

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

MARCH 12, 1875

MISS ERISM'S CODICIL

She paused. He leaned forward, and still kept his eye, now wan and haggard, upon her face. Then she sank pale and trembling into a chair, and covered her eyes with her hand. She was moved with pity, perhaps, or a vague regret. At last she spoke.

"I have just accepted an offer of marriage." "From Badger," cried Gerald, and walked to the door. "Your prudence," he added, standing upon the threshold, "has served you well. You have just got rid of me in time. My aunt died this morning, and has left everything to her nurse and companion."

Then he got into the street, and walked along with a faltering, staggering step. His eyes were wild, his face lividly pale. People turned to look at him as he went by, and two or three wondered what was sending that man to the devil.

He went home and stood by the body of his aunt. There was a single fascination about this death—something very wonderful and tempting in that mysterious and absolute rest. Suddenly he became master of himself of the bitterness and despair of the moment. He walked firmly to the door, but a step followed him, and turning, he saw the pale, perturbed face of Miss Williams. Then he remembered her presence in the room, but his madness and grief had prevented him realizing it.

"Just one word, Mr. Erism," she said. "Of course you know that I will not touch one penny of this money!" "It doesn't matter now," he replied. "It might as well be yours as anybody's." "But it is yours," she said.

"Oh, as for me," said Gerald, "I shall not want it." He walked through the hall. Miss Williams followed him stealthily. He entered the room, but when the door shut him in Luane remained, haggard and trembling, her ear glued to the cold panel between them. A grim silence reigned about her. She could hear the clock tick in the dead woman's room below. Suddenly she put both her hands about the knob and opened the door. Gerald turned quickly; there was an ominous click; the pistol fell a little as it went off. The blood soaked through his coat and trickled out upon the floor. Just as Luane was about sinking at his feet, Gerald put out his hand to her.

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"An accident, Miss Williams," he said, "Please send Adams for the doctor, and then help me off with my coat."

This brought Luane to herself. She hastened to do his bidding, dispatched Adams, and returning again to Gerald, stanchd the blood with strips of the pillow-case from a bed. When the doctor came she held the light for him while he probed the wound and extracted the bullet.

"An inch or so higher," said the doctor, "and you would have been buried on the same day with your aunt.

"It was a lucky thing, then, that Miss Williams had an errand to my room when she did," said Gerald. "As she opened the door my hand fell and the pistol went off."

"She has unconsciously saved your life," said the Doctor. Then as Luane left the room he added, "She's the finest young woman I know, and would make a capital nurse in my hospital. Do you know what she thinks of doing now that your aunt is gone?"

"No," said Gerald, with a grim smile; "but I fancy she'll think of something livelier than that." "She has such an excellent physique and splendid nerve," said the doctor. "But I must go. Keep as quiet as you can, and have Adams within call."

That night Gerald awoke with an intolerable thirst; his temples throbbed, his eyes burned. Looking over at Adams, he found that he was sound asleep. This of itself was offensive to Gerald. What business had the man to sleep when he was suffering? How terribly oppressive the stillness was, this semi-darkness and loneliness! At that moment a ponderous snore resounded from the throat of the study Adams, and Gerald almost leaped from his bed. It was like a stab to him: it was unendurable. He stretched over his sound arm, and reaching a pillow, threw it with all his might at the unconscious Adams. In spite of the agony the movement cost him, it was a futile one. The pillow fell far short of the object on the floor, and Gerald sank back with a groan.

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Suddenly the soft touch of a woman's hand fell tenderly upon his forehead, the sweet tones of a woman's voice fell soothingly upon his ear.

"It is time for your medicine," said Luane, and put the cup to his lips. Gerald drank as if it was nectar. Then she arranged his pillows for him, and was about retreating from the room when he faintly called for a drink. Then he thought his head was too high, or perhaps a trifle low; every movement caused him intolerable agony, and he hated to be alone with Adams again.

Besides he was curious about this woman. She must have really divined his motive, and come to him to save his life. She was again about to leave him, but he put his hand upon hers to detain her, and found that it trembled a little beneath his touch.

"Your hand didn't tremble when you held the lamp for the doctor," said Gerald. "He wants you for a hospital nurse, but I told him you'd prefer something more cheerful."

"Why, I think I'd like it," said Luane. "You know I must do something." "I don't see the necessity," said Gerald; "you have my aunt's money, and it will occupy all your time to enjoy it."

"Your aunt's money is your own," said Luane, "and you insult me by thinking I would take advantage of a poor old lady's weakness; I never will touch a penny of it. And, Mr. Erism, you must not talk.

"One word, only one," pleaded Gerald. "But for you I might have been like-like our poor old friend below." Gerald shuddered and turned pale. "I am cowardly enough," he went on, 'to hate even the thought of it now. How can I thank you, Miss Williams?"

"By taking what is your won, and using it nobly and well," said Luane, and vanished from his sight.

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As she left him he felt a sudden throb in the hand beneath his own, and saw a quick flame leap into her cheek, a glow to her eyes. "Three long years," murmured Gerald, "and I never knew her till now."

Gerald was young and strong, and the fourth day, the one appointed for the funeral, he was able to be up and dressed, and welcomed Luane warmly as she entered his room. She looked paler than ever in her black dress, but Gerald though he never had seen so sweet and noble a face.

"How I would like to go down, Miss Williams," he said, "and enjoy the surprise of the good people below! I'd like to see them bow and smile to the heiress of my aunt's fortune. I'm as bad as the rest of them, I suppose, for I feel like making all sorts of pretty speeches" Gerald paused, and his face grew suddenly grave and tender. "Go now" he added "and kiss my aunt good-by for me; tell her I am quite satisfied with everything."

Luane went from the room and down the stairs. For the last three days she had been like one in a dream. It seemed awful to be warm and happy even after she entered the dark, gloomy drawing-room, even after she had bent and kissed the cold, stern face for Gerald and for herself.

"I will not take it," she whispered, hot tears raining on the dead woman's face-" I will not take a cent of it, but it has given me such a gleam of happiness. God forever bless you for it."

Then the people began to pour in, and the ceremony commenced. Luane's were the only tears that were shed, and the most of the guests came from civility or curiosity. Miss Erism had taken but little active part in the world for many a year, and the poor lady was very soon put away and forgotten.

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The most important part of the proceedings was when they returned from the burial to hear the reading of the will. Luane trembled when the pompous lawyer unrolled the parchment, and began in a sonorous voice: "In the name of God, amen!"

What would they think of her-what would they say of her? Oh, how glad she was that the only one she cared for in the world knew all about it.! How innocent she was, and how ignorant! Even while she thought thus she heard the lawyer read: "To my beloved nephew, Gerald Erism, I give and bequeath all my property, personal and otherwise." Luane could scarcely believe her ears. She listened to the end, and heard at last: "To Luane Williams, my faithful nurse, I give a mourning ring and the sum of \$50." Then she went up stairs to Gerald.

"The King shall have his own!" she said. "Only on one condition," said Gerald. "I'll take your money only on one condition." "You'll take my money?" echoed Luane-"my poor little fifty dollars?" Luane's face shone with a profound joy. "Your aunt left her money where it belonged, Mr. Erism. I have just heard you declared her sole surviving heir." Gerald remained stunned and bewildered.

"Where is the codicil?" he cried to the lawyer, who stood at the door. "My aunt left her money to Miss Williams. She told me so when she was dying!" "Oh, that was when you bought the horse! I was afraid there would be trouble then; but, bless your soul, she got all over that."

"The money is mine?" cried Gerald. "Of course it's yours," and the lawyer went down the stairs chuckling at his incredulity. Then Gerald held out his hands to Luane. I was going to be magnanimous enough to marry you despite your money, he said; "now there is no obstacle to our happiness. Come, my sweet Luane, and bless the life you have given me!"

Luane became his wife. Mrs. Grundy said that he married her to spite Emily Thorpe. The lawyer chuckled still more, and thought of the codicil. We know that it was love, and for love alone.

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CAMP-MEETING

"It's too aggravating, so it is! Dear me! I wish I never forgot anything." "No, no! for mercy's sake don't wish you never forgot anything; for then you'd always have to remember all the disagreeable things that ever happened to you in your life. Believe me, its vastly better as it is. If we never forgot anything at all, then we'd have to carry down to our graves the vivid recollection of all the grief, sorrow, or pain we ever suffered; of all the times we've been snubbed by people, of all the hateful things folks have said to us and about us, and, above all, of every time in our lives when we've made fools of ourselves.

You will find that its' much to be thankful for, if you can forget the occasions on which you've made a fool of yourself, when you come to be an old maid, like your Aunt Laetitia." Alice Kildare laughed.

"Not much like being an old maid, is it; seventeen, and already engaged six months?" Well, I was engaged at sixteen, and have been engaged three times in my life, and yet here I am, an old maid in eye-glasses, and likely to die the same, please God. Think, now, what a budget of heart-breaking recollections I'd have to carry about with me the rest of my life, if I had remembered it all. Don't wish you never forgot anything, Alice.

On the contrary, thank heaven we do forget things." Again Alice Kildare laughed. "Sue and I are going to have our fortunes told, Aunt Laetie. Go with us, venerable mother, and see that it's done right." "I can tell yours without looking into a globe of mesmerized water. You'll be an old maid, mark the prediction. You have the elements of an old maid in your soul-one sort of an old maid, that is."

"What are the 'elements of an old maid,' Aunt Laet?" "Oh !-of your sort of maid-a high spirit, a bright mind, a sharp tongue, and an uncontrollable love of flirting. You'll be the sort of an old maid that takes to woman's rights and things-not the sort that takes to cats and religion. Once more, mark the prophesy, Alice Esmeralda Kildare!"

For the third time Alice laughed, her bright, spunky, ringing laugh, and then clapped on her gipsy hat and went with her friend Sue to see me.

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Minchauski, the great clairvoyant sibyl, who could miraculously see the shadow of coming events in a globe of mesmerized water-at so much a head. Alice was betrothed to a slim, handsome, long-haired college student, who wrote poetry and had an Eolian harp in one window and a rose geranium in the other, and meant to go into the literary line as soon as he was done college. He was very much in love, and Alice was-oh! Dreadfully in love, but that didn't at all prevent this truthful young lady from flirting with a dozen other young men all at once, and telling no end of white lies about her engagement.

She was exceedingly attractive, but not so pretty as she was bright, piquant and spirited. At this very time, when she lay awake nights thinking of her betrothed, and never went to bed without tenderly kissing his photograph, at this very time she was flirting desperately with Tom Creighton, her lover's classmate, a rich man's son who was at home on a three months' leave of absence, which had been recommended by the college faculty. Worst of all, she had allowed Tom Creighton, in the presence of a third person, to tell her a slanderous story about her lover, one which she knew must be false; and there she sat and listened to it without the faintest attempt to fight for her lover's good name, just for fear Tom Creighton would think she was engaged, if she said anything.

