

(2485)

Landby
May 1st 1888

Sir,
Mr. Gayle has desired
me to remind you of your
kind promise to attend the
Meeting at the Vicar's School
on Thursday, May 3rd
at 7.30 P.M.

I am

Sir,

Your obedient servant-

Carl. Pitt Rivers
Rushmore
James Burt

74853

Cliffe
Dorchester
Worcester
May 4. 88

Dear General Pitt Rivers,

You will I hope have received my circular letter about the General Meeting at the Hospital Dorchester on Wednesday next. If you are in Dorset can you make it convenient to come down and vote for whichever may appear to you the better cause. The matter is urgent, & should be settled definitively.

Yours truly
Edward Kinderley

IMPORTANT.

DORSET COUNTY HOSPITAL.

DEAR SIR,--

A General Meeting of the Governors of this Hospital will be held at DORCHESTER on WEDNESDAY, the 9th of MAY, at 12 o'clock, at which your attendance is most earnestly requested.

The meeting is called by the Managing Committee, that the Governors may give their decision upon a question which has for more than three years been agitated between two of the Medical Staff on one side, and the Committee on the other. The point at issue is as to the position of the Matron in the Hospital; whether she shall, in accordance with the wording of the Rule 89, "be responsible, subject to direction from the House Surgeon and Medical Officers, for all that concerns the nursing and exercise of the patients, and the administration of the prescribed diet and remedies;" or whether she shall be regarded as Housekeeper only.

The Committee have for some years past considered that it was desirable to take advantage of the new class of Matrons who of late years have come into existence. These Matrons, after passing from girlhood through a regular course of training in Hospitals, have qualified themselves in the highest grade of nurses, and should be fully competent to superintend the nurses in their office in the wards. The Committee, considering the immense advantage to the patients and to the general welfare of the Hospital to be derived from this opening, and being keenly alive to the many abuses to which, under the old system of untrained Matrons the Hospital had in previous years been subject, have for more than three years endeavoured to introduce the new class of Matron. But this endeavour has been persistently opposed by the Physician (Dr. Lush) and one of the Surgeons (Mr. Good). The Committee have endeavoured by all the means in their power to persuade these two gentlemen to accept their views on this subject, but without avail; and they now feel that the time has come when the Governors should be called upon to decide the question between them.

I therefore on the part of the Committee, venture to express an earnest hope that you may be able to attend the General Meeting, and that in the mean time you will kindly abstain from any promise of support to either cause until you have fully heard the merits of the case.

It may be well that I should say that, as far as I understand the wording of the rules, on this occasion none but those who attend the meeting can vote; that there can be no proxies; that the vote will be first taken by a show of hands; and that if a poll is demanded the cumulative vote (by which each Governor would be entitled to one vote for each guinea of subscription or for each £25 of donation) would then come into operation.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

EDWD. L. KINDERSLEY,

Chairman of Committee.

Dorset County Hospital, March 17th, 1888.

DEAR SIR,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of yesterday's date enclosing copies of resolution of the Hospital Committee.

Yours faithfully,
(Signed) WILLIAM VAWDREY LUSH.

E. L. Kindersley, Esq., Clyffe, Dorchester.

(COPY.)

Dorset County Hospital, April 5th, 1888.

SIR,—I beg to inform you that to-day's meeting has been adjourned till Thursday, 19th, at 12 o'clock noon.

Business.

Dismissal of the House-Surgeon and a request to Dr. Lush and Mr. Good to resign their appointment to the Hospital, and further to consider a letter from the Matron resigning her office.

Yours obediently,
W. E. GROVES,
Clerk.

Fordington Green, Dorchester, April 19th, 1888.

DEAR SIR,—I am requested by the Committee of Management of the Dorset County Hospital to forward you the following proposal made and passed in Committee to-day :—

Proposed by the Chairman, and seconded by Major Clapcott, "That in consideration of his failure to give a reply to the request of the Committee of March 15th, 1888, that he would signify his hearty acceptance of the resolution of the Committee of April 14th, 1887, with regard to the presence of the Matron in the Wards as head of the nursing department Dr. Lush be requested to resign the Office of Physician of this Hospital."

