

January 10, 1914.]

THE SPECTATOR.

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unequivocally, that his vote at the next General Election will be conditional upon the summary suppression of these iniquities. Under a snowstorm of such missives this black infamy would be blotted out, and, like Aaron of old, Parliament would stand between the living and the dead and the plague would be stayed.—I am, Sir, &c.,
Arnold F. Hills,
Hammerfield, Penshurst,
Kent.
President of Vegetarian
Federal Union.

RHODES: THE "AUBERGE DE FRANCE."

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—It is noteworthy that when Rhodes passed, eighteen months or so ago, back from the Turk to the Christian, scarce a comment was made on the recovery of the island which, in the fifteenth century, was the bulwark of Christendom. After the siege of 1480 the Pope conferred on the Grand Master, d'Aubusson, the title of "Bouclier de la Chrétienté." Times have changed. The Pope at the Vatican no longer confers titles of honour on the servants of the Quirinal or of any other seat of temporal power. Curious it is that France should be the first to reclaim the property of its "Knights of Rhodes"—France, which in 1792 confiscated the vast possessions of the Hospitallers of the three "Langues" of Provence, Auvergne, and France; and in 1798 commissioned Napoleon to seize Malta. It is, however, charming to see the somewhat chastened Republicanism of to-day atoning for the atrocities of the age of "Liberté, égalité, et fraternité," and recovering an architectural gem of the fifteenth century which was so staunchly defended by the Knights of Provence, Auvergne, and France in 1480 and 1522. If "La Gioconda" appeals to the artistic sense of the French nation, Rhodes recalls memories of daring, courage, and unflinching fortitude which are of priceless value. Nor were the other "Langues," Italian, English, German, and Spanish, behindhand in their devotion to their Order. Each "Langue" had its "Auberge," in other words, its headquarters, in Rhodes; and to-day there seems to be nothing to prevent Italy, England, Germany, and Spain following the example of France and recovering possession of the buildings which severally pertain to them. It is, however, a grievous thing to reflect that it was the disunion of Christendom which lost Rhodes to the Knights in 1522; and, if anything, the disunion is more pronounced. Will the Moslem League recover Rhodes, while the Great Powers disagree, as Turkey regained Adrianople at the expense of the Balkan Allies?—I am, Sir, &c.,

Beckbury Hall, Shifnal.

A. C. YATE.

THE LATE MISS JULIA WEDGWOOD.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—Yesterday is often hard put to it, in the twentieth century, to hold its own against to-day; and little notice has been taken of the departure last month, at eighty, of one of the most gifted Englishwomen of her time. To many older readers of the *Spectator*, however, the name and work of Julia Wedgwood will still be a familiar, to some of them a treasured, memory; and I should like, with your permission, to put on record in its columns some of the impressions gathered during a friendship of more than thirty years. She came, on both sides, of families which have been of intellectual note for a hundred and fifty years, and have mingled, perhaps improved, their mental inheritance by frequent intermarriage. Her mother was a Darwin, sister to the great naturalist; her father, the philologist Hensleigh Wedgwood, author of an etymological dictionary still of solid value, and one of the doughtiest of the early critics of Skeat. One of her grandfathers was Sir James Mackintosh, of the *Vindiciae Gallicae*; and for great-grandfathers she had the founder of Etruria and the author of *The Loves of the Plants*. In spite of Erasmus Darwin's rhymed heroics and Mackintosh's glittering rhetoric, this ancestry made on the whole for a type of intellect solidly laborious, scientific, rational, the best stock of the English eighteenth century; and such certainly was the groundwork of Julia Wedgwood's mind. But it was crossed and enriched in her with qualities of quite another order, such as might have sprung from a lineage of mystics and transcendentalists, philosophers and poets. These deeper affinities were early evoked by the preaching and writing of Frederick Denison Maurice, a man of genius whose rarest gift was to waken the genius of others. He, if any man, was her intellectual master,

and the impression he made upon her in girlhood remained ineffaceable when she had outgrown discipleship. But two other spiritual teachers of the early nineteenth century counted little less with her: Thomas Erskine of Linlathen, and John Scott, first Principal of the Owens College, Manchester.

