

Diary of Dr. P. C. Kelly 1870-1939, Part III

History

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There is one other incident I wish to relate that occurred in the first term I taught there and that is the incident of Vilda (Savilda) Moore, a grown woman and as strong as the ordinary man. The teacher who taught the school the year before had trouble with her and she shook her fist under his nose and cursed him roundly and he could do nothing about it. When I went there to teach I, of course, heard of it but I never thought she would come to my school. On the first day of school some big young woman came into the school room with a bucket of water for the children to drink and after she left I asked who that woman was and they said "that is Vilda Moore and she is going to start to school tomorrow". I did not faint but I felt like it. Sure enough, she came to school next day and I had steeled myself against for fear of her as best I could and had determined not to let her know that I feared her. She was nearly half again as large as I was and had powerful muscles. I started in with her just as I would a child and treated her very kindly and she seemed to be susceptible to kindness. About the second day she came to school and about four o'clock in the afternoon, just as I was nearly ready to dismiss for the day, the whole school was disturbed by the screaming of a woman and this Vilda began to cry. I asked her what was the matter and she replied between sobs that Pa was whipping Ma and we could hear her screams plainly as they lived just out of sight of the schoolhouse. I sympathized with her. She finally got up and left the room which was strictly forbidden by me. I found her out at the side of the house crying and I said "Vilda, you must return to the school room" and she obeyed me. I talked very kindly to her.

About the time I was dismissing the school, a very rough man appeared at the door, armed with a large pistol in his hip pocket, and he looked so mad that I felt a little alarm but I spoke to him and invited him in, which he declined and said that he would wait outside. When I dismissed the school and went outside, a crying woman came up to me trying to tell me of her whipping and I had good sense enough not to take sides with either one and said I know nothing about this business and I did not want to talk about it. This man was Pa, old devil Bill Moore, and this woman was Ma. He had married the second time and the woman had a small son who was in the school. Old Bill took him and stripped every bit of clothes the boy had except his shirt and trousers, including his shoes, and ordered his wife and her boy to leave and never return. This Moore had a grown man son and also a grown daughter who were both idiots and it would run a cold chill over one to even look at them. They were absolutely the worst idiots I ever saw. This old Moore would get mad at those idiots and take any kind of a weapon stick, club or switch and beat those poor idiots until it was pitiful to hear their screams. To my surprise, when I got to my boarding house which was the house of Si Moore, brother of Bill and a very different man, as this Si Moore was as mild talking man as I ever saw and never swore but was not afraid of the devil himself and would kill a man same as he would a snake if he got mad enough. I found that the woman was there for the night.

Around the fire that night this whipped woman got to telling me things as well as the whole family. She said in a whimpering voice "Bill is a fine man but he would get mad and whip her and the children." In my mind I said "you old devil, I think you are the meanest of the two and it does not matter if you get strapped once in a while." She hung around till the next day and old Bill came up

there and compelled this woman to strip every dud off her and hand them out through a crack in the house between the logs to him and left her without even a dress. The other Mrs. Moore had to give her a dress. I tell this story so that any who might read this account will know just what a rough community I had to teach school in.

After finishing this school, I thought sure that I would quit teaching for good but as it will be seen in the remaining part of this account, I was compelled to teach again and again. I concluded to go to some college and started out from home, undecided whether to go to Marshall College State normal at Huntington, West Virginia, or to some college in Ohio. As it happened, I had to go by way of Huntington and I stopped to see the president of the college and he came out on the porch of the college building which stood on a high place right in the middle of a perfectly level tract of land. There was so much green grass and fine shade trees that I immediately fell in love with the place and the president, Professor Thomas E. Hodges, sat down by me on a seat for the purpose and was very cordial in his conversation with me. I always thought he was a very high class gentleman and highly educated.

As the conversation went on, I finally said "Professor, I am just a hill country boy. I have taught school but I have never been away from home enough to learn the ways of the world and am, in fact, a green horn in that respect". I continued, "I suppose it is just as well that way as I have but little money and want to put my whole time to my studies and I suppose if I were like other young men I would waste my time from my books." I further stated that I wanted to get in with some good studies roommate who would want to put his whole time to improvement of his education. He seemed much pleased at my attitude in the matter and he said "I know where I can put you in with some young men who are just perfect gentlemen and want to do the same thing you do." I said "Well, that suits me and I think I will enroll as a student here." I think he took me downtown to the rooms of these perfect gentlemen and introduced me, however, of this fact I am not certain. At any rate, I found these perfect gentlemen all on one floor and rooms adjoining and it was like rooming with the whole bunch to be in any of the rooms.

I took up rooming there and there was Parsons and Bill Bechthal, Casto and Bailey and George Quick and myself. Bechthal was a dressy fellow and very talkative and full of life and fun. Quick was the most particular dresser of us all and Bailey, Parsons and myself only wanted to look respectable. Parsons was of a very excitable nature and sometimes we had trouble in believing everything he told us. Bailey was tall and awkward looking but a fine fellow and as honest and honorable as they make them. I was tall and slender and light weight and no doubt gawky as I was from the country. I at once announced that I did not want to waste my time running out at night but wanted to study all of my time. Mr. Quick grabbed at the chance for me to stay in his room as that was his intentions also. After we went down to the restaurant and had supper, one of these fine gentlemen proposed a walk around town and invited me to join them. I replied that I would for just that evening as I had no particular work to do as I had not been to classes as yet.

