

## HOMESTEADS OF THE BLUE-GRASS.



DRAWN BY HOWARD HELMICK.

AFTER DINNER LONG AGO.

ENGRAVED BY CHARLES STATE.

### I. COUNTRY AND TOWN.



**K**ENTUCKY is a land of rural homes. The people are out in the country with a perennial appetite and passion for the soil. Like Englishmen, they are by nature no dwellers in cities; like older Saxon forefathers, they have a strong feeling for a habitation even no better than a one-story log house, with furniture of the rudest kind, and cooking in the open air, if only it be surrounded by a plot of ground and individualized by all-encompassing fences. They are gregarious at respectful distances, dear to them being that sense of personal worth and importance which comes from territorial aloofness, from domestic privacy, and from a certain lordship over all they survey.

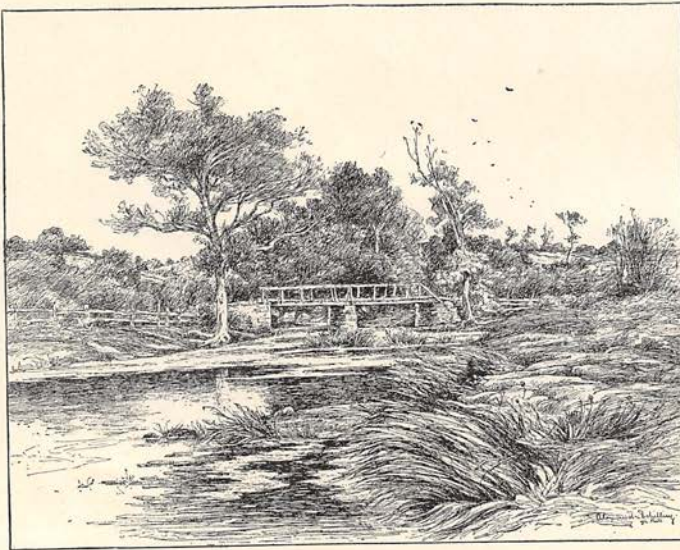
The land that Kentuckians hold has a singular charm and power of infusing some fierce and tender desire of ownership. Centuries before it was possessed by them, all ruthless aboriginal wars for its sole occupancy had resolved them-

selves into the final understanding that it be wholly claimed by none. Bounty in land was the coveted reward of Virginia troops in the old French and Indian war. Hereditary love of land was the magnet that drew the earliest settlers across the perilous mountains. Rapacity for land was the impulse that caused them to rush down into the green plains, fall upon the natives, slay, torture, hack to pieces, and sacrifice wife and child, with the swift, barbaric hardihood and unappeasable fury of Northmen of old descending upon the softer shores of France. Acquisition of land was the determinative principle of the new civilization. Litigation concerning land has made famous the decisions of their courts of law. The surveyor's chain should be wrapped about the rifle as a symbolic epitome of pioneer history. It was for land that they turned from the Indians upon one another, and wrangled, cheated, and lied. They robbed Boone until he had none in which to lay his bones. One of the first acts of one of the first colonists was to glut his appetite by the purchase of all of the State that lies south of the

Kentucky River. The middle class of farmer has always been a strong, a controlling element of the population. To-day more are engaged in agriculture than in all other pursuits combined; taste for it has steadily drawn a rich stream of younger generations hither and thither into the younger West; and to-day, as always, the broad, average ideal of a happy life is expressed in the quiet ownership of perpetual pastures.

Steam, said Emerson, is almost an Englishman: grass is almost a Kentuckian. Wealth, labor, productions, revenues, public markets, public improvements, manners, characters, social modes—all speak in common of the country and fix attention upon the soil. The staples attest the predominance of agriculture; unsurpassed breeds of stock imply the verdure of the

features of urban life. The hundreds of little towns and villages scattered at easy distances over the State for the most part draw out a thin existence by reason of surrounding rural populations. They bear the pastoral stamp. Up to their very environs approach the cultivated fields, the meadows of brilliant green, the delicate woodlands; in and out along the white highways move the tranquil currents of rural trade; through their streets groan and creak the loaded wagons; on the sidewalks the most conspicuous human type is the farmer. Once a month county-seats overflow with the incoming tide of country folk, livery-stables are crowded with horses and vehicles, court-house squares become market-places for traffic in stock. But when emp-



DRAWN BY A. SCHILLING.

DOWELL'S BRIDGE ON GLENN CREEK.

lawns; turnpikes, the finest on the continent, furnish viaducts for the garnered riches of the earth, and prove as well the high development of rural life as the every-day luxury of delightful riding and driving. Even the crow, the most boldly characteristic freebooter of the air, whose cawing is often the only sound heard in dead February days, or whose flight amid his multitudinous fellows forms long black lines across the morning and the evening sky, tells of fat pickings and profitable thefts in innumerable fields. In Kentucky a rustic young woman of Homeric sensibility will rightly be allowed to discover in the slow-moving panorama of white clouds her father's herd of short-horned cattle grazing through heavenly pastures, and her lover to see in the halo around the moon a perfect celestial race-track.

Comparatively weak and unpronounced are

tied of country folk, they sink again into repose, all but falling asleep of summer noonings, and in winter seeming frost-locked with the outlying woods and streams.

