

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

History

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My cousin was an adventist preacher but he was as jolly as anyone could be and many is the good laugh he and I had. On the way back, it came noon and dinner time and we were going to pass a country store that was owned and run by a friend of Hershberger. He said to me that we would stop there for dinner. said it would be alright with me except that if he is running a store, he is likely to be very busy and maybe his wife also. He replied that it would be alright he knew. So we rode into the store and met Mr. Thompson McGraw, the owner, and he immediately sent us over to the house for dinner. When we went in, there was a very long table set and it was full of guests who were the store customers. I felt that it was an imposition on the folks and mentioned it to Hershberger and said maybe we should go further on. He said it was alright so we stayed and when I wanted to pay for my dinner, it raised quite a stir and the man almost became indignant at the idea. I asked him if those were all customers of the store and he said all that were eating were. I remarked that it seemed to me they would eat up all the profit. He replied that any customer at the store was welcome at the table and all his friends also. I said no more.

There were several other young fellows in our community who went a term or two and then started practicing and usually made a botch of it. There was William Noyes, another Bert Edgell, who was a cousin to Dr. A. W. Edgell, our old family physician, and then George Trout who had tried to teach school and also tried the ministry and failed at both. I do not believe he ever went to medical school at all but the other two did go for at least one term. Old Uncle Bill Ferrell had a lot of fun talking about these would be doctors. For instance, he said that if he wanted a physic he would only have to look at one of the fellows and it would be all right and in case he wished to vomit he only had to look at the other one and it would work.

Bert Edgell had no way of getting money to go to St. Louis but to fatten up the old mare that he owned and sell her and use the money. I remember all through the summer he was fattening the old mare. It seemed that this was all he did the whole summer. When I would stop in to see him, he would take me out and show me how she was getting along and looking forward to the time she would be fit to sell for a work horse. Before this feeding process, she was so poor that no one would want her. Finally, he got sale for her and he grew right to that money until it was time to go to school. I think when the money from the mare sale ran out, Bert came on back home and got him an old pair of pill pockets and went into the practice. I think, however, he used pills for the physic despite the fact he could have saved them if we are to believe what Old Uncle Bill had said.

It was now coming near the time for me to return to college and my last year as I was to graduate that year. On my way, I stopped at a small town to spend the night with my two friends, Dr. and Mrs. Dorcas Starkey. I had known them for years and before they were married. I called him Dr. Starkey although he had not graduated he was practicing under another doctor just for experience and what little money he could make to help him in college. He and his wife were going to St. Louis and he to the same college I was headed for. If I mistake not, he had spent one term before that and this was to be his second term and my last one. While there at Dr. Starkey's, I am sure it was that the three of

us cooked up the scheme of getting rooms and the three of us doing light housekeeping and Mrs. Starkey being the chief cook. After reaching St. Louis, we carried this plan into effect and we had everything going nicely until we made the mistake of taking in another student by name A. W. Tarr who was a widower and an all round nuisance to me especially as he was always singing or whittling and raising Cain generally until it got so bad that I pulled out and went to room with a great big good-natured Texan by name of Jeff Parsons. Parsons was the best fellow I ever roomed with or I should have said one of the best as I had been rooming with John Smith and, outside of our having the quarrel, he was just a fine roommate. Parsons was very studious and an all round good fellow. He had a string of Texas boys as friends and I liked all of them. While these Texans were fine sociable fellows and seemed so kind and good, they would fight at the drop of a hat or less. I ran with these Texans so much that the rest of the school thought I was a Texan also. I nursed Parsons through a very painful, if not dangerous, sick spell and had to sit over him one complete night giving him an anesthetic for pain. I won the everlasting respect and gratitude of Parsons and all his friends. They would have spilled blood for me. At the end of the term, I thought I was amply able to pass the examinations but after we had written the answers to the questions, I became uneasy for fear that I had failed in the examination of children's diseases as I had been called out in the middle of the examination by a party who was delivering some medical books which I had previously ordered. I was foolish enough to leave the room to sign up for these books when the professor was giving verbal questions and giving I think one minute for us to answer on paper. Thinking of this occurrence and being somewhat of a nervous wreck from my strenuous work, made me believe that I would not get enough credits to pass. We had to wait several days after the exams to receive our credits or in other words pass or fail. I was in the room one day alone for several hours and it was one of those dark gloomy days that we have so many of in St. Louis, enough to make anyone despondent alone. The boys finally came in and the room was full of Texans. "Well boys, I have studied the matter over thoroughly today and I have fully decided that I have failed in the examinations" I said, not giving my specific reason as being the interruption but just saying that I thought I would get a failing grade. There was a long gangly Texan by name of McFarlane who was a very wicked talking man but a splendid fellow. He seemingly flew mad and began cursing me saying, "Kelley, you are the damnedest fool I ever saw. You think you have failed? Where in H--I do you think all of us fellows are going to come up as you know twice as much as any one of us? Now we are going to pass and why in hell won't you pass?" It rather convinced me that I was wrong and I felt better. I knew that what he said was practically true as to knowledge as some of them were rather poor and I knew it.

