SUNNY DAYS AT DEAR OLD DELAWARE
WHAT I REMEMBER OF MY EXPERIENCES
THERE IN 1871-1875

By GEORGE MORGAN, CLASS OF 1875

NO DOUBT there was Sussex sand on my shoes when I entered Delaware College. What was inside my head, if anything in particular, is harder to guess. I was not quite seventeen when "caught" in a Concord peach orchard and dragged north where I could be tamed and taught not to wear paper collars or use such words as "chunk" and "tote." It was hoped that New Castle County, with its superior civilization, would receive into its bosom a rather raw, green one from evergreen Sussex, and convert him into a sure-pop civilizee.

Nowadays Sussex schools are up to the mark, thanks to Mr. du Pont and his co-workers in a good cause; but in my time they had their drawbacks. The teachers were mainly young men who expected to become doctors or lawyers. They were conscientious enough and zealous enough, and did well in their way, taking pains in their work—and also inflicting pains by the free use of the hickory gad; but neither the district schools nor the "Subscribed" schools were what they should have been.

It is true, old Professor Freeze, a Sussex character, who kept a "subscribed" school, drilled me in Latin; and such fascinating Latin I have never since met with, for he talked it sepulchrally through his nose, as though a horn. He brought old Rome right straight to Concord,—Cæsar, Cicero, Catiline, Livy, Cornelius Nepos and all, and made them almost as real to me as the perch in the pond or the ten thousand crows cawing about the pines.

From Professor Freeze, I went to Professor Frost at Laurel Academy. We also had a Sussex teacher named Blizzard and one of my classmates at Newark was Charlie Snow, from Snow Hill. So there you have it—Freeze,
Frost, Snow and Blizzard; which concatenation reminds me of that other trio of Delaware names, somewhat hotter and spicier—Mustard, Pepper, and Pickles.

Frost’s Academy was really a high-class school, with students from distant parts. With these I lodged in an octagonal dormitory, a mile from the insidious temptations of Laurel; and thus got an inkling of academic life. But I was only a little while with Professor Frost, who closed his school and returned to his native Connecticut.

That left me scholastically stranded; so I spent a year around home, picking peaches, writing for the local papers on themes far above my head, sailing on the Nanticoke and Chesapeake, and reading Rollin, Gibbon, Arnold, Hume, Goldsmith, Smollett, old Josephus and anything I could get my hands on. I have often thought that this year of reading, though undirected, unmethodical and desultory, did me as much good as if I had spent the time at some such preparatory school as Professor William A. Reynolds’s Academy in Wilmington, whither I was ever going to join my elder brother, then a pupil there, but never went.

We were nearly all Methodists in Sussex; and Dickinson College was much talked about there. A graduate of that college, a relative of my mother, had given her a Dickinson scholarship; and early in September, 1871, she handed it to me, with the news that my father would start with me for Carlisle, Pennsylvania, the next day. At once I rubbed the peach fuzz off my hands and neck and put on a paper collar.

Still harping on peaches, I will say that, on the way up the Delaware railroad, they were much in evidence at every station—heaped-up crates of late Crawfords and Old Mixons. It was still the peach era. You could sniff the fruity fragrance along the whole busy line. At Dover, a party of honorables boarded our up-train. Most of them knew my father, and one of them was a particular friend.

“What are you going to do with that boy?” he asked.

“Put him into Dickinson College, if I can,” said my father.
"Why not into Delaware? Where's your State pride?"

This was a home thrust, for all our folks were ardent Delawareans, and had been from away back.

He told us all about the reorganization of Delaware the year before; and dwelt persuasively upon its future. As for the Dickinson scholarship, there would be little advantage in that, since the tuition at Delaware for a native was negligible.

My father was impressed and so was I. As the train pulled in at Wilmington, he said to me:

"Let's stop off here, run over to Newark and take a look at Delaware College. If we like the place, and you pass muster, I'll fix everything up for you, and hurry back home. I'm afraid they'll let those peaches in the Callaway orchard get too soft before they start picking."

With peaches on his mind, and not a thing to speak of on mine, we arrived at Newark and were soon in the presence of one of the most amiable and engaging men I have ever met—Colonel William Henry Purnell, President of the College.

Never shall I forget his laugh when I called him "Cur-n-l Pur-n-l," with the emphasis on the "Cur" and "Pur." In Newark he was Dr. Purnell, with the stress on the last syllable. I had used the Eastern Shore pronunciation. Not only did we have plenty of Purnells down the Peninsula, but "Purnel," or "Purn" was a familiar given name in our locality. The war-time "Purnell's Legion," raised by him, had marched through Concord when I was a boy. Graduate of Delaware in 1846, lawyer, something of a statesman, trusted by President Lincoln in critical times, ex-postmaster of Baltimore, he had abandoned political life for the more congenial environment in which he now found himself. He was well grounded in economics and English literature, was quite a master in elocution and had acquired a high outlook on public affairs. He was a true-hearted man and most gracious gentleman—upright in carriage as in character.
SUNNY DAYS AT OLD DELAWARE