Carried 16 to 3.

It was further resolved that in sending you copy of the above resolution a request be made that a definite answer may be received at the Hospital not later than Wednesday, April 25th, and an intimation that any failure in that respect would be regarded as tantamount to a refusal.

I am, dear Sir,
Yours faithfully,
(Signed) WALTER E. GROVES,
Clerk.

Dr. Lush.

12, Frederick-place, Weymouth, April 20th, 1888.

SIR,—I have duly received your letter of yesterday's date communicating a request from the Committee of Management that I should resign my Office of Physician to the Dorset County Hospital, but as I am at a loss to discover any grounds for this request I must decline to make any such resignation.

Yours faithfully,
(Signed) WILLIAM VAWDREY LUSH.

Mr. Walter E. Groves, Clerk to the County Hospital,
Dorchester.

Appendix.

(COPY OF LETTER RECEIVED MAY, 1887.)

35, Earl's-court Gardens, South Kensington, May 16th.

DEAR DR. LUSH,—I am quite at a loss to understand what can have given rise to such an idea that you had anything to do with my leaving Dorchester. I am sure I never received anything but kindness and consideration from you. I left entirely from family reasons—owing to the illness of my sister. I wished to live near her. I am so sorry that anything so untrue should have been said.

With kind regards,

I remain,
Yours truly,
(Signed) L. STRANGE.

Dorset County Hospital.

SIR,—I was unable to return on Saturday, in accordance with leave granted me on Thursday last, being prevented by illness from continuing my journey until Saturday morning. I shall be obliged to make repeated journeys to London; this I do not feel able to do and at the same time continue my duties here; therefore I ask the Committee to accept my resignation and allow me to leave a *locum tenens* in my place until my term of office shall expire. Bearing in mind the expenses connected with my previous resignation this year, and being anxious that the Hospital shall suffer as little pecuniary loss as possible, I have enclosed a donation of £10 for the Hospital funds.

Believe me, Sir,
Yours truly,
(Signed) K. TWINING.

Nov. 24th, 1886.

(COPY.)

GENTLEMEN,—Although I have been here but a short time I must ask you to please accept at your meeting to-day my resignation as Matron of the Dorset County Hospital. I am extremely sorry to put you to the inconvenience, but I trust you will think it is a serious matter for myself. I feel, in fairness to another Matron, I ought to draw your attention to the wording of the advertisement as it appeared in the *Lancet*, and cannot help saying it is misleading. The part to which I refer is "to superintend the nursing" (not nurses) and "comfortable (?) furnished apartments." The latter, I admit, could be easily rectified, but the former (as far as I can understand) the Matron has never superintended. If any of the medical staff are present perhaps they will kindly say "whether I am correct or not." The foregoing, added to the facts that the Hospital requires a great deal of re-organisation and improvement, has decided me in taking the step I have, and I can only hope that out of my misfortune good may come to others.

I am, Gentlemen,
Yours faithfully,
(Signed) GRACE E. SACHET.

To the Chairman and Gentlemen of the Dorset County Hospital.

To the Governors of the Dorset County Hospital.

MY LORDS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—The Committee of Management, by a resolution of the 26th inst., have called you together, as their circular states, "For the purpose of deciding the differences now existing between the Committee and two of the Medical Officers as to the position of the Matron in the Wards as head of the Nursing Department and as to their retirement from their present Office."

This circular in itself is ambiguous, and far from explicit, but the Chairman has lost no time in placing his views of the matter before you in a Circular Letter issued yesterday, without date, for no other apparent object than that of influencing your opinions, though, with some degree of inconsistency, he asks you to abstain from any promise of support to either side until you have fully heard the merits of the case.

In ordinary circumstances, and but for the issue of this circular, I should concur with the Chairman in the appeal that he has made to you; but there has been so much said out of doors, and all sorts of unfounded representations have been industriously circulated by members of the Committee on the question at issue, that I feel the time has come when I should no longer remain silent, and that you should be informed of the facts as they stand, and which are incapable of being contradicted.

The Medical Officers referred to are Mr. Ernest Good and myself.