The night we went to the college to receive our grades, we all congregated in the hallway where the professor handed the grades out. When they were handed to each individual, we could tell who failed and who passed as when one got a passing grade, he hooped it and threw his hat in the air but when we saw a fellow who quietly slunk out of sight, we knew what had happened to him. I received the good news despite my fears and worries. I could not endure St. Louis and it was very hard for me to wait until commencement night to receive my diploma but at last the night rolled round and we went to the 14th Street Theatre where we were presented with our diplomas. After the ceremony was over and I had my diploma in my hands, I wanted to run to the train and get home as fast as I could. The situation was this. I had written home for my fare money to be sent to me on a certain day and it had not arrived so it was unbearable for me to think of having to wait for the money. An idea struck me and I immediately carried it out. We had a professor of chest diseases by name of Dr. Jennings who was a fine instructor although he had a stoppage in his speech that hindered him considerably. By the way, he was a first cousin of the great orator, William Jennings Bryan, and should have been a good talker. His thoroughness made up for the defect as I considered him the most systematic instructor in the whole faculty. Later on, I wish to relate a short story which will include this professor.

Now for my plan to get home quickly. I wish it understood that I was not intimately acquainted with Dr. Jennings and really had no right to ask him for a favor. It was my only chance so I took it. I marched right up to the professor and said "Professor Jennings, I now have my long wished for diploma in my hands and I never was so proud of anything in my life but I am in trouble as I have not money enough to pay my way home. I wondered if you would have confidence enough in me to loan me twenty dollars which will be sufficient to take me home to West Virginia. The minute I get home, I will return it to you." To my great joy and surprise, he said, "Certainly I will" and asked me to call next morning at his office and told me where it was. I then told him why it was necessary that I borrow the money and that I was positive the money was in the mail at the present time. Next morning I went as early as I could to his office. At the street door his name was posted and with instructions to push a button and when I did a door opened at the top of the stairs and a bell rang. The next instant I saw Dr. Jennings at the top of the stairs and he spoke down to me and said to come on up. I did so and when I got up to the office, he had a twenty dollar gold piece in his hand and handed it to me. I said "Professor shall I give you a note?" He said there was no use of that as if I wanted to get away with the money a note would not do any good. I said "Professor, if I should try to beat so good a friend as you are being to me, I think it would be the lowest thing I could possibly do." He said, "I am not alarmed about anything like that happening." We then shook hands and I left and to this day I never have seen him or heard from him. This was in April 1898. I shall always love the man.

