

CHRIST IN FLANDERS: A TRIBUTE

[To the Editor of the Spectator.]

Sir.—On May 7th died at Leeds, after a long illness, most bravely and patiently borne, Mrs. Lucy Whitwell, writer of the poem, "Christ in Flanders," published anonymously in your issue of September 11th, 1915. The poem, her sweet and fitting swan-song, as one friend aptly terms it, has had a truly wonderful, an almost world-wide, circulation, its simplicity and sincerity at once winning a way to unnumbered hearts, so that it has had to be reprinted many thousands of times, besides being republished in books and magazines, and often quoted from the pulpit. Knowing that her illness, human, continual joy and comfort to her to realize that she had been privileged to encourage and strengthen our soldiers in the trenches, and thus take a share, however small, in helping her country in its awful trial—

"The song that nerves a nation's heart, Is in itself a deed." Those fortunate enough to know her personally may forgive me if the memory of her gracious presence recalls Tennyson's touching tribute to his dear friend— "But there is more than I can see, And what I see I leave unsaid. Nor speak it, knowing Death has made His darkness beautiful with thee." —I am, Sir, &c.

The Spectator, London, May 19.

REVOLUTION AND MONARCHY

NO one who bears in mind the events of that annus mirabilis of revolution, the year 1848, needs to be told that revolution has something infectious in it. Having appeared in an acute form in one country, it becomes epidemic. In 1848 there was scarcely a country in Europe that was not convulsed. Even in starved Prussia the King was forced to humble himself before a Berlin mob, to do a king of obedience before the corpses of citizens killed in the rioting, and to promise a Constitution—a promise which was characteristically evaded. So now, Revolution is in the air. Intense sympathy with the great revolution in Russia has caused almost insensibly the reading of a new, or at all events a more highly emphasized, motive into the war. We hear it said on all sides that the war is a war for democracy; that it is against autocracy and Kings; that it must be finally proved that the popular will is able to prevail over personal caprice all over the world. With all this, so far as it goes—for it is not a full statement of the objects of the war—we most heartily agree. There never was a moment during the war when we should not have said that the principle of popular will, as against the irresponsibility of autocrats or oligarchies, was one of the most obvious and important, indeed the chief, of all the issues at stake. But now that the downfall of the historic Monarchy in Russia gives a sharp point to the allegations about the wicked irresponsibility of Kings there is a tendency for people who have what Henry Baskerville once called "cross-country minds"—minds that lightly fly over obstacles in reaching a desired conclusion—to group all monarchies together. Their argument runs that the nations will never be safe from war till Kings disappear. Kings and not peoples make war. If it be said that there are Kings and Kings, these "cross-country" people answer that the reigning monarchs form a kind of endless cousinship, and that they are bound to stand together in order to protect their profession. Why do they never denounce one another? It is asked. To be specific, why has King George never denounced the German Emperor? We referred last week to the argument of a British miner who assumed that after the war the King would probably feel that it was his duty as a member of a close corporation to shield the person and protect the rights of the German Emperor. We imagine that in the present revolutionary infection there is a certain amount of this kind of talk. So far as it exists, it is probably encouraged rather than mitigated by such questions as Mr. H. G. Wells, posing as a prophet, places before his readers as to the future of the British Monarchy.

In an article in the *Evening Pictorial* of May 19th Mr. Wells gives a lurid account of the growth of the close corporation of monarchy. He says incidentally that Queen Victoria and the Tsar professed to be "the heads of religion upon earth." If Mr. Wells remembered the history he has doubtless read, he would know that a British Sovereign professes no more and no less headship of religion than the British people requires him to profess. He says, again, that Greece, the motherland of Republics, was handed over to "a needy scion of the Danish Royal Family." As a matter of fact, the Greek people themselves expressed a wish to have a government modelled on the British Constitution. That involved a Constitutional Monarch. Britain would actually have supplied them with a King as well as with a model if their original suggestion had been acted upon. Mr. Wells, however, draws (as he could not very well help doing) a distinction between the British Monarchy and others. He then proceeds to ask if the British Monarchy, having admittedly a better chance of survival than other monarchies, can arrive at something like an assurance of survival. He lays down conditions: (1) The British Monarchy must sever itself definitely from the German dynastic system. (2) Non-German marriages are desirable. (3) Ex-Monarchs should not be given rights of asylum here, as the presence would cause misunderstanding and intrigue.

