

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

FRIDAY JULY 2, 1875

How I Became A Farmer

“All aboard!” I shouted, swinging my lantern above my head. I suddenly became aware of my mistake. I had struck the next man in front of me on the nose, and, strange as it may seem, he was without doubt dreaming the same thing as I was, thinking he a conductor also, for he turned toward me and said something. I could not tell whether it was “all aboard” or not; anyhow, he swung his lantern in such a way that it struck my head, and the lantern was smashed to atoms.

“What’s up?” I said. “Are we off the track?” He made some remark about uncoupling me, but as I was on hand to debate, I turned and followed the train, while my brother conductor went back to the station to procure another lantern and return on the next train. I will not relate what transpired while at the barn, but let the reader guess we did something by saying that after two hours’ work we returned to breakfast, which consisted chiefly of cold turnips and fat salt pork, with nothing to drink but black coffee without milk or sugar. When breakfast was over we again repaired to the barn-this time to shear sheep. They were all huddled together in a small pen near the barn, where they had been put the night previous. The boss and I got into the pen for the purpose of catching and handing out to the two men, who were to carry them to the barn.

On getting in, I was cautioned to look out for the old ram. I was not afraid. I determined not to catch the old ram, and thus remain unhurt. But, alas! For human nature, how sadly was I deceived? For a wonder, my first attempt to catch a sickly looking lamb was a success. I picked him up in triumph and started to where the man was waiting, but on the way my burden became restive. I put it down in the center of the pen, and stooped fondly over it to rest myself. I was thus standing over the helpless sheep, when a voice called out. “Look out for the ram!” The next thing I knew I was flying through the air over the fence. I struck the ground, face downward, of course. Presently I arose, and finding no bones broken, struck out into the open country beyond. The farmer laughed, the hired men ditto, the sheep bleated, the dogs barked, and I, well never mind that.

Before I was out of hearing the farmer made some remark about paying for my meals and lodging; but without heeding his plaintive appeal, I rushed bravely on, never to look on a Granger again.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(Continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

Who Murdered Him

Two gentlemen sat sipping their wine after dinner, and talking in the leisurely, disconnected way which, together with their attitudes, showed that they both were taking mental as well as bodily rest after the labors of the day. They were representatives of two of the learned professions, each a man of mark in his calling, the one tall, strongly-built, with a massive head and a thoughtful and benevolent aspect; the other much smaller, wiry, agile, with keen, marked features-a man evidently profound as well as astute, and though not handsome, one calculated to arrest attention, wherever encountered.

The first was a distinguished physician, the other an equally distinguished lawyer. The physician's investigation and testimony as an expert had been procured in a case just closed, in which his legal friend was the prosecuting attorney. The labors of both had been arduous, and neither was averse to the rest and quietude which the close of the trial made possible to them. They were, and had long been, warm personal friends, and were now dining together at the lawyer's rooms, and indulging in the easy converse, broken by long silences, which their familiar friendliness warranted.

The case had been decided against the prosecution, the jury, after not more than an hour's absence, bringing in a verdict of not guilty, which had been received with cheers and other expressions of approbation by the closely crowded audience which had listened to the closing scenes of the trial, and many of the persons composing which had attended day after day through its entire continuance.

"I did not look to see you so little annoyed by the result of this trial" said the physician to this friend. "You seemed flushed and weary, but there was an expression of relief upon your features, if one may judge from the few signs betrayed by a countenance so closely guarded when the verdict was announced."

"You judged rightly, doctor," was the answer. "I might tell you, as a friend, that I was relieved. Facts had come to my knowledge, in the course of the investigation, which made me believe the accused innocent. I was morally certain of it, though the evidence was strong against him, and I trembled lest the jury should bring in a verdict of guilty, as they might very well have done, had they alone considered the facts sworn to, and left out of account the man's previous good character, and the slight provocation, distant in time and apparently forgotten, which only could be adduced as a motive. Of course, you will not mention this. The man is acquitted, and I trust the whole affair will soon be forgotten save by the actors in it."

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

Who Murdered Him

"I certainly shall not mention it, since you desire me not," said the doctor; "but your statement accounts to me for what I have been looking at as a lack of your usual spirit in concluding the prosecution. I, myself, had not doubt of the man's guilt until the very last; but I had no means of knowing the circumstances which have changed your opinion."

"Neither had others," replied the lawyer, "who have accused me with much bitterness, of not seeking with sufficient zeal the ends of justice. It is sometimes difficult, in my profession, to reconcile conscience and a desire for popular approval. But I see you are laughing at my unwonted strain," he continued. "Perhaps it strikes you as out of character from the lips of a public prosecutor, and it may be. I will stop moralizing, and, if you are disposed to listen, tell you a story, an incident of my profession, as it really occurred, and which is quite in point."

"Bravo!" cried the doctor, rousing up from a half doze at his proposition. "Push that bottle nearer- there, that will do- this is capital. Heidsick, can you get me some of the same? Ah! Now give me a cigar, and I'm ready."

"You have not forgotten, I suppose," began the lawyer, "the case of Roberts, who, in the year 186-, was tried for murder on circumstantial evidence, of the strongest character, and acquitted too? You doctors never take much interest in such matters, I know, unless you have a hand in them, and fat fees for medical examinations and testimony. Well the case was this:

"A man named Hamilton, a boarder in a house in Perry street, was found dead in his room one morning. There were several wounds upon his person, some of which he might have inflicted upon himself. But there were two, at least, which it was impossible could have been made by a weapon held in his own hand, as their situation and direction made evident.

"At first it had been supposed that he had committed suicide, as he was a man of intemperate habits, addicted to gaming and low company, and had of late been much depressed in consequence of losing his business situation, and by a long run of ill luck. He was a morose, sullen man and had no friend among his fellow boarders, who were all of a class superior in morals, if not in position, to himself. Still, he had never quarrelled with anyone in the house up to the night of his death, nor did it at first appear, as far as its inmates were concerned that he had given any one there provocation for the crime.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

Who Murdered Him

“Nevertheless, in the course of the investigation by the coroner, it was elicited that Hamilton had on one or two occasions, when considerably intoxicated, addressed provoking and insulting remarks to a fellow boarder, named Roberts, who occupied the room adjoining his. And Roberts had been heard to complain that Hamilton annoyed him almost beyond endurance by the noise he made on coming in late of nights, that he had threatened to leave the house if Hamilton was allowed to continue, and that, finding his complaints to the land-lord, who was a relative of the deceased, produced no effect, he had been heard to declare that he would himself find a way of quieting his disagreeable neighbor.

“Now all this amounted to nothing more than the impatient ebullitions of a nervous, excitable man, who had been subjected to a long course of annoyance from a drunken fellow inmate. But it served to point out one individual, whose relations with the dead man had been unfriendly beyond those of others with whom he was associated in his own home.

“And when it was further discovered that Hamilton, on his return home at a late hour on the night of the murder, knocked at Roberts’ door, and demanded matches for the purpose of procuring a light, arousing him from his sleep, and that pretty high words had followed on Roberts refusing the accommodation, suspicion fixed firmly upon this man. And this was changed to certainty when another boarder testified that during the quarrel Roberts had threatened Hamilton’s life, and had risen from his, bed and by main force thrust his persecutor into his own room, where he had been heard to fall heavily upon the floor. Another boarder who occupied a room beneath Hamilton had heard a trampling over head at a still later hour, but none of these things, though now serving to fix suspicion on Roberts, had been treated at the time as other than matters of ordinary occurrence.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

Who Murdered Him

“Roberts’ statement was that Hamilton was very drunk when he came home. That when pushed into his own room he fell violently upon the floor, and that, leaving him there, he returned to his own room, retired again to rest, and presently fell asleep. That, at the expiration of perhaps an hour, or it might have been even less, he had been again awakened by a sound of struggling in Hamilton’s room, and some smothered ejaculation, but supposing that the man had roused from his stupor and was preparing for bed, he had not heeded the sounds, which soon ceased, when he fell asleep again.

“In the face of this was the fact that the man was dead, with the evidence of a severe struggle. And it was argued that one so near as Roberts, and hearing these sounds, could not have failed to detect in them something more than the aimless trampling of a drunkard seeking his couch. The assassin, whoever he might be, had left no evidence of his presence in the room. Nor was there any apparent means of exit. Suspicion fell heavier upon Roberts. He was arrested, and search made in his room and among his effects. Nothing was found there tending to criminate him, except several large smears of blood upon a dressing-gown, which he acknowledged he had hastily thrown on when he rose to put Hamilton away from his door. But between his own door and Hamilton’s, upon the matting of the passage, blood was also found, and a distinct spot upon the threshold of his own room.

“This was accounted for by Roberts, who said he had slightly lacerated a finger upon a nail in his struggle with Hamilton, and that before lying down he had wrapped a pocket handkerchief about it, which finding saturated with blood in the morning, he had thrust into the stove. The wound upon his finger still appeared, but was so slight that his story gained no credence, particularly as popular excitement already ran high.

And when, during the afternoon that followed this arrest, a poniard was found in his desk in his office, which precisely fitted the peculiar incised wounds upon Hamilton’s person, there were few persons who still had hardihood enough to stem the current of popular opinion and declare their belief of his innocence.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

Who Murdered Him

“To pass over all preliminary steps, in order that my story may not be too long, I will come to the time when the indictment had been found, and Roberts was about to be arraigned for trial for the murder of Hamilton. The evidence, of course, was entirely circumstantial, but I felt assured that Roberts was the guilty man, and was going on without the slightest hesitation or doubt in the necessary preparation for the part I was to take in his trial. There had been an attempt to indict him only for manslaughter, but the provocation was so slight in comparison with the crime, and the easy remedy of removal from the annoyance so obviously in his power, that these considerations, taken in connection with the supposed fact of his having arisen from his bed after an hour or more of reflection, and having deliberately proceeded to his neighbor’s room to commit the deed upon an unguarded and unsuspecting man, rendered doubly defenseless by his probable state of inebriation, determined the grand jury to present a bill that, in accusing him of murder, met the entire approval of the public. I confess that the whole matter was so absolutely certain to my mind, that the trial assumed the light of a necessary formality only, and seemed hardly needed as a justification for the penalties of the law.

“But upon the very eve of the trial a circumstance occurred which, so far as I was concerned, altered the whole aspect of affairs. I was sitting alone in my private room, making my last preparations for the morrow’s trial, when a person was announced as desiring to see me on urgent professional business. Though much annoyed at the interruption, I gave orders that he should be admitted, and looking up a moment later I saw, standing just within the circle of light shed by my lamp, a tall, pallid man, whose eyes, full of the fires of suppressed excitement were fixed upon my face. I was a little startled-he had come in so silently-but I recovered myself, and bade him be seated. As he sat down I added that I was very busy, and begged him to make his communication as short as possible.

“You were preparing for the Roberts case,’ said my visitor, after a few preliminaries. I assented, and he went on to say: “It is about that very matter I have come. And if you can first assure me that my communication shall be held as privileged by one mutual relation of counsel and client, I shall perhaps be able to throw some light upon this mysterious subject.”

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(Continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTYT

BY H.E. SMITH

Who Murdered Him

“Thinking that he had sought me, as prosecutor, to add some testimony which would fix the guilt more strongly upon Roberts, I assented. But judge of my surprise-my utter bewilderment-when he proceeded to assure me that he was not only aware of the complete innocence of Roberts, but that he himself, had been present during the altercation between Roberts and Hamilton, which preceded the death of the latter by not more than an hour. In fact that he was concealed in Hamilton’s room, his purpose being to regain from him a large sum which he had that evening lost to him at play.

“As my story has already occupied more time than I intended, I will, in a few words, state all that this man told me. He had spent the evening at a gaming establishment with Hamilton, to whom he was well known, and the latter had won from him a large sum-all that he possessed in the world, with which he intended to sail on the morrow for Europe. Both left the saloon together, but separated on reaching the street. My visitor, however, turned after a little, impelled by some motive for which he could not account, and followed Hamilton. He did not then think of murdering or robbing him, but almost maddened by his losses, cared little whither he went.