When I arrived home, I immediately mailed the twenty dollars to him. I remarked that I had nursed my roommate Jeff Parsons for an entire night. This is the way it happened. One day at noon I came back to our room and found Parsons in great pain and scared to death about what was the matter with he. He had diagnosed his case and told me what he thought was the matter with him. After I questioned him, I told him that he was absolutely wrong in his diagnosis but I can tell you right now what is the matter. It is stone in the kidney and that is what is paining you so severally and he asked me how did I know. I replied that the symptoms were so plain that I could not be mistaken. He did not believe me and asked me to go and call our professor in surgery, Dr. Pinoney French, but this was not done immediately. I am sure it was the next day after I had been with him all night and the pain was some easier. I had sat up all night giving chloroform just enough to keep him easy and begging him all the time to let me give him a hypodermic and he thought I would not do it right and refused until four a.m. when I told him I could not stay awake any longer and I would have to give the hypodermic and he consented. We rested until morning. I also remember while I was giving the chloroform that it ran out and I go to hot foot it for a block or two to the nearest drug store and get some more. When I ran into the drug store and asked for the chloroform I was rather excited and the druggist refused to give it to me until I took time to explain the situation. He then gave it to me and I ran all the way back and poor old Parsons said "I heard you running the ways but I thought you never was coming back." Then in the morning I went and got Dr. French and he came and the room was full of students.. He crowded in and examined Parsons and said "Well you have gallstones but the danger is all over now and all you have to do is to get well now." When he left Parsons asked me what I thought of that. I said "Well he does not know what is the matter with you as I have told you, you have stone in the kidney." We talked it over then decided to send for Dr. Philips our genitourinary professor. The doctor himself could not come but sent one of his assistants and he came in and made a blunder in his diagnosis and left and Parsons asked me what I thought. I said "I think he knows nothing about it and has missed it just as far as Dr. French did." He said, "Well, no one seems to hit it to suit you. What next shall we do?" I said, "I believe Dr. Jennings is the best professor and the most thorough diagnostition we have in the college and what would you think of sending for him?" Parsons said, "I like Dr. Jennings fine but you know we have been imitating his impediment in speech and laughing heartily about the way he says things and I doubt very much whether we could keep from laughing in his face when he comes." I said "Well, I am going to call him and we will just have to watch closely as I have

great respect for the Professor and would not intentionally hurt him in the least." So I phoned for him to come and he was soon there and sat down by the bed. He began asking questions and I saw he was on the right track and felt encouraged. When he was through, he explained that there was either a small stone in the kidney or uric acid sand which could cause the pain same as if it were a larger stone. He prescribed and told us, before he left to use a chamber for the urine and that no doubt the stone would be passed into the chamber which to our great satisfaction it did the next day. After he left, Parsons asked me what I thought of him and his diagnosis. I said "He is the only man who has hit it and I am looking for the stone." Which as I have already said, passed next day and Parsons was well again. Needless to say, I was very proud of having diagnosed the case correctly when two of our professor had diagnosed it incorrectly.

The morning I started for home, good old Parsons and his best friend Brown from Texas accompanied me to the train at Union Station St. Louis. They went to the gate with me and bade me goodbye and I went through the gate and on down to the train. I naturally looked back just before entering the train and there stood Parsons squeezing his hands together and half stooped and he shook his hands to me still clasped together as though saying goodbye. From that day to this, now forty years ago, I have never seen him. I do not know whether he is living or not. I went on home to West Virginia and started up in a small town 20 miles from Charleston where my Uncle Jim Kelley lived. Clendenin was the town. I only stayed there for a week or two and then went to Uncle John Kelly's place at a post office by name of Looneyville and set up my office right in the country and began a practice there.

Before I go further with this account, I must tell a story about Uncle Jim Kelley. Uncle Jim was getting quite old and he was a fine looking old man with his fine body and his long iron-gray beard and his smoothing soft voice was something to be remarked. He could swear so mild and nice, one would like it rather than resent it. He was another type like old Bill Vineyard. The better friends he was with any one, the harder he would talk and demean him. Would call his best friends, "You old horse thief" just as a friendly gesture.

One day when he and I were at the barn, a man rode by on the worst old nag I had ever seen. The man was close to us and said, "Good morning Mr. Kelly." Uncle Jim said, "Good mawnin". Then said, "Whar did you get that D--nd old stack 0 bones?" The man answered, "I traded for him." Uncle Jim said, "Why in H--I don't you feed him some oats?" The man answered, "I hain't got any." When the man got out of hearing and they stopped talking back and forth with each other. I said, "Uncle Jim, aren't you afraid of making people mad talking that way to them?" He said, "Oh, I like to say a few kind words to them as they go by."

