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THE LEPERS OF TRACADIE.

A DAY IN THE LAZARETTO IN NORTHEAST NEW BRUNSWICK.

(From the New York Sun.)

Miramichi is a district in northeastern New Brunswick, about half way between New York and Greenland. Over half a century ago one Gardner, a Scotchman, and a resident of the town saw a tawny-colored spot on his wife's forehead. Anon there were ominous swellings at the corners of her eyes. Then the tentacles of her fingers began to stiffen and contract until her hands resembled bird's claws. The two-colored spots were doubled and quadrupled. The husband sought the advice of Dr. Mackey, a young medical graduate. This physician made a careful study of the disease. It baffled his skill. He could give it no name. He found nothing like it on the medical calendar. It seemed beyond the reach of remedies. So engrossed was he in his study that he grew thin and pale. Sleepless nights were passed. To add to his distraction, his attention was directed to a second case. The victim was a Mrs. Landry, living seventy-five miles from Miramichi. Of French extraction, she was in no way related to Mrs. Gardner. Fawn-colored spots appeared upon her body. Her skin became as transparent and as scaly as singeing. The contraction of the fingers and the ominous swelling of the eyes were there. There were the same aches and pains as in the case of Mrs. Gardner. The physician was nonplussed. At the end of his medical rope, determined to ascertain the true character of the disease, he sold his little property and went to Europe. He travelled through England, France, and Germany, and gleaned no information. Acting up on a hint received in Paris, he passed through Denmark into Norway. Near the coast, where the main staple of food was dried fish and salt meats, he visited a lazaretto. His inmates were immured for life. There was no mistaking the symptoms. They were suffering from the same disease as Mrs. Gardner and Mrs. Landry. It was leprous, and incurable.

On his return to Miramichi Dr. Mackey found the scourge eating into the little community like a cancer. Prompt action was necessary. Mrs. Gardner's fingers had dropped off at the joints, and her skin was dry and flaky. Mrs. Landry was in a worse condition. Her eyesight was gone, and she exhibited unmistakable symptoms of elephantiasis. The young physician sounded the alarm. The interest of the oldest practitioners was aroused. One or two scoffed at the idea of leprosy, and asserted that the disease would yield to remedies employed in scrofulous and similar complaints. Their experiments, however, verified the young doctor's discovery, and the community was thoroughly startled. It was composed mainly of descendants of the old French settlers. The English language was not much spoken. Families had married and intermarried for nearly two centuries, until whole parishes were devoted. The result was similar to that attending the overbreeding of animals. The blood became overheated and impure. Its impurities were quickened by a diet of salt meats and dried fish, and a genuine leprosy crept to the surface. There were 78 cases in one section within twelve months.

The Provincial Parliament was spurred to action under the personal appeals of the members from Miramichi. A bill establishing a lazaretto was passed. Shelldrake Island, dotting a bay on the northeast coast of the province, was the spot selected. It was an isolated island, off all lines of travel. Here buildings were erected, with barred windows. A strict search for all tainted with leprosy was made, and they were confined on this island. Scores of the unfortunate wretches were captured. The lazaretto was under the charge of two men, who seemed to be destitute of all feeling. No care was given the lepers. They were mostly ignorant French Canadians, who had eked out a living by cultivating the thin soil and by fishing. Cleanliness was not a virtue. They were neither bathed nor dieted. Clean underclothing was distributed thrice a year. The most abject and squalid never removed their clothing, but drew their clean shirts over their old ones at each distribution. Saxes were not separated. The lazaretto was a virtual prison for life. Its inmates rotted like murrain sheep. It was the horror of the adjacent parishes. Occasionally a poor wretch escaped, and appeared to those outside for protection. Every face was turned from him. He desecrated everything that he touched. Even the fence that he leaned against while telling his pitiful story was contaminated. If he drank from a spring the spring was poisoned. If a cup of milk was given him the cup was broken as soon as drawn. A walking upas tree, freighted with the atmosphere with its poison, would not have been regarded with more horror. He was either recaptured or driven back to the lazaretto by hunger.