At the end of January last the present Matron, who had been in Office about a month, expressed a desire to know the wishes of the Medical Staff as to her accompanying them in their rounds, and being present in the operating room during Operations. A meeting of the Medical Staff, with an intimation of its object, was convened, but only I and Mr. Good attended, and at such meeting the Matron was informed by us that it was not our wish, though we expressly abstained from any expression of opinion as to her right to do so.

The other Medical Officers did not attend the conference or intimate any disapproval or otherwise of what we had done until after our opinion had been communicated to the Matron.

In consequence of all this we have been called upon by the Committee—1st, to heartily concur in a resolution of theirs which we do not approve of, and, failing our assent, 2ndly, to resign our respective offices of Physician and Surgeon to the Hospital.

The Chairman has not informed you, as I think in common fairness he should have done, that, notwithstanding the expression of our wish to the contrary, the Matron has accompanied me and Mr. Good when visiting our Wards without any hindrance whatever on our part.

The simple truth, however, is that the Committee propose to ask you to expel us from the Hospital after our many years of faithful service, a return which I am unwilling to believe we have deserved, or shall receive at your hands.

I beg to draw your attention to the Hospital rule which declares that "In case any Honorary Medical Officer of the Hospital wilfully absent himself from his duties or be found incapable of discharging them, or in any way misconduct himself, the Committee of Management shall be empowered to call a general meeting of the Governors to consider the propriety of removing him from his Office and of appointing a successor."

Neither Mr. Good nor myself have either absented ourselves from our duties, or been found incapable of performing them, and I rely, with confidence, that you will consider that our entertaining a sincere and conscientious opinion as to what we consider best for the Hospital is not "misconduct" because it happens to conflict with that of the Committee, and the more especially from the fact that the Committee have had no personal experience of Hospital management, and that by the rules the Matron is under the direction of the House-Surgeon and Medical Officers for all that concerns the nursing of the patients.

The Chairman, too, in his anxiety to obtain the uninfluenced judgment of the Governors, has offered his own interpretation of the rule which is to guide the expression of your opinion. It will be sufficient for me to say, at this time, that I do not accept such interpretation, and that I prefer to leave it to be determined by others better qualified to judge between us on such a subject.

The accompanying correspondence will show the manner in which we have been met by the Committee on the questions raised by them *alone*, and to it I respectfully beg your attentive consideration.

I remain,

My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

WILLIAM VAWDREY LUSH, M.D.,
Physician to the Hospital.

Weymouth, 27th April, 1888.

(COPY.)

Dorset County Hospital, Dorchester, March 7th, 1888.

SIR,—At the meeting of the Committee held on Thursday last the following proposition was made and carried :—“The Committee shall, at its rising, be adjourned till Thursday, 15th instant, and that each individual member of the Medical Staff be requested to attend in order that he may express his willingness to carry out with all cordiality the resolution of the Committee concerning Rule 89, passed 14th April, 1887, with respect to the Matron's rights in the Wards, and that notice be sent to each member of the Committee.”

Yours faithfully,
(Signed) WALTER E. GROVES,
Clerk to Committee.

Dr. Lush, Weymouth.

(COPY.)

To the Committee of Management of the Dorset County Hospital.

GENTLEMEN,—(1.) At your meeting on the 1st inst. your Chairman, after expressing his regret at being placed in antagonism with an old friend, addressed me to the following effect :—

“Now, Dr. Lush, I appeal to you to heartily accept the resolution of the Committee (referring to one passed April 14th, 1887) to take the Matron round the wards with you, to explain your cases to her, and treat her as a gentleman would a lady, otherwise either you must go or the Committee must go. If you will not agree to this further steps will be taken.”

I regret that such language, which cannot be regarded otherwise than as a threat, should have been used towards me, and, with all due respect to him, I would express a hope that your Chairman only used it on a momentary impulse, and that on reflection he himself will also regret having done so.

I cannot see anything in the Rules of the Hospital requiring the Medical Officers to take the Matron round the wards with them and to explain their cases to her; and I submit that the request so directly addressed to me to treat her as a gentleman would a lady is capable of an especially offensive construction and of a suggestion that she had been treated otherwise by me.