Hamilton entered a bar-room and drank freely, and his victim waited out-sides reflecting bitterly that he no longer had the means to purchase a dram or a night’s lodging. While standing there he determined to accost Hamilton, and coax or compel him to return some of the money. But when he saw him come out intoxicated, he thought by offering him his service to assist him home he could better accomplish his purpose. Hamilton was very glad to see him, and oblivious of all that had passed between them, invited him to go home and spend the night with him. Here was the opportunity he desired. He could doubtless get the money while Hamilton slept, and contrive to convince him that he had lost it on his way home, at any rate, evade suspicion until the sailing of the steamer.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(Continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

Who Murdered Him

It was an insane project, but the devil is very fond, apparently, of arranging opportunities for those who desire to commit crimes. "He went in with Hamilton, and was present, as has been said, at his altercation with Roberts. When Hamilton fell upon the floor, he quietly threw himself upon the bed, and after waiting until he thought his victim was soundly asleep, as all other persons whom the noise he had made might have aroused, he arose, and groping across the room until he came in contact with the body of the drunkard, commenced a search of his pockets. He had just laid his hand upon the wallet which contained the money, when Hamilton awoke. Then commenced the struggle which Roberts had heard.

"The thought of murder first entered his mind as he held his struggling victim by the throat. Hamilton was a strong man. The danger was imminent. In another moment his cries would arouse all in the house. Perhaps even then the ear of suspicion had heard his smothered appeal for help. There was a sharp poniard in his belt. He seized it, and in a moment it struck into his victim's side. Another struggle ensued, another, and another, each fainter, as blow followed blow, till finally the murdered man fell back in the stillness of death. All this time the murderer's hand had been upon this throat, and no distinct cry had escaped his lips.

"An hour later, the murderer, having noiselessly let himself out was at his hotel. Here he changed his clothing, burned his linen, carefully removed the blood stains from his outer garments, and then actually lay down and slept peacefully until nearly noon. In fact, as he told me, he had barely time to make his arrangements and arrive at the steamer before the hour for departure.

"But this was his last peaceful sleep. The stings of conscience had been more than he could bear. He had reached London; but, after lying ill a long time in that city, had seen in a New York paper the account of the arrest and indictment for Roberts, for the crime he had himself committed, and determined to return, and if possible save him. Of course, we had a long consultation. I did not let my new client leave me; but after he was safe for the night, I sat and pondered the matter, for I found myself placed in a most trying position.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(Continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

Who Murdered Him

"Next day I appeared in court, and I afterward knew, to my cost, that I astonished and surprised the audience and all concerned, by the wildness of my opening speech. No one can imagine with what trembling solicitude I watched the course of the trial. I had contrived all in my power to give it a favorable turn, and I was more than pleased to see that some evidence was elicited on the part of the defense which went clearly to invalidate the charge.

"After a trial of four days-days of intense anxiety to me, the murderer, whose pallid face and burning eyes haunted me continually as he sat in court and to his friends-the case went to the jury. Twenty-four hours were passed before their verdict was rendered, and I know that the words 'not guilty' were not more welcome to poor Roberts than to me. He was acquitted and discharged. The nine days' wonder passed, but even now the profession often talks of the manner I managed the prosecution, and pronounce that my leniency alone saved Roberts and defeated the ends of justice. Doubtless the first is true. But the ends of justice were defeated by the compulsory secret I have borne with me ever since-my knowledge of the true murderer." "And what became of him," questioned the doctor, breaking silence for the first time since the commencement of the tale."

"O, he went to California after all was over, and I hear he has since risen to considerable eminence in his adopted State. He is noted for his morality and public spirit, and is looked upon as a thoroughly good man. He was one of the celebrated vigilance, committee of 1858, and is a foe to all gamblers, and drunkards, and evil-doers, of whatever manner or stamp. But I would not bear his conscience about the world with me for all the wealth of California's mines."

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(Continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY
BY H.E. SMITH
OCTOBER 2, 1874

WEIGHED IN THE BALANCE

Cyrus Ferriston and his mother were all that remained of the family. They lived together in a snug farmhouse in a district so rural that it hadn't so much as a name; it had only a number-Township Number One. People below, in the adjoining farming villages, spoke of it and its neighbors as The Numbers. It might have been supposed to be the outskirts of civilization-its frontier; for the nearest neighbor was five miles away, the only religious exercises were held in Deacon Crocket's kitchen, three miles further off, while there were ten miles between them and the doctor.

Cyrus was an energetic fellow, who farmed in summer and logged in the winter; that is, he usually took a contract to being the drive of logs down from the woods; therefore he had been in the habit of borrowing Farmer Hutton's daughter Jane to keep his mother company and help her about the house, for a small consideration. Sometimes, too, Jane stayed on through the summer, or returned for the harvesting when it was heavy; and at such times Cyrus always observed that his butter and cheese found a more ready market; that the house was more cheerful and better kept—for old Mrs. Ferriston was one of the slack kind; that provisions went further and relished better.

For all this he felt no inclination to marry Jane, as folks at Wheatfield had predicted when she first went up to The Numbers. Jane was called plain; and Cyrus had a prepossession that his wife should be rosy and dark-eyed, with the smile that conquers men. Jane halted in her gait the least bit in the world-his wife should have the step of a panther. She always dressed soberly, like a brown leaf, as if she would like to melt into the land scape-his wife should carry her fascination into the knot of ribbon at her throat, or the slipper on her foot. Therefore it was utterly out of the question, if we put any faith in logic, that Jane should become the wife of Cyrus.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY
BY H.E. SMITH
OCTOBER 2, 1874

WEIGHED IN THE BALANCE

But Alas! As it often happens, she had not wintered and summered at The Numbers for naught. When the neighbors had hectored her as she was about to leave home for the first season, and prophesied,—" Well, Jane, I dare say it won't be long before you'll be changing your name to Ferriston," Jane had laughed at the notion and had reckoned that Cyrus hadn't enough schooling to please her and had thought she could never be reconciled to spending her days in the Numbers.

"Folks as held their head as high as you, miss, hey hed ter come ter it," they answered her. When she became acquainted with Cyrus in his everyday life and thought, she found that he knew more than she had dreamed. He had a little library of books on a swinging shelf that he had made with his own hands and had carved out with deer heads and oak leaves. He could talk with her about the heroes of Plutarch and the empires of the Old World, about election and free-will and seemed to enjoy it. Jane had a taste for these things; and so it happened that, as she saw Cyrus in his daily comings and goings, stripped of disguises and in his genial fireside humor, he grew in her favor unawares. In short, his manly attributes, his kindness and good temper, and his handsome face, won her heart, without an effort on either side. He had so grown in her affections that one day, when she overheard Deacon Smily joking him about Agnes Price, her prophetic soul stirred in her with a mighty throe.

Everything seemed to revolve before her eyes-the churn-dasher, the tins on the kitchen wall and the andirons on the hearth. She was obliged to sit down on her way to the dairy and recover herself, with a tray of butter in hands.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

OCTOBER 2, 1874

WEIGHED IN THE BALANCE

"It is too heavy for you," said Cyrus, coming to her relief, with his ready thoughtfulness and taking the tray himself.

"He'll make a good husband, Cyrus will," said the deacon, while the young man's back was turned. "She'll be a lucky gell that gits him; and, between us, I ain't noways partial to that there Aggie Price, Highty, tighty! Now, Jennie, why didn't you set your cap; for him, and you right here at hand? "Twould hev bin easy as lyin'?"

"Would it?" laughed Jane, out of the depth of her silent misery. Of course Jane should have left off loving Cyrus after this, but she didn't; and naturally he was as blind as others of his sex, and never guessed what an ache it gave plain Jane Hutton when he dressed up in his Sunday best, with the neck-tie she had made him on his birthday, and rode off to pay his court to Agnes Price, five miles across the country. She was always awake when he let himself in at midnight and went ti-toeing to his room, and she lay wondering how it must seem to be loved by a man after your own heart. Her life seemed to promise to be all November weather. Though The Numbers were so isolated, they had their merry-makings. There was a quilting at Mrs. Deacon Crocket's in Number. Two, or a husking at Farmer Dusenbury's in Wheatfield, or a having-bee at Deacon Smiley's with dancing in the well-swept barn, hung with lanterns, in the evening;

There were camp-meeting days, and now and then there was a wedding, and no distance too far to travel, and Cyrus always harnessed old Dapple and took Jane along with him, as Agnes would be going with her brothers; or sometimes, if the road led that way, he would call for Miss Agnes, and Jane would sit on the back seat of the wagon, and only guess at what was going on before her in the twilight, hugging her pain in loneliness of heart.

Register of Deeds

Judy Lambert

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY.H.E.SMITH

OCTOBER 2, 1874

WEIGHED IN THE BALANCE

Nobody knew but Jane was just as happy as the others who danced chorus jigs and college hornpipes; nobody ever would have known. Sometimes there was a preacher on the circuit, who went about from one Number to another, holding meetings, and Cyrus and his mother and Jane put on their best and went the rounds, too; and Cyrus and Agnes helped at the singing and lingered after the benediction. One week the preacher stayed at Ferriston Farm and asked Jane to marry him; and, though Mrs Ferriston was sorry to part with her, yet she advised Jane to think seriously, and went so far as to get Cyrus to talk with her about it. This was the last straw that broke the camel's back. Jane was sick in bed till the preacher left The Numbers.

"Dear sakes!" said Mrs. Ferriston, "if its going to keel Jane over like this every time she has a beau the fewer the better. Girls didn't use to take it to heart so." "On the whole," remarked Cyrus, "I'm glad she didn't take to him. It's selfish, but how could we get on with out her just yet?"

"I suppose you'll be bringin' a wife home one of these days. It's a pity you couldn't hev taken a likin' to Jane yourself, and she right handy in the house and knowin' all your ins and outs, and no fault to find."

**"Choose the one that you love best,
Suit yourself and you'll suit the rest,"**

Sang Cyrus "Jane wouldn't have me, either." "That's for you to say," returned his mother, thinking that the girl was un-born that would refuse her Cyrus. Well, at one time they had Miss Agnes Price up at Number One to make a visit, and to let her see how the land lay; and at first words weren't big enough to express her satisfaction. She used to laugh at Jane's old-fashioned way of dressing her hair and cutting her gown, and when Jane and Cyrus got talking upon their favorite themes she would put on her bonnet and be off for a walk, and Cyrus would naturally follow without delay.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY
BY H.E. SMITH
OCTOBER 2, 1874

WEIGHED IN THE BALANCE

She wasn't happy unless Cyrus was praising her dress or herself, unless there was young company invited over from the other Numbers and from Wheatfield for a frolic, or they were going abroad to some merry-making; and when nobody was present but themselves she would amuse herself taking off the folks who spoke in the last revival meeting, showing how Elder Prosy, at Wheatfield, conscious in midst of a long prayer that the candles on the desk needed snuffing, groped for them with his eyes shut, snuffed them out between his thumb and finger, and threw red hot ends into a brother's new hat on the deacon's seat, and wring his hands at this foretaste of damnation; then she would follow this episode with singing Coronation gutturally like Deacon Crocket, and nasally like old Mrs. Quaver, and relate how Deacon Crocket always omitted the blessing when they had pudding and milk for tea; and Mrs. Ferriston would look at Agnes over her spectacles, and shake her head in protest, but laugh in spit of herself.

By and by my lady began to suggest improvements in the house; there might be a wing built out here, the roof might be raised, the yard needed a new picket fence; whoever heard of a house without a flower garden?

"I thought we had one, eh, Jane?" said Cyrus. "Where ignorance is bliss!" returned Agnes. "Nobody has such old fashioned things as marigolds, bachelor's buttons, hollyhocks and love-lies- bleedings in their garden nowadays; everybody laughs at 'em."

