

"burning questions" of late in the RECORD, but they are pale glimmers of light compared with the burning condition of my temperature at this present moment. To plunge *in medias res* I will tell you at once the cause of all this inflammation of feeling. Some five years since I entered at a well-known London Training School (which I name in my private letter to you) and have successfully and with great credit to myself passed up through the various stages of development from the chrysalis condition of the pro. to the more active state of the Staff-Nurse, with her aspirations of winging a flight towards Sister and onwards to the gorgeous perfection of Matronship.

But, on my way upwards, moth-like, I was attracted towards the flame, I fluttered about, and hesitated, and—fell in love with a House-Surgeon. We became engaged as any other conventional young people might have done, and all would have gone well towards the "marriage bell" only that in a fit of conscientiousness, and perhaps with a vague little yearning for sympathy I confided the fact to Matron.

"I am very sorry, Nurse, that you have told me this. I would much rather not have known it, because I must at once ask you to resign. You know we have a general rule that all Nurses who become engaged to any member of the staff, must at once leave the Hospital." "Will he have to leave?" I asked, knowing that to do so would place a serious bar on his ambitions. "We have no rule of that kind about the medical staff," said the Matron, who in reality is very sympathetic with us in our affairs of the sentiments.

"One law for the man and another for the woman," said I in the bitterness of my heart, reflecting, now it was too late, that it would be most awkward for me to have to leave the Hospital at this time.

My father is a poor clergyman with many children to provide for, and I am very unwilling after the past five years of self-help and independence to go home and add, even for a short time, to his responsibilities. But Matron says that go I must, and Jack (that's my house-surgeon) is awfully sorry that he is not in a position to marry me for another year or so. So please, kind Editor, excuse my temper, which I must confess is never of the sweetest kind, and print my hard case as a warning to Nurses not to be too ready to confide their engagements to such hard-hearted authorities.

While I quite realise that complications might arise from the billing and cooing of the medical and nursing staffs under the stimulus of an engagement, I think it would be quite time enough for action to be taken in the matter when any difficulty arose. Any Nurse with a very small share of good breeding would be very careful not to obtrude her romantic relations with a medical officer. Most young men under the circumstances of an engagement, provided they had any pretensions to being gentlemen, would particularly guard against anything in their conduct in the wards which could excite any criticism. If the couple chose to depart from the unwritten laws of good manners, and chose to allow their intimacy to interfere with their professional bearing and behaviour I grant that the authorities would be acting perfectly within their province in requesting one or both of them to resign.

But that a Nurse whose method and conduct during a five years' residence in a Hospital has been shown to be above reproach, should be requested to leave on the ground of her engagement to one of the medical staff, is to my mind a distinct grievance, as to which it is very important we should get a general consensus of feeling. I shall be very glad if some other Nurses will write their experiences and give their views on the question.

A NURSE IN AN UNPLEASANT POSITION.

CIVIL GOVERNMENT HOSPITAL, KANDY.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM, As a member of the Royal British Nurses' Association, I am writing to let you know how its Nurses are protected by Government in this island of Ceylon.

Amid the loveliest of surroundings we can endorse Bishop Hebers' statement "where only man is vile." After belonging to the Universities' Mission to Central Africa for five years, I offered my voluntary help to the Sisters of East Grinstead who had undertaken the nursing of this Hospital. Miss H. came with me, and together with Dr. M. we have been trying to improve the Nursing, together with the general *morale* of the place.

While Miss H. was on duty as Night Superintendent, she found the morality in the administration block was at a very low ebb. It was my turn to go on next, and I said I could not do so if Dr. G., the Head of the Hospital, was not told. He said it "was as much as his place was worth" not to inform the Colonial Surgeon. The matter was then laid before the Colonial Surgeon and he saw the House Surgeon at 10 a.m. one day, and on his denying the charge, called for a public investigation. She heard of this five minutes before it took place in the afternoon. The House Surgeon, meanwhile, had called up the attendants, the kangany, etc., who are all in his power, and prepared his—defence?

Not at all. The subject in hand was scarcely alluded to, but a parcel of lies about Miss H. were told. His line was not clear; the first day his endeavour was to prove Miss H. did not like him and had a spite against him. When the investigation was continued next day, his line was that Miss H. was very much in love with him. (The conceit of Burghus is without parallel.)

The result of the enquiry were sheets of foolscap covered with ungrammatical and incoherent English, the burden of which ran that Miss H. had kissed him, that she had done so many times; not being at all shy, it had always been done in public, and before witnesses (witnesses here can be bought for sixpence). His friend the steward had seen him kissed, and had also, and upon many occasions, been also kissed himself.

We thought very little of all this tissue of lies, but what was our unbounded astonishment and disgust when our Principal Colonial Medical Officer, Dr. K., came and stated to Dr. M. that both he and the Governor, Englishmen, actually believed this impossible story—that an English lady had kissed a black, Burghu house-surgeon.

You will not be surprised to hear we sent in our resignations to Government immediately, and Miss H. wrote that she considered she had been grossly insulted. We are three Europeans in the midst of an Augean stable, which we are trying to cleanse. If our word is doubted, and we are made subjects of lying slanders, and are unsupported by our chiefs, no possible good can be done. This man, the House Surgeon, had thrown himself down like a native, begging and praying for the sake of a mother and sister whom he had to support, that Miss H. would say nothing about what she had seen and heard, as it would be his ruin.

Miss H. has gone to nurse the wife of H. E. the General, which shows that others treat these statements with the contempt they deserve.

I think, for the sake of other Nurses who might come here, they should know what is the risk of having their fair name dragged in the mire. If you see well will you insert this letter in the NURSING RECORD.

I remain,

Yours faithfully,

S. C. McLAUGHLIN.

Civil Government Hospital, Kandy,
March 29th, 1895.

[It would appear from the above letter that these ladies have had a very trying experience. It is surely an unjustifiable thing that the reputation of English women should be in the hands of Natives—especially of Natives whose testimony Miss McLaughlin affirms can be bought for sixpence! A more unpleasant position than that in which Miss H. found herself, can hardly be imagined, but I think the "law of probabilities" will acquit her, even in the eyes of strangers.

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