(2) Major Clapcott stated that three Matrons had resigned because they could not go round the Wards with the doctors. I challenged the correctness of his statement; and I did so then, as I do now, on the following facts :—

During the 15 years of my office there have been five matrons at the Hospital—

1. Miss Bell,
2. Miss Feek,
3. Miss Strange,
4. Miss Twining,
5. Miss Satchett,

Now 1. Miss Bell died in office.

2. Miss Feek was dismissed by the Committee.
3. Miss Strange resigned on account of family reasons and I have her own statement to that effect.
4. Miss Twining resigned on the plea of ill health as will appear by her letter dated Nov. 24th, 1886.
5. Miss Satchett resigned from a combination of reasons as the copy of her letter entered in your minutes of April 14th, 1887, will show.

(For Copies or these Letters see Appendix).

(3) Mr. Pearce-Edgcumbe accused me of uncourteous behaviour towards the present Matron (Miss Nicolay), and this, it will no doubt be remembered, was met by my immediate and positive denial; and I think such denial is entitled to quite as much respect as his assertion.

I enclose for your perusal copies of my correspondence with him relating to this charge, and also of a letter from Mr. Ernest Good in regard to it; and I submit that it is a well understood rule that it is the duty of every one making an assertion which is denied, or even questioned, to proceed to proof at once and not attempt to shelter himself, as Mr. Pearce-Edgcumbe has done, by gross imputations on others and an airy refusal to take “cognisance” of that which tends to make the truth of his original statement more than doubtful.

(4) Whilst fully admitting that the Committee of Management “have the power of making and enforcing bye-laws for the regulation of the Institution, provided they be not inconsistent with the General Rules,” made or approved by the Governors, I cannot see that so long as I obey the Rules so made, as I have always done in the past, do my duty, and in no wise misconduct myself, that they have the right to exact promises from me as to my future conduct; and after the treatment I experienced at the last meeting I attended, out of respect to myself and to the position I occupy I decline to subject myself to a repetition of the same.

I have the honour to be,

Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

(Signed) WILLIAM VAWDREY LUSH,
Physician to the Hospital.

March 15th, 1888.

P.S.—As this matter has become one of public interest I reserve to myself the right to publish this letter, and the accompanying correspondence if I think fit.

[COPY.]

Dorset County Hospital, March 3rd, 1888.

SIR,—At the Hospital Committee Meeting on Thursday last you accused me of rude uncourteous behaviour towards the Matron.

On my emphatically denying your assertion you said that you made it in consequence of a statement made by the Matron herself, and proposed that she should be summoned to corroborate you. I have this day had an interview with her, and she positively denies having made any such statement to you or to any one else, or having received any disrespect from me.

Were this a private matter I should not trouble you with this letter; but as such an unfounded assertion was made by you publicly I must ask you to publicly withdraw it. Awaiting your reply,

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,
(Signed) WILLIAM VAWDREY LUSH,
Physician to the Hospital.

E. R. Pearce-Edgcumbe, Esq., Somerleigh, Dorchester.

Somerleigh, Dorchester, 5th March, 1888.

SIR,—I gave you the fullest opportunity of meeting what I said by suggesting that the Matron should be seen then and there by the Committee. As you did not choose to avail yourself of this I can withdraw nothing. Your privately interviewing the Matron and getting her denial to I know not what is not a matter I can take cognisance of.

Yours faithfully,
(Signed) E. R. PEARCE-EDGCUMBE.

Dorchester, March, 6th, 1888.

DEAR DR. LUSH,—I was very surprised to read the letter you sent me this morning. Miss Nicolay positively asserted to you in my presence that she had been treated by you and every member of the Honorary Medical Staff with nothing but courtesy and kindness.

Yours very truly,
(Signed) W. E. GOOD.

Dr. Lush,

(COPY.)

Dorchester, March 15th, 1888.

