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NEW YORK, SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16, 1887.

INSIDE THE MADHOUSE.

Nellie Bly's Experience in the Blackwell's Island Asylum.

Continuation of the Story of Ten Days With Lunatics.

How the City's Unfortunate Wards Are Fed and Treated.

The Terrors of Cold Baths and Cruel, Unsympathetic Nurses.

Attendants Who Harass and Abuse Patients and Laugh at Their Miseries.

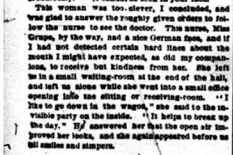
Doctors Who Flirt with Pretty Nurses—A Queer Medical Examination that Did Not Examine—Inmates of Hall No. 6—At the Piano—Taking Away Her Clothes—A Long Wait in the Cold for Supper—No Knives nor Forks—Food Unsalted and Unfit—Half Drowned by an Icy Bath—Soap Only Once a Week—Put to Bed in Damp Clothing—Noises at Night—The Horror of Being Locked Up and Barred Room—Hair Combed with a Public Comb—Nurses Who Vex and Annoy Patients—Holding Them Under Water Until Half Drowned—Punishing Unfortunates Who Appeal for Protection—Attendants Curse Nellie—Set Free at Last.

AS THE wagon was rapidly driven through the beautiful lawn up to the asylum my feelings of satisfaction at having attained the object of my mind were greatly dampened by the look of distress on the faces of my companions. Poor women, they had no hopes of a speedy delivery. On the wagon sped, and I, as well as my comrades, gave a despairing farewell glance at freedom. As we came in sight of the long stone buildings. We passed one low building, and the stench was so horrible that I was compelled to hold my nose. I mentally decided that it was the kitchen. I afterwards found I was mistaken, but I was not allowed to go near enough to be sure of the fact. "Visitors are not allowed on this road." I don't think the stench would be necessary if they once tried the road, especially as a warm day.

The wagon stopped and the nurse and officer in charge told me to get out. The nurse added: "Thank God! they come quietly." We coaxed our feet to go ahead up a flight of narrow stone steps, which had evidently been built for the accommodation of people who climb stairs three at a time. I wondered if my companions knew where we were, so I said to Miss Tillie Mayard: "Where are we?" "At the Blackwell's Island Lunatic Asylum," she answered sadly. "Are you crazy?" I asked. "No," she replied, "but as we have seen sent here we will have to be quiet until we find some means of escape. They will be two, though, if all the doctors, as Dr. Field, refuse to listen to me or give me a chance to prove my sanity." We were ushered into a narrow vestibule and the door was locked behind us.

In spite of the knowledge of my sanity and the assurance that I would be released in a few days, my heart gave a sickening twinge. I recommended hemp four expert doctors and shut up behind the numerous bolts and bars of a madhouse! Not to be confined alone, but to be a companion, day and night, of senseless, chattering lunatics; to sleep with them, to eat with them, to be considered one of them, was an uncomfortable position. Timidly we followed the nurse up the long uncarpeted hall to a room filled by so-called crazy women. We were told to sit down, and some of the patients kindly made room for us. They looked at us curiously and one came up to me and asked: "Who sent you here?" "The doctors," I answered. "What for?" she persisted. "Well, they say I am insane," I admitted. "Insane?" she repeated in ecstatic tones. "It cannot be seen in your face."

The woman was too clever, I considered, and was glad to answer the roughly given orders to follow the nurse to see the doctor. The nurse, Miss Grupe, by the way, had a nice German face, and if I had not detected certain hard lines about the mouth I might have expected, as did my companions, to receive but kindness from her. She left us in a small waiting-room at the end of the hall, and left us alone while she went into a small office opening into the sitting or receiving-room. "I like to go down in the wards," she said to me in visible party on the inside. "It helps to break the day." By answered her that the open air improved her looks, and she againapparoled before us all smiles and simpers.



THE INSANE ASYLUM.

"Come here, Tillie Mayard," she said. Miss Mayard obeyed, and, though I could not see into the office, I could hear her gently but firmly pushing her case. All her remarks were in rational so may I ever heard, and I thought so good physician could help but be impressed by her story. Her hold of her recent illness, that she was suffering from nervous debility. She begged that they try all their powers to restore her to health and give her justice. Poor girl, how my heart ached for her! I determined then and there that I would try by every means to place my mention d bouch to my suffering sisters; that I might be able to tell they are committed without sample trial. Without one word of sympathy or encouragement she was brought back to where we sat.

Mrs. Louie Schanz was taken next into the presence of Dr. Kiehr, the medical man. "Your name?" he asked, loudly. She answered in German, saying she did not speak English nor could she understand it. However, when he said Mrs. Louis Schanz she said "Yah, yah." Then he tried other questions, and when he found she could not understand one word of English he said to Miss Grupe: "You are German; speak to her for me." Miss Grupe proved to be one of those people who are ashamed of their nationality and she refused, saying she could understand a few words of her mother tongue. "You know you speak German. Ask this woman what her husband does," said the doctor sternly. I felt for Miss Grupe joying a joke. "I can't speak but a few words," she protested, but at last she managed to ascertain the occupation of Mr. Schanz. "Now, what was the use of lying to him?" asked the doctor, with a sneer which dispelled the rudeness. "I can't speak any more," she said, and she did not.

