know; but then ‘taint my fault if I don’t I was born that way, and I don’t see as how I kin help it.”

Mr. Silas Bronson was standing on his portico, or what passed for one, when he uttered the above. The house to which the portico belonged was a tottering, tumble-down affair, very much awry, and looking not unlike a man intoxicated who is uncertain about his standing in the world. The surroundings were in keeping with the house. The fences seemed to possess the same helplessness, and straggled about without regard to division lines, while the garden-patch was laid out with the mathematical precision of chaos.

“No, ‘taint my fault,” continued Silas; “I did the best I knew how with the money.”

“No ye didn’t,” answered Mrs. Bronson, sharply, from within the house. Mrs. Bronson, a care-worn, sharp-featured woman, seemed to be greatly disturbed, and her fingers worked nervously as she gathered up the few dinner dishes. “Ye did know better. Ye had sense enough to know your family were out of clothes, the house and place needed fixin’ up, and ye kept promisin’ ye’d get all these things when ye got some money. Ye didn’t get the money, an dye never would have got it if Providence, as it were, hadn’t a just chucked it into your face by that uncle dyin’ off there in California and leavin’ ye a thousand dollars. And then, like a born idiot, you must needs give it all to Judge Fay to sink in that oil well of his’n where ye’ll never hear on’t again.”

“Well, I did as well as I could,” again pleaded Silas.

“Oh course ye did well!” emphasized Mrs. Bronson with an unconscious pun. “That old oil well will keep the money safe enough, I recon; ye’ll never get it back.”

Then Mrs. Bronson said no more, and Silas was quite willing to keep silent on a disagreeable subject. A well-meaning but shiftless man was Mr. Bronson, not inclined to work, with little knowledge of business, and no practical sense to direct what knowledge he had.

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

A TRANSACTION IN STOCKS

On Mrs. Bronson fell the real burden, and had it not been for her sagacity and executive ability poor Silas would have fared badly. In spite of her efforts, however, the fortunes of the family were getting at a low ebb, and her complaints of her husband's amiable inability were becoming frequent-more frequent than Silas liked.

"Don't be always a frettin', Maria," he said one day. "Luck's agin us, I allow, but it'll change pooty soon."

"Not unless ye work for 't," answered Maria, not relishing such sercne resignation. "They do say that Providence takes care of lazy people and feels, but I do not set no great store on't."

But "luck" did change after a while. An uncle of Mr. Bronson died conveniently off in California, and among other bequests left one thousand dollars to his nephew. Then Mrs. Bronson's face brightened. Visions of a home fixed up, of comfortable clothing for herself and family began to flit before her eyes. They proved to be only visions after all. When the letter came containing the long looked for check Silas went up to the village bank to get the money, and there he fell in with a certain Judge Fay. That smooth, glib-tongued speculator met Silas just as he was coming out of the bank and immediately button-holed him.

"Halloo, Bronson How do you do? Glad to meet you; just the man I wanted to see."

"Pooty well, thank ye," answered Silas smiling weakly. He felt considerable awe of the Judge, and began to wonder what possible business that great man could have with him. The Judge did not seem to notice his embarrassment; he locked arms with Silas, and began talking in a very familiar and confidential manner as they walked along.

"How are your family, Bronson? By the way, those are mighty smart children of yours-mighty smart. Wish mine were equally so. My children frequently speak of that little boy of yours; they attend the same school."

"I haven't any boys; they're all girls; it's Jennie maybe ye mean," mildly suggested Silas.

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"Oh-yes! Jennie; so it is. Strange I should forget the name when I have heard it so often," answered the Judge, flushing a little. And then as they came to a small building on a corner he added, "Here's my office, Bronson. Come in a little while, I want to see you."

Still wondering Silas obeyed. If the Judge had asked him to take off his boots it is probable he would have done so. He entered the office as requested, and sat down in an awkward way by the stove, and stretched out his hands toward it as if he were cold. To be sure it was a warm day, and there was no fire in the stove; but then Silas didn't know what else to do, so he did that while he awaited the Judge's pleasure.

"Quite a cosey little office I have here, haven't I?" queried the latter gentleman, pleasantly. "Take a cigar Bronson," producing a case. "Perhaps they are not as good as you are accustomed to, but they are imported, and I think them very fine."

Silas meekly accepted a cigar, lighted it, and then said, "They are very nice" – applying the remark to both office and cigar.

For a few minutes the Judge puffed away in silence.

"That was a comfortable little wind-fall you had-your uncle dying off there in California and leaving you that money," he said at last.

"Yes," answered Silas, beginning to feel complacent. "Toler'ble nice little pile on't-a thousand dollars. Got it this morning."

"To be sure it is not a very large sum for a man of your means," continued the Judge; but it is nice to get such thing, and it will do to get a suit of clothes and a few knick-knacks, maybe. And that makes me think, Bronson-where is it you get your clothes? My wife often says: "Now, Judge Fay, if you only had the taste of Mr. Bronson about dress!" But then, bless me! I haven't or I would look as tasteful on Sunday as you do." The Judge was careful to say "Sunday," for if he had included week-days it would have been more than even Silas could swallow.

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

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"Jerry Markle, he made my last suit," answered Silas, surprised and pleased that his dress should thus attract admiration, and from so distinguished a source, too.

The Judge passed another few minutes in meditative smoking.

"The fact is, Bronson, " he resumed, taking the cigar from his mouth, "the fact is I wanted to see you about a little matter that is-well, I may say of mutual advantage. You see, I was over in Pennsylvania last week, and through the oil regions. While there I bought a tract, five acres, right near the best producing well. Of course I could have made a good thing by selling it again, but I concluded not to be selfish but to come home and form a stock company of a few of our influential men, like your-self and others."

"I am very much obleeged to ye, Judge," began Silas; "but then-I-I-"

"Please hear me through," interrupted the Judge, with a soft, deprecating wave of the hand; "I am not done yet. Now, there is lots of money in this thing if it is property managed, and as I didn't wish to connect with Tom, Dick, and Harry, I have mentioned the matter to but few of our best men. Dr. Ross, Col. Clark and Squire Hardy have all taken stock, and our minister, the Rev. Mr. Norris, expects to invest. The stock is only a trifle-five hundred dollars a share."

"Yes-five hundred dollars-uncommon cheap, I should say," stammered Silas. "But then, ye see, I hain't got the money-that is, to spare, jest now. " I'm sort of poor, like."

"Poor!" echoed the Judge; " a man of your means talking about poverty. What is a paltry five hundred to you!" The speaker snapped his finger as if the sun mentioned were insignificant beyond measure. "Why, man, I'll warrant you have more than that with you now!"

"I know; but then I thought I'd better-" began Silas; but the Judge broke in with apparent surprise.

"Oh, that's it! You have been already considering the matter! I might have known Col. Clark would speak to you about it.

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A TRANSACTION IN STOCKS

When I told him of my proposed company last week he asked if you were in it, and he said, "If Bronson takes hold I will, because whatever Bronson takes hold of issuer to succeed." Those were his very words; and so he spoke to you himself? Well, I am glad on the whole he did, and that you are going in with us. You can't have more than four shares, Bronson!" – with a playful tap on the back – "and you needn't pay more than half down. That will be enough to carry the thing through, I think."

What could poor Silas say to all this? With a nature weak and yielding, he was surprised and flattered to learn of his own prominence in the community, and that such men as the Judge, Col. Clark, and others should give heed to his views on any subject was, to say the least, extremely complimentary. In fact Silas began to think his self-estimate had been placed altogether too low in times past, and he presently smoked and talked himself into a very pleasing state of complacency indeed.

The Judge's tongue was not idle the meanwhile; he piled on the "soft-solider" to a remarkable thickness, and after a time, somehow – Silas didn't exactly know how – the Judge took possession of the one thousand dollars, and Silas found himself the owner of four beautiful lithographed certificates of stock, calling for five hundred dollars each.

They looked nice, and Silas placed them in his pocket fully convinced that he and Judge Fay, Col. Clark and the others were very important men and shrewd financiers withal. Then the Judge mildly intimated he had business to attend to, and Silas took his departure. When outside, and on his way home, Silas, like the prodigal son, "came to himself," and he began to think the investment not so good a one after all. He tried to recall the arguments and brilliant promises of the Judge, but some way he couldn't remember them, and the more he tried the more he forgot, while facing him was a very important question:

What would Maria say?

Yes, there was the rub! Maria had a great deal to say when she heard of it, as her words, at the first of this story, do in part testify. Her words could not bring back the money, and with heavy heart the poor woman placed the stock certificates in a bureau drawer, hoping against hope that something might come from them after all.

Vain delusion! Days and weeks passed by and the "Great Union Petroleum Oil Company" paid no dividends to its stockholders – at least, Silas didn't receive any.

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