

ALL THE DOCTORS FOOLED.

THEY TRY TO EXPLAIN NELLIE BLY'S STAY IN THE INSANE ASYLUM.

Six Columns of Excuses, Apologies, Defenses—Somebody Ought to Have Found Out that the Plucky Representative of "The World" Was Not Insane, of Course, but Nobody Is to Blame, as Usual.

The Sun yesterday devoted six columns to the adventures of Nellie Bly, a reporter for THE WORLD. Under instructions from THE WORLD, she simulated insanity, had herself sent to the madhouse on Blackwell's Island, was told to ascertain the facts as to the inside workings of that institution and to report them for the benefit of the readers of this journal. The story of her life behind the bars of the insane asylum will be told to-morrow.

The apologies of the insanity experts who pronounced the bright reporter insane, of the doctors who tried to cure her and of the nurses who fear exposure are set forth in the Sun in advance of any charges against them. Some of the apologies are interesting.

Dr. Kinler, who received Nellie at the asylum, cleverly washes his hands of the whole matter. How was he to know, he asks. Did not he have a certificate of insanity signed by the commission of experts, Drs. Fitch, Braisted and Fields, and approved by Judge Donohue, of the Supreme Court? And when she declined to talk the Sun explains that "his conclusions were strengthened to a positive conviction, and not without pity for the interesting unfortunate, he turned her over to the attendants of hall 6. The suspicion that she was a malingering, feigning mental troubles, with the flattering motive of being anxious to get into the company and under the treatment of the asylum staff, never entered the examining doctor's head. And he is not alone in the opinion that the fatigue and nervous strain of what she had undergone had affected her so that it was a matter of little difficulty for her to seem to be of unbalanced mind."

So he entered on his book the following record, setting forth the condition of a strong, healthy girl:

Very much depressed; said that she heard voices, but soon refused to talk. She complained of severe pain in her head, and kept her hand applied to her head all of the time.

Next comes Dr. W. H. H. Wallace, in charge of the receiving ward. He, too, took his turn at the new patient. The Sun says he has an everyday style in dress and carriage, but even this failed to help him out. He could only concur in the opinions of the other physicians, and Nellie went quietly about her business.

Nor did Dr. E. C. Dent, the Medical Superintendent of the asylum, show greater acumen, in spite of the fact that he is, according to the report, "a pleasant-faced man and good-looking, his black hair, dark eyes and black mustache being calculated to be especially attractive to a young woman." All this attractiveness failed to help him, and he went away satisfied that the new girl must be crazy to resist such attractions.

Assistant Supt. Dr. Ingram seemed to be the only doctor that treated the patients kindly, and to him Nellie talked more freely. Dr. Kinler came into the ward the first day and the girl explained that she was not crazy, but he would not listen to her. She had been there half a day, when the following entry was made in the "Record":

Sept. 27.—Answered questions in monosyllables. Asked that she be not spoken to, as it hurt her head very much. Does not appear to realize where she is or to be able to give any account of herself. Am unable to gain any information from her.

The fact that the clothing was insufficient and that she in common with other patients were shivering with cold, seems to have been taken as tending to show insanity. Naturally, being cold, she continued to plead for enough covering to keep her warm, and when that was given her this symptom of insanity strangely vanished.

The attendants testify to Nellie's continual watchfulness. One of them is reported as saying: "Nellie did not make any great row or trouble either of herself or by instigating others, but she kept the sitting-room in a stir most all of the time." The Sun continues: "This day was unfit for a walk, and in the long afternoon Nellie had an excellent opportunity to become acquainted with the new place and people."

"Her doctors now were George O. Caldwell and his assistant, Charles C. Flint. The former is a bluff, outspoken Yankee, from New Hampshire. He has blue eyes, brown hair and a big mustache. In spite of his brusqueness, no complaints have ever been heard of his treatment of his patients. Dr. Flint is a tall, rather light-complexioned man, with a Bonianger beard and mustache."

The Sun wants to know what the doctors could have done when the girl kept on insisting that she was sane and asked to be subjected to the severest tests. Hear it:

"Of the whole case Dr. Dent says that he will be interested in seeing what she will have to say about the asylum, because if there is anything wrong that should be corrected he will be glad to learn of it. The institution has a record of steady improvement for several years on the inspections and reports of the visitors of the State Commissioners of Lunacy, the State Board of Charities and the State Charities Aid Association. Of the medical aspect of the case he says that in the absence of any previous history of the case, and considering the certificate and commitment on which she came, her manner, behavior and conversation were in support of the condition of mind she was supposed to be in. If suspicion had been directed to her as a malingering there was no one to discharge her to. Of it tests to determine sanity in a similar case, Dr. Dent says the reliance is solely upon observation. When the suspicion of simulation warrants it, this is made continuous, as only by constant watching is the test of any value. He says that if he had his attention attracted to any suspicion of Nellie's condition being assumed, he would not have ordered her under continuous observation, as, in the event of the suspicious being unfounded and her trouble real, this would have a bad effect and tend to make her delusions indelible and her cure impossible."

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As to the official reports of the physicians, there are as many reports as there were doctors. The fact that some of these conflict is only natural, in that all of them were based on the assumption that the wide-awake reporter was insane. Dr. Kinler starts the reports with the following:

She stated in conversation that she was in Cuba, and not in New York, and that this must be Cuba, because she came on water to get here. She said: "Why do you keep me here? I am not crazy. She was in a depressed condition during the time she was under my observation."