THE FRONT HALLWAY.

Thus was Mrs. Louie Schanz consigned to the asylum without a chance to make herself understood. Can such injustice exist? I asked, wondered, when it is so easy to get an interpreter? If the confinement was for but a few days one might comprehend the necessity. Here was a woman taken without her own consent from a free world to an asylum and there given no chance to prove her sanity. Confined most probably for life behind asylum bars, without even being told in her language the why and wherefore. Compare this with a criminal, who is given every chance to prove his innocence. Would it not rather be a murderer and take the chance for life than be declared insane, without hope of escape? Mrs. Schanz begged in German to know where she was and pleaded for liberty. Her voice broken by sobs, she was led unheard out to us.

Miss Fox was then put through this weak, trifling examination and brought from the office, convicted. Miss Annie Neville took her turn and I was again left to the last. I had by this time determined to act as if I be when free, except that I would refuse to tell who I was or where my home was.

THEY EXAMINE HER AGAIN.

But the Doctor Paid More Attention to the Nurse Than to Her Patient.

"Nellie Bly, the doctor wants you," said Miss Grupe. I went in and was told to sit down opposite Dr. Kiehr at the desk. "What is your name?" he asked, without looking up. "Nellie Brown," I replied coolly. "Where is your home?" writing what I had said down in a large book. "In Cuba." "What is your occupation?" he asked understanding—then, addressing the nurse: "Did you see anything in the papers about her?" "Yes," answered she. "I read a lear account of this girl in the Sun on Sunday." Then the doctor said: "Keep her here until I go to the office and see the account myself." I left as and I was relieved of my hat and shawl. I felt sure if he had been unable to find the paper, but he related the story of my object, as he had read it, to the nurse. I was thankful for an escape. They will be two, though, if all the doctors, as Dr. Field, refuse to listen to me or give me a chance to prove my sanity." We were ushered into a narrow vestibule and the door was locked behind us.

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AT SUPPER.

Rancid Butter, Weak Tea and Five Prunes Her Unlaviting Portion.

This examination over we had a crumb one yell, "Go out into the hall." One of the patients kindly explained that this was an invitation to supper. We into corners tried to keep together, so we entered the hall and stood at the door where all the wards had crowded. How we shivered as we stood there! The windows were open and the draft went whistling through the hall. The patients locked hims with cold, and the minutes stretched into a quarter of an hour. At last one of the nurses went forward and unlocked a door, through which we all crowded to a large hall of the asylum. Here again came a long hall directly before an open window. "How very imprudent for the attendants to keep these thinly clad women standing there in the cold," said Miss Neville. I looked at the poor crazy captives suivering and added emphatically, "It's barbarity, brutal." Why they stood there I thought I would not relinquish my shawl, but I felt so sorry for the poor creatures. Some were chattering foolish nonsense to invisible persons, others laughing or crying aimlessly, and one old gray-haired woman was singing no, no, and, with winks and sage nodings of her head and pitiful shrugs of her high and hands, was assuring me that I must not mind the people talking to me as they were. "Keep in the heater," was then ordered, "and set in line, one by two." "Mary, get a comparison." "How many times must I tell you to keep in line?" "Stand still." "Mary, get a comparison." Here was shove and a push were administered and often a slap on the ears. After this third and final hall we were marched into a long, narrow dining-room, where a rush to seats was made.

The table reached the length of the room and was observed and unlinoleum. Long benches without backs were put for the patients to sit on, and over these they had to crawl in order to face the table. Placed close together all along the table were large dressing bowls filled with a pinkish-looking stuff which the patients called tea. By each bowl was laid a piece of cake, cut thick and buttered. In a small saucer containing five prunes accompanied the meal. One fat woman made a rush, and jerking up every saucer from those around her emptied their contents into her own saucer. Then she leaned back in her own bowl and filled again other and drained its contents at one gulp. This she did to each bowl in her reach, and then it takes to tell it. Indeed, I was so amused at her successful grabbings that when I looked at my own share the woman opposite, without so much as by your leave, grabbed my bread and left me with out any.

Another patient seeing this kindly offered me hers, and I declined with thanks and turned to the nurse and asked for more. As she flung a thick piece down on the table she made some remark about the fact that if I thought always by some was I had not forgotten how to eat. I tried the tread and the butter was so horrid that I could not eat it. A time-eyed German girl on the opposite side of the table told me I could have bread without butter if I wished, and that very few there ate eat the butter. I turned my attention to the prunes and found that very few of them would be eaten. A patient near asked me to give them to her, and I did so, though I thought tea was all that was left. I tasted and one taste was enough. It had no sugar and it tasted as if it had been made in copper. It was as weak as water. This was also unsweetened to a daughter relished in spite of protest of Miss Neville. "You must force the food down," she said. "else you will be sick, and who knows but with these surroundings you may go crazy." Force food down! Force myself to eat what I cared not." It is impossible for me to eat that tea." I replied, and I felt as if I was urging I ate nothing that night.