He was fortunate in having as his chief aid at this juncture an equally able, earnest man in the much plainer person of Professor William D. Mackey, who was as greatly beloved by the students of that day as Professor George A. Harter is now. Professor Mackey won you to him by his simple, hearty ways. You had no doubt at all of his conscientious interest in your welfare. It was not a hectic interest, passing on the morrow; but was continuously the same, day after day, year after year. You loved him—loved even his lisp, due, as we learned, to the fact that when a child he had struck on his chin in falling and had bitten off his own tongue. It was his heroic mother who had held the severed parts in place till they miraculously reknit. Such was the tongue that gave us our "amo, amas, amat," our "all Gaul" and our Horace, and that brought old Homer home to us in a way not to be lost even upon idle minds.

President Purnell and Professor Mackey put me through a quiz together. First one used his stethoscope, figuratively speaking; and then the other. How many spots they found I have no idea, since they were too polite to exchange glances; but one incident I recall: In a little spelling bee, they gave me "beneficent." I came right back with "benificent." Both laughed.

"Crack the word as you would a nut," said Professor Mackey—"take it apart."

"Oh!" said I thinking of Professor Freeze and his big nose,—"bene and facere, beneficent."

Again they laughed; and by and by Dr. Purnell said: "That will do. Your father wants to make the next train home. Give him my compliments, and tell him we will take care of you here."

They gave me a room next to Athenaean hall in the East Wing. We bought a bed, a wash-stand, with fixtures, a study table, chairs, carpet, stove and what not; and with the help of dusky old Bill Taylor, the janitor, I was soon ensconced. I give these details not only to introduce our hard-worked factotum, the unpoetic Bill, but as a reminder of the simplicity of things in Old College in the
early seventies. All the rooms in the Athenaeum and Delta Phi wings were similarly plain. Most of those in the upper hall, above the Oratory, were untenanted.

But there was one detail connected with my room that I cannot fittingly describe. I mean the view from my window of the range of hills, only a mile or so away, stretching from east to west along the whole horizon line. Such a sight for a boy from the loamy low levels of sandy Sussex! As a writer, I have tried a hundred times to picture in print this most entrancing of views; but never have I been lucky enough to corral the elusive words that would help me do the magic trick. No buildings then stood, as they now do, north of Old College; and the panorama, as I saw it, during four years, was perfect. Nor was it ever quite the same—now asleep, now enlivened by swift-moving cloud-shadows, sunlit, storm-swept, green, gray, brown, white in its blanket of snow. At first, coming from the lowlands, it seemed to me I had never seen a hill before; certainly I had never seen slope blending with slope in such far-extended fine lines, each making for the beautification of the whole. Field merged with field and woods with woods; and all was as if designed by some master of landscape who had come down out of the blue sky and played awhile as the old gods were wont to do. No artist in search of lines of grace need travel to the world's end to find them: they are all in that range of White Clay hills.

I was brought back to earth when the unpoetic Bill slammed down my first scuttle of coal, and gave me the news that the newly arrived professor of chemistry, Dr. Theodore Rudolph Wolf was installing himself in his rooms on the floor below. Young though he was, Dr. Wolf, fresh from Heidelberg, had about him the air of a mature man who knew what he was doing and would stand no nonsense. Living in Old College, he would enforce order and minimize student deviltry. Evidently the mischievous and volatile James Hemphill Jones Bush, from Wilmington, much given to practical jokes, would have to stop his surreptitious pleasantry of filling the
halls and the rooms of freshmen with the odor of sulphurated hydrogen. Sure enough, he did stop; but nothing could altogether subdue his propensity for pranks and his monkey-shines till he fell one day from the cupola to the main roof, slid down it heels over head, and dropped like a plummet to the campus grass below. I saw him fall, and thought him dead, but, after a day or so in the Wilmington hospital, he was with us again as lively as ever.

It is impossible to do justice to such a man as Dr. Wolf in the brief babblings of the moment. He was a heaven-send to Delaware College, and made his mark in its history. As I first remember him, he was an upright, dignified, quick-stepping, handsome man; and we were all struck with the fact that across his brow was a dueling scar. No one dared ask him the story of the scar. He was too uncommunicative and reserved for that. He was curt in his speech, quite hard-headed and given to sarcasm. He knew me better than I knew him. In his class-room one day he plumped a question at me right out of the blue. I did not have the gumption to suspect that it was a catch question. Sparring for time, I beat around the bush for a while, and then, uncandidly, remarked that, while I had heard the answer and really knew it, I was afraid I had forgotten it.

"What a pity!" said he—"What a pity! Morgan is the only man on earth who ever knew the answer to that question and he has forgotten it!"

Many another memory I have of him. One night, being in my room alone and hard at it under my lamp, I heard a great racket on the stairway. In dressing-gown and slippers, I stepped into the hall and along the corridor till I came to the stairs. Some of the boys were skylarking there. In order to see the fun, I took post on a step of the flight leading up to the dark topmost story. That instant with a cry of "Wolf—scatter!" the skylarkers vanished. I saw the top of Dr. Wolf's head as he quickly ascended two steps at a time, and knew that if I attempted to return to my room I should be recognized
and thus involved in a scrape to which I was not a party. So I eluded him by retreating to the top story, thinking that he would ascend no further than the scene of the fracas and soon go down. But he kept on up into the unlighted hall where I was. I avoided him by side-stepping into an unoccupied room, with a window opening out upon the roof of the East Wing. There was a coating of ice and snow on that roof, and wind was howling; but, as Dr. Wolf came into my hiding-place, I threw up a sash and went out of it through the window. It was a rather desperate game of hide-and-seek; but my spunk was up and I said to myself that no Heidelberger should catch me. I climbed to the East Wing ridgepole, and then, in desperation, up the roof to the main hall to the very top.

There the Northwest wind reminded me of my folly. It cut clean through me, lightly clad as I was; the icy ridgepole was slipperiness itself; there was no going back the way I had come. Had I attempted it, I should have slid with increasing momentum, and gone on down. I was in the worst fix of my life. There I was on the peak of a snow-coated roof, clawing it with benumbed fingers to keep myself from being blown away. I kicked off my slippers, so as to get the prehensile use of my toes. Straddling the ridgepole, I inched along it towards the cupola. I kicked the snow away as I advanced and beat loose the ice with my fists. Little, tough, wiry, I had climbed to many a masthead on the Nanticoke. As the wind came in gusts, I moved forward only when it lulled for a moment or so. Then I clutched the tin and hugged tight for the next gust. The cupola was a long ways off—a long, long, ways; but I reached it after an exhausting struggle. What I wanted was to get inside that slatted belfry. But how? Could I break a slat? I tried one, using all my strength. It held fast. I tried another and it snapped in two. I made myself as small as I felt and squeezed through into the cupola. I groped for the steps of the belfry ladder, found them and descended. The belfry door was locked. I beat against the door, and
by and by heard Dr. Wolf say to the janitor: "Go get the keys!"

When I stepped out upon the landing, there stood my persistent seeker, a look of amazement on his face.

"Why, Mr. Morgan!" said he, as I silently made my very best bow, and returned to my quarters.

I expected to be brought up before the faculty next day; but nothing came of it. Neither Dr. Wolf or anybody else ever spoke to me on the subject of my midnight folly.

This escapade could not be repeated now, even if anyone should be so idiotic as to try it, because old stairs, top landing, window outlet to wing roof, old main roof itself and the two-storied cupola went by the board when the whole interior was torn out and rebuilt on present lines. Outside, Old College seems pretty much the same as of yore; inside, it is less like its Nineteenth Century self—a dissimilarity unnoticeable save to fossils of the lower alumni layer.

When I come to think of it, I am about the last of these fossils of the re-opening period—in fact, the oldest living graduate of Delaware College. Perhaps I am warranted, therefore, in attempting to sketch other pen-portraits and pictures and of jotting down for the college scrap-book whatever unconsidered campus trifles come to mind.

On the afternoon of my first day, having fixed up my room, I was sitting on the big steps gazing down the Linden walk towards distant Iron Hill—a little lonesome and homesick and wondering what would come next—when I saw a real, live Sophomore cross the street stile, with a brisk step, and stride collegeward along the avenue as though he owned the whole place. Here, thought I, approacheth a roper-in, either for the Athenaean or Delta Phi. But I was mistaken.

"I'm Aleck," said he—"Alexander F. Williamson, Class of '74."

His face beamed. In two minutes he had me in tow. He led me round back of Old College and we took a look
at the sporting lay-out. It was nothing in the world but a horizontal bar, in an open space near the little wooden astronomical observatory, later burned.

That was the sole equipment for sports at Delaware College. There was no gymnasium. There was no football field—no track. There was a rough baseball diamond, nearby, in the back lot where the Baltimore and Ohio tracks now cut through; but most of the ball-tossing was done on the campus, then somewhat broader on its western side. As for the swimming pool of the early seventies, it was nature's own; and one had to go to the White Clay to find it. In fact, from the latter-day point of view, that was a period of "no anything"—no autos, no hard roads, no telephones, no radios, no airplanes. One student, it is true, owned a bicycle; but the thing had wooden wheels. Not that we then thought ourselves in a backward age. Far from it. Daniel Webster had said, in the Senate: "I am as old as Methuselah, Mr. President, for I have lived in the days of the magnetic telegraph, the steam engine, the fast printing-press, the sewing-machine and the steam-reaper." At Delaware College in the Seventies we were like that great Daniel in that we thought ourselves relatively progressive. The real lack that mattered was the lack of sanitary plumbing and equipment.

Since the great college sport was walking, my sophomore guide and I footed it for an hour or so viewing the mile-long street that constituted Newark. Much bigger now of course, and greatly graced by the University developments south of Main street, as well as by other modern extensions and improvements, Newark is still old Newark, plus good plumbing and its air of up-to-dateness. The Academy remains much as it was. The churches are the same. The shops are better lit, but retain their old-time aspect. Creek Road is the same. Views from Quality Hill are the same.