It was about dusk when we started out and I thought to myself now I am out with perfect gentlemen and I must watch what I do and not make a blunder and offend these nice gentlemen. So I was all keyed up to show my nicest manners and actions in every way. Very soon, I was to have the surprise of my life. The very first place we landed was in a disreputable bawdy house. I tried to faint but could not, so surprised was I at the actions of these perfect gentlemen. After carousing around for considerable time, we departed and it was getting well into the night. One of these perfect gentlemen got hold of a large pitcher and sneaked in the back way of a saloon and got it filled with beer and we went out to a vacant lot and they began to pour out glasses of beer and offered it to me as well.

Unlike the rest, I had never tasted beer. I tasted it and made the statement that I had never tasted nastier stuff in my whole life whereupon the boys said that I must drink it and I would get to like it just as much as I hated it. So by coaxing me, I made out to drink several glasses. They were very kind in coaxing me and used no ruff stuff. After they had gotten several pitchers full, and I helped drink it, I could feel myself getting drunk. I said, "I think you have succeeded in doing it. Now if another glass of beer was offered to me, there is going to be a fight. I am possible green and cannot do many things you boys can do but I warn you, there is one thing I know I can do and will do if you offer me more beer and that is fight. I can do that well as I have had many and if you do not get me home to my room at once, I think I can whip the whole bunch of you." These fine gentlemen at once hustled me to my room and only had to push me over on my bed. I was so drunk that I knew nothing until next morning. After I had gotten well awake, I said "Now boys, you had a lot of fun with me last night and now I know that you were hazing me and that is alright with me but we came near having an all round fight over it." They all laughed good-naturedly and from then on, we were the best of friends. Any one of them would have fought for me. That term in college was a very pleasant season for me as we boys were very congenial to one another. We really enjoyed ourselves and to my memory, we never pulled any more rough stuff as we did the first night I was there. To tell the truth, they were very nice gentlemen.

One incident more I wish to relate in regard to Mr. George Quick and myself as principal actors. As I have said before, George was a very dressy fellow and always wanted to look neat and clean and well dressed. In the school, were two boys named Blankenship and Potts and they were forever picking on country boys and making fun of them, many times, right to their faces. If the boys resented it, they would not hesitate to fight with them. On my arrival, I was told that I would have to fight these two or take a lot of humiliation. Seeing how I acted the night they made me drink, they decided I would fight them rather than take their remarks about my clothes or my person. I said promptly that it would not happen more than twice before I took them. However, in this connection, I wish to say that I made it handy to get right in touch with these fellows and gave them every chance to say any slight thing to me but, to my great surprise, they treated me just as well as any of the others and I talked to them many times, thinking they would make the break but they never did. In fact, we were together quite a lot and always got along fine together. Not so with my roommate George Quick. They were continually making fun of him openly. He could not go into a classroom or anywhere without being sneered at and ridiculed something awful. They called him dude and all sorts of names. He kept telling me how they annoyed him and I advised that he knock the both of them into a cocked hat. I said "You are very able to do just that thing." He said he did not want to get into any trouble in the school. I replied that the trouble he would get in by doing it was no worse than what he was enduring in the present situation. I think that took hold of him and he began to think it out for himself for in the very next day or so I was seated in the main chapel of the college and all at once Quick came to me (he had started with the rest to his class and I thought he was gone for the forenoon). He was all over in a tremble and whispered to me "I knocked the whey out of that Blankenship out there in the hall and I am going to my room downtown to get my gun" and he asked me to keep his books. When he started out, I said, "Now Quick, you are not running away from Blankenship are you?" He said, "No, I will be back." I said, "You?d better as I do not want to admit I have a coward for a roommate." He said, "I will be back."

Hour after hour passed away and no Quick. I was furious. In the evening, we all went to our rooms and found nothing of Quick. We started out down town to hunt him and walked around a block or two and back to the rooms. Someone there told me that a lady had called to see me while we were out and as I knew no ladies in Huntington, I suspicioned that she was bringing me a message from Quick. I invented the scheme of hunting him some more and when we got down a few blocks, I said

