

PATHFINDER

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WOMEN

"TYPHOID MARY"



New York has a strange exile. She is Mary Mallon. Now in her sixties, this woman has been isolated on North Brother Island, way up the East River, for 17 years and must spend the rest of her life there. It was through no criminal or overt act on her part that she was ordered quarantined for the rest of her days. Rather it was because she was found to be a human typhoid carrier, endangering public health. No less than 57 cases of typhoid, several of which resulted fatally, were traced to her. This is what gave her the nickname of "Typhoid Mary." At that time she was a cook and the disease, to which she herself is immune, was transmitted by food which she handled. So the health authorities had to isolate her, but not without much bitterness on her part, and several instances of determined physical opposition. But now, as "Typhoid Mary" says, she "is used to it" and evinces a willingness to put up with fate. She lives in a small cottage and prepares her own meals. Until a year and a half ago her chief interest was a pet dog. But it died and since then she has been "all broke up." Occasionally she is permitted to leave the island for a holiday in the big city on her promise not to touch any food on her "day off."

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