

SWORD DIET DID NOT AGREE

M'CLONE'S EXHIBITION HAD RATHER SERIOUS RESULTS.

"The Chevalier Cliquot" Astonished the Doctors at the Metropolitan Throat Hospital—When He Seemed in Pain with Fourteen Swords Down His Throat Dr. Hope Yanked Them Out in a Bunch—McLone in Bed Under Morphine's Influence.

"Oh, I'm all right," groaned Frederick McLone, "the Chevalier Cliquot," sword swallower, as he tossed uneasily on a bed in Room 66 of the Union Square Hotel last evening, when his manager, William Howell, asked him how he was getting along.

McLone was under the influence of morphine administered by Dr. William Shannon, who believes that his exhibition of sword swallowing at the Metropolitan Throat Hospital at 351 West Thirty-fourth Street on Friday brought about slight inflammation of the stomach and oesophagus, and that there are slight lacerations of the throat.

McLone is a handsome little man, with a physique that is like that of Rowell, the walker. He was born at Quebec in 1862, and when a schoolboy became fascinated with a circus show and ran away from home to become an acrobat.

A family of saltimbancos attached to a circus took an interest in him, and taught him to tumble and do feats of strength. He had just become expert enough to be worth a salary when he saw Battin, the sword swallower, perform some of his feats, and he detected him in trickery.

McLone experimented with himself, first with a wire with a knob at the end, until he had overcome the muscular and nervous resistance of his throat. Then he practiced with a sword until he was able to swallow a blade of about twenty inches up to its hilt.

Constant practice made his throat callous to or familiar with intrusion, and fourteen years ago, when the United States man-of-war Lancaster was at Algiers, and a minstrel show was given on board, he appeared as the "American acrobat," and gave an exhibition of sword swallowing without using a "sheath" or any device to lessen the severity of the ordeal to which his throat was put. His pseudonym was given him two years later in a Paris café, after a bottle of "The Widow's" had been splashed over him.

He last appeared in public at Pittsburg, three weeks ago, and was to appear at Montreal to-morrow, but the date has been canceled. To kill time he and his manager went to Boston, and his ability to swallow almost anything, except an insult, was demonstrated before Dr. Bowditch, Professor of Physiology at Harvard College, and others in B. F. Keith's office in the Gaiety Theatre. Dr. Bowditch, at the end of the exhibition, asked:

"Can you swallow anything?"

"Yes," replied McLone.

"Then swallow my cane."

"I will if you'll wipe the ferrule."

This was done, and the cane was pushed twenty-two inches down the Chevalier's throat, and the spectators marveled.

The staff of the Metropolitan Throat Hospital deny that McLone was invited to appear before them. They say that he was brought there by his manager. They are familiar with the feats that a throat accustomed to distension will endure, and say that, physically considered, what McLone did on Friday was startling, but not especially wonderful. He first caused the 22-inch blade of a Chassepot sabre to disappear up to the hilt, and then swallowed four sword blades twenty inches long. The swords were made for the purpose, and the hilts were in the same plane as the blades, which fitted into each other like a nest of spoons.

Then, taking the sabre, Cliquot fastened at right angles to the hilt a hollow rod of iron, four feet long, and to each end of the rod attached a dumbbell maker "14 pounds." Then, raising the rod until the point of the sabre was in his mouth, he swallowed it again, as he had done when nothing was attached to it.

While the sabre was in his oesophagus McLone gave the bar a half twist, something he had never before attempted, according to Manager Howell. The doctors were asked if they wished to see a fowling piece attached to the bar and discharged while four inches of the sabre were out of the juggler's mouth, so that the sabre would force the blade down to the hilt, but they declined, and McLone prepared to do the next feat, that of swallowing fourteen swords, the blades of which were like those used in the second feat.

Howell admits that when the sabre with the bar and the dumbbells was drawn from its living sheath McLone appeared to suffer and retched, and that he should have then desisted, or have been made to do so.

The fourteen swords were swallowed like the bunch of four, and the ordeal was little more severe, except that the distension of the throat was greater. Before swallowing the swords McLone said that if any one wanted to draw them it should be done one by one, and not in a bunch.

The swords were not half their length in McLone's economy when he appeared to be suffering and turned pale.

Howell had turned his back when they were beginning to disappear, and he heard one of the doctors say, "My God, this is going too far."

He turned, to see Dr. G. B. Hope grasp the swords by the butts, and sharply withdraw them, instead of pulling them out cards, one by one, as a card player deals cards, and as McLone does on the stage.

McLone gave a groan, and leaned forward. He appeared to be in great agony, and could not speak for several moments. He then complained of severe pain in the stomach and throat.

After a hypodermic injection of morphine had been given to him, he was taken to his hotel in a cab.

It was at first feared that either his throat had been lacerated or that there was a puncture of the stomach, and that an operation would be necessary, but there was no hemorrhage, and his condition had so far improved yesterday afternoon that he was able to drink some kumys.

Manager Howell was convinced that the new trick of turning the sabre with the bar and dumbbells attached was too great a strain for organs that had been strained and stretched to fit them for abnormal uses. He expected, however, that McLone would be able to go to Toronto to fill an engagement at the end of this week. His wife, who aids him in his performances, was so satisfied with his condition that she went out for a walk with a friend.

The staff of the hospital say they were not responsible for McLone's collapse. Before he gave his exhibition his throat was examined, and, while it was found to be healthy. McLone admitted that frequently after he had been idle for some time he swallowed food with difficulty, and had several times been almost choked by food. He also suffered from dyspepsia when not "in practice," but found relief when he swallowed a sword. He was advised not to attempt any feat that would tax his throat more than it had been, and to keep it exercised.

There was, the doctor said, absolutely nothing new in McLone's performances. They were simply taking violent liberties with delicate organs which had gradually become accustomed to distension, but had lost tone and muscular health. They could well be compared to a rubber tube which constant distension or inflation had robbed of its original elasticity. McLone's throat was, before he juggled with swords, the same as any healthy man's. There was nothing abnormal about it then. It was extremely probable that his three weeks' rest brought the muscles nearly to normal condition, and that in his desire to excel he overstrained them. When warned against allowing his throat to relax and cautioned against straining it more than it had been, McLone said these were new hints, and that no physician had up to then seen any peril in his feats. He not only swallowed swords, but watches, and, when in practice, a large one with a chain attached gave him, comparatively, little inconvenience, and he smoked a cigarette while it ticked in his internal economy.