"I suppose the Lord made 'em," objected Mrs. Ferriston' and then Agnes openly confessed that she should die of the landscape papering on the best room, which Mrs. Ferriston had guarded from the flies for years, as if it had been a gallery of paintings by the first masters; and, for her part, declared, looking out at the window, she hated to see nice fields about a house disfigured with vulgar-looking pumpkins and cabbages. After she went home, Cyrus set to work quietly making some of the alterations she had suggested-for they were to be married in the spring -asking Jane's opinion and co-operation as if she had been a sister. In the first place he built on the wing, and cut another window in Jane's room.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY
BY H.E. SMITH
OCTOBER 2, 1874

WEIGHED IN THE BALANCE

"You'll be able to see to prink better, Jennie," said he, "or maybe-on second thought—"maybe you'd rather have a room in the new wing? Take your choice;" for Jane's parents were dead, and she had now been living year in and out at The Numbers.

"I shan't want either one or the other, thank you," she answered. "Why not, I should like to know? Are y7ou going to swing in a hammock among the trees?"

"I'm going to seek my fortunes," she laughed, because she felt more like crying. "Going away from here, Jennie!" he cried, dropping the hammer with which he had been driving nails. "Where are you going?" "O don't know-somewhere." He paused a moment, as if he were trying to understand her, and perhaps his eyes were opened a crack; then he picked up the hammer and resumed his work.

"I never thought of such a thing, Jane"—between the blows. "There's no need of it. At least you'll stay-till -till-spring?" "Yes, I will stay till Agnes comes," she answered.

The winter set in early that season, and Cyrus went, as usual, into the woods logging, leaving his mother with Jane for company, and a boy to clear the paths and look after the stock. Few but those who live there know what winter in The Numbers is like, when the snow hedges you about week out and week in, and a passing team is so rare as to bring the household from kitchen or attic to watch it out of sight, and the wind whistles over miles of un-inhabited country with nothing to impede it; when there is nothing to break the monotony of the long, frosty days, which the almanac says are short, but homely duties, and the promise of seed-time and harvest.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

OCTOBER 2, 1874

WEIGHED IN THE BALANCE

It seems then as if no sun were potent enough to melt the mountainous drifts, built as miraculously as the coral reeks; and at mid-night you wake up suddenly, and hear the wolves howling in the woods close at hand, and find their tracks about the sheep-pen the next morning, and remember with a shudder that there isn't an able-bodied man on the premises. In such circumstances one needs to have vast resources in one's self to be in harmony with one's household and one's destiny.

When Seth Price joined Cyrus' camp, a week before Christmas, he carried him a line from Agnes, saying that she should expect him down to watch the new year in and the old year out at the watch-meeting, if he loved her. Esther Smiley had offered to lay a wager that he wouldn't put himself out so much, and even Mrs. Deacon Crocket had said it wasn't likely, seeing he was sure of her; but she had set her heart upon showing how much he cared for her.

It isn't every lover who could resist such an appeal, and though Cyrus didn't think it of the least consequence whether other people believed in his love or not so long as it was a reality to himself and Agnes, yet he was doubtless flattered by her earnest desire for his presence, and if it would please her, why not go? It did not occur to him that it was as much a vulgar wish to make a parade of his regard for as a desire to see him. It happened very luckily, however, Cyrus thought-and perhaps most people would agree with him-that the camp had run short of molasses, and one of the men was detailed to take a team and go to Wheat field for supply, for what was coffee without molasses?

He started on the last day of December, and Cyrus with him, and he dropped Cyrus where the roads diverged, one leading into Wheat field, and the other into The Numbers. There was a matter of ten or twelve miles between Cyrus and Price farm when he left the team, but he had often walked further with a load of produce for market. The distance didn't strike him as being of any consequence; he had all his life been used to mile-stones.

It had begun to snow sometime before, gently, as if it meant no harm, and Cyrus was used to snow, too. Presently the wind changed and blew rough, and tossed the flakes into his eyes, and the flakes themselves grew bigger and thicker, till they clogged his steps and blinded his sight and obliterated every landmark.

Register of Deeds

Judy Lambert

(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY
BY H.E.E SMITH
OCTOBER 2, 1874

WEIGHED IN THE BALANCE

Still he trugged forward, sheering himself with the warm welcome before him, assuring himself that the way was as familiar as his own potato field, till by-and-by he began to wonder if he were not watching the old year out by himself, if he had not been longer on the road than the distance warranted, if he had not missed the way, if it were not growing colder and darker every moment. He knew about as well where he was as if he had traveled into Nova Zembla, or had been cast away on an iceberg.

He paused, and rested against the bole of a tree, to collect his wits. There was no use in proceeding further on the wrong road. In coming to this decision he naturally sat down by the way to reflect which was the right one. He did not reflect long. Lovely images and colors floated before his mind's eye. He had reached the farm, and there was a great back-log blazing on the hearth for him, and brown eyes looking into his, and tender tones in his ears. Then he came to himself with a start, and sat upright, peering into the dark night, upon which the storm seemed an inscription in an unknown tongue, waked by the rending of some great limb from the tree above him which had fallen and pinned him to the ground. The dangers of his situation were too evident for conjecture. He would be frozen stiff before cock-crow, even if he were not dead of the blow first.

Through the storm and darkness he called for help, without daring to hope for it, put all his waning strength and despair into a few imploring cries, and fell benumbed with pain, with one leg crushed and broken. It looked very much as if he would bear the old year company.

Jane had sat up later than usual that night, cutting a piece of stuff out of the loom, which she had finished weaving that afternoon. Mrs. Ferriston was fast asleep, and the farm boy had gone to the watch-meeting; and as Jane raked up the coals on the hearth, she wondered if Cyrus was holding watch with Agnes-who had boasted that she would bring him down from heaven if she wanted him-and if he would be coming home to kiss his mother in the early morning.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY
BY H.E. SMITH
OCTOBER 2, 1874

WEIGHED IN THE BALANCE

She went to the door to look out at the night, which was not more lonely than she, to bid adieu to the old year; and was it the shriek of the wind or a human voice that smote her ears?-a voice that sounded strangely like his. Oh, if it should be! If he were needing her! At least somebody on that lonely waste was in trouble, perhaps dying. If she went to her safe warm bed and waited for daylight, she might never be able to get the cry out of her ears:

She raked open the coals and piled on the logs; she set a lighted candle in the window; she put a flask of brandy in her pocket and a bunch of matches, took her lantern, and pushed out into the storm, with answering cries that help was near. The wind slapped in her face and shrieked about her ears till she half misdoubted herself; but destiny led her to where Cyrus lay, not a quarter of a mile from home. She was down on her knees beside him in the drift instantly, rubbing him with the snow that sifted about him; chafing his hands in her own soft palms, struggling with the imprisoned bough, letting the brandy trickle down his throat, warming him into life with her cheek against his, and calling to him with all the tenderness in her soul, with all the endearing names that love invents; for in that awful moment she had forgotten that he belonged to anyone but herself.

Perhaps, in the gradual reawakening, he may have caught the meaning of this, but he gave no sign of it. By frantic efforts Jane succeeded in removing the limb that had fallen upon him, and, having pushed and dragged it to a safe distance, she made a bonfire of it, which illumined the ghastly night fantastically, and kept the wolves at bay that were howling in the woods near.

It was only then she discovered that his leg was broken! There was but one thing to do, however; she provided him a counterpane of spruce boughs, as warm as wool, gathered dry faggots in the edge of the woods, and extended her blaze in a circle around the disabled man, like an Indian watch-fire; then she hastened home, and, as his mother was too infirm to give assistance, she yoked the steers into the drag-for old Dapple's slender legs could not flounder safely through the drifts-and urged them slowly across the untrodden snow.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY
BY H.E. SMITH
OCTOBER 2, 1874

WEIGHED IN THE BALANCE

Guided by the lantern, to the nearest neighbor, five miles away, who willingly left his warm pillow and with his son of fifteen plodded back on the drag to where the watch fires smoldered and Cyrus waited. It was not long after this before Cyrus was safe in bed, with his mother and Jane administering to him, and neighbor Goodheart and the steers on the way for the doctor.

It was many a long week before he left his bed; indeed, the drifts had dissolved like magic, and spring had woven her spells in blade and bud, and the grass was long and ready for mowing before he took his first step into the air, and then he leaned on Jane's arm and walked with a crutch. The folks in The Numbers said he would always need a crutch, unless he preferred a cork leg. When the doctors from Wheatfield and decided upon amputation, Cyrus had sent for Agnes. Perhaps he had meant to give her freedom with a lingering hope that she would reject it;

Perhaps he craved the solace of her presence before his journey toward the valley of shadows. Nobody ever knew; it was only known that she refused to go to him! The people in The Numbers blamed or excused her, according to their natures or predispositions.

"She didn't promise herself to a cripple." "It's better to live unmated than ill-matched." "She's like to go all the way through the woods and take up with a crooked stick at last." "It's a poor kind of love that's scared at misfortune," were some of the current remarks passing from mouth to mouth.

And so the year wore through, and Cyrus could no longer go up to Aroostook lumbering, nor swing his scythe in the meadow. He had to hire a hand about the farm. While he sat at home with idle, impatient hands, inspiration came to him as he watched Jane laboring at her wheel, and he invented a spinning machine.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY
BY H.E. SMITH
OCTOBER 2, 1874

WEIGHED IN THE BALANCE

About this time old Mrs. Ferriston slipped away out of life; and one day Mrs. Deacon Crocket rode over to engage Jane for her winter's weaving.

"You won't be needin' a housekeeper longer, I s'pose, Cyrus," said she; "and folks allus talks so; so, thinks I, Jane had better come home with me for the weavin'."

"Jane," he said-for Mrs. Deacon Crocket used an ear-trumpet, and was no kind of hindrance to love-making. "Jane you promised to stay with me till Agnes came. Will you keep your promise?"

"Yes, Cyrus, I will if you insist upon it," she answered." "Jane and I," he said, speaking into Mrs. Crocket's trumpet, "are going down to Wheatfield this afternoon to be married." Mrs. Crocket took in the Price farm on her way home, for fear her news would spoil if kept over night.

"Cyrus Ferriston's going to be married." She said, "and no thanks to you, Agnes Price! Jane Hutton's a lucky gell."

"Do tell !" cried Agnes, "Never swam a goose so gray but what could find a mate." I always thought she had a hankerin' after him. S'pose I shan't be asked to stand up with'em! What a figger they'll cut when they 'pear together! I never could have borne to go limpin' along with a man like that all days-it didn't look genteel."

"But they do say," continued her comforter, "how he's made a power of money out of that machine of his'n-it's jest like spinnin' gold. And they are talking about sendin' him to the Legislature, and then I s'pose Jane'll go too, and help represent."- Harper's Weekly.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

OCTOBER 22, 1875

\$500 REWARD

Everybody's mouth was agape! For the bride, in her shining white dress, and her trailing lace veil, with the sweet-smelling orange blossoms in her beautiful brown hair, was walking into church.

Little Rose Floy happened along, on her way home from school. So there she stood, never minding how her long, light curls were being blown about in the wind, nor that her bonnet had fallen back upon her shoulders, nor that she was being elbowed by greasy Tom Boggs, who drew his fishy basket (he was a butcher's boy) across her delicate pink dress.

Never minding anything, but, with her mouth agape, like the rest, following, with her eyes, the shining white lady that swept up the high steps into the church.

Through the open doors floated the sound of the organ, and presently, though never able to tell just how, Rose had a chance to slip behind the long, flowing curtains of a window near by before anybody saw her. Here, from her snug little lookout, Rose peeked and admired.

Around the bride stood a great many ladies and gentlemen, and the ladies; dresses were most splendid to behold. Some were soft blue, some were rose-pink others were delicate pearl-color and gold. By-and-by when they all knelt down, and the beautiful pinks, and blues, and pearls and golds puffed up from the floor, all in waves, Rose thought it was a fairy ring, such as she read about in her story books.

The great pyramids of flowers that stood by the altar drenched Rose with such floods of perfume that she began to feel drowsy. The organ sounded fainter and fainter and further away, and the fairy ring, with the bride, all in white, kneeling in the middle, faded out of Rose's eyes.

Mrs. Floy was in the greatest distress. "Where can Rose be?" she said; and she had certainly asked the question a hundred times before. "Go over to school Bridget" she said "and find out what has become of her."