Remarkable is the absence of considerable cities; there being but one that may be said truly to reflect Kentucky life, and that situated on the river frontier, a hundred miles from the center of the State. Think of it! A population of some two millions with only one interior town that contains over five thousand white inhabitants. Hence Kentucky makes no impression abroad by reason of its urban population. Lexington, Bowling Green, Harrodsburg, Winchester, Richmond, Frankfort, Mount Sterling, and all the others, where do they stand in the scale of great American cities? Hence, too, the disparaging contrast liable to be drawn between Kentucky and the gigantic young States of the West.



DRAWN BY W. L. MACLEAN.

HOME OF THE SHELEYS, LINCOLN COUNTY.

ENGRAVED BY GEORGE P. BARTLE.

Where, it is severely asked, is the magnitude of the commonwealth, where the ground of the sense of importance in the people? No huge mills and gleaming forges, no din of factories and throb of mines, nowhere any colossal centers for the rushing enterprise and multiform energy of the modern American spirit. The answer must be, Judge the State thus far as an agricultural State; the people as an agricultural people: in time no doubt the rest will come. All other things are here, awaiting occasion and development. The eastern portions of the State now verge upon an era of long-delayed activity. There lie the mines, the building-stone, the illimitable wealth of timber; there soon will be opened new fields for commercial and industrial centralization. But hitherto in Kentucky it has seemed enough that the pulse of life should beat with the heart of nature, and be in unison with the slow unfolding and decadence of the seasons. The farmer can go no faster than the sun, and is rich or poor by the law of planetary orbits. In all central Kentucky not a single village of note has been founded within three quarters of a century, and some villages a hundred years old have not succeeded in gaining even from this fecund race more than a thousand or two thousand inhabitants. But these little towns are inaccessible to the criticism that would assault their commercial greatness. Business is not their boast. Sounded to its depths, the serene sea in which their exist-

tence floats will reveal a bottom, not of mercantile, but of social ideas; studied as to cost or comfort, the architecture in which the people have expressed themselves will appear noticeable, not in their business houses and public buildings, but in their homes. If these towns pique themselves pointedly on anything, it is that they are the centers of genial intercourse and polite entertainment. Even commercial Louisville must find its peculiar distinction in the number of its sumptuous private residences. It is well nigh a rule that in Kentucky the value of the house is out of proportion to the value of the estate.

Do not, however, make the mistake of supposing that because the towns regard themselves as the provincial fortresses of a good society, they therefore look down upon the home life



DRAWN BY W. L. MACLEAN.

ENGRAVED BY F. W. SUTHERLAND.

THE PORTER'S LODGE.



DRAWN BY W. L. MACLEAN.

COLONEL HART GIBSON'S HOUSE, NEAR LEXINGTON.

ENGRAVED BY CHARLES STATE.

of the country. In fact, between country and town in Kentucky exists a relation unique and well to be understood: such a part of the population of the town owning or managing estates in the country; such a part of the population of the country being business or professional men in town. For it is strikingly true that here all vocations and avocations of life may and do go with tillage, and there are none it is not considered to adorn. The first governor of the State was awarded his domain for raising a crop of corn, and laid down public life at last to renew his companionship with the plow. "I retire," said Clay, many years afterward, "to the shades of Ashland." The present governor (1888), a man of large wealth, lives, when at home, in a rural log house built near the beginning of the century. His predecessor in office was a farmer. Hardly a man of note in all the past or present history of the State but has had his near or immediate origin in the woods and fields. Formerly it was the custom — less general now — that young men should take their academic degrees in the colleges of the United States, sometimes in those of Europe, and, returning home, hang up their diplomas as votive offerings to the god of boundaries. To-day you will find the ex-minister to a foreign court spending his final years in the solitude of his farm-house, and the representative at Washington making his retreat to the restful homestead. The banker in town bethinks him of stocks at home that know no panic; the clergyman studies St. Paul amid the native corn, and muses on the surpassing beauty of David as he rides his favorite

horse through green pastures and beside still waters. Hence, to be a farmer here implies no social inferiority, no rusticity, no boorishness. Hence, so clearly interlaced are urban and rural society that there results a homogeneousness of manners, customs, dress, entertainments, ideals, and tastes. Hence, the infiltration of the country with the best the towns contain. More, indeed, than this: rather to the country than to the towns in Kentucky must one look for the local history of the home life. There first was implanted under English and Virginian influences the antique style of country-seat; there flourished for a time those gracious manners that were the high-born endowment of the olden school; there in piquant contrast were developed side by side the democratic and aristocratic spirits, working severally toward equality and caste; there was established the State reputation for effusive private hospitalities; and there still are peculiarly cherished the fading traditions of more festive boards and kindlier hearthstones. If the feeling of the whole people could be interpreted by a single saying, it would perhaps be this: that whether in town or country — and if in the country, not remotely here or there, but in well-nigh unbroken succession from estate to estate — they have attained a notable stage in the civilization of the home. This is the common conviction, this the idol of the tribe. The idol itself may rest on the fact of provincial isolation, which is the fortress of self-love and neighborly devotion; but it suffices for the present purpose to say that it is an idol still, worshiped for the divinity it is

thought to enshrine. Hence you may assail the Kentuckian on many grounds, and he will hold his peace. You may tell him that he has no great cities, that he does not run with the currents of national progress; but never tell him that the home life of his fellows and himself is not as good as the best in the land. Domesticity is the State porcupine, presenting an angry quill to every point of attack. To write of homes in Kentucky, therefore, and particularly of rural homes, is to enter the very citadel of the popular affections.

