

THE OPERATION

Frank D. Goatcher in "The Fragment".

"My boy, your stomach is in a chronic condition which can only be relieved by an operation for gallstones." With these words Dr. Jones started me on one of the greatest experiences in my very checkered career.

For some time past I had been troubled with severe pain in the northern regions of the stomach, which in my ignorance I called acute indigestion, and of late, my condition becoming worse, I called in the family physician with the above result.

"You had better come down to the hospital in the morning; I will arrange about getting a bed for you, and we will get the operation over with as soon as possible," and with these parting words of cheer, Dr. Jones hurried out of the door. No time for me to say that I was not yet prepared to undergo an operation; I was not questioned on the matter at all; the dear, kind-hearted doctor would arrange all the details for me, and the only thing which remained to be done was for me to present myself at the hospital in the morning.

Therefore, the next morning found me at the door of the hospital feeling like the fatted calf must have felt, and inwardly praying that I should be refused admittance, but the welcome expression on the face of the Sister who admitted me quickly dispelled any such hope.

"Private," she queried; "No," I replied, blushing. "I was really a Lance-Corporal, but please don't feel that you have insulted me, I can assure you that many people have made the same mistake. She appeared confused, and then asked, "Are you going into the Public Ward, or are you a private patient?" I said "Oh, please put me into the public ward, I always seem to thrive better on the smell of ether."

After all particulars had been taken, I was duly entered as Bed number three, in ward thirteen. I never did like the number 13 anyway.

Arrived at the ward, I heard one man say it was a crime for anyone as healthy as I did to come into a ward full of sick people, and I blushed with shame.

A card was placed at the foot of my bed giving particulars as to my name, age, religion, and the complaint from which I was suffering, and I was told to strip off and come into the bathroom. I managed to survive the embarrassing ordeal of undressing while bewitching nurses passed to and fro, and then took my bath with the assistance of the day orderly.

I felt very sad at the sight of so many fellows all suffering in various ways, and made up my mind to be as quiet as possible and not disturb any poor fellow who might be desirous of sleep, but apparently my bedfellows did not share my considerate feelings.

One fellow produced a mouth-organ and started to play "Show me the way to go home," whilst a Scotchman with very broad accent was murdering "Annie Laurie" at the top of his voice. Whatever this chap had been admitted for was certainly not lung trouble.

Another man shouted across at me, "What are you in with, buddy?" to which I replied, "Ingrowing toenails." He said "Well that's a new one," and then asked, "Who's doing your operation, brother?"