In our day, we usually ended our walks at the top of this hill, in front of the Murphey mansion; and, of an evening, rested our elbows on the fence and gazed enrapt,
at the sunsets. It was “sunset view”; and many a pan-
orama of perfect splendor did my dear friend and yoke-
fellow, Edward Noble Vallandigham, and I marvel at from
that spot—fall, winter, spring and summer. Golfers now
haunt the adjacent fields but in those times only birds
and strollers were about. Further along the Quality Hill,
or “Telegraph,” road, leading into the golden sunsets, was
the Donnel mansion, socially open to us, as were all the
best houses in or around town—the Blandy, Curtis,
Evans, Cooch and other hospitable homes. At the Donnel
dwelling was a lawn with evergreens, typical of the
Newark neighborhood; and here the mallet cracked the
croquet ball quite merrily. The Blandy place was “Bel-
mont”; Rathmel Wilson’s “Oakland,” and W. E. Heisler’s
farm on the New London road was “Greenwood.”

Young Will Heisler and Ned Vallandigham joined us
during this very tour of inspection. They were both in
a way to become six footers, both bookish; and they both
took to the little fellow from Sussex so heartily that we
became sworn friends—establishing an intimacy lasting
until Will’s death in Texas, when still in his prime, and
Ned’s death at Seville, Spain, in 1930.

From Quality Hill we walked eastward to the sun-
rise end of the town—past the College, past the Seminary
on the north side of the street nearly opposite the
Academy; and so came to Professor Edward D. Porter’s
experimental farm, famous for its pear orchard.

Professor Porter had been a member of the faculty
in Delaware College before the Civil War, and then a civil
engineer; and then principal of Newark Academy. He
was now professor of mathematics, civil engineering and
astronomy in the resuscitated college. He was brisk and
brusque and always busy—so busy that he seemed to be
constantly hurrying on ahead to the next thing on the
program. Unlike Dr. Purnell and Professor Mackey, he
was skeptical of the trustworthiness and gentility of the
raw lads under training. We posed as “gentlemen.” Mr.
Steve Choate, the stocky, rubicund newsdealer, used to
greet us when we entered his shop with “Good evening,
gentlemen in a bunch!” But if “oh-yeah!” had been in vogue in that long-gone era, Professor Porter probably would have uttered it under his breath. He knew us and our pretensions; or thought he did, and treated us accordingly. The gracious sympathetic Purnell-Mackey way led to better results. Vallandigham, in his “Fifty Years in Delaware College,” a finely discriminating and illuminating book, says that Professor Porter was “in some respects the most brilliant and versatile man of the Faculty.” His smile was a smile to be remembered; his speech fascinating. He also dearly loved to talk; and in his classroom we took advantage of this weakness of his, apparent to us but not to him, by starting him off, full tilt, on some subject which we felt would reduce our oversupply of ignorance and at the same time keep us away from the telltale blackboard.

It was an age of hazing at the big colleges; but, since there were few classes in Delaware at that time, I escaped it. But one day, in the crowd gathered on the campus for the cadet drill, a big bully of a fellow began to pick on me, probably because he thought he could thrash such a bit of a chap as myself. At home, I had been a bantam “rassler,” posted on all the tricks. I saw what he was up to, and waited for the proper provocation, just as a rooster sidles circumspectly around in his dunghill arena, biding the moment of bloody battle. Then I flew at him in a quick grapple, gripped him with the underhold, and tripped his heels from under him. As he went down, my stock went up. My status was fixed. Years after I happened to meet my good friend, the reformed bully, and he told me he had profited more from that experience than from any other at Delaware College.

Professor Jules Macheret, son of a famous soldier and himself a French veteran, with his Legion of Honor button, his explosive, fun-provoking English and his high ideas of the importance of military discipline, was a serious minded, lovable man. He was our instructor in French and professor of tactics. Under a provision of the Land Grant act, we had to take tactics,
and he shattered his excitable nerves trying to make us drill according to the manual of arms. How he volleyed at Tom Caulk, the grinning irrepressible—each succeeding volley funnier than its forerunner! There were a few of the students, such as George W. Marshall of Milford, who showed some sense and turned out to be good soldiers, but the corps as a whole benefited mainly from the good exercise it got, in spite of itself, in handling heavy rifles and in marching and manœuvring. We were uniformed in cadet gray cloth, made at Dean's Mills, and felt quite spruce and natty, but as I have said, most of us were as unamenable as unbroken colts. It was our sporting event—our hour for blowing off steam. Lafayette may in past times have looked down from Iron Hill, but he did not help his dear old compatriot gain the upper hand of our Tom Caulks. Poor Macheret! In aftertime I sat by his bedside in Wilmington, his son, Candide, named after Voltaire's hero, standing sorrowfully beside me. I assured the Professor that all of us at Delaware loved him dearly, but the dying old soldier smiled incredulously, told me to give everybody his blessing, and turned on his pillow.