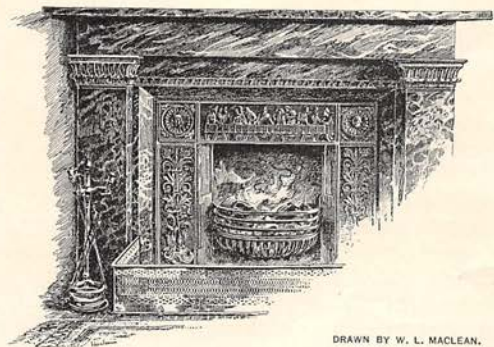
## II. TYPES OF EARLY HOMES.

At first they built for the tribe, working together like beavers in common cause against nature and their enemies. Home life and domestic architecture began among them with the wooden-fort community, the idea of which was no doubt derived from the frontier defenses of Virginia, and modified by the Kentuckians with a view to domestic use. This building habit culminated in the erection of some two hundred rustic castles, the sites of which in some instances are still to be identified. It was a singularly fit sort of structure, adjusting itself desperately and economically to the necessities of environment. For the time society lapsed into a state which, but for the want of lords and retainers, was feudalism of the rudest kind. There were gates for sally and swift retreat, bastions for defense, and loopholes in cabin-walls for the deadly volleys. There were hunting-parties winding forth stealthily without horn or hound, and returning laden with such antlered game as might have graced the great feudal halls. There was siege, too, and suffering, and death enough, God knows, mingled with the lowing of cattle and the clatter of looms. Some morning, even, you might have seen a slight girl trip covertly out to the little cotton-patch in one corner of the inclosure, and blushing crimson over the snowy cotton-bolls, pick the wherewithal to spin her bridal dress; for there they married also and bore children. Many a Kentucky family must trace its origin through the tribal communities pent up within a stockade, and discover that the family plate consisted then of a tin cup, and haply an iron fork.

But, as soon as might be, this compulsory village life broke eagerly asunder into private homes. The common building form was that of the log house. It is needful to distinguish this from the log house of the mountaineer, which is found throughout eastern Kentucky to-day. Encompassed by all difficulties, the pioneer yet reared himself a complete and more enduring habitation. One of these, still intact after the lapse of more than a century,

stands as a singularly interesting type of its kind, and brings us face to face with primitive architecture. "Mulberry Hill," a double house, two and a half stories high, with a central hall, was built in Jefferson County, near Louisville, in 1785, for John Clark, the father of General George Rogers Clark.

The settlers made the mistake of supposing that the country lacked building-stone, so deep under the loam and verdure lay the whole foundation rock; but soon they discovered that their better houses had only to be taken from beneath their feet. The first stone house in the State, and withal the most notable, is "Traveler's Rest," in Lincoln County, built in 1783 by Governor Metcalf, who was then a stone-mason, for Isaac Shelby, the first governor of Kentucky. To those who know the blue-grass landscape, this type of homestead is familiar enough, with its solidity of foundation, great thickness of walls, enormous, low chimneys, and little windows. The owners were the architects and builders, and with stern, necessitous industry translated their condition into their work, giving it an intensely human element. It harmonized with need, not with feeling; was built by the virtues, and not by the vanities. With no fine balance of proportion, with details few, scant, and crude, the entire effect of the architecture was not unpleasing, so honest was its poverty, so rugged and robust its purpose.



IRON AND MARBLE MANTELPIECE IN THE PRESTON HOUSE, LEXINGTON.

It was the gravest of all historic commentaries written in stone. Instructive enough is the varied fate that has overtaken these old-time structures. Many have been torn down, yielding their well-chosen sites to newer, showier edifices. Others became in time the quarters of the slaves. Others still have been hidden away beneath weather-boarding,—a veneer of commonplace modernism,—as though white-washed or painted plank were a finer thing to see than rough-hewn gray stone. But one is glad to discover that in numerous instances they are the preferred homes of those who have



DOORWAY IN THE BROWN HOUSE, FRANKFORT. (DESIGNED BY THOMAS JEFFERSON.)

a certain taste for the antique in native history, a certain pride in family associations and traditions. On all the thinned and open landscape, nothing stands out with a more pathetic air of nakedness than one of these stone houses, long since abandoned and fallen into ruin. Under the Kentucky sky houses crumble and die without seeming to grow old, without an aged toning down of colors, without the tender memorials of mosses and lichens, and of the whole race of clinging things. So, not until they are quite overthrown does nature reclaim them, or draw once more to her bosom the walls and chimneys within whose faithful bulwarks, and by whose cavernous, glowing recesses, our great-grandmothers and great-grandfathers danced and made love, married, suffered, and fell asleep.