We ascended the porch. Passing into the entry was stood before a door with a wicket. The words:

PERSONNE N'ESTR'ICI S'IL NE VEUT: AMER JESUS CHRIST.

were above the door. Father Babineau rang the bell. A second afterward the white face of a Sister of Mercy appeared at the open wicket. The Father spoke to her in French and she opened the door. We were ushered into a reception room under the motto:

The victims of the disease are at first visited by their near relatives, but as the disease progresses, they are removed to the institution at the same time. They were cousins. Wives who have had children by leprosy husbands have married on the death of their husbands. Some of the children by the first husband were infected, and those by the second did not appear until the third generation. Then it broke out on the body of a man of herculean strength. The natives families of French descent seem to be satisfied it is contagious. They gaze at the lazaretto from the outside, and very few say a word.

The lepers all express a willingness to work, but many of them are unable to do so. The Sisters are allowed only a pittance to feed them. They have food on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, and fish on Friday. Seldom, if ever, do they see fresh meat. Their abhor mutton and veal. Fresh pork is the most costly eaten. Three of the lepers play the violin, and each appears to be a musician. The voice is hoarse. When the weather is dry, those who are able frequently dance from morning until night. These who first enter the institution complain of a drowsy feeling, and sleep days and nights, hours at a stretch. The lungs become affected. The hair falls out of the eyebrows. The voice is hoarse. In some cases there is a loss of all feeling in the hands and arms. A few retain their wits, and some are able to do manual labor, but the majority are unable to do so. They are kept on the main floor and the women on the floor above. Rarely do they see each other. There is a little room on each floor where the Sisters officiate as wardens. There is not a man about the establishment who is not a leper. The Sisters are allowed a meagre stipend, and a servant boy. Aside from this they do all the work. In the dormitories the beds are arranged side by side like beds in a hospital. Old-fashioned wooden beds with iron bedsteads. The floors are scrubbed once a day. Everything is scrupulously clean. Each patient has an oratory, where the afflicted say their prayers on retiring and arising. The walls are covered with pictures of saints and religious notices in the French language. Here is a specimen.

POUR UN BON ŒIL
DIEU ESTRE EN LOUANGES

which seems hardly applicable to persons suffering a life of misery. There is no specified dress for either the male or female lepers, and unaccustomed eyes would be surprised to glimpse some of them from ordinary persons.

As we entered the male ward one of the unfortunate was arising from dinner. It was plain board table, destitute of cloth and napkins, and furnished with tin plates, cups, and spoons. On an iron cot within ten feet of the table sat a pitiful object. His flesh looked like flakes of sulphur moulded into the shape of a man. He had been in bed over a year. Although but 15 years old he looked like a man of 70. Nothing in the wards at Blackwell's Island equals this scene; yet the sisters said that the patient was much better than he had been. As we entered the apartment a heavy black bear led man came in a blue woollen shirt turned his face from us, picked up a short black clay pipe, and moved into the sunlight through the open door. Poor fellow, his misfortunes were his own, and he sought no sympathy from the outer world. He was Michael Duron, the lone fisherman, who had expressed the fear of being someone before entering the lazaretto. The windows were open and a cool breeze from the sea was felt.

of my eyes," he continued. They were of a light orange color. He pointed to the slight swellings below the temples, and then said: "All your doubts would be removed if you saw my leg. This spring I was long-trip the northward branch of the Miramichi. One night, when I was going to bed near Cunard's Lodges, I saw a yellow spot on my leg. I paid no attention to it, supposing it came from wading so much in the cold water. Two or three days afterward another spot appeared near the first one. I began to have strange pains in my legs, and could not get enough sleep. Within a week I noticed a spot on my breast, and the pains increased, and I thought I had rheumatism. I took some medicine for it, but it did me no good. At last I came over here, by the advice of a comrade, to see the Sisters, and to find out what was the matter with me. They told me that I had the disease, and here I am for life." Noel told his sad story with an erect head. He had not been in the lazaretto long enough to acquire the dejected look of his fellow-sufferers, but the shadow on his face indicated that he was surely coming.

He is a fair violinist, and undoubtedly vents much of his sadness through his fingers in his eyes. He had been a spoke of the kindness of the Sisters. He had not been in the lazaretto long enough to acquire the dejected look of his fellow-sufferers, but the shadow on his face indicated that he was surely coming. He is a fair violinist, and undoubtedly vents much of his sadness through his fingers in his eyes. He had been a spoke of the kindness of the Sisters. He had not been in the lazaretto long enough to acquire the dejected look of his fellow-sufferers, but the shadow on his face indicated that he was surely coming.

The Sisters then conducted us upstairs to the female ward. Fourteen women and six girls, in stages of amputation, stood in line with hands clasped and eyes cast down. Sisters and cousins were among them. All were in some way related to the men here. Some were supposed to be communicative. One woman, nearly eighty years old, overheard Sister Noel calling our attention to the fact that she was concealing her hands under her apron. She flung up her apron with spiteful energy and exhibited two wretched stumps of fingers. The action was bitter words. She had no hands. Her heart was touched by our expressions of sympathy. She was the woman released from Shelldrake Island forty years ago under the supposition that she had been cured. She called to her side her daughter, a pleasant-looking woman, 24 years old. Her fingers were talons in appearance, and her hands were withering, losing the joint one by one, the same as her mother's had done. In the dormitory we saw a female dwarf only 28 years old. She looked to be 90. Her eyes were sightless, and her face shapen and totally unlike the face of a human being. It was the face of a person suffering from the worst form of elephantiasis. Despite our remonstrances she arose to receive us. Sad at heart, we turned away. The afflicted woman, in low tones, bade us good-by as we went. We were very feeble.

The Sisters then showed us the kitchen, the range, the electric bells, the neat apothecary shop, and the exquisite chapel with its stained glass windows and Choir. This chapel is latticed on either side. Behind the lattice, on the right of the altar, the Sisters hear mass. Half a dozen benches fill the main body of the little chapel, and are evidently used by the male lepers. A solitary woman bearing marks of the disease was on her knees behind the left lattice, counting her beads and praying. Everything throughout the building was clean and neat. The floors were scrubbed as white as marble, the great range shone with stove polish, there was not a greasy spot on the clothes of any of the lepers, the aprons and kerchiefs of the women were as white as snow, and the windows were as clean as the plate glass of Simpson, Crawford & Simpson's store. The oratories were simple but attractive. Delicate efforts at ornamentation bespoke the excessive care by the Sisters. There is only one impediment to the comfort of the beings buried alive. It is the parsimony of Sir John A. McDonald's Government. The buildings disgrace the five million people who are taxed to support his Government. The ceilings are low, and the rooms are ill-ventilated. The Sisters work to great disadvantage. All that they receive is spent upon the immured lepers. They are now building a dormitory for the females at their own expense. The isolation of the lazaretto is a complete and visitors are so few that it wants do not reach the public ear. Surely there ought to be one man in the Parliament of the Dominion of Canada to champion the interests of the poor men and women whose life imprisonment is a punishment for no crime, although confined for the protection of the community.

Out again in God's free air we cast our eyes toward Mr. Young's mansion. Poor Noel and four of his companions stood in the yard awaiting us. "Gentlemen," said Noel, approaching with hat in hand, "I beg your pardon, but my companions can't speak English. This poor man," pointing to the heavy-bearded man who had left the dining table on our entrance, "is bleeding at the lungs. He thought that one of you might be a doctor, and that you could tell him what to do for it. He has been on the sea, but he can't stand the sea air any longer, because his lungs are so weak." We could give him no encouragement. Our faces betrayed Noel's translation of what was said. The bearded man walked back to the fence and turned his back to the sea. Noel accompanied us to the end of the lane leading to the highway. It was the boundary of the leper's world. The two leprous boys walked at our side. One said, "Please, sir, give me a penny." He got half a dollar, and the other boy was not forgotten. If a bag of gold dropped from the sky they could not have been more surprised. They shot off towards the lazaretto with the speed of the wind. You seem surprised to see me here," he said, "because you do not see marks of the disease. Look at my hands," showing his palms. All the lines of his hands seem to have been treated with silver. The pores of the skin listened as though dusted with silver. "Look at the whites

pared him with William H. Vanderbilt, and at that moment probably speeding Mandrake, soraxopa, and with Jay Gould lolling on the silk cushions of his princely home on the Hudson. An hour's interest in Vander-bit's fortune would strew this agonizing life with humble luxuries, and a million part of Jay Gould's fortune make it immeasurably happy. If honesty and industry are any gauge of fortune, what had honest, hard-handed Noel done that his fate should be so much different from theirs?