to the others "I will go around this way and you fellows meet me at a designated spot". They all agreed and I was alone. As soon as I got out of sight of them, I went directly back to the rooms and when I got there, I saw a lady standing at the door and I spoke to her and asked if she was looking for me. She replied that she was looking for me. She then handed me a note from George. The note said "Kelley, you are the only one I will confide in and I do not want you telling the boys a thing. Tell them that you received a note from me and that I have gone to Charleston on my way home, then you come to this address", naming it. I was so furious at his actions that if I had come on him at that moment, I verily believe I would have tried to beat him up. However, after a few moments, I said maybe I do not understand the situation and I will do as he asked me to do. So I went down the street after first writing a note to myself, supposed to be from George, asking me to pack his clothes and ship them to him at Charleston and stating that he enclosed five dollars for me to pay up any little bills he might have left behind. After getting the note in shape, I walked downtown and met the boys and I hailed them and told them that the lady that was hunting for me had returned with a note for me and that Quick had gone to Charleston. I read the note aloud to them. They were all disgusted and I said "Boys, you will all have to go up to the rooms and help me pack his clothing." They very willingly did so. After packing the clothing, I had to scheme some to get away by myself. I finally did get away and went to the room Quick was hiding in and I went in and, if I did not demean him, I will eat my head. I told him that he was acting cowardly and that I was heartily ashamed of him, that he must come out of it and go right down with me and, if necessary, fight that Blankenship and Potts both. He begged me not to be mad with him and explained that he had intended going home anyway in a few days and that he did not want to be arrested and have trouble. He vowed that he was not afraid of the fellows. Finally I gave in and agreed to do anything I could for him. He told me to go about midnight and get his clothing we had packed and bring them to the Chesapeake and Ohio depot where he would take the train (The Cannon Ball) to Charleston. We played some games to pass the time till midnight and then I slipped over to the rooms and up the stairs and found the boys sound asleep. I slipped in and grabbed the suitcases and out very quickly and was not seen. I got him to the depot in time for the train and away he went. The other boys never suspected me but before I left them at the end of the term, I told them all about it.

I thought I was going into a swell college and that I was among the lower grades as a scholar and went back home thinking I was no great fellow in any way. As was the custom, the college teachers sent my father my record and it was good. At the bottom of the report was written "The Best in the class". If I ever was surprised, I was at the sight of that statement. My father took special pride in it also.

Before school term was out, a man by name of Thompson got in touch with me and some of the rest of the boys. He sold us an agency for a book called "Manner, Culture and Dress". He was to go out during our vacation and sell these books. I wrote George Quick who lived in a wooded country not far from Charleston. I arranged to visit him and try to sell books in his territory. I boarded a train and went to Charleston and from there on foot to Quick's home. He was glad to see me and I took board and room with his sister and her husband by name of Kendal. They were good country folks and treated me well. I finally got acquainted with the country girls there and among them, Quick's sister. It seemed that we rather fell for one another and I began going places with her. She had a steady by name of Hoff (Charley). I think his name was Charley Hoffman. I was not in the neighborhood but a few days before I was taken sick and was complaining for several weeks but finally a Dr. Staunton was called from Malden in to the country. I was told he would pass by where I was boarding and I watched for him. He gave me a very little medicine which straightened me up in good shape.

As I said before, I had been going places with George's sister and, while I was not feeling well, I took

her to a country picnic and was feeling so punk that I hired a seat in the merry-go-round and sat there most of the time with Martha by my side. Along in the afternoon, we heard some man riding into the picnic grounds yelling to the top of his voice and weaving from side to side on his horse and acting drunk. I asked her who it was and she said it was Charles Hoffman and that he was on the warpath on account of me. He was jealous concerning the girl. I asked her if she thought he would give me any trouble or want to fight with me? She said she hardly knew. I assured her that if he did, I was going to defend myself. If he did not bother me, I was not going to bother him. It turned out that nothing came of it.

There was a lot of pretty girls in the neighborhood and one Sunday we made it up for a lot of us to walk through the mountains to a "Hardshell Baptist meeting" where they were to observe foot washing. We started on a pathway which was rough and the girls pulled off their shoes and stockings for the walk as we had to wade streams and so forth. When we got very near where the preaching was to be, the girls sat on rocks and put on their shoes and stockings. While they were doing this, the young men went a short ways around the turn of the creek and began to hunt nice throwing rocks and stuffing their pockets with them. I asked what it meant and they told me there was a kind of feud in the hills and that persons from each side would be there and that they wanted to be prepared. I said "Well, I will fill my pockets and am with you." They remonstrated and told me the best for me was to stay out of it. I took their advice. No trouble developed that day.

After finishing this college course at Huntington, I determined to take up the study of medicine and informed my father of this fact one rainy foggy night as we rode along a mountain road on our way to a lodge meeting. The lodge was that of the Junior Order Of American Mechanics to be held in a hall right in the country. As my father and I rode side by side in mud ankle deep or more to our horses, it was so dark that we could not see one another though we rubbed elbows many times. I broke the news in the following manner. I said "Father, do you know what I have decided to do?" He answered that he said not. I said, "Well, I am going to medical college." "How can you think of such a thing, you have no money (which was absolutely true) and I am not able to help you through. However, I would be willing to help you all I possibly can if you undertake it," he replied. I replied that there was no doubt about my undertaking it as my mind was made up to that effect. He said "well, I hope that you make it alright but I cannot see just how you will do it." I said in a very determined tone "I WILL MAKE IT."

I had spent all my money in one way or another but did not owe anyone at that time. The first move I made was to go to my neighbor Clay Taylor and borrow one hundred dollars or rather got the promise that he would let me have it at the proper time. He promised me on the strength that when I had gone my first term, I was to come back and teach school and pay it back. While I did not know it or even dream of it, this same Clay Taylor was to be my brother-in-law as I afterwards, after I had graduated, married his youngest sister, Virgie Taylor.

