

Nurses of the Latest Fashion.

MR. GANT'S professional experiences of "Nurses of the Latest Fashion," as detailed weekly in the *Medical Press and Circular*, are becoming somewhat wearisome; nevertheless, a few remarks appear to be called for in this journal on the article on "The Doctor Nurse," whom he describes this week.

He begins by depicting Mrs. Gamp, the "great, great grandmother" of the modern nurse, who, he says, is buried "as an extinct species in ground which can never be opened again to view her remains, unless by express permission of the Home Secretary, under an Act of Parliament for the purpose. There she lies, whatever there is of the short, fat, florid faced woman, of kindly disposition (*Kindly*, was she? We seem to remember her acceptance, with thanks, of her colleague Betsy Prig's hint. "The easy chair ain't soft enough. You'll want his piller"—the patient's. Scarcely one's idea of kindness.—ED.), but stupid, negligent, muddled even more by perpetual drops of gin or brandy from the bottle she concealed in her pocket, and stealthily carried to the lips of its owner. Her dress is loose and slovenly, not too cleanly, certainly not 'antiseptic.'" We should scarcely imagine it would be by this time! Are nurses' dresses ever antiseptic, by the way? Aseptic, we hope they are, but Mr. Gant must pardon us for reminding him that neither doctors nor nurses, so far as we are aware, dress in sal-alembroth, or cyanide, or carbolized wool and gauze, or, in fact, in any material impregnated with antiseptic agents. They may do so, of course, in the future, but the day of antiseptic clothing is not yet.

WELL, the doctor-nurse is by name "Blanche"—Blanche, pure and simple. The medical man of to-day, as a rule, addresses nurses by their surnames, in conjunction with the professional prefix of "nurse," but this is a detail. Having been introduced to Blanche, we diverge for a while to listen to Mr. Gant's views on the nurse who has attended regular courses of lectures and practical instruction in a hospital training school, from some specially appointed member of the medical and surgical staff.

"WHETHER or not," says Mr. Gant, "the nurse up-to-date is not *overtaught*, does not enter into the purpose of this essay to discuss. A corresponding order of examinations concludes the nurse's curriculum ere she can obtain her "certificate" of qualification. The outcome of all this

advanced education has produced its fruit; ripe and good nurses, unripe and bad—as with regard to their technical education and knowledge. But, while possessing far greater fitness for the duties of a trained nurse, other personal qualifications being equal, our nurse of the newest pattern is apt to assume the impersonation of the doctor, under whose directions she is mostly in service."

"I WAS, perhaps, the first member of my profession to pronounce the name 'profession' in the former now defunct 'Association of British Nurses.'" (Softly, Mr. Gant, you were not in the chair at the first public meeting of the British Nurses' Association. Sir William Savory *was*, and he spoke, as he knew so well how to speak, in the most sympathetic terms, of the *profession* of nursing. And is the British Nurses' Association really defunct? Moribund, perhaps, but defunct? If that is the case, the information would have been worth five shillings, we feel sure, as a prize paragraph in a contemporary. It really seems a pity to give away news for nothing). "The title, 'professional nurse,' has now grown familiar. But the two professions, that of physician, surgeon, medical practitioner, and that of nurse and sister, cannot possibly be identical, although the doctor and nurse necessarily meet on common ground in their attendance on the sick for the mutual benefit of the patient, and with the happiest relation between themselves, so long as they both fulfil their respective functions never to be confounded."

HERE we are able to agree with Mr. Gant. No well trained nurse ever thinks of encroaching on the province of the medical man, which is quite distinct from her own, but the "reciprocity" should not be "all on one side." Yet do not medical men sometimes act as if they thought the two professions identical, or, at least, that the profession of medicine should assume absolute control over that of nursing?

"GIVEN, therefore, a fully trained nurse 'such a clever nurse,' in attendance with the doctor; the one also presenting a more winning personality than the other member of the same profession; as they seem to be in the eyes of a patient, the relatives, and friends; which of these two will gain most the confidence and the gratitude of the public?" Mr. Gant answers his own question, and believes that "the doctor-nurse quite eclipses the doctor."

FROM which it would appear that what is urgently necessary, from Mr. Gant's point of view, is a series of lectures to medical men, on

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