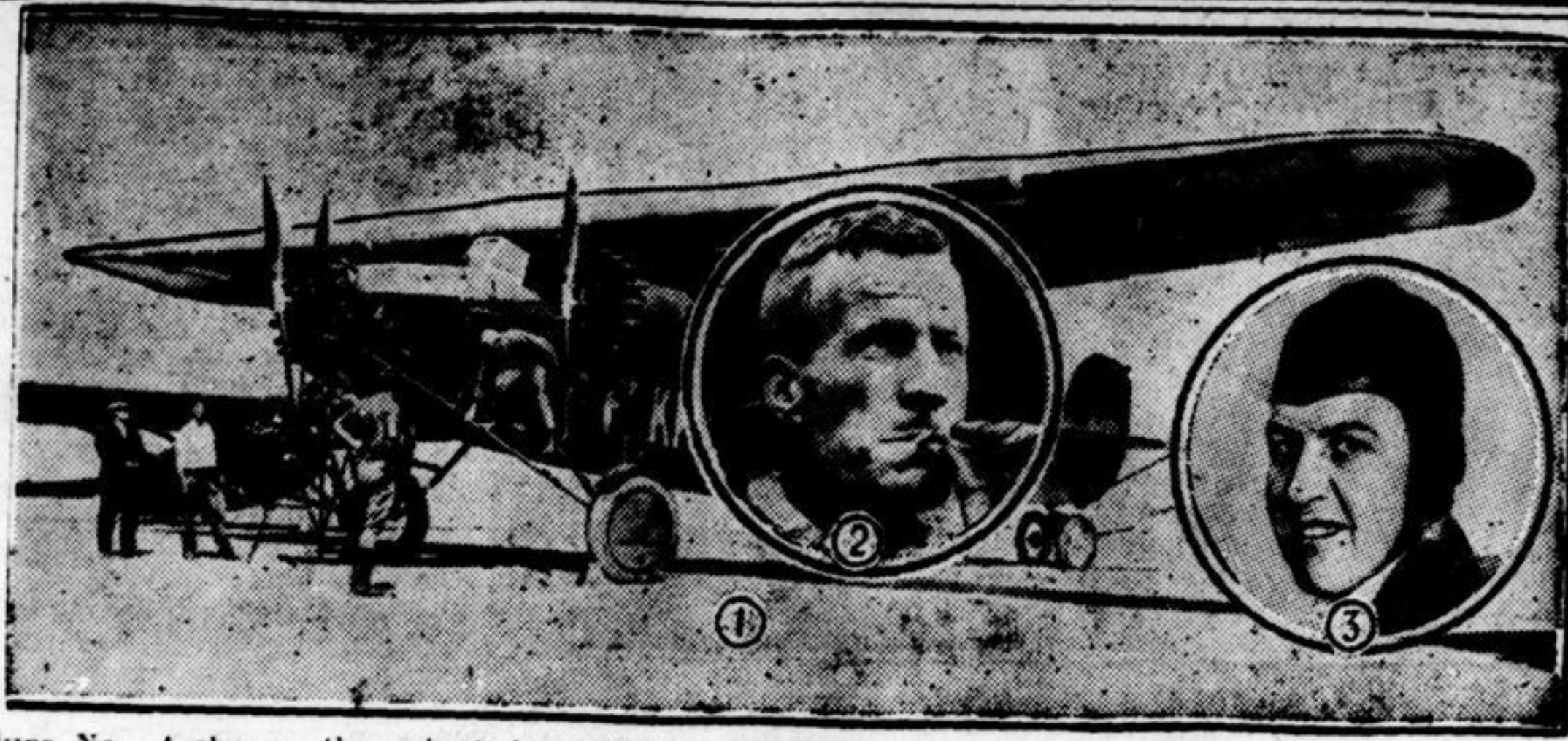
I professed my ignorance of this question, whereupon a man with his arm in a sling came and read the card at the foot of my bed. The fellow in the next bed to mine said "I hope you don't get Smith for your doctor," and the chap who was reading the card then announced that it was Dr. Smith, and they had me down for an operation for gall-stones. I then remarked that perhaps the doctor thought the ingrowing toenails were caused by my stomach condition and I nearly passed away at the weary look the fellow in the next bed gave me. He said "You sure are in tough luck, old man, to have that old butcher work on you."

A cold shiver ran up my spine as I enquired the reason for Dr. Smith being called "an old butcher" and I was told that his last two cases had died as a result of his being so absent-minded, I should like to have made further enquiries about Dr. Smith, but the arrival of the hospital barber cut short any further conversation.

Regarding the hospital barber, I have often wondered what other fellows did with their safety razor blades when they are through with them, but now I know. They give them to the barbers at the hospital.

Another thing I cannot understand is why it should always be necessary to remove every particle of hirsute adornment from the anatomy before an operation can be performed. As my companion in the next bed remarked, "They even have to shave you before you can have an operation for ingrowing toenails, ain't it the limit?" and I was forced to agree with him.

The barber having completed his function, I was told to try and get a little sleep as I would be the first "to go up" in the morning, but somehow sleep would not come to me. I thought continually of "the old butcher," and I kept wondering what barbarous atrocities he had been guilty of to have earned such a terrible cognomen. Then by a strange coincidence every man in the ward seemed to be suddenly reminded of the most gruesome experiences that surely any person ever heard of, and it was remarkable how many tragic circumstances were connected with Dr. Smith.



Picture No. 1 shows the giant tri-motored Fokker monoplane, Southern Cross, in which Capt. Charles Kingsford-Smith, Australian aviator, No. 2, announces he will start shortly in a flight from San Francisco to the Antipodes. Two stops will be made, at Hawaii and New Guinea. Capt. Charles Ulm, No. 3, will accompany him, it is said. He is also an Australian.

One fellow recalled the "Bom-bunk" in the end bed whom Dr. Smith had operated on for appendicitis, and how after the operation the man still complained of feeling considerable pain in that region, and after his wound was reopened, it was discovered that the forgetful doctor had left one of his rubber gloves in the poor fellow's stomach.

