

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

My Night in A Stage Coach

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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