In those days, one who started to study medicine had to read under a preceptor for some time before going to college and then give the name of this preceptor to the college on entrance. I knew a fine country doctor at Minnora, W.Va. I journeyed horseback for about 20 miles through the mountains to ask him if I might give his name as my preceptor and I was supposed to read his med books. When I arrived at his country town and office, he had a lot of people in and as he knew that I was not sick and being a very sociable man he asked me if I would wait until he attended to these patients. After he got them all waited on, he invited me into his private office and I immediately informed him of what I had come to see him for. He squared himself in his chair and looked me square in the eyes and said "Kelley, are you sure you want to study medicine?" I replied that I was very sure. He said "Do

you realize just what you are going into and the great responsibilities you will be required to take upon yourself?" I replied that I had thought something of that but I might not fully realize the full meaning of it. "Well, I am going to tell you all about it and see what you then think of it" he replied. He started in and recited the hardships from the time one started in as a student and after that as a beginner in practice and as a full fledged practitioner. He told me if there ever was a professional man who led (the proverbial dog's life) it certainly was the doctor. In fact, he painted it so black that there seemed to be no evidence of any bright place in the whole career. He told me of all the drawbacks and none of the pleasing aspects of the profession. Any ordinary person, I verily believe, after hearing him would have been ready to drop the matter definitely and finally. After he had talked to me for the greater part of an hour, he rested and I took the opportunity of saying to him "Dr. Dye (for it was Dr. James A. Dye who still lives at Parkersburg, W.Va.), you have given me a great talk and to many it would be a very discouraging lecture, but I am of the same mind as when I arrived here and not discouraged in the least. I am, if any change, more determined than ever to enter into it. Will you allow me to read under you as a preceptor?" His face brightened up and he said "Well, Kelley, I deliberately tried to scare you out but I am really pleased that you take the attitude you have and I will do all I can to help you." He further stated his reasons for trying to discourage me. He said that very often young men would come to him and put on a front that they wanted to study medicine and some of them actually started in and always backed down and quit. "Now I do not believe you will do so." I said, "I am fully determined to go through with it." I immediately began to cast around for a medical college where I could go with the minimum charges and I finally found the Medical Department of the National Normal University of Lebanon, Ohio, to which school I enrolled in the year 1895.

I took my one hundred dollars that I had borrowed from Clay Taylor and what other money I could raise and departed for Lebanon. I arrived and enrolled in the medical class, which I afterwards found to be a small class and we were in close contact with the professors. It was the custom to assign a subject to one of the class for next day's lecture and the students were made to give the lecture. Then the professor would take it up before the class as he thought best. I happened at the first class that it was anatomy. We assembled for class and it so happened that the professor picked me to lecture next day and he had a closet in which he kept a skeleton and he gave me the key and told me that it would be my duty next morning before class assembled to unlock the closet and place the skeleton out before the class. I felt that this was a great honor to be selected for this duty. However, he further stated "I have here an occipital bone, being the lower bone of the skull which articulates with the neck. You will be required to lecture before the class tomorrow morning and describe this bone as minutely as possible. It has many ridges, foramens and grooves. Study it and lecture tomorrow."

I went immediately to my room and got my bone and my Gray's anatomy book and settled down to reading and memorizing every word. I venture to say that I never slept over two or three hours the whole night. Next morning I went to class all keyed up and placed the skeleton before the class and sat down with the others. The professor, Dr. A. W. Mardis, soon arrived and took his seat before the class and called on me to make my lecture. I immediately rose with considerably more confidence in myself than I thought I would have. I knew that I had never before seen an occipital bone but at the same time, I knew that I could tell a lot about it after having put the whole night in on studying. I started in and I think I described it just as well as Gray's anatomy did it. I noticed the pleased look on the professor's face and when I sat down he remarked that he was sure I knew more about that bone than I knew yesterday when assigned to me. I replied "Yes professor, I read about that bone all night." The class roared with laughter. That one lesson gave me a standing in the subject of anatomy that I really did not deserve. Everyone of the class seemed to regard me as a fine anatomist, which I

was really not. However, that opinion held to the last of the term and I was looked upon as a favorable contestant for the prize in anatomy. As it turned out, I ran out of cash and had to leave for home just a day or so before the prize was awarded, which went to another party.

Times were different then than now. If I tell you that I boarded and had nice meals for 25 cents per week, which I did, you would not be inclined to believe it. I joined up with a club house and in that way we lived very economically. On my arrival in Lebanon, I took a room in the dormitory and was alone for the first night. As stated before, I spent nearly the full night studying the occipital bone and in the morning before school I was at the same job. I was sitting by the table reading and studying when all of a sudden someone opened my door and barged right in on me and when I looked up I saw a tall man with long hair and a dirty face and a hard looker every way. It rather frightened me and before I could say anything, he began sweeping the floor and then it dawned on me that he was doing janitor work and not a word was spoken. How it every occurred to me to think of it, I do not know, but I immediately dubbed him "Li Hung Chang" and that was what I always called him thereafter. I learned afterwards that this man was a "book worm" and just laid around the library and read constantly and was doing the janitor work in order to get to stay near the library. I never talked to him but was told that he could hold conversation with the best educated persons and often surprised the learned ones with his store of knowledge. Every morning we expected him at a certain time and he always came and never said a word but went to his work as he did the first time.