I don't defend her, mind you; I think such conduct was simply scandalous, and such a young lady don't deserve even to have anybody fall in love with her; no, not if she lived to be a thousand years old.

"Well, what does the sibyl say?" asked Aunt Laetie. "She's a humbug," said Alice, savagely. "I'm sorry I went. It's real silly and wrong to encourage such wicked imposture, besides." This time Sue laughed. "The sibyl didn't say Alice was to be married, and so she thinks the sibyl is a humbug." Said Sue. "We went into a darkened room, and in one corner there sat a little ghostly, waxy-looking old woman, with great hollow black eyes. She had a glass globe of water before her on a little stand. The water had been magnetized, she said and she being a clairvoyant, was able, by her second sight, to see in the water beautiful pictures, and visions of events to come. Then she took Alice's hand and pressed it against her forehead, and began to wink and roll up her great hollow eyes in an awful manner. It was real scarey, Aunt Lactie. By and by she bobbed her head about and mumbled something and, still with her eyes rolled back and half shut, she began looking into the globe of magnetized water.

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Then presently she opened her ghostly-looking lips, and in a sort of sing-song said to Alice; "My child, I see pictures of your future spread out here and there before my inward eyes like a moving panorama. I see lovers ; you will have plenty of lovers, but I see no picture of a wedding. Strange! There is no wedding ring in the circle at the bottom of the globe. How is this, my child? I see one dim picture, a long way off in the future, it must be, because it is dim, and in it you stand up surrounded by people-ah! Let me see, they are children around you, and you are greatly changed, taller, paler, thinner, but there is no wedding. The water is not clear to-day; you must come again. Mercy! What is this? Here is a great crowd; they are making a noise, and looking at two men-young lady, the two men are fighting, and heavens! The water turns red; it is blood, blood! I see no wedding, no wedding. I see blood, but no wedding."

"She looked so weird and dreadful, Aunt Laet, that I was afraid to have her tell my fortune after that. She told us to come again when the water was clearer; and then we came away, and Alice has been cross since. I'm sure I wouldn't go back again for anything."

Where upon and finally Aunt Laet had her laugh. "What did I tell you, Alice? Didn't I tell you were to be an old maid? It was foreordained by the fates. Only, Alice, let me request one thing of you , yea, two things, come to think. Don't you ever go to petting cats, or dyeing your hair with vile-smelling sulphurous stuff, when white hairs begin to sneak in around your temples. I'll never will you my teapot or eye-glasses if you do that."

Aunt Laetitia who like to tease people, laughed again. It was the season of peaches and melons, the roasting season when idle people hunt cool places, and devout people hold cam-meetings. Alice went to a camp-meeting with her father, mother and Aunt Laetitia. Is there anybody here, I wonder, who doesn't know what a camp-meeting is? If there is, let her go to the next one, and find out for herself.

Father and mother sat among the worshipers, close to the preachers platform; Aunt Laet sat half-way back in the congregation, like one who was doubtful in her mind, as yet, whether to separate herself from the world or not; while giddy-pated Alice didn't pretend to sit among the congregation at all, but hovered away back on the extreme borders, where the preacher's voice could scarcely be heard at all.

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Their position in the camp-meeting audience was an exact barometer of the devotional states of these excellent people, namely, father and mother, Aunt Laetitia, Alice. In point of fact, the young people on the outermost borders of that devout assembly were flirting with all their might. If you've never been to a camp-meeting, I don't mind telling you that is what young people mostly go to camp-meeting for. Alice Esmeralda Kildare was flirting with Tom Creighton. Her betrothed, the slim long-haired student, was coming home tomorrow.

"When the cat's away the mice will play and the mouse will play till the very last minute before the cat comes," Alice had remarked to herself as she admired her bright brunette face in the glass that morning.

She sat upon one of the rude wooden benches under a tree and let Tom Creighton talk nonsense in half whispers to her. Was all this wicked, of a Sunday, at camp-meeting? Yes, certainly it was; but two-thirds of the young people about them were behaving in the same wicked manner. Suddenly Tom Creighton's soft, lazy voice ceased and Alice looked up presently to see why. She could hardly keep down a cry as she saw approaching them her own betrothed, the slim, handsome student who had been gone a year. Somehow she felt dreadfully guilty as she caught his bright, gray eyes. It was such fun to flirt, but—dear me!

The slim student passed her with a cold bow. His mother was on his arm, and he led her to a seat up among the devout people around the preacher's platform. Alice's heart beat a little queerly, and Tom Creighton watched her keenly. It wasn't pleasant, and Alice hated unpleasant things. Suddenly her betrothed came back toward them. He had seated his mother and left her. He touched his hat to Alice.

"I beg pardon, Miss Kildare, but I wish to ask you something, in presence of this person. I may not have the opportunity again. I may not see you again soon, indeed."

He took a paper from his pocket and unfolded it. "Read that, if you please," said the slim student to Miss Alice, who by this time was beginning to be conscious of a powerful inclination to run away. The paper contained an exact copy of the slanderous statements which Alice had allowed Tom Creighton to repeat to her concerning her betrothed.

"I only wish to know," said the slim student, with simple dignity, "whether you allowed this person to tell you the stuff that is on that paper?"

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Alice did not answer. She wanted worse than ever to run away, but to save her life she could not have gone past that wrathful gray eye which was fixed on her like a siege gun. "A very short answer is sufficient. Yes or no, Miss Kildare." "I won't tell you," said Alice, pouting. "Do you think you can make me do anything I won't do?"

"I beg your pardon," said the slim student, with icy politeness. "I would not for the world ask you to do anything which is disagreeable to you. Allow me to wish you good morning." As he strode away and left them Alice didn't like the looks of him. Consequently she flirted harder than ever. During the dinner recess, after Tom Creighton had gone away and left Alice, suddenly there arose a terrible roar and rumpus in the edge of the woods. Then there was a pistol shot, and the next moment we heard cries of "Prize-fight!" "Murder!" "Part'em!" "Give it to him, little one!"

Those who rushed to the quarter whence the cries came saw a slender man, all bloody, and foaming like a wild beast, madly beating and pounding a big fellow who was trying faithfully to shield himself from the blows which were raining down upon him. Before they could be separated the slim student had beaten Tom Creighton half to death.'

"Good enough for him, too," said everybody who saw the encounter. "Who'd have thought that a slim fellow who wrote poetry could do it?" It seems the two rivals had met somewhere in the grove. Angry words had passed between them, and at last Tom Creighton, who seemed to be in constant terror lest the other would "pitch into him," the boys said, suddenly drew this pistol, without a moment's warning, and exclaiming, "Don't you come near me!" fired at the slim student.

The blood streamed from the young man's arm, and he fell to the ground, wounded and stunned. Tom Creighton turned to run away, but he had not taken three steps before the slim student who wrote poetry was upon him. He sprang up, covered with blood, and leaped madly forward, with a roar like a lion.

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"I'll beat your infernal head off," he howled. "I'll kill you." He was in a fair way to do it, too, wounded though he was, when the camp police appeared and arrested both the young men in the name of the offended majesty of the law. A wicked newspaper said next day that the prize-fighters had a larger and more enthusiastic audience than the minister.

That evening this note was put into the hands of haughty Alice Kildare, who had caused all this trouble: "I return you your troth. It is nothing to me now, because I know it is nothing to you. I know now, too, that women are incapable of steady truth and faithfulness. I suppose God made them so. I do not know why it was ordained that a man shall pour out all his soul, all his manhood and earthly hopes at a woman's feet, and for compensation have only the satisfaction of knowing he is a fool. I shall not return to college, and you will not see me again. I hope you will always be happy."

Alice took the letter upstairs with her, and cried all night over it. In the morning she bathed her red eyes very carefully, and looked at herself narrowly in the glass as she combed out her dark locks. "And so I am to be an old maid for all time," she said very soberly. That is the romance of one camp-meeting.

"Oh, botheration!" remarked Sam. "Sam Harrington! Before heaven I believe you are the laziest, slovenliest, crossed, uncivilizedest old bachelor that ever vegetated outside of a grizzly bear's hollow tree. I can hardly believe you are my cousin anymore, as I think of what you were fifteen years ago when you visited us; and look at you now, stout, chuffy, slovenly, and rich, caring for nothing on the earth or under the heavens but your nasty pipe. An old bachelor is a disgrace to humanity, anyhow. Sam Harrington! I say-for the Lord's sake, get up and put on a clean shirt!"

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Sam grunted. The little woman poked him energetically in the ribs. "Your duty to your health imperatively demands it," she said. Sam groaned. The little lady poked him again. "By all the laws of reason and logic this duty is pressingly incumbent on you. Allow me to put it to you in the light of public duty which you owe to your kind, as a member of a civilized community, and not a Hottentot or a Red Indian. Moreover, I, your cousin, implore you with tears in my eyes to oblige me immediately and go and change your linen, and not disgrace me before the world. There now is a consideration which ought to move a heart of stone."

Sam elevated his right foot across his left knee, and regarded attentively a hole in the toe of his ragged slipper. "Oh, pshaw!" says he. "There is no pest on earth equal to a woman." "And, besides that, society expects it of you," continued the little woman, punching him with great vigor.

He arose and slowly stretched himself. Then he disappeared, and presently came back, having reluctantly made the required change of raiment. The wristbands were unbuttoned and the cellar and bosom terribly crumpled. His cousin eyed him discontentedly.

"See the man now!" she said. "And that beautiful bosom, too, looks as it you'd been rolling down somebody's shed-roof. I declare you're enough to drive a woman mad. You're going to our camp meeting with us, too, and I wanted so much to introduce you to Widow--"

"Drat all women!" said Sam, reflectively. "Drat all women-especially widows." "Our widow isn't a widow at all, she's a-she's an old maid. I don't know why everybody calls her widow, but that's the name she is always known by. She used to be rich when she was young, but she was real bright and learned then, very learned, for a rich man's daughter. Her father died, they lost their fortune, and widow had to work for a living. She came here, and has actually been principal of our village high school for the last seven years.

There never was a woman held the place before, and there never was a man who filled it half so well. Her graduates make the best wives and the best school-mistresses in the country. School-mistresses always make good wives, Sam. I used to be a school-mistress myself."

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"Yes" said Sam, "Modest, you know." And little Mrs. Gerty sat among the devout part of the congregation, and listened to the sermon like old folks. When it was over, and they had all left the wooden benches, a tall, pale lady, with lustrous black eyes, and dark, wavy hair, stood up facing them. An aged lady, with silvery hair and a sweet, placid face, leaned on the other's arm, and the younger lady carefully supported her feeble steps.

"That's widow and her mother," whispered Sam's cousin. "Isn't she lovely?" Sam looked. The fine, delicate face was the least bit faded and tired-looking, but not a bit soured or gloomy. Or, no! not the least. It was a clear, true face-fine, strong, and pure, like steel or silk, or something of that sort. Little Mrs. Gerty caught the schoolmistress hand.

"Widow," said she, "this is Cousin Sam Harrington, a rich, slovenly old bachelor. I wish you'd take him off my hands. Sam-Miss Kildare." "W-h-a-t!" screamed he crazily. "Don't hurt my arm so. What did you do that for?" said Mrs. Gerty.

"Mr. Harrington and I used to know each other long ago, when I was young," said the schoolmistress calmly, but with an ineffable look from her dark, softly-fringed eyes. "I met Mr. Harrington fifteen years ago, at a camp-meeting. I have never seen him from that day to this."

Then she moved in a calm, graceful way, with a little spot of quivering sun-shine glancing across her gray dress as she passed. The first thing Sam Harrington did was to look sheepishly down at his dusty boots, while his face reddened slowly with the memory of an old flame. He laid his hand upon Mrs. Gerty's arm.

"Cousin Mary, you said awhile ago that I used to be a poet and an enthusiast, with bright hopes and aspirations, and it had all ended in my being a useless, slovenly old bachelor, who got rich at patent brick-making:

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"Then I am sure you wronged her more than she wronged you. She is the truest, best, brightest woman I ever knew. I do wonder if you are the man she nearly broke her heart about long ago? I've heard a whisper of that, I'm sure. You were always too hard and unforgiving, Sam."

Little Mrs. Gerty, romantic as a girl, watches them narrowly. Were the old flames kindling into life again? Sometimes little Mrs. Gerty thought they had never died entirely out from the hearts of either. Sam Harrington began to blacken his boots and button his wrist-hands.

One summer moonlit evening Alice Kildare sat in the porch of the little cottage in which she lived with her mother. She was looking down the avenue of trees in front, toward the west, where the sun was sinking in the glowing sky. Sam Harrington came slowly up the walk and joined her in the porch.

"Widow Kildare," he said. "I've come to bid you good-by. 'Have you?'" said the widow. She would not ask a word more. "Yes, I must go back to my muck-raking, bricks, you know, and clay, and furnaces and things. I meant to be a poet when I used to be in love with you, fifteen years ago. Now I am a brick-maker."

"Used to be! That was what she had stayed an old maid for. Her heart was like lead in her bosom, but she smiled and said: 'After all a brick-maker is as good as a poet.'" "Are you sure you think that, Widow Kildare?" "Yes; quite sure."

"Wouldn't you like to see'em- great brick yards, and the huge furnaces, baking the patent bricks by the half million!" "Yes," answered the widow. "I could tell the school children about it you know." Sam Harrington made a face. Then he looked at her, and saw that, in spite of the brave, proud head which she held up so stately, her face was pale and sorrowful as face could be, as though she were parting with a last great hope. He actually smiled to see it. She had tortured him bitterly once. He threw his hat across the floor, and sat down on the edge of the porch at her feet.

"Alice," he said, "Why haven't you been married? What have you stayed single all these years for?" She looked at him and tried to answer, but the sound died away in a sorrowful, bitter sob, and she covered her face with her hands. The brave, proud woman was crying. He took one of the slim cold hands in both of his own. "Alice-I never got over it-the old hurt you gave me once. I never got over the old love, either. Be my wife, now, darling, and let us begin all new again. A little old-fashioned portfolio lay on her lap. She took from it a sheet of paper, all yellow and creased with age. She held the paper toward him. "Samuel Harrington! You said in this note that a woman was incapable of truth or faithfulness. Will you take it all back!" He tore the paper into shreds and blew it through his fingers, and I don't know where the wind carried it. "So please heaven, my hand shall remove all that gives you pain or trouble as long as you live. God bless you, my wife! God bless us all!" In spite of the globe of magnetized water, Alice Kildare didn't die an old maid. "There is no love like one's first love, after all," said little Mrs. Gerty to her cousin. "No, there isn't-that is if one's first love changes so as to suit, as one grows older," answered Sam, with a miserable attempt at being philosophical instead of sentimental. And that is the romance of the second camp-meeting.

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Judy Lambert

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

MAY 14, 1875

A Transaction In Stocks

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

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

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

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

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

Then Mrs. Bronson Said no more, and Silas was quite willing to keep silent on a disagreeable subject. A well-meaning but shiftless man was Mr. Bronson, not inclined to work, with little knowledge of business, and no practical sense to direct what knowledge he had. On Mrs. Bronson fell the real burden, and had it not been for her sagacity and executive ability poor Silas would have fared badly.

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

MAY 14, 1875

A Transaction In Stocks

In spite of her efforts, however, the fortunes of the family were getting at a low ebb, and her complaints of her husband's amiable inability were becoming frequent-more than Silas liked.

"Don't be always a frettin', Maria," he said one day. "Luck's agin us, I allow, but it'll change pooty soon." "Not unless ye work for' t," answered Maria, not relishing such serene resignation. "They do say that Providence takes care of lazy people and fools, but I do not set no great store on't."

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

"Halloo, Bronson! How do you do? Glad to meet you; just the man I wanted to see." "Pooty well, thank ye," answered Silas smiling weakly. He felt considerable awe of the Judge, and began to wonder what possible business that great man could have with him. But the Judge did not seem to notice his embarrassment; he locked arms with Silas, and began talking in a very familiar and confidential manner as they walked along.

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

"I haven't any boys; they're all girls; it's Jennie maybe ye mean," mildly suggested Silas. "Oh-yes! Jennie; so it is. Strange I should forget the name when I have hear it so often," answered the Judge, flushing a little. And then as they came to a small building on a corner he added, "Here's my office, Bronson. Come in a little while, I want to see you." Still wondering Silas obeyed. If the Judge had asked him to take off his boots it is probable he would have done so.

He entered the office as requested, and sat down in an awkward way by the stove, and stretched out his hands toward it as if he were cold. To be sure it was a warm day, and there was no fire in the stove; but then Silas didn't know what else to do, so he did that while he awaited the Judge's pleasure.

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

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

For a few minutes the Judge puffed away in silence. "That was a comfortable little wind-fall you had-your uncle dying off there in California and leaving you that money," he said at last.

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

"To be sure it is not a very large sum for a man of your means," continued the Judge; but it is nice to get such things, and it will do to get a suit of clothes and a few knick-knacks, maybe. And that makes me think, Bronson-where is it you get your clothes? My wife often says: 'Now, Judge Fay, if you only had the taste of Mr. Bronson about dress!' But then, bless me! I haven't nor would I look as tasteful on Sunday as you do." The Judge was careful to say "Sunday," for if he had included week-days it would have been more than even Silas could swallow.

"Jerry Markle, he made my last suit," answered Silas, surprised and pleased that his dress should thus attract admiration, and from so distinguished a source, too. The Judge passed another few minutes in meditative smoking. "The fact is, Bronson," he resumed, taking the cigar from his mouth, "the fact is I wanted to see you about a little matter that is-well, I may say of mutual advantage. You see, I was over in Pennsylvania last week, and through the oil regions. And while there I bought a tract, five acres, right near the best producing well. Of course I could have made a good thing by selling it again, but I concluded not to be selfish but to come home and form a stock company of a few of our influential men, like your-self and others."

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

"Please hear me through," interrupted the Judge, with a soft, deprecating wave of the hand; "I am not done Yet.

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There is lots of money in this thing if it is properly managed, and as I didn't wish to connect with Tom, Dick, and Harry, I have mentioned the matter to a few of our best men. Dr. Ross, Col. Clark and 'Squire Hardy have all taken stock, and our minister, the Rev. Mr. Norris, expects to invest. The stock is only a trifle-five hundred dollars a share."

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

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

"I know; but then I thought I'd better-" began Silas; but the Judge broke in with apparent surprise. "Oh, that's it! You have been already considering the matter? I might have known Col. Clark would speak to you about it. When I told him of my proposed company last week he asked if you were in it, and he said, 'If Bronson takes hold I will, because whatever Bronson takes hold of is sure to succeed.' Those were his very words; and so he spoke to you himself? Well, I am glad on the whole he did, and that you are going in with us. But you can't have more than four shares, Bronson!"-with a playful tap on the back-"and you needn't pay more than half down. That will be enough to carry the thing through, I think."

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

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

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

MAY 14, 1875

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They looked nice, and Silas placed them in his pocket fully convinced that he and Judge Fay, Col. Clark and the others were very important men and shrewd financiers withal. Then the Judge mildly intimated he had business to attend to, and Silas took his departure. But when outside, and on his way home, Silas, like the prodigal son, "came to himself," and he began to think the investment not so good after all.

He tried to recall the arguments and brilliant promises of the Judge, but some way he couldn't remember them, and the more he tried the more he forgot, while facing him was a very important question:

What would Maria say?

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

Vain delusion! Days and weeks passed by, and the "Great Union Petroleum Oil Company" paid no dividends to its stockholders-at least, Silas didn't receive any. In answer to his questions the Judge always talked learnedly about the geological formation, the various strata to be gone through, and would describe with great minuteness the machinery used, until his bewildered listener thought digging oil wells a very deep business. And so it was. Altogether too deep for Silas.

One day in the early autumn Silas came home with a new idea in his head. He had been talking with the Judge, and that great man had told him the company were on the eve of striking oil-a story Silas had frequently heard before, but this time a sudden thought came to him. He would go to Pennsylvania and look for himself. He mentioned the project to Maria and, to his surprise, she agreed with him.

"I don't know what made me do it either," she said afterward, talking to a neighbor when Silas had gone. "It is only throwing good money after the bad."

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Nevertheless she did so agree, and went hard to work to get her husband-in trim for the journey. He, the mean-while, worked steadily to secure money for the purpose, and then, resplendent in blue brass-buttoned swallow-tail, drab trousers and tall hat, with the certificates snugly placed inside a breast-pocket, departed. The exact locality of the well he did not know. He understood it was somewhere near the city of P-, and thitherward he journeyed, feeling confident that the "Great Union Petroleum Oil Company" could easily be found.

Silas reached P-the next evening and found it a lively place, made up chiefly of refineries, derricks, barrels and speculators; and, like a wise man, he went immediately to a hotel and ate a hearty supper and then went to bed. On the following morning he was ready for business; and on that morning, too, came the tide that led him on to fortune.

When he passed out into the street after breakfast he found everybody talking about "the great strike" of the preceding night. It seemed that a new company, composed of Eastern men, had been boring for oil for sometime past, and no prospect of success. But just as they were about giving up, and considering the money invested as money lost, then it was fortune smiled upon them. In a moment, as it occasionally happens, they had struck the oleaginous fluid, and the despised well became a flowing fountain of wealth. And, of course, the company's stock went leaping up to an enormous distance beyond par.

Silas heard all this, and his heart and head at once became light with hopeful expectation.

"Shouldn't wonder a bit if 'twas our well," he murmured to himself, "cause the Judge said we was jest on the p'int o' striking something. I'm sure it's our well!" Then, as a man went hurrying by, he asked; "Say, Mister, is it the 'Great Petroleum Company' that has struck oil?"

"Why, of course it's a petroleum company," replied the man, hastening on.

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MAY 14, 1875

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"I jest knew it! Hooray for General Jackson!" shouted Silas, throwing his best hat recklessly into the air, much to the surprise of the bystanders. Then he hurried back to the hotel, scarcely knowing whether he stood on his head or heels. After he reached that place he didn't know what to do with himself. He walked around, and then he sat down; then he got up and walked about again. Presently he entered the reading room, and as he did so he heard a gentleman near one of the tables say:

"Well, last night I would have sold my four shares for fifteen cents on the dollar, but now I hardly know what I would take for them."

"Have you got shares in the Great Petroleum? So have I," exclaimed Silas, rushing straight up to the stranger as if he were his long-lost brother.

"Bully, ain't it? Hooray for —"

"Don't get excited," interrupted the stranger, laughing. "Perhaps you are mistaken. Let me compare your stock-certificates with mine." As he spoke he placed his own certificates on the table, and Silas did the same with his. The papers certainly bore a general resemblance, but just as the stranger was about to examine them closely someone came to the door and called him.

"I can't stop," he said gathering up his papers again hastily and placing them in his pocket; "there is a carriage in waiting for me outside. However, my friend," he added. "You just keep cool. That is my advice."

The stranger then walked quickly out of the room, and Silas sat still for a moment with his certificates yet on the table before him. Someone placed a hand on his shoulder. He turned and saw a small, neatly-dressed, keen-eyed man behind him.

"Pardon me sir" said the new-comer, "but I heard part of your conversation with the gentleman who has just gone. I understood you to say that you owned several shares in the well that is so talked about this morning?"

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY
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MAY 14, 1875

A Transaction in Stocks

"Yes, I've got four shares," replied Silas with complacent promptness. "What will you take for them?" "Don't know as I keer abut sellin'," answered Silas.

The stranger picked up the certificates and looked at them carefully, and then, apparently satisfied, he said;

"I will give you three thousand dollars cash for them." Silas shook his head. "Four!" Another shake of the head. "Five!"

Silas began to waver a little, and he stopped to think. "Give me six thousand and you may have'em," he said, finally.

It was the stranger's turn now to hesitate. He scrutinized the certificates very closely, meditated a moment, and then said: "I will take them."

The exchange was quickly made, the stranger took the stock-certificates, and Silas placed six new, crisp bank notes in his wallet, and the two then separated. Elated and excited over his good fortune, Silas paid his hotel bill at once, and set out for the depot just in time for a homeward train.

When he reached home what a sensation his story produced! Everybody in the little village talked and wondered, and strangely enough, too. Silas was the only one of the "Great Union Petroleum Oil Company" who realized anything on the stock. People wondered about that, too, and Judge Fay explained it by denying the statement of Silas altogether. Indeed, in a moment of excitement, the Judge forgot his usual caution and gave his reasons. He said, firstly, the "Great Petroleum" had not struck oil; secondly, the company had not commenced to dig yet; and, thirdly, the "Great Petroleum" didn't own any land in Pennsylvania, nor anywhere else; therefore Silas's story must be false. Then Silas had the money and how did he get it?

Between you and me, gentle reader, I have my theory. I am inclined to think when the stranger place his certificates on the table to compare with those of Silas, and then went away so suddenly, in his haste he accidentally made an exchange and took away with him the "Great Petroleum" certificates. Silas, of course, was innocent in the transaction, and sold the genuine article to the speculator. Be the case as it may Silas never heard anything more about the matter; neither, under Maria's careful management, did he thereafter invest in any more oil-stock.

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

JULY 30, 1875

An Old Soilder

On a December evening in the year 1870 a train, entering the depot with much noise and bustle, ejected Gottlieb Braun into the city streets.

There was nothing remarkable in the circumstance. He was small and insignificant in appearance, with an expression of patient suffering, and one arm gone. Such was Gottlieb Braun, one of those quiet natures capable of bravery, also capable of fighting in the last trench, as he had done in the war, which had maimed, crippled, and made him a pensioner. Had you asked him where the arm was lost, he would have replied with military brevity, "Gettsburg." Or did you inquire as to the cause of an ugly sabre cut across the brow, and a wound in the thigh rendering quick movements painful, he would have added, "Seven Oaks" and "Shenandoah."

Despair had rendered him a hero for a brief moment; he had sought death in the ranks and had not found it, but hope had died within him long before, when his little daughter Gretchen was swept away by the fever; a lonely, quiet man, of whom war had made a cruel sport, and left alive. Humble as he was, Gottlieb still cherished ambition; in summer he was a peddler back among the hills; in winter he mended shoes. The ruin of large business houses cast a shadow abroad; the ruin of Gottlieb Braun, soldier-peddler, occasioned no comment in the mercantile world, and brought grief only to his own heart. The autumn mists of mountain lakes had claimed him as a victim of argue, and while he was ill, strong men robbed him of his little stock. Surely, among the crimes of earth that cry out to heaven, this robbery must be heard! Did Gottlieb weep and repine? Not at all.

He was now coming to draw his pension of \$100, and in the spring would start life again. Here he was in the city streets, gazing about him blankly, without a friend, and, still worse dilemma, with no money in his pocket. It would make no difference to anyone how he went or came, he thought ; and yet at that very moment Christine Carlen, terror in her wide blue eyes, was saying to the shopman, "I never did it!"

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

JULY 30, 1875

An Old Soldier

The chance of being left supperless and without shelter had a still worse aspect when it is remembered that it was Saturday night, with Sunday coming, and Gottlieb would not receive his pension until the following Wednesday.

Up among the mountains the Sabbath meant nature-worship to Gottlieb; skies were then brighter, and sunshine rippled the silver waters of cascades; the breeze played among the leaves; and in all the voices of woods and air he heard only the laughter of his child Gretchen. Often at such times he took a pen and endeavored to write his thoughts of her on the day of days, when heaven kissed earth; but his great need would not flow in words on paper; he remained dumb, the purple mountains raising a prayer all about him.

In the town all was different. He paused on the curb-stone irresolutely, pierced by the miserable conviction that he was weary, hungry, and cold. A carriage drew up, and a gentleman whose bearing betrayed fussy importance alighted.

“Bless my soul! I am late, actually late for a dinner party in my own house!” he exclaimed, testily, his glance falling on Gottlieb Braun.

The gentleman, whose middle age was smooth, rosy, and rotund, even as that of Gottlieb was sharp and meager, ascended the broad steps of a house, and was met at the threshold by a trim servant.

“Have not arrived, eh?” he said, rubbing his hands. “Very good. Still the fish may be spoiled, Maria.” Again his preoccupied gaze fell on Gottlieb, who, victim of circumstances, advanced and begged for assistance.

Mr. Gildwell listened with a certain exasperated composure. He was a person of weight in the world, wealthy and noted for being connected with many branches of charity; still he never gave at the door. A safe member of society, this, not liable to be carried away by impulse; whose very heart must be divided into sections for distinct emotions; whose principles, measured by rule and compass, did not permit Gottlieb Braun to gather crumbs which fell from the table spread for a foreign attaché and Mr. Thorn the millionaire.

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

July 30, 1875

An Old Soldier

The trim servant still held the door open, permitting a glimpse of marble vestibule, a rim of crimson rug, the sweep of a velvet curtain, and a group of lovely children playing with a poodle.

"It is against my rules to give money. I dare say your story is true. Served in the war, eh?" And did not run away? "No," said Gottlieb, simply. Mr. Gildwell pursed up his lips sourly, and did not spare himself. At the risk of having his guests discover him with-out a dress-coat, he searched in a corpulent pocketbook for a small red ticket.

"Take that to the Poor Bureau. A police man will direct you. Now be off." Gottlieb turned away. Curious freak of destiny! As Gottlieb, a poor German, was thus dismissed, the attaché also a German, was received with excessive urbanity in the house he condescended to honor. The trim servant, Maria, ran out on the step after admitting the visitors, fumbling in her pocket for pennies. Gottlieb had disappeared. Half an hour later he found the bureau, having twice blundered and missed his way. The place was closed for the night. He wandered on without purpose to the corner. The bitter wind had lulled; the somber clouds, gathering in dense masses overhead, promised the first snow of the year.

Mr. Gildwell, adjusting his napkin and presiding over a table glittering with silver and gorgeons with flowers and light, was observing: "If truffles are not indigenous in the country, Count, they may be cultivated."

Gottlieb observed a church, massive and dark, with a slender shaft towering far above the surrounding roofs. The church meant cool darkness, silence, purity, after the reeking streets, if one could gain entrance. He tried the door mechanically; it was locked. What would you have? We cannot keep our churches always open, even should a fainting soul perish by the way.

Next he was caught in an eddy of desperate humanity-the abject poor, the sodden, brutal poor, all seeking the station-house, eager to receive that last stamp of degeneration on the coinage of their own abasement, if sleep might only bring forgetfulness of misery.

Gottlieb shuddered and drew back from the crowded entrance of a building which seemed to exhale a painful familiarity with crime in every stone. He could not throw himself into that stream of pollution.

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

JULY 30, 1875

An Old Soldier

Afterward he wandered on, without purpose, past rows of fine dwellings, past hurrying people all intent on reaching home. Sometimes he held out his hand for alms, but it was done so awkwardly and hesitatingly that few noticed the movement. The way grew narrow and crooked; he had quitted the spacious thoroughfare unconsciously, and now tall houses, time-stained and dilapidated, lined the street. Gottlieb sat down on a wooden doorstep to rest. Nobody disputed his right of possession. Laborers came and went; work-women trudged along; children played in the gutter.

Suddenly a light form darted around the corner, tripped, and fell almost at Gottlieb's feet. Was it the gleam of golden hair escaping from a little scarlet hood, or the blue eyes, now anxious and terrified, that made Gottlieb start with the exclamation, "Gretchen!" Color had dawned in his pale face; he knew his mistake even before the young girl rose, nursing a bruised wrist; Gretchen was in her grave. The girl regarded him sullenly, almost wildly, and when he laid a hand on her arm she darted away again as if fearing capture. Her rapid flight was impeded by an old woman carrying a basket of apples and oranges, which were spilled by the shock of contact.

"Ain't yer ashamed, now, an' for an old body, too?" said the woman, whose name was Mother Bates. The girl hesitated, then stooped to gather up the fruit.

"Don't let her go," implored Gottlieb. The girl looked from one to the other suspiciously. "He wants me to be taken," she cried, with a sob. "You are like my Gretchen, and I wish to help you," he returned, quietly. Mother Bates planted her cane before her energetically.

"Where are you going?" to Gottlieb. "I don't know," wearily. "Where are you going?" to the girl. "Away from the police," with a shudder and fearful glance around. "Come along, then."

They followed the old woman, these two waifs, scarcely knowing why, and the girl whispered to Gottlieb, "I am Christine Carlen; I don't know Gretchen. And what makes you so pale?"

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY
BY H.E. SMITH
JULY 30, 1875

An Old Soldier

Mother Bates lived at the top of a tenement-house, and she conducted her guests into a small room with cheerful hospitality. Already were five children gathered here, sharp-featured, shrill-voiced, and bearing that aspect of precocity peculiar to boys and girls of the city streets. They might have been trained in a worse school, certainly, and the little room made a sort of democracy, of which Mother Bates was ruler, with limited authority. The addition of two strangers to their circle was taken as a matter of course by these small citizens of the world; only the baby stared at Christine, attracted by the beauty of gold hair, blue eyes and red lips.

With a tact Mr. Gildwell could have imitated, this ignorant old woman, taught by the goodness of her own heart-the only true instructor, indeed, in politeness-asked no questions while serving a frugal supper. Few manifestations of affection were exchanged in the household, although shrewd Mother Bates cherished a dry pride in the success of some of her charges.

"I used to live here alone, but I picked'em up one by one a-starving. I taught'em their trades, too. Billy sells newspapers; Molly sweeps crossings; and Mike gets cinders from the barrels for our fire. They save my old bones lots of work."

Christine Carlen had grown quiet; she was ready to tell her story. Two years before she had come from Sweden with her mother. They were to join their family in the West. Instead, the foreigners stranded in the city; the mother had sickened, been taken away to a hospital, and, alive dead, Christine could never find her again. They told her the mother had gone to one of the islands, and there she had been put in a pauper's grave. That was all. Afterward a woman took the child, and placed her as cash-girl in the house of Dibbler & Co. What heaps of glittering finery, festoons of ribbon and lace, crowds of beautiful ladies, did Christine daily behold! What longing filled her own young heart to be free like these fortunate ones! Sometimes she touched furtively delicate fabrics, wondering how it would seem to own such splendor.

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

JULY 30, 1875

An Old Soldier

When Gottlieb Braun emerged from the depot the usual throng surged through the premises of Dibbler & Co., and the shop-man had pulled a bundle of lace from Christine's pocket. Yes, there was conviction of robbery, although Christine had not stolen the lace. She affirmed, hotly, "I never did it!"

The shop-man merely said, "Come to the desk." As she prepared to obey, trembling, confused and astonished, the pretty girl in the corner, who wore pink bows in her hair, and who had grown deadly pale, grasped her arm.

"Get your things and run away, Christine, before the police catch you. Quick!" Christine had snatched the little red hood, and fled in blind panic and fear, until she fell at Gottlieb's feet. The old soldier now listened attentively to the story.

"She came to see like Gretchen," he said, with a smile Mother Bates could not understand. In the night the snow fell. The geranium in the window, pride of all the children, shrank from the frosty pane; the meager fire died to a single coal. The old woman had insisted upon giving Gottlieb a spare pallet in the corner; the children were huddled together on her side of the room; Christine sat before the fire regarding her bruised wrist piteously. At midnight Gottlieb rose, and silently motioned the girl to take his place. She obeyed wonderingly, and sank into dreamless sleep. In the cold dawn Mother Bates discovered that the man had fainted on the hearth.

Life may become infused with unexpected interest, which stimulates fresh exertion rather than hope. All through the night Gottlieb Braun, thinking of the lost Gretchen, gazed at the sleeping child; and when darkness screened a soft cheek, rose-flushed, swept by silky lashes, he listened to her quiet breathing, forming a new resolution, until exhaustion overpowered him in the patient vigil. The advent of Christine Carlen in his life was not such a great event, only Gottlieb's portion was such a very little one. God sent this humble man for you, Christine, slumbering among the shadows, within reach of the talons of that great bird of prey want.

Judy Lambert

Register of Deeds

(continued)

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

JULY 30, 1875

An Old Soldier

Gottlieb counted the days with haggard restlessness, a slow fever consuming his veins, pain gnawing at the very sources of life. While daylight lasted he dragged himself about the streets in search of food, at least, for Mother Bates's little brood. When he returned at night Christine was romping with the children. The old woman, whose wrinkled brown face, framed in a black hood, was a landmark on the thoroughfare where she vended fruit, recklessly dispensed apples at the evening meal, observing Gottlieb sharply the while. Little Molly, bright-eyed and saucy, with a ragged shawl pinned over her head, was making money in the slush and mire. Fear of the police kept Christine from joining in street-sweeping. Sleep refused to visit Gottlieb's weary senses. What visions came to him in the night? On Tuesday morning Mother Bates said:

"You come to the dispensary, my man." "What's the use? It's all the old wounds and the fever." Then he added, with sudden tears in his eyes, "God bless you, good woman, for taking us in? Tomorrow I draw the pension." Thus did he identify himself already with the Swedish maiden.

Mother Bates scoffed loudly at sentiment, then paused at the foot of the staircase to wipe her own eyes on her gingham apron. Gottlieb was out all day. When he came back he gave his hostess a fifty-cent bill, with no other explanation than that he obtained a "job" in a warehouse despite his one arm. Excitement robbed him of all appetite for food. He spent a second night with wide eyes fixed on the ceiling, counting the hours, delirium creeping over his senses. If he could only last until tomorrow! He would last, even if he crept to the goal on hands and knees. Desperate resolution made him face the day; desperate energy took him, pallid and trembling, to his post, and brought him back at dusk to sink down speechless on Mother Bates' pallet. The fire of life only burned in the sunken eyes. When Christine sat beside the bed, he was quiet; when she moved away, a spasm of anxiety distorted his features. Billy ran for the doctor; Molly hushed the other children; the baby hid his head in Mother Bates lap. The doctor was out.

"So I went for him," said Billy, glancing curiously and half nervously at the sick man. The noise of the street reached this quiet room only in a distant murmur. A step was heard on the stair. Mother Bates moved uneasily.

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY
BY H.E. SMITH
JULY 30, 1875

An Old Soldier

Billy, failing to find one kind of doctor, had chosen another, and the difference was not clear in his own mind. Mother Bates had never received city missionaries with favor, and now one was at the door. Her creed was a crooked yet self-helpful one.

"Everyone must get along the best they can," she said.

He was on the threshold—a grave, slender man, with dark, calm eyes. Terrible indeed if he proved a broken reed! How did he divine the very depths of human need at a glance? With unerring tenderness he sought in Gottlieb's pocket for a package of money, guided by a look, and gave a ten-dollar bill to the old woman. Then he bent his ear to the faltering lips.

"Use the-money-to send-the child to her friends-in the West. She knows-the-town.

Thus the old soldier made his last bequest, and so, utterly spent in the battle, died. Evening merged into night, and darkness again yielded to the morning, when Christine Carlen was led away by the missionary. Mr. Gildwell knew nothing of the evening, and Mother Bates said, grimly, to the good missionary.

"If ye take the baby, sir, we'll just stay as we are," Gottlieb Braun, soldier, laid away a nameless grave, had one what he could in saving the bloom of a young life.

Judy Lambert
Register of Deeds

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

FEBRUARY 6TH, 1874

Karr The Borderer

An old gentleman I met on the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, between Newark and Zanesville, not long ago, gave me a thrilling account of one of Hamilton Karr's adventures, as told by his father who was a member of the "Ohio Settlement Company," and at one time under the command of Colonel Harmar. The story has never before been in public print.

Among the boldest of the spies and rangers who operated in defense of the first settlers of Ohio, was Hamilton Karr. He was of Scotch descent, a man of powerful endurance, a fleet runner and as sly as a fox in all his movements. He was so well posted in the art of wood-craft that the Indians learned to hate him and did their best to put him out of the way.

Sometime before the great Indian war broke out, probably between the years of 1785 and 1788, Karr had a secret habitation on the island in the Ohio, above the mouth of the Muskingum, and while there, it is said, he sent fully forty red-skins to the happy hunting-grounds. Taylor's history of Ohio, I believe, verifies this assertion.

Although generally more than a match or the most artful of the savages, his victories were not always easily won, and several times he came so very near losing his life that, as he expressed it, he "never expected to draw bead on a feathered head again" One of the most singular, if not the most desperate, of his adventures occurred in the following manner:

One day in the spring of the year, while on a hunting expedition up the Muskingum, a few miles north of the Ohio, Karr suddenly came upon three Delaware Indians, whom he at once recognized as his deadly enemies. He would have turned and avoided an open contact, had he not been seen at the same instant; but being ever on his guard, Karr got in the first salutation, and one of the warriors leaped into the air with a yell, and fell dead to the earth. The sudden and fatal movement put the remaining two off their guard for a moment, and the hunter, knowing that odds were still against him, he having an empty gun, turned and ran, hoping to be able to load his rifle as he retreated. He had not, however, gone far when his powder-horn caught upon a projecting branch, and in his struggle to free himself the strap broke which held it, and the bent limb threw the horn several feet back. The Indians being in hot pursuit, it would not do to return for the powder, and the rifle being worthless without it, he threw the faithful piece away, and trusted to his legs for escape.

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

FEBRUARY 6TH, 1874

Karr The Borderer

After running awhile with perfect confidence in his ability to distance his pursuers, he was not a little surprised to find that one of the savages was giving him a close chase, if anything lessening the distance between them. Karr doubled his efforts, but in spite of his best outlay of strength, the young warrior kept him hard pressed, and carrying a loaded rifle made the chances for the white man not the most encouraging that could be imagined. Down through the forest they sped the pursuer and the pursued, one running to save life and the other to take it. Like the hound and the hare, the two men leaped log and stream, the distance between them varying a trifle now and then, but not enough to pronounce either of them the better runner. The Indian occasionally lifted his rifle as if to shoot, but Karr watched the motions of the savage by constant glances over his shoulder, hoping by a zigzag course to be able to prevent the enemy from getting a fair sight on him.

They had run fully a mile when Karr reached the body of a large log, and just as he was about to leap upon it, he saw the Indian lift his gun to his shoulder; jumping to one side as quick as lightning and then ahead, he cleared the log, but before alighting on the other side heard the crack of the red-skin's rifle. Although unharmed he threw up his arms and dropped to the earth. Instantly picking up a stick he placed his cap upon it, and so placing the rod on end that the cap would show on the right side of the log as soon as the Indian came within a few feet of it, the artful hunter crept stealthily around the roots of the upturned tree, and watched the movements of the enemy.

