

W. J. KNOX LITTLE

[We are extremely glad to find Canon Knox Little dealing so plainly and strongly with the conventional nonsense about men "only going to the Transvaal to make money." Call it "going abroad to get their living," and the phrase carries no prejudice; yet the act and intention are exactly the same.—*Ed. Spectator.*]

NATIONAL MORALITY

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."

STR,—I sometimes think an unreal standard of morals is a greater foe to conduct than even a low standard, not that it influences many people, but that it influences good people. Perhaps the harm done by selfishness, if the truth could be known, is not greater than the harm done by the assumption that all consideration of self is wrong. In no respect is this more true than with regard to a promise. Few do so much to set up a focus of baleful influence on those they love best as those persons who carry out an engagement of marriage which has become merely honourable. They spoil more lives than their own. Yet the promise, which in such cases should be broken, is the most solemn, the most important, and the most deliberate which human beings can make to each other. And then again the recognition of a region where promises should be broken would give sanctity to the region where promises should be religiously kept. The standard of commercial honour would stand immeasurably higher if it were realised that this is the only region where a promise should be treated as something ultimate. As things are it is the region in which, most of all, a promise goes for nothing. There are all sorts of reasons for this, but I am sure one of them is the blunting influence of a standard refusing to recognise the limitations which concentrate duty, and which in assuming a particular claim to be valid everywhere prevents it being cogent just where it is most urgent.

JULIA WEDGWOOD

THE JOHANNESBURGERS

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."

STK.—I happened to be at Port Elizabeth at the time of Dr. Jameson's "ride," and had some opportunities of observing Johannesburg matters from a rather close point of view. Now, Johannesburg is again to the fore, and I am watching matters from a greater distance. But the question I ask myself is the same from both posts of observation, viz., "Why do not the Johannesburg people help themselves?" Last time it was the impetuous and chivalric, if misguided, Dr. Jameson, who ran amuck to make gold-finding more easy. Now it is the British nation who are being hurried on to war—for the same object. If the Boer Government is such that a free-born Briton cannot endure it any longer, if the fifty millions' worth of machinery sunk in the Witwatersrand reefs are worth fighting for, why do not the Johannesburg people resist the one and fight for the other, instead of continually crying to some one else for help?—I am, Sir, &c.,

RIC. O. A.

"IN DUBIIS LIBERTAS."

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR,"

SIR,—I have been favoured with a report of a meeting under the leadership of the Bishop of Hereford which has been described as "a Conference of Churchmen." The professed object is to unite a section of Churchmen who shall pledge themselves to maintain "the comprehensive character of the Church" and "the religious freedom of the people" secured at the Reformation. My sympathy as a Broad Churchman was at once aroused, until the programme proceeded to recommend the adoption of views and a course of action directly opposed to the boasted spirit of freedom and comprehensiveness. To define "the purely Real Presence" in the Eucharist, and to reject whatever does not square with preconceived opinions on disputed doctrines, presents a curious illustration of "freedom and comprehensiveness." When authority such as that of Holy Scripture, or of the Creeds, or of the General Councils have not spoken, then Christian liberty should remain unfettered, if only for consistency's sake.

—I am, Sir, &c.,

Clifton, July 9th.

C. H. BROMBY, Bishop

A "LINGUA FRANCA" FOR MANKIND.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."

SIR,—In reading your interesting article on “*A Lingua Franca for Mankind*” in the *Spectator* of July 8th, it occurs to me that the following may interest you, as it bears on your idea of English being the *lingua franca* of the future. It occurred during the visit of the Prince of Wales to Bombay in 1875. I was lucky to be there on the Staff of the Governor. Of course many native chiefs were assembled, two of whom, it was remarked, were quite unable to talk to one another except in English. English, in fact, was their *lingua franca*. One came from Travancore, and the other was a Rajput from Rajputana. It was a strange sight to see these two chiefs clad in all the grandeur of the East, and separated by the length of India, using the English language as their only means of communication.—I am Sir, &c.,

M. FAWKES, Lieut.-Col

White Lodge, Parkstone, Dorset, July 10th.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."

SIR,—An incident which befell me some few years ago in Stockholm bears so aptly on your idea of English becoming the *lingua franca* of the future, as possibly to merit publication. Stepping on board one of the neat, little steam-launches that ply about the city, I was addressed in fluent English by the Swede in charge. "Wherever did you learn such excellent English?" said I.—"I've forgotten the biggest part of it, Sir," said he, "but I served under the English flag for seventeen years."—"Did you ever meet an English sailor who could speak Swedish?" I queried. The idea seemed to tickle him immensely, and he burst out laughing, adding, "I never met an English sailor who could speak another tongue than his own, but he's no need to, for the first language a native shopkeeper learns in any foreign port is English."—I am, Sir, &c.,

W. S. MAINPRICE.

W. S. MAINPRICE

High Bank House, Altrincham, July 9th.