What Mr. Wells forgets is that if the King acted on his own initiative in making any dramatic denunciation of the Hohenzollern dynasty he would be doing exactly what all anti-monarchists, and indeed all Constitutionalists, object to. He would be acting on his own personal judgement. Those who did not approve of that judgement would call it caprice. The border-line between an act of good judgement and an act of caprice is very shadowy. It cannot be safely left to be delimited by a single brain. When we read a great deal of the criticism launched

ed against the management of the war we sometimes rub our eyes and ask ourselves: Are we, or are we not, fighting with Allies? We read line upon line and chapter upon chapter of criticism without discovering anywhere a hint or suggestion that in an Alliance it is impossible to act without consent. We are continually being told that the King could do this or the Prime Minister could do that, without a word about the wishes or feelings of France, or Italy, or Russia, or Serbia, or Japan, or the United States. Our own hopes are that the Hohenzollern will be placed under a ban, as Napoleon was placed, and that the Allies will deal with the German people alone. The Germans themselves have given us a precedent for the procedure when they refused to treat with Gumbetta. We go further, and we hope that in some Royal Proclamation, or other instrument with the Royal signature attached, King George will express his detestation of the infamous methods for which the German Emperor has made himself responsible. That the King would be ready to denounce the Kaiser's record from the bottom of his heart we are absolutely convinced. We speak without precise evidence, of course, but we were never more sure of anything than that the last thing the King would wish to do would be to shelter the Kaiser. If we may judge from the utterly different practices and temper and character of the two monarchs, there could not be a more hateful example of kingship to King George than the Kaiser displayed at Berlin. Even if the King wished after the war to fraternize with the Kaiser—to us as impossible a supposition as that the Lord Chief Justice would feel to hobnob with a murderer—he would feel himself absolutely compelled to abide by the advice of his Ministers and the wishes of his people.

The King has always been a scrupulously Constitutional ruler. It will be remembered that during the crisis of the Parliament Act many extremists wanted the King to interpose a veto, but the King acted in the strictest sense on the advice of his Ministers. Had he not done so, it might conceivably be said now that he was capable of acting on caprice. As it is, we are thankful to say that there cannot be a shadow of excuse for making that suggestion. Again, those who so foolishly imagine that the King will want to shield the Kaiser must make very little allowance for the King's filial piety. They must assume that the most astounding success of King Edward VII counts for nothing in the thoughts of King George. To us such an assumption is ridiculous. King Edward's great diplomatic triumph was to interpret the wishes of his Ministers in drawing this country into an intimate connexion with a Republic and drawing it further away from an autocracy.

In some directions one hears it said that the democratic orientation of the war must be given a Republican tinge by the admission of the United States. Instructed Americans, we are sure, cannot believe this, because they do not confuse democracy with Republicanism. They know that ever since 1868 the British people have been an established Republic in spirit without ever looking back. They know that, as a matter of fact, the King has much less power than the President of the United States—see how Mr. Wilson held the issue of peace and war in his own hands—and they know that the House of Lords has less political power than their own Senate. With its absolute control over treaty-making, the Senate is one of the strongest Upper Houses in the world. In Britain popular control—that is to say, the control of the people as a whole—is complete as in any country, and that fact cannot be affected by the nature of the appointment of him who presides over all. Whether the supreme Head holds an hereditary office or has chiefly a ceremonial power, like our King, or whether he is elected and has a great deal of actual political power, like the President of the United States, does not matter if the essence of democracy be there, though of course we personally prefer our own plan. One wonders sometimes if people who confusedly think that what is nominally a monarchy cannot really be a democracy remember the wording of the Act of Settlement. The Act lays down such precise conditions for the kingship of Britain that, from the point of view of popular choice, one may almost compare an accession to the British Throne with an election to the American Presidency. We have our rules and Americans have theirs. The Act lays down such precise conditions for the kingship of Britain that, from the point of view of popular choice, one may almost compare an accession to the British Throne with an election to the American Presidency.

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Dear Mary:— When you bought your new furniture did you overlook buying a nice bed-couch? Well, I did and when company came all four of us tried to pile into one bed. We put James and Ruth in the middle to keep them in—and what do you think? I fell out. It was so funny, but I might have known, when needed, can be converted into a bed. Don't you, too, need one? Hastily—HELEN.

P.S. Let's go down to-day and look at new couches at

ever accept at all, an elected Head of the whole Empire. Half-educated and the race yield homage and loyalty to an hereditary King, but would have no idea of treating a bidder for votes with the same respect. We trust that all who are conscious of the epidemic of restlessness which has so recently seized upon the British Throne for three generations. We have great respect for Republicans who have convinced themselves logically, but none for those who confusedly imagine that a Republic is necessarily a better democracy than our Constitutional Monarchy, or that a Constitutional Monarchy has anything to do with the wanton making of wars. One grievance lately expressed is that, though there was a solemn service at St. Paul's to invoke blessings on the union with the United States, there was none to celebrate the Russian Revolution. But Russia was already our Ally. Her assistance was no new thing, and her continuous loyalty to the common cause of humanity was presumed. There was no lack of sympathy. We are certain of that. For the rest, it is a very "monarchical" act to hold a service of an unprecedented importance in honor of union with a Republic. The same should have thought out. But the trouble is that people infected with unrest do not think reasonably.—The Spectator, London, May 19.

FISH, CHINESE AND COLONELS

(From Our Own Reporter.) Ottawa, June 9.—It was fish Friday in the House. The fisheries estimates were up, and the occasion is usually one of great joy for the Nova Scotia Liberals but yesterday's feature was the subject of the men who are wont to grow eloquent over a lighthouse-keeper's salary or a mail-carrier's contract. The Liberal caucus in the morning and the growing number of Ontario and Western Liberals who are openly avowed supporters of the principles were the saddening influences. An added discontent came from the announcement of Loggie, the Northumberland, N. S., lobster canner, that he was out and out for compulsory service. He has two sons in the trenches.

IT COULD BE SEEN The cleavage in the Liberal ranks was most noticeable. During the afternoon and evening only a stray conscientious Liberal found his way into the House.

SPLEEN FOR B. C.

I speak in the name of British Columbia, he orated, when he had warmed up a bit. "And I call upon you to stand by the policy of a white British Columbia you advocated some years ago."

This stirred Col. Taylor, of New Westminster. The Conservative Party stood where it always had in regard to Oriental immigration, but this was no time to

bring up harsh discussion of the question. "Particularly," he said, "since we want to look to these allies for the assistance in fighting the battles of the Empire, which is refused to us in quarters where we have a right to expect it."

PUSSLEY'S JIB This pointer to the Quebec orator brought from the Conservative benches the only applause of the day. Of course, it was Dr. Pugsley to the rescue. He was astonished that Col. Taylor should introduce partisan politics into the discussion, and all the more that it came from a colonel in his Majesty's army.

WRONG QUARRY A near-sighted man was passing along a country road when his hat was whisked off by the wind and carried over a stone wall. He gave pursuit, but each time he thought he had it, it got yet another move on. Then a woman's angry voice rang out. "What are you doing there?" she demanded shrilly. He explained mildly that he was only trying to retrieve his hat, whereupon the woman said, "Your hat? There it is over there under the wall—that's our little black hen, you've been chasing"—Boston Transcript.

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Big Times Ahead Thus passed the last of the Parliamentary dog days. The Conscription Bill should, on Monday, turn things loose, and though most of the "anti" argument will probably be in French, it should be worth translating.—Toronto Telegram. Held over from last week.

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