Dr. W. H. H. Wallace's report is:

Nellie Brown, admitted Sept. 26, 1887, was examined by me on the 27th. At that time she was in a depressed condition, sitting with her hand to her head, taking no interest in anything about her, and refusing to answer questions, except an occasional "Yes" or "No." She stated that her people had died, and she was independent. Other than this I was unable to gain any information about her. She remained in this condition for the next two days.

All of the physicians seem glad to make written statements to the Sun explaining their diagnoses by the light of Nellie Bly's recent exposure in THE WORLD. Dr. Charles C. Flint pleasantly states that "on Oct. 2, 1887, I received in Hall 7, of which I have charge, a patient named Nellie Brown from Hall 4. My assistant, Dr. Caldwell, made the regular morning rounds on that date, and I myself did not see the patient until Oct. 4. On that morning I noticed the patient to be reticent, taking no part in the amusements provided, and seeming to be listless in her way. She was reported as having been impatient to the attendants and to have shown a disposition not to conform to the rules and regulations of the institution. During the remainder of her stay in the hall she did not show much change from the condition as above stated."

Dr. George O. Caldwell thinks that Miss Nellie must have melancholia or something. He says: "Regarding the case of Nellie Brown, whom I received in Hall 7 on Oct. 4, I would make the following statement: The notes in the book were as follows: 'Received from Hall 6—good physical condition—depressed, and evidently cares but little as to her surroundings. Answers questions by repeating over and over something in a foreign language. I will add to the above statement that she answers the questions were, 'Si, Señor,' that when requested to speak in English and told that she was known to be able to do so, she continued to repeat the same phrase. She sat with hands folded in her lap looking at the floor, and having the countenance of one suffering from melancholia."

Miss C. Kroener thinks the girl was a little unruly. She says: "Nellie Brown was received in Hall 7 Oct. 1, and was asked to change her clothes by attendants, which she did, but refused to wear the dress given her as it did not suit her complexion. She refused to walk with any patient except Annie Neville, who had always been her companion since she was admitted to Bellevue Hospital. I asked her if she could play the piano. She said yes, but she would not play here. I asked her if she would sew or do some work. She said no, not while here. She was very rude and saucy sometimes, and inclined to make other patients very angry. In fact, she did make one patient very noisy and excited for some three or four hours. Otherwise her general behavior was good."

Impoliteness was one of the faults that Nurse Annie Grape finds with her patient. Miss Grape declares: "Nellie never spoke to me in a polite manner, was impolite in her conversation, answered very shortly, conversed some about Cuba, and said she formerly lived there, and thought she was there now. She conversed with the other patients and tried to incite them to ask for all manner of things apparently to make trouble for the attendants. She did not mind well and was disrespectful in her manner. She complained of being cold, and was

more clothing was given her she refused to put it on."

Miss A. C. Finner says: "I received Nellie Brown on Oct. 1. She seemed to be a very nice person at first, but made herself very disagreeable the remainder of her time in the ward. She objected to the clothing she was given to wear, saying it did not suit her complexion. She constantly complained of cold, of her food and of her bed. She would not walk with any patient on the road except Annie Neville, whom she selected as a companion, and said she would run for the river if put with any one else. While on the walk she tried to excite the other patients, and asked them why they were not screaming. She never took part in the entertainments in the ward. Never conversed with the patients, only criticised their actions. She repeatedly asked to talk with one of the members of the staff, he being the only one she wished to converse with. She was saucy, disrespectful and impudent while under our charge."

Nurse M. Grady charges Nellie with making naughty faces at her. According to her report, "Nellie made no particular disturbance in the hall except to talk to other patients and to endeavor to incite them to ask for other clothing and apparently to make trouble by interfering with the patients as above mentioned. She asked me for extra underclothing for herself and refused to take it when offered. She was disrespectful to the attendants, making faces and endeavoring to make trouble through other patients. She played a little on the piano. She had a good appetite and slept well. She had a good memory, and impressed me as putting it all on."

Miss Alicia McCarten states as follows: "She talked with the other patients, telling them they should not do what the attendants told them, acting in an insolent manner; said the attendants here were not ladies and the doctors not gentlemen. She asked me for a cigarette one day. She impressed me as of a very disagreeable disposition. She conversed but little except with patients."

Miss Nellie Brown's observations in Bellevue on Ward 13 and led her to assert that two of her companions there were not insane and not properly committed there. The Sun gives the following record of the patients she mentions:

Sept. 26, 1887. Annie Neville; 33; Ireland; single; Bellevue; never been visited; no history from friends; formerly in Utica Asylum; there for several months; has delusions concerning religion; says she sees visions; hallucinations of sight; apparitions of visitors from heaven.

Melinda Maynard, 25; United States; admitted, Sept. 26, 1887; Bellevue; delusions of persecution; thinks people have conspired against her; conversation irrelevant and rambling at times she would talk at all; refuses to answer questions, still in receipt ward under observation. Oct. 11—Fluctuates in the case reader it impossible to determine to what ward she should be assigned.

The above statements embody the excuses and apologies of most of the attendants and doctors with whom THE WORLD representative came in contact. They are interesting as foreshadowing coming events. Nellie Bly's own experience among the mad people on Blackwell's Island will be told by herself in THE WORLD of to-morrow.