

Mrs. Gamp undertook professional duties. To quote her own words, "There is a gent, sir, at the "Bull," in Holborn, as has been took ill there, and is bad a-bed. They have a day nurse as was recommended from Bartholomew's, and well I knows her, Mr. Mould, her name being Mrs. Prig, the best of creeturs. But she is otherways engaged at night, and they are in wants of night-watching; consequent, she says to them, having reposed the greatest friendliness in me for twenty year, "The soberest person going, and the best of blessings in a sick room, is Mrs. Gamp. Send a boy to Kingsgate Street," she says, "and snap her up at any price, for Mrs. Gamp is worth her weight and more in goldian guineas!"

The "Black Bull," as well as the house in Kingsgate Street, will soon be in the hands of the housebreakers, but at present it also is much the same as in Mrs. Gamp's day. One still passes up a dark staircase, through a "variety of intricate passages," and there is still the "parapidge," which was a consolation to Mrs. Gamp "in case of fire, and lots of roofs and chimney pots to walk upon."

And surely, although the modern nurse does not think about her own meals before she considers her patient's welfare, and the delicacies which appealed to Mrs. Gamp may not all be attractive to her, yet there is a certain decision about the way in which Sarah's orders for her creature comforts are given, which has descended to her present day representative.

"I think, young woman," said Mrs. Gamp to the assistant chambermaid, in a tone expressive of weakness, "that I could pick a little bit of pickled salmon, with a nice little sprig of fennel, and a sprinkling of white pepper. I takes new bread, my dear, with jest a little pat of fresh butter and a mossel of cheese. In case there should be such a thing as a cowcumber in the house, will you be so kind as bring it, for I'm rather partial to 'em, and they does a world of good in a sick room. If they draws the Briton Old Tipper here, I takes *that* ale at night, my love, it bein' considered wakeful by the doctors. And whatever you do, young woman, don't bring more than a shilling's worth of gin and warm water when I rings the bell a second time, for that is always my allowance, and I never takes a drop beyond!"

"Having preferred these moderate requests, Mrs. Gamp observed that she would stand at the door until the order was executed, to the end that the patient might not be disturbed by her opening it a second time, and, therefore, she would thank the young woman to 'look sharp.'"

Standing where this scene took place it is easy to picture the now empty room as it must then have appeared. The poor delirious patient, the

easy chair that was "harder than a brick-badger," and which necessitated the abstraction of the pillow from under the patient's head in order to make it of the required degree of softness. The untidy array of physic bottles, glasses, jugs, and tea cups, the chest of drawers in the corner, and the two old harpies securing their own comfort and neglecting that of their patient. One saw Mrs. Gamp, sitting over her warm gin and moralizing "what a blessed thing it is to make sick people happy in their beds, and never mind one's self as long as one can do a service," and then proceeding to "administer the patient's medicine by the simple process of clutching his windpipe to make him gasp, and immediately pouring it down his throat."

One saw, also, the scene in the morning. "The doctor came, too. The doctor shook his head. It was all he could do under the circumstances, and he did it well.

"What sort of a night, nurse?"

"Restless, sir," said Mrs. Gamp.

"Talk much?"

"Middling, sir," said Mrs. Gamp.

"Nothing to the purpose, I suppose?"

"Oh! bless you, no, sir, only jargon."

"Well," said the doctor, "we must keep him quiet. Keep the room cool, give him his draughts regularly, and see that he is carefully looked to. That's all."

"And as long as Mrs. Prig and me waits upon him, sir, no fear of that," said Mrs. Gamp.

"I suppose," observed Mrs. Prig, when they had curtseyed the doctor out, "there's nothing new?"

"Nothing at all, my dear," said Mrs. Gamp. "He's rather wearin' in his talk from making up a lot of names; elseways you needn't mind him."

"Oh! I shan't mind him," Mrs. Prig returned, "I have somethin' else to think of."

"I pays my debts to-night, you know, my dear, and comes afore my time," said Mrs. Gamp.

"But, Betsey Prig," speaking with great feeling, and laying her hand upon her arm, "try the cowcumbers. God bless you."

So the scenes rise before one, and below in the road the traffic seethes and surges, and on the footways passers by jostle one another in the mad struggle for existence. There could have been little opportunity of rest for the delirious brain of Mrs. Gamp's poor young patient if there was the same unceasing roar there then as now.

Ah, well. One is inclined to follow Mrs. Gamp's example, and moralize a little, too. Our best friends are those who show us our defects, and who knows how much we Bart's nurses of to-day are indebted to Charles Dickens for his unsparing portraiture of our predecessors. If Mrs. Gamp could return once more and go through her training in the present well organized

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