

# THE VARSITY

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## A Venetian Hospital

To visit a hospital in Venice may seem a curious thing to do, and suggest, perhaps, too great devotion to work. But this hospital—Ospedale civile—has been in my mind as the scene of the curious crossing of two lives whose subsequent courses were far apart. In 1537 two men were there, each of whom was to start a movement, the result of which it was impossible to estimate. One was a student of medicine, the other a monk of the order that had charge of the hospital. The first was Andreas Vesalius, whose work on Anatomy, *Fabrica Humani Corporis*, published in 1543, was the beginning of modern anatomy and medical research. The second was Ignatius Loyola. As Sir Michael Foster says in his lecture on the History of Physiology, "The one with his eyes fixed on man's body brought forth a work, the fruits of which have profoundly influenced and are still profoundly influencing men's minds. The other was busy with a scheme for the spiritual welfare of mankind which took shape as the order of Jesuits." To speculate on these two men perhaps having met in this old hospital

suggested much, and if only to indulge such fancies, a visit to it seemed worth while.

The hospital building was formerly a monastery. Its architecture is varied and much admired. It stands beside the Church of San Giovanni e Paolo and opposite its entrance is the figure of Bartolommeo Colleoni, one of the most magnificent equestrian statues in the world. The entrance leads into a large stone paved hall, divided into two by a high barrier. Before the gates there is a large motley crowd of patients' friends trying to induce the porter to admit them. They are most persistent, and the scene suggests similar ones nearer home. Iron gates would sometimes be useful in this country as in Italy.

The buildings have been somewhat altered for their present purpose. Additions have been made judiciously. A monastery does not seem to promise very much for hospital purposes, but it is wonderful to see how well it does. Stone floors sound more cheerless than they really are. The hospital contains 1,400 beds, most of which are occupied. My guide insists on showing me the chapel first and seems rather disappointed at my slight interest. But chapels rather pall on one after some weeks in Italy, although this one contains some good pictures. The wards are much more interesting. One of them was

formerly the great hall and seems to have fallen from its early grandeur. It contains eighty beds. The high carved roof and the mural paintings tell of other days. The magnificent ceiling seems to mock the rather squalid scenes below. The beds have a rather untidy look and each patient seems to be allowed to have an odd collection of various things on the table beside his bed. Bread and wine seem common to nearly all. They have a supply on hand and appear to eat and drink when they choose. To go around such a ward is a good clinical test. To

pick out this one and that, deciding his disease by the method of Zadig, is excellent practice. One may not understand the patient's language but disease has the same speech everywhere.

We pass the mortuary and see the picture which is the same in every land—the poor waiting for their dead. In Italy, Germany or England it is the same. Usually there is a look of stolid despair; sometimes they weep, but not often. The memory of the scene outside a German clinic is still strong. A woman from a neighboring hamlet had died. The relatives had come for the body with a rough cart drawn by a cow which was their only means of taking the dead away. Death does seem sadder when joined to poverty. Here there are all the parapher-

### SONNET D'ADIEU

à

#### Son Excellence LADY MINTO

Madame, vous avez passé dans notre Histoire  
Ainsi qu'un météore au lumineux sillon,  
Ou plutôt comme un vol vibrant de papillon  
Teintant ses ailes d'or d'un poudroisement de gloire.

Et vous allez partir! . . . Mais, charmant médaillon.

Votre douce figure au fin profil d'ivoire  
A conquis pour toujours place en notre mémoire,  
Nimbée à tout jamais d'un immortel rayon.

Car, dans le tourbillon doré qui vous entraîne,  
Pour nous, vous resterez longtemps la souveraine  
Que nos petits-enfants apprendront à bénir.

Vous règnerez toujours au fond de nos pensées;  
Et plus tard, remontant vers les scènes passées,  
Nos coeurs tressaillèrent à votre souvenir.

*Spisfucheth.*