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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Old-Time Remedies; They Were 'Different'

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A FORMER Kings County man, Dan McLean, writes from North Vancouver with some old fashioned remedies, to which I referred before going on vacation. Here are some of the most interesting ones.

"In those olden, fearful days of throat ailments, one remedy called for gargling with one's own urine."

To kill a cold in the snuffle stage, one scraped a turnip with the spoon and ate the pulp before retiring.

"For measles, ah here we go for a kill or cure. Boil the leaves of burdock and drink the juice. Oh boy, oh boy, what a taste. But that was apple jack compared to steeped sheep dung, taken without cream and sugar."

I WAS reading a part of Mr. McLean's letter to George Dixon and Mrs. Dixon, Clyde River - she writes "Ellen's Diary" in this paper, and Mr. Dixon recalls that the remedy was used for bringing out the measles when they didn't come out naturally.

I believe it was Mr. Dixon who recalled that a person had come a considerable distance long ago to their place for some sheep manure, to bring the measles out on a sufferer. And it worked, too. It saved the person's life, it was believed at the time.

And, he told me, he had often seen the urine treatment used to treat cuts on horses' feet, and it worked too, he assured me.

Personal Experience With Measles

A PERSONAL experience with measles may be interesting. The Mt. Allison University track team was going to Acadia at Wolfville for a Maritime Intercollegiate championship meet, and I had a bothersome pain in a back muscle which handicapped me considerably in throwing the hammer, one of the events in which I was to compete.

I decided to take a hot shower and increase the heat gradually until it was as hot as a person could possibly bear. My idea, of course, was to steam the pain out.

"German measles" were on the campus at the time and they called for immediate transfer to the isolation hospital, although nobody appeared to be seriously ill with them. Imagine my surprise when I walked out of the hot shower to see in the mirror that a rash had come out all over my body.

THEN I really was worried. If the University people saw it, I feared I would be hospitalized immediately. A quick bit of thinking brought the decision to go back and take a cold shower.

I figured if heat would bring the measles out, cold would drive them in, and my one thought was to get to the track meet in Wolfville. Well the plan worked and I got away

with it, though I've often thought since then of the chance I took, if the rash that showed really was the measles.

Back to Mr. McLean's letter - "For warts cut a piece from a spud for each wart, rub on, then say a few words to God, place the pieces of spuds under the bed(?) and the warts will disappear."

For sore eyes, use a poultice of hot tea leaves when retiring.

Parboiled Eggs For Heart Ailment

FOR HEART cases, there was a diet of parboiled eggs fried in butter, and not much else for a month or so.

Here's a cure for "a wild barefooted boy with a busted toe. Get a clean rag, put a blob of axle grease on it, apply to the open wound and turn the boy loose. Penicillin has nothing on this."

Here's a cruel one, "for a bad slash of an axe, first pour salt into the open wound."

For a twinge in the back, (a sore back) use "hot and cold packs. Apply until the skin is as red as a boiled lobster, always end with the cold pack."

To cleanse an ugly sore, use a poultice of molasses and strong fig tobacco.

For a strained wrist, sew on a piece of eel skin.

Mr. McLean has an explanation for the old cure of frightening a person to cure the hiccups. "There's a cure in fright", he says "for disease to start with, was believed to be caused by evil spirits, hence the saying "it scared the devil out of him".

Here's A Really Weird Yarn

I'VE DELETED the name but Mr. Maclean tells me "a lady from Red Hill, in Kings County removed a bit of steel from a sailor's eye when I was a boy. She sat him at the kitchen table, then took a glass of water into her bedroom to pray. Suddenly the sailor grasped his face in pain, then he was eased, as she came out and showed him in the glass the speck of steel that had been in his eye.

"On her next confession she told her priest, who warned 'never do that again, if you do, I will not give you forgiveness'."

If the story sounds highly improbable to you, it does to me too but, apparently, it was one of the folk tales of the day. As Mr. McLean observes "a bit of man's psychic powers that survived the suffering of the Irish druids."

MR. MCLEAN, I find, is a native of St. Margaret's. He left home in 1911, was a contractor in Chicago and is now retired. He refers to Vancouver as "The Pensioners Paradise". He tells me that Hugh MacDougall, St. Mary's Road sends him "Across the Island" columns.

His letter also told me that the former Islanders were having a picnic August 4th in Stanley Park.

I have a number of other home remedies, but they'll come in a future column. There are some other things I want to talk about this week.

Strait Swim Feat Is Recalled

IT'S A long time since the Cape Tormentine - Borden swim, but I haven't had a column since and some comment is appropriate. First of all I want to agree with my friend Norman MacDonald, Summerside when he suggested that perhaps the feats of Evelyn Henry and Mrs. Dorothy Gallant Peters, Summerside were more impressive than we had thought at the time. I hope Evelyn will forgive me for quoting her, but I know that she was terribly disappointed when all of the Island swimmers allowed themselves to be pulled from the water so early. She swam the distance just for fun, July 15, 1951, and just couldn't understand anyone quitting when there was \$500 awaiting them at Borden. She was talking about the second place prize behind the Quebec swimmer LaCoursiere.

I visited with Evelyn - she is now Mrs. Doug Brown of North Queensland, Australia now at her mother's home in Southport the day after the swim and to say she was disappointed was putting it mildly. Several of the swimmers, including LaCoursiere, complained of the tides that held them motionless for an hour or more, and of the long distance they had to swim. Evelyn encountered the same thing.

HER FATHER, the late Stewart Henry, told her she was making no progress after she had battled the tides for more than an hour, but she stuck to it for several hours until she was making progress again. And the man who was accompanying them in a motor boat - I think it was George Ceretti of Borden - told her she had swam at least 15 miles, though the distance straight across is only nine.

She also recalled for me that the water was so rough on the last part of the swim that she feared she would be dashed against the Borden dock, as she was approaching to touch it to complete the effort. So there was rough water and strong tides on that occasion too.

And I recall that Stewart said at the time she had been off Seacow Head for a long time, or words to that effect. Evelyn's time was eight hours, 53 minutes, as I recall, which was beaten this time only by LaCoursiere.

MANY OF the people I met while on vacation, and at the livestock show here last week asked for a ghost story column soon, and it's coming. If not next week, it will appear in a few weeks time. I have some really good yarns, but I'd appreciate hearing from somebody who could tell me where I can find some others.