In a few days, they sent me a roommate and he was O. E. Bell of Hopedale, Ohio. He was a short red haired young fellow and he was a very fine fellow but was very self important and so excitable on the least provocation that I had many good laughs at him. For instance, he feared anatomy as he would a ghost and we had a card listing the days and hours of each branch of study, anatomy with the rest. I was in my room one morning when in rushed Bell yelling at the top of his voice "Great God Kelley, ANATOMY COMES TODAY". He had make a mistake in reading the card and the only way I could quiet him down was to almost hold him down and show him where he had read the card wrong and that A NAT OMY (long A) did not come today. Then he quieted down to normal. He wore good clothes and a derby hat cocked back on his head and held a high head and was a great talker. Walking down the street you would think he owned the whole town and college. He said every morning or two to me "Kelley let us have an egg nog this morning", shouting to the top of his voice and adding an oath. I thought he was joking for a long time as I never touched liquor in any form except a drink of beer occasionally. I had as the Huntington boy predicted, taken a liking to beer. By the way, speaking of beer reminds me that in the school of medicine was a fine fellow from my home state (W.Va.) by the name of O. B. Beer and he proved to be a very likeable fellow in the class. I shall mention him later on. Come to think of it now, I had just as well say what I have to say of him right now.

We had a Miss Crone for a Materia Medica and therapeutics teacher and she was a very attractive young woman and O. B. got to going with her but I never knew what came of it. Another fine young man from Louisiana (East Feliciana Parish) by name of Thomas Dreher and his sister were both in the university. Dreher studying medicine and the sister in some other department. I became quite chummy with Dreher and we ran around together quite a lot and had a lot of fun together. I came to like him so much that I really hated it when I had to part with him and considered him a gentleman in every respect. I carried a note for him to one of the young ladies he got stuck on asking her to let him take her to a dance, I think it was. The young lady refused him and I carried the note from her back. This hurt Dreher considerably but he came out of it very gracefully. The sad ending of Dr. Dreher about ten years ago gave me a lot of grief. I never saw him after I left Lebanon but about ten years ago I was in Joplin, Mo and reading the paper one evening, I saw Dreher's name in an article

concerning the murder of a man and it named Dreher and the man's wife as the murderers. This murder was committed while Hughey Long was governor of Louisiana and he had been appealed to time and again to commute the sentence to life imprisonment. He flatly refused to interfere. At that time, Dr. Paul N. Cyr was lieutenant Governor and I heard that Gov. Long was going out of the state or was thinking of it. So I wrote Dr. Cyr knowing that he and the Gov. were not on the best of terms and asked him if he had a chance to commute the death sentence of Dreher and the woman if he would consider doing it. He replied and did not say straight out that he would do it but I thought he talked very favorably. I then wrote him a long letter concerning my associations with Thomas E. Dreher at Lebanon, Ohio. I told him of an incident that happened while I was out walking with Dreher that made me think he at times was temporarily insane. (The letters should be written in here which are self-explanatory)

I do not think this story would be complete if I left out an incident that involves myself and at the time was very amusing and somewhat embarrassing to me. I laughed with the crowd and came out of it quite gracefully. In this college, every little while all departments came together in a great hall and marched in couples (male and female) around the hall and as the parade went on at a signal I think the gentleman dropped back and had a new partner and tried to get acquainted. In looking around, I had spied a young woman by name of Miss Kemper that I got much interested in and wanted to meet her and naturally I wanted to get in that parade and I would finally fall in with her and get acquainted in that way. Those days we were very backward and did not ask someone to introduce us as we should have done. So we fell on the plan as stated.

Mr. Bell, my roommate, was trying to get me acquainted with a girl from his neighborhood that he praised to the skies and he said "Besides, Kelley, she is very wealthy." He pointed her out to me and I decided she was not good looking and then she was a very small statute and I was very tall so I did not care to get acquainted but I had to get me a girl to start the march with so I consented to be introduced to the young lady in order to finally get to Miss Kemper. Bell introduced her to me (I cannot remember her name) and I asked her if she would accompany me to which she readily accepted. The march began and I was by her side and she talked so low that I could not hear a word she said without stooping way down to hear her. We soon parted and I kept dropping back and watching Miss Kemper. I was getting closer and closer and at last, she was only one or two couples behind me. I was on needles for it to come time for me to be with her and all at once the march broke up and I never got to see her to talk to her alone. The next day the laugh was on me and all the boys that knew me poked fun at me about how I had to stoop down to hear the girl talk. Bell had noticed it first and, of course, he drew attention of as many of our friends as possible to watch me stooping down. I could not go around on the college grounds or the streets but that I would see the boys coming toward me and they would stoop down as though listening to something and then give me the horse laugh. I cursed them and then laughed so heartily with them. So in a little time, I lived this down. I want to add that the Miss Crone whom O.B. Beer went with had a sister and Thomas E. Dreher married her and she was his wife when Dreher finally was hung with the woman at Morgan City, Louisiana.

