

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

A KNIGHT OF SPAIN.*

Don Juan is the objective of this romance, and it may be readily imagined that there would be no lack of material connected with his repute, engineered as it is by the highly sensitive imagination of Miss Bowen. As is her wont, she has herself fallen a victim to the fascination of her own creation, and Don Juan's faults are attractively decorated and his faithlessness tenderly shielded, till she has triumphantly placed him upon a pedestal.

His first little adventure is with Dona Ana, whom he is not in love with, but as he is in love with life, she has to fit in with his pleasure, and so answering the signal from her balcony he pays a secret visit to her late in the evening.

"You sent for me," he murmured.

"Yes; I have seen you go past often."

"Every knight in Alcala is your servant."

"You also wrote and serenaded me?"

"Yes; yet I never knew how wonderful you are." She closed her eyes and the tears overbrimmed and ran down her cheeks. "I never knew you were a prince," she whispered.

He spoke the bitter truth he had never put into words before.

"I am a peasant, too," he said.

This truth was indeed bitter to him, for his illegitimacy stood between him and that which his ambitious heart so eagerly coveted—the position of an Infant of Castille.

Dona Ana does not come much more before us; he forgets and forsakes her quite easily at the bidding of his royal brother Don Felipe. "The King wished his company."

"Juan placed the poor flower whose message must still be delayed in the answering next his heart, changed his clothes, and went down to Don Felipe, who had said his prayers, and was eating mushrooms stuffed with snow in the sombre dining-room."

A pathetic although unattractive personality is Don Carlos, the deformed and feeble Infant of Castille, whose devotion to Juan was the only redeeming thing about him. His hatred of his royal father brought about his own death under sinister circumstances. Juan, made Admiral of the Fleet, has many adventures of love and war, and his most constant passion was for the fair Diana di Falanja, an earring of whose hair he wore till the day of his death.

"I shall return a conqueror," he said; "I shall smite the Turk to nothing."

"Aye, you will," she replied. "But will you come back to me . . . ?"

"Ah, strange and sweet," he said. "You know you have me in your power."

"For a while, yes," she answered under her breath, "but I shall have a short reign. I think Almighty God did not make you constant, Prince."

"He made me a lover of fair women," said Juan, "and a loyal knight."

And Diana spoke truly when she said: "You would not give up one sparkle of glory that you have, or hope to gain, for Venus herself."

And yet she consents to swear: "I will wait for you, nor look, nor think of any other man."

"And if I die you will enter a nunnery," said Juan, "and pray for my soul, for if you should forget me I should be in torment, even if I were placed by the throne of God."

She dies of the plague, attended in her last moments by Juan, who in his turn succumbs to what appears to be an intermittent form of the malady, though not before his faithless nature had bestowed its attentions in more than one direction.

This book is full of colour, and though its love intrigues are numerous it is without a trace of coarseness. We have, as usual, to compliment Miss Bowen on her apparently inexhaustible power of creating charming personalities.

H. H.

COMING EVENTS.

February 15th.—National Union of Women Workers: Meeting to discuss "Nursing in Rural Workhouses, what can we do to help?" Chair, Miss James, P.L.G. Speakers, Miss Wilson and Miss Gibson. Parliament Mansions, Victoria Street, S.W. 3 p.m.

February 18th.—Nurses' Missionary League: Lecture by Dr. H. Gordon Mackenzie, "Old Problems in new forms and the Christian Theory of Life," 33, Bedford Square, W.C. 3 p.m. Nurses invited.

February 18th.—Nurses' Social Union: Third Lecture of the Session, on "Tuberculosis," by Dr. Steegmann. Institute of Hygiene, W. 3.15 p.m.

February 19th and 26th.—Trained Women Nurses' Friendly Society: Meeting of Committee of Management, 431, Oxford Street, London, W. 5 p.m.

February 20th.—The League of St. Bartholomew's Hospital Nurses. Course of Lectures. "The Industrial Position of Women," by Miss Constance Smith. Clinical Lecture Theatre, St. Bartholomew's Hospital, E.C. 5.30 p.m.

February 20th.—Meeting Central Midwives Board, Caxton House, S.W. 3.30 p.m.

February 26th.—Lyceum Club: Debate, State Registration of Trained Nurses. Speaker, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick Discussion. 8 p.m.

March 1st.—Eugenics' Education Conference, University of London.

A WORD FOR THE WEEK.

Let me live in my house by the side of the road,
Where the race of men go by—
They are good, they are bad, they are weak, they
are strong,
Wise, foolish—so am I.
Then why should I sit in the scorner's seat,
Or hurl the cynic's ban?
Let me live in my house by the side of the road,
And be a friend to man,

* By Marjorie Bowen. Methuen & Co.

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