

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

History

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My practice continued to increase and we had laid up what we thought considerable money though in fact it was very little. Shortly after this Ellis case, Mrs. Abram Looney took suddenly ill. She was the mother of John Looney the man from whom I was renting the office and house we lived in. Aunt Sally Looney was an old settler there and could talk that you could hear her at least half a mile and she was a great help in the neighborhood, especially in sickness. She would go day or night to help. I know that many was the time she came when my mother was sick and when she died she (Aunt Sally) was so good to our family. We thought of her as a mother or some very close relative. When she fell suddenly ill, I was sent for and worked very hard to save her life and had numerous consultation but to no avail.

After Aunt Sally's death, Uncle Abe, as we called him, was left all alone and his son John took him into his home and left a nice little white cottage vacant. My wife and I immediately rented it and moved in. We felt like society as it really was a nice house and a pretty yard and trees. Then my mother-in-law who had been sick for years came to stay with us and take treatment. I had heard so many stories concerning mean mother-in-law's that I wondered what the outcome would be. Mrs. Elizabeth Taylor was a very fine old lady and I was well pleased to have her with us. I could not detect the slightest meanness in her as she always took up for me in every little difference in the household. Nothing of course serious but mother Taylor won my most ardent respect and love.

We lived in this little house until we left there for good despite the fact that we bought ten acres of fine grove and started to build a house on it. There is quite a story connected with this purchase. My wife had nearly three hundred dollars saved up and as before stated we never broke in on her money. When we purchased the land, she paid for it and I had the deed made to her. I of course had lumber sawed and put the house up out of our earnings but never finished the house. There was a very rich man in the neighborhood by name of James Simmons and he had a grown family by his first wife and in later years married a very beautiful young woman and had I think four children. The older children, then men and women got uneasy about the great properties owned by their father and thought he was not competent to transact his own business. This old man Simmons had been mixed up in an incendiary fire and murder scrape some years ago but whether he was guilty or not I do not know. Uncle Abe Looney had a crossroads store at Looneyville and one night he was burned out and suspicion pointed to the Simmons' who were thought to have hired one Thomas Dustan to burn the building and it was coming to an arrest of Dustan and a day or so before they thought the officers were to get Dustan, he was shot in his field. It was thought that he was killed for fear he would make a confession and involve the Simmons'. However, it never was proven that they hired Dustan to fire the building or that the Simmons' hired Dustan to be killed. This James Simmons was a fine looking old man and also very intelligent a moneymaker. He had bluegrass farms all over the country and the finest grade of stock (I think the durham) brand was what he liked and they were certainly a nice sight to behold. Mr. Simmons had known me from childhood. He owned a farm that ran right down to the post office at Looneyville and lay right in front of our door and nice timber all over it. It was just lovely to behold. Wife and I got the idea of buying ten acres or just the amount of land on which were

the beautiful shade trees. We would have him survey it off of the farm for us. I went to see Mr. Simmons and he said he did not want to part with that little bit of land off his large farm. He did not entirely turn me down but I did not get it at that time. So I let matters rest for quite a time and did not hear from Simmons.

My practice was steadily increasing and we craved the more to have a home we could call our own. One day in the early fall, I met this Mr. Simmons on the road. In those days it was very customary for two horseback riders to meet on the road and pull up and visit sometimes for two hours sitting horseback. So we pulled up for a little visit and I took occasion to bring up the subject of the sale of the ten acre tract and yet Mr. Simmons protested that he did not care to sell of that amount of his land. I took a firm stand with him and started in as follows. I said "Mr. Simmons, I am certain you have heard how hard I have struggled to get a medical education so that I might locate here in the neighborhood where I was raised and try to make myself a useful citizen. Now it seems that I am to be refused the purchase of a site for a home out of the many hundred acres you own here. Am I right in this way of thinking?" He sat a few minutes and replied and said "It does look a little tough to turn down one of our home boys who has made a great effort as I know to prepare for a profession and besides one that is needed here." I do not think he agreed that day to sell to me but asked me to come up to his house on a certain day for my answer. If I remember correctly when I went up on the appointed day, he promised to sell me the boundary supposed to be ten acres at \$20.00 per acre which I thought was a very high price at that time. I cinched the deal and asked that the papers be made out for it. His son-in-law, Mason Vandevender handled all the old man's papers of that kind and when Mr. Simmons informed him that he had sold me the ten acres and wanted a deed written up, it aroused the heirs of the first wife terribly and they came to me and told me not to buy the land as it would start trouble. I told them to start it if they wanted to that I wanted the land and was going to buy it. When Vandevender brought the deed to me, I noticed it had reserved oil and gas rights and I would not accept the deed until it was corrected. In a short time afterwards, Mr. Jim Simmons sent for me to come and see him professionally. When I arrived, he informed me that the older heirs had gone before the court and swore that he was incompetent and asked for a committee be appointed to transact his business for him. He said, "I thought I would send for you and have you examine me and see if I am crazy." I did as he asked and made the examination. I found the old man as keen as a briar on his business and could calculate accurately. I noticed one thing with him and that was he was very forgetful and would ask a question over several times in succession having forgotten that he had just a few minutes before asked the same question. Otherwise, he was as I thought brighter in business than any son or daughter of his that I had been acquainted with I pronounced him mentally fit. Soon after that his second wife lost her reason and was sent to the Asylum and when they opened up the old man's safe, they found thousands and thousands of dollars which she had collected and stored away for future reference. This, of course, did not look favorable for the sanity of Mr. Simmons as he should have caught on to this trickery but I attributed this to the confidence he placed in her and that possibly he had known when the money was put in the safe.

This trial came up soon after that and Mr. Simmons had me summoned to testify for him and the trial came on. I was in the courtroom far back in the room and Mr. Simmons spied me and sent one of his attorneys back to get me. He wanted me to sit right by his side. I did so and then they began asking Mr. Vandevender questions about Mr. Simmons' farms and the number of cattle on each farm. Mr. Simmons would whisper the answer to me before Vandevender could answer it. For some reason the trial was postponed and in this connection, I will say that the lawing over this estate lasted over thirty years.