So Bridget went and poor, pale, sick Mrs. Floy, who was a widow, and had only little Rose left to her in all the world to love, sank back on her sofa, and counted the long minutes till Bridget came back.

Poor woman! She could hardly bear Rose out of her sight, and would never have sent her to school, had it not been for a grouty old uncle, who would say, stamping furiously with his cane on the floor.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

OCTOBER 22, 1875

\$500 REWARD

"Zounds, ma'ma! Do you mean to keep Rose tied to your apron-strings all her life? Are you going to make a milksop out of a Floy, and an ignoramus, ma'am?" Rose's mother was very nervous, and so at last, worn out by this dreadful, racketing old man, with his everlasting "ma'ams," and his thumping cane, she sent Rose to school.

Bridget did not come back, and she could lie still no longer. She tied on her bonnet, and pinned her shawl with her weak, trembling fingers, and crept feebly down stairs. She was a long time undoing the street door, and then she would have fallen, had it not been for Bridget, who was coming up the steps. They had to put her to bed, and bring her to with vinegar and salts. Her eyes did not open till there came a ring at the door.

"There she is!" cried she, starting up, and she listened, breathless, for Rose's dear voice, and the sound of her pattering footsteps. Stump, stump, stump! Came a heavy tread up the stairs, and into her room. It was the horrible uncle, and he began in this horrible way:

"Zounds, ma'ma! What's all this about? Rose lost? What does that mean?" "It means," said Rose's mother, furiously, "that you have robbed me of my only treasure. If it had not been for you it would never have happened." "Hoity-toity!" said Rose's uncle, and he sat a moment thinking. "Bridget" said he, "clap on your street gear again and be off to the City Crier's. Five hundred dollars reward to whoever brings the child back alive and well. Do you hear?" For Bridget stood staring and saying: "Five hundred dollars reward-five hundred---Yes, your honor," she answered to his last question to her.

"And shall I tell him that, then?" "Of course," growled the grouty uncle; "and don't let the grass grow under your feet." So off darted Bridget, saying over again. "Five hundred dollars! Five hundred dollars five hundred dollars!" in a tone of wonder.

The grouty uncle thumped his cane, and raged like a lion in a cage, for, underneath the crusty part of him was a big, soft heart, that loved his little niece Rose more than anybody knew. The crier whipped up his round, lazy horse, and started off in his one-seated gig. At every corner he rang his brazen-faced bell like wild fire, and shouted, in his round, rolling voice;

"Five hundred dollars reward! Lost! Lost! Lost! A little girl, with long light curls, and a bonnet with blue strings; with one thumb done up in a cot, and a mole one inch back of her left ear.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

OCTOBER 22, 1875

\$500 REWARD

Five hundred dollars reward to anybody that brings her back safe and sound-five hundred dollars reward!" Tony Ketchum, with his pile of papers under his arm, just damp from the press, listened to the crier at one of the corners.

"Wouldn't I like to find that 'ere little girl?" said Tony, with a smack of his lips. "That's the easiest way for a lucky chap to Step into a fortune that I knows on," went on Tony. "I'd like to be that lucky chap, the worst kind, too! Guess mother and me take things easy then; and Sis! Mebbe she wouldn't have an orange-colored gown-eh? S'posin' I wanted to sport light kids on a Sunday-whose business would it be?

Marm's cracked teapot might shed its old puttied nose. Who d'ye s'pose 'ud care? Wouldn't we make tea in our silver ice-pitcher?" Tony fitted his back to a lamp-post and let the bright visions of what he and "marm" and "Sis" would do with that 'ere five hundred dollars flit through his busy brain. It is strange how completely Tony's head was turned, for generally he was the sharpest, cutest little chap that ever trod worn-out shoe-leather. He almost sold out his papers, too, ahead of the other newsboys; but this night he never thought of attending to his business till the clock struck eight, and then all at once he came to his senses.

"I swanny!" said he, with a start-"what a precious donkey I am to be sure!" He went to work in earnest; but his papers sold slowly. "What's to be done?" said he, "Marm's waiting for me to bring home some provender. If they were only provided for I wouldn't mind for me."

He walked on, up one street and down another, taking no thought of where he was going. "Hooray!" he said at last-"there's the hash! It'll be enough for them and if I don't go home they'll have to eat it. Mr. Tony Ketchum, the best plan for you will be to"-here he took time to consider-"to camp out, and wait till morning light for rations. More'n one brave feller afore you has done it, so none o' yer lip!" For the damp night air had set him to coughing. "Let this teach yer a lesson, Tony," said he, looking around for a good place where to spend the night "not to go wool-gatherin' agin-leastwise not-in business hours.

He stopped at last before a church that had high steps in front, but on one side was a porch. Tony, eyeing it, said; "The very ticket!" Over the fence he climbed. There was a bench running along inside the porch.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

OCTOBER 22, 1875

\$500 REWARD

“Heigho!” said Tony; “if it wasn’t from marm and Sis a-worrying about me I’d be comfortable enough.” He doubled up his papers for a pillow. “Howsumever, they won’t go hungry – that’s one ‘breviation to think of. Hash! Well, hash is good. Seems to me I never was so fond of it, though, as I am just this minute.” Tony was drowsy. In the next breath he would have been asleep, but a queer kind of noise struck all at once upon his ear.

“What’s that?” said he springing up, wide awake. The moonlight streamed into the porch, and showed every corner of it as plain as day. There was nothing there to make such a noise, sure. Still the noise kept on.

“It sounds like Sis crying,” said Tony. He went outside the porch; he could hear it plainer. It was a kind of soft sobbing, such as a frightened child would be apt to make. Guided by the sound Tony walked along in the grass till he stood underneath one of the church windows, which he saw was open. He thought, too, he saw a face pressed against the glass of the window. Tony waited a bit to make sure, and then asked: “What’s up?” “I am,” answered a faint little voice, “and I want to get down.”

“How did you get there?” “I went to sleep and got locked up.” Then the soft sobbing began again. “Hold on!” said Tony. “Don’t do that.” “But I want to get out.” “Well, ain’t I just the one to help yer out? You’re a little chap. I can tell by your voice. I’ll have yer down here in the twinklin’ of an eye.”

Tony stripped off his jacket-it was an old coat with the tails cut off-and threw his cap on top of it. “Now for it!” he cried, and he swung his arms backward and forward, faster and faster still, and finally he made a rush, and there he was, two or three feet up on the rough stone wall, hanging on to a stout branch of wood-bine. He thought he heard a laugh.

“My!” that ain’t you, little lock-up?” said he. “I couldn’t help it, you looked so funny. “All right!” said Tony, cheerfully. “It’s better to laugh than to cry.” And then to himself he added. “The little chap’s got grit.” “Ain’t you afraid you’ll fall?” “Lor’, no!” said Tony. “Look here!”

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

OCTOBER 22, 1875

\$500 REWARD

He went through some break-neck performances on the branch of wood-bine. "I learnt all that when the circus was in town. The clown was one of my reg'lar customers." "Oh, that's first-rate," said the little voice laughing.

"I'm a little out of practice now," said Tony, wiping his forehead with his sleeve, and laughing, too. By the time Tony had climbed up to a level with the open window, the little lock-up and himself had become the best of friends. But, face to face with Rose, the moonlight shining full upon her, Tony's wits seemed to desert him. Rose was the first to speak. "How you going to get me down?" asked she.

"Then you ain't a chap at all?" said Tony. "I can't climb, like you. "You couldn't ride down pig-a-back?" asked Tony, doubtfully. Rose smiled, but shook her head. "You'll have to do that, or climb," said Tony. "I will help you." "Well, I don't know as I'd be afraid with you. You won't let me fall, will you?" "I guess not," said Tony, grandly. "Just you try it, and see."

There was something in Tony's smudge of a face, with its tangled hair and turned-up nose, that pleased Rose and made her trust him. "I tell you what," said Tony. "I'll just strap you round the waist with one of my suspenders. They're all leather, strong as iron.

So Rose, belted with her champion's belt, was helped carefully out of the window, and began her dangerous journey downward. "Slowly," Tony would say, holding up Rose by the belt. "Steady," as he felt her tremble.

Clinging to the woodbine, the trellis, the sharp edges of the wall, Tony and Rose came nearer and nearer toward the ground. But half way down Rose made a false step, and slipped. Tony held her whole weight on one arm. "Quick," he whispered, "put your foot on mine. All right." And she was safe again.

All the way down, after this, Tony's arm held Rose up as steadily as ever; but when their feet touched the ground, it snapped, and fell down by his sides, as he had no power over it. He sat down on the grass.

"O!" cried Rose, seeing how pale he grew. "What is it? What have I done?" She knelt down beside him, and touched his arm; but he winced, and drew away.

Register of Deeds

Judy Lambert

(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

OCTOBER 22, 1875

\$500 REWARD

"Don't he said, trying to smile, even then. "It isn't much. It'll be better soon. I didn't let you fall, did I?" "No, you didn't; but if you had, you wouldn't have got hurt yourself," said Rose. "I'd have smashed both arms and legs 'fore I'd have done it. Didn't I promise?" He had to cough down a groan. Rose's eyes filled with tears. "Come home with me," she said. "I know mother can stop your arm from aching so."

Tony shook his head, he couldn't trust himself to speak. "But I won't go without you," said she. "Well, then," said Tony, "I'll try." And he stood on his feet. "If I could sling this up, it wouldn't be so bad." "Here," said Rose, "I can do it with my sash."

As He passed the band around his arm, and reached up to tie it, he noticed one her thumbs was done up in a cot. Through all his pain his heart beat joyfully. What if this was the little girl that was lost? What if he should get the \$500, after all. He forgot his broken arm for a minute, as he asked, breathlessly;

"You ain't got a mole right behind your left ear, have you?" "Yes, I have. But how did you know that?" answered Rose, astonished. "Long, light curls, blue bonnet-strings," said Tony, musingly. "Yes, you're the one. It's the \$500?" "What's \$500?" "Finding you" said Tony. "I am so glad," said Rose, when Tony had told her the particulars. The grouty uncle opened the door on the happy pair.

"So, ragamuffin," said he, in his gruffest voice, for his heart was softened by this time into jelly-"so you expect the \$500 reward, do you? You think to cheat us, do you, with your disgraceful stories about broken necks and heads and arms? Hark ye, sir! I am too old a bird to be caught by such chaff!"

"O, uncle!" began Rose; but before she could say anymore, he had caught her, and kissed her, and thrust a little paper, all doubled up, into her hand. "That's every farthing he shall have," said he, sternly. "Now send him packing. Do you hear?" Rose opened the paper. "It's the \$500!" cried she, giving it to Tony. Tony bowed respectfully, and turned away. "Here, you!" shouted Rose's uncle, in a voice that almost took the roof off.

"Don't be in too much of a hurry. I'm going home with you, and, whether you are willing, or not, I shall stop at the doctor's on the way. I'll have no broken bones here, sir." "O, the sly-boots!" "You are the very bestest man alive!" The grouty uncle, and the happy broken-armed Tony, and the \$500 reward, went off together, and Rose was found, and her mother was at peace, and Bridget-well, she was all in a fidget.

Register of Deeds

Judy Lambert

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY
BY H.E. SMITH
JANUARY 30, 1874

SPOONS AND SPARKS

A broad and sinuous line of river, bright with the full sunshine of a September noon, here bordered with meadows, there fringed with low woods and winding toward the clustered roofs of a distant town. Two wherriers, drifting idly in the shadow of hemlocks and pines, while their prone and meditative occupants watch the lazy wreaths of smoke curl above the bowls of their pipes. Of these two individuals, the one nearest the sunshine is David Whipple, a Bostonian aged 19, fair-haired, fair-skinned and six feet two. The other lying at full length with his cap pulled low over a pair of dark eyes, is of slighter make and more vivacious expression. This is Ernest Walch, a young Virginian.

Fifteen minutes of silence had evidently tried the latter's patience excessively. He had frightened several turtles back to their watery haunts, had whistled to birds and apostrophized flies. He finally pocketed his pipe and sat erect, with the remark, "I say, Davy!"

