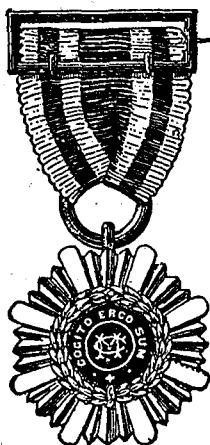


The Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland.



A meeting of the Matrons' Council was held at 431, Oxford Street, London, W., on Friday, April 22nd. Mrs. Bedford Fenwick presided. There was a large attendance of members. Before the business meeting began the Hon. Secretary, Miss M. Mollett, gave the following Valectory Address on the late President, Miss Isla Stewart, who had held this office from the foundation of the Council.

Miss Mollett said:—

VALECTORY.

"Before the Council commences its work I have been asked to voice the respect, the last respect we can pay to our President, and to say good-bye. For we meet to-day under the shadow of a great sorrow. We have lost the bravest and most loyal leader we shall ever know.

Others may mourn with us the death of a great Matron, of a wise woman, of one who was a power for good in the profession, but we have also to bear the loss of a very dear comrade, who understood and shared our troubles and our difficulties, and who never failed friend or foe; of one who was the soul of honour and of good fellowship, and who led us most valiantly from the first founding of our Council. For, like the brave standard bearer she ever was, she bore the standard of right and high principle unfalteringly throughout her career; she carried out to the letter the old instructions: "Ye shall not fall back, nor fly, nor suffer it to be wrested from you" and, at the end, might well say:—

I did not fail, nor faint, nor fly,
I carried the banner all the day;
Wrap it round me when I die.

If peace has its heroes as well as war, assuredly Isla Stewart was one, and had deserved to bear the motto, "Ich dien," for she served her God, her profession, and humanity well and nobly with a very single mind throughout her life. We were proud of her, and more and better than that, we loved her, we love her now, for she had the secret that gains affection, the kindly sympathy, the warm heart that beats for humanity and is tolerant of its fail-

ings. We shall miss her; we shall miss the steady understanding, the clear mind, that was very true and went straight for the principle underlying the argument; we shall miss the courage that never faltered; nor shall we ever forget how, in the darkest times, *she* never lost her brightness, her cheerfulness, her belief in the ultimate victory of right. We miss her to-night. Hardly ever did she fail in her place at our meetings, and her keen interest, her alert intellect, and ready speech gave a zest to our debates. None of you will forget how, at the last meeting we held in this room, she came, ill as she was, to take an interested and animated part in the subjects under discussion, although she had already spent the whole afternoon at a most exhausting conference on the State Registration Bill. But it was her duty, and that with Isla Stewart was ever first. We shall miss her unswerving belