



Ascending the Pyramid.

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scathing languidness. "Ancestor of mine. But it is a small matter. I have others."

It was not noble in me to do it. I have always regretted it since. But it landed him. I wonder how he felt? However, it made no difference

in our friendship, which shows that he was fine and high, notwithstanding the humbleness of his origin. And it was also creditable in me too, that I could overlook it. I made no change in my bearing toward him, but always treated him as an equal.

But it was a hard night for me in one way. Mr. Phelps thought I was the guest of honor, and so did Count S.; but I didn't, for there was nothing in my invitation to indicate it. It was just a friendly, offhand note, on a card. By the time dinner was announced Phelps was himself in a state of doubt. Something had to be done; and it was not a handy time for explanations. He tried to get me to go out with him, but I had declined. Then he tried S., and he also declined. There was another guest; but there was no trouble about him. We finally went out in a pile. There was a decorous plunge for seats, and I got the one at Mr. Phelps's left, the Count captured the one facing Phelps, and the other guest had to take the place of honor, since he could not help himself. We returned to the drawing room in the original disorder. I had new shoes on, and they were tight. At eleven I was privately crying; I couldn't help it, the pain was so cruel. Conversation had been dead for an hour. S. had been due at the bedside of a dying official ever since half-past nine. At last we all rose by one blessed impulse and went down to the street door without explanations—in a pile, and no precedence; and so parted.

The evening had its defects; still, I got my ancestor in, and was satisfied.

An Interrupted Serenade

AMONG the Virginian Clemenses were Jere. (already mentioned) and Sherrard. Jere. Clemens had a wide reputation as a good pistol shot, and once it enabled him to get on the friendly side of some drummers, when they wouldn't have paid any attention to mere smooth words and arguments. He was out stumping the State at the time. The drummers were grouped in front of the stand, and had been hired by the opposition to drum while he made his speech. When he was ready to begin, he got out his revolver and laid it before him, and said in his soft, silky way:

"I do not wish to hurt anybody, and shall try not to; but I have got just a bullet apiece for those six drums, and if you should want to play on them, don't stand behind them."

Sherrard Clemens was a Republican Congressman from West Virginia in the war days, and then went out to St. Louis, where the James Clemens branch lived, and still lives, and there he became a warm Rebel. This was after the war. At the time that he was a Republican I was a Rebel; but by the time he had become a Rebel I was become (temporarily) a Republican. The Clemenses have always done the best they could to keep the political balances level, no matter how much it might inconvenience them. I did not know what had become of Sherrard Clemens; but once I introduced Senator Hawley to a Republican mass meeting in New England, and then I got a bitter letter from Sherrard from St. Louis. He said that the Republicans of the North—no, the "mudsills of the North"—had swept away the old aristocracy of the South with fire and sword, and it ill became me, an aristocrat by blood, to train with that kind of swine. Did I forget that I was a Lambton?

That was a reference to my mother's side of the house. As I have already said, she was a Lambton—Lambton with a P; for some of the American

Lamptons could not spell very well in early times, and so the name suffered at their hands. She was a native of Kentucky, and married my father in Lexington in 1823, when she was twenty years old and he twenty-four. Neither of them had an overplus of property. She brought him two or three Negroes; but nothing else, I think. They removed to the remote and secluded village of Jamestown, in the mountain solitudes of East Tennessee. There their first crop of children was born; but as I was of a later vintage I do not remember anything about it. I was postponed—postponed to Missouri. Missouri was an unknown new State and needed attractions.

I think that my eldest brother Orion, my sisters Pamela and Margaret, and my brother Benjamin were born in Jamestown. There may have been others; but as to that I am not sure. It was a great lift for that little village to have my parents come there. It was hoped that they would stay, so that it would become a city. It was supposed that they would stay. And so there was a boom; but by and by they went away, and prices went down, and it was many years before Jamestown got another start. I have written about Jamestown in "The Gilded Age," a book of mine; but it was from hearsay, not from personal knowledge.

The Land There Was Millions In

MY father left a fine estate behind him in the region round about Jamestown—above one hundred thousand acres. When he died in 1847 he had owned it about twenty years. The taxes were almost



Colonel Sellers Feeding His Family on Expectations.

From "The Gilded Age." Copyright, 1907, by Samuel L. Clemens and Susan Lee Warner.

nothing (five dollars a year for the whole), and he had always paid them regularly and kept his title perfect. He had always said that the land would not become valuable in his time, but that it would be a commodious provision for his children some day. It contained coal, copper, iron, and timber, and he said that in the course of time railways would pierce to that region, and then the property would be property in fact as well as in name. It also produced a wild grape of a promising sort. He had sent some samples to Nicholas Longworth of Cincinnati, to get his judgment upon them, and Mr. Longworth had said that they would make as good wine as his Catawbas.

