

from Philadelphia and Harper's Ferry for the making of the road. It is as dry as a bone and as smooth as a floor, and you ride for almost a mile over it in your ascent to the house proper. You wind in and out through the forest, now going through acres of green velvet, past beds of luxuriant plants, by the great barn which contains Mr. Elkins' horses, past a garden big enough to supply a New York hotel, till you come to the ledge on which the house stands.

ITS WONDERFUL INTERIOR.

The front of the house faces the forest, and it is only its back that can be seen from the valley. It is an immense structure of three stories, so carefully planned that its beauty, rather than its size, is impressive. Its big rooms are so furnished that there is nothing barn-like about them, and the house is more like a comfortable home than a millionaire's palace. And still, its size is enormous. The stone porch which runs about its two sides is 180 feet long, and so wide that you could run a freight car around it and not touch the edge of the walls. The main feature of the ground floor is the hall which runs through the center, and into which the parlors, the library and the dining room open. This hall is so big that you could drive a wagon load of hay in through the front doors and drive out again without grazing the wood-work. Sixteen big chairs and two large sofas form a part of its furniture, and it has a fireplace at one side which eats up wood by the cord, and in which the logs are put without splitting or sawing. At the right, as you enter, is the parlor, and beyond this the Senator's library. This library has the biggest fireplace in the United States, and the room is, I venture, larger than any committee room in the Capitol. It is walled with books, and the pictures of the great Americans of the time, who are close friends of Senator Elkins, look down from its walls. Opposite the parlor is the dining room, which is, I judge, as big as the dining room of the White House, and at the tables of which from thirty to forty often sit down to dinner. Senator Elkins keeps open house, and his friendships are so many that he has plenty of guests. Not long ago he had a large number of friends stopping with him, when a crowd of sixteen more appeared without notice. Mrs. Elkins took care of them all, and nearly every guest had his own sleeping room. The bed rooms are arranged in suites, each of which has an elegant bath room, with a porcelain tub, and some of the guest rooms are enormous. The furniture, however, makes them look smaller, and it gives you some idea of the size of the house when I say that it took many car loads of furniture to fit out the rooms. The house is heated by steam, and it has all modern conveniences. It has its own gas plant, but it will soon be supplied with electricity, and the steam will come from the railroad company's works in the town. The ice house connected with it now contains 200 tons of ice, and the Senator has all the luxuries of the city here on the top of the Allegheny mountains. He entertains like a prince, and his home life is delightful.

A WORD ABOUT MRS. ELKINS.

This mountain estate is named after his wife. It is called "Halliehurst." The word "hurst" means wood, and Mrs. Elkins was, you know, Miss Hallie Davis, the daughter of Senator Henry

G. Davis, when the Senator married her, now twenty years ago.

Henry G. Davis was then the democratic Senator from West Virginia. Stephen B. Elkins is now the republican Senator from that state, and this is the first instance of a woman being the daughter of one Senator and the wife of another, both from the same state. Senator Elkins was in Congress at the time of his marriage, and Miss Davis was one of the belles of the capital. Old Senator Thurman told her that Elkins was a man with a future, and urged her not to make the mistake of letting him go. It was, however, a case of love on both sides, and the marriage has been a most happy one. Mrs. Elkins is today one of the most accomplished women of the country. She is thoroughly wrapped up in the Senator and her children, and she is his helpmeet and friend in every sense of the word. It was she who planned this house, in connection with the architect, and she it is who manages it. She has executive ability, and I am told that she is almost as good a politician as her husband. The two have four boys, the eldest of whom is nineteen, and one girl, Miss Catherine, who at nine is the baby of the family, and who is a host in herself. In addition to these, Senator Elkins' married daughter, Mrs. Bruner, and her husband are now with him, and his father, who at eighty-six is one of the brightest old young men of the country, is an important part of the establishment.

PART II.

A TALK WITH STEPHEN B. ELKINS.