DEAR DR. LUSH,—I attended the meeting this morning. Fisher and George were first asked whether they would cordially and heartily agree to take the Matron round, allow her to see operations, and explain their cases to her. George gave his assent after a little talking over the matter. Fisher said nothing gave him greater pleasure than to see the Matron in the Wards and at operations, and that she was of great assistance to him in his work. I was next asked, and replied, that my wishes were expressed in the resolution * we passed at the meeting of the Staff. Mr. Kindersley asked me if I still adhered to that resolution, and I said "Yes, I must," he then said "Mr. Good, do you adhere to that resolution at whatever cost it may be to yourself." My reply was "Yes, at whatever cost it may be to myself." After a little more conversation he told me I was led by Dr. Lush. I objected, and said it was my own individual opinion, and that if your opinion was not the same I should take the lead myself. Thus ended the meeting as far as I was concerned.

Yours very truly,
(Signed) W. E. GOOD.

* A meeting of the Medical Staff was held at the Hospital on January 31st, 1888, called "to consider the proposition of the Matron as regards her relation to the Medical Officers."

Present: Dr. Lush and Mr. Ernest Good.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and signed by the Chairman as correct.

The Matron, having been sent for, expressed her desire to know the wishes of the Medical Staff present as to her accompanying them in their rounds and being in the operating room during operations, and stated that if not satisfied on these points she should be obliged to tender her resignation on the 2nd proximo. It was

Resolved: That whilst expressing no opinion as to whether or not the Matron is entitled to do so it is not the wish of the Medical Staff present at this meeting that the Matron should accompany them in their ordinary rounds or be present at operations.

(Signed) WILLIAM VAWDREY LUSH,
Chairman.

(COPY.)

15th March.

DEAR SIR,—A long letter was read of yours at the Committee of the Hospital to-day, in which you quoted your letter to me and mine in reply, and further stated that you might proceed to publish the same. I wish to say (1) that as you were present at the last Committee in your capacity of *ex officio* committee man, and as all that passes in Committee is recognised as private, any publication by you of what then passed would be a breach of confidence:—2, that I decline entirely to accept your version of what passed at that committee. In your letter to me, and in what you have said to the committee, you have put an entirely erroneous account upon paper. 3, my letter to you was not intended for publication, and I decline to agree to your publishing it, as I consider these matters to be part of the transactions of the committee. As you seem to be under a serious misapprehension as to what I said, I do not mind explaining. The Chairman said you declined to recognise the Matron as the head of the nurses. Your reply was that you had never been asked to do so. I said there were two ways of asking and two ways of refusing, and although you might not have been asked in words or refused in words, you certainly had refused by acts. That I was prepared to substantiate and that I adhere to. It was no question of courtesy or not. Your last letter to me was not one to provoke an explanatory reply. It first misrepresented what I did say, and then very curtly asked me to withdraw it.

I am, yours truly,
(Signed) E. R. PEARCE-EDGCUMBE.

Dorset County Hospital, 17th March, 1888.

Sir,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 15th inst., and in reply simply to say that if I had had any doubt as to the propriety or necessity of publishing the correspondence which has taken place between myself and the Hospital Committee, your letter removes it and only renders the publication more imperative.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient Servant,
(Signed) WILLIAM VAWDREY LUSH.

E. R. Pearce-Edgcombe, Esq., Somerleigh, Dorchester.

(COPY.)

Clyffe, Dorchester, Dorset, March 16th, 1888.

DEAR DR. LUSH,—At the adjourned monthly meeting of the Hospital Committee yesterday the following resolution was passed:—"That a letter be written to each member of the Medical Staff enclosing a copy of the resolution of 14th April, 1887, and expressing the desire of the committee that they will carry out its terms, and notifying that they have desired the Matron to attend from this time the visits of any of the Medical Staff as far as she may find it desirable in discharge of the duties as head of the nurses and nursing."

The resolution of 14th April, 1887, is as follows:—"The Matron is by Rule 89 made responsible, subject to the directions of the Medical Officers and House-Surgeon, for the nursing of the patients and the administration of the prescribed diet and remedies. The Committee consider that in order to the discharge of this responsibility it is necessary that she should have access to the Wards at all times, and especially that she should be entitled to accompany the Medical Officers when nurses are in attendance."

I remain,
Yours truly,
(Signed) EDWARD L. KINDERSLEY.