"Well?" "I saw Miss Wentworth today." That this announcement possessed some interest in the mind of the youth called Davy, may be surmised from the fact that he, too, suddenly sat erect; but he only said, as he slowly knocked the ashes from his pipe, "Humph."

"You'd have said something besides 'Humph,' if you had seen her. She rode past our hotel." I presume you moaned after her in your usual style." "Very near it, I admit," rejoined the other, with a shrug. "The case is unique. I never before tried for a month unsuccessfully to gain an introduction to a lady. But I shall succeed yet."

"I'll wager anything you choose," was the reply, emphasized by a flourish of the pipe, "that I'll have an introduction first, after all!" and the speaker faced his friend with the last trace of indifference banished from his countenance.

"Safe enough to wager, where neither is likely to win," commented his companion. "That's as one thinks. I consider my winning as certain as-as that I can reach the stone bridge, two miles down the river, at least a minute in advance of you." "Done!" exclaimed the Virginian with a laugh and a quick straightening of his lithe figure. "The loser in the race abandons his chances, eh?"

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

JANUARY 30, 1874

SPOONS AND SPARKS

In two minutes the wherries were abreast and their owners ready for a start. The next, they swept off down the stream, pulled evenly and easily. Both the young men were powerful rowers. Ernest had the most effective stroke, David greater reserve of strength. It was pretty to see the wherries dart through shadows and sunshine, past bold wooded curves and banks gay with golden-rod. Their progress during the first ten minutes was quiet, but at the beginning of the second mile it became more lively. Laborers in the fields on either hand paused to watch as the wherries shot by, and now the red jacket, now the blue, seemed gaining.

For a while the fates favored David, and he won half a boat's length in a quarter of a mile. Then Ernest bent more gallantly to his oars and regained his place. In the next quarter he lost again, and David's greater strength told steadily against him.

When they were on the last half mile, a long straight stretch, with the bridge before dwarfed in the distance, they pulled like two young giants. David's teeth were set and every muscle in play. Ernest's cap had fallen, and his black eyes gleamed triumphantly as he noted that each determined stroke brought him nearer his first position. Independently of its puerile cause, the race was magnificent.

There happened to be but one spectator of its close. This was a gray-haired gentleman, who, seeing the two boats sweep around the upper curve of the river, checked his horse on the bridge. They came in grandly, darting like birds through the smooth water, straight and swift, for the bridge. The intent watcher leaned far over the rails, and as both bows simultaneously on opposite sides of the central stone pier, uttered an involuntary "Hurrah!" that was like an electric shock to the two excited rowers beneath.

"By George!" gasped David, trying his best for breath, "we hit the pier in the same second." "Ernest, in no condition to dispute or assent, replied by a nod. "Tough one, wasn't it?" "Who's the party on the bridge?" Ernest was saved an answer by the appearance of the "party," who scrambled down an embankment and approached radiantly.

"Pretty well done, young gentlemen! Haven't seen such a race since my college days. Pretty evenly matched. Now I should have said, "with a glance from the powerful David to his slighter companion, "that this young man had an advantage; but it seems not."

Register of Deeds

Judy Lambert

(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

JANUARY 30, 1874

SPOONS AND SPARKS

"Watch makes up in science what he lacks in strength," said David, magnanimously, grounding his boat. Ernest imitated his friend's example remarking that "with all the science he could muster, he had rarely won a race with Davy."

"A fine sight it was, indeed!" resumed their enthusiastic friend. "I used to be remarkably fond of boating before I got my flesh-remarkably. Some of my pleasantest hours have been passed on the Charles river." "On the Charles? You were a Cambridge student, then? We belong to that persuasion," rejoined David.

"Harvards, are you? I'm glad to hear it. Glad to have met you. Allow me to introduce myself-name's Wentworth; place is about a quarter of a mile from here. My carriage is on the bridge; come and take a glass of wine with me and have a chat about college affairs."

The faces of the two recipients of this invitation were studies. The name was Wentworth, was it? Ernest pulled his cap lower to hide the twinkle in his eyes, and David abruptly picked up the spoons of his wherry. Neither had an idea of refusing, though Ernest murmured something about appearance, boating costume, etc., which objections were promptly overruled by their new friend.

"Boats are perfectly safe. I'll send a man down to attend to 'em. Dress is all right," puffed the old gentleman, pulling himself up the embankment by means of a wiry shrub. "Jump in, jump in!" Five minutes' drive brought our friends to the Wentworth place, the goal of their desires, an ancient stone mansion set in the midst of extensive grounds. On the way up the avenue the two visitors were electrified by seeing the flutter of muslin skirts on the terrace. Immediately after both had a vision of blue eyes and curls and a dainty figure, and found themselves bowing confusedly to "My daughter Ella," the divinity of their worship.

Both gentlemen were in a maze most of the afternoon. They had wine in the shady dining-room, through the windows of which they caught glimpses of beds of bright autumn flowers. They had stores of jovial anecdotes from their host. Then they had music in the parlors and sweet commonplaces from Miss Wentworth.

When our two friends were set down on the piazza of their hotel at seven o'clock that evening, both stood motionless, watching the carriage of their new acquaintance rolling away. As it disappeared they first faced each other blankly, then, by common impulse, burst into a fit of laughter.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY
BY H.E. SMITH
JANUARY 30, 1874

SPOONS AND SPARKS

The inaugural remark was made by Ernest. "This beats anything I ever heard of." "It does. We're even, Watch. Neither of us won the race, and neither of us won the wager." "Curious enough!" rejoined Ernest, soliloquizing, as he turned away. "I wonder which will win the lady?" The enlightened reader must have anticipated the results. Our collegians were not original. The changes were rung on riding, boating, music, croquet, and billiards, for three weeks. At the end of time, unfortunately for their friendly feelings, they found themselves as even in this race for a lady's favor as they had been in the memorable race down the river. Both were prodigious –and equal-favorites with Mr. Wentworth, both received gracious smiles from Miss Wentworth, both made the greatest efforts to please, and spent the whole of their pocket-money in the attempt.

I do not know precisely when their friendship became a memory; but at end of those three weeks they were enemies, who endured each other for the sake of appearance when they met at the Wentworths' house, but outside it never exchanged a word, and regarded each other loweringly at meals and in passage-ways. To add to the complications of the affair, the 28th of September approached, bringing with it the dreaded necessity of returning to Cambridge.

The days flew by and each delayed until the morrow, before putting his fate to the test. On the 27th both must go, and the 25th found each resolute to ask the question that had become all-important to both, on the 26th.

The 26th came, and with it a violent autumnal storm. Instead of proceeding to the Wentworth mansion for a morning's croquet, our heroes found themselves reduced to despair. David misanthropically kept this room. Ernest lounged around the stables till dinner-time, playing at billiards half the afternoon, then took a survey from the window and formed a desperate resolve. Immediately after supper at which David did not appear, he put on heavy boots, borrowed a cloak of the landlord, and started through a sea of mud in a pouring rain, and in the face of a furious northeaster, for the Wentworths'.

Looking back at David's lighted windows, he thought, with pardonable triumph, that for once he had stolen a march upon his rival; but his triumph changed to perturbation when he finally stood, a mud-bespattered and drenched individual, ringing the Wentworths' door-bell.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

JANUARY 30, 1874

SPOONS AND SPARKS

His spirits rose, however at sight of the cozy library where Mr. Wentworth, in dressing-gown and slippers, sat before an open wood fire, and Miss Ella, seated on a cricket, was occupied in popping corn. The latter with a blush and smile of welcome.

"Please excuse papa and me. We were having one of our old-fashioned evenings." "Delighted to see you, my boy!" chimed in Mr. Wentworth, adding, with uncomfortable solicitude. "And where's Mr. Whipple?" "I really don't know what Davy is doing with himself this evening," responded Ernest, seating himself on the other side of the fire, and wishing Mr. Wentworth in the Arctic regions. "I for my part, couldn't reconcile myself to leave town without spending my last evening with you"-these words accompanied by a significant glance at the young lady.

"Your coming is a perfect godsend-a perfect godsent!" was the hopelessly brisk response. "I don't know anything duller than a September storm. I wish your friend was here; but never mind, we'll make an evening of it."

Accordingly the hospitable old gentleman rang for fruit and wine and cigars, and gave full freedom to his garrulous tongue. Ernest was in despair. Reminiscences and stories and jokes succeeded one another, while he was obliged to laugh and answer and take hopeless notes of the firelight gleams netted in the brown curls opposite, the downcast eyes, the snowy hands busy with the tassels of a coquettish silk apron, and the tinny slippers resting on a flower in the hearth-rug.

Periodical glances at the clock told Ernest that it was half-past eight, then that it was nine. He formed the second desperate resolve of the day and began to talk about his travels. He gave a long and intensely prosy account of his life in Paris, sing all the French he could think of. Mr Wentworth had never traveled, but evinced polite attention. Ernest, with unflagging zest, went on with Germany and Italy. His host nodded with waning interest. Ernest was about to attempt Russia, when a snore delighted his ears.

The young lady nervously resumed her corn-popping, vainly trying to hide a smile. The fire was dying down. Ernest hastened to assist her, seized the tongs and raised a heavy log; as he raised it, a brand fell out upon the hearth, and broke in pieces, sending a shower of fiery sprays over the pretty figure on the cricket.

Register of Deeds

Judy Lambert

(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

JANUARY 30, 1874

SPOONS AND SPARKS

Each uttered a suppressed exclamation. Miss Wentworth shook her curls hastily, and Ernest shook the little silk apron and much-beruffled skirt. He shook it so vigorously that a letter dropped out of the pocket and lay before him, address upward; but he did not heed the letter, for somehow he had mistaken the young lady's hand for her apron, and still held it, though the sparks were only black specks. He was in the midst of an incoherent but earnest speech, saying something about wanting the right to protect her from all the troubles of life as he had protected her from those flying sparks, when the letter caught his eye.

"Miss Ella Wentworth, D-Massachusetts." In David's handwriting, unmistakably. That one glance showed him also that it was a drop-letter and stamped September 26.

Ernest hesitated so noticeably in the middle of his speech that his listener glanced up at him in surprise, and caught his glance at the letter. She picked it up hastily, with a rosy blush, and an exclamation that caused the old gentleman's drowsy eyes to open wide. "Ahem!" I believe," he observed, with the extra dignity sleepy persons often assume, "that I lost what you were last saying-about the Swiss patois, wasn't it?"

Poor Ernest! It was hard work to sit and hear the history of the old gentleman's speculation after that; and many pleading glances were sent toward the flushed, downcast face opposite him. At last, at eleven, he rose hopelessly, to go. He lingered and lingered, finding continually last words to say, till the utter futility of delay discouraged him in seeking the door; but here the old gentleman, suddenly radiant with a new thought, detained him.

"Dear me!" Why, Nell, I had almost forgotten what we spoke of at dinner. Mr. Walch, we want you and your friend Whipple at Christmas-time, you know. You must give us a few days, Nell here is going to be married about that time, and you must both come to the wedding without fail. I dare say," he added, struck by the blankness of Ernest's face, "that you've never happened to hear of it before. Well, well, good news is always welcome, isn't it? Now I shall depend on you for a week at Christmas. Don't forget to invite your friend. Good-by, and good luck to you, my boy!" and the hearty good-wisher followed him out upon the door-step to give a final hand-shake.

A half hour after, as David was pacing his chamber feverishly, his door opened and a drenched and muddy figure presented itself, and remarked, hysterically, as it dropped a soaked cloak on the floor. "Well, old fellow, we've come out even again. Neither of us won the race, neither won the wager, and neither has won the lady!"

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

JULY 16, 1875

THE DEAD LETTER

Ten years! Yes, just ten years since that night. As memory retraces the journey of those years the time seems very long, and yet the events of that night could not be more vivid had they occurred on yesterday.

Then my hair was brown, my life was full of hope, my soul full of trust. There are threads of silver among the brown tonight, and the intervening years between that time and this have brought a succession of disenchantments and sad experiences. How one changes in a decade.

