

want putting in more lights than one. Are you anything of a lawyer? I never looked upon this ere vile body as of any value before. We'll do it, and you shall be witness. I feel quite perked up like."

No Sister appears at eight to read prayers; indeed it is nine before Sister Matthew appears out of her room, with papers in hand, ready to report to the office. Before that hour apparent order is regained. The men have hopped back into bed. The outside of the platter is fairly decent, but the drawers, the cupboards, the lockers, and, I may add, amongst other items of Ward furniture, *the patients*, are sadly, sadly neglected. The ablutions of those patients, who are helpless, are of the most cursory order; a pint of tepid water in a tin bowl and the round towel being taken round from patient to patient: face and hands are dabbed and dried. How different to the careful washing, limb by limb, the comforting warm towels insisted upon by Sister Damian as the most refreshing and healthy attention, when skilfully performed, which a Nurse can bestow upon a patient! I found out later that several of the patients are suffering from bed-sores, which are accepted in Matthew as inevitable.

Sister Matthew is known here as the Prime Minister, and is a *persona grata* at the Office. She keeps the somewhat inert monarch up to the mark, and writes daily long and detailed reports of scandals (great and small) which occur, or are invented, during the constant and prolonged holidays of the Ruler of our Destinies. Many of these documents, I believe, are filed, duly copied into the Black Book, and, without further proof or inquiry, used mercilessly, if needs be, against the unconscious offender. Doubtless a long list of my delinquencies is already there recorded.

Jean, *some day that dastardly and lying document must be cast into the flames.*

Sister Matthew is a widow; very tall and straight; her long upper lip is hideous; her voice loud and harsh. She seems to me devoid of every womanly grace, and enjoys favour for the success of her method of reducing female humanity to pulp. A poor girl, fresh from the freedom of her own dear home, enters this Hospital, commits a petty breach of etiquette—she says "Good morning!" to a cheery House Physician on the stairs; she forgets to fly from one end of the Ward to the other, to open a door to the Matron; she fails to carry out directions which a neglectful senior forgets to give; and more unpardonable than all, she expresses an opinion or reads *The Record*.

Down comes the sword of Damocles!

At breakfast Night Sister opens the little red book, and reads (always with regret) "To Matthew," "To Regent," and in a few months that place knows them no more.

A word on the qualifications of this trainer of youth. She entered the Hospital for training, worked on day duty for twelve months as a Probationer in *medical Wards* only; was then appointed Night Sister or Superintendent of four hundred sick people—the majority surgical and obstetric patients—*for one month*, and after a few weeks was made Sister of Matthew Ward. At the end of another year she was awarded a first-class Certificate, signed by Matron, Chairman, and Medical Staff, saying that she had completed her full term of two years' training in the Medical and *Surgical Wards* of this Hospital, both on day and *night duty*!!!

Further comment is unnecessary.

Her system of working a Ward of thirty-four beds is to have no Staff Nurse—in other words, no person to whom her ignorance would be too apparent; a continuous relay of ignorant Probationers are placed on duty in this Ward. As you can imagine, the confusion is worse confounded, and is a case of the blind leading the blind, and if Dr. Grey Mather, the Visiting Physician, was not the most scientific and least observant person in the world, a crisis must have long ago ensued. More anon.

Adieu, dear Jean!—Yours,

PHYLLIS.

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No. 35.

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