It did not require much time for the patients to finish their meals, and when it was ended, then we got out again in line and then we went back. When the wa done the doors before us were unlocked and we were marched in and then we proceeded to the sitting-room. Many of the patients crowded around the stove. I was again left to look by them and by the nurses. To please the patients I sang a few songs and they were well pleased with my singing. The first thing she asked me to play was "Hickory, Dickory Dock," and I did so. She sang it beautifully.

IN THE BATH.

Scrubbed with Soft Soap and Put to Bed in a Wet Gown.

A few more songs and we were told to go with Miss Grupe. We were taken into a cold, wet bathroom and I was ordered to undress. Did I protest? Well, I never yet was ordered to undress in the cold. I tried to beg off. They said if I did not they would use force and that it would not be very pleasant for me if they had to do it. I undressed and in the ward standing by the filled bath with a large discolored rag in her hands. She was chatting with another nurse and occasionally in a manner which seemed to me fiendish. I knew now what was to be done with me. I shivered. They began to undress the patients gathered at the door outside the scene, and I jumped into the bathtub with more energy than grace.

THE RECEPTION-ROOM.

The water was ice-cold, and I again began to protest. Her reply: "Hold your tongue." I felt certain that the patients be made to go away, but the nurse said no, that it was good for them to see such one. I can find no other word that fill the place of the nurse's conduct. From a warm bath she took some soft soap and rubbed it all over me, and I felt as if my face had been flayed. I was at last, prevented seeing or speaking, although I was forced into my hair by her unscrewed. Rub, rub, rub, went the cold women, and I felt as if every tooth chattered and my limbs were goose-fleshed. After the other three buckets of water over my head and shoulders, I was dried with a towel, and my nose and my mouth. I think I experienced the sensation of being scalped. The towel was dragged me, gasping, shivering and quaking, from the bath. I felt as if I had been in the cold for me, dripping wet, into a short cautos Sound side, and then the nurse gave me the entire suit of clothes, "Lunatic Asylum, R. I., U. S." The letters were stamped on every article. Then to or further to my chagrin, she dragged the coat up and that was my last look at her for the night.

I was hurried into a room where there were six beds, and I was ordered to get into one of them. I did so, sitting and jerked me out again, saying: "Never put your feet in a bed until you are quiet, or I suppose she's sleep." I was taken to the bed. It was an impossible task. The bed had no sheets, only a wet, cold, clammy quilt and a cold slab. At the first touch my head doubled the pillow, and I felt as if I had put my head into a damp, cold, dirty dampness to the sheet. When Miss Grupe came in I asked if I might have my pocketbook. "Yes, if you have no such things in this institution," she said. "I do not like to sleep without," I replied. "Well, I will put it under your pillow," she said. "You are in a public institution now, and you can't expect to get anything. This is charity, and you should be thankful for what you get." "But the city pays to keep these places up," I urged. "and pays people to kind of the unfortunates brought here." "Well, you don't think you are good enough to have, for you won't get it," she said, and she went out and closed the door.

HER BEDROOM.

A sheet and an oilcloth were under me and a sheet and black wool blanket over me. I felt it was the thing so annoying as that wool blanket as I tried to keep myself from slipping into the damp bed and getting underneath. When I pulled it up I left my feet and when I pulled it down my shoulders were exposed. There was absolutely nothing to rest my head on, as were the pillows of the dry. I knew they were nurses. The first one carried a lantern, and she flashed its light into my face while she said to her assistant: "This is Nellie Brown." Looking at her I asked: "Who are you?" "The night nurse, my dear," she replied, and "Waking that I would scream if she went out. I had locked the door after her. Several times during the night they came into my room, and I was had been able to sleep, the unlocking of the heavy door, and talking and heavy tread would have awakened me.

THE HORROR OF FIRE.

Escape Practically Impossible in Case the Building Should Catch Fire.

I could not sleep, so I lay in be dpicturing to myself the horrors in case a fire should break out in the asylum. Every door is locked separately and the windows are barred and so that escape is impossible. In the one building alone there are, I think Dr. Ingram told me, some 300 women. They are located, one to ten to a room. It is impossible to get out unless these doors are unlocked. A fire is not improbable, but one of the most likely occurrence. Should the building burn the jailers or nurses would never think of releasing their crazy patients. This I can prove to you later when I have time to tell you about the fire drills of these things intrusted to their care. As I say, in case of a fire, a fatal disaster would be inevitable. All would be left to roast to death. Even if the nurses were kind, which they are not, they would lose their presence of mind than women of their class possess and the fire would have gained headway before they unlocked the hundred doors for the hundred poor women. Unless they do so I hope there will come day be a tale of horror near enough to the asylum to be heard by the people. I am sure if what happened just previous to my leaving the asylum happened in Brooklyn about many things, and at last told him what I had seen and what I feared, he was unable to contradict my assertion. "Why don't you have it changed?" I asked. "It is not in my do?" he replied. "I offer suggestions until my tongue is tired, but what good does it do? Why would you do?" he asked, turning to me, the professional smile, which I had not seen since my leaving Blackwell's Island, on his face. "