Among my lady acquaintances and friends none were to me so fascinating and perfect in all that goes to make up the sum of female loveliness as pretty Jennie Fisk, and I shall not conceal the fact that the mention of that name bears to me a cruel memory.

One evening upon arriving at my lodgings I found an invitation for Jennie to attend a party her father intended to give a celebrate her eighteenth birthday. The thought of Jennie's "coming out" caused me a momentary pang, for I was confident that her beauty and expectations would soon surround her with a host of admirers. The possibility that someone else might lay siege to her heart and carry off the prize made me very unhappy, and I determined to see her as soon as possible and ask her to be my wife.

Putting on my best suit, and arranging my toilet with as much care and precision as a society belle would have done, I set out for the Fisk mansion. It is needless to say that my anxiety about the result of my visit made me somewhat nervous. I ascended the steps, paused a moment to renew my courage, and then rang the bell.

A servant answered the summons, and showed me into the parlor. "I suppose you wish to see Miss Jennie," the young woman remarked with a mischievous twinkly in her eyes. "Yes; is she at home?" "She is; I will announce you, and I presume she will soon be down." That, I thought, was suspicious. At least the manner as well as the words of the girl indicated that my footing with Jennie was favorable. Going to the long mirror at the end of the room to satisfy myself again that I was presentable, I heard the patter of footfalls on the stairs and hurried back to my seat.

Register of Deeds

Judy Lambert

(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY
BY H.E. SMITH
JULY 16, 1875

THE DEAD LETTER

Jennie came in. I thought I had never seen such a vision of loveliness. She was dressed in snowy muslin, that fell in fleecy folds about her graceful form; a pink rose adorned her hair, which fell, in golden waves, to her waist. Another rose of the same color reposed at her throat, viewing with her cheeks in loveliness of tints.

She welcomed me with a cordial yet modest greeting, and I sat down by her side. The restraint that I feared might make a coward of me, was soon gone, and I told her the "old story," which yet is ever new, of my deep love for her. Taking her willing hand in mine I asked Jennie to be my wife.

Her answer was not delayed. Her eyes had already indicated her reply, and her tongue confirmed the language of her hear speaking through them.

Speaking figuratively, I was in the "seventh heaven" of delight. Jennie had promised to be mine; what more on earth was there to covet? Strange infatuation; wondrous passion. It comes alike to all the sons and daughters of men-the cultured and the savage, the peasant and the king.

Well, the night of the ball arrived. It was clear and beautiful. The silvery light of the moon bathed the old Fisk mansion in a halo of soft radiance, and the stars gleamed and glistened like gems in Night's coronet, a bright augury of Jennie's happiness (such was my interpretation of the scene) through life.

I was among the first arrivals. Jennie met me with a smile of love and trust; she laid her little hand again in mine, and though no words were spoken, each well knew the other's thoughts. She was dressed in exquisite taste.

Every circumstance connected with her on that night will never be effaced from my recollection. She had never looked anything but charming to me, but on this occasion she outshone herself. Her dress was of the whitest muslin and lace, puffed over blue silk.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY
BY H.E. SMITH
JULY 16, 1875

THE DEAD LETTER

She wore a necklace of pearls, and bracelets to correspond encircled her shapely arms. Her whole toilet was faultless, and during the evening she was the cynosure of many eyes, the admiration of the young men, and the envy of a score or more of her won sex.

She welcomed her guests with perfect ease and grace. The rooms were soon filled with company, and then she chatted merrily with one and another for awhile, and gradually found a place near me.

Presently the music sounded its preparatory note. Jennie took my arm, and we took our place at the head of the room. A young physician, Richard Price by name, and his partner, were opposite in the quadrille. He paid little attention to her, and seemed rather abstracted and ill at ease. It was a mystery to me then, this manner of his; but subsequently it was explained. Several times during the evening, when Jennie and I were together, Price hung upon our steps, much to Jennie's annoyance.

After a while, after she had filled several engagements with others, I claimed her again for my partner, and at the close of the waltz we sought the refreshing air of the summer house, in the spacious gardens attached to the mansion. Here we conversed of the future; of our plans and prospects, and oh, how bright were the promises that the future held for us then.

How long we talked I do not know. Fearing our prolonged absence would occasion remark, we returned to the house. At length the guests departed, and then I bade my betrothed good night. Her manner towards me was all that a lover could expect, and yet at parting some unexplained and undefinable feeling oppressed me. It was one those strange forebodings for which no one can satisfactorily account. When I should have been the happiest of mortals I was depressed with a presentiment of coming evil. I tried to shake it off, but in vain. It bound me like some horrid dream, and the feeling did not leave me for several hours.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

JULY 16, 1875

THE DEAD LETTER

The next morning I slept late, and having partaken of a light lunch I went to the Postoffice, impelled by I know not what motive, as my letters were usually delivered at my place of business.

At all events, to the Postoffice I bent my steps, and there found a note from Jennie. She had been suddenly summoned by telegraph to a distant city by reason of the severe illness of a near relative—so ran the note—but would soon return. The strangest part of it was that she hoped I would not write to her, stating that she would give a satisfactory explanation upon her return.

The days wore heavily away, and no word more came from her. I was depressed and oppressed with a feeling of anxiety and alarm. A week elapsed before she returned. The first intimation I had of her arrival was the follow note:

Friend Harry: It pains me to write this note, but it is very necessary, and I cannot shrink from it. When I told you that I loved you I did not know my own heart: and the future happiness of both of us compels me to say that I can never become your wife. Do not make any effort to see me: an interview would be of no avail, and could only prove painful to both you and me. Jennie

Need I say that this heartless note completely stunned me for a time. My brain was in a whirl, and I was so stupefied that I hardly knew whether I was dead or alive. The condition passed after a time and I looked at the matter as calmly and coolly as I could. I determined to leave the scene of this bitter disappointment and seek "surcease of sorrow" in the excitement and change of travel.

Arranging my affairs did not take me long, and drawing my funds from the bank, where they were deposited, I bade adieu to my friends and started for New York. My sudden resolution was surprise to all who were intimate with me, but my explanation was that I had long meditated a trip to the old world, and a more opportune period than the present to gratify this desire would probably never occur. I had been entirely reticent about my relations with Jennie, and although some of my boon companions rallied me about leaving such an attraction when, to all appearances, I was the favorite suitor, I passed the matter off as though it was a capital joke while suffering unspeakable torture at my heart.

Register of Deeds

Judy Lambert

(continued)

Early History of Cloud County

By H.E. Smith

July 16, 1875

The Dead Letter

In a few days a gallant steamer bore me across the ocean. It is unnecessary to name the route pursued, or speak of my rambles in England and on the continent.

A year passed; then came a longing for my native land, and homeward I turned my footsteps. Upon arriving at New York I went straight to Washington, where I had friends, through whose influence I obtained a position in the Postal Department of the government. My duties were in the Bureau devoted to "Dead Letters." Here another year was spent. Time passes very swiftly when one is busy, even if the heart is heavy. My duty was chiefly opening dead letters and many a curious and quaint epistle passed through my hands.

One day while the room in which several clerks beside myself were engaged was undergoing repairs, several old letters dropped from a desk being removed from the wall. The carpenter picked them up and handed them to one of the employes in the office.

"Why," said he, "Harry, here is a letter directed to you." As I received it from his hand I recognized the hand-writing at a glance. It was from Jennie, and had been written nearly a year previously. By some means it had not reached me while I was waiting for the place I subsequently obtained, and had preceded me a few days in the "Dead Letter Office." There it had lain almost a whole year through an accident, but for which I should never have received it, and probably never known the revelation it brought.

With a nervous tremor I opened it and devoured its contents, which were these:

Dear Harry: Today I was surprised and pleased to ascertain that you had returned from your wanderings and are in Washington. I write at once, because we have both been grievously pained I know by a cruel forgery.

When I heard that you had left N---I could not believe, but soon was compelled to do so. Believing that I knew your heart, it was impossible to understand the motive or reason for your sudden and strange departure. Fate solved the mystery. You remember the party on my eighteenth birthday and you will recollect that Richard Price dogged our footsteps wherever we went.

Register of Deeds

Judy Lambert

(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY
BY H.E. SMITH
JULY 16, 1875

THE DEAD LETTER

He overheard our conversation in the garden, and thus learned of our engagement. A year previously he had proposed to me and was rejected and in revenge he determined to blast my happiness at all hazards. He was an expert at imitating the hand-writing of others, and having attended the same school that I did for several years, he was easily enabled to produce a fac simile of my chirography.

A few weeks after your departure he was thrown from a buggy and fatally injured. Before he died he sent for me, and I received from his tongue the secret that he was the author of a letter to which my name was signed, and had caused your sudden and strange flight.

In whatever light you have come to look upon me it is but right for you to know the truth. For myself my heart has never changed. Jennie

The first thing I did after reading this letter was to obtain leave of absence for a few weeks; the next was to hasten to my lodgings, pack my trunk and take the first train for N-----.

The train was the "Fast Express," but to me it seemed a "slow coach." Close connections were made, and at six o'clock that evening I stepped upon the platform at N-----. It had been two years since my feet had touched it. A crowd of recollections rushed through my mind, but nothing stayed me. At once I set out for the Fisk mansion. It was summer, and as I followed the walk from the gate to the door every object seemed as familiar as if I had seen them only the day before.

My desire was to find Jennie alone, and my wish was gratified. The old hall door was open, and I stepped in unannounced. I turned into the parlor softly and saw her sitting at a west window gazing at the glowing sunset sky, but oh how changed. There were Jennie's eyes and hair, but the rounded form and glowing cheeks were wanting; in their place were wan features and an emaciated form-a wreck of her former self. The hand destroyer was upon her, and it was evident that her sufferings were fearful. My heart sank within me, and again my dream of happiness vanished.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY
BY H.E. SMITH
JULY 16, 1875

THE DEAD LETTER

She uttered a cry of delight as I hastened to her side, and, half-rising, extended both hands toward me. I caught her in my arms and pressed her to my heart; then she sank exhausted into her chair. In a few moments she revived, and a look of angelic sweetness overspread her features as I told her the history of the "Dead Letter," for then she saw that it had remained unanswered from accident and not from design.

We went over the bitter past, only to prove how cruelly we had been defrauded of happiness by untoward accidents following the malice which had first directed our paths apart.

Supper was announced, and I attended Jennie to the dining-room. The family was not aware who their visitor was, for Jennie had purposely kept them in ignorance thereof, to surprise them as I had surprised her. They greeted me cordially, and were soon made acquainted with the facts. Although a shade of sadness pervaded the household and tinged the conversation, still the evening passed very pleasantly.

Several weeks I remained at N---, and passed most of the time with Jennie. She seemed to rally, and one all began to entertain hopes of her recovery. How I longed and prayed that her life might be spared. She was cheerful and hopeful, and as my leave of absence approached its limit I made up my mind to resign, so that I might be constantly near her. With this view I bade her good-by for a short time, my intended absence being only for the period necessary to close my affairs at the Capital.

Scarcely had I arrived in Washington when a telegram reached me that Jennie's condition was exceedingly critical. It was the recoil from the temporary improvement consequent upon the excitement, which we had mistaken for returning health. I hurried through my business and returned to N---at once. Reaching the house, I went at once to the parlor door, opened it, and looked in. A cold chill crept through my body as I discovered the unwelcome sight. Not a sound broke upon the stillness except the throbbing of my own heart, it was the stillness of death. I sank upon my knees by her lifeless clay; the fountains of my soul were broken up, and my aching heart found vent in tears.

We laid her to rest under the willows and maples. A shadow rests upon a stricken home-as dear to me as to her kindred-but the cloud that cast it wears a silver lining, for the white soul which left the earthly casket basks in the sunshine of eternal bliss. In that bright realm she will yet be mine.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

SEPTEMBER 24, 1875

A STORY OF THE SHERIFF

A well trained hotel clerk, who knows his duty rightly, considers that the accepted guest in the hotel is as much in his own castle as in his own house and will not permit him to be knowingly disturbed by unpleasant or unauthorized intruders. This, sometimes, is of service, and prevents disagreeable consequences, as will be seen in the history here about to be given, the scene of which was in the Tremont House in Boston several years ago, and one of the actors therein, a well-known merchant of Boston, who, over the **nom de plume** of "Acorn," used to furnish some of the liveliest sketches of humor, and sharpest of dramatic criticisms to the old New York **Spirit of the Times**, whom we shall designate as Jim Pines; the other, a well-known business man of our sister city of Portland, whom, for convenience sake, we shall call Short, in as much as he was short when one of the actors in the scene we are about to recount.