Noel saw that we were about to part with him. All his longings, fears, and wishes gushed to his lips. "My God," he said, "why can't I get well? I have worked hard. I have never dissipated. I bathe every day. I am clean. I don't see why I can't get well. Sometimes I think that it is not the leprosy (it was the first and only time that he used the word) spoken of in the Bible. I've heard of a man who had the same disease, and who was cured by a doctor who said it was the black scurry. If I was cured for the black scurry I believe I'd get well. They say that there is a doctor in Chatham who can cure us. I've lain awake at night studying up a plan to get to him so that I might ask him to cure me. I have no money, but I would work hard to pay him if he would only cure me. Do you know that at times I can't help thinking that we are not cured because some one is making money by keeping us here? I know it isn't so, for as it is used to be when they had a fence with sharp spikes at the top surrounding the yard. Some of the men here have told me how they used to treat them. The Sisters have changed all that. I have no word of complaint against them. God bless them, they do all they can for us. It is not their fault, nor is it our fault that we are here."

We were standing at the end of the lane. The church was out, and a cloud of dust indicated the march out of the churchgoers homeward. The sun had passed the meridian. A dinner bell rang. Noel started as though awakened from sleep. "I beg your pardon gentlemen," he said, removing his hat, "for detaining you from dinner. I see so few of you understand our situation, that I get myself when I meet them." Tears were in his eyes. "Come again and see me if you ever revisit the country. God help me, but it will be many a long day and many a long night before I forget your faces." He turned and walked slowly down the lane, the hot sun casting his shadow before him, and I saw no more.

THE PANAMA EARTHQUAKE.

The effects of the earthquake were very severe on the whole Isthmus of Panama. Ten miles of the Panama Railway are impassable. Bridges are damaged and abutments cracked. The damage amounts to over \$100,000. This is partly estimated. Rails were bent in places by the earthquake. At other places steel tracts was sunken. A freight building of stone in Aspinwall is reported to be destroyed. One man was killed there. Several small shocks occurred in Panama yesterday at 11.20 a. m., 2.15 and 4.19 p. m. There was a distinct movement last night at 11.50 and another at 3 o'clock this morning that brought down more ruins. No lives were lost in Panama. The ocean at Aspinwall and Panama was quiet. The United States steamer Iroquois dragged her anchor in Panama, perhaps by movements of the bottom.

RECENT DISTURBANCES.

Mr. Robert Gray, Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, and chief of the staff of the India Rubber and Telegraph Works, of Silvertown and London, in charge of its cable ships here in Panama with Mr. Joseph Stornes, the Engineer and General Manager of the Central and South American Telegraph Company, report an earthquake in the Bay of Panama some six weeks ago. It was felt on the Silvertown cable ship. Mr. Gray also reports another up the coast, likewise felt on board, following it. Mr. William Le Blanc reports several small shocks for three days preceding the severe earthquake.

The West India and Panama cable is reported broken. There have been small shocks in Aspinwall. This is sent by the courtesy of the Central and South American Telegraph Company, whose cables are not yet open for business, but will probably be so toward the end of September.

"What an economy!" began Brother Gardner, as he got a brace for his feet and looked himself in the left eye. "I answer that economy an dear of extracting de most value for de least money. Economy an dear of making time count. Take de plumber for instance. All he wants to begin life on an solder-in, a fire-pot an' a bar of solder. Economy does de rest. He gets pay for the hours he works. Likewise, moreover, fur his helper. Time an cash to him. Ebery five minutes gone while he an huntin' fur a leak an so much added to his capital. Take de house painter. Ebery minute he gains an dead cash. He could save ten cents a day by economin' on cigars, but he don't have to. He can save fifty by economin' on de man who hires him half a day."

A new contribution basket has been invented which rings a gong every time a button without an eye ora ten-cent piece with an eye is dropped into it. The first Sunday it was tried in an Amsterdam church it went off like a Gatling gun the whole round trip.