This reminds me of a curious coincidence. Some years ago as I stepped out on the main portico of old College one night, after attending an alumni meeting in the Commons, I was struck with the extraordinary beauty and brilliance of the moonlit campus. I plumped myself down on the steps and took a mental flight back to the far-gone Seventies. I seemed to recall Thomas Macdonough Caulk and his happy shining face more vividly than anybody else. I had long lost track of him, and so even had Ned Vollandigham, who cherished a peculiar affection for him, since they had been boys together around Newark. Where on earth was that missing jovial Tom? Next day I read that Tom was dead in Western Pennsylvania, where he had been at work as a civil engineer. He had died just about the time—almost at the exact moment—I was picturing him to myself on the college steps.
In justice to the cadet corps, I should add here that it was subsequently very thoroughly developed, and became a pride of the college.

But what did we do in the way of study, and what was the routine?

There were compulsory chapel exercises in the Oratory in the morning at half past six in the fall and spring, and at a quarter to seven in the winter. Ever memorable was the rush to get there on time—the headlong sprint in the echoing corridors, the untied shoe strings, the flapping suspenders. Breathless were the boys who came hurrying in from the town, or the surrounding country. A rule as to "bounds" was little regarded, but the chapel rules were strictly enforced.

We had the four-year classical course; the three-year scientific and agricultural course, and the three-year literary course. The girls who first entered college in 1872, thanks to Dr. Purnell's pushing belief in co-education, all took the latter. They either lived at the Academy, or at their homes in town. They were at college only when in attendance upon classes. They were a well-grounded, bright lot, ever decorous, and were gallantly treated.

I will not attempt to give our classical curriculum in detail. As Freshmen we had it quite hard with ancient and modern history, Latin, Greek, rhetoric, and mathematics. As Sophomores, we added political science, English literature and the study of words. As Juniors, we branched out into logic, physics and mental and moral philosophy. As Seniors we had elements of law and the higher mathematics. My hardest years were the first two; the others were less grinding.

President Purnell knew how to pique the interest of students and how to set them thinking. He sounded the depths of John Stuart Mill. He made old Archbishop William Paley's "Evidences of Christianity" stand out in all its strength; he made Lord Kames's "Elements of Criticism" a good influence with us, in spite of Goldsmith's remark that it was "easier to write that book than to read it"; he caused us to realize that Hippolyte Adolphe
Taine was a helpful critic, full of meat; and developed Archbishop Richard Chevenix Trench’s “Study of Words” into a veritable fascination. It has interested me greatly in my later life to note the fact that Trench still holds his own. He is still read. He was one of the founders of the Oxford Dictionary. Paley and Lord Kames are much less in evidence in the world of modern scholarship, and Taine is no longer a favorite appraiser of English literature in spite of his many masterful merits.

We had a great deal of decorous fun in Dr. Purnell’s class room, under Athenaean hall, but the real enjoyment was in Professor Mackey’s in the West Wing. Dr. Mackey (he was a Ph. D.) never grew tired of his subject, or of us. He was so interested himself that he brought old Greece and Rome clearly before us. More powerful scholastic lenses are now focused upon those civilizations than he was able to employ, and distinctions and differences are now brought out that he did not acquaint us with, but he adroitly humanized the old paganism for us. Archaeology he had little of; the latter-day English, German, French, and Italian scholars have gone far beyond him; yet in his way he illuminated that whole ancient age so that we could see it and understand it. He appreciated the fact that even college boys, who, with consummate skill, fight off attacks upon their ignorance, could be brought to enjoy everyday realities. Nothing delighted him more than to dwell upon such a passage as that in Virgil’s “Georgics,” referring to a cow, “which as she walks, sweeps her footprints with the point of her tail.” We could see cows ourselves, in the hedged pastures around Newark, and they, no doubt, were doing what Virgil’s cow had done some eighteen hundred years before. His Caesar lived for us, too—which reminds me of a little tale told of the poet Charles Algernon Swinburne, who, at Eton, construed “De Bello Gallico” as “concerning a Frenchman’s stomach.”

So we had good times in Professor Mackey’s room and were sorry when a session ended. When a son was born to him, we had the impudence to send to his home in
Quality Row, a box packed with toys and books on the classics, and the further impudence to suggest that he should name the boy "Plato." Next day, in class, we expected a rebuke, but received instead, his thanks, and a most eloquent talk on the realities of life as set forth by the grand old writers, especially Plato. But the boy was called Willie.

Professor William McCaulley Jeffries, who came to the college in the fall of 1873, was a man of another mould. He was a young Episcopal clergyman, lately from a swell school on the Hudson, and was the only beardless man in the faculty. Dr. Wolf wore a mustache; most of the other professors had chin whiskers or side whiskers or both, well cropped and orderly—Purnell, Mackey, Porter, even the young, shy, and agreeable Professor O. B. Super, who taught German and French. But Professor Jeffries was clean-shaven. He was little and ruddy and handsome and dapper and right out of the bandbox. He had a liking for shiny silk hats, and was a model to be envied—a new type at Delaware. His jet black hair was just as shiny as his hat, and his Anglican polish quite as smooth as hat or hair. At the same time, he was most competent, as Chancellor Curtis, the best Latin and Greek scholar in the college, will testify.