The West Virginia Senator Discusses the Issues of the Day and Chats of Religion, Money-Making and Politics.

Senator Elkins is one of the most charming conversationalists in public life. He likes to talk, and his association with the prominent men of the past has been so close that his reminiscences are most interesting. During my stay at his house I felt very close to Grant and Blaine. His library is filled with relics and mementoes of them, and Mr. Elkins knew them so well that talking with him about them seems almost like chatting with the men themselves. One morning, I remember I asked him to explain to me the meaning of a frame filled with closely written manuscript, containing many erasures and corrections, which hung on one of the walls of his library. "That," said he, "is the first draft of Blaine's estimate of Grant, which he published in his book. This manuscript had something to do in bringing Grant and Blaine together, and to make them friends again. They were great men, and it seemed a pity to me that they should not be friends. I knew them both very well. While they were not on good terms I was living near Gen. Grant, on 58th street, in New York, and during his latter days I visited him very frequently. I often had Blaine visiting me, and I would excuse myself and say I wanted to go over and see Grant for an hour. Grant would ask me about Blaine, and Blaine never had a bad word to say against Grant. The two men were too great to stoop to little things. At this time I had a summer house at Deer Park, and Grant came up and spent a week or so with me. I got to know him better at that time. He looked upon me

as a kind of a boy, and I was as much at ease with him as with you. One day I got a letter from Blaine, in which he spoke very kindly of Grant, and I then asked Grant why he and Blaine could not be on better terms. Said I:

"You are both great men, and it seems to me as great Americans you ought not to go on through the world closing your careers without being closer to one another. Here is what Blaine has written me about you, and I know that he has only the kindest feelings toward you. I wish you two could come together."

"Grant thereupon said that he had no objection, and shortly after this, when he was at Washington, Mr. and Mrs. Blaine called upon him, and were well received, and the two became reconciled.

HOW GRANT FELT IN BATTLE.

"Gen. Grant," Senator Elkins went on, "was a great big man. The closer you got to him, the bigger he grew. He was a broad gauge man in every sense of the word, and entirely unselfish, and with all his greatness he was the soul of simplicity. Simplicity belongs to greatness, you know, and no great man was ever a selfish man. One day, as we sat on my porch chatting and looking out over the mountains, the thought of his great deeds in the war came to me, and I asked:

"General, I want you to tell me how a great man feels when he is in the midst of a battle which is to decide, perhaps, the fate of a nation, and make a mark in history for all time, knowing as he does, that the world is looking on, and the success or the failure of the battle is largely dependent upon him as the commander?"

"Grant smoked a moment and replied: 'I can't say now how I felt. All that I thought of was whipping the enemy and putting down the rebellion, and saving the Union.'"

THE RELIGION OF GRANT AND BLAINE.

"Senator, was Grant a religious man?"

"Yes," was the reply. "He was a simple, earnest Christian."

"How about Blaine?"

"Blaine had a strong faith in religion," replied Senator Elkins, "and he did everything he could to strengthen it. He would never discuss the foundations of his faith. He did not want to doubt, and he did not want to reason on the matter. His mother was a Catholic, and this influenced him greatly, and made him respect her faith. I am told the cardinal and Father Tom Sherman saw Mr. Blaine before his death, and still, the last time he went to church, it was at the Church of the Covenant, in Washington, which is, you know, Presbyterian."

ELKINS AND RELIGION.

"How about yourself, Senator? You are a Catholic, are you not?"

"No," replied Senator Elkins. "I come from the old, cast-iron Scottish Presbyterian stock. My ancestors were all Protestants, and my church is the Christian Church, sometimes known as the Church of the Disciples, or Campbellites, which I joined while at college. During my term in Congress, I attended the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, and I suppose I will go back there when I return to the capital to live. The reason why I sometimes have been thought to be a Catholic arises from the fact that I have a great many Catholic