



C H A P T E R 5

MY FATHER WAS JOHN MARSHALL CLEMENS OF VIRGINIA; MY MOTHER Jane Lampton of Kentucky. My mother married my father in Lexington in 1823, when she was twenty years old and he twenty-four. Neither of them had very much in the way of property. She brought him two or three Negroes but nothing else, I think. They moved to the village of Jamestown, in the mountains. There their first children were born, but as I came at a much later time I do not remember anything about it. I was born in Missouri, an unknown new state and in need of attractions.

My father left a fine estate behind him in the region around Jamestown—75,000 acres. When he died in 1847 he had owned it about twenty years. He had always said that the land would not become valuable in his time, but that it would be a good provision for his children some day. I wish I owned a couple of acres of that land right now, in which case I would not be writing autobiographies for a living. My mother's favorite cousin, James Lampton, 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 if a man will keep up his heart and fire at everything he sees he will surely hit something.

James Lampton floated, all his days, in a world of dreams and died at last without seeing a one of them realized. He was, when I saw him last in 1884, old and white-haired but he entertained me in the same old way of his earlier life and he still had a happy light in his eye and hope in his heart—and he could still share the secret riches of the world with me.