Neither to the house of logs, therefore, nor to that of stone must we look for the earliest embodiment of positive taste in domestic architecture. This found its first, and, considering

the exigencies of the period, its most noteworthy expression in the homestead of brick. No finer specimen survives than that built in 1796, on a plan furnished by Thomas Jefferson to John Brown, who had been his law student, remained always his honored friend, and became one of the founders of the commonwealth. It is a rich landmark, this old manor-place on the bank of the Kentucky River in Frankfort. The great hall with its pillared archway is wide enough for dancing the Virginia reel. The suites of high, spacious rooms; the carefully carved woodwork of the window-casings and the doors; the tall, quaint mantel-frames; the deep fireplaces with their shining fire-dogs and fenders of brass, brought laboriously enough on pack-mules from Philadelphia; the brass locks and keys; the portraits on the walls—all these bespeak the early implantation in Kentucky of a taste for sumptuous life and entertainment. The house is like a far-descending echo of colonial Old Virginia.

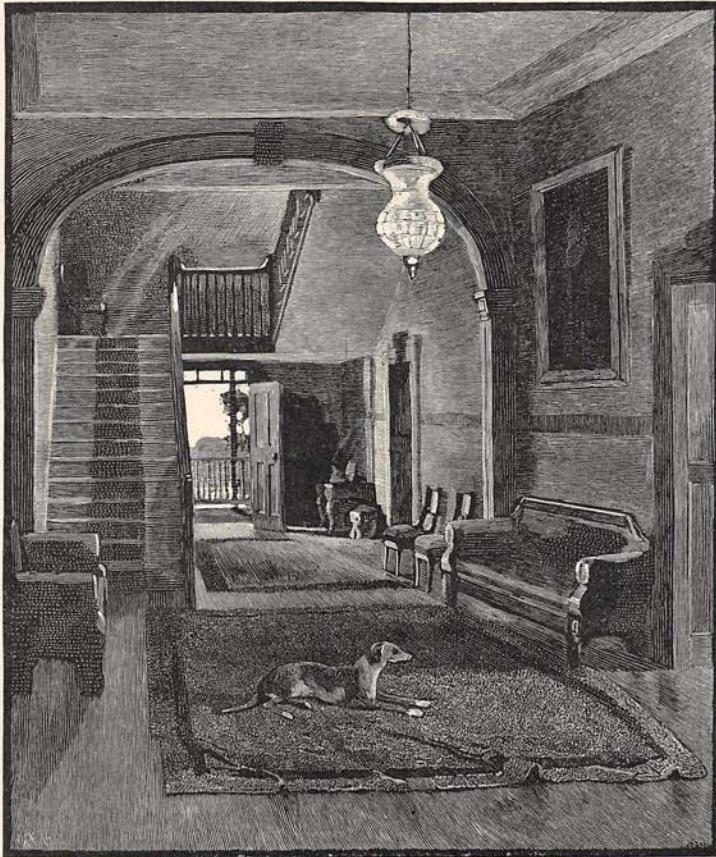
More famous in its day,—for it is already beneath the sod,—and built not of wood, nor of stone, nor of brick, but in part of all, was “Chaumière,” the home of David Meade during the closing years of the last, and the early years of the present, century. The owner, a Virginian who had been much in England, brought back with him notions of the baronial style of country-seat, and in Jessamine County, some ten miles from Lexington, built him a home that lingers in the mind like some picture of the imagination. It was a villa-like place, a cluster of rustic cottages, with a great park laid out in the style of Old World landscape-gardening. There were artificial rivers spanned by arching bridges, and lakes with islands crowned by Grecian temples. There were terraces and retired alcoves, and winding ways cut through sweet, flowering thickets, withal an Eden of forest green and shadows numberless. A fortune was spent on the grounds; a retinue of servants was employed in nurturing their beauty. The dining-room, wainscoted with walnut and relieved by deep window-seats, was richer still with the family service of silver and glass; on the walls of other rooms hung family portraits by Thomas Hudson and Sir Joshua Reynolds. Two days in the week were appointed for formal receptions. There Jackson and Monroe and Taylor were entertained; there Aaron Burr was held for a time under arrest; there the refined and courtly stateliness of the old school showed itself becomingly in silver buckles and knee-breeches, lifted high the huge wassail-bowl, and rode abroad in a yellow chariot with outriders in blue cloth and silver buttons.

Near Lexington may be found a further notable example of early architecture in the Todd homestead, the oldest house in the region, built

by the brother of John Todd, who was governor of Kentucky Territory, including Illinois. It is a strong, spacious brick structure reared on a high foundation of stone, with a large, square hall and great square rooms in suites, connected by double doors. To the last century also belongs the low, irregular pile that became the Wickliffe, and later the Preston, house in Lexington—a striking example of the taste then prevalent for plain, or even commonplace, exteriors, if combined with interiors that touched the imagination with the suggestion of something stately and noble and courtly.

Take these, chosen here and there, as a few types of homes erected in the last century. The point is not that such places existed, but that

sudden, fierce flaring up of sympathy with the French Revolution; hence the deep reëchoing through the Kentucky settlement of the war-cry of Jacobin emissaries. But scarcely had the wave of primitive conquest flowed over the land, and wealth followed in its peaceful wake, before life fell apart into the extremes of social caste. The memories of former position, the influences of old domestic habitudes, were powerful still. Rudely strained, not snapped asunder, were the connective tissues of civilization; so that, before a generation passed, Kentucky society gave full proof of the continuity of its development from phases of traditional State-existence. The region of the James River, so rich in antique homesteads, began to renew itself



DRAWN BY W. L. MACLEAN.

