

Our eyes meet. What we simultaneously read in them is one word—

MARINA!

Her pale lashes flicker, her full lids droop—I stand motionless.

I win!

Nay, Jean, not I. My innocence, my courage, my honour, (depravity, audacity, disloyalty, in official language), what are they worth when weighed in the balance with power? Nothing, nothing. Had I been friendless, and poor in spirit and this world's goods, should I not have been despised, despitefully used, discharged. And yet we wonder that the children of this world make unto themselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness!

The silence is broken by the Matron—

"You are to go on duty in Doris Ward" (my heart gives a great leap for joy), "and I hope you will never be accused of such grave faults again."

"Falsely accused, Matron," I reply.

As I turn to go, she unlocks a drawer, takes from thence a large official diary, and unlocks it with a key. I leave her doubtless engaged in the performance of a most congenial duty—placing to the discredit of Probationer Graham a full and sufficient record of all her enormities, founded on false accusations, denied and yet accepted, and recorded for all future time *in case of need*. This veritable black book is the grossest form of intimidation—the most unjustifiable form of injustice—which has existed in any institution since the Inquisition. It is to be hoped that the day will come when this method of privileged slander will be exposed in a court of law and made a criminal offence, and forbidden and punished as all other forms of malicious libel are forbidden and punished. There is a traditional story here—that one Probationer—afterwards a Sister (she was wealthy)—was for some months singled out for special favour in high quarters; she spent many hours in the Matron's private house, went in and

out with her—their holidays were passed together. Later on, a coolness arose, and finally this lady was advised by one of the medical staff to resign and winter abroad. She returned to England in the spring, and applied for one post after another, referring to the Great Eastern for a reference concerning her training and character. Somehow, she could obtain no work, and after her services were refused for one appointment after another, her suspicions were aroused, and she interviewed the last Superintendent to whom she had applied—a lady who was just enough to place the privileged communication received from our Matron and marked private, before her. It ran somewhat like this:—

"MADAM,—Referring to the Official Register of Nurses concerning Miss —, I find her record far from satisfactory during her residence here. Miss — entered this Hospital for training in July, 188—, and after working in connection with this Institution in various capacities for three years, was awarded a certificate. During that period, I received many verbal complaints of her conduct from the Sisters under whom she worked; she was considered by them unpunctual, slovenly in person, flighty in manner with the male sex, dainty concerning her food, untidy in her bedroom, given to frivolous gossip, her veracity not of the strictest. You will, I feel sure, consider this letter as confidential, otherwise you would recognise the impossibility of one Matron giving a true report to another."

You can guess now what sort of a character some future Matron will find in this Register concerning

Your loving and indignant,

PHYLIS.

P.S.—You are wise not to mention these episodes to the Dad, Dear old thing. Oh! the heroic Dr. Fulton is engaged to Nurse Carew. Happy woman. He is just the sort of man—but no—I am far too spiteful to develop into anything but a spinster of the most pronounced type.

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"Yours faithfully—, M.R.C.P.E., &c."

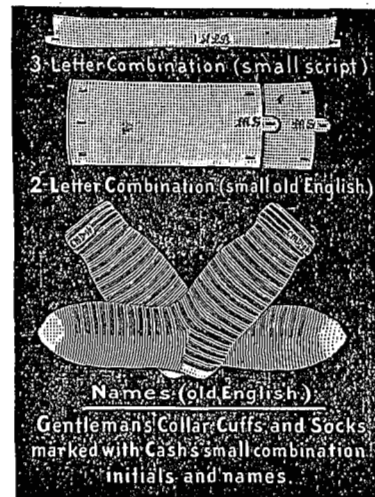
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