Another chap mentioned that the last patient of Dr. Smith's who died was a fellow with stomach ulcers who felt so much worse two weeks after the operation that a second one was found necessary from which he never recovered. It was later proved that death was caused from the infection produced by a pair of scissors inadvertently sewn up in the victim by Dr. Smith.

The most unfortunate feature about these mistakes of the doctor was that the poor victim not only had to suffer additional pain, but was also compelled to pay the expenses of the second operation, and in some cases had even been obliged to pay with his life.

I failed to get one crumb of comfort out of these distressing stories of Dr. Smith, and if my clothes had not been taken away from me, should have skipped out right there and then, but the only garment I possessed at the time was one the hospital authorities humorously called a night-shirt, but which reminded me more of the little woollen vests worn by children, which fitted around my neck like a tie.

The arrival of supper stilled my quaking thoughts for the moment, but my appetite seemed to have deserted me, and the fellow in the next bed obligingly helped me out with my meal.

After supper a book was brought me to sign a statement to the effect that I willingly consented to having the operation performed, and also any future carvings which Dr. Smith might consider necessary. I shuddered violently as I signed on the dotted line, and I seriously considered putting in an amendment which would debar Dr. Smith from taking any active part in the proceedings. Later reflection, however, showed me the folly of this, as once I was thoroughly subdued under the ether, who knows what spiteful vengeance the doctor might not have wrought on me for such an insult to his surgical ability.

I might here remark that Dr. Smith's surgical qualifications were never questioned (he could have carved six apples amongst seven schoolboys and given general satisfaction) but his faulty memory more than offset the value of any surgical knowledge he possessed.

Shortly after this I must have dozed off for a while, as I can distinctly remember being at a barbecue down South, and asking the cook to serve me a nice juicy piece of sirloin steak, but when he turned his head to see who had made the request, his resemblance to Dr. Smith was so startling that I awoke in a hurry with a cold shiver running up and down my spine.

A solemn group were standing round my bed, and the nurse informed me that one of the gentlemen present was a lawyer who had brought his stenographer with him to take down my last will and testament just in case the operation should not be a success, though I was assured that I stood a fifty-fifty chance. The writing of the will was a very brief affair (my most valuable possession being a wooden leg which in the event of my death I left to Dr. Smith) and this being duly witnessed by one of the patients, my guests took their departure.

From then on sleep was an utter impossibility. My mind was tortured by all sorts of premonitions, and I was afraid to doze off again, for fear I should awake to find the undertaker prepared to take my measure.

The long, long night of waiting finally came to a close, and the day orderly was dispatched to find an ambulance to convey me to the operating room. I had a sudden combination of delirium tremens when they laid me out on the stretcher, which was not helped any by hearing one of the patients shout, "If they run out of ether, buddy, don't let them use a hammer."

I distinctly recall being laid on the operating table, my wrists fastened to the sides, and a doctor standing over with some sort of a pad in his hand. He asked me if I liked the smell of "eau de cologne" and my reply being in the affirmative, he requested me to take a real good sniff as it would prepare me for what was still to come. Oh boy, don't ask me what happened after that. I can just remember pushing a wheelbarrow along a plank, fifteen stories above the ground, when the wheel ran off the edge, and try as I would I could not leave go of the handles, and I dropped with it.

It doesn't take long to drop fifteen stories, and with only a concrete floor to land on, one may be excused for having a rather hazy memory of what happened next.

When I awoke, feeling terribly sick, I at first thought somebody had mistaken my stomach for a football and was busy lacing me up as tight as possible, but I was recalled to my senses by hearing a buzz of conversation near me, of which I seemed to be the chief topic.

"The nurse said his language was terrible," was the first remark which reached my ears, and a man replied, "Yes, she will have it in for him now after the way he called her everything."

Then the fellow in the next bed said he wondered whether Dr. Smith had left anything in the poor devil, to which another chap replied that it was almost certain that he had, even if it was only a small safety-pin, as these stomach cases which took such a long time were always having further trouble and it was only to be expected that a doctor who was notoriously absent minded like Smith would be sure to forget something.

