

## Obituary

### MRS. ROBERT MATHIAS

#### "A VELE GONFIE"

A correspondent writes:—

There may be some who will remember a picture by John Sargent which was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1905, under the title "A vele gonfie." That was a portrait of Ena, eldest daughter of Asher Wertheimer; and it was a true and beautiful reading of character, which the better-known painting in the Tate Gallery does not so well translate.

The death of Mrs. Robert Mathias, as she afterwards became, calls for something more than a mere epitaph, as she was that something more than an individual which we call a personality. She had, in its highest and best sense, the artistic temperament—an acute and sensitive love of beauty in every form that it can take, unmingled with any trace of pose or affectation. But she had more than this. Generous, enthusiastic, loving to gather young and old in the houses which she made the frames and background of her untrammelled hospitality, she was even more endeared to her friends by a candour and innocence of mind seldom seen but in a child. "A vele gonfie"—that was Ena's way of life. She was never one to shorten sail, and when the storm struck her she sank swiftly, but with all her colours flying. She will be mourned not only by her husband and her five children, but by many devoted friends.

Lady Ottoline Morrell writes:—

To the world in general Ena Mathias will always be known as the most beautiful of the Wertheimer sisters whose portraits, painted by Sargent, are in the Tate Gallery; but to those who knew her well she will survive as a figure of extraordinary grace and distinction. She was the bravest, most generous, most lovable of women; full of the joy of life and the appreciation of art and beauty. Her kindness was inexhaustible; her vitality apparently unquenchable. She had, more than any one I have known, the precious gift of youth. At her charming house in London, and at her lovely little manor under the Sussex downs, it was her delight to entertain her friends. To them the news of her sudden and premature death will bring a sense of irreparable loss.

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