HALL IN THE BROWN HOMESTEAD, FRANKFORT.

ENGRAVED BY GASTON FAY.

they should have been found in Kentucky at such a time. For society had begun as the purest of all democracies. Only a little while ago the people had been shut up within a stockade. Stress of peril and hardship had leveled the elements of population to more than a democracy: it had knit them together as one endangered human brotherhood. Hence the

in the region of the blue-grass. On a new and larger canvas began to be painted the picture of shaded lawns, wide portals, broad staircases, great halls, drawing-rooms, and dining-rooms, wainscoting, carved woodwork, and waxed hard-wood floors. In came a few yellow chariots, morocco-lined and drawn by four horses. In came the powder, the wigs, and the queues, the

ruffled shirts, the knee-breeches, the glittering buckles, the high-heeled slippers, and the frosty brocades. Over the Alleghanies, in slow-moving wagons, came the massive mahogany furniture, the sunny brasswork, the tall silver candlesticks, the nervous-looking, thin-legged little pianos. In came old manners and old speech and old prides: the very Past gathered together its household gods and made an exodus into the Future.

Without due regard to these essential facts the social system of the State must ever remain poorly understood. Hitherto they have been but little considered. To the popular imagination the most familiar type of early Kentuckian is that of the fighter, the hunter, the rude, heroic pioneer and his no less heroic wife; people who left all things behind them and set their faces westward, prepared to be new creatures if such they could become. But on the dim historic background are the stiff figures of another type, people who were equally bent on being old-fashioned creatures if such they could remain. Thus, during the final years of the last century and the first quarter of the present one, Kentucky life was all richly overlaid with ancestral models. Closely studied, the elements of population by the close of this period were separable into a landed gentry, a robust yeomanry, a white tenantry, and a black peasantry. It was only by degrees,—by the dying out of the fine old types of men and women, by longer absence from the old environment and closer contact with the new,—that society lost its inherited and acquired its native characteristics, or became less Virginian and more Kentuckian. Gradually, also, the white tenantry waned and the black peasantry waxed. The aristocratic spirit, in becoming more Kentuckian, unbent somewhat its pride, and the democratic, in becoming more Kentuckian, took on a pride of its own; so that when social life culminated with the first half-century, there had been produced all over the blue-grass region, by the intermingling of the two, that widely diffused and peculiar type which may be described as an aristocratic democracy, or a democratic aristocracy, according to one's choosing of a phrase. The beginnings of Kentucky life represented not simply a slow development from the rudest pioneer conditions, but also a direct and immediate implantation of the best of long-established social forms. And in no wise did the latter embody itself more persuasively and lastingly than in the building of costly homes.

### III. HOMES OF THE MIDDLE PERIOD.

WITH the opening of the present century, this taste went on developing. A specimen of early architecture in the style of the old

English mansion is to be found in "Locust Grove," a massive and enduring structure,—not in the blue-grass region, it is true, but several miles from Louisville,—built in 1800 for Colonel Croghan, brother-in-law of General George Rogers Clark; and still another remains in "Spring Hill," in Woodford County, the home of Nathaniel Hart, who had been a boy in the fort at Boonesborough. Until recently a further representative, though remodeled in later times, survived in the Thompson place at "Shawnee Springs," in Mercer County.

Consider briefly the import of such country homes as these—"Traveler's Rest," "Chauvière," "Spring Hill," and "Shawnee Springs," and the writer deprecates all odium for restricting his mention to them, or for choosing them as types rather than others.<sup>1</sup> Built remotely here and there, away from the villages or before villages were formed, in a country not yet traversed by limestone highways or even by lanes, they, and such as they, were the beacon-lights, many-windowed and kind, of Kentucky entertainment. "Traveler's Rest" was on the great line of immigration from Abingdon through Cumberland Gap. Its roof-tree was a boon of universal shelter, its very name a perpetual invitation to all the weary. Long after the country became thickly peopled, it, and such places as it, remained the rallying-points of social festivity in their several counties, or drew their guests from remoter regions. They brought in the era of hospitalities, which by and by spread through the towns and over the land. If one is ever to study this trait as it flowered to perfection in Kentucky life, then one must hope to see it, not wholly, but at its best, in the society of some fifty years ago. Then trained horses were kept in the stables, trained servants were kept in the halls. The dinners were perennial, as boundless as the courtesies; the animosities were for the time dissolved by all the amenities; guests came uninvited, unannounced; tables were regularly set for surprises. "Put a plate," said an old Kentuckian of the time with a large family connection—"always put a plate for the last one of them down to the youngest grandchild." It is narrated as a fact in a Kentucky home,—and certainly it never happened in any other,—that a visitor once arrived, as he said, for a sojourn of several days, but remained twenty years; at the end of which time it pleased Providence to terminate his visit. What a Kentuckian would have thought of being asked to come on the thirteenth of the month and to leave on the twentieth, it is difficult to imagine. The wedding-presents of brides were not only jewels and silver and gold, but a round of balls.