I don't know how I should have

survived any further conversation of this nature, but fortunately a commotion in the corridor outside took the attention of everybody and I was left alone with my thoughts. But not for long, as the commotion proved to be caused by Dr. Smith, who was saying to the nurse, "I am sure it must be in here somewhere, as I distinctly remember having it in my hand just before we went up to the operating room with that gallstones case."

Mention of the gall-stones case evidently recalled him to my bed, for he came right over and, seeing that I was awake, enquired how I was feeling.

I told him I could never remember feeling so tough before in my life, to which he replied that it was only natural that for a few days I should feel terribly cramped in the stomach but it would soon pass off.

He then resumed his conversation with the nurse and they both began a further search of the ward which culminated in their approaching my bed again and Dr. Smith remarked that it must certainly be around here somewhere, I have a feeling that it is not far away.

Recalling his absent-minded propensities, my heart came into my mouth as I enquired what the doctor had lost, but when he told me that he distinctly recalled having it in his hand before the operation, but now his umbrella had completely disappeared, I think I may be excused for not remembering any more.

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Bentnick Council

On May 1, 1928 there was a special meeting of Council to arrange for the appointing of a new Road Superintendent, owing to the resignation of Fred J. Monk.

Magwood—Hopkins: That Clerk be authorized to advertise for a Road Superintendent and that applications be received by him until Saturday, the 12th day of May. Duties to commence on appointment May 14.—Carried.

Bailey—McCaslin: That in consideration of regular scale of wages, leave be granted to amend By-law No. 120 with the following amendments:

Councillors, attending meetings and com. work, day, \$3.00; man and team, travelling, day \$4.50; man and team on small graders, per day \$4.50; man and team on drags, day, \$4.50; man and team, on large grader, day \$5.00; man, day \$2.50; patrolman, day \$2.75; man operating grader, per day, \$3.00; superintendent, day \$4.00.

Magwood—Hopkins: That the above scale of wages shall come into force and effect on Monday, the 14th day of May, 1928. Patrolmen are requested to have all pay sheets forwarded to Clerk or Councillors on or before Monday, May 14, and to include all work up to that date.

The Council, on going over bridges of Township on April 18, the following resolutions were passed, per report given:

Magwood—Hopkins: That Schenk's Bridge, S.L. 30, Con. 1, N. D.R., be rebuilt of concrete abutments and steel superstructure, and that Reeve have Engineer R. C. McKnight draw plans for said

bridge; debentures to be issued for said bridge.—Carried.

McCaslin—Bailey: That we build an overflow culvert north of steel bridge at Clark Torry's and have road built three feet higher to guard against washouts.—Carried.

Council adjourned to meet as regular meeting on Monday, the 14th day of May, at 10 o'clock.
J. H. Chittick, Clerk.

PRESENTED WITH WATCH FOB

Mr. Arch. McLellan, implement dealer here, was pleasantly surprised at his office last Friday afternoon when he was presented with a watch fob by the members of the pinochle and euchre club which held forth on his premises. There were 32 of them in all, though the presentation was made quietly and Mr. McLellan is quite proud of their memento of good will.

As told in these columns some weeks ago, Mr. McLellan has disposed of his building to F. W. Moon, who is now in possession and fitting it up for machine shop and residence. Mr. McLellan has been in the implement business here for the past twenty-odd years and intends giving up his business interests in the course of the next few weeks.

"How did you find marriage, Tony?" she asked.

"Well," replied Tony, "during the honeymoon I talked and she listened. Then for six months, she talked and I listened. Now we both talk and the neighbors listen."

The longer you have what you have, the less thankful you are that you have it.



Don't Be Stampeded Into Selling Your Mining Shares

I feel impelled to urge holders of mining securities on no account to part with their stocks at current quotations, for history has shown that invariably in every Bear market stocks are reduced to levels quite out of line with their real worth.

The present is a typical case of history repeating itself; of that I am convinced. Firmly believing the mining market is destined to attain far higher levels in due course of time, I, therefore, have no hesitancy whatever in strongly recommending purchases of mining shares at prevailing prices. I shall be glad to co-operate in making selections suitable to individual requirements, and invite your correspondence.

J. W. CHITTICK
882 Second Ave., E.—Owen Sound
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