Mr. Simmons had moved to Spencer, the county seat, before his wife had gone to the insane asylum

and after that he was left alone. It was cold weather and he took pneumonia and died. This occurrence did not stop the lawing and I was again called to get my deposition as to the mental state of Mr. Simmons. In the time that elapsed, the Superintendent of the insane asylum which was located in Spencer, was called in to examine Mr. Simmons (prior to his death) and I had learned that he agreed with my diagnosis. Next day, I was called in to take my deposition and the Simmons heirs (the old set) had Walter Pendleton as their lawyer. Pendleton was regarded as a good lawyer and a gentleman. In fact I had great respect for him. It was his duty to trip me up on my diagnosis of Mr. Simmons' case which had been pronounced senile dementia. I had made the statement that he did not have senile dementia. Mr. Pendleton immediately began questioning me. "Do you know Mr. James Simmons" and all those leading up questions until he asked me if I had examined Mr. Simmons recently before his death. I replied that I had. "How did you find his health?" "Good, considering his age", I replied. "Do you know of a disease known as senile dementia?" I answered that I did. "Did Mr. Simmons suffer from senile dementia?" My answer was negative. "Will you give me the symptoms of senile dementia?" I replied that some of the most prominent symptoms was forgetfulness in an aged person and also arcus senilis was another symptom and several other symptoms but that was enough to diagnose the case provided there were enough to warrant a diagnosis. "Did Mr. Simmons have any of these symptoms?" I said "Yes, he had arcus senilis and also he would forget and ask the same question over maybe two or three times." Then he said, "Mr. Simmons had senile dementia." I replied "No." "How can you square yourself as you told me Mr. Simmons had the symptoms of dementia and yet you say he did not have it. Will you explain?" I said certainly and began. "I found Mr. Simmons a very rugged and healthy person and I also found that his mind by test showed me was keen at figures and calculation. I further found that he would forget and reask questions about minor matters for instance, when I went to his house one day, he asked if I had had dinner and I answered him that I had. In a few minutes, he asked the same question. I examined his eyes and true enough he had arcus senilis which was in a way two symptoms of senile dementia. However one can not hazard a diagnosis on only two symptoms alone when all other symptoms are absent." So I made the assertion again that Mr. Simmons was not a case of senile dementia. Soon after that, they told me that was all for now. I had my horse tied to a post in front of the lawyer's office. I started for it at once and one of the lawyers (William Bishop by name) followed me out and asked if I was leaving. "I surely am" I said. He said "Well Dr. you certain did well in that quizzing." I said, "I am glad you think so as I was just about scared stiff all the time." He said, "You have nothing to regret as you did fine." I immediately left for home. Our old family doctor (Dr. A.W. Edgell) was called in on the Simmons case and he was determined that the diagnosis should be senile dementia. He had a terrible time with the lawyers and got terribly mixed up on his statements and he allowed the lawyers to ask him hypothetical questions. Of course, those questions were for experts and he tried to reply to these questions and of course made a botch of it. I remember when he was on his way from court, he stopped in the store at Looneyville and I happened to be there. He got to telling me of his trouble before the court and was complaining of the lawyer that they did not seem to want the truth as he was stating it. I said, "Doctor, the trouble I think with you was that you allowed them to ask you questions of an expert nature and as you are no expert or I either, we could not be compelled to try to answer expert questioning. The only thing for you to have done would have been to say I am not posing as an expert witness. I only post as a learned witness and then they would have had to take your answers as you gave them." The doctor while on the stand became angry and asked one of the lawyers what he was asking such fool questions for. The lawyer replied, "I do not know unless it is because I have such a fool for a witness."

This lawsuit was getting up a lot of strife in the neighborhood and the old heirs were against me. I was becoming so much competition to Dr. Edgell, who was championing the cause of the old heirs, that my friends feared that as I had been the cause of starting this trouble by buying the land and

considering the fact that all of them wanted to get rid of me and also remembering the fate of Tom Dustin, they predicted that sometime I would be picked off my horse with a rifle shot. I poohed the idea and refused to budge a peg. But now after many years absence from there, for as it happens I did leave there a little later by my own choice.

My preceptor, Dr. Dye, sent for me to come to see him. It was a distance of about 20 to 25 miles through the mountains and it was wintertime. I immediately started to see him and it was getting late in the evening and I got far into the wooded country when I got bothered which path (for paths were all the roads I had) to take. I stopped in at a mountain cabin and got set right and started on. The snow was falling thick and fast and it was as dark as pitch. I simply gave rein to my mare and was letting her go at will when all at once I felt that she had missed her step and we were falling mid air to some place. When we lit, I was standing by the mare but could only feel her as I could not see anything. I noticed that she did not move but suddenly I felt her front legs stretching out touching my legs and I immediately knew she was choking. I fell on my knees by her side and ran my hand up her neck to the throat latch of the bridle and quickly unloosened it. The mare was instantly on her feet. I then took the reign in hand and started straight up the hill towards where we had fallen from. By grabbing hold of bushes and brush and holding to the rein, I finally pulled up on the path again and everything seemed ok and I mounted and went on to the town of Minnora where I found the doctor overwhelmed in vaccinating people as there had broken out an epidemic of small pox. I waited until he was through and then he told me why he wanted to see me. He said, "I am going to sell out here and move to Spencer, the county seat of my county, and I thought I could sell to you." It struck me that this might be a good deal and asked him his price on sixty-five acres, a house and good barn, and all kinds of young orchard trees and right in town. Part of the land was steep and rough and he only asked me seven hundred dollars. I took him up and we agreed thoroughly on it and I was getting ready to start home.