After firing, the savage drew his tomahawk and bounded forward like a tiger. Reaching the log with the instrument ready for the fatal blow, should he not find the pale-face already dead, he saw the cap, and with a whoop clutched the furry object he lifted it high in the air, and stood gazing in astonishment at the spot from whence it came. Had he not been so chagrined at the deception he doubtless would have noticed an object dart out from its hiding place, and have put himself on guard before the heavy knife of the hunter was coming down upon him, but he was outwitted, and, before hardly aware of the sudden movement, received the broad blade to the hand in his dusky form.

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

FEBRUARY 6TH, 1874

Karr The Borderer

The Indian plunged forward with such force as to roll entirely over the log, carrying the knife in his body. Karr, believing his victory complete, stood panting, bare-headed and alone, contemplating the scene. How long he stood, thus, he could not tell, but probably not many minutes, when he was startled by the click of a flint upon the hammer-pan of a gun. Glancing in the direction from whence the noise proceeded, he saw the Indian in the act of re-cocking his rifle. The hunter had not time to recover his knife, and, entirely unarmed, made for a thicket lying between himself and the river. By a zigzag course he reached the bank of the Muskingum, but the water was too high to make an attempt to ford it safe, and too rapid to allow him to reach the opposite bank by swimming. No time could be lost in discussing plans for further action, for the savage, although following through the underbrush by trail alone, would soon put in appearance. Karr, never lacking for stratagem, picked up a small boulder, and putting it into the slack of his hunting shirt above the belt, ascended a tree that stood close upon the brink of the bank, but several feet above the water edge, and took a position upon a limb at least ten feet from the earth.

Not long after the borderer had taken this elevated position, he saw through the thick foliage of the tree the feathered head of the savage darting here and there among the bushes. In a moment or two the Indian came out and, following the track of the hunter by sight as accurately as the hound will the fox scent, he reached the spot exactly beneath his enemy and stood gazing right and left for the object of his search

Karr believing his most favorite time had come to act in self-defense, prepared himself for the work. It would not do to keep silent, for in doing so he would in all probability be discovered and shot, for the Indian would soon discover that the pale-face had never left the spot. Holding the rock as nearly over the head of the savage as he could, Karr, let the stone drop, and breathlessly watched its downward course; the aim was a good one, and would have finished the foe had he not turned just as the heavy weight was to crush his skull.

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

FEBRUARY 6TH, 1874

Karr The Borderer

The borderer saw the change of position and the rock light on the savage's shoulder and bring him to his knees. Throwing himself from the limb, Kerr followed the boulder, an striking astride the stalwart form of the Indian, clutched him by the neck and both went at full length on the earth.

The struggle that followed was fierce, and of the most desperate character. Karr held the savage too tightly to allow him to get at his knife or tomahawk, nor could the hunter loosen his hold to obtain any weapon from the belt of his foe, and the two, grappling like tigers in the jungle, rolled over and over again until they reached the verge of the bank, nor did they stop there, but went splashing into the dark river below.

The water into which they fell was not more than ten or twelve inches deep, but fortunately Karr came on top as they landed and kept the advantage. Getting a vise-like grip upon the savage's throat he forced the copper-colored head down upon the pebbly bottom of the river, and held it there until life was extinct.

Just at the nightfall of that eventful day, wearied and worn, Hamilton Karr reached his island habitation bearing lashed upon his back three rifles besides his own, while at his belt dangled three scalps, trophies of an adventure he cared not to repeat.

Register of Deeds

Judy Lambert

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

By H.E. Smith

Nancy Jones' Baby

The wind came howling down the mountainside, and with a hollow moan rushed through the canons. The tall pines tossed and bent their heads at each rude blast of the storm. Masses of black clouds hung like a funeral pall over the mountains, and the rain poured down in torrents.

Rabbit creek bounded down its narrow bed, carrying all before it, whirling and writhing like a huge serpent, taking way with rapid leaps, bearing on its foaming bosom a mass of rubbish. Great logs and stumps of trees, caught from their resting places on some hill-side, were borne on till lost to sight. Now and then a sluice-box came floating down until dashed to pieces against a boulder, telling of disaster to some poor mine farther up the gulch. On, on, swept the rushing waters, taking in their rue embrace all that crossed the path of their fury.

Sudden and awful had been the coming of the storm, as if delay had strengthened its power and given new energy to its fierceness. Then came the change from warmth to cold-from rain to snow-and soon the rugged hills were clothed in white, and in the gulches were piled huge drifts. The whirling masses were borne on and scattered.

The trees were heavy with their burden, and when some blast more rude than others stirred their branches, the grate-full limbs lifted their heads and tossed about with joy at their relief.

The town of Rabbit Creek stand unsheltered on the hillsides, and in its unprotected state had been exposed to the fury of the storm. The small rude houses were rocked by ever blast till they trembled on their slight foundations.

In the principal barroom of the town were gathered the greater part of the male population. It was a large room, with tables scattered around its sides; in the center stood a billiard table, the boast and pride of the proprietor, and he had often been heard to say.

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

By H.E. Smith

Nancy Jones' Baby

“See that billiard table; it cost a fortun’ to set that’ere piece of furniture up in my saloon.” And then, as surprise and wonder were depicted on the face of his listener, the owner of that “ere table” would give the astonishing information that “she was packed across the mountains on a mule.”

In the corner stood the mammoth stove, and alongside of it a pile of logs for ample were the heating accommodations of “old McKenzie’s” saloon, and the larger part of the crowd were gathered around its warm sides taking in its cheering heat. The smiling host’s rubicund countenance shown like a new brass teakettle, as he rushed around attending to the wants of patrons. He finally addressed one of the crowds near the stove with;

“I say, Jake, it’s started in good. You were in luck; if you had been a day later you would have had to come over on snow-shoes.”

The answer came in a voice singularly low and sweet, for the person spoken to as Jake was a man of great size, and as he stood with his back to the stove, his heavy coat almost reaching the floor, he looked like a giant. There was an indescribable air of refinement and grace about the man, and a face that looked out from under the broad-brimmed hat was one handsome and yet sad.

“Yes, Mac; I was lucky, as you say; and if it keeps on in his way long, we shall be blockaded for a couple of weeks.”

One or two more of the crowd here gave their opinion as to the chances for a hard winter; but their conversation came to an abrupt termination as the door of the saloon opened with a rush, and in came a figure which at first looked like a mass of snow, but by dint of much shaking and stamping of feet, it finally assumed the shape of a man, who, as he pulled off his heavy coat, disclosed to the crowd the well-known features of the only doctor on Rabbit Creek.

A run of salutations greeted him from all sides, for Dr. Holmes was a man respected by old and young. He had a pale, refined face, with the sharpest of gray eyes looking out from jet-black eyebrows, and people said when the Doctor got filed those gray eyes snapped and glared, giving the person who met his displeasure some insight into the character of the man they had to deal with.

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

By H.E. Smith

Nancy Jones' Baby

After the Doctor had said. "How are you boys," he turned to McKenzie and called for a drink, when his eye caught sight of the tall figure by the stove, and then came.

"Why Jake Morse, how are you?" The same low, sweet voice answered, "First rate, Doc; how are you? Come near the stove and put some warmth into your bones. Who is sick in town? It's a bad night for even a doctor to be out." The doctor made his way to the stove, and, as he did so, said; "Well, I will tell you something that will surprise you and every one in Rabbit Creek."

The crowds which had been scattered in different parts of the large room, engaged in playing cards or talking over the last news from Frisco, gathered round the Doctor, or neglected their occupation, to hear what he had to say, for a surprise at Rabbit Creek was a novelty. McKenzie handed the Doctor his drink, and as he stood with the steaming glass in his hand he said, in a low voice;

"Nancy Jones has got a baby!"

For a moment everything was as quiet as the grave-the only sound was the click, click of the spoon as the Doctor slowly stirred up the contents of the glass. It was only for a moment, and then up jumped Pat Moran, a little red-whiskered Irishman, who had a face in which humor and good nature were the chief characteristics, and noted as being the noisiest and smallest man in the camp. Getting on one of the many tables, he in a loud voice, called for "Three cheers for Nancy Jones' baby." Then, as if every man's life depended on it, they one and all gave three such cheers as would have frightened a civilized being out of his wife. Then followed a scene of confusion. All manner of questions were poured in upon the poor doctor. "What is it-a boy or a girl?" and Pat Moran says, "If it is a boy, docther, darlint, call hi after Me." The doctor stated that it was a girl, and very fine one. At this information, Pat Moran expressed his disgust to the effect that "he had the devil's own luck," and that he should never rest quiet in his grave till he "stud" godfather to a baby, for sure it's the next to being the father of one."

Then followed propositions to drink the health of mother and child, which were checked by the doctor, who, after continued efforts, made him heard.

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

By H.E. Smith

Nancy Jones' Baby

Pat Moran, equal to the occasion, took the top of his favorite table, and yelled:

**“Whist! Ye devils! And sure the Doc wishes to address yees on the topic of the day.”
Then Dr. Holmes said;**

**“Boys, I am sorry to destroy all your pleasure, but I have seen tonight, down at the
“Log House,” that which has made me, doctor as I am, and used to sorrow and
suffering, shed tears. It’s with great pain I tell you that Nancy Jones and her baby
must both die.”**

**As the doctor said this, a low hum passed around the room, and one could see the
gruff and rugged faces of those men change color and grow pale, while their hands
clenched together to prevent the feelings they wished to conceal. Then Jake Morse
said, in a low voice:**

**“Doc, what’s the matter? Can’t you save one of them; can we do anything? I don’t
think there is a man in the room but would risk his life to do the poor woman and
her child a service.”**

**And from many a bearded mouth came words, which, if not elegant, were forcible,
of their will to do all and everything to save the mother and her child.**

**The doctor looked around for a moment, and then said: “Boys, you know as well as
I, that Nancy Jones is what is called fallen woman-that she is beyond the pale of
respectability; but you will not contradict me when I say that if one of you were sick
and needed someone to watch by your sick bed, she would be the first to offer her
services. You all remember when Bill Childs lay dying at Sawpit Flat, how she
nursed him for weeks, and when at last death came, she closed his eyes, and wrote to
his friends, telling them of poor Bill’s fate.”**

**“You bet she did!” came from many a mouth. Morse stood by the bar. Not a
feature moved. His hand trembled where it rested, but his voice came low and calm,
as he said:**

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

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

By H.E. Smith

Nancy Jones' Baby

"Doc, can we do anything to assist you?"

"I will tell you, boys," said the doctor, "the poor woman is worn out with suffering, and her child lies dying by her side, and the mother is unable to nourish it. If there is one of you who dare for their sakes go to Port Wine and get some milk, we may save the life of Nancy Jones' baby." Morse said at once:

"I will go, Doc; and if I fail, and Nancy lives, tell her that Jake Morse risked his life to save her child."

