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Company have built a house at Ice Fiord in Advent Bay, with accommodation for thirty or forty visitors, servants, and stewards. The 'Fram's' captain, Otto Sverdrup, famous as a hunter and Arctic navigator, takes charge of the vessel. Sport forms part of the Norse programme, for Spitzbergen has for some years attracted visitors from Scandinavia to shoot reindeer, ptarmigan, and white bears, and to fish for whales and seals. Boats and sealing gear are kept at headquarters, and the famous breeding haunts of the eider-duck, auks, barnacle-geese, and other Arctic fowl will be within reach. The English Company dwell more especially on the mental exhilaration and physical refreshment caused by the migration to regions where the never-setting sun shines day and night on the everlasting ice, where the primitive landscape shows no trace of man's handiwork, where the air has been purified by ages of frost, and is untainted by the dust of the earth, for man never defiles or disturbs the surfaces of the soil, and where the silence of the void is only broken by the plunge of glaciers into the Arctic Ocean, or the cries of the Arctic fowl.

Why Spitzbergen, instead of the North Cape or the Lapland coast? is a question which may occur in connection with the new project. The essence and interest of the proposal lie in the fact that it is a visit to real Arctic scenery, and that the nearest point to temperate Europe at which this can be enjoyed is in the Spitzbergen Archipelago. In the first place, the islands are four hundred miles nearer to the Pole than the North Cape, and within an average of one hundred miles of the ice-pack; and, secondly, the North Coast of Norway, though geographically well within the Arctic circle, is not Arctic at all. The Gulf Stream and the forcing heat of the Northern summer have converted it into a temperate coast. Its waters are warm, it is inhabited by man, its glacial period has passed away. In summer the North Cape and the "Land of the Midnight Sun" are merely temperate Norway shorn of timber. Familiar flowers and birds, villages, fishing-boats, and fishing towns like Vardo, with European civilisation, recall the traveller's thoughts daily to the life of every day. But the voyager to Spitzbergen passes out of one familiar world into another so different that it might be part of another planet, a world whose plants are begotten in six months' darkness and forced to life by six months' sun, whose birds and animals are the born children of the ice, and return there yearly by air or water to enjoy their summer by the Arctic Sea.

The Spitzbergen region is not a mere group of islets. Its area is as large as that of Ireland. Northwards the Arctic current keeps it in the grip of the Polar cold. On its south side the fringe of the Gulf Stream tempers the air, and causes the one climatic drawback to the Spitzbergen summer, dense and clinging fogs, which brood over the adjacent sea. But within the fog-screen the sun shines bright and clear on the snow-peaks, out of a sky of amethyst, and the landscape looks much as if the whole mass of the Swiss Alps had been sunk in the Polar sea to a point above the level of tree growth. The submerged valleys become fiords, the glaciers—far larger than any on the Alps—slide down to these fiords, and break off in icebergs; ptarmigan, or true grouse, according to Mr. Abel Chapman, haunt the lower range, and in place of chamois, reindeer are found in most of the valleys. The reindeer are larger than those of Norway. How either they or the grouse subsist in the winter is one of the mysteries of animal life in the island; but the fact that they do survive shows that we are not yet acquainted with the limits of vegetable life in Spitzbergen. The area of the islands is too large and too little known to speak with any certainty of their capacity as a sporting reserve; but it is known that game is numerous in some parts, and of a kind and among surroundings entirely new to ordinary experience. The Polar bears and walrus have been much killed down; but when the ice-pack and drift-ice touch the land, with them come the seal, the polar bear, and the walrus to restock the island. Ten years ago fifty polar bears were shot by one hunter in Hinlopen Straits, between the two main islands. The chance of shooting two or three polar bears, of hunting the walrus, and the certainty of shooting reindeer under the Arctic sun on an uninhabited shore, offered within eleven days' voyage of London, have no parallel in any part of the globe. It is probable that before long measures will be taken to preserve the game, and though this will not extend to the