As stated above, I left for home a few days early on account of finances. A lot of the boys escorted me to the train and bade me goodbye. I think Miss Lowery and Miss McGrew, the only lady students in our class, also was at the train. (I may be mistaken about Miss McGrew's name as I cannot fully recall the name of the other lady but I am sure of Miss Lowry) They were both young ladies and we dissected a subject side by side. I returned to my home in West Virginia and taught school and paid back the money I had borrowed and intended going to Saint Louis to Barnes Med College for my next term. I had been a chum to L. A. Ellis, son of Philip Ellis mentioned before as being my friend.

This young man was, I thought, the homeliest person I had ever met but he was full of fun and I took a liking to him and he to me. He improved himself to a teacher's capacity and was well liked. He and I were like brothers. When he had money and I had none, he always loaned me his money without note or other papers. This time, after I had collected considerable money preparatory to going to St. Louis in the fall to college, it was he who had to borrow some money and I loaned him all I had. One day he asked me if I did not want my money back as he had it and was not at that time in need of it. I said "No, you keep it for a little time more and then give it to me." Next time I saw him he had been to Charleston and had gotten drunk and into the company of some bad women and they had robbed him and he could not then pay me. It left me without funds.

The loss of this money made me very despondent for a short time, knowing that besides the loss of the money, it was going to throw me back one year and cause me to come out of college just a year later than I had planned it. After worrying quite a lot, I determined that I would go through with what I had planned in spite of everything and everybody. I yet had my hands and a determination to work at anything in the world that would bring in the dollars. There was an old Kentuckian by name Judge Lewis, working a timber job right in my home neighborhood. By the way, this was the same company that I had worked for as reported in this story before but they were operating in a different county then (Fayette). The head boss of this project was Buell Lewis, a brother of Judge Lewis, who was the real head of the company. I had just finished teaching a term of school and I weighed 145 pounds and my hands were so tender and white that I was most ashamed of them as looking too much like a girl's hand. I was dressed in a dark suit and I wore a white light overcoat and a derby hat, making me look very much like I had never done a bit of manual labor. I went down in the woods one mile from Uncle John Kelly's place where I had made arrangements for my board when, and if, I got the job. John Kelly got in a tough spot on two occasions and I went on his note for \$10.00 and another for \$20.00, to this very same young man that got my money and did not pay it back. I had to pay both of these notes.

I went to my father and told him my troubles and he was not able to help me anymore as I owed him some money anyway. I told him that I had made arrangements with Uncle John Kelly to board me while I worked in payment of his obligation to me as I had paid his notes that I went security on. My father used to butcher many hogs and as I was a great meat eater, I suggested that if he had the meat to spare, I would appreciate it if we could have a cured ham once in a while as Uncle John did not have so much more meat than would do for his own family. My father saw the point at once and volunteered to furnish all the meat that was necessary during the time I worked there. This looked fine to both my uncle and myself.

As I began to say before, I walked one mile from my uncle's place down into the woods and met the boss (Buell Lewis). As I have said before, I was dressed like a dude and looked (I suppose) like a dude and perfectly worthless. I walked boldly up to the boss and said "Mr. Lewis, I am looking for work." He asked me why I wanted to work. I told him my story and said "I must work now to get back the money I have lost and spend it to go to St. Louis to school." He replied that it was very praiseworthy of me. I noticed also that he was scrutinizing my appearance very closely. He finally said or rather asked me, "What kind of work do you wish to do?" I replied that I did not care what kind of work I got to do, just so it brought me the required money that I must have. I went on further to say that I was not out particularly hunting a white collared job, but that I was willing to get right down in the mud and work as I knew by previous experiences what the nature of the work was. He replied that I talked all right and promised me a job and told me what day to report and where.

The day came and I was on the spot. They did not start that day for some reason. I think the weather

was too cold and there was snow on the ground. On the next day, I was on the ground early but something happened and we did not go out that day. The third day was set and when it rolled around, I was there and we went to work. The first job was a rough one as we had to cut roads out and remove great logs and when it came to lifting these logs, we put hand spikes under the log and two men to each hand spike, one on either end and then we tried to carry the log. Many times I fell to my knees but right up again. I was trying to do my part. This ran on for a few days when there was a lot of these stave blocks sawed three feet long and to be rolled out of the woods to the brink of the hill and turned down the hill to roll the rest of the way down a steep hill to the valley below. These logs were, of course, covered with rough bark and a man rolling them would come in contact with this rough bark with his hands and one or two trips, even with soft gloves on, ones hands got unbearably sore. One must wade mud ankle deep or more and when night came I got home and rested until next day. When I started to work, it was all I could do to walk and I just thought it would be impossible for me to touch another log with my hands but that old determination again took hold of me and I went right on and worked the best I could. One time they put me to cutting the roads in the woods which was a light job and I was glad of it.

I was working one day when I smelled the odor of some of the boss's tobacco somewhere near me. I said to myself "the boss is watching me and probably thinks I am not working." Finally, he came right out in sight of me and spoke very kindly to me and said, "Kelley, don't you think this work is too rough and heavy for you?" He went on further before I had time to reply saying that if I would quit for a few days until the mill started up, that he would give me a job inside that would suit me better. I saw through it immediately and said to myself "that is just a nice way to fire me." I then spoke to him in the following manner. I said "Mr. Lewis, I know that I have not been doing you a good day's work since I have been here with you for the reason that I have not been physically able to do it. However, I now am able to work and if you will let me continue on this job, I will be there every day ready to work." He replied that he wanted someone who could be there to work every day. I said "That is just what I will be if you let me stay, for I verily believe that you are firing me this morning for I would never be called back and I assure you, Mr. Lewis, that I must have this money to go to school. If you will let me stay and work as long as I can, I will guarantee that when I am compelled to quit work for you, you will want me to stay." He smiled and said, "Alright Kelley, go right ahead." In a very few days they were having trouble getting a hand that could stand up to a certain Mr. Ashley who was an excellent sawyer and I asked if I might try it. I said "I am considered good with a cross cut saw." They said go and try it. It proved to be the very thing I was cut out for and I got the best of Ashley and they tried twenty men before they got Frank Gandee who could and did hold his own with me.

After I had worked quite a while, the straw boss approached me and said, "Kelley, I think it would be best if you bought some goods at the Commissary as you never have bought a dollars worth from there." I knew that when I bought there, I would be charged a lot more for the things I bought than what I could get it anywhere else for. So I flew mad and cursed a few oaths and told him flatly that I had not bought goods there and furthermore that I did not intend doing so and if they wanted to let me go on that account, I would still stick to my resolution. I went further and said, "I am broke and I am working for this money to help me get through college and I cannot afford to pay two prices for my goods and furthermore I will not do it." I heard no more about it.

When, after I had worked about eighty days there, I felt much of a man and it was time that I quit work and get things rounded up for going to St. Louis Barnes Medical College. I went into the office of Mr. Buell Lewis and said "Mr. Lewis, I came in to say that the time has arrived now that I must quit and get ready to go to school." He threw up his hands and said "Kelley, you cannot quit on me now, don't you know that mess up the run has to be cleared up immediately and we need you so bad?" I

smiled and said "Now Mr. Lewis, you have just now said just what I told you that you would say when you were trying to fire me up in the woods that day." We both laughed heartily and he said, "I have. So you will have to go if you just cannot stay any longer." I left there feeling good.

After getting everything in readiness to go to St. Louis, I found that I have a few days in which I might work and earn a few dollars. There was a man by name Mack Welch who's children had gone to school to me at my first term of school. He was running a timber job near where I was and I went to him and asked if he could use me for a time. I finally made agreement to work for him and buy clothing out of the store. I thought if I could earn some clothing, I would need rather than lay idle and do nothing, it was the best thing I could do. So I started in and in the few days I worked for him, I had a good supply of clothing laid away and found afterwards that I had done a wise act by so doing.

Time arrived and I departed for St. Louis and Barnes Medical College. I arrived due time and took up rooming with a neighbor one John W. Smith who had been raised up in a mile of my home I found out. He was a fine fellow to be associated with. The difference between our circumstances was that John's father was rather wealthy whereas my father was only well to do. However, John had been raised to be very economical and, in spite of the fact I was not as well fixed as he was, I found him with a disposition to be more saving than I was. This rather pleased me as he was rather a governor over our spending. John and I secured a room together with one bed and a gasoline stove which neither of us had ever used. We decided to stock up with food and cook it ourselves and save our little funds.

I shall never forget our starting up for light housekeeping and the trouble getting the gasoline stove lit. As I remember it, John did not want to tackle the job of lighting the stove as he was afraid it would blow up and burn him. After some argument, I decided to try it myself. In those days, I wore a mustache. I got my matches ready and then turned on the gas for generating the burners and, like the fool I was, I got my head right down close to see how to light it and stuck a lighted match to it. Immediately there was a great flash of flame in my face. For a wonder, I did not suffer any serious burn but it singed my mustache so badly that I had to trim it down to half it's natural length. It was comical after it was all over as when the great flash of blaze came out, I went backwards on the floor with my feet straight up in the air. When I got able to call John, I heard him answer from a way down the hall where he had fled in a panic. I looked at the stove and the generator was just about burned out. I knew that I should turn on the gas now but feared to do so. Finally, before it cooled down too much I got just as far away from it as I could to reach the valve and turned it very slowly and to my great delight, it lit up nicely and our troubles were over as we gradually learned the proper way to light our stove.

Believe it or not, John and I were both fairly well informed in the art of cooking and we were surprised ourselves how nice and how good our meals were when set on the table. John was very economical in buying food and I decided to let him do all the buying. We just made up a purse each week and turned it over to John to use as he thought best. I will say that never did I have any regret or dissatisfaction concerning his handling the money or of purchasing the things we needed. Every cent of the money was always accounted for. Another thing I admired about John was that he was the best student roommate I had ever had. He would sit up to any hour of the night to get knowledge he was in need of and I must say that he was exceptionally bright in all the subjects. We finally got into the habit of trying to ask each other questions just to try to stall the other and many is the time John woke me from a sound sleep and said, "Kelley, wake up. I just thought of a hard question to ask you." He would not stop until I woke up and tried to answer him. Then to get even with him, I would wait until I knew he was sound asleep and I would do the same thing to him. We never had but one

quarrel in the whole time and he got me so mad that I wanted to fight him and actually did throw the shoe brush at him and missed.