Turning to one of the men, he said; "Charlie, will you lend me your snow-shoes." In a moment all was confusion; the men rushed about as if mad. McKenzie busied himself putting up a flask of his favorite brandy, for use should Morse require it?

The arrangements were completed, and out into the street went the crowd. The houses were white with snow; the wind came tearing down the hill, dashing the falling flakes into their faces, cutting and blinding them. Morse strapped on the huge shoes, and then stood erect, saying;

"Boys, if I don't get back, send my things to my mother; McKenzie knows her address; and now, here goes," and at the word, off he went into the night like a flash; only for an instant was he seen, then was lost to sight.

Brave heart! God in his goodness will not fail to watch your lonely path. His eye is on you, so breast on and fear not.

The men went back to the saloon, glad to return to its shelter and warmth. Their glasses were refilled, and silent prayers were offered for Jake's return.

The doctor said; "If Jake does not return in four hours, go out and meet him," and then, filling his flask, started on his way to visit the woman and her child.

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Judy Lambert

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

By H.E. Smith

Nancy Jones' Baby

With his hat pulled over his eyes, and his face closely muffled, he went out into the darkness and the storm. After plodding sometime in the drifting snow, he said to himself; "I shall have to stop at Abe Stearns and get warm-I can't be far from there." Pushing on, he reached at length a house, rude and small; out of the single window shone a light. In answer to his knock, a man's voice said; "Come in!" He pushed open the door and stood within, white with snow.

For a moment the light from the large fire dazzled his eyes. Abe Stearns, greeting him, said;

"Why, Doc, are you out on a night like this? It's a wonder you're not dead. I say, Jessie, here's Doc Holmes," and from the other room came a young woman with a fair, calm face, holding in her arms a bundle of clothes, from which issued a cry, telling that there was someone beside husband and wife, Abe said:

"Give me the youngster and get the doctor something warm; he is cold." "Never mind," the doctor replied; "I will be all right in a moment. I could not resist the temptation of your big fireplace. But how is the baby? Let me see him, Mrs. Stearns."

The young mother, with a proud look and tender hands, uncovered her sleeping babe. The doctor, looking at him a moment, said; "He is a fine boy, Mrs. Stearns, and worthy of his father and mother; how comfortable he looks in his warm nest, and how different from the poor child I am on my way to see."

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Judy Lambert

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

By H.E. Smith

Nancy Jones' Baby

“Why, doctor, is there anyone sick? Who is it?” The doctor answered in a low voice; “A poor, unfortunate, woman, Mrs. Stearns, who is out off from everyone, and who, in spite of every misfortune, is a woman, and lies at death’s door with a baby by her side; and, to add still more to her misery, nature has failed to give the nourishment necessary for her child.”

For a moment the husband and wife stood speechless, and then, in one breath, they asked, “Who is it, doctor?” He answered, “Nancy Jones.” They repeated the words, “Nancy Jones,” and the young mother clasped her child still closer to her heart, and looking down on her sleeping babe she inwardly thanked God, even though her home was small and rude, that her child was safe from such a misfortune as the doctor had related; and turning to him, her mother’s sympathy shining in her face, she said:

“Oh, doctor can’t something be done to save the child? No matter what the mother’s sin, the child at least is innocent. It is too terrible-something must be done. Abel, can’t you think of something we can do?”

The doctor said; “The only cow for miles around is owned at Port Wine, and Jake Morse has gone on snow-shoes, in the midst of the storm, for milk. If God sees fit to let him return in safety, then the child might be saved; but if he should fail there was no hope.”

“But Doc,” said Abel, “how long will it take Jake to go and return?” “About four hours if he does his best and meets with no accident.”

Jessie asked in a low voice, as she clasped her baby close to her breast, “How long is it, doctor, since the mother failed to nurse the child?” “She became unconscious about 5 o’clock, and since then it has been without food, and by the time Morse returns it will be seven hours.”

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. Smith

Nancy Jones' Baby

Jessie did not speak-she looked down upon her child, wrapped the shawl closer around its little body, and out from under the bed drew the rude cradle-an old boot-box, with rockers attached, no doubt made by Abel's hardy hands-and with tenderness placed her baby in its resting place. A soft flush covered her face, and her calm, sweet eyes lit up as she looked at her husband-the lover of her youth, the one for whom she had left her home, the father of her child-and, drawing her slight form to its full height, she said:

"Doctor, the child shall not die, for I myself will go and nurse Nancy Jones' baby." The doctor looked at her radiant face for an instant; the tears came to his eyes and his voice trembled with emotion. "You are an angel, Mrs. Stearns," and he lifted her hand reverently to his lips and kissed it.

Then the wife, with an indescribable grace, turned to her husband and said: "Abel, have I your consent to go?" And the great, strong, bearded creature picked her up in his arms like a child, while the big manly voice shook and trembled in reply.

"Yes, Jessie, my wife, God forbid that I should stand in the way of your angel mission. Go, my love, and God bless you." And the doctor, after sundry coughs, ostensibly for the purpose of clearing his throat, managed at length to say;

"If you two young people don't have luck I shall turn infidel, d----d if I don't. Excuse me, Mrs. Stearns, but I could not help it."

The preparations were soon completed; Jessie bent over the cradle for a moment, kissed her husband, charging him to be careful of the "boy," and then went out into the night.

The wind had ceased, and the moon shone bright and clear; the cold, sharp air cut like a knife, but still they labored on, sometimes breaking through the Frozen crust, never stopping until they reached the "Log House." Jessie here spoke for the first time:

"Is there anyone with her, Doctor?" "Yes, the old negress, Judith," and as he spoke he opened the door.

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

By H.E. Smith

Nancy Jones' Baby

Jessie for a moment stood on the threshold-only for a moment, however, for the faint cry of a child was heard, and then the entire woman came to her relief and she stepped quickly into the room. The cry of the child came again. Going to the bed she took it in her arms it moaned; she seated herself in a low chair, the doctor turned his face away, a feeble cry of content from the child, and then all was quiet, and Nancy Jones' baby was saved.

Five years have come and gone since that night, and time has made many changes. Abel Stearns and Jessie are no longer in Rabbit Creek. One mis-fortune after another has happened to them, until starvation stares them in the face. They have one more mouth to feed since we saw them last, and Christmas night, 1858, sees them in San Francisco without food.

Jessie, unable to see her invalid husband suffer any longer, has made up her mind to beg. Out into the street she goes, trying to gain courage for her task. Faint and tired from fasting and overwork, she reached the corner just as a fine carriage is dashing past; she tries to avoid it, but her foot slips, and she falls on the crossing. The carriage stops, the window is lowered, and a man's voice asks:

"What is the matter?" The bystanders reply that "a woman has fainted," and then a woman's voice asks "if she is hurt?"

"She is in the drug store," the same persons reply, "and is insensible." The soft voice from the carriage speaks to her companion, saying: "I should like to see her, dear." The door is opened, and, passing into the store and asking to see the lady who fainted, she is shown into the room. She glides up to the lounge and casts one look at the white face, and drops on her knees and puts the poor head to her shoulder. Only for a moment does she remain there, then, turning to the clerk, she said:

"Carry this lady to my carriage: she is an acquaintance of mine; I will take charge of her." The unconscious woman is lifted into the carriage and it rolls away. Abel Stearns waits for his wife but she does not return. Fear at last over-comes him, and he resolves to start out and find her, when there is heard a knock at the door.

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

By H.E. Smith

Nancy Jones' Baby

A man's voice asks if Mr. Stearns lives there, and, if so, he is requested to come with him at once, as his wife has been taken ill, but is with friends. Abel hardly recovers from his surprise when he finds himself in a fine apartment, and in a few moments has his wife in his arms, pale, and smiling, in her nightdress.

There is heard a rustle of silk, and Abel turns and sees a beautiful woman behind him, amused at his embarrassment. She comes toward him, offering her hand as she says:

"Why, Mr. Stearns, don't you know me? Am I so changed in five years?"

She looks at him with her great black eyes full of tears.

Abel still stands in doubt. She steps to the door and leads in a golden-haired little girl, beautiful as a dream. She lifts the child up to Abel and says:

"Don't you know Nancy Jones' baby?" Comfort and plenty have come to Abel Stearns and Jessie since that night when Nancy Jones found her in the street – Nancy Jones no longer, but Nancy Morse. She gave Abel the means to re-start in life, and now he has one of the finest ranches in California, and he says the finest wife and children, and all because Jessie saved Nancy Jones' baby.

Register of Deeds

Judy Lambert

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

ANASTASIA'S GHOST

By H.E. Smith

How well I remember that dismal November night. Some vague presentiment of evil weighed upon my heart, as I sat alone in the twilight. There was nothing apparently to make me gloomy. On the contrary, I ought to have been more than usually cheerful; had I not received a delicious promise from Katie Nelson that very afternoon?

It seemed to be odd, to be sure, that a gray-haired widower like myself, was to marry this girl of eighteen. Her mother had been a housekeeper in our family, but died soon after Katie's birth. It happened that she was adopted by us, as we had not children of our own. My wife treated her kindly, but without much warmth of feeling. Anastasia was of such a peculiar disposition that I actually believed she was jealous of this infant.

Poor Anastasia! She warned me solemnly on her death-bed never to marry again, and threatened to rise from her grave in case of such an event. Katie was in her tenth year when my wife died. I sent her away to a boarding school; and, as business called me abroad, did not see her again until my return, eight years afterwards. I was somewhat bewildered to find a lovely woman, instead of the little girl I had left in short dresses. Of course you can guess the sequel. I fell in love with this charming adopted daughter. There was something in the frank tenderness of her manner that completely won my heart.

It was evident that she was deeply attached to me. I could not help seeing how much higher she valued by society than that of my nephew, Charles Raymond, who had accompanied me from abroad. She never addressed him except in monosyllables, and would flush all over with embarrassment if he but entered the room. With me, she was always self-possessed, and so talkative and sociable that I could not help pitying Charlie. He was really quite good-looking, and I used to wonder sometimes at her antipathy. Poor fellow; how I dreaded to tell him of my approaching happiness. It would be a great blow to his hopes, for he had expected to inherit my fortune.

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ANASTASIA'S GHOST

By H.E. Smith

Katie wasn't a bit like other girls that I had ever known anything about. Instead of blushing at my confession that afternoon she turned pale, and shivered as if struck by a sudden chill. I noticed, too, that there was a strange quiver in her voice when she finally consented to be my wife. I was apprehensive that Charlie had told her what Anastasia had said on her death-bed. I couldn't believe she would be so inconsiderate. Somehow, I couldn't forget that warning. Anastasia was a remarkable woman, and would surely keep her work, if ghosts are permitted to walk the earth. Thinking thus, I began to grow frightened at the shadows in my room, and hastily rang the bell for lights.