It so happened that I had been carried away by my desire to establish a monthly sheet called the Delaware College Advance. Though Ned Vollandigham had been graduated in 1873, and was teaching, he backed me up in the enterprise, and we put The Advance through. Others co-operated. We thought well of our work. Professor Jeffries stopped me in the Linden walk one morning, and began to speak of an article of mine in The Advance. As I thought very highly of the article myself, I was quite ready to be praised for it, especially by Professor Jeffries.

"I read it all," said he; "I read it twice—yes, actually twice over; but what on earth were you driving at? What does it mean?"

And, with a sarcastic cut in his look, and a con-
temptuous switch of his long black coat-tails, he darted off.

Years afterwards, I met Professor Jeffries—a changed man. He had become, in a hard-boiled world, delightfully humanized. He had abandoned sarcasm and gone in for loving kindness. He had lived long in Texas, and had lost his academic air among honest cow-punchers. I understood the transformation, for I too was to have the academic conceit knocked out of me; or, at least, much mitigated, when I got out into the world.

In spite of such slurs, The Advance continued to be my hobby. We exchanged with all the other college papers, which were read with profit. They widened our horizon. They gave us a good idea of what was going on elsewhere and made us all the more anxious to hold up our end. But The Advance soon ate up what little money we had to start with, and we had to have more funds. We asked Dr. Purnell if he would permit us to give a play in the Oratory, and if he would supervise its production. He selected "The Rivals" as brought out ninety-nine years before by Richard Brinsley Sheridan at the Covent Garden in London.

Now since I have become a devotee of Jane Austen's novels, our Newark has reminded me quite a little of Highbury in "Emma." We may not have had our Miss Woodhouse exactly; but we seemed to have our Jane Fairfax and Frank Churchill. We had our Eltons, Knightleys and Perrys, and we certainly had our Miss Bates, as well as a polite, colonial and very human atmosphere in keeping with these characters. At any rate it was an old-fashioned Highbury atmosphere, breathing kindness to such students as behaved themselves and conformed to social usage. We had at Newark, besides the merry younger set, some "college widows," left over by Old College and the cruel Civil War that had robbed them of their natural mates; and not a few of these were "characters," fit to put into a book. My friend Vallandigham, who knew them better than anybody else, thought of doing it, but he had not the heart to make copy out of
his friends, and he put aside the temptation. He was too scrupulous to use them as "originals," even under fictitious names.

Well, when we got up "The Rivals" for the benefit of The Advance, our Highbury people came to our aid, not only buying tickets but decorating the Oratory for us. They always made a festive occasion of it when they decorated the Oratory with ropes and wreaths of laurel and crowsfoot on Athenaean and Delta Phi anniversary celebrations and at Commencement time. And now the ladies of the leading families had old trunks brought down from the attics—the Hamels especially—and rummaged out for us the necessary costumes, some of which had been worn by their own folks in the Revolutionary period.

Dr. Purnell assigned the parts. The robust, somewhat rotund, George William Marshall was Sir Anthony Absolute; John Webster Dorsey was Captain Jack Absolute; Walter F. C. Golt was Bob Acres; William Richardson Martin was Faulkland and I was Sir Lucius O'Trigger. Charles Minot Curtis and John Martin were in the cast. Mary F. R. Churchman was Mrs. Malaprop, with her "allegory on the banks of the Nile"; Harriette Hurd Curtis was Lydia Languish; Elizabeth Shapleigh Blandy was Julia and Elizabeth Harwood Purnell and Ella Mackey took minor parts.

Dr. Purnell drilled us for weeks. We all worked long and hard and happily, and those in the cast put in more time on Sheridan than on their studies. Thus, on the day before the evening of the performance, we were ready for Dr. Purnell's dress rehearsal in the Oratory, where a spacious stage then occupied the whole north end of that auditorium, with its many rows of pew-like benches.

And now for an incident, in which I was unexpectedly taken down a peg or two. After the rehearsal I accompanied Miss Churchman and Miss Purnell to the President's house, at the foot of the campus. They were to leave off their costumes there and don their street clothes. I waited in the living room, so that, when Miss
Churchman was ready, I could walk with her to the Academy where she lived. Alone in the living room I could not help hearing the lively talk going on in the Purnell dining room, where the President was holding forth over the roast. He was giving the charming, soft-voiced Mrs. Purnell and the whole company an account of the rehearsal. He was much pleased. Marshall, said he, had real talent as an actor. That winsome, soft voice of his had lent itself surprisingly well to the part, and he had developed into a good-enough Sir Anthony. Dorsey, too—Dorsey, the punster; yes, Dorsey’s Captain Absolute was quite adequate. As for Golt, nature had cut him out for a Bob Acres—slim, trim, a bit comical, the very hesitation in his utterance helped to make him carry through his part.

