

A Near Miracle

Darkness was drawing her curtains on a dreary night in mid-November at the Davies home on Hawk River. Lights were coming on in brother Sam's house across the fields. Other neighbors were a half mile distant.

This family consisted of the father, Alfred Davies, the mother and four children, Ethel the eldest, Ernest Fred, and Gladys the youngest child. At the farm, stock had been fed; bedded down for the night; the usual chores of the farm had been tidied up and the stock was comfortably settled for the night. Within the home which was usually a tranquil one, signs of deep concern was apparent on the mother's face. As she prepared the evening meal she made frequent trips to the adjoining bedroom. The previous evening he had suffered severe pains and his condition had steadily worsened through the day. Despite careful nursing and the use of home remedies on hand they realized the malady was of serious nature, a neighbor was dispatched for medical aid - being 18 miles away at Minden.

One of the facts of life down through the centuries, dependence, confidence and faith in times of emergency in services of the "medicene man" of the era in which they lived. The family anxiously awaited the arrival of the doctor, and soon after dark the sound of an approaching rig was heard and shortly after the doctors' team drew into the yard. The father was out immediately and took charge of the horses. The doctor picked up his bag, the trademark of his calling and hurried to the house.

After removing his fur coat, the mother ushered him into the sickroom. A thorough examination of the boy was made, the doctors' face revealing

his concern. Returning to the kitchen, the father having arrived from the stable, he made his report. "There is no doubt in my mind that Fred is suffering from acute appendicitis. Mrs. Davies says the trouble started yesterday evening, a great deal of inflammation is apparent now. This is Saturday night and we are 60 miles from a hospital over very indifferent roads, with your permission I could operate here and believe it is the better procedure." "Are you quite sure doctor the ailment would not respond to medical treatment," replied the mother. "I am quite certain that unless aid comes by surgery in the matter of hours and few at that, Freds' chances of life are very slim." After a short consultation between the parents, permission was granted to proceed.

The doctor gave the mother instructions for preparation and also to aid him during his work - naturally his instruments were few, they were carefully sterilized. The kitchen table was made ready as the operation centre and the father given instruction for administering the anesthetic. Before commencing his work, the doctor stepped quietly into a small adjoining room and there on his knees sought guidance from the Great Physician in the task ahead. Returning to the living room Fred was made ready for the ordeal and the father under the doctors' guidance gave the first application of anesthetic, very shortly the boy was completely under this influence and the doctor commenced his work. The mother was a very capable helper anticipating his needs as she delivered to his ready hand the instrument he desired. The abdomen was opened and the offending organ showing much inflammation, but still intact was quickly and deftly removed. The incision was closed and Fred was back in his bed within 45 minutes after the operation began.

The doctor was quite satisfied with his work and assured the parents of the boys recovery under favorable care on which he knew he could depend. After a hearty lunch, his team which had been rested and fed was brought to the door ready for the long trip home - a good 2 hour drive for the best of horses. Fred rapidly recovered; grew to manhood and is filling a useful place in the community in which he lives.

Dr. Chas.E. Frain was a young man keen of mind and steady of hand, who had quite recently graduated and located at Minden. His recent schooling gave him advantage over the older men previously practicing here. He continued his practice for some years in Minden and later in Haliburton. He was a much loved and respected citizen, being one of the three members of the Telephone Commission when it was established. He met an untimely death by drowning in Lake Kushog. It will be noted that 2 hours valuable time was lost in calling a doctor by courier. This with other similar happenings hastened the day of establishing the Municipal Telephone System in the townships.

When I read and know of the great expenditure on hospital equipment in this day, I am pleased with the advance in this field - yet my mind goes in reverse when I think of this case of a life saved by a man dedicated to his calling and working with few and simple instruments. Surely it is a far cry from todays operating room to the dimly lit farmers' kitchen of this tale, yet the daring of the young doctor strengthened by faith in his Master and the great love of humanity, performed a near miracle in our midst.