<sup>1</sup> Ashland, the Clay homestead, has already been written of by another in this magazine.



The people were laughed at for their too impetuous civilities. In whatever quarter of the globe they should happen to meet for the hour a pleasing stranger, they would say in parting, "And when you come to Kentucky, be certain to come to my house."

Yet it is needful to discriminate, in speaking of Kentucky hospitality. Universally gracious toward the stranger and quick to receive him for his individual worth, within the State hospitality ran in circles, and the people turned a

toerat, if revenge was desired, could always be taken at the polls. Study the history of great political contests in the State, and see whether they are not lessons in the victory and defeat of social types. Herein lies a difficulty: you touch any point of Kentucky life, and instantly about it cluster antagonisms and contradictions. The false is true; the true is false. Society was aristocratic; it was democratic: it was neither; it was both. There was intense family pride, and no family pride. The ancestral sentiment was

weak, and it was strong. To-day you will discover the increasing vogue of an *heraldica Kentuckiensis*, and to-day an absolute disregard of a distinguished past. One tells but partial truths.

Of domestic architecture in a brief and general way something has been said. The prevailing influ-



DRAWN BY W. L. MACLEAN. ENGRAVED BY GEORGE P. BARTLE.

THE CROGHAN PLACE, "LOCUST GROVE."



THE CLARK HOUSE, "MULBERRY HILL."

piercing eye on one another's social positions. If in no other material aspect did they embody the history of descent so sturdily as in the building of homes, in no mental trait of home life did they reflect this more clearly than in the sense of family pride. Hardly a little town but had its classes that never mingled; scarce a rural neighborhood but insisted on the sanctity of its salt-cellar and the gloss of its mahogany. The spirit of caste was somewhat Persian in its gravity. Now the Alleghanies were its background, and the heroic beginnings of Kentucky life supplied its warrant; now it overleaped the Alleghanies, and allied itself to the memories of deeds and names in older States. But, mark you, if some professed to look down, none professed to look up. Deference to an upper class, if deference existed, was secret and resentful, not open and servile; and revenge on the aris-

ence was Virginian, but in Lexington and elsewhere may be observed evidences of French ideas in the glass-work and designs of doors and windows, in rooms grouped around a central hall with arching niches and alcoves; for models made their way from New Orleans as well as from the East. Out in the country, however, at such places as those already mentioned, a purely English taste was shown for woodland parks with deer and, what was more peculiarly Kentuckian, elk and buffalo. This taste, once so conspicuous, has never become extinct, and certainly the landscape is receptive enough to all such stately purposes. At "Spring Hill" and elsewhere, to-day, one may stroll through woods that have kept a touch of their native wildness, and lack only the restoration of timid, bounding forms to become primeval. There was the English love of lawns,



DRAWN BY W. L. MACLEAN.

"SPRING HILL," NEAR VERSAILLES.

ENGRAVED BY H. E. SYLVESTER.

too, with a low matted green turf and wide-spreading shade-trees above,—elm and maple, locust and poplar,—the English fondness for a mansion half hidden with evergreens and creepers and shrubbery, to be approached by a leafy avenue, a secluded gateway, and a graveled drive; for highways hardly admit to the heart of rural life in Kentucky, and wayside homes, to be dusted and gazed at by every passer-by, would little accord with the spirit of the people. This feeling of family seclusion and completeness also portrayed itself very tenderly in the custom of family graveyards, which were in time to be replaced by the democratic cemetery; and no one has ever lingered around those quiet spots of aged and drooping cedars, fast-fading violets, and perennial myrtle, without being made to feel that they grew out of the better heart and fostered the finer senses.

On the whole, however, the best proof of culture among the first generations of Kentuckians is to be seen in the private collections of portraits, among which one wanders now with a sort of stricken feeling that the higher life of Kentucky in this regard never went beyond its early promise. Look into the meager history of native art, and you will discover that nearly all the best work belongs to this early time. It was possible even then that a Kentuckian could give up law and turn to painting. Almost in the wilderness Jouett created rich, luminous, startling canvases. Artists came from

older States to sojourn and to work; artists were invited or summoned from abroad. Painting was taught in Lexington in 1800. Well for Jouett, perhaps, that he lived when he did; better for Hart, perhaps, that he was not born later: they might have run for Congress. One is prone to recur time and again to this period, when the ideals of Kentucky life were still wavering or unformed, and when there was the greatest receptivity to foreign impress. Thinking of social life as it was developed, say in and around Lexington,—of artists coming and going, of the statesmen, the lecturers, the lawyers, of the dignity and the energy of character, of the intellectual dinners,—one is inclined to liken the local civilization to a truncated cone, to a thing that should have towered to a symmetric apex, but somehow has never risen very high above a sturdy base.