"Why are you so late, Bridget," I asked, sharply, as the servant entered the room. "Indeed, sir, and it's myself that's been with Miss Katie every blessed minute, and she's almost kilt with a pain in her head." Could this be the result of our conversation that afternoon? Considerably startled, I questioned Bridget eagerly. Charlie came in while we were talking.

"Katie ill?" he said, with a shadow on his brow. "Is it anything serious, uncle?" What business had he to take any special interest in Katie? "Only a headache," I answered, coldly. "She is subject to such attacks. Bring in tea, Bridget." "We shall have a lonesome evening," Charlie sighed. I half believed that he was in love with the girl himself.

It was cheerless, though, without Katie. I missed her bright face behind the tea-tray. Charlie left his cup un-tasted. My jealousy was aroused, and I watch him keenly. As soon as we were alone, I said, half angrily, "What is the matter, Charlie? You look as if you hadn't a friend on the earth. I didn't know before that you liked Katie so well." The crimson leaped up to his very brow. "I am glad that you do," I continued, hastily, "for you will soon be connected by ties of relationship. She has promised to be my wife." "You are jesting, uncle!" He said, doubtingly. "I was never more serious in my life." I answered.

Charlie showed evident signs of agitation. "You have no right to sacrifice that young girl," he said, bitterly. "You are old enough to be her father. Of course she accepted you from gratitude. How dare you think of such a thing?"

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ANASTASIA'S GHOST

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"No wonder that you rave," I replied, with a mocking smile; "you are disappointed of your inheritance." At that moment the wind gave a fearful shriek outside, and I thought of Anastasia. "Are you not afraid to marry again?" Charlie inquired, maliciously, "You remember the warming?" "Nonsense!" I answered; "it will take something more than a ghost to frighten me out of this marriage."

I had scarcely finished speaking, when there came a gust of wind, and a crashing of glass, and the storm actually swept into the room. We glanced around us in dismay. The boughs of a large elm tree that stood in front of the house had fallen against the window.

Charlie gave me a peculiar look as I cowered over the fire, and then barred the window in such a manner as to keep out the rain. A strange gloom enveloped us both, and we did not return again to the subject we had been discussing. Our conversation was fitful, and it seemed a relief when we separated at bed-time.

There is no use in denying that I was troubled a little with superstitious fears, I peered round anxiously into every corner of the room before retiring, but found no sign of any mysterious visitant. I had such a fear of the darkness, however, that I left the candle burning. The fury of the storm had not abated, and I lay awake some time listening to the wind. At last, however, I fell into an uneasy slumber. How long I had slept I know not, when I was awakened by an icy touch upon my forehead.

I started up, with a thrill of apprehension. The light emitted a faint, sepulchral gleam. Oh horror! What was that I saw? A figure, robed in white, came gliding toward me from the foot of the bed. The face was hidden from my view, but I knew from the form that it was the ghost of Anastasia.

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ANASTASIA'S GHOST

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"Why, uncle," he answered, and I was almost sure that I saw a gleam of mischief in his eyes, "something extraordinary must have happened. You are not usually so fickle!" "We won't discuss the matter," said I, in an irritated tone. Will you, or will you not, grant my request?"

"Of course, I will," he replied; "but it is a difficult task. The poor child will be so disappointed?" I detected a joyous ring in his voice, and looked at him rather suspiciously. His diplomatic mission was successful, however. Late in the afternoon, Katie came down into the library where I was sitting. I had never seen her look prettier.

"Oh, Mr. Raymond!" she said eagerly, "I am so glad that you have changed your mind! It was all so unexpected yesterday. I never dreamed before that you loved me in any other way than as a daughter." Was this acting? Was she trying to deceive me in her sweet unselfishness? "Then you never loved me?" I asked.

"Dear Mr. Raymond, you know better," she answered; "only it was not exactly the kind of love one ought to feel toward a husband. You are as dear to me as if you were my own father; but you are so much older than I, that- that-"

She hesitated, and did not finish her sentence. I remembered my gray hairs with a pang of mortified vanity. Was not the ghostly visit enough? Must I be tortured in this manner afterward? The veil was torn away from the delusion I had cherished. Alas! I had misinterpreted her childish affection. It might be that she loved another. I looked down into the face where a vivid scarlet glowed, and read her secret.

"My dear child," I exclaimed, attempting to control my agitation, "tell me everything."

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"Oh, Mr. Raymond," she answered in confusion, "Charlie has asked me to be his wife." The rascal! No wonder that he remained with her such a long time that morning; no wonder that he boasted of the satisfactory manner in which everything had been explained. "The impudent fellow!" I muttered, impatiently. "What did you answer, child? Do you love him?" Low and soft the answer came;
"Yes."

The heart of a woman is a mystery that I cannot fathom. I was certainly outwitted by my nephew. He might have been afraid, however, that my conscience would reproach me if Katie showed her disappointment. I have little doubt that she loved me far better than she would confess.

Ah, well! They were married in due time, and we are all living together. The dear children do everything they can to add to my happiness.

Kathie is still a beautiful woman, and Charlie is the staff of my old age. I never saw the ghost again. In fact, I have good reason to think that the mysterious visitant was a certain graceless nephew of mine, who had fallen in love with Katie. Of course I forgave the deception long ago, as it saved me from a terrible mistake.

I am much happier, probably, than if I had married the young girl whose heart belonged to another. I am not certain, however, that she did not accept Charlie from pique at my rejection; anyway, he has made her a good husband.

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EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY

BY H.E. SMITH

In A Tunnel

“That will do nicely,” said Ruth Mayhew, receiving her last package through the car window from Mr. Perkins on the platform.

“Write us how you get along, Ruth. If your aunt can spare you a spell this summer we’d be glad to see you hum agin. Oh, my! Here’s Miss Curtin with a bunch of posier from her gardin. Hurry! Hurry! You’ll be late, sure’s the world, Miss Curtin.”

This spoke the group at the depot in shrill chorus as the locomotive, every plate burnished and dazzling which had simmered quietly for some minutes, started, imparting a jerking wrench to the cars, and then the long snake of a train glided smoothly away.

“She takes it first rate,” commented Mr. Perkins, wiping his brow with a red bandana handkerchief.

Then he climbed into his rusty carry-all, drawn by a meek white horse; the others returned along the village street to resume their usual avocations, and the event of the day was over.

Ruth Mayhew had departed from the home of her youth, and the place would know her no more forever.

The struggle had been a hard one, but she bore it well as Mr. Perkins averred. She did not look at once at the white house on the hill, where death had robbed her of parents and shelter, because even her fortitude could not be trusted to witness the Smalls moving in. What was before her? Life with Aunt Harriet in a close sick-chamber, slave of an invalid’s caprices and grateful for daily bread. Oh, the long, dreary years with nothing but old age in advance!

She took a small pocket mirror from her bag, and gazed pensively into its depths. The reflected image was by no means unattractive. She was not as she had once been, yet her features were good, her complexion fresh, her eyes clear, and her physique robust. More-over she was carefully and becomingly attired, and her chignon was of the latest style.

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In A Tunnel

Nevertheless, a sigh welled up from her heart when she gazed in the glass, not altogether in unreasonable dissatisfaction with her present appearance; still her past had had disappointments, and the future with Aunt Harriet was without promise. Away back in the vista of summers she beheld herself a fanciful girl, building cloud-castles out of the sun-set glories. One spring-time was brighter and fairer than the others; around it still bloomed flowers of regretful memories, blossoms without earthly semblance in the cold, bleak climate where Ruth lived, because sprung from the richest sources of humanity.

A brave young missionary had urged a heedless girl to go with him to the hot countries among the heathen, and the girl, to whom the world seemed a vast treasure-house lavish of gifts, had flouted her young missionary, and he had silently departed without complaint, to return no more. Then Ruth had shed tears in secret, bitterly remorseful tears, and turned her back capriciously on the well-to-do farmers of her acquaintance.

"Got a cinder in yer eye?" inquired a sharp voice in our traveler's ear.

The latter awoke from her reverie with a start, and turned to her questioner with a guilty blush suffusing her cheek. She, Ruth Mayhew, of middle age, caught looking in the glass! Her interlocutor was a brisk, bright little old lady in a faded shawl and an antiquated bonnet of the coal-scuttle pattern. She carried on her arm a black silk bag which seemed to contain unlimited stores of snuff and peppermint drops. Encircling her withered throat was a necklace of beautiful gold beads delicately wrought. These beads, an heirloom in her family, descending to her through long generations, had been worn by her since early youth, and so much of superstition was associated in the mind of the possessor with such relics, that the old lady would have dreaded immediate misfortune had she lost them. Such was her child-like faith in her fellow-creatures that she never dreamed of parting with her treasures.

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In A Tunnel

"I can get it out quick as a wink, child," she continued, eagerly, settling her spectacles, and spreading out a soft silk handkerchief, with the intention of applying it to Ruth's eye.

"No, thank you. It is nothing," said Ruth, hastily popping the glass back to its hiding place. Thus foiled, the old lady relapsed into silence, although she could not remain quiet long. She jerked her head about quickly to observe different objects with a sparrow-like motion, and becoming absorbingly interested in Ruth, she peered at the trimmings, even testing the quality of a ribbon furtively with a critical fore-finger and thumb. Age had chiseled wrinkles, innumerable fine lines, in the intelligent face, had whitened the scanty hair, and robbed the sunken mouth of teeth, yet the vital forces seemed unimpaired. She was like a queer little gray bird hopping along to peck a crumb of information everywhere.

"I wonder who she is and where she's goin'?" pondered the old lady, her busy brain having unsuccessfully twisted Ruth around the whirlingwheel of minute investigation. Then she bobbed abruptly, and skipped into the seat beside the object of her interest with an apologetic, "Guess I'll change my place, if you don't mind, and get out of the draught from that winder. Old folks have to be kinder keerful about draughts."

Miss Mayhew graciously assented, and her neighbor was delighted with the success of her stratagem. "Live in these parts?" small, beady eyes twinkling all over her companion interrogatively.

"Yes. Have you come far?" "Far! I guess so ! I left my darter's home in Indianny day afore yesterday. My son-in-law, Marthy's husband, is a lumber merchant, you know, out West. Yes, the winter's been cold, some. We had Bible classes and lectures, and once there came a panoramy of New York. Jabez took me. Hev you been there? Most as good as seeing it for yourself, the panormay was. Come home alone? Law, yes! Made my way along as easy as could be. I stopped over night at Montreal in Canady at a great hotel, and the clerk gave me a snug little room so's I felt real to hum. There's a big bridge - the victory bridge, they call it there. I see it. I've been a good piece on the Grand Turk Railroad, too."

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