After I went to Looneyville and located. I soon saw the necessity of having a wife and a home of my own and quit living in with other families. It was a fact that I was, and had been for a year or two engaged to Virgie Taylor, a sister of the man Clay Taylor who had loaned me the money for my first term of school. All that was in the way of getting married was that we had not set any day for the event and so time dragged on. I wanted to start a home very much and I was very proud that I was going to marry what I though was the most beautiful woman I had ever seen. She seemed to think so well of me that I thought very strongly of putting the question up to her as to a set date. Another difficulty was that I had nothing but debts and my medical education to bank on. I felt very secure in my medical ability and so one day I concluded to write to her, telling her how I was situation. I wrote a long letter of explanation and in the letter, along toward the last, I suggested that if she were willing, we would get enough things together to start housekeeping and get married. The reply was favorable and we then set the nineteenth of June, 1898, for the day. This day fell on Sunday and I had fifteen

miles to drive to her home where the ceremony was to be performed. I had hired a buggy and horse to make the trip. The roads were very rough and I started early in the morning and drove a ridge road nearly all the way. When I was within a few miles and near a schoolhouse, there came a very hard shower of rain and I ducked for the schoolhouse and waited for the shower to get over. Finally I was able to travel again and I went on and in a short time arrived. We were going to have a very quiet affair and not have but the immediate family and the minister and a few others present. However, when we arrived there was several people there that had known nothing of our intentions until they arrived. They were surprised and so were we.

Clay Taylor was there and we had never told him anything of our plans. We were glad he was there and I remember what he said after the ceremony was over. In the first place, I must tell what Clay thought of me before he knew I was to marry his sister. He thought well of me or he never would have trusted me by loaning me that hundred dollars to attend my first term in medicine. However, he always said I was lazy as I would hover about the fire at home and read as much as I could and get out of all the manual labor I could. I heard that he made the remark that I would sit around the fire and burn the leather of my boots so lazy was I. This was, of course, all in good natured language and everyone just laughed and let it go at that. But little did Mr. Clay Taylor dream that those hours sitting by the fire was being very beneficial to me as I was acquiring the needed knowledge for entrance to medical school. After the ceremony was over and I had a wife and she a husband, Clay was heard to say to someone present, "Well, they are married and have nothing at all to start with but they may be able in time to buy all of us." I am rather proud to remark that this did actually come true after a few years. I could have bought any of them out. After a few more years, I could not have done so as Clay came in rich in oil land.

We had a great feast of a dinner and some of the best food imaginable. The early afternoon we left to make our way back to my uncle's place. We, of course, had a jolly drive and landed there just about sundown and just as we drove in to his place, the fifth wheel of the buggy broke and I had to send it to the repair shop as we had been invited the next day to my father's home for dinner and we were to ride in the buggy. We spent the night and next day at my uncle's place and the next day we harnessed up the horse and hitched to the buggy and started around a long ridge road. After two or three miles on that road which ran through a wooded country, we were suddenly surprised when the buggy again broke in two and the horse took fright and ran away with the front part of the buggy, leaving us sitting in the rear. Then a shower of rain came up and I had to place my wife in the buggy under the top as it was up and that sheltered her so that I could go after the horse. I was gone so long after the horse that she was about to abandon the place and go to the neighbor who had let me have the buggy, which was not so far from where the accident happened. After I arrived, we decided to go to this house and we did and got another horse and saddle for Mrs. Kelley to ride and then went on to my father's home and they were just about despairing of our arrival.

After that day, I attended to what little practice I had picked up and we were arranging to move to the little crossroads post office at Looneyville. I will try to give a description of our efforts to fix up a home and the difficulties we encountered. I do wish to say now that after going through life as we have with prosperity at our hands, that we both have said that the beginning of our lives together, despite some hardships, was the most pleasant of all our whole career. To start with, I will say that just before I was to be married, I went to this crossroads and to the owner of an old abandoned store building that stood on the hillside with the front door jam up against a public road and the other extended so far back down the hill that it had to be raised up on a level with the front end and made the floor at the back end about 4 feet off the ground. It was in fact a very disreputable building. A few days before we were to be married, I went to the owner of this building who had been raised up with me in the

neighborhood and who had been my teacher for a number of terms, John W. Looney, and asked him if I could rent this building. There was a lean to shed on one side of it made of the roughest native oak lumber and there were cracks between the planks that one could well see out through them. It had a rough floor in it but it was a very poor excuse for a room. I think it had one window in the end for light. John Looney said to me while looking at it that he had just as well tear that part off the building as it would look better and more like an office building. I said as carelessly as possible that I just as leave he would not do so. I think he took a fall as to my intentions as he said "Oh yes, if you want it left on, of course I will not bother it" and I imagined he grinned a little under the skin. However, I said no more.