So we turn to speak broadly of home life after it became more typically Kentuckian, and after architecture began to reflect with greater uniformity the character of the people. And here one can find material comfort, if not esthetic delight; for it is the whole picture of human life in the blue-grass region that pleases. Ride east and west, or north and south, along highway or byway, and the picture is the same. One almost asks for relief from the monotony of a merely well-to-do existence, almost sighs for the extremes of squalor and splendor, that nowhere may be seen, and that would seem so

out of place if anywhere confronted. On, and on, and on you go, seeing only the repetition of field and meadow, wood and lawn, a winding stream, an artificial pond, a sunny vineyard, a blooming orchard, a stone wall, a hedge-row, a tobacco barn, a warehouse, a race-track, cattle under the trees, sheep on the slopes, swine in the pools, and, half hidden by evergreens and shrubbery, the homelike, unpretentious houses that crown very simply and naturally the entire picture of material prosperity. They strike you as built not for their own sakes. Few will offer anything that lays hold upon the memory, unless it be perhaps a front portico with Doric, Ionic, or Corinthian columns; for your typical Kentuckian likes to go into his house through a classic entrance, no matter what inharmonious things may be beyond; and after supper on summer evenings, nothing fills him with serener comfort than to tilt his chair back against a classic support, as he smokes a pipe and argues on the immortality of a pedigree.

On the whole, you feel that nature lies ready, or has long waited, for a more exquisite sense in domestic architecture; that the immeasurable possibilities of delightful landscape have gone

made the land so kind to beauty; for no transformation of a rude, ungenial landscape is needed. The earth does not require to be trimmed and combed and perfumed. The airy vistas and delicate slopes are ready-made, the park-like woodlands invite, the tender, clinging children of the summer, the deep, echoless repose of the whole land, all ask that art be laid on every undulation and stored in every nook. And there are days with such Arcadian colors in air and cloud and sky — days with such panoramas of calm, sweet pastoral groups and harmonies below, such rippling and flashing of waters through green underlights and golden interspaces, that the shy, coy spirit of beauty seems to be wandering half sadly abroad and shunning all the haunts of man.

But little agricultural towns are not art-centers. Of itself rural life does not develop esthetic perceptions, and the last, most difficult thing to bring into the house is this shy, elusive spirit of beauty. The Kentucky woman has perhaps been corrupted in childhood by tasteless surroundings. Her lovable mission, the creation of a multitude of small lovely objects, is undertaken feebly and blindly. She may not know

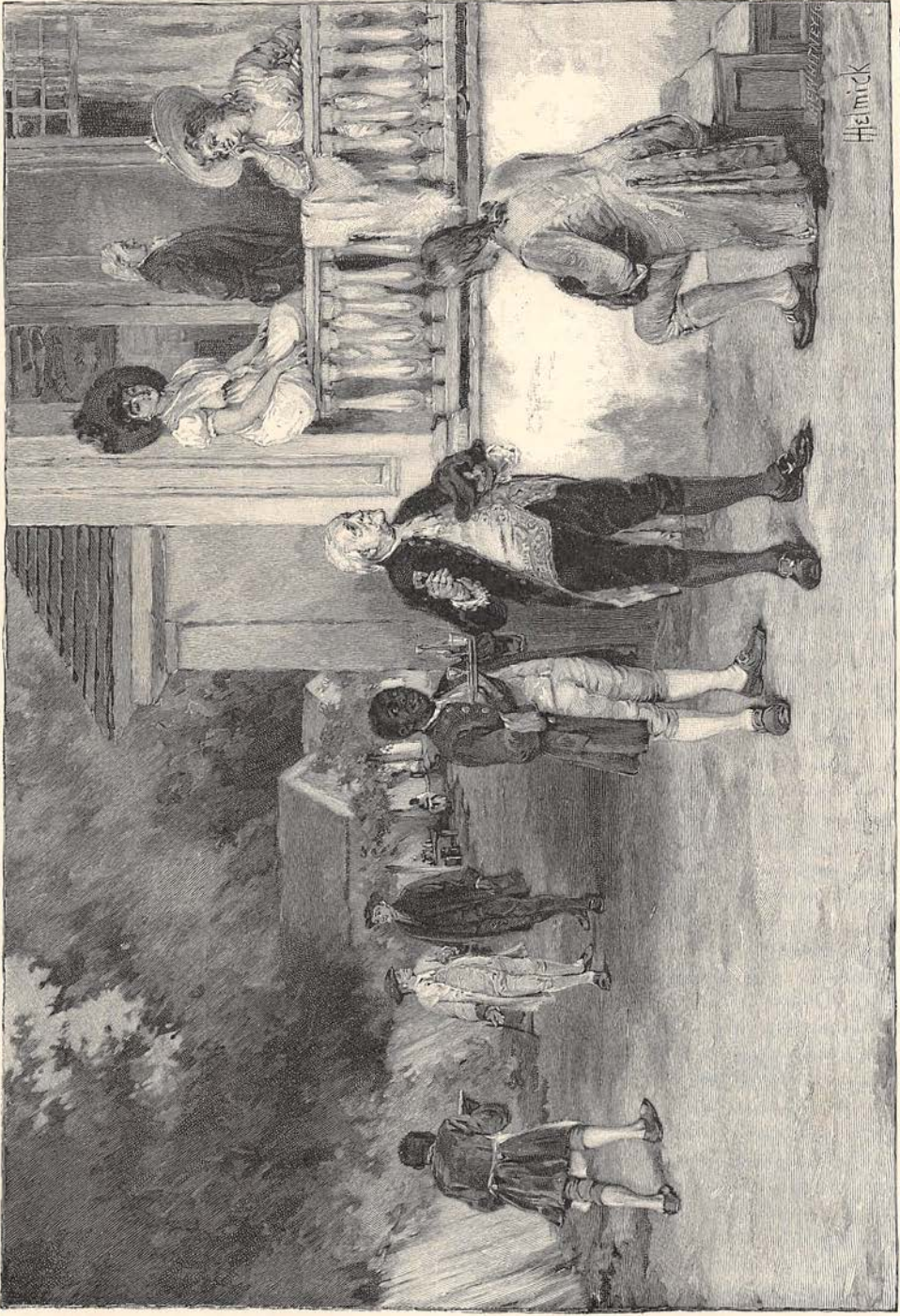


DRAWN BY W. L. MACLEAN.