It changed one fine evening that a stranger entered the Tremont and addressing himself to the "gentlemanly clerk," inquired if Mr. Short of Portland was stopping at the house?

"He is," said the clerk, referring to the register. "Well, I want to see him; show me up to his room, if you please." "If you will send your card, I will see if he is at home," replied the clerk.

The visitor produced a card, which was handed to the bellboy, whom he was about to follow up stairs, when he was restrained by the clerk. "By kind enough to wait till we see if Mr. Short is in and will see you."

The bell-boy returned with word that Mr. Short "would see the gentleman tomorrow morning. "Where's the room?" said the visitor, "I'll go right up myself."

"Excuse me, sir! Mr. Short has already sent word he does not wish to see you till tomorrow, and Cannot permit him to be disturbed."

"Well sir, I think I shall go up if you will give me the number of the room, for I'm the Sheriff, and I intend to arrest him."

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY
BY H.E. SMITH
SEPTEMBER 24, 1875

A STORY OF THE SHERIFF

At these words Jim Pines who was sitting in a little room behind the keyboard, where he had heard all the conversation, and who is always ready to aid a man in difficulties-Jim, knowing this to be a case of late-at-night arrest to force a claim, rose and remarked that "he was going to see if his supper was ready," and slipping through the dining-hall up to his room, he took from thence an old pair of boots and went to Short's room, where he was at once admitted.

"Take your valise and duds, old boy, and come along with me." "What's up, Jim?" asked Short. "Not much, but the Sheriff will soon be; so come along."

The pair left the room, locked it behind them, and Pines dropped the old pair of boots outside the door, after which they passed over to another wing of the house, to Pines' room, where Short was left; and the former descended, where he found the hotel clerk still engaged in conversation with the Sheriff.

"I've seen about my supper, and it's all right," said he, as he passed the clerk with a wink. "I see this room against Mr. Short's name on the register is 26; is that where you put him?" asked the Sheriff of the clerk.

"Yes, sir." "Then I demand to be shown to that room, immediately." "All right, Mr. Sheriff. Boy, show the gentleman No. 26." This unwelcome visitor was conducted upstairs to the desired room. There it was, sure enough, number on the door, pair of boots sitting outside. The Sheriff looked at his watch. Half-past nine. "Humph! Goes to bed early."

He knocked; no response. Knocked a little louder; still no reply. "Boy," said he to the bell-boy who still stood near him, "is there any door opening out of this room to the chambers either side?"

"No, sir; you can see for yourself there's nobody in this one." The Sheriff looked into the unoccupied rooms on each side, and satisfied himself that there was no communication, and then, with a grim smile, took a chair from one of them and sat down beside the door of number 26.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY
BY H.E. SMITH
SEPTEMBER 24, 1875

A STORY OF THE SHERIFF

"Boy," said the officer of the law, "do you want to earn a dollar?" "Yes, sir," said the waiter, as his eyes sparkled. "Well, take this note for me," said the officer, as he hastily scribbled on the back of an old letter, "and bring me an answer, and you shall have it."

The waiter was off like a shot, and returned with an answer, to whom the other in a whisper explained the situation. "He's in here, and no way of getting out; we can't break in the door; you must watch here till morning, and when he comes out to breakfast arrest him. Boy, there's your dollar."

Thus left, the deputy settled himself comfortably down in his chair, and the Sheriff walked off, satisfied that he had trapped his bird. Next morning about eight o'clock he reappeared. There sat the watchman, looking a little red about the eye-lids, and there stood the boots, as when he left the night before.

"Any movement, Linx?" "Not a bit as yet; quiet as a churchyard." "Ah, ha!" Thinks to tire us out. Go down and get some breakfast, Linx and I'll mount guard while you're absent."

The deputy went away, and in half a hour returned invigorated and refreshed, and resumed his post, which he faithfully held till noon, when his principal again made his appearance on the scene.

"What! Not up yet?" "Not a motion!" The two men looked at each other doubtingly. At this moment one of the chambermaids came along, with broom and a bunch of keys in hand. "Got a key that'll open this room?" said the sheriff. "Yes sir," said the maid. Applying it, the door flew open, and the two officers rushed in.

It was empty. The bed was undressed; a half-smoked cigar and a newspaper of the day before lay upon the table, which were all the traces of its having been occupied. From force of habit the deputy guarded the door, while his principal looked into the shallow closet, under the bed, out of the window (it was forty feet to the pavement), and had even taken off the blower at the little fire-place with the vague ideas that the man sought might have vanished, in some mysterious manner, up the chimney, when his eyes caught sight of the bell-boy, standing outside the door.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

SEPTEMBER 24, 1875

A STORY OF THE SHERIFF

"Say, boy, do you know where Mr. Short is, who occupied this room." "Sure, sir, he must be in Portland," said the boy with a grin, "he left in the seven o'clock train, and it's twelve now." The sheriff glanced at his watch. "Yes but whose boots are those at the door." "These," said the boy, taking them up; "these be Mr. James Pines' boots, here's his name on the lining."

And so it was, and the officers had never thought to look in them. "Are you afraid anyone would stale 'em, that ye sit by 'em so?" asked the waiter maliciously. The sheriff made no answer but strode out of the room, sending the boots aside with a vigorous kick as he passed toward the staircase. When he was halfway down, he was stopped by the voice of the bell-boy, who, leaning over the banisters, called out;

"Sir, jist a moment, plaze." "Well, what is it!" replied the officer, turning up his face. "Would you tell me, plaze, how much it is Mr. Pines pays an hour for the watchin' ay his boots?" The sheriff vouchsafed only an indignant "humph," and passed on. He and his deputy had passed out upon the front steps of the house, when another waiter, running after him, tapped him on the shoulder with the message that the hotel clerk wished to speak with him. Hastening back with the thought that he was to hear something respecting his lost game, he was met with a bland smile by the clerk, who remarked;

"I b'lieve you forgot this little bill." "Little bill! What little bill?" The clerk presented a paper bearing the pictorial representation of the Tremont, and beneath which was the charge; "Do you mean to say that you intend charging me a dollar for my man's sitting up a chair here all night?" said the officer of the law, red and irritated. "Can't tell how he passed the night; all I know is that we gave him lodging, and one dollar's our price," replied the clerk, icily.

"Say, Charley, have you seen my old boots?" asked a gentleman at this juncture who appeared to be accidentally standing near. "I've missed 'em from my room. I hope someone has kept an eye on 'em, for I would rather give a dollar than lose em."

"All right, the boots is safe, sure didn't the gentleman sit by 'em all night," answered the grinning waiter as the sheriff turned around. "Ah!" Graham, good morning-much obliged to you-here, let me pay this lodging bill, for I prize those boots," said Jim Pines, as he took the slip of paper from the sheriff's hands, who stood staring at him. "Mr. Pines, I give it up. I'm euchred," said the officer, "and that's the first pair of boots I ever knew that helped a man to run away without this being in 'em." "Ah," said Jim, "there's nothing like leather when there's business afoot."

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY
BY H.E. SMITH
JULY 9, 1875

HOW SHE WAS RIGHTED

"Have you any references?"

"No, madam, I am a stranger in the city. But if you would only try me!" There was an appealing look in the soft gray eyes, and a quiver of the nether lip that went straight to Mrs. Mayfield's heart. She looked again at the applicant.

She was dressed plainly, yet neatly in black; but the look of settled sorrow that appeared in the curve of her mouth, and in her sad eyes, might or might not be wholly occasioned by the loss of friends. Altogether there was an air of refinement about her that marked her as a lady, and one not used to brave the world alone.

Mrs. Mayfield was at bottom a kind-hearted woman; and after some hesitation, and with misgivings that were natural to one governed rather by custom and the opinions of others than her own judgment, she finally consented to receive the new governess on trial, and Miss Compton entered immediately upon her duties. Mrs. Mayfield was pleased to find that the children took to her kindly; and when she saw with what cheerfulness the governess entered into all of their childish pursuits, and her tact in everything, she felt a sense of quiet satisfaction in her choice.

"I believe that we shall like her ever so much, Tom," she said to her cousin, Mr. Harkworth, "She seems to take such an interest in the children, and she is really an accomplished musician. I got her to play for me this morning while I was feeling somewhat unwell."

"I am getting quite impatient to see your paragon," replied Tom. "Do trot her out, Lib, as soon as convenient."

Mr. Harkworth was lounging in an easy chair, with an air of perfect comfort, listlessly glancing over the paper. The words were scarcely out of his mouth when the door opened, and Miss Compton appeared on the threshold. There was a momentary hesitation, a slight opening of the eyes, and just a suspicion of heightened color in the cheeks, and then the governess advanced with quiet self-possession.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY
BY H.E. SMITH
JULY 9, 1875

HOW SHE WAS RIGHTED

With Tom the effect was electric. All appearance of ennui disappeared in an instant, and upon presentation by his cousin he bowed with all the deference he would have shown to the finest lady in the land.

This was the beginning of Miss Compton's life in her new position. She proved herself eminently qualified as an instructress, and her lady-like bearing and modest retirement won for her the esteem and confidence of her employer.

Delicacy of feeling prevented Mrs. Mayfield from trying to penetrate the reserve with which she spoke of her early life, and all that was known of her was that her father had died leaving her un-provided for, and that she had chosen to rely upon her own efforts rather than be dependent upon relatives.

As for Tom, he was a marked man from the first; only he was shrewd enough to conceal his feelings from his cousin, whose devotion to Mrs. Grundy might interfere with his purposes. If he seemed to take an unusual interest in the children, it was all in such an offhand manner as to attract no attention. At the same time his treatment of Miss Compton, while it was lacking in no degree in respect, was so familiar and free from anything like restraint, as to awaken in Mrs. Mayfield's mind not the slightest suspicion of his true feelings.

One day Mrs. Mayfield went out, accompanied by her children, but leaving Miss Compton in her boudoir in charge of the baby. Upon her return she found her governess in a state of nervous agitation. She left the room somewhat hurriedly, evidently to cover her discomposure. As Mrs. Mayfield stepped to her dressing-table, she discovered her portmonnaie lying open and several bills beside it.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY
BY H.E. SMITH
JULY 9, 1875

HOW SHE WAS RIGHTED

"How careless I am!" she said, hastily replacing the money in the pocketbook, and putting it into her pocket. And then: "I wonder what was the matter with Miss Compton; she seemed disturbed. There must be some trouble in her life, poor soul!"

Presently the door bell rang. It was a milliner's girl with a new bonnet for Mrs. Mayfield. The lady was pleased with it, and took out her portmonnaie to pay for it. She had the money all counted out and rolled up. Upon counting it again before handing it to the girl, she was surprised to find it five dollars short. There was no other money in her purse except some small change. She ran up stairs and looked on her dressing table, where the money had lain. It was not there, and further search proved fruitless.

The lady called to her governess had she seen any money lying about? Miss Compton had not. She joined in the renewed search, and seemed disturbed that the missing bill was not found.

"Never mind, it may come to light," said Mrs. Mayfield; but, as such things always do, it left a feeling of dissatisfaction on her mind.

Later in the day a visitor called. After exhausting all other items of gossip she said:

"And your governess, It is sad, isn't it, that she should be annoyed by such a fellow?" Mrs. Mayfield looked puzzled. "Ah, Miss Compton?": Yes. He has just broke jail. Didn't you notice it in last evening's paper? It is terrible to have such relatives."

Mrs. Mayfield was more mystified than ever. "Her relative? I don't know that I understand you. Miss Compton has been somewhat reserved in speaking of her people and her life before coming here."

"Is it possible that you don't know?" The visitor's eyes dilated with astonishment, and Mrs. Mayfield colored slightly at her ignorance of the antecedents of her governess.