The trouble started when in a friendly game of cards, John was getting the worst of it and he accused me of cheating. In those days, one was supposed to protect his honor if it even came to blows and I was in good shape to protect myself as I had done all that hard manual labor before entering the school. John was not nearly as large as I was and as I was advancing on him I noted the difference as he was of very slight build so I stopped right there and let it go at that at least for the present. To an outsider, I suppose it would have appeared comical. We went around there for several days eating and sleeping together but not talking. After a few days, I admit I was getting very sick of the situation and I thought he was too. I studied the matter over thoroughly to determine who should be the one to first offer apology. John was very determined when he got mad and showed no evidence of giving in. To tell the truth, I had always borne that reputation also; that is, I had the name of never giving in when I started anything. I did not know just what to do as it hurt my pride a lot if I had to give in. However, I reasoned that it would hurt John just as bad for him to have to knuckle to me. So I said maybe I was too hasty in what I did and that one of the two of us had to knuckle a little to get us back together happy as we were before. I went to the college one forenoon alone and it was gloomy and cloudy and no sunshine. John went out to classes and we saw nothing of one another until I went in at noon feeling miserable because of the circumstances at home. I determined to make the break if he did not so I went in the room and here he was looking miserable as I felt. I did not delay and spoke right up and said "John, don't you think we have acted the fool long enough?" I don't remember the words of his answer but they were favorable to a settlement of the trouble. I said, "I feel that I had reason to be offended at your accusation but I also feel that I was somewhat hasty in my actions toward you and I am sorry for it." He said "That is just what I thought of it and also, that I possibly was too hasty in what I said and if you were not cheating as you claim you were not, I am sorry also." I assured him that I was playing a straight game and had not had even a thought of cheating as sometimes we all tried to do when we were getting the worst of it. I said, "John, we have lived here together so long and have had such a nice time studying together and have gotten so much good out of it that we cannot afford to fall out over some trifling matter and separate as we will have to do in case we cannot come to some understanding right now." He agreed thoroughly with me. Then I said "I think we had better forget the quarrel and be just as good friends as ever as we are both liable to have acted in the wrong manner." He said "Alright, that is what I want to do and I said I am going to be with you just as I was before and I am going to admit that down in my heart I like you as a roommate and I hope you can say the same or else it will do us no good to try to make up." I said "I feel the same way. If it is alright with you, we are friends again." From that day until now, if there was ever any hard feelings between us, I did not know it. After the term, we went happily home together. At this time, September 28, 1938, I do not know where John is but think he is in West Virginia somewhere practicing. I am sure if we met today it would be a most wonderful visit we would have talking of our old days.

When I returned home from this college term I was greeted by friends and relatives most cordially and they one and all wished me well in every way and were loud in their praise of my efforts to get through college. Many saying that a young man that was not too proud to do manual labor of any kind to earn his way through school was deserving of success. In fact, I had relatives and friends who told me that in case I did not have money ready for my last term, which was the next fall, that they would back me to get all I needed. However, these promises did not stop me from my efforts to get all the money I could earn myself. I do not now remember just what I did during my vacation but I got around and earned some money.

I went to my preceptor and told him of the splendid backing I had and he knew all the men who had said they would back me for money and I asked him if he would let me have the money with these men for security in case none of them had it to put out themselves. He immediately said he would. Nothing more was said about the money until it was getting time for me to go back to Saint Louis. At that time, I started to see my preceptor who lived twenty miles or more in the hills of W.Va. I was accompanied by my cousin, Peter Hershberger, who had taken a lot of interest in me and in many ways had encouraged and helped me. He was a very likeable man and one of my best and closest friends. We started on horseback as there was not much other ways of getting around in those days. On our way, we stopped at one of my aunts who had married William B. Ferrell and who was Hershberger's stepfather. This Uncle Bill Ferrell as we called him was a fine old fellow and while he was very high tempered, was also one of the mildest speaking men I ever heard talk and he could make the dead laugh at his funny sayings. He was my uncle by marriage to my father's sister who was a widow Hershberger and the mother of Peter. This Mr. Ferrell is that same Bill Ferrel that old Bill Vineyard was going to get a jug of whiskey and send for to help him hate old John Jett. I stopped there for dinner, as I remember it, and we talked a while and I had occasion to go outside of the house for a few minutes. When I returned Uncle Bill asked me if I were going to Dr. Dye's place to get the money to go to college on. I was surprised that he knew all about it but I answered that I was on my way. He said "If you want me to, I will sign your note as security if it will help any." I assured him that I appreciated it a lot and that it would help a lot. After dinner we journeyed on through the hills and saw Dr. Dye and, as I remember it today, I only got one hundred dollars loan and I had five well thought of citizens to sign the note. I asked the doctor if he thought I had enough signers and he said I had too many.

[\(continued in Part IV\)](#)