

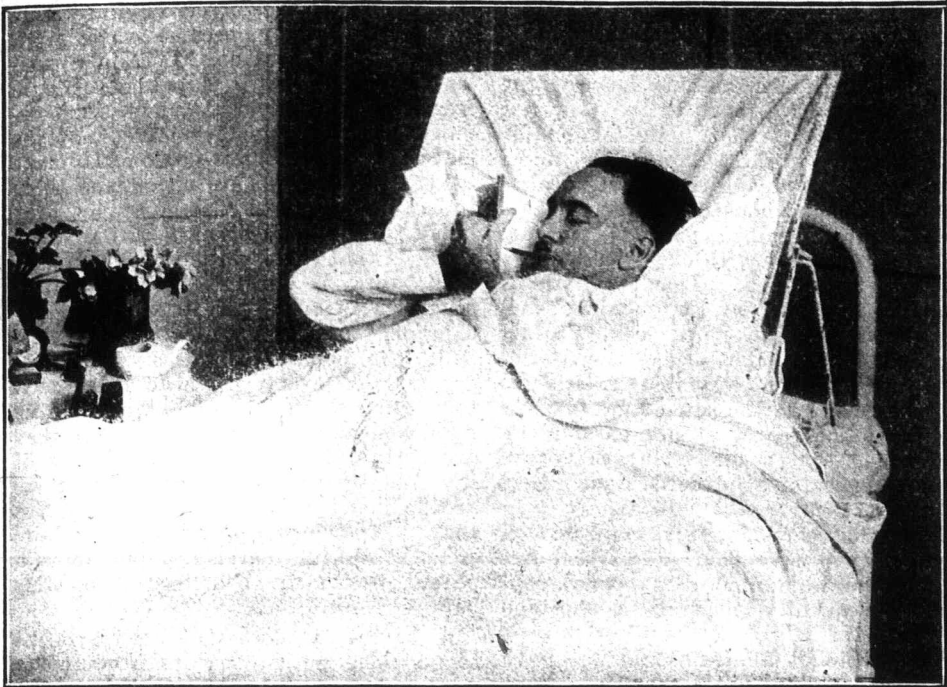
How I Learned to Swim

Written for *The Western Home Monthly* by Private Robert Chaloner

Private Robert Chaloner enlisted in a Winnipeg Battalion in the year 1916, and four days after he donned the king's uniform he broke his neck while diving. From that day his body became paralyzed and so far surgical science has been able to do but little for him. Determined to overcome his difficulties and make as much of his life as possible, this plucky boy taught himself to write by holding his pencil in his teeth. The following little story, taken from an incident in his own life, was written in this way, and is the brave author's first effort for publication.

such as this, I decided that obedience was the best policy, for as long as I did what I was told I would be able to sit down with comfort. Of course I thought my sister very unjust and cruel, being too young to understand that it was all for the best.

After these experiences I always obeyed my sister while at home, but when I got away I used my own judgment in most things. One day she sent me with my next older brother to pick blueberries. I liked picking blueberries about as well as I liked castor oil, and would have told her so, only I had not forgotten



Private Chaloner writing his story at Tuxedo Hospital

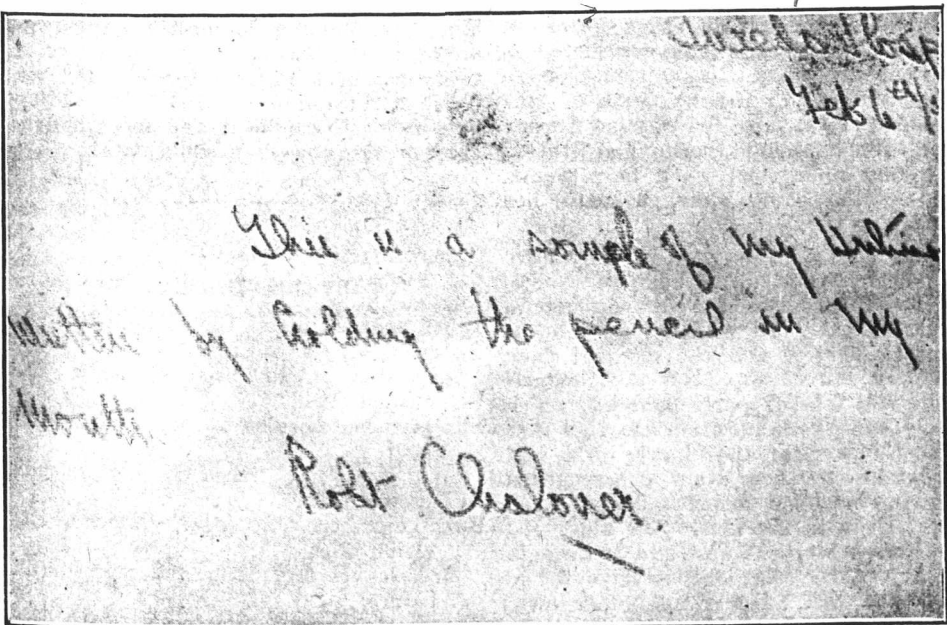
How I Learned to Swim

I suppose before I tell you about how I first learned to swim, I had better tell you something about myself and my early childhood.

My mother died when I was five years old. I was the second youngest of seven children, three sisters and two brothers older, and a baby sister of only a few months. My father worked up north and only came home once or twice a year, so things were pretty hard, and my oldest sister, only eighteen, worked in an office and so left the sixteen year old one to bring up the family.

what the slipper felt like, so I went without a word, but before going I slipped my bathing suit into my berry pail. I hoped I would be able to get my brother to go down by the river, and I knew that once there, the blueberries would be forgotten. I had a hard time coaxing my brother to come with me, but finally got my way, and he said perhaps we might play on the shore for a while before picking berries.

When we arrived at the river, (only half a mile from home) we met two other boys, neighbors of ours, and they asked if we would like to go for a boat



The baby took up most of my sister's time, and I, being considered well able to look after myself, was given more liberty than is good for little boys, and I got very disobedient. It was all right for mother to tell me what I should, and should not do, but when my sister started to boss me (as I called it) I didn't like it, and wouldn't do anything she told me to. However, there are ways of impressing upon little boys, the consequences of disobedience, and I was duly impressed while lying across my sister's knee, face downwards, while she tried her best to wear out one of Dad's slippers across me. After a few impressions

ride. We had been forbidden to go on the river without our older brother, but we thought no one would ever know if we only stayed a few minutes, so we got into the boat and started to row around the shore. It was a very hot day in the latter part of July and we soon got very warm. I took off all my clothes and put on my bathing suit so that I would be cooler. I, being the youngest of the four, and the smallest, got lots of abuse from the others. One of the boys threatened to throw me in the water if I did not jump in. Of course he was only fooling, but I thought him in

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