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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Columnist Collects Stories In Hospital

By NEIL A. MATHESON

I CHECKED out of the hospital Monday afternoon and have been taking it easy for the most part.

One of the chaps I forgot to mention last week is Murray Green who returned to his home in Bangor on Sunday, after an operation for a ruptured spleen. He received the injury in a warm up for a hockey match in the Morell rink.

Murray was carrying a puck down the ice – “I had my head down, he explained, and “the other chap was skating toward me, also with his head down”. The result was a collision of the pair at full speed, the other chap struck Murray with his head and shoulder and caused the damage. Had Green had his stomach muscles tightened for the shock it would likely have been different.

I asked Murray, a young high school student, what did it feel like when he received the injury. “It’s just like getting the wind knocked out of you, except that the wind-knocking sensation is temporary although it’s severe for a few seconds. This time the sensation continued, the distress did not disappear as it does when one merely has his wind knocked out.”

The likable high school student lost some three weeks from his studies. “I’ll have to hit the books when I get home”, was his observation shortly before leaving the hospital.

Temperature Is High

THE NURSE who took Mel Bell’s temperature last Saturday must have been more than a little surprised when she looked at the thermometer; the mercury was hitting the top of the instrument. The reading was just as high as it will go and that, I believe, is just over 106.

When I asked the mischievous Desable man what he had done, I found he had touched the mercury end of the instrument to the lighted end of his cigarette.

MALCOLM STEWART is a lad whose broad Scotch accent fits into his Dundas background. I asked him one night to ask the head nurse to give me some frosts to kill the pain in an ear that had developed an infection. When he returned Malcolm spilled about 50 words of gaelic into the room, then he said the nurse would be along soon.

Back a few years ago Malcolm was helping Harold Taylor get his big show team ready for the ring. Stewart was spouting gaelic to nobody in particular as he worked.

A week or two later a carload of people were looking for Harold’s place in Dundas. They told a neighbor “he has a hired man who speaks Dutch”. It was an insult to the gaelic, but Malcolm got a kick out of it.

Mr. X Won That Round

A FORMER orderly who liked a bit of fun, got bested several years ago when he tangled with patient who was always trying to put something over on him. Mr. X, as I’ll

call the man, was a heart case, he died about a year following this incident. The orderly had gotten the best of the deal up to a certain afternoon when Mr. X wanted him to prepare a bath and let him soak in the tub for a half-hour or so.

The orderly had a couple of patients to take down to X-ray that afternoon, so he told Mr. X he'd look in on him to see how he was doing after he had returned with each patient.

First time the orderly looked, Mr. X was fine, he was really enjoying himself in the tub. Next time, though, the orderly got a real scare. Mr. X was slumped down in the tub, his nose and mouth were under water and there was not the sign of even a tiny bubble of air.

"I immediately pulled out the drain plug and tried to tug the man up high enough in the tub so I could leave him and run for help – Mr. X was so heavy it was impossible for one man to lift him.

"When I was just about ready to run for help," the orderly told me, "the man opened his eyes and laughed in my face. He won that round."

The orderly told me he knew he had been wrong, even though the affair of the man in the bath tub had not resulted in a fatality.

Lest someone may think it's all fun and games at the hospital, nothing could be farther from the truth. The nurses and their licensed assistants do their work with professional assurance, and with all the care and attention they can bring to their task. Nothing is left undone to treat each patient as effectively as is humanly possible.

The Immaculate Mr. Gordon

THE ORDERLIES are under the command of John Gordon, the handsome and immaculate man who always looks as though he had just donned his white trousers and equally white shirt. How he, and the other men manage to keep their sparkling white clothes spotless through a busy day, is really something to think about.

Alfred MacLeod is the man who was with me the most, I thanked him warmly as I left, for his kind care and attention.

The last comment on the hospital staff is that I never saw even a trace of a frown on a face during the two and one-half weeks I was there.

My niece, Jean MacLeod (Mrs. Gordon), Charlottetown came in just before I left. She had an operation next day. Charlie Morrison, Flat River said hello to me Monday morning. Doris MacLeod, Charlottetown and Mrs. Heber MacPlail, Cornwall are others I met during the last few days. Howard MacKinnon, of the Research Station came in for an operation on Monday.

I met only a few of the fourth floor patients during the last four or five days. A touch of the flu, along with an ear that kicked up a lot of pain, and required considerable treatment, curtailed my usual visiting and story-telling role.

His Favorite Meal

WHAT WOULD you like for your first meal after an operation removed the need for a special diet? I asked the question of George DesRoches, Bunbury who shared our semi-private room over Sunday night – he had his operation Monday.

I was trying to keep his mind off the operation for the morning as I talked with him Sunday night. Your answer might be different, or it might not. Mr. DesRoche's dream meal when he gets out of hospital is salt-mackerel and potatoes. You can keep your steak, he observed.