About this time it dawned upon me that I was in danger of hearing something about myself that had better be left unheard. Dr. Purnell gave high praise to Miss Churchman’s Mrs. Malaprop as quite good enough for the professional stage, and I was on edge to have Mrs. Malaprop come down so that I could hurry away with her. But she tarried above stairs, and the talk continued.

“How about Lydia and Julia?” asked Mrs. Purnell.

“Fine,” said the President—“just as I knew they would be.”

“And Sir Lucius O’Trigger?”

Dr. Purnell’s laugh rang out.

“Well, you know,” said he, “Morgan takes that part, and Morgan is a little fighting cock-sparrow anyhow!”

So true it is that listeners never hear any good of themselves. I was mad clear through, and a few minutes later took it out on Mrs. Malaprop, as we walked down the street. Nevertheless, she had the kindness to marry me in 1879, and we have been man and wife for fifty-five years.

The Oratory was packed on the night of the performance, and we raised enough money to keep The Advance going. Of those who took part, stocky, sturdy,
smiling Billy Martin from Snow Hill, distinguished himself as judge in the First Maryland District, my dear and dignified friend Curtis grew up to be Chancellor of Delaware; Golt developed into a leading Indianapolis banker; the genial Webster Dorsey, inveterate punster and valedictorian of our class, went West as far as he could go, and, until his death a few years since, was at the head of a San Francisco law firm; and good John Martin, pay director in the United States Navy, participant in the Battle of Manila, reached the rank of Commodore. Dr. Marshall's fine record in the medical world, and in the public service in Delaware, is well known. He married Mary Donnel. Like the sturdy, hard-studying, faithful Tom Davis, who married Miss Clara Springer, he was long a Trustee. Others of my time and a little later became trustees—Marshall, Charles M. Curtis, Charles B. Evans, J. Harvey Whiteman and Samuel Messick. Miss Curtis married Delaware Clark, and Miss Blandy Alexander Fletcher Williamson, who won success as a marine adjuster in Philadelphia, dying in 1933.

My best friend of all, noblest of men, Ned Vallandigham, left the newspaper field, where he had made his mark, and for many years was professor of English literature and political economy in the college. His cousin Charlie Vallandigham, son of the celebrated Clement L., was a student in my time. He had many friends in Delaware, being good-natured and fond of fun. He was ambitious to develop his high oratorical powers, and by and by entered public life. He certainly had a lot of the old fire about him when he repeated a Patrick Henry, or Daniel Webster piece. He served in the Ohio Legislature, but was not enough of a statesman to go higher.

This brings me to other student memories: Bob Todd of Snow Hill—Bob of the beaming countenance—who loved euchre and all the girls. Bob graced Newark with his presence till he tore himself away to go to Princeton. John Moore, all suavity, all business, all politics, ambitious to go to Congress, was another Snow Hill character of my time.
Another student character was Morris Cloak, of Smyrna, small, urbane, dressy, a bit superior in his manner, who made a doctor of himself and died all too early. He was a bit odd. Sainte-Beuve, when he fought a duel in the rain, held an umbrella over himself. I think Cloak would have done the same.

All too early, likewise, died Lewis Cass Vandegrift of the Port Penn and Old Drawyers neighborhood. Few better men have come out of Delaware College—none better, indeed. He was of the substantial mould, with high aspirations. He took his law degree at Harvard, and at the Wilmington bar soon gave evidence of his sterling qualities. No doubt, had he lived, he would have distinguished himself, realizing the promise given by him while with us at Delaware.

Then there was the good-hearted Septimus Jay of Aberdeen, Maryland. Who could forget “Sep” Jay, or Harry Colvin of Baltimore, or the sterling Frank Springer who pegged away at it so hard, burning the midnight oil, in order that he might become a doctor? Again there was J. Newton Huston, another hard plodding student, who had no patience, as Vallandigham and I had, for such reprobates as Sir John Falstaff and Sir Toby Belch. In Dr. Purnell’s class room once, the dignified Huston, aiming for the ministry, took me to task for using the phrase “too thin” and the word “stuff.” He thought me flippant. Dr. Purnell smiled a memorable smile when I demonstrated that both expressions were right out of Shakespeare, though Huston shook his serious head. He was just as critical in the debates in Athenaean hall, held every Saturday morning during term time.

This brings me to the two outstanding secret fraternal societies, almost as old as the college itself—the Athenaean and Delta Phi. They were a great power at that time and great was their rivalry. The Athenaean Society was founded Dec. 18, 1834 and incorporated by the Delaware Legislature Feb. 11, 1881. The Delta Phi was incorporated January 22, 1835, renewing its charter in 1871 and 1895. Each society owned an excellent
library of some 1500 selected books. Many a solitary hour I spent among the Athenaean books. I borrowed for Vallandigham such as he wished to read, and he in turn brought me desired volumes from the Delta Phi shelves. But most of the students profited from the debates. They expected to be lawyers or ministers or public men of some sort, and were eager to acquire the knack of thinking quickly on their feet. The experience gained in the society halls, where strict parliamentary rules were enforced, was a downright help to many of them. The annual celebrations of the two societies at Commencement time rivaled the general exercises in the Oratory.

