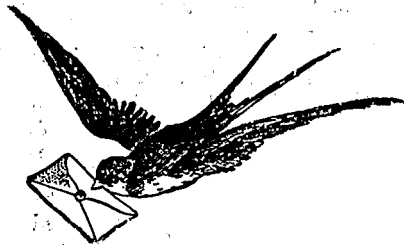


Our Foreign Letter.

"SAN JUAN DE DIOS."

Though the marvellous and manifold beauties of the Alhambra, standing on its tree-clad hill, reign supreme



at Granada, yet there are many objects of interest in the town itself. And certainly with regard to the life and work of its founder, the hospital of San Juan de Dios

must rank as one of the most interesting.

Probably this saint is but little known outside Spain. Yet he was a medical missionary and a medical martyr in an age when wounding with the object of killing was more usual than wounding with the object of healing!

San Juan de Dios, or San Juan de Robles, was a Portuguese who lived in the middle half of the sixteenth century, and was canonised at the end of the seventeenth century. He founded this hospital at Granada for the sick and for foundlings in 1552, and he also founded the Order of the Brothers of Mercy, or Hospitallers. This Order is still in existence, and is partly of a missionary character, having a branch established in Palestine.

In common with most reformers, San Juan was but little appreciated during the commencement of his work. Indeed, his zeal in preaching the necessity of hospitals and the proper care of the sick caused him to be considered mad, and he was shut up in an iron cage! Augustus Hare, writing some thirty years ago, says that this cage was then in existence, and was shown to travellers. However, on the occasion of our visit this year we did not see it.

In many ways Spain is still curiously unprogressive, but I understand that, as regards medical science and practice, her professors are quite up to date. Is it a vain speculation that they inherit the wisdom and skill of the ancient Moorish hakeems, with perhaps a slight sprinkling of modern science on the top of it.

The Moors have left an indelible mark on Spain, and chiefly of a beneficial character. For instance, their system of water supply and irrigation in Granada and the surrounding Vega, or plain, is still in working order, and makes of the Alhambra Hill and the Vega a fertile, smiling country.

In the chapel of the Hospital of La Caridad, at Seville, which contains several of Murillo's masterpieces, is one picture which peculiarly impressed me. It represents San Juan de Dios, with the help of an angel, carrying a sick man to the hospital. Murillo often strikes one as artificial or merely pretty in sentiment.

But here both conception and execution are grand. Heaven and earth united in one of the most blessed of works, that of aiding suffering humanity. The intentness and absorption of the man and the heavenly messenger on their work is very finely expressed, and the colour and arrangement of light is most harmonious.

By the way, in contradistinction to this lovely and appropriate picture adorning that hospital chapel in

Seville, in another corner hangs a painting by Valdes Leal, terrible in subject and ghastly realistic in treatment. It represents a dead man, looking at which, Murillo is reported to have said, "Leal, you make me hold my nose."
RAY MERTON.

Professional Review.

FOODS AND DIETARIES.

Foods and dietaries play such an important part in the treatment of the sick that no apology is needed in introducing a book dealing with these matters to nurses.

That now under consideration under the above name is a *Manual of Practical Dietetics*, by Dr. R. W. Burnet, Senior Physician to the Great Northern Hospital, which is now in its fourth edition. It is published by Charles Griffin and Co., Ltd., of Exeter Street, Strand, price 4s. The dieting of the sick is not sufficiently understood by nurses at present, although, especially in convalescence, it is often left to a great extent in their hands. It is important, therefore, that they should have a knowledge of the physiology of digestion, which the author tells us lies at the root of practical dietetics, of the various groups of foods and of "the proper apportioning of these different elements with due regard to the age, circumstances, and surroundings of the individual," so that a well-balanced diet may be arrived at.

"When the dietary is full and the digestive organs are vigorous, the surplus food assimilated is stored up, and increase of body weight takes place. When the diet is scanty and insufficient for the needs of the system at the time, the reserves have to be drawn upon and loss of weight is the result. Fluctuations often occur in the same individual, according to the surroundings in which he is at the time placed as regards climate, activity, and other agencies influencing the processes of oxidation. Thus a diet that is amply sufficient for a sedentary life would not meet the requirements of an active open-air life. Conversely, the body when called upon to undertake great muscular activity may be able to utilise a diet that in times of less activity would burden it with waste matter and lead to disturbances of health."

The knowledge which enables one to estimate the value and proportion of foods under different conditions is therefore very necessary to acquire. The standard which is suitable in health must in sickness be modified according to the condition of the patient, and the disease from which he is suffering. It is the purpose of the book under consideration to treat of dietetics in relation to the sick, to show what diets are suitable in different diseases and why, to give the hours of taking food and the quantities to be given at each time stated, and also in many cases to add a list of foods and dishes unsuitable to the special case. Such a book cannot fail to be of great use to nurses, and is one which we recommend every nurse to study.

The chapter on influenza may be taken as a specimen of the care with which diet is regulated in relation to disease. "Three different varieties at least," we are told, "may be distinguished, according as the brunt of the attack has fallen upon the lungs, upon the gastro-intestinal mucous membrane, or upon the nervous system." A diet scale suitable under each of these conditions has been carefully planned.

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