

NELLIE BLY'S DOCTORS.

Seven Well-Known Physicians Disagree About Her Case!

"Dyspepsia," Says Dr. Francis Delafield, of No. 12 West 32d Street.

"Malaria," Says Dr. Meyer; "All Stomach Trouble," Says Dr. McNeill.

"Shattered Nerves," "Defective Eyes," "Neuralgia," &c.

And the Doctors Were All Given the Same and Absolutely True of Symptoms.

An Extraordinary Variety of Prescriptions Written by These Seven Eminent New York Physicians—The Advice These Doctors Disagree Illustrated in a somewhat startling way—What Can Medical Science Say to This?—An Article of Peculiar Interest to Everybody.

I am ill. A young girl to the decision of seven reputable New York physicians I am suffering from seven different complaints. Still I manage to keep up. For a year past I have been suffering daily from headaches more or less severe. Having always been blessed with perfect health, I have never required the services of a physician, so when it came to a question of securing medical advice I was at a loss what particular doctor to consult.

After going one I thought I would be better satisfied as to the correctness of his diagnosis if I should consult another. This I did, only to find the doctors differed, as doctors sometimes will, so, for lack, I consulted a third.

But it was like having my fingers told: the more I heard the more I wanted to hear. Doctors, as a rule, are such pleasant, happy fellows that the novelty of having them look serious over my symptoms and having them discuss my condition bewitched me. It was my first taste of "medical advice," and it was so interesting that I could readily understand why men as well as women consult doctors for every little ache. I really think I shall become a hypochondriac.

THE DOCTORS ALL DISAGREED. When I began, the first of last week, to think and talk about my physical condition I had a headache. When I finished I was bedridden. Then, when I wanted to send for a physician, I did not know which of the seven doctors who had been with me was to send for, as I did not know which of the seven complaints I was afflicted with at last. It was simply bewildering!

It should be stated that in each and every instance I gave the physicians absolutely truthful statements of my condition, and that I answered every question asked by them with frankness and veracity. Some of the many questions and answers are not printed here for obvious reasons, but not a misstatement was made to any physician nor was any attempt made to conceal any fact or symptom.

I came to consult you about my headache," I said, by way of introduction to Dr. Allen H. Starr, of No. 22 West Forty-eighth street, as he took me into his cozy office.

"I have a headache almost constantly," I continued, sitting down in the chair he offered me near an artistic carved oak desk. "I have never been ill before and have no physicians. I don't think I am ill now, except that I have a headache almost constantly, which really may be mere imagination than ache, because I have had fits long that I feel lonesome if I miss it."

"Do you suffer any from indigestion?" Dr. Starr asked, looking at me closely.

"Not particularly," I replied, "though often after dinner I feel uncomfortably full, doubtless on account of eating too much."

The doctor smiled at my frankness. He was a pleasant man to look at, not over tall, nor yet over handsome, but so genial, happy, healthy and hearty, that I felt stronger from having confided in him my little pains and aches.

"When does this headache begin?" he asked.

"At any particular time in the day?"

"No. Sometimes it begins when I get up in the morning, other times not until the afternoon, and still again not until the evening. I should not call it change in time, for sometimes it is more or less constant."

which surrounded the office, he brought forth a little box. I expected as he slid off the lid to see it filled with chalk; somehow the lettered card had recalled school scenes.

I was disappointed. The box contained little square bits of glass. Kneeling by my chair he held one of the glasses before my right eye.

"How many candles do you see now?" he asked.

The glass looked like a bit of window-glass, but, as I looked through it, I saw two candles instead of one.

"I see two," I said, "one above the other."

"How many do you see now?" he asked, changing to another glass.

Horrors! Could it be that I was seeing double? I saw two candles again. At this time they were setting on a level, but some distance apart. He told me to look down and then look back and tell him what I saw. I followed directions.

Still there were two candles, but they were moving close together, and, as I looked, they almost joined in one. I did not feel exactly seasick, but I felt as if it was an uncanny proceeding, and was relieved to see the doctor return the glasses to their nook in the bookcase.

After listening to my heart and asking the regular routine of questions, Dr. Starr said:

"It may be that your eyes are affected, and that helps to give you a headache. You are very far-sighted, and there may be a strain which would affect the head. Your nervous system is very much run down, and your blood is in a very impoverished condition. You are anemic. It may be that building up your nervous system and your blood will help your eyes. If not, then I will want you to consult an oculist. You are just in the same condition as a bank would be if it had paid out more money than it had."

IMPOVERISHED BLOOD AND SHATTERED NERVE. "Then that is all you think is wrong? My blood is impoverished and my nervous system is shattered?"

"Yes, that is all as far as I can see now. I will give you some medicine to take, and you can eat your regular meals, avoiding indigestible food. Every night I want you to take a spinal douche, to increase your circulation, which is very bad, and your skin has a very unhealthy pallor."

DR. STARR'S PRESCRIPTIONS. Dr. Starr gave me the following prescriptions, the second of which was to be used only when suffering from a severe headache:

Handwritten prescription:
 Ferrous Sulphate ʒj
 Quinine Tonic ʒij
 Cod Liver Oil ʒij
 Saffron ʒi
 Rfj ʒij in caps. no 255
 S 1707

TRANSLATED PRESCRIPTION NO. 1.
 Reduced from 1 dram.
 Extract of the root of Sassafras ʒss.
 Arsenious acid, ʒss.
 Extract of gentian sufficient to make a mass to be divided into 20 capsules.
 One to be taken 4 or 5 times a day after eating.

Handwritten prescription:
 Phenacetin ʒij
 Dr. Delafield. no 4
 McNeill 21 lb
 Starr

TRANSLATED PRESCRIPTION NO. 2.
 Phenacetin, ʒss.
 To be divided into two powders, one to be used every hour.

I paid Dr. Starr his fee of \$5. As I explained before, I thought I would be better satisfied as to my own condition if I consulted another physician. So I went to see Dr. Andrew H. Smith, of No. 23 East Forty-second street.

"Do you sleep well?" Dr. Smith asked, and when I told him I did, he asked to see my tongue. I told him my symptoms exactly as I had told Dr. Starr.

Dr. Smith also asked if my eyes seemed to affect my headache. I told him I did not think so, and he made no examination. He hesitated after asking a few questions, as though at a loss for a conclusion to arrive at.

PROBABLY NEURALGIA. "Headaches may arise from a number of different causes," he said at last, "and they are very difficult things to doctor. I think from the symptoms, that you are suffering from neuralgia. There are so many different headaches though, that I can judge better after you have visited me several times just what kind you are suffering from. I think it is a case of neuralgia and you can take the medicine I give you and report the result to me in several days from now."

Dr. Smith charged \$5 for his diagnosis and prescription.

said. I walked back and forth six times before he was satisfied, then he listened to my heart.

"Do you get out of breath when going upstairs?" he asked, after this operation was over.

"Well, I always run when going upstairs, and naturally I get breathless," was my reply.

Dr. Meyer examined my hair, asked if my stomach felt hard after eating, and if I ever had a feeling of fear or depression about the heart.

"MALARIA," SAYS DR. WILLY MEYER. "You have malaria," he said, in conclusion.

"Malaria!" I said, in surprise, counting on my fingers. "A shattered nervous system!" "neuralgia!" "malaria!"

"If you will obey your doctor, if I am to be such, you will get well; but it takes time and patience," he said pleasantly. "You must not do as Americans almost always do—eat fruit on an empty stomach in the morning. You must get plenty of sleep, drink no coffee or tea or beer or wine, excepting Rhine wine, and eat plenty of eggs."

"Now you eat three times a day, you say. I want you to eat five times. Not regular meals, but eat sandwiches or crackers between meals. Don't allow yourself to fast."

"Have you any reason for feeling depressed, any love affair?" the doctor asked timidly as he wrote the fictitious name and address I gave him in his ledger.

"No, I have no love affair," I replied, smiling at his hesitancy. "There is no good cause for any gloomy feelings."

This seemed to relieve the doctor, and he gave me the prescriptions and cheered me up by saying if I only obeyed my doctor I would soon feel better and soon be well.

I paid him the usual \$5 for his information. DR. WILLY MEYER, 105 EAST FORTY STREET, N. Y.

Handwritten notes:
 A. W. Starr 0.5
 Dr. Meyer 0.4
 Dr. McNeill 0.3
 Dr. Smith 0.2
 Dr. Delafield 0.1
 Dr. Starr 0.5
 Dr. Meyer 0.4
 Dr. McNeill 0.3
 Dr. Smith 0.2
 Dr. Delafield 0.1

THE TRANSLATED PRESCRIPTION.
 Extract of Digitalis, 5 decigrammes.
 Extract of the root of Sassafras, ʒss.
 Arsenious acid, ʒss.
 M-phosphate of gentian, ʒss.
 Make into 20 pills, take 1 pill three times a day as directed.
 Dilute hydrochloric acid, ʒss.
 Take 5 drops in half a glass of water after the pill.
 Phenacetin, 5 decigrammes.
 Dispense 10 such powders in a gelatine capsule.
 One capsule twice a day.

I had caught the mania by this time, and I decided to consult more physicians and learn more about myself. From Dr. Meyer's I drove to Dr. Francis Delafield's, 12 West Thirty-second street.

Dr. Delafield, like Dr. Smith, said I would have to visit him several times before he could decide just what was the proper treatment for my case. I gave him the same symptoms I had told the others, and he asked some few—very few—questions about my blood and sleep and what and how I ate.

"DYSPEPSIA," SAYS DR. DELAFIELD. "You have dyspepsia," was his verdict—ones more added to my already long list.

"The course of treatment will be severe, and you will not like it at all," he said while writing out a prescription. "You must abstain from coffee and tea. Do you eat candy? No? Well, I should not have allowed you to do so."

"Take this medicine according to directions," he said, handing me the prescription. "You must not eat anything except a thin slice of toast with the scrapings of beef on it three times a day, and don't drink any more water than is absolutely necessary to wash the toast down. I know it isn't pleasant, and you won't like it," he added, seeing me make a very face, "but you must do it if you want to get well."

HOW IS THIS, MESSRS. DOCTORS? I wondered what Dr. Meyer, who told me to eat five times a day, would say if he could hear Dr. Delafield tell me to live daily on three slices of toast with a thin spreading of beef?

I put Dr. Delafield's prescription carefully in my purse, paid my fee of \$5 and went forth to consult another doctor.

FRANCIS DELAFIELD, M. D., 12 WEST 32ND STREET.

Handwritten notes:
 P. H. Starr 30
 Dr. Meyer 30
 Dr. McNeill 30
 Dr. Smith 30
 Dr. Delafield 30