After a few days at Uncle John Kelly's, we began thinking of getting in to our own home. We went to the place and the storeroom was all in one and there was two front windows and I think only one back window for light. We had to have living quarters and office room so as there was one front window on each side of the front door, I laid off an office room 6 x 12 in front of one window, and it only took two sides of a petition to get into the office so I did that and had an office at very little cost. Then we started to paper the whole inside office and all and we were doing the work ourselves. I bought wallpaper and we made some paste and started in on it. When we were half done putting the paper on my wife remarked to me that she thought we should match the paper, that is the figures on it, and I said "I'd be darned if I knew anything about it but it might be alright". She contended it was right to do it so we did it from then on but we never took any notice of the other part or put new paper on it. It must have been a very botch job but we paid no attention and just kept on. For bedrooms, we stretched a wire across the room in front of the back window and put a cheap curtain across the room and then set one bed on each side of the middle where the window was and there we had our two bedrooms. The floor in this building was of six or eight inch lumber and very rough at that. Then we moved into the lean-to shed for repairs and the first thing was to strip it with some kind of strips. This done, we stopped the large openings under the roof as best we could. Then the scrubbing and cleaning process began and was it dirty! We finally got it reasonably habitable. Then we had to get everything to live on and as Virgie had some things at her mom's, such as bedding and a lot of things not worth much ordinarily, but to us were invaluable as we were not able to buy anything but the absolute necessities. Virgie had some money, not a lot but a few hundred dollars, and I was worse than broke as I had a lot of debts. I told her that she should keep her money intact and that we would fight it along together if she was game to do so. She was right in for doing it and we did without many things we should have had but we had a lot of fun laughing at our predicament and we often said we were the counterpart of Robinson Crusoe in the necessities of life.

It was there in a country where we dared to live that way as a lot of people were doing the same. If we had been in some communities, I suppose we could not have held our heads up and would have had to sacrifice her little savings. I yet laugh heartily at some of the things we did in the way of living. We did laugh often and it made it more bearable. In fact, when I look back to that time, after having lived a very prosperous life after we got started, I regard those few years as the very happiest of our married life. Virgie has told me many times the same thing. It became necessary for me to drive out a long ridge road in a two horse road wagon to her mother and father's place to get her things for us to outfit our house with. We started one afternoon in order to have the coolness of the evening to drive in and we drove until after sundown. It became a little cooler when we began to tease one another in every way possible just to pass the time away. Finally, she got to pointing her finger at my ribs as thought she intended tickling my ribs but she never touched me. I remember that I laughed very hard just anticipating getting poked in the ribs but as stated, she never touched me. She did not have to as she was getting results anyway. These were the really happy days with us and we arrived at the home place after dark and stayed there until morning. Then we loaded her belongings in the wagon

and started our journey back. I have no remembrance, just what time of day we arrived, but I do know we just piled everything right in the middle of the floor in the front room. We had quite a big heap of pile and dug it up and placed it. Finally we had two beds up and dressed so they were usable and the kitchen and dining room in fair shape. We really felt that we were fairly well fixed. Then the cooking process came and in a few months, getting one thing at a time that we needed, we really were in livable shape. I also took the little drugs that I had and fixed them on shelves so that it had the appearance of a doctor's office. People began to come and I would put up medicine for twenty-five cents and fifty cents was considered a big fee in those days. I would make calls for the distance of one or two miles for one dollar.

Among the things that my wife got from her home were some chickens, among which was a nice white rooster and we had nothing but the open range to turn them out on. They were free to go anywhere they wished. I had a barn to set that fracture and we hustled about and found some t n This suggestion took very quickly an strips of wood and T whittled them out the right size while Virgie held the rooster. When I got everything ready, I reduced the fracture and put as nice a splint and dressing on it as I have ever done for a human and we turned the rooster loose. He could hop around nicely and he made a complete and uneventful recovery. In after years, we have had many a good laugh about our practice on the rooster. He made a fine bird and now I cannot remember his fate or what went with him. I rode night and day practicing and many times I did not get to stop long enough to go to bed in the right way for days and days. I rode horseback on pathways a lot of the time when it was so dark that I let the horse bridle go and trusted to the horse to take me out and I always came out right. Some folks might not believe that one can ride horseback for miles and at the same time be asleep. I can vow for the trust of such a statement as I have ridden miles and miles sleeping and when wake up startled and find that I had ridden several miles while asleep. I was practicing right in the neighborhood where I had been raised and there were many comments as to my ability in handling a practice. There were doubts in many cases as to whether I had experience before in such cases as might be under discussion. The practice of obstetrics gave me the greatest trouble in convincing people that I was capable of taking care of. The first case I was engaged for the wife of a man who had known me since I was a kid. Johnny Ferrell, of whom I have already spoken in this narrative as being one of the young men who took my father and all six of us little boys to Charleston to take the train for Greenbrier County and my grandmother's home. This Mr. Ferrell had married a girl whom I knew from childhood, Elizabeth Looney, the sister of this John Looney who rented me my first home. These Ferrells had nine children and all were girls. Johnny came to me all puffing and blowing one morning and asked me the flat question as to whether or not I had waited on such cases and I lied and told him I had. Well he said "We are expecting a case of that nature at our house and when I call you, you will have to come at once because the other births were very quick." I told him that I would come at once when he called me. Just after he left my office, in came another Ferrell who was no relation to Johnny, and told me that he was hunting for the old midwife who did nothing but that kind of practice by name of Susie Hammack. I had been raised up within a mile of this young man and we played there many Sundays. He said "I wanted to get you on this case but my wife has had the midwife for the other children and prefers her so I will get her if I can find her but in case I cannot, I will call on you." He asked if I had ever attended such cases and I had to lie again and tell him I had done so. It was not long after that when he came back and asked me to go with him. I did with fear and trembling for the reason I had never attended a case like that but I knew every detail of how to perform and I went with him. When I got there, I very pompously ordered the bed prepared as it should be and then told the lady she ought to go to bed and she informed me that she never went to bed and would not go. She then showed me how they had been doing it. She sat on her husband's lap over a slop jar or chamber and I attended her in that position and then put her to bed. That was my first and last case I ever confined in that position. I must say that it worked fine

and I had an easy case (Thank God) as I was scared speechless. After it was all over the neighborhood, women praised me on how nice the job was done and remarked that they had feared that I might not be up on such kind of work. One middle aged neighborhood woman by name of Mrs. Frances Summers spoke up right away and lied and said "Oh yes, I have been with Doctor Kelley in several cases." (God rest her good old soul) I had been vindicated in my own lies without any effort.

The very next morning I was called to Johnny Ferrell's on their case and it proved as he had said and was a very easy case. They had their first boy and that gave me a lot of notice over the neighborhood. I began getting the cases all over the country. I have thanked the good spirits more than once for the fact that my first two cases were so very easy. Some of the other cases that I came upon later was indeed hard to do and if I would have had one of those hard cases to start with, I would have been scared into fits. Many of my cases were girls with whom I had been raised and often times it seemed to embarrass me as well as the girls but I held myself in the most respectful attitude and was very kind in my speech and made no funny cracks. I finally gained their confidence and I got along fine with them. Unfortunately, I had to confine three girls out of wedlock and I had been acquainted from childhood with them. I was more embarrassed in these cases than usual. Two of these girls were most beautiful women and of good families. One of them refused to let me touch her at first and her mother and the neighbor woman talked very earnestly to her but she still refused. I finally sat down by the bed and called her by her first name and told her that what I had to do for her was very necessary for her safety. I saw that I was gained her confidence and finally she submitted to examination. I confined her and she had a fine boy baby. After it was all over, I dreaded to ask her who the father of the baby was and I, at one time, just about gave it up when I said to myself, this is my duty and I will do it. So in making out the report as required by law, I came to the question "Name of Father", I hesitated for an instant and then said "Mary (for that was her name) I am required by law to ask you who the father of this baby is and I want you to tell me." She never hesitated an instant and told me who the father was. He lived a mile down the creek from there and named John Singinqueil.