It was necessary for me to slip through the quarantine lines. I said "Dr. Dye, I have no money whatever on my person and I will be unable to make a down payment on this deal." He said that would not be necessary and as I went out the door, he said to me, "Now Dr., this is a real business and I do not want you to fool me and go back on the deal." I told him not to fear anything of that kind as my word was as good as my bond. I got home and immediately sold my house and ten acres preparatory to go to this location. One day after I had disposed of my property, a man rode in stating that he had come with a letter from Dr. Dye. I read the letter and behold it was he who went back on his word and cancelled the deal himself. If I ever was mad, I was mad that day. I sat down and wrote him what I had done preparatory to going to his location and wrote "I am getting H-1 from my close friends for leaving. I am now put in a position that I cannot stay and you have done the very thing you cautioned me not to do. I must now hunt a location somewhere else. Unless I can by law hold you to this deal and by the gods I intend doing it too." However, after investigation, I found that I would not be able to hold him to the agreement as there had been no written contract or agreement between us and no money paid down on the deal. I had sold out there at Looneyville and the word got out that I was moving away. It surprised me very much how people took it. They almost regarded it as an insult to them. Many said hard things about me as being a very ungrateful person. They rather thought they owned me body and soul. While I did not like their ill will in the matter, I reasoned that I had scored good in the country as their displeasure was genuine. My family and relatives made a great to do about it and some of them was quite bitter saying that they had all stood by me and that I was making good there and why should I want to leave them.

Another feature of the case was that our first child was expected very shortly. I had a brother and sister-in-law on my wife's side who lived in Spencer by name of Homer and May Cottle and as it was

not overly pleasant living at Looneyville, I took my wife and went to Spencer to the Cottles and arranged with them to live in their home until after her confinement. It was not many days until the event occurred and a fine girl baby was born to us named Kate Kelley. Three days after this, I found that it was safe for me to leave and I went directly to Chicago and joined in a room with two of our local physicians namely Dr. J. H. McQuain of Spencer and Dr. Fleet Stewart. We all attended post graduate school at Chicago Clinical School and Cook County Hospital and we had a great time together. We were just as lighthearted as children playing together. I was so impressed with the actions of Dr. McQuain. At home he was a very dignified person and was a good scholar and a good speaker in public gatherings and a very likeable gentleman. Fleet Stewart, in contrast with McQuain, was a very diminutive person and also was proud and very gentlemanly and a splendid little fellow. I was tall and gangly and no gentleman as I was in for any rough stuff that came up. However, we were very congenial companions and all could see fun in most any situation.

What first made me take notice of our changed actions was one evening when we all got in the room together. I found the lot of us in our stocking feet on the carpet rolling around and McQuain leading us in almost any kind of song. We had all in all a very fine month together. I do not know what the others thought of it but as for myself I gained more practical information in the four weeks there than I had in all my medical years. I am sure it was from the fact that I had been in the actual practice for two years and was put upon my own in many trying situations and was isolated in the country so that I had slim chance of running into another doctor and consulting him on the sly about my troubles. When I got into the Clinical School, everything was interesting to a high degree to me and I drank it up as it were. During the time I was there, I had my eye peeled for a location in the west. Among the doctors there for the same reason I was there was Dr. Joseph P. Ridile of Wood River, Nebraska. He approached me concerning a location at Alda, Nebraska. I could only look for a small town location as I was spending nearly our last dollar there so I listened to him. Dr. Ridile gave me a good account of Alda and his house and two lots he wanted to sell me and praised the surrounding country. Ridile was of such a disposition that he did not inspire me with confidence in his story. He was a man who would put a big cigar in his mouth and cock his feet up on a table and throw his head and shoulders back and would have the appearance of thinking he owned the whole world. Yet I could not find any serious objections to him in any other way. He was clean and well dressed and would answer questions most civilly. However, I was suspicious that his story was only intended to cause me to go out to Nebraska and he would induce me to buy his location and house and lots.

I had a very nice roommate from Kansas. I do not remember now what town he came from and at this moment, I do not remember his name. He had told me in answer to my questions as to how he got along in establishing a practice out west. He had been in a small town in Kansas for seven years and had started broke and now he figured he was worth seven thousand dollars. My narrow contracted mind could not accept this as truth at that time but in every way I had found his word reliable enough. Seven thousand was a veritable fortune to me in those days. I said to him "If I am ever worth seven thousand dollars, I shall be satisfied to quit right there." He laughed at me as he should have and told me that was a mere nothing and that he thought he had not done nearly as well as he should have done. I became attached to this doctor as being reliable so I told him I was on the lookout for a small town location and also told him of Dr. Ridile and his story (although I did not tell in detail) that which Ridile had told me. I said that he had given me a good story about a small town location in Nebraska and I also added that I had no confidence in the story as I thought Ridile only wanted to sell his property. I asked him if he would contact Dr. Ridile and get the story, then tell me what he said. I wanted him to remember word for word if he could. He agreed to it and came back with the exact story he (Ridile) had told me about the location. This inspired me greatly in the hope that he was telling the truth. So I talked to Dr. Ridile again about the location and he said to me

"There is an old Doctor Brubaker living herein Chicago with whom I am now staying while I am here in Chicago and of whom I bought this Alda home and practice and only stayed a few years when I moved to Wood River eight miles west of Alda. Dr. Brubaker had practiced there at Alda for many years." He asked if I would like to see this doctor and talk with him. I replied in the affirmative. When I met him, I liked him and his appearance. He was really a very fine looking old man and was crippled so that he had to use a cane to walk. He was cordial and we took well with one another and he told me all that Ridile had told me and I was cocked and primed to go to Nebraska.