THE PARK, "SPRING HILL."

unrecognized or wasted. Too often there is in form and outline no response to the spirit of the scenery, and there is dissonance of color — color which makes the first and strongest impression. The realm of taste is prevailingly the realm of the want of taste, or of its meretricious and commonplace violations. Many of the houses have a sort of featureless, cold, insipid ugliness, and interior and exterior decorations are apt to go for nothing or for something worse. You repeat that nature awaits more art, since she

how to create beauty, may not know what beauty is. The temperament of her lord, too, is practical: a man of substance and stomach, sound at heart, and with an abiding sense of his own responsibility and importance, honestly insisting on sweet butter and new-laid eggs, home-made bread and home-grown mutton, but little reveling in the delicacies of sensibility, and with no more eye for crimson poppies or blue corn-flowers in his house than amid his grain. Many a Kentucky woman would



ENGRAVED BY J. H. E. WHITNEY.

KENTUCKY HOSPITALITY IN THE OLDEN TIME.

DRAWN BY HOWARD HELMICK.

make her home beautiful if her husband would allow it.

Amid a rural people, also, no class of citizens is more influential than the clergy, who go about as the shepherds of the right; and without doubt in Kentucky, as elsewhere, ministerial ideals have wrought their effects on taste. Perhaps it is well to state that this is said broadly, and particularly of the past. The Kentucky preachers during earlier times were a fiery, zealous, and austere set, proclaiming that this world was not a home, but a wilderness of sin, and exhorting their people to live under the awful shadow of Eternity. Beauty in every material form was a peril, the seductive garment of the devil. Well nigh all that made for esthetic culture was put down, and, like frost on venturesome flowers, sermons fell on beauty in dress, entertainment, equipage, houses, church architecture, music, the drama, the opera—everything. The meek young spirit was led to the creek or pond, and perhaps the ice was broken for her baptism. If, as she sat in the pew, any vision of her chaste loveliness reached the pulpit, back came the warning that she would some day turn into a withered hag, and must inevitably be "eaten of worms." What wonder if the sense of beauty pined or went astray, and found itself completely avenged in the building of such churches? And yet there is nothing that even religion more surely demands than the fostering of the sense of beauty within us, and through this it is that we work most wisely toward the civilization of the future.

#### IV. HOMES SINCE THE WAR.

MANY rural homes have been built since the war, but the old type of country life has vanished. On the whole, there has been a strong movement of population toward the towns, rapidly augmenting their size. Elements of showiness and freshness have been added to their once unobtrusive architecture. And, in particular, that art movement and sudden quickening of the love of beauty which swept over this country a few years since has had its influence here. But for the most part the newer homes are like the newer homes in other American cities, and the style of interior appointment and decoration has few native char-

acteristics. As a rule the people love the country life less than of yore, since an altered social system has deprived it of much leisure, and has added hardships. The Kentuckian does not regard it as part of his mission in life to feed fodder to stock, but to have it fed; and servants are hard to get, the colored ladies and gentlemen having developed a taste for urban society.

What, then, is to be the future of the blue-grass region? When population in the United States becomes much denser and the pressure is felt in every neighborhood, who will possess it? One seems to see in certain tendencies of American life the probable answer to this question. The small farmer will be bought out, and will disappear. Estates will grow fewer and larger. The whole land will pass into the hands of the rich, being too precious for the poor to own. Already here and there one notes the disposition to create vast domains by the slow swallowing up of contiguous small ones. Consider, then, in this connection the taste already shown by the rich American in certain parts of the United States to found a country place in the style of an English lord. Consider, too, that the landscape is much like the loveliest of rural England; that the trees, the grass, the sculpture of the scenery are such as make the perfect beauty of a park; that the fox, the bob-white, the thoroughbred, and the deer are indigenous. Apparently, therefore, one can foresee the yet distant time when this will become the region of splendid homes and estates that will nourish a taste for outdoor sports and offer an escape from the too-wearying cities. On the other hand, a powerful and ever-growing interest is that of the horse, racer or trotter. He brings into the State his increasing capital, his types of men. Year after year he buys farms, and lays out tracks, and builds stables, and edits journals, and turns agriculture into grazing. In time the blue-grass region may become the Yorkshire of America.

But let the future have its own. The country will become theirs who deserve it, whether they build palaces or barns. One only hopes that when the old homesteads have been torn down or have fallen into ruins, the tradition may still run that they too had their day and deserved their page of history.

*James Lane Allen.*