The other good looking girl I as called to was, if any difference, a finer looking girl than the one I have just written about. I went in the night and found her in labor. The father and mother very much downcast on account of the occurrence. I talked with them and tried to make it as easy on them as I could. Her sister, who was not a good looking girl at all, got in the conversation with me and she was so mad that she would not speak to her sister. I told her that I felt sorry for her sister as she would have to bear the burn of the disgrace and I really felt sorry for her. She declared she did not and would not agree to make up with the sister as I had advised. This young lady would never tell'em who was the father of her child so I had to put down the "D.K." or don't know answer. This sister that was so very mad about this baby out of wedlock soon had to call me to confine her. I was tempted to mention her last conversation with me but thought better of it and said nothing I knew that the first girl of this story afterwards married the father of her child. The good looking one married another man whom we knew as not the father of her child as he had come from a foreign county recently before he married her. As to the other girl who was not so good looking, I am not certain at this time who she married, but I think she married the father of the child. I am sure she told me who was the father and I am sure also that she afterwards married him.

As I went home from the first girl's confinement I had to pass right by the house of John Singinqueil, father of the child. I saw him and said to him "You have a fine boy up there" indicating the house where the girl lived. Instead of showing any remorse in the matter he seemed pleased and asked me if I had received my five dollars which was the customary fee in such cases. I replied in the negative and he went on to say that if they did not raise trouble with him, he would pay it. I said, "Alright, I do

not suppose they were able to pay it." The matter went that way for several months I would judge or maybe nearly a year. At some time during this period, John married Mary.

At the time I confined Mary, her mother was expecting confinement any day and in a few days, I was called to her. (There is a story connected with this confinement that I will relate later on). She was at that time forty-four years old and had borne many children. This child was born and it was a weakling and I was very often called to see it in its sickness. One rainy morning, I was called to the sick baby and the roads were as muddy as could be. I was wearing leggings and an overcoat with what was called a mackintosh over it. This mackintosh was really a raincoat with a cape on the shoulders principally to protect from the rain. The two on at one time made one feel very much bound up and clumsy. I had to pass right by John's barn and as the road ran around the hillside about the barn, I could look right down into the barn door. I saw John currying his horses and I spoke to him and he came out where we could talk and we went on in a friendly way until I thought I must be going on when I said to John, "That bill has never been paid John and I wonder if you will pay it now that you are married to Mary." He was in his shirt sleeves and immediately started to advance on me and curse me and told me that he never would have had me in the first place and did not intend paying it. I said "John you know you promised me to pay if she did not." He then was enraged and I was also getting mad. I got off my horse and I suppose made a motion as if he were outside of his fence I would hit him. "G- D-m you, I am not afraid to get out there where you can have a chance" and he jumped over the fence and came right at me. I clinched him and we went down in a fence corner together and I on top picked up a rock of which there were plenty and I began hitting him in the head and the blood gushed every way. I remember I held my head enough to strike him glancing blows with the rock in order not to kill him. I have often thought it was a miracle that I had ever thought of it that way as when I got mad in those days, I was mad enough to never think of consequences. He begged for mercy and as it was the custom in that part of the country, if the man who was getting the worst of it begged for mercy, one was honor bound to grant it. I had no more than let him up than he grabbed a rock and whizzed it at my head and I dodged it. I immediately grabbed him and downed him in the same fence corner. I always thought that I got the same rock and started in again on him. He again begged for mercy and I said "John you have lied to me once and now I am asking you if you mean to quit if I let you up again." He vowed that he meant to stop the fight. I let him up and he immediately drew a knife and opened it. It looked like the knife and handle was a foot long. Then I said to him "John you have lied to me twice now about this giving up the fight and I have never taken my overcoats off and have whipped you like a dog and now you have drawn a knife to cut me up." Now I said "I am going to lay my overcoats on the fence here and then you come on and if I get the best of you again, do not ask for mercy for you will not get it from me." I spoke in a very determined manner and called him a son of a b . He immediately shut the knife and said, "Well, I will not bother you anymore." This was the sweetest news I had ever heard for I always was afraid of a knife and would anytime rather be shot with a gun than cut by a knife. There was a little running stream right there and we walked up the stream a short distance and began washing the blood off our faces for his head was bleeding profusely and I had been scratched in the face and had blood on me also. He finally called to me to come and see where I had cut his head and I did go and see him. I said, "You owe me two dollars for examination of your head." I asked him if he ever intended paying his wife's bill and he answered "No By G-d, I will never pay it." I said it is bad enough for you to ruin a nice girl whom we both have been raised up with but it is worse to raise a bastard without his fee being paid for his birth. He never answered.