However, I took Dr. Ridile to task again and asked him this question after explaining to him my financial condition which was poor at that time as I had spend considerable money but thought I had more than the value in knowledge to begin a new practice. I asked him if he felt sure I could make as much as \$100.00 per month there. His answer was that if I did not absolutely go off and hide myself that I would be sure to earn one hundred per month. This cinched it and I went to Nebraska with Dr. Ridile, landing at Wood River in the night and the next day he took me out to Alda and showed me the house and lots. He took me around to meet several of the citizens, most of them treated me very respectfully. Some of them I thought were a little queer. One old man especially, George Richard, I will relate a story concerning him. I had been directed to go to A. B. Fraker's place to see him and to J. W. Modesitt, the postmaster and local grocery man, and real estate agent on the side. I first saw Modesitt and he rather encouraged me and was very talkative and kind to me. In this connection, I wish to say that I was very timid and was suffering from bad eyes. I was so slender that I did not make a favorable impression at all in the eyes of the people. Besides, I was as I thought then almost outside of the world so great the distance back home. I went to Mr. Fraker's place and found that he and his wife had gone to central city to a Quaker church meeting and would not be back until the next day as they had driven by horse and buggy. I was to wait for him to come back and the hours were so long and I got so low in spirit and so homesick that I could not seemingly bear it. The young ladies of the family, Bertha and Mabel Fraker, and the brother, Bob Fraker, were keeping the house. They were real Westerners and so different from the people where I came from that I did not enjoy them very much. Before I came west, I had written Mr. Fraker and the old letter was laying around there and the young lady Bertha picked it up and came over to where I was sitting and asked if I recognized the handwriting. I then took particular notice of her and she was a lovely young woman and the kindest of any that I ever knew. In fact, I just fell for that girl and I still think so much of her. She married Mr. Chas Ellis and has a good size family and is yet just the nice looking pleasant woman that she was in girlhood. The whole family were fine people but the old Mr. Fraker was a very stern man and somewhat awed me when conversing with him. In later years he proved to be my closest friend and we had many good times together. He would walk a mile to get to tell me a new funny story and I would do the same with him if it was necessary to do so. He was always trying to get me worried and would tell me most any kind of a story if he thought it would get me worked up. Afterwards, I would find out that there was not a word of truth in what he had told me. However, I liked him very much. Mrs. Fraker is still living and one of the loveliest old ladies I ever was acquainted with. I treat her and love her the same as I would a mother. Mr. Fraker took me to a Mr. and Mrs. Clayton Gaskell's and I took a room and board there. Mr. Gaskell was a very fine man and as quiet as could be but his wife was quite different. She was a great talker and could and did talk very loud. I remember that she talked so loud and so much that I trembled all over after leaving the house. She was a splendid woman and gave me nice meals and I think I slept in my office as I had rented the house of Dr. Ridile with the understanding that if after a while I bought it, he would credit what rent I had paid on the purchase price. I was a foot and had to walk to my first patients until the Methodist Minister loaned me his buggy and pony which I drove to my first patients. His name was Rev. King. I have forgotten his initials or first name. Mr. Fraker drove me around several places and introduced me. Among the places was to see Mr. George Rickard who was bedfast at that time. I

went to his bedside and talked with him for some time. After I left, I heard that he said he pitied Fraker's judgment of a doctor.

After I had gotten established and some successful cases had been treated by me, Rickard heard of them and concluded he would send for me. When I entered the sickroom, he eyed me closely and I could feel that he did not fancy my appearance very well. I began the examination and found that he had an enlarged prostate gland and a weakened condition generally, including the sphincter muscle of the bladder. He had to constantly keep a small vessel in the bed to catch the dribbling urine. I examined the abdomen and in the region of the bladder, detected a large lump and of the consistence of a rubber bag filled with water. I informed him that the first thing I should do was to remove the urine from the bladder. He hooted at me and said, "You don't know a thing about it. I have to keep a vessel to catch the constantly dribbling water so the bladder cannot be full." I contended with him and got quite hard boiled with me and I thought I was going to lose the case entirely as I could not convince him of what I said by talking to him. At last I said, "Mr. Rickard you sent for me to come and examine you and I have done it. I have told you that you have a bladder very much distended with urine and you will not believe it." He replied he could not believe such a thing knowing how the urine was always running from him. I said, "Well, I am ready to prove my point beyond a shadow of a doubt. Will you allow me to do this? It would only be treating me fair, don't you think?" He replied that it would be only fair and agreed. So I sterilized my soft rubber catheter and proceeded. I had a quart tin can to catch the urine. I introduced the catheter and drew a quart of water and showed it to him and he said "Did you draw this from me?" I assured him that I did and then drew another quart and showed him. I then drew half a quart and I showed him that and told him that I have not got it all but I do not dare take more as it might injure you. He thought that was the greatest discovery in the world and then began on Dr. Henry D. Boyden and said he had been coming regularly and had not found this out so I was employed and I soon had the old man out and able to come to my office for medicine. He bragged how well he was feeling. The news of this case spread and it made me worlds of good practice. I had never yet seen Dr. Boyden but had heard of him. I will have more to say of him later on in this account.

One of my first cases of any note was a case of pneumonia right near Alda. To begin with Dr. J. B. Hawk of Grand Island had a case of pneumonia in the family of Charles Nichols who lived next door to Mr. Jobe who had a young son Walter. This man Jobe was the father-in-law of Nichols and young Walter Jobe was consequently his brother-in-law. As stated, Dr. Hawk was called to the Charles Nichols home just before I located and was in charge of a small daughter of Nichols and made many trips and finally discharged the girl was cured. This case was fresh and in the minds of the people when I was called to Walter Jobe who had a severe case of pneumonia. Of course, the whole neighborhood looked on with anxiety, wondering how the new doctor would handle the case. It turned out that everyone who had seen both cases had all said that the Jobe case was the more severe and were much surprised when I got the boy up in four or five days into convalescence. I prided myself then as I do now on my very successful method of treating pneumonia. This case happened before the George Rickard case and was really the means of my getting the Rickard case as the news spread around that the little no account looking Alda doctor was really a successful practitioner. Then it was that Mr. Rickard sent for me. It should be understood that I was there all alone in Alda as my wife and baby had not come with me. In relating what happened hereafter, I am telling the facts in the different cases but would not vouch that they came in the succession I here relate them but however that may be, I vouch for the truth and veracity of each occurrence and I hope I may be able to give a true account of the trials and tribulations of a young doctor in a strange land.

