

A King's Handshake.

The following is taken from a Canadian paper:—

“ Fact and fancy have combined to make a pretty legend concerning Alfonso XIII, King of Spain.

It all happened some years ago. As Alfonso was moving through the streets of Madrid he espied a leper. The victim had been ailing long from the disease. He presented a foul appearance. Some say this man was virtually rotting away, and a great part of his body had already been sadly affected. The very sight of him was quite sufficient to turn the stomach of the ordinary man or woman.

But Alfonso is impulsive. Glancing at the man he felt a surge of sympathy sweep over him. Here was this leper sitting in the street so obviously trying to attract the regal attention. It was quite evident the diseased man thought that his king could help him. Doubtless he believed that a touch of the royal hand would be sufficient to cure him of his ills.

All this flashed through Alfonso's brain as he looked at the man. Spurred by impulse, the king went over and grasped the leper's hand and shook it heartily. The people were amazed at this display on the part of their monarch. They cheered him to the echo. The leper was proud. And the legend maintains that the sick one got better. The cure was attributed to nothing else but the kingly clasp of the hand.

The legend does not tell about the immediate reaction of the king. That is left for Her Royal Highness the Infanta Eulalia, aunt of Alfonso, to relate. She vouches for the authenticity of the handshake. She also is authority for the fact that the king came home and soaked his hand in a powerful disinfectant for days. And at every treatment with the disinfectant he pondered over the duties of royalty.”

Leper Home Destroyed.

“ The Japan Chronicle ” publishes the following :—

“ On the evening of the 31st of July the Hokubu Hoyoin, a leper home at Shinjomura, Aomori-ken, Japan, was totally destroyed by fire. The loss is said to amount to £20,000. Some of the 200 lepers housed there have wandered away. It is said that the fire was caused by a candle in the chapel.”

We greatly regret to receive this news, and trust that provision will soon be made for these now homeless sufferers.

Literature.

“ Leprosy: Summary of Recent Work,” No. 14, reprinted from the “ Tropical Diseases Bulletin,” is now ready for distribution.

“ Leprosy: Diagnosis, Treatment and Prevention,” by Dr. E. Muir. This, the 4th (revised) Edition, is now available. It has been brought up to date and is a valuable pamphlet.

Various pamphlets, lists of which were given in Nos. 1 and 2 of “ Leprosy Notes,” have been issued by the Association, and others will be published as time passes. Anyone wishing to receive the literature sent out is requested to send his name and full postal address to The Secretary, The British Empire Leprosy Relief Association, 24, Cavendish Square, London, W.1.