polar bears, portraits of which, engaged in biting the heads of prostrate gentlemen voyagers, or laying a friendly paw on their arms previous to making a meal off them, lend such lively interest to De Veer's account of the early discoverers' voyages, the increase of reindeer and seals is certain to lead to an increase in the numbers of the animal that preys upon them. Ice-fowl swarm in certain portions of the coast, especially in Ice Sound, Bell Sound, Horn Sound, and the Alkefjeld, near Lomme Bay. The three former are all on the coast of West Spitzbergen, to the south of the "hotel" in Advent Bay. Here are the home of the "rotches," and of the most thoroughly Arctic of all birds, the ivory gull. There is an immense colony of little-auks in Magdalen Bay, to the north of the West Island, and on the flat islets in Ice Sound thousands of eider-duck breed. The past value and numbers of game and fowl may be gathered from the history of the islands, so far as human interest has been concerned with them. Right-whales were so numerous in the seventeenth century that ten thousand whalers' crews used to meet annually on the coast during the summer. In 1697 the Dutch whalers alone caught one thousand nine hundred and fifty right-whales. The remains of their houses still exist on the shores of "Smeeringberg," the old whalers' headquarters. In time the right-whales were nearly killed off, and Spitzbergen was left to the polar bears. Then Russian hunters sailed thither, and killed such numbers of reindeer, walrus, and Arctic fox that these grew scarce, and the Russian hunters moved off to Novaya Zembla. When the game recovered, the Norwegians began to visit the island, partly for sport, partly for profit; and it is due to the reports circulated by them that the Vasteraalens Company organised their weekly expeditions to the islands. Salmon are found in the rivers and fiords, but so far they have only been netted, as the glacier water is too muddy for using the fly. But other whales than right-whales are still found on the coast, and one whaling station is maintained. This opens a chance for the most dangerous and exciting of all sea sports. For the Alpine climber there is endless opportunity on the ice-covered peaks and enormous glaciers; and for the botanist and geologist there are one hundred and twenty species of flowering plants, many of which are not found elsewhere, and at the entrance of Recherche Bay is a "fossil herbarium," the richest in the world; and all this, as we may again point out, within eleven days' voyage from Tilbury Docks; a new climate, a nightless summer lasting from April 20th to August 22nd, a new fauna and flora, and new forms of sport. Soon we may expect a regular service to the islands, and moveable headquarters, in large steamers which will act as large hotels or receiving ships. To them will be attached smaller steamers, steam-launches, boats, and subsidiary huts on shore, with guides, fishermen, and hunters, and a new Polar playground will be added to Europe.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

PRE-CRIMEAN ANTICIPATIONS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—You would have vividly illustrated your pregnant assertion that "hope does not deceive men more frequently or ruinously than fear," in your article on "The Great Terror" in the *Spectator* of July 17th, if you could have quoted some of the newspaper warnings, at once wise and fallacious, which preceded the Crimean War. I, then first awakening to that exciting experience which Thackeray somewhere describes as "living for the first time in the history of England," vividly recall such warnings, given in the columns of the *Times* and elsewhere, but most strikingly in the great newspaper which was soon to be one of the most ardent supporters of the struggle it at first earnestly deprecated. Even after the agitations of forty-four years I venture to quote confidently one sentence, though I have no guarantee but the sharp impression on a youthful memory. After urging that a war such as we were entering on opened issues contemplated and desired by neither party—that "the first cannon shot on the banks of the Danube" would dispel the aims and schemes on which its advocates built their arguments—the writer concluded:—"Amid all the unforeseen changes which such a war would

bring about, one may be singled out as incontrovertible. Whatever is doubtful as to the result of a European war, one thing is certain, at its conclusion there would be no Turkey in Europe." Alas that the fallacious prophet was not the successful counsellor!—I am, Sir, &c.,

JULIA WEDGWOOD.

COUNTY v. DIOCESE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—The managers of voluntary schools in Lincolnshire, as elsewhere, have too much reason to be thankful for your consistent championship of the cause of denominational teaching to allow the admission of any other feeling than a patient surprise at the readiness with which you level against them the charge of bad faith, upon no other evidence apparently than the *ex parte* utterance of a rejected candidate for their support. When Lord Heneage's statement that "three hundred of the 'so-called' Church-schools in the Lincoln diocese are for all practical purposes undenominational schools" is subjected to the necessary sifting it will probably be found that a fallacy lies hid in the term "undenominational." For in what does the undenominational character of these schools consist? It is not denied that the teachers are Church men and women, that the Church Catechism is taught, that the religious instruction is in many cases supplemented by the clergy, and the schools annually examined by the diocesan inspector; a condition of things which would probably be found to prevail almost universally in these schools. Apparently the charge of "practical undenominationalism" rests upon the two grounds specified in your article:—(1) That the managers of these schools are assisted by an undenominational Committee. Well, there are, happily, other questions connected with school management besides the religious question, and provided the religious teaching is safeguarded in the way above mentioned, as it commonly is, under the trust deeds of the school, what harm is done by entrusting the secular side of school management to a Committee as representative as possible? After twenty-five years' experience as manager of three of these "so-called" undenominational schools, I can assure you, Sir, that quite the last thing any one with an adequate knowledge of the facts would think of questioning is the denominational character of the religious teaching that is given in them. I have no reason to suppose that my experience is exceptional, and it certainly disposes of the fallacy that an undenominational Committee assisting the managers implies undenominational teaching. *Ex uno disce plures*. But (2) it is said that "the object of the managers of these 'so-called' Church-schools is not to teach the religion in which they have a 'so-called' faith, but simply to save the parish the cost of a School Board." No doubt there are people in Lincolnshire, as in London, who value economy more than definite religious teaching. On such a point Lord Heneage is admirably qualified to speak for himself, but it has yet to be shown that he has any title to speak for the managers of voluntary schools in Lincolnshire; indeed, such evidence as exists points all in the other direction, and shows that on the only occasion on which these same managers have had the opportunity of expressing their collective opinion they voted, clergy and laity alike, by an enormous majority, against his lordship's scheme of a County Association, and in favour of the diocese as the area. Such a decision may have been prudent or imprudent, but it was certainly not dictated by a desire to save expense, nor is it easy to refer it to any other cause than the true one—namely, the conviction of the managers that the cause of denominational teaching was safer in the hands of a Diocesan than a County Association. After this I was quite prepared for an article in the *Spectator* on "religious zeal carried to excess," but it is certainly something of a surprise to find myself, one of a body of men with such a vote as this to our credit, accused of a want of "necessary religious zeal." It is not that we have been condemned unheard, we have been condemned for opinions from which we have most emphatically dissociated ourselves by an overwhelming vote.—I am, Sir, &c.,