I got a call one night to go to a fine family in the country by the name of Fred Thomssen, a German, and I succeeded in pleasing him by relieving a very bad headache which I could not diagnose to be anything I had ever seen as Mr. Thomssen was almost wild with pain. When I started out of the house which was situated in a fine grove of trees, it was so dark that I began to grope my way out thinking it was a rough country and that I might step off a precipice if I did not be careful. When Mrs. Thomssen saw me doing this, she took me by the arm and led me over a hundred yards to my buggy. I made up my mind that there was a fine woman and found in after years I was not mistaken as we became such good friends that it seemed like home folks when we were together. From that case I was called to a confinement case at Mr. Ernest Kruse's place who lived on Mr. Fred Thomssen's farm. After the case was attended to, it was getting dark. I was in the yard talking to Mr. Thomssen who was at Kruse's that evening. Before that day, I had concluded to try to buy the house and lots from Dr. Ridile at the price of \$700.00. I thought that as the property was clear of debt, I would try to borrow five hundred on the place and then go to Dr. Ridile and say to him "Now I have arranged to get five hundred dollars by mortgaging the place and give it to you and if you want to trust me for the balance on my plain note, I will buy the property." Deducting the rent I had paid to him would leave me nearly two hundred dollars to give my note for. I had no idea of how or where I could mortgage the place for five hundred dollars so as I talked with Mr. Thomssen that evening, it came to my mind that Mr. Thomssen might direct me to someone who would let me have the money. I approached him in this manner and said, "Mr. Thomssen, I am a stranger here in this country and I have no friend to whom I can go confidentially on a business talk. I am here broke flat but have a nice little start in the practice. Dr. Ridile offers to sell me the house and two lots at Alda which you know of for seven hundred dollars. I have decided to try to mortgage the property for five hundred dollars and take that and pay Ridile and ask him to take my note for the remainder. If he does not want to do that, I cannot buy it. What I wanted to ask you is, if you could direct me to someone who would let me have that money on the terms stated." Mr. Thomssen, being a very deliberate acting man, studied a few seconds and then said, "Well doctor, if you would wait until tomorrow and let me have some little time to see what I can do, I might help you out." If ever I got a surprise I got it then as I had no idea of applying to him for a loan. I said certainly I would wait. He said for me to wait until tomorrow afternoon and he would ride his pony up to my office and would pay me for my trip for him and at that time he would know about the loan. I went home jubilant as I felt sure he would arrange the loan. However, when the next day arrived and the hours dragged on, I wondered if he would do it. Late in the day I saw him coming loping his pony up to my office. I was so jittery I could hardly wait for him to say what he would do. He first paid his bill then started talking and the time was just dragging me to death seemingly. He finally said in a very matter of fact way that he thought we could arrange it. No sooner was he out of sight than I started toward River to see Dr. Ridile and he told me that he would be willing to trust me for the remainder of the purchase price. So the deal was done all but making out the papers.

I had gotten two other surgical cases. Mr. Wm Huebner blew his hand off with a fourth of July cracker and Mr. Sam Shipton had just about ground his hand off in a corner crusher. It began to look so hopeful that I sent for my wife and babe. She had about all the money we possessed, not quite \$100.00 so she came by train to Grand Island and I drove the preacher's horse and buggy in to get her. When I got started back to Alda along the sand road that is now the Great Lincoln Highway No. 80, I was compelled to fight the sun flowers off our heads as we drove through them. When we arrived at the house, we found it very bare and nothing like enough furniture. I proposed that we take our nearly a hundred dollars and go to Grand Island and furnish the house. Back east it would have done it and we would have had a little left. James Modesitt directed me to go to James Costello's furniture store to get the furniture as he said Mr. Costello was a very fine gentleman and I afterwards found it to be so.

We went in the store and introduced ourselves and stated that we wanted to buy enough furniture to furnish the house. We started in to buy and everything was priced so high that after buying just a few articles I figured against the funds and found they were all but exhausted and I said "Well, I guess that is all for today." Mr. Costello said "You have not bought enough to furnish the house." I said "Well, I know it but we cannot buy more today." We started out of the store and I think got outside and Costello following made the statement several times that we had not bought enough to furnish the house with. I rather got peeved at his repeating the statement and said "Well, you have told me that a lot of times and I agree with you but I have run out of money and I will have to quit buying." He said "Here now, you come right back in and buy some more goods and I will trust you to pay me later." I said I could not do that as he did not know me and could not afford to take the risk of selling to me on credit. He assured me that it would be alright and I went back in with the understanding that I was to pay it as and when I could. I told him that if he sent me statements, I would rather do without the things and buy them as I got able. He promised me there never would be a statement sent to me. So I bought just enough things to get along with and went home and fitted the house out. I had no horse and buggy so I went to Wood River and bought a bay horse from Dr. Wm B. Kern who was a very fine fellow and I had to pay him \$25.00 down for a down payment and \$5.00 per month till I paid \$25.00 more. Then I went across the street to Murphys Hardware Store where they also sold buggies and harnesses and bought a \$55.00 buggy and a single set of harnesses with a \$5.00 payment down and \$5.00 every time I got hold of one. I also went to the Bowen drugstore and filled my case, which was a new one and looked good, with the most necessary drugs. You will see now that I was plastered with debt and obligations to pay to the very limit and I remembered also that I owed several hundred dollars back in West Virginia.

I willingly admit that when I thought the whole matter over, it gave me a chill but I was young and had a fairly good start and I determined that I was going through with it. As I collected the few dollars together, I would set aside a part of it until I had five dollars to pay on something. Then I would not trust mailing it but I always took it driving either to Grand Island or Wood River, a distance either way of eight miles. As I had an agreement with the furniture man that he would not send me a statement, I usually turned my horse's head toward Wood River and I would first pay on the horse and the next on the buggy. I began cutting them both considerably. But at about that time, I received a statement from the furniture company, I felt much hurt that the man had not kept his agreement. (I should not have felt so.) However, I just happened to have another five dollars laid up and I immediately harnessed up and went to Grand Island and to the furniture man. I said "Mr. Costello, you have not kept your word with me." He asked me why? I replied "I asked as a special favor that you should not send statements to me as it would worry me and this morning I got one from you." He apologized profusely and said he had not intended that any statement go to me. I said, "Well I have brought you five dollars to pay on the bill". He gave me a receipt for it. I drove back home and to my surprise and pleasure, I collected another five dollars and immediately set out for Grand Island and went in and paid another five on the bill. It seemed to cut the fellow's feelings a bit and he said "Doctor, you are taking that little statement too seriously, I am not trying to crowd you." I said "Mr. Costello, I know you have been very kind indeed to trust me and now I do not wish to have you spend one moment in doubt about my paying every cent I owe you." He said, "I have never felt that way." I said, "Well, I suppose I am acting foolishly about the matter and it is only business to send out the statements each month but I am from a different country and in that part it is not practiced and I am not used to it so that is why I do not want them." He told me to go on back to my practice and if any more statements came to me just disregard them and pay when I could. We were the best of friends thereafter and I wish to say I never dealt with a more true gentleman than he was. He died a few years later not a very old man either.

I wish to say in this connect that I kept the roads to Wood River and to Grand Island hot until every penny of my debts were paid off. Many years after all this happened, I was told by Fred Holister, the man in charge of the Murphy Hardware Co. at Wood River that those little payments on so many different debts made me more money and character than I thought it would when I was making these drives. He said the word got out that I was doing this and it was the talk of the country how honorable the young doctor was in discharging so many debts by paying a little each time he got it. He (Holister) said in a laughing way, "when I saw you coming in at the door, I always smiled to myself and said well, I am going to get five dollars now." In this way I established a good name all over my community. I was even proud of it myself and felt the good of it in my business transactions as no one ever questioned my word or intentions in any deal I tried to make.

With all these debts to be paid, I had hard sledding and sometimes I got very blue and if it had not been for the wonderful loyalty of my wife and her splendid efforts to build me up, I sometimes think I would have failed. I remember one particular time when the hot winds were blowing the dust and we were having no callers at all. We were laying on a bed in the breeze to keep cool and I mentioned that it looked very blue to me and I said to her would it not be a hard thing for us to do if we were compelled to send back home for money to return on after what they thought of us for leaving. She replied (good brave soul that she was) "Do not let it worry you, we will come out alright yet . It was but a few days after that a good old Irish citizen called for medicine. His name was Thomas Mahoney and he was full of jokes and fun. I looked him over and put up considerable medicine for him and concluded I would stick him a little heavy and charge him fifty cents for his medicine and examination. When I told him fifty cents, he hooted at me and said that was not enough and handed me a dollar. One can imagine my feelings. This never occurred again in my office and it gave me an insight to the spirit of the country which I should have caught on to long before, judging by the prices I had to pay for my household goods.

At another time there seemed and I was worrying that I believed the Mahoney and his family proved to be my lifelong friends. I felt a lull in the whole month business and people were falling away from me and that finally my practice would fail entirely. I told my wife that I was sick and had to go to bed and that I thought I should take some calomel and I think I really did take some. However, my wife got the idea that it was mostly mental worry on my part and she brought the subject up and she said "I am going to get the books and see how your months practice compares with the few months back." I agreed and thought I would find it much reduced but we figured it out and it was better than the preceding months although it seemed that I was falling off. She went about her work as usual and pretty soon I was up feeling as good as I usually had felt. She came round and said "I thought you were sick". I said "I feel better now." She told me that it was the book report that made me feel better and then scolded me for getting these notions.

The following accounts of different cases that I had will give the reader a good idea of my early struggles which finally brought me success in the end. For instance, I was fired out of two cases in one day. That discouraged me greatly and I felt like giving it up. I was doing well with the majority of my cases but it so happened that I had two severe cases on hand at one time. One was a Mr. Groves who was seriously ill and, by the way, died in this sickness. I was called to see him but his favorite doctor was Dr. Kern of Wood River. As it was a serious case, he called Dr. Kern in consultation and Kern at first refused to take the case off of me but the man insisted that he did not want me to treat him and wanted Kern. I told Dr. Kern that if he refused to take the case, I also would refuse to continue and just about forced the Dr. to take the case. Of course, as I knew just as well how to handle the case as anyone else, it rather hurt to be fired out of the case.

I had another case an old lady who had dysentery very bad and she had married her hired hand who was very much younger than herself. I always thought she had hired him so long that she owed him a lot of money and that they agreed that it would be best to settle it in that way. I think it was a good idea too as they were both good people. She had a son-in-law by the name of Tom Brownfield who lived at Lincoln, Nebraska. The day I was fired out of the other case, this Brownfield and wife came to visit the mother and at late evening after dark I was called to see an old lady by name of Hammond just next place beyond Mrs. Willers (for that was her name at this time). On my way out, I just called in to see Mrs. Willers and Brownfield met me at the door and informed me that they had another doctor on the case and that I would not be needed again. This, of course, riled me up to some extent but I figured that the best policy was to keep cool and not get mad. I said to him that I knew she was very dangerously ill but that she was improving and that I thought it was not fair to me to call in another doctor and say nothing to me. In my talk I said I do not think you have given me fair treatment in this case. Well, he said, I had nothing to do with it as I have just came. We talked a little longer and in the talk I again mentioned that I had not been treated fairly and used the word you in the statement. He bristled up showing temper and said "You still persist in saying you have not treated me fair in this case after I have told you that I had nothing to do with it." This angered me as I knew well enough that he was lying to me as he was right at the bottom of the whole affair. I spoke up and told him that it was my opinion that he was responsible for the whole thing and that I had nothing to retract. I said, "Now if you do not like that, you can get just anything you want out of me." I was thoroughly mad and was ready to fight. He mellowed down and said we must not have any trouble and excite the patient. I gave him a piece of my mind in a low tone and left. I found my other patient almost at the point of death, an old lady. I called her grown son with whom she lived to one side and told him that he might expect anything. However, she was better next morning and got well and lived for years.

Naturally, I was low in spirit on account of the other cases the way it turned out but bringing the other more serious case out successfully seemed to partly heal the wound. Especially as the neighbors talked in my favor and remarked that I had brought this Mrs. Willers out of her worst danger and then they fired me. This spread over the country and also what I told Brownfield. This Brownfield never bore any too good a name anyway.

