

# ONLY A CASE OF "MUMPS."

But Nobody Wanted the Poor Girl in the House and the Hospitals Would Not Receive Her.

DOCTORS IN A QUEER DILEMMA OVER THE CASE.

If the Patient Had Had Small-Pox, or Typhoid Fever, or Leprosy, She Would Have Been Duly Cared For, but Having Only "the Mumps" She Had a Hard Time of It—The Need of a New Kind of Hospital.

Did you ever stop to think that if you had an illness which was infectious but not dangerous, like the mumps or the chicken pox, there is no house of refuge in all this great city where you could seek shelter?

If you were afflicted with small pox, diphtheria or a kindred disease in that appalling list, which the Health Board has printed in its books, you would be taken in hand by the authorities in the twinkling of an eye. But suppose it to be a simple case of the first order, and your landlady refuses to keep you under her roof. You may be poor, or friendless, or homeless. What are you going to do? Where can you go?

The Health Board has just had under con-

sideration the case of a poor unfortunate, which illustrates the dreadful possibilities that may happen at any time to people of her class. She was a poor servant girl named Mary Redington, and was living in the house of Dr. C. S. Welles, at No. 42 West Twenty-sixth street.

A little over a week ago she was taken ill. Her employer attended to her, and thought at first she was suffering with tonsillitis. He requested her to keep in her room, where he visited her every day. After a few visits, however, he found that she had a fully developed case of parotitis, or "the mumps." Just what to do the doctor didn't know. He would willingly have kept her in his

house, but every room was filled with his patients. He had no place to isolate her. Lack of space compelled his three servants to sleep in the same apartment. One of his patients, who had his two sons with him in the establishment, requested the doctor to send the girl away. He was nervously afraid that his children and himself would contract the disease, and finally he told Dr. Welles that unless she was removed he would be compelled to leave himself.

WHAT SHOULD THE SICK GIRL DO? The sick woman had only one available relative in the city. That was an aunt, who was employed as a housekeeper in the family of Mr. Ritter, who lives at No. 230 West Thirty-fourth street. Dr. Welles sent a note to her last Saturday, explaining the case and asking her what he should do about her niece. After the delay of twenty-four hours and after a second note was despatched to her by a special messenger, she sent back word that she would call Sunday evening and see what could be done. She failed to appear, however. Monday she told Dr. Welles that she had consulted with her employers, and, while they were willing to assist her in any way they could, they hardly dared to take the sick girl into their household.

Dr. Welles was then in a predicament. He utilized every spare moment he could snatch from his business to find a way out of it, but all to no purpose. He was compelled to have the girl removed, and with no further delay. After a consultation by letter with Mr. Ritter, the latter said that he would gladly furnish a carriage in which to take her away if Dr. Welles would see her placed in a hospital.

The carriage was sent. Dr. Welles saw that the woman was carefully wrapped up, and at 9 o'clock P. M. on Monday he drove with her to Bellevue Hospital.

He says that he was compelled to wait there in the office for a half hour, though he was expected at an important consultation at 9.30 o'clock. Drs. Gwathmey and Bremner were on duty that evening and examined the girl. They refused point-blank to admit her.

"But, dear me," replied Dr. Welles, you must. I can't take her back to my house. I have no place for her."

"Sorry; can't be helped," answered the other physicians. "We can't take her in here."

"But what am I going to do?" gasped Dr. Welles, taking out his watch. "I am due now at the bedside of a patient. It's a case of life or death. You must help me out."

One of the Bellevue physicians suggested that he drive down to the Willard Parker Hospital, at the foot of East Sixteenth street.

THE DOCTOR IN A QUANDARY. "But suppose they refuse to take this girl in there?"

"Then I guess you're in a hole, Doctor," one of the two young men replied.

And the doctor was. All the while the poor sick girl, who was being bandied about from one place to another, had sat outside in the carriage. The driver got up on his box and away the horses galloped at hot haste for the dock at East Sixteenth street.

Dr. Lester was rung up. The big gate swung open, and Dr. Welles proceeded to discharge his burden upon Dr. Lester.

"But what is this case?" queried the latter.

"Mumps, and a pretty bad case." "But, Dr. Welles," said Dr. Lester, "don't you know that we don't take mumps here? That's Bellevue's province."

"But Bellevue flatly refuses," exclaimed Dr. Welles in despair. And again he asked of Dr. Lester what he was going to do.

"I don't know what you can do if Bellevue won't admit the patient. I wouldn't dare subject her to the contagious diseases we treat here, even if I could receive her."

It was growing late. The poor girl still sat outside in the darkness with absolutely no place to lay her head. Her position was a pitiable one, and Dr. Lester was moved to pity for her. Then he echoed Dr. Welles's words: "What can I do?"

At length he said he would assume the risk of keeping the girl over night, but only with the express understanding that she should be removed the first thing in the morning. He would turn out one of his own helpers and give her bed to the unfortunate outsider. "That is the best I can do for her," said Dr. Lester.

Mary Redington was given temporary shelter for the night. Dr. Welles drove away to his consultation, missed three visits that he ought to have made and found himself sick with a congestive chill the next day. Dr. Lester shut up the hospital expecting that the girl would be called for the coming morning.

But no one came for her. Dr. Lester got nervous. He needed the room that the poor shelterless creature was usurping. Further he did not care to assume any longer the risk he was running in keeping her in his hospital. "It was he who was 'in the hole' this time."

He communicated with Bellevue. No, they positively would not accept the girl there. Then he tried to communicate with Dr. Welles. Dr. Welles was ill himself and couldn't get out. He wrote to the hospital, however, asking Dr. Lester to find a nurse and send the woman down to Jamaica, L. I., to some friends there, whom the aunt at Mr. Ritter's said would be willing to care for her. Mr. Ritter offered, through Dr. Welles,

to pay all the expenses of the nurse and transference.

Dr. Lester got angry. He had no nurse to spare and no time to look for one, inasmuch as he had thirty-eight cases of diphtheria and scarlet fever on his hands. Furthermore he wasn't going to take the responsibility of shipping the girl out of the city limits. If the Bellevue Hospital doctors were afraid of spreading the mumps among the patients there, and since Dr. Welles had removed from his own house for that reason also, he argued that he had no right to subject the people with whom she would come in contact while travelling to the same chances.

"WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH HER?"

So Dr. Lester began to look about for a way to get out of "the hole" in which he found himself when Dr. Welles got out. He despatched a note to No. 42 West Twenty-sixth street. This is what he wrote:

DEAR DR. WELLES: Will you be kind enough to arrange to transfer your patient, Mary Redington, to-morrow forenoon, as I cannot keep her any longer and will be obliged to send her out if she is not called for?

Bellevue will not receive her. I did not expect that you would give me the trouble of communicating with her friends about her removal when you agreed to attend to it yourself. I should not have admitted her last night had I anticipated the result. Very respectfully, F. W. LESTER, Resident Physician.

Meanwhile Dr. Welles, sick and worried about the affair, was at his wife's end. He heard that a patient of his was in extremis, and that didn't tend to help his irritability. Mary Redington's bed had been taken by a new servant, who waited upon the door, and, even if it were still vacant, the same objection to her coming back to him existed.

Then the Health Board received simultaneous communications from Dr. Welles and Dr. Lester. Dr. Bryant handed over the matter to Dr. Edson for investigation. In his instructions to the latter Dr. Bryant said: "Find out first if it is absolutely impossible for Dr. Welles to take the patient back to his own house again. If so we have her on our hands, for she has been loaded upon us. We can't turn her into the streets. Her disease does not entitle her to be cared for by the Board of Health. And if we keep her we can only treat her as we treat cases of dangerous contagious diseases. If she has no friends who will give her shelter then there is only one thing left for us to do. She must go up to North Brother Island."

In other words, because she had no home, no friends to aid her, and because in this great city, with all its resources, no place had been prepared for cases like hers, she must go to the pest-house.

But then there was tied immediately another knot in this twisted skein of difficulties. The pest-house was full. It would be necessary then, as in times of plague, to spread a tent somewhere on the island, put a stove in it to keep it warm, find a nurse to care for the unfortunate woman and place her under the canvas.

And early Wednesday morning poor Mary Redington would have been carried up the river to her tent if succor had not come to her during the day.

When Mr. Ritter had time to act on the note which Dr. Welles had written him he called a carriage again and made all the necessary arrangements for the transfer. A permit was obtained and Tuesday afternoon, in the care of a nurse, the poor girl who had been banged about as from post to pillar went down to Jamaica, where, it is to be hoped, she found a sure refuge at last.

A HOSPITAL NEEDED FOR SUCH CASES. "The predicament in which this unfortunate found herself is not an exceptional one," said Dr. Bryant, of the Board of Health, yesterday. "but I don't know that I ever saw one of these cases exploited in the newspapers. The fact is, we need in this city a hospital of some sort that will cover cases just like this one, and further, one that will provide for people who can afford to pay, and who may happen to be stricken down with some infectious illness. Suppose a triple millionaire comes to this city in his yacht or steps down off a steamer, bringing small-pox with him or catches it here. He can't stay in his hotel. There is no place prepared where he may go and have whatever physician he may desire attend him, and all the various comforts which his money would provide for him. Just like the pauper, he must go to the pest up on North Brother Island. There is no way out of it."

Such a hospital is a necessity. I have advocated it for years. So has Dr. Jacoby. There should be one erected where a man of means could have his own doctor in attendance, and the privileges to which his money entitles him, since he can pay for them. And there should also be some arrangement made to suit cases like the one in question. Bellevue declares it won't take in people who have chicken-pox, mumps, rubella and that class of disorders. The Willard Hospital can't. There is your sick man whom his landlady may not care to keep, and your sick domestic whom her employer cannot or doesn't care to shelter—out in the cold, if he or she is a stranger, or without friends and a home. "And what do people so afflicted do, Doctor?" "Heaven only knows," he answered. "That's a pretty hard lot."