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EDITORIAL.

A NOBLE OBJECT TO COMMEMORATE A NOBLE SACRIFICE.

The proposal of Mrs. Blakeway Little, St. Peter's Grove, York, most happily conceived, to launch an appeal for £3,000 from Yorkshire women, with the object of restoring the glorious Five Sisters' Window of York Minster, in memory of the brave women who laid down their lives in the service of their country in the Great War, was adopted, and successfully launched, at a largely attended meeting at the Mansion House, York, on February 15th, presided over by the Lady Mayoress (Mrs. Reid).

No nobler memorial could be raised to perpetuate the memory of these women; and it is peculiarly appropriate that a window, of which the design is attributed to women, should be restored in honour of women.

Speaking at the Mansion House meeting, York, Mrs. Little referred to the many memorials from North to South, and East to West, which we come across in honour of our splendid brothers who gave their lives in the service of their country—a simple cross, or a rugged column, or even a cenotaph. "But where," she asked, "is there any adequate national memorial to those of our sisters, who equally, though in far fewer numbers, gave their lives in the service of their country?"

It is proposed to commemorate in the Five Sisters' Window, with the cordial consent of the Dean and Chapter, the Army (and, we hope, the Navy), and Civilian Nurses, V.A.D.s, W.A.A.C.s, W.R.N.S., Stewardesses, all who went down in ships and who were killed in air-raids and bombardments. Special mention was made by Mrs. Little of the brave transport drivers who went right up to the firing-line and the stewardesses who stuck to their posts.

The Five Sisters' Window, a priceless gem in the glorious Minster at York, which is a national heritage, is, Mrs. Little stated, in grave danger. Most of our ancient glass was destroyed in the wave of iconoclasm which swept over the country in Oliver Cromwell's

time. To Sir Thomas Fairfax, his Commander-in-Chief, we owe it that the glass of York Minster was spared. Mrs. Little tells us of the order he issued to his troopers: "There is one church which, for the honour of Yorkshiremen, you must not touch, and that is York Minster." In consequence, the "Minster possesses more old glass than any other cathedral in England, but the oldest and the rarest is the Five Sisters' Window. How appealingly arresting it is as you enter the South Transept Door, with its five beautiful lancet-shaped lights indicating, perhaps, the five wounds! These lights are unequalled in freedom, vastness and simplicity of design, and each one measuring 53 feet 6 inches in height, and 5 feet 1 inch in breadth, containing thirteenth-century Grisaille glass of a kind all too rare, and one Norman panel as the base of the central light representing Habakkuk feeding Daniel in the den of lions. Among the plants depicted in the design is said to be the *Herba Benedicta* and the ivy, symbolising love, which always means sacrifice, and the maple denoting victory.

"It is traditionally recorded that five maiden sisters worked the patterns in tapestry; hence the name of the Five Sisters. Whether this is correct or not, it is certain that the window is known, and will for ever be known, as the Sisters' Window, and the only one so named, and is a strange embodiment of what true womanhood should be in its quaint simplicity, quiet dignity, and lofty purity."

Mrs. Little therefore appealed to Yorkshire women of all denominations to join together "to preserve and restore that national thing of beauty, that priceless, unique, world-famed Five Sisters' Window, to the abiding memory of those who have gone before, but left their trail of 'light' upon our shore."

The scheme has the warm support of Mrs. Edwin Gray, J.P., Past President of the National Council of Women, who, with Mrs. Little, is acting as Joint Hon. Secretary to the scheme. Donations may be sent to them at the Assembly Rooms, York. We feel sure that many of our readers will desire to take part in promoting this noble memorial.

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