Here I wish to tell an antidote which happened years before involving Mr. A. B. Fraker and old Dr. Brubaker about Brownfield. As I have said before, Fraker was a big rough looking man and was in his glory when he could get someone guessing as to his attitude anything that happened to his friend. Dr. Brubaker, then located at Alda, was quite an odd character also and he had treated this Brownfield and charged it on his books. Brownfield did not intend paying it. Brubaker drove a phaeton and one horse and often he would invite Fraker to go to Grand Island in the evening and they would have a lunch and a drink together, never getting too much as the saying goes. This evening they rode in to Grand Island and went into a saloon and sure enough here was Brownfield. Dr. Brubaker, as I have before told you, used a cane to walk with. He walked immediately up to Brownfield and said in his characteristic way, "Brownfield, be God sir, when are you going to pay that bill?" Brownfield answers that he was going to pay it very soon and Brubaker said, "You have promised it so many times that I am saying you are going to pay it right now." Brownfield said, "Well Dr. I cannot pay it this evening but upon my honor, I will right away." "Your Honor" said Dr. Brubaker in a question mark, "You have no honor" loud enough to be heard and the doctor took hold of Brownfield's throat and raised his cane as if about to strike him. Finally he paid up and the matter was ended for the time. On the way driving out home that night, Brubaker noticed that Fraker said nothing about the affair and he did not know whether his sympathies were on his side or on Brownfield's side. So he started out to feel Fraker out. He began by saying "Be God Sir, he showed

fight and I thought he was going to strike me. What would you have done had he fought me?" Fraker said "Oh H--1, he would not fight you." Well says Brubaker "What if he had fought, what would you have done?" Fraker said "You need not fear he would never fight you." He would not tell Brubaker that he would have interfered had Brownfield fought him.

Soon after the occurrences related in this last paragraph, I had a man by name of Hunter, a very substantial citizen, come one evening about dark and said "Doctor, I think my daughter has appendicitis and I want you to send some medicine out for her." I replied that I did not like to do that way but would rather see her and be sure what was the matter with her. He said "Well, if you will send some medicine out and let us try it out and if it does not help her, I will come back and have you go out." I sent the medicine. Along four o'clock in the morning he rapped at my door and said that the girl was no better and that he wished I would go out to see her. He continued and said, "Doctor Kelley, I had just as well be plan with you in what I say. The doctor we always have lives in Grand Island but you have come here to locate and we need you here, but if you do not suit us we will send for our old doctor." I told him that I was glad he spoke plainly to me and I knew just where he stood. Besides there is no unfairness in what you intend doing. This doctor was Dr. Henry D. Boyden. I went out to his house, which was only one and a half miles, and went in to see the daughter and in less than five minutes diagnosed appendicitis. Now says I, "Mr. Hunter, you talked very plainly to me down at the office and now I am going to be just as plain and outspoken as you were. I have diagnosed appendicitis and as I am a stranger to you, I want this diagnosis confirmed or denied by your doctor and I want you to call him out in consultation." He says, "Well that suit me so you go back to your office and call for him to come out and meet to come." He did shortly and as to appearance, I thought of a bull dog as he was low and heavy set and large of face with heavy eyebrows and spoke gruffly. I thought here is where I get it in the neck. He went into the sick room and was only in there a minute or two when he came out and said "Yes, it is appendicitis." We consulted together and decided on some medicine for me to give and in case it did not improve her condition, we would operate. Operations in those days were avoided as much as was possible. I gave the medicine faithfully without improvement for a day. Then I told some of the neighbors in town that we were going to be compelled to operate and as soon as they learned I was to have Boyden, they all threw up their hands in dissatisfaction. I was advised not to be alone in the operation with Boyden. I called him and asked if he would bring another doctor with him and he got Dr. Weeter who had a large practice to come out with him. I told them that I had to dress two accident cases before I came out but that I thought I could be there by the time they got out there. I dressed Huebner and Shipton and went out. I found them waiting in the yard and I was introduced to Dr. Weeter and I asked, "Well, have you examined the patient?" and he replied that he had and that he disagreed with our diagnosis and pronounced it ovarian trouble. Well I said "Dr. Boyden, you agreed with me on this diagnosis, have you backed up?" He said "No, I have not and still think it is appendicitis." "What are we to do about it" I asked. They both spoke at once and said, "It is up to you to say what to do." This rather stirred up my fighting spirit and I said at once we will operate. We immediately did so and found a pus appendix. This nerve that I manifested in this case and because I won out, made me many friends and the word spread about the case and how I stood firm in my opinion and it brought me a lot of business.

There is one little story connected to this case that. I wish to tell on myself and the reader may judge for himself whether or not I did the right thing. But whether right or wrong, it worked. After the operation was over, Dr. Boyden and I agreed on what treatment to give and I was to have charge of it. He put in a drainage tube and I had to take care of everything. The girl was very low and no one thought she would get well. I went regular and often. The abdomen began to bloat and everything we did seemed to fail to help that condition. I was following closely this doctor's directions but it did not

change for the better. Remembering a case of similar symptoms that I treated successfully and as a last resort with Syrup of Figs (a patent medicine), I determined to try it in this case but I felt that I had to keep it a secret as in those days a doctor resorting to patent medicines was considered a quack. My theory and practice was to give anything that will do the work, let it be patent or any kind of medicine. I went to my office and then to the grocery store and purchased a bottle of Syrup of Figs and took it to my office and put it in a different bottle and then added Tr Nux Vom (which is a very bitter medicine) and made it very bitter to taste for a disguise. Well, next day everything was lovely and the girl went right on to complete recovery.

Not long after this, a young man from a ranch rode into my office in the night somewhere about eleven or twelve o'clock at night and aroused me from sleep. When I went to the door, I found it to be Ray Quisenberry, son of John Quisenberry" a rancher, and he said "Doctor, I want you to go down to the ranch, some of the folks got burned a little." I replied that I would go and followed him down to the ranch. When I went in to the yard and Mr. John Quisenberry came out to meet me, I said in a rather jovial way, "What have you been doing here trying to burn someone up?" He at once explained "Oh my God, it's awful doctor!" When I entered the door, I beheld one of the most, if not indeed the most, awful sights in my whole life. It must have stunned me as the first thing after that I heard was Mr. Quisenberry saying, "Well doctor, aren't you going to do anything?" I suppose I came out of the spell and I found that I was standing in the middle of the floor with my hands clasped together. I replied, "Certainly I am." I ordered them to send for at least one more doctor as I said the job is too big for one doctor to get done as quickly as it should be done and they immediately dispatched a runner to Wood River for a doctor or two if they could get them. I was somewhere along about one or two in the morning then, I am not sure about the hour, but it was after midnight as I remember it. Then I looked about me again and saw six persons sitting around in a circle with the largest water blisters I had ever beheld hanging down from their faces. It was indeed a horrible sight. The seventh one, a boy, had escaped through a window and was not so badly burned as the rest of them. I was told that the mother had locked the children in a single small room up stairs and as soon as they were asleep she poured coal oil all over them and lighted a match to it. When they woke up, they could not get out and only the one boy escaped by breaking a window of which there was only one in the room and escaped. The mother who was a fine lady ordinarily had suddenly gone insane and had thought she would end the whole business in that way. There was one little boy who was singed all over but not burned deeply. I would call it a first degree burn which would not have been serious but for the fact that he was singed all over the entire body. I said "John (Mr. Q), this one should be cared for first as he is the most seriously burned." He raised his hands in surprise and said "Doctor, he is the safest of all of them, just see how he is chattering away and does not suffer." I said, "John I do not believe he can ever live and if it is your wish, I will begin on the others but I said about daylight or sunrise this boy will die." He said, "Oh doctor, I can't believe that as he seems so well now." I replied, "Then just wait." I ordered sheets torn up for bandages and I worked from that time till daylight dressing and wishing the other doctor would hurry and come as I felt very tried but he did not get there until I had all dressed except our little boy, for he died just about sunrise. Quisenberry rushed into another room where I was working and said, "Doctor, come quick, the little boy is acting queerly and I rushed out to where he was just as he was dying. Mr. Quisenberry always wondered just why the boy should die that quick. I explained to him that the skin carried thousands and thousands of pores out of which the sweat came and that I thought in a way they served as sort of a breathing system and that the fire had singed the openings to these ducts just enough to close them and caused all the poisons of the body to be retained and it was poisonous enough to take the boy's life.

The other doctor arrived finally and I had all the dressings done and I was very tired. When I was through something happened just before I finished that seemed to lighten the burden of the whole

thing greatly. While I was working with some others of the family, a little girl about fifteen years old asked me, "Doctor how soon can you get to me?" I replied, "Just as soon as I get this one dressed." Poor little soul was suffering severely but she was brave enough to say, "Well doctor, come as soon as you can but do not neglect the others." I appreciated this remark so much that I got to her just as quickly as I could and dressed her nicely and when I was through she said, "Oh thank you doctor, I do feel so much better now since you dressed the burn." I believe tears came to my eyes, so glad was I that I had relieved this suffering child. However, she had but little more time to live as she passed away the next day. I am not exactly sure about the last statement for it does seem to me that it might have been the same day she died. I had then lost two out of seven and the rest were severely burned. The oldest daughter was eighteen years old and was before the burning a very beautiful woman but as the fire had just ruined her face, it being so severely burned. I took great care in dressing her but after two days she died and I do not know just how she would look after healing. I believe that she would have preferred death. That was the last one to die but the mother was horribly burned and all the rest of the four except the boy who jumped out the window had escaped with lesser burns. I struggled for months with the rest, dressing them very often and finally got all out regardless of the whole community saying that Mrs. Q could not possibly get well. She did get well but soon had to be sent to the insane hospital at Hastings and was in that institution for many years when she was pronounced well and came back home looking better than I had ever hoped and seemed well in every way. After a few years, she developed pneumonia and died. Mr. Q is still living and is very far advanced in age. This particular case made me a wide reputation and my practice steadily increased.

Before I leave this subject I want to tell a little story connected with my many trips to the ranch to do dressing as I would often pick up someone in town to go with me just for company. There lived in Alda at that time one Hayse Tuttle. He smoked a pipe continuously and was a well educated man and very peculiar in many ways. He had some money but never added to it, but to see him and hear him talk, you would imagine he never would run out of money. However, he was a splendid man and neighbor and a good joshier all the time. I asked him to drive down with me one evening to the ranch and he accepted. I drove a top buggy and one horse. It got dark before we started back and I was driving along a very dark road but level as a floor. It was raining and I missed the end of a culvert and the buggy turned over and threw me right on top of Tuttle and broke the seat entirely loose from the buggy. I could not quickly get up and Tuttle cried out "Doc, get off of me, my pipe has gone out." I told this on Tuttle and he never heard the last of it. I had only had a one horse team to drive until after this case when I made a deal with Mr. Quisenberry for another horse. Then I had a double team. After I discharged the case, as it went for quite a while, Mr. Q never mentioned anything about settling the bill. I had bought the horse, it is true, and had said nothing about pay to him. So one day he was passing through Alda and stopped at the grocery store and we met there. I said to him that I believed we had better settle up and he said something that sounded to me like he rather thought I had been paid. I said there was more yet and he asked me about what. I think I told him \$400.00. He thought that was quite a little more besides the horse and I explained the number of trips, the enormous amount of dressings and the number of cases treated and then we went to the office and settled and he gave me a check for four hundred dollars. This was the largest cash fee I had ever received and the largest of any kind for that matter. I immediately made a beeline for the First National Bank at Grand Island and got the cash. I took it out home with me and after an hour or two made my way to Fred Thomssen's and paid him in full on the note of five hundred I had borrowed. As I had a patient a few miles south of Fred's, I asked him if he would like to drive down with me and I could drop him off at home as I returned. He readily accepted the invitation and we drove down to the place I was to go. As we drove back visiting along, my fertile mind got to working and I reasoned that I had settled with Fred and possibly he had but little use for the money. I had left

obligations back east that this money would about take up and it would be very acceptable to them. So I said to Fred, "Mr. Thomssen, do you need that money I just paid you?" He said "Why no, not particularly." Then I explained to him that if he could and wanted to trust me with it, that I borrow it back from him and send it back east and clear my name there. I cleared my debt with Dr. Ridile and that was the first complete home I had ever owned. I gave it to my wife as she had helped and really nearly bought our unfinished home in West Virginia.

[\(concluded in Part VI\)](#)