The land contained all these riches, and also oil; but my father did not know that, and of course in those early days he would have cared nothing about it if he had known it. The oil was not discovered until about 1895. I wish I owned a couple of acres of the land now; in which case I would not be writing autobiographies for a living. My father's dying charge was, "Cling to the land and wait; let nothing beguile it away from you!" My mother's favorite cousin, James Lampton, who figures in "The Gilded Age" as Colonel Sellers, always said of that land, and said it with blazing enthusiasm too, "There's millions in it—millions!" It is true that he always said that about everything,—and was always mistaken too,—but this time he was right; which shows that a man who goes around with a prophecy gun ought never

to get discouraged; if he will keep up his heart and fire at everything he sees, he is bound to hit something by and by.

It is a world of surprises. They fall too where one is least expecting them. When I introduced Sellers into the book, Charles Dudley Warner, who was writing the story with me, proposed a change of Sellers's Christian name. Ten years before, in a remote corner of the West, he had come across a man named Eschol Sellers, and he thought that Eschol was just the right and fitting name for our Sellers, since it was odd and quaint and all that. I liked the idea; but I said that that man might turn up and object. But Warner said it couldn't happen; that he was doubtless dead by this time,—a man with a name like that couldn't live long,—and he be dead or alive we must have the name; it was exactly the right one, and we couldn't do without it. So the change was made. Warner's man was a farmer in a cheap and humble way.

When the book had been out a week, a college bred gentleman of courtly manners and dual upholstery arrived in Hartford in a sultry state of mind and with a libel suit in his eye, and his name was Eschol Sellers! He had never heard of the other one, and had never been within a thousand miles of him. This damaged aristocrat's program was quite definite and businesslike: the American Publishing Company must suppress the edition as far as printed, and change the name in the plates, or stand a suit for ten thousand dollars. He carried away the company's promise and many apologies, and we changed the name back to Colonel Mulberry Sellers, in the plates. Apparently there is nothing that cannot happen. Even the existence of two unrelated men wearing the impossible name of Eschol Sellers is a possible thing.

Early Troubles as an Author

MY experiences as an author began early in 1867. I came to New York from San Francisco in the first month of that year, and presently Charles H. Webb, whom I had known in San Francisco as a reporter on "The Bulletin," and afterward editor of "The Californian," suggested that I publish a volume of sketches. I had but a slender reputation to publish it on; but I was charmed and excited by the suggestion, and quite willing to venture it if some industrious person would save me the trouble of gathering the sketches together. I was loath to do it myself; for from the beginning of my sojourn in this world there was a persistent vacancy in me where the industry ought to be. ("Ought to be" is better, perhaps, though the most of the authorities differ as to this.)

Webb said I had some reputation in the Atlantic States; but I knew quite well that it must be of a very attenuated sort. What there was of it rested upon the story of "The Jumping Frog." When Artemus Ward passed through California on a lecturing tour, in 1865 or '66, I told him "The Jumping Frog" story, in San Francisco, and he asked me to write it out and send it to his publisher, Carleton, in New York, to be used in padding out a small book which Artemus had prepared for the press and which needed some more stuffing to make it big enough for the price which was to be charged for it.

It reached Carleton in time; but he didn't think much of it, and was not willing to go to the typesetting expense of adding it to the book. He did not put it in the waste basket, but made Henry Clapp a present of it, and Clapp used it to help out the funeral of his dying literary journal, "The Saturday Press." "The Jumping Frog" appeared in the last number of that paper, was the most joyous feature of the obsequies, and was at once copied in the newspapers of America and England. It certainly had a wide celebrity, and it still had it at the time that I am speaking of—but I was aware that it was only the frog that was celebrated. It wasn't I. I was still an obscurity.

Webb undertook to collate the sketches. He performed this office, then handed the result to me, and I went to Carleton's establishment with it. I approached a clerk, and he bent eagerly over the counter to inquire into my needs; but when he found that I had come to sell a book and not to buy one, his temperature fell sixty degrees, and the

old-gold intrenchments in the roof of my mouth contracted three-quarters of an inch and my teeth fell out. I meekly asked the privilege of a word with Mr. Carleton, and was coldly informed that he was in his private office. Discouragements and difficulties followed; but after awhile I got by the frontier and entered the holy of holies. Ah, now I remember how I managed it! Webb had made an appointment for me with Carleton; otherwise I never should have gotten over that frontier. Carleton rose and said brusquely: "Well, what can I do for you?"

I reminded him that



Street Cars of Damascus.

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