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**Nellie Bly's Story Has Impression on Commission.**

With terror and indignation New York looked yesterday through grated bars and saw shameless cruelty and criminal carelessness exhibited towards the most helpless creatures in all the town. Nellie Bly's sad story, so simply told, so full of the terrible force of truth, fell like a bombshell on the public. It was worse than had been anticipated. Could such things be in this much-vaunted institution to which New Yorkers had long pointed with pride as a model for the nations? A "Do the boys Hall" in heartlessness and selfish cruelty with the city's denuded daughters for the victims, and worse than all else, some daughters who may not be denuded. It seemed too horrible to be true, and yet there were the facts, succinctly and irresistibly set forth with names and dates attached.

It was only a half-hearted and apologetic denial that The World could get from the asylum authorities regarding Nellie Bly's terrible accusations. There was blushing and hawing, a bushel of evasion, a large amount of "referring" to some one else, a refusal to bring forth the accused person, and a feeble cry of "it can't be so." The reporter was not permitted to see the female attendants whom Nellie charges with atrocious cruelty towards feeble women, and the possible truth of this charge was admitted after a left-handed fashion. The charge that patients were plunged into a cold bath was denied, and concerning the bathing of many women in a single water, Supt. Dent could only say: "A nurse who did this would be discharged." There was a plea of not guilty to the charge of bad and insufficient food, and the doctors united in saying that Miss Nellie Bly was mistaken in the belief that there were some patients sharing in captivity and suffering. There was no real encouragement in the asylum to the searcher after information. The doors leading to wear seals locked, and the doctors all strove to keep their mouths. Persistent questioning and an order from President Simmons, of the Charities Board, which said: "The Commissioners desire that the officers of the department should afford every facility to Mr. Blank for the examination and visiting," etc., enabled a reporter to learn something, however.

Supt. Dent and Dr. Ingram were in the city when the reporter reached the asylum. The doctors left in charge would not make a statement, produce a nurse, or show a ward in the absence of the Superintendent. It was 6:20 o'clock when this gentleman reached the island.

"I have nothing at all to say," he said. "We have nothing to say here at all. We are so situated here that the papers have a right, apparently,

to criticize and attack us. We cannot prevent it. If the grand jury comes here we shall be glad to answer any questions it may propound, but to-night we have nothing to say."

After a little Dr. Dent thawed out enough to say that he thought Nellie Bly was romancing. "The food here," he said, "is not bad. The meat is inspected at the wharf and again here by the officer of the day, the steward and myself. If it is not right, back it goes. The coffee is excellent. The tea is not too long, but it is by no means bad. In short, we live up to our schedule of food. The butter is not rancid. As for baths, it is not true that the same water is used over again, nor is the water cold. I know what I am talking about when I say this. As for the attendants, I have nothing to say regarding the material, but we are very strict with them, and if anything is wrong the attendant goes. You would be surprised to see how many changes there are in the course of a year. The cruelty charge is simply impossible. Why, not a scratch appears on a patient but we investigate it thoroughly. Regular books are kept which are devoted to this subject."

Dr. Dent did not think Nellie Bly was entitled to any special glory for fooling the doctors in the asylum. "In a family of 1,000," he said, "you cannot expect that much of time will be devoted to the examination of a single case. Miss Bly would not answer some questions, and answered others erratically. There was no reason to suspect that she was not insane. At the same time I am positive she would have been discovered before many more days."

Dr. Dent would not allow the accused nurses to be sent for and given an opportunity to speak for themselves. He said that they all bore good reputations in the asylum. Miss Grube had only been there three or four months. She is a "third attendant," which means a learner. Miss Grady and Miss McCarten have been two or three years in the asylum. The Superintendent was very anxious to have the reporter search for facts in the central office of the Commissioners in New York. That was the place for facts, he insisted, and not the asylum.

Dr. Ingram, a peculiarly shrewd and handsome young man, was willing to talk on all subjects save one, and that was the Nellie Bly story and the accusations it contained.

Another member of the medical staff grew quite eloquent over the food furnished to the patients. The bread was excellent. He liked it better than the white bread furnished the doctors. The meat was never salted. The soup? "Why," said he, "the soup yesterday was admirable, was good enough for Delmonico's." The cooking was good and everything clean. As for the patients, many of them actually love the asylum. There is one happy old woman who has been an inmate for forty-one years. Another inmate of Ward No. 6, where Miss Bly was, has but one fear, and that is lest she should be moved away.

Dr. C. E. Simmons, President of the Board of Charities and Correction, said yesterday:

"I am glad this story has been printed, for if it is true it will make the nurses and doctors on the island more careful in the future. The Commissioners will, of course, investigate the matter. If Miss Bly will come forward and substantiate her accusations these nurses will, of course, be disciplined and discharged. Of course, you can't expect to get a very high class of attendants at six per month, though I don't know as money makes any difference. The doctors are young men who go there for practice. They only get about \$300 a year. It's the best we can do with the money at our disposal. We always discharge a nurse if there is any evidence of cruelty against her. The Civil Service Examiners do not supply us with new ones as fast as we want them. We have to send applicants of our own. They are examined by the doctor, whose certificate is accepted by the Civil Service Board."

The doctors on the island declare that Nellie Bly is all at sea regarding the sanity of Miss Mayard and Miss Neville. These women, they say, are possessed of undoubted mania. The reporter was not permitted to see them. Commissioner Simmons said yesterday that he would not have any doubt in this matter long, but would have both of these patients examined by outside insanity experts to-day, and their condition ascertained beyond a peradventure.