"Miss Compton came to me a stranger in the place, and without references-" "And you took her in without knowing."

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

JULY 9, 1875

HOW SHE WAS RIGHTED

The enormity of the thing seemed to overcome the visitor, and she broke off without giving the enlightenment that would have relieved her auditor's out-growing curiosity. "She appeared like a lady, and seemed in distress," began Miss Compton's employer, by way of extenuation.

"Why, bless your dear heart!" cried her guest, "if we took in every one who looked like a lady or gentleman, we should all be murdered in our beds!" "I am sure there can be nothing terrible connected with Miss Compton," said Mrs. Mayfield, with apprehension awakened by the words and manner of the other.

"Have you yesterday's paper?" asked the visitor. She had an eye to dramatic effect, and knew that every moment of suspense was fitting her auditor for the final denouement. Mrs. Mayfield remembered that the paper was in her boudoir, and sent for it. When it was brought the visitor pointed to a paragraph among the "dispatches for the Associated Press," and said impressively:

"Read that!" With some trepidation Mrs. Mayfield complied.

"New York, July 23.

"The noted defaulter, John Compton, whose apprehension recently cost our detectives so much time and ingenuity, has managed to elude the vigilance of his keepers and is again at large."

When the lady raised her eyes from the paper the other said: "That is her brother!"

"Impossible!" cried Mrs. Mayfield; nevertheless she was fully satisfied of the truth of the statement. "I always supposed you were informed in the matter when you took her." "What!" place my children knowingly in the charge of a person of such disreputable connections!" "O, of course, she may be none the worse on that account; only fancy his coming to her for money, or to be secreted until the heat of the search for him was over. I have read of such things. Ugh!" And the lady shuddered at the bare idea. Like a flash, Mrs. Mayfield's mind reverted to the missing five dollar bill and Miss Compton's agitation.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY
BY H.E. SMITH
JULY 9, 1875

HOW SHE WAS RIGHTED

With the readiness of many another of her turn of mind, she “put this and that together,” and jumped at a very rational conclusion that she was harboring a monster. It was all clear to her. The culprit had fled from the metropolis and come immediately to his aid. She, to eke out her little store, had been tempted to appropriate some of her employer’s money.

When Tom came he was met by a very solemn face. “Halloo, Lib! What’s up? Has the baby got the measles, or have you got rain on your new bonnet, or—” “Don’t trifle, Tom,” said his cousin. “The case is a serious one.” “Well, out with it. There’s nothing half so terrible as suspense.”

Tom was used to his cousin, and expected nothing more than a very moderate sized mountain. “Tom I have every reason to believe that we have been harboring a most ungrateful woman. I am forced to suspect Miss Compton of dishonesty.”

The idea struck Tom as so absurd that he went off in a roar of laughter. “O, Lib!” he cried when he could fetch breath, “let up! That’s the biggest bugaboo yet. Has she made off with the plate?” Few of us can with equanimity bear being laughed at. Mrs. Mayfield colored. “Your merriment cannot alter the fact,” she cried. “Nonsense, Lib! What can have led you to such an absurd suspicion?” “I left a roll of bills on my dressing-table when we went out to drive, and upon my return one of the rolls was missing. There was no one in the room but Miss Compton and baby. How will you explain that?”

“Why, you made a mistake in counting the money, and left less than you supposed?” “Didn’t you give me thirty dollars this morning?” “Yes” “Well, just before going to drive I counted out enough to pay for my bonnet and left it lying on the table beside my *parte-monnaie*. The rest I put into the inside pocket, and it is there just as I left it.” “Might not the bill have blown out of the window?”

“Miss Compton sat in the window; the distance was too great, and there was not draft sufficient.”

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY
BY H.E. SMITH
JULY 9, 1875

HOW SHE WAS RIGHTED

"She may have left the room a moment, and one of the servants entered and taken the money." "They were both out. She and baby were the only persons in the house during our absence."

"Anyway" said Tom, with a frown, and the air of a man who discredits for no better reason than because he is determined not to believe, "it's preposterous to think for a moment that Miss Compton is capable of a petty theft. Where is she?"

"In her room, I presume," replied Mrs. Mayfield, with the quiet satisfaction of one who had beaten the enemy at every point. "Of course you have not insulted her by letting your suspicion be known?" "I have said nothing to her since she helped me in the fruitless search for the bill."

Tom frowned. "And, Tom." Mrs. Mayfield had reserved a cap for her climax. "Well?" "Read that." She pointed out the newspaper paragraph. When she saw that he had read it, she said simply: "Her brother!" Tom frowned again. "Lib," he said, "you'd make an excellent detective. It's a pity your sex shuts you out from so congenial a field of action." Mrs. Mayfield smiled quietly. She could afford to be tolerant. She would not quarrel with the patient for making a wry face over a bitter pill.

"At any rate," said Tom, "don't act hastily in this matter. The bill may turn up, but then it may be too late to heal the wound you may inflict by undue precipitation." With that he left the room.

Miss Compton did not appear at the tea-table. Mrs. Mayfield looked significantly across at her cousin, but he sat looking doggedly down into his plate. In the evening, while working in the garden in moody thought, he suddenly came face to face with the governess. She had a shawl thrown over her head, and was hastening toward the house. Upon seeing him she started back, and would have avoided him; but he was at her side in an instant, a recollection of Mrs. Mayfield's suspicion of her meeting her brother flashing through his mind.

"Miss Compton!" She turned upon him, and grasped his arm almost fiercely. "Do you believe her?" she demanded. "I heard her telling you." "Then you must have heard my reception of her absurd suspicion." "That is true," replied the governess, with an air of relief. "Miss Compton," said Tom, taking her hand, "I cannot express my regret that you should have overheard my cousin, who, at best, is but a woman easily influenced by outward appearances. Since you did hear her, I am about to prove to you that in my mind, at least, not a shadow of suspicion rest against you."

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

JULY 9, 1875

HOW SHE WAS RIGHTED

Miss Compton—Jessie—let me call you so—I love you, and ask you to be my wife! With a sharp cry, she snatched her hand away, and broke from him. “Don’t! don’t!” she cried. “I am satisfied that you believe in my innocence in this case; but, aside from this, I am unworthy of you. Do not entertain the thought for a moment.”

“Jessie, I know all; but, if you return my love, I will brave the opinion of the world. O, let me stand between you and it! Give me the right to be your protector.” “No, no, Mr. Harworth. I cannot accept the sacrifice your generosity would prompt you to make. I cannot drag you down with me. Now let me pass, please.”

“Jessie, is this your final answer?” “Yes, final. It must be so,” she said in a broken voice. “One moment,” he said. “Do not think that I give you up. I do not believe I am indifferent to you, and someday I shall renew my suit.”

With that he stepped aside and let her pass. The next morning Mrs. Mayfield’s maid came to her and said; “Just see, ma’ma, what I found in baby’s clothes.” She put into the lady’s hand a crumpled five dollar note. It was mutilated and wet, indicating that it must have been in the child’s mouth. “Dear me!” said Mrs. Mayfield, with a look of distress, “it must have blown down on the floor, where baby could get it. Then he got it into his mouth and afterward dropped it down into the bosom of his dress. It must have been overlooked in undressing him.” She hastened with the bill and her explanation to Tom. He compressed his lips. “This is very poor salve for the pain your tongue caused her yesterday,” he said gravely. “It’s sure I didn’t mean to be unjust,” said Mrs. Mayfield, with a whimper.

Then she ran to Miss Compton’s room to apologize. The chamber was empty. A note explained the matter. “Of course, I cannot stay under your roof with the suspicion of theft resting upon me. The money due me will more than repay you the amount you suspect me of having stolen from you—the injustice of which may never be known save to God and myself. Do not think that I entertain hard feelings toward you. I do not. Appearances are certainly against me. My usefulness would end with the loss of your confidence, and hence I go. Jessie Compton.”

Mrs. Mayfield wept over the note. Tom put it into his pocket without comment. He immediately employed a private detective and hunted her up. “Miss Compton,” he said, “it would be only generous in you to return and receive my cousin’s apologies.”

When he had carried his point, and Mrs. Mayfield had again and again begged Jessie’s pardon with tears, he said: “You cannot better show your perfect forgiveness than by consenting to retain your position.” That was purely selfish. However, he was ably seconded by Mrs. Mayfield, and between them they almost constrained compliance with their wishes. Tom had a quiet laugh in his sleeve, noting his cousin’s enthusiasm, and thinking how it would be cooled down by a little peep into his mind. While they were talking a tragedy was being enacted in another part of the city. A fugitive from justice, being hard pressed by the police, shot himself rather than be captured. Tom took charge of the body of John Compton, and secured for it decent burial. Six months after that he shocked his cousin and the devotees of Mrs. Grundy generally by marrying Mrs. Mayfield’s governess.

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

March 12, 1875

Miss Rebecca Erism, a valetudinarian of sixty, lay dying at her house in town. She had held so tenacious a grip upon life that it was difficult for the two young people to realize the end was so near. These two young people were Gerald Erism, her nephew, and Miss Luane Williams, her companion and nurse.

Gerald had seen the young woman every day for the three years she had lived with his aunt, but never until this moment had bestowed a serious thought upon her. He did not even know the color of her eyes till his aunt gasped out a sentence that caused him to look at her attentively. Then he found them shining luminously in the somber gloom of the sick chamber, and something therein forbade him to hate her, although the sentence his aunt had uttered was to the effect that she had left Miss Williams all her money.

"If you expect to pay for that horse for Emily Thorpe to ride with the money you get by my death," said the dying woman, "you're mistaken."

"You don't understand," began Gerald. "It was an infamous transaction," said the old lady, "what I call a post-obit. I found out enough about it to make me put a codicil to my will. That rascally horse dealer'll loose his money after all, and Emily Thorpe shall flaunt none of her finery at my expense. I've left my money to Luane Williams!"

It was then that Gerald looked at Luane; but his aunt suddenly stretched out her hands to him pleadingly, and finding a gray pallor spreading over her face, he knelt down by her bedside and took her cold withered hand in his own.

"If the horse had been for anyone but that Emily Thorpe!" faltered the poor lady. "Oh, aunt," said Gerald, "if you'd let me explain—"

"I would if I had time," she said: "but I must die now."

Register of Deeds

Judy Lambert

(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY
BY H.E. SMITH
MARCH 12, 1875

MISS ERISM' S CODICIL

In ten minutes it was over, and Gerald went out of the house with a great ache at his heart. He was very sorry for his aunt; she had been very kind to him—too kind, for she had reared him for the useless life of a drone, when now it appeared he must work for his living like all the rest of the bees. It had hitherto been something of a bore to him merely to spend money, and the fact began to dawn unpleasantly upon his mind that to earn it must be infinitely more wearisome.

Walking aimlessly on, his feet took mechanically a familiar direction and he found himself pausing before a fine house in a fashionable quarter of the city, from which shambled a somewhat bent and awkward figure that presently disappeared in a brougham before the door.

Gerald recognized the man as Mr. Badger, the millionaire, and involuntarily contrasted his condition with that of the fortunate soap dealer. He was, however, so absorbed with the direful news he had to tell Emily that before she came into the parlor he had forgotten Badger's existence.

It was singular that her remarkable beauty and brilliant toilet did not appall Gerald at that moment; that the fact of his no longer being able to grace that lovely hand with befitting gems did not prevent him from seizing it in both his own, and kissing it rapturously. But for an enchanting moment he was allowed to forget the gloomy chamber where his aunt lay dead, and the woman who waited there for the money he had been taught to consider his own.

"It seems to me that you are very beautiful this morning," was all that he could say. Emily drew her hand gently away from his caress. "Gerald," she said, "I have something to tell you." Her accent was cold. There was something in her manner that caused him to step back and look at her with a dim premonition of what was to come.

"You know," she continued, "how bitterly opposed is your aunt to your affection for me. She has told me herself that she will never consent to our happiness. Gerald, I am too fond of you to wreck your whole life. There was but one way to end it all---"

Register of Deeds
Judy Lambert
(continued)