

least, which in itself throws a curious sidelight on the differences which have come about in the position of Nurses since Wilkie Collins published his great masterpiece.

But if we are to consider Nurses as they appear in the pages of mid-century novels, it is impossible to pass over without notice that appalling woman, Mrs. Gamp. Yet it is with genuine regret that we mention her. She is so repulsive, with her drink and her vulgarity, her ignorance and her toadyism, that her very name has passed into a bye-word. Yet we doubt whether anyone but a modern-trained Nurse can realise the enormities which she committed. From the very first scene in which she is introduced to us, when she "looked out of window with her mourning countenance on," and the waiting crowd of females, having mistaken his errand, rated Mr. Pecksniff—it is the only occasion on which we ever remember to have pitied that oleaginous gentleman—till she finally disappears from the pages of "Martin Chuzzlewit" "in a species of walking swoon," she is depicted as being, not merely a horrible woman, but a most atrocious Nurse. We would not now a days consider that she had any right to the title. Yet her friend, Mrs. Prig, is almost worse, with her beard, her deep voice, and her equally unamiable character. It is interesting, by the way, to notice that this paragon is described as belonging to "Bardlemy's," otherwise St. Bartholomew's Hospital. How, we wonder, would that famous Nursing School welcome the re-introduction of its former member?

One is inclined to think of these two characters merely as caricatures, exaggerated, slightly at least, as so many of Dickens' characters are. We Nurses especially would like to imagine that if a woman had been describing one of our profession before the days of scientific training she would have endowed her with at least some gentle and lovable feminine qualities which might partly have atoned for her lack of skill and technical knowledge. But, unfortunately, this is not the case. Charlotte Brontë has depicted a Nurse for us in "Shirley," who, if not so notorious as Mesdames Gamp and Prig, is equally deserving of abhorrence.

Mrs. Horsfall is really an appalling female, described in one place as "a sort of giantess"; in another as "no woman, but a dragon," and again as "that ogress"; yet, we are told, she was the best Nurse on the staff of an apparently flourishing country surgeon.

We do not wonder to read that her patient "hated the sight of her rough bulk, and dreaded the touch of her hard hands"; but we do wonder a good deal at his recovery, when we are told that when he was bad "she shook him." Mrs. Horsfall must have been an agreeable woman to have had in a sick room. "She took responsibility stolidly, as she did the easy chair at the bed-head. . . . She sat upstairs when she liked, and downstairs when she preferred it; she took her dram three times a day, and her pipe of tobacco four times." If, as it is hinted, she even ate the jellies and good things sent up for her patient, one imagines, with a shudder, one would almost rather have been confided to the tender mercies of Mrs. Gamp herself, though she *did* drop her snuff into her patient's chicken broth and grasp his windpipe to make him swallow his medicine.

One is rather inclined to wonder vaguely whether the old-world Nurses were like these three amiable speci-

mens, especially when we are told that Mrs. Horsfall's patient, on remonstrating with his doctor on that lady's tipping, was answered, "Pooh! they are all so." But we greatly doubt that sweeping assertion, because there can be no large body of women (and Nurses must always have been fairly numerous) without there being some true and gentle ones amongst them, and, fortunately for this contention, we have one celebrated Nurse in fiction, who, though she is uneducated and drops her h's, has yet all the essentials of a good Nurse—we refer, of course, to the "Little Sister" in "Philip." She is so attractive, with her gentleness and her pathetic story, her warm heart, and her soft voice, that she is quite worthy of being placed by the side of that dear Dr. Goodenough, one of the most lovable of Thackeray's minor sketches. She is affectionate, watchful, and alert, but—but one trembles a little when she experiments with the chloroform, even though it is on one of the villains of the book, and we feel that, though she was playing with fire ignorantly and for a good cause, yet the poor little soul ran a great and serious danger.

The Little Sister is not perfect, but she is the finest professional Nurse I can find described in the fiction of that period, and, if this is rather a galling reflection for Nurses, let us remember that since the time when Elaine tended Lancelot in the cave, and far further back than that, a true woman in the presence of pain and sickness was, as she always will be, a ministering angel, even though she has not passed through a Nursing School and been carefully trained by Staff Nurses and Sisters.

If the secret history of Nursing could be written, we would find, long before the time when Florence Nightingale had the most desperate cases laid closest to her room door, instances of pure devotion and heroism which passed utterly unrecorded; and perhaps at all times, if we only knew it, the Little Sisters outnumbered the Gamps and the Horsfalls, though, as they were gentle and unobtrusive, they passed on their modest way unnoticed.

Inventions, Preparations, &c.

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THE London Shoe Co., already well-known to Nurses, have opened most handsome and lofty new premises, 123 and 125, Queen Victoria Street, which, from a hygienic point of view, are perfect, well lighted, well ventilated, handsomely decorated, and luxuriously furnished, all on the ground floor; while downstairs a *recherché* ladies' room has been carefully fitted up for the convenience of customers. The London Shoe Co. have a specially large assortment of Nurses' shoes in the best cut and finish, also arch supports, &c. Their new and extensive premises will be specially convenient for all Nurses in the City Hospitals, as they are situate only three minutes' walk from Mansion House Station.

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