There was a marked difference between the Eastern Shore boys and those from the nearby Pennsylvania counties. The down-county lads were all smiles. I liked to see their faces light up. The Pocomoke natives, like Austin Merrill, and even those from around Baltimore, seemed to have a sunnier outlook than the Chester county and upper New Castle county men, who, as a rule, were older, less given to euchre, society pins, watch fobs and sporty rattan canes, and more inclined to cut society and grind away at the text books. They scorned "ponies," and were rarely seen at the Curtises, or Springers or on the steps of the ever-open, hospitable, delightful Watson Evans house, now Purnell Hall. Somehow the down-country gray matter seemed to be nearer the surface, but with the upcounty students it was more deeply embedded and harder to stimulate.

Our stamping ground took in Iron Hill on the South and the "Ticking Tombstone" on the north. What a delight was the beautiful and romantic White Clay, past the Spa, past Tweed's, past Lovers' Retreat, all the way up to the old Baptist Church and graveyard. Here was the "Ticking Tomb," with its gray, flat stone. From this tomb came a ticking sound as from a grandfather's clock. Mortal time was ticking itself off into eternity—for the benefit of good old John Evans, died in 1738, who reposed below. He was the son of John of Radnorshire, Wales, who bought 400 acres in London-Britain township. The
graveyard was filled with Evanses of pioneering stock, some of them Revolutionary heroes. We used to put our ears down on the slab of sandstone, and sure enough heard the same strange whispering sounds that had been heard for a hundred years. Marshall, of Milford, our Sir Anthony Absolute, did this once, and leaping to his feet, cried "It ticks! it ticks! Boys, I heard it tick." That instant his animated expression changed into a sheepish grin. There by his side stood a wag and in the wag's hand was a watch, which he had furtively held to Marshall's ear. As a matter of disillusionizing fact, it was dripping water in the tomb that caused the "tick."

One glorious moonlight night a party of us, well supplied, as we thought, with cheese and crackers, left the college for a walk up the White Clay, and so on, next morning, to Kennett Square, where we proposed to pay our respects to Bayard Taylor. To us—Vallandigham, Heisler and the others—he was a great literary character. We had read his translation of "Faust," his "Story of Kennett," his poems and some of his books of travel. We expected him to receive us, if not dine us and lodge us at his beautiful home on the outskirts of Kennett. We built a fire along the White Clay Creek road, toasted our cheese, talked Shelley and Keats and read "The Culprit Fay." Fairies danced for us on the moon-flecked road. We slept among the rocks. We reached Kennett next day, and were given something of a set-back when we learned that Bayard Taylor had gone to Philadelphia to spend the day. But he would be back by the five o'clock train, it was said. So we scraped up enough dimes to buy more crackers and cheese, and waited.

Mr. Taylor was surprised, when he stepped off the train, to see a dozen admiring college boys who had tramped so far to greet him. Such pilgrimages were rare. He was cordial and complaisant and shook hands all around. But he did not invite us to Cedarcroft. Instead, he beat a graceful retreat to his carriage by the railroad platform, and waved us farewell.

We were not in a situation to fare so very well—
moneyless, twenty miles from home, leg weary, and night coming on. Moreover, we were hungry.

But there was only one thing to do—strike out for Newark. And that was what we did, singing as we went. We took the Mermaid road; and by dark were over the line in Delaware. It was so dusty and warm that we were glad to stop at a well and water trough by the wayside and refresh ourselves. At hand was a fine old farmhouse, in a sycamore grove, lit at the top by the rising moon, and when the farmer came out we asked him to let us sleep in his barn. He was a kind old Quaker, and when we promised him that we would not smoke in the barn, and so not endanger it from fire, he let us seek the hay.

At daybreak, or a little after, we were up and out and laving ourselves at the well. The Quaker joined us.

"So Bayard didn't even feed you," he said, "—well, well! And I expect you could put away a lot of ham and eggs, in consequence. Bayard, as a traveler, ought to know how good they go—ham and eggs and flapjacks. I bet he does!"

He seemed to be teasing us, especially as the mouth-watering fragrance of frying ham was that moment coming from the house.

We thanked him, picked up our sticks, and started down the Mermaid road.

"Hold on!" he cried. "Not so fast! Do you think I would let you go without your breakfast? Come into the kitchen, boys—the whole table is spread for you."

And so it was! And such a feast as it was—ham, eggs, pancakes, rolls, butter, cream, coffee! Rarely has a good Samaritan done a better turn than the dear old Quaker of Mermaid road, backed up by his kind-hearted wife, did for us on that Sunday morning homeward bound from Kennett. We ate till we had our fill; and, leaving behind us a thousand thanks, merrily struck out for Newark.

And with this I end my sketch of sunny days at dear old Delaware.