I went on up to see the baby which was his wife's brother or sister, I do not know now which. His father-in-law was the same Phil Ellis I have remarked about earlier in this story as being very kind to me in my younger days and he immediately asked me what was the matter with me. At the time John

and I were parting, he said we had better keep this fight to ourselves and prevent being indicted when the grant jury term of court convened. We believed that we were the only ones that knew about it so I said, "Well John, I will never tell it for that reason and also for another reason and that is I am heartily ashamed for anybody to know that I fought with so worthless and low down a cur as you are." So when Ellis asked me what was the matter, I would not tell him a thing and he said, "Doc, I know what you have been doing and I wish you had done more to him." This John was a blowhard and would always be telling how he had such and such fights and that he came out victor every time and I was inclined to believe him and consequently when I saw we were to have a fight, I really feared that he would get the best of me but I determined that I would not show fear to him. As it turned out, it was an easy job and I told him so before I left saying, "John, I always thought you could fight good but you are the poorest excuse at it I ever tackled."

I remarked that there was a story connected with the confinement of Mary's mother. Here it is. This Philip Ellis and wife had been the parents of numbers of children and had our old family physician Dr. A. W. Edgell for all of them. I suppose they never paid for half of them. So when I began practice, Mr. Ellis came to me and asked if I would come for the confinement of his wife which they were expecting most anytime. I proudly told him I would come. He warned me that his wife had very hard flowing spells at these times and sometimes it looked dangerous. So he said "you must not make any blunders or mistakes as it would not be a good reputation for you." I said very confidently, "I will take care of everything." When I was finally called, it was a very warm day and I got along fine with the delivery. I started out of the house to get some fresh air and Ellis told me again not to get far away as something was liable to happen any minute. I went out in the yard thinking the man was unduly alarmed and was walking up and down the lawn cooling off. When all at once, Ellis appeared in the door and said "For God sake, come here Doc." I rushed in and behold everything was flooded with blood. I was all but panic stricken and grabbed the fundus of the womb and told Ellis to go to the well and get a bucket of cold water quick which he did and returned. As I had all I could do to massage the womb trying to check the hemorrhage, I cried out to him to throw the cold water on and he naturally hesitated to do it and asked "You do not want me to throw this water on her do you?" I said "Yes, D--n it, I do and do it now!" He raised the bucket and dashed the cold water right on her abdomen and it worked like a charm and the bleeding immediately stopped. I did not stop, I sat there for a long time massaging the uterus. Finally, I thought it was safe to rest a while but it did not last but a few minutes and the flowing started worse, if anything, than before. I had time to get my medicines where I could get what I wanted quickly. I called for a teaspoon and by the time it got to me, the woman fell limp and rolled her eyes up like a dead person. In fact, I was afraid she had passed out. I grabbed the teaspoon and poured it full of aromatic Spts Ammonia and was reaching toward her to put it in her mouth when Ellis took hold of my arm and said "God Doc, do not try to give a dead woman medicine." I turned on him fiercely and cursed him, telling him that I was in charge and dashed the medicine into her mouth and immediately she roused and came to. I worked hard all afternoon and at evening, I had to go home but she was very weak and I did not want to move her at all. I told the women there to spread dry sheets around her as her bed was soaked with water and blood.

After giving a lot of instructions, I started home feeling very sad as I could not see a possibility of the woman living until morning. Next morning I went as early as possible with some hope of finding her alive as I had not heard from her all that night. Sure enough when I arrived, she was still alive but so very weak that it seemed every breath was to be the last. She was in a terrible mess, the bedding wet and only partly protected from it. The women said they thought it very dangerous to try to change beds. I said that I realized it also but I simply could not make up my mind to leave her in that mess any longer as my conscience had hurt me all night for leaving her as long as I had. I said, "If you

women will help me by doing exactly what I tell you I think we can move her." They agreed and I said "The first thing to do is to lay a good mattress on the floor and make a bed out of it same as if it were on the bedstead." They did so. Then I got the woman round the shoulders and the women at the feet and we gently laid her in the nice new bed with pillow and all. Then I ordered them to get on each side of the bed on the floor and enough of them to be able to easily lift the mattress, woman and all. We did so and easily deposited the mattress on the springs and the trick was done nicely. I received many compliments on this movement. The lady got well and lived many years afterwards.

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