

# THE COURIER

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## OBSERVATIONS.

### Justice to a Mormon.

Congressman Roberts has been regularly and constitutionally elected to congress by the citizens of Utah. There is no federal law against polygamy, but all the states in the Union now have one forbidding it. There is no evidence that Mr. Roberts has married any more wives since the passage of the compulsory monogamy bill. Roberts appears to be living the same sort of humdrum matrimonial existence which other members of congress appear, on the surface to be living. If congress decides that he cannot take his seat among other members, the irony of such a vote would be overwhelming to anything but the congress of the United States. The hardest thing any human being has to do is to look his soul squarely in the face, often assuming a highly virtuous and outraged attitude of very great strain, and impossible to maintain long.

I have heard of several women's clubs (and there is Anna Gould) who have petitioned their congressmen to take a firm stand on the Roberts matter, meaning thereby to vote against his occupation of the seat he has been elected to fill. Mrs. Burnett's old mountaineer while dying advised his daughter "Not to do no one an injustice." It is easy to do the stranger, a devotee of a religion abhorred by christians, an injustice. Mohammedans have a contempt for a man who drinks wine or spirituous liquors.

Missionaries report that it is most difficult to explain to the Mohammedan almost persuaded to accept christianity why the church allows its members to drink. Their moral sense is deeply and unfeignedly shocked by christian use of liquor. This same man may have twelve or fifteen wives.

Congressman Roberts is the son of a Mormon family. He is said to be an honest and able man. He supports all the wives he had when a law was passed which, if he obeyed it, would compel him to choose one wife and leaving all others, cleave only unto her. This he may have done. But he supports the other women who had contracted an alliance with him in good faith before the passage of the law which declassified them.

Polygamy is an abomination. Nineteen hundred years of experience has proved that. polygamous communities are made up of under-sized, low-browed, dull-eyed men and women and witless children. Musicians, writers, artists, statesmen, warriors are not developed in these communities. Nevertheless we have no right to retroactively deprive congressman Roberts of his seat in congress for a crime committed before a law forbidding polygamy in Utah had been passed, and while he was a faithful member of a church into whose fold he was born. We claim and, I think, we can demonstrate that polygamy is a crime. In their wisdom the Mormons think the gentiles are in error. We are not so likely to convince them of their mistakes by denying Congressman Roberts the position to which he has been elected. For the good do justice all the days of their life.

### Club Amenities.

In every club there is doubtless a guiding spirit. It is also true that when twenty or thirty or five hundred agree to associate together for purposes of self culture, or benevolence to some one outside of the organization, or for the purpose of self discipline which association with nineteen, twenty-nine, or four hundred and ninety-nine cranky and self-willed club members will certainly accomplish, the opinions and wishes of each individual must yield and herein is the club an evangel. Women are very touchy about any public criticism even if that public be no larger than nineteen of their intimate friends. If clubs finally accomplish no more than the cure of that sore feeling caused by a difference of opinion frankly expressed, they will not have been formed in vain.

Men's debating and culture clubs are treating the same sensitiveness in men. To differ with a whole club or part of it, to have our pet theories ridiculed and destroyed, to receive good natured evidence that our own logic is faulty requires a cultivated social sense very few of us possess. The practise of toleration is much

easier theoretically than practically, but it has been found that club discussions develop it better than solitary contemplation. The man who puts on his hat and goes home because his false premises have been exposed rejects the very means which if he accepted them cheerfully, would revise him into a more perfect edition. And the woman who declares to her husband that she will never go to the club again as long as that smarty, Alice Brown, is a member, ignores a means of education which might have made a woman if not a scholar of her. We none of us see the same rainbow. The angles of all topics as well as of all objects are different to every pair of eyes. Then why does it irritate us when in giving our impressions of a topic or object we find that our own view is unique and that no one else agrees with us? After all we may be right and our disputants the misguided.

### A Free Gift.

In spite of Admiral Dewey's reluctance to accept the gift of a house from the American people, in spite of the counsel of those who instinctively recognized the awkwardness of the gift, a few inveterate and insatiable hero-worshippers persisted in buying and presenting Dewey with a house. As soon as it was his, Admiral Dewey gave it to his wife along with his other worldly goods. This did not suit the people. Both those who did, and those who did not contribute to the house fund announced in newspapers, in clubs, and wherever a large or small herd met for grazing and gossip, that the Admiral was guilty, if not of ingratitude, at least, of an unpardonable faux pas. The Admiral and Mrs. Dewey having both eyes to see and ears to hear, heard the gossip and read the newspaper opinions and quickly enough came to the conclusion that the house was entailed to the Dewey succession. Realizing that the American people in a bunch objected to her enjoyment of her wedding gift, although the few real subscribers to the house money were not those who were pulling the string, Mrs. Dewey has deeded the house to Admiral Dewey's son. She at first proposed to give it to the Catholic church. Even in his honeymoon the Admiral had sense enough to know that those who had and those who had not given the house to him would have very strong and very voluble objections to its transfer to the Catholic church. And so this house which neither the Admiral nor Mrs. Dewey really need has made more trouble than it is worth. If the money had been given to one of the truly great American sculptors with instructions to mould a statue of the Admiral, it would have remained for all time a monument to a great American. For such is the character and effect of symbols.

Before his statue the gratified subscribers to the fund might have stood

and admired their own magnanimity and good taste. They and the people who had not given the Admiral anything would have been quite satisfied to see their gift in the open air. No member of the Dewey family, no wife who has supplanted the people in the Admiral's affection could monopolize the statue. The Americans who love publicity and freedom better than everything else could not be thwarted in the enjoyment of the sight of their bounty, as the visitors who want to see the house that Dewey got, so frequently are by the doorkeeper at the Deweys.

Gifts by a republic to a warrior unless they be symbolic or portable like a loving cup, a gold model of a ship or something which a hero is not likely to melt down or transfer, are embarrassing. The difficulty is, the ownership of a national or semi-national gift is never quite settled. If the Admiral had bought or inherited the house that has made so much pother no one would have questioned his right to give it to his wife or to anyone else. A gift from anyone but a king or a queen has strings to it and these strings interfere with irresponsible and unmitigated enjoyment of the gift. Princeliness disdains a return and forgets benefits bestowed. Everybody knows of the almost famous Lincoln man whose left hand never bestows a gift that the right does not immediately set it up in print and demand, if not simultaneously, then eventually a quid pro quo. In his case, for he is a good business man, there is little reason to believe that he is skeptical about the greater blessedness of giving. Such gifts snap gyves upon the spirit and between his benefactor and an unpleasant consciousness of obligation the prisoner walks until he comes to the occasion and the time when the debt must be paid. For there is nothing free in this world. No; not one thing.

### A Specious Comparison.

The questions of morality or justice or abstract right and wrong have not much to do with race movements. The Goths and Vandals took Rome and replaced the Roman by a sturdier, younger race. What was good in Roman law and custom survived and was incorporated later by the Germans. The Normans took England without much discussion. The fittest in America drove the Indians from the Atlantic coast and later beat back the English not because either one or the other was right but because we wanted the land and we took it first from the Indians and then from the English.

If the Dutch in Africa are strong enough to beat back the English, Well, God will be said to be on their side. On the other hand if they are beaten the Dutch and the English together will develop the resources of the country faster than the Dutch have ever done by themselves.

There is little doubt that railroads