The crossing of opposite strains in a mind often leads to mental bankruptcy. In Miss Wedgwood it led to a dualism certainly, but a dualism which apparently made only for fertility and comprehensiveness. Like Kant, she was at once a powerful reasoner and an inexorable critic of reason; anti-rationalist to the verge of fanaticism in temper, yet a most subtle and formidable wielder of every logical weapon. For all her beliefs she had apt arguments, for all her arguments felicitous words; but no belief was more radical with her than that the best part of truth is that which evades our thinking, and the best part of thought that which evades our speech. It belonged to this inborn dualism that she could accept all that science had to say, and yet insist, with a heightened access of the grave intensity which (with flashes of quiet humour across it) was her most usual mood, that the deeper truth begins where "science" ends. She used to tell how she had once tried to induce her uncle to read the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and how Darwin returned the book shortly, reporting that it said nothing to him. A fine sentence of somewhat similar purport was often in her mind: "God has so arranged the chronometry of our spirits that there shall be thousands of silent moments between the striking hours." She counted faithfully the striking hours, but the sphere of her more peculiar insight and interest lay in the silences between. It was the main work of her life, in the book by which she will chiefly be remembered, to make some of these silences speak. For *The Moral Ideal* is, as she puts it in the original preface, a tentative and fragmentary history of human aspiration. It is an essay in *Kulturgeschichte*, based upon the principle that men and nations are finally to be interpreted, not by what they did, nor even by what they wrote and said, but by what they aspired after. But no one knew better that historical aspirations can be deciphered only through the record of words and deeds, a task demanding immense equipment, capacity, and patience. *The Moral Ideal* was, in its original form, the work of more than twenty years, much of it effected in the hours between 4 a.m. and a late breakfast, a habit she maintained in all seasons until within a few months of her death. In mere erudition these chapters are remarkable enough, and "Snow" Wedgwood—the beautiful name by which she was known to her intimates—had won her Latin and Greek long before the days of women's colleges. No doubt Miss Wedgwood's powerful synthetic imagination was too ready to sum up the ethics of an entire nation in a speaking formula, such as "Greece and the Harmony of Opposites," "Rome and the Reign of Law," and she cared little for the obscure, incipient, and intermediate phases of ethical evolution. But her interpretations of its great salient epochs are of enduring value. They are contributions to the history of ethics; contributions, moreover, of an historian for whom the past was still alive, in the sense that she regarded the succession of the "Moral Ideals" slowly evolved by it as vital material which must be taken up into the completed Moral Ideal of the future.

During the greater part of her long life Miss Wedgwood suffered from deafness. She was thus cut off from all general conversation, from a good deal of ordinary intercourse, and from music. But her defect perhaps even quickened her delight in pictures, and it increased the opportunities for talk with a single intimate friend—and almost all her friendships were intimate—as well as for correspondence, and one would hazard the belief that she wrote few letters in which there was not something of intimacy, something at least that was touched with the inmost quality of her nature, too. Her talk under these conditions was extremely varied, copious, and brilliant; and she talked not for display, or for victory, but because her mind was full. She had none the less a very keen relish of conversational quality, and could express herself with much frankness when A had been tedious or B monosyllabic. But that deep-seated distrust of the adequacy of words and thoughts of which I spoke above made her final estimate of men and women singularly independent of either their talk or their opinions. With some of her closest friends she had scarcely an article of faith in common, unless it were that the faith which can be put into articles cannot be final. Little

concerned with the detail of politics, she felt deeply upon its larger issues. The sufferings of animals were an enduring sorrow to her, and she was an ardent and generous supporter of the cause of anti-vivisection. But, as has been said, her friendships by no means followed these lines. A strong Conservative herself, she had intimate friends among Liberals no less "strong." That is, happily, not uncommon, but intercourse between them can rarely have evolved so constantly the sense of a fellowship deeper than creeds or policies, as did ours with her. Deepest of all in her was the passion for righteousness, the divine fire which glowed in Greek as in Hebrew, and of which policies and creeds, in their noblest exponents, are the partial, the stammering, expression.

—I am, Sir, &c.,

C. H. HERFORD.

The University of Manchester.

MR. FRANK TAYLOR.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—One of your readers does indeed "learn with sincere regret" of the death of Mr. Frank Taylor. Those who knew him personally will feel grateful to Miss D. K. Broster for her fine appreciation of his gifts of mind and character, while others who, like myself, knew him only through his poetry will fully share her sense of the loss to English literature through his all too early death. His lines on d'Artagnan, published in the *Spectator* of May 11th, 1912, are an excellent example of the "felicity" of thought and phrase to which your correspondent refers. The same felicity and "spirit" are very apparent in his sacred poem of 1905. The subject was "Esther," and Mr. Taylor's treatment of it is strikingly original. I hope it may have been included in his recent volume, which I have not seen. If you have room for a quotation, the three stanzas describing Esther herself and the decree of King Ahasuerus are a good sample of the verve and vigour of the whole poem:—

"Not mine to set the battle in array,
Not mine to move sublime amid the spears,
I might but strive as all weak women may,
Smiles for my sword, and for my buckler, tears;
I had scant language save the tender sigh,
The laugh of dalliance, and love's broken cry.
Like the far moaning of the rain-storm's breath,
Like the low wailing of long, winter seas,
The murmur of a lone race, marked for death,
Sobbed upward from a hundred satrapies,
Upward to me in this close harem mewed,
Dwelling apart in splendid solitude. . . .
The God before whose presence Esther bends,
He is the God by whom this Empire rose;
The friends of Esther are the Great King's friends,
The foes of Esther are the Great King's foes;
Ye that were servants to the Agagite,
Look to yourselves! Up, Judah, now, and smite!"

I can only say again that many besides myself must have read Miss Broster's letter with most sincere regret.—I am, Sir, &c.,

W. H. SAVILE.

DEMOCRACY STUNTED AND FULL-BLOWN.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—In a very interesting article on "Eloquence as a Fine Art" (*Spectator*, January 3rd), the Athenians, in the great days of Athens, are represented as having lived under "an extreme form of democratic government." The distinguished author of that remark can hardly have realized that, at that time, only a minority of the population was even socially enfranchised; the majority consisted of slaves. Indeed, Sir Henry Maine regarded the Peloponnesian War as in no sense a struggle between oligarchy and democracy, but rather as a struggle between communities ruled by a close oligarchy, and communities ruled by a less close oligarchy—in which latter, no doubt, a remarkable freedom of speech was allowed to the enfranchised minority. I never could make out how Mr. Grote came to attach so much importance to the working of what may be called the stunted democracy of Athens as throwing light on the probable working of the full-blown democracy which, for good or for evil, may one day overspread the world. Was it not in view of the Socialist peril, or its foreshadowings, that Tennyson said to Jowett: "Things are going quite fast enough," and that Jowett quoted the remark to me with strong approval?

There is also a matter in the article which I will venture not to controvert but to supplement. Your contributor quotes

Lord Curzon's striking comment on Parnell. In illustration of that comment I should like to quote from *Talks with Mr. Gladstone* part of the criticism which that great statesman passed on one who might be termed his semi-detached ally:—

"TOLLEMACHE: 'You once told me that Parnell's speeches reminded you of Lord Palmerston's in their way of expressing exactly what the speaker meant to say. But of course you would call Parnell a pigmy compared with Lord Palmerston.'

GLADSTONE: 'I should not call him anything of the sort. He had statesmanlike qualities; and I found him a wonderfully good man to do business with.'

Gladstone qualified his praise by adding that Parnell was sometimes unguarded in his statements. But I have been assured that the qualification, worded as it was with the trenchant *παρηγορία* of a born orator, did not express Mr. Gladstone's deliberate judgment, and it is therefore omitted in the later editions of the volume.—I am, Sir, &c.,

Athenaeum Club,

LIONEL A. TOLLEMACHE.

Pal Mall, S.W.

THE VALUE OF THATCHED ROOFS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—We have a very picturesque old waggon lodge some twenty feet by forty feet, built of oak throughout with heather-thatched roof, standing at all angles in the grounds of our old fifteenth-century house. My man and I (we do all our own building *except* thatching) are greatly perturbed as to how we can save the dear old building. Every rafter, plate, and cross-piece, well silvered, is quite sound, saved by the thatch. The uprights alone are rotting between "wind and water," which gives to the building the appearance of some old-age pensioner on a festive Christmas night. I have often wondered how much the old oak owes to the "thatch," as against the "tile," for its beautiful silvering. Alas! In this district it is easier and, I believe, less expensive to tile than to thatch.—I am, Sir, &c.,

HOMO.

P.S.—Your correspondent Mr. Mark Kennaway writes of "one hundred and twenty-three thatchers in Devon." Roof or barn thatching is a very different handicraft from stack thatching. The term "thatcher" conveys little.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—I hope you will allow me a small share of space to refer to Mr. J. J. Mallock's letter (in reply to mine) in the *Spectator* of January 3rd. I dare say Mr. Mallock is well qualified to speak on the subject; but those who advocate thatch rest their case on the testimony of men of the greatest practical experience of its virtues, including economy, as all must admit could they see the very numerous letters received: and professional journals of much weight in practical matters have given the subject hearty support. As regards scarcity of thatchers, it is unlikely that thatched buildings will be erected where thatchers are to seek, at any rate without the owner's eyes being open to the circumstances; where they are plentiful, as is undoubtedly the case in some districts, the objection on that score ceases. And as regards reed, one of the objects of the supporters of thatch is to induce agriculturists to prepare more than is done at present. On this subject, as on most others, doubtless much can be said on both sides, and the ventilation it has received has resulted in far more support than the instigators of the appeal ventured to hope for.—I am, Sir, &c.,

L. MARK KENNAWAY.

St. Helens, Teignmouth.

THE EMPEROR FRANCIS JOSEPH AND KOSSUTH.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—Last week, in your summary of the articles in the January *Fortnightly Review*, there is a reference to an alleged remark made by the Emperor Francis Joseph to Kossuth (*sic!*) regarding King Ferdinand of Bulgaria, then a young Austrian officer. It is difficult to conceive how so astonishing a fable could arise. As is well known, Louis Kossuth proclaimed the deposition of the House of Habsburg in April, 1849, and was Governor of Hungary until forced to fly the country in the following August. After his memorable tour through Britain and America to kindle sympathy for the Hungarian cause, Kossuth remained in exile till his death in 1894. He never again set foot on Hungarian or Austrian soil, and resolutely declined to avail himself of the amnesty proclaimed under the Dual System. How, then, could he have