H. J. C.

[Certainly "H. J. C.'s" statement puts a different complexion on the matter as regards three at least of the schools referred to. But for ourselves we can only say (1) that Lord Heneage's assertion was public and positive, and (2) that it was not challenged by the Bishop of the diocese, who followed him.—Ed. *Spectator*.]

MR. RHODES AND THE PRIVY COUNCIL.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—Will you permit an old reader of the *Spectator* to submit four reasons why Mr. Rhodes's name should not be struck off the Privy Council list, notwithstanding the facts against him stated with so much impartial ability in your article in the *Spectator* of July 17th? (1) If the Government were to decide on a prosecution, and the trial were to result in Mr. Rhodes's conviction, his dismissal from the Privy Council might be a logical consequence. Since, however, Ministers refrain from prosecuting him, and quietly accept all the political and international advantages accruing from his administrative genius unselfishly applied in Rhodesia, they are surely debarred as honest men from publicly humiliating him, unless they also forbid him to work for the Empire on the Zambesi or elsewhere. (2) The deprivation of the Privy Councillorship would embitter a large number of people in South Africa who see in Mr. Rhodes the embodiment of their political aspirations. Friends of Mr. Rhodes would inevitably discern in such a step the hand of Mr. Chamberlain, and the strongest Colonial Minister of the century would thus be weakened by an imputation that he had acted from motives of revenge. (3) I venture to submit that, if expiation be possible to man, Mr. Rhodes has partly atoned for the evil he has done by conduct which the English public should not overlook. It is true that lives have been lost, racial differences revived, and the Imperial idea debased by Mr. Rhodes's acts. On the other hand, it is equally true that instead of abandoning the Colony he created he has devoted himself to its advancement with undeniable courage, persistence, self-sacrifice, and generosity. One act of reparation upon which the public may especially rely in refusing to dismiss him from the Privy Council is the splendid courage displayed by Mr. Rhodes on September 21st last. On that occasion, unarmed and almost alone, he placed himself in the power of bloodthirsty savages who could have destroyed him and his little party without the slightest difficulty. At the Indaba with the Matabele Indunas, with his life in his hands, he arranged a peace which has saved hundreds of lives, both of whites and blacks, and by so doing has earned a title to belong to the Privy Council at least as good as that of the average man belonging to that distinguished body.

In the last place, the public humiliation of Mr. Rhodes in the absence of a prosecution could accomplish no practical purpose, while it would tie his hands for the future. At least one other Privy Councillor still takes a prominent part in public life whose title to remain a member of that body, if Mr. Rhodes be expelled, is certain to be vigorously challenged. Mr. Rhodes is no friend of mine, and I wholly agree with your estimate of the past, but his courage and self-sacrifice, and the specific acquittal by the South African Committee of any sordid motive for his errors, appear to demonstrate that a great future awaits one whose life, like that of the rest of his fellow-countrymen, should be judged of in the main, and not by a deplorable episode in his career.—I am, Sir, &c.,

2 Windmill Hill, Hampstead.

ARNOLD WHITE.

SIR JOHN TENNIEL'S INDIAN CARTOON.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—The grand series of Sir John Tenniel's cartoons in *Punch* are a national heritage. On the whole, throughout all his career, they have with marvellous fidelity portrayed the history of the times. It is therefore a national misfortune when by a strange lapse one of them sets forth an historical falsehood. That is the case with the cartoon of last week, in which Lord Lawrence is presented as the foreseeing seer of the Mutiny days warning our generation of coming danger. Great as were John Lawrence's services when the Mutinies were upon us, he was blind as any bat to the rising of the storm. Sir Charles Napier and Henry Lawrence had clearly foreseen what was coming. Either of them might have taken the place of Lord Lawrence in the picture. That cartoon ought never to be republished, and ought, for the reputation of both *Punch* and Sir John Tenniel, to be blotted out from their series. It is no mere difference of men. Two antagonistic policies would be represented by two cartoons, one of which should show Henry Lawrence and the other John as giving the warning. The one would be that which facts have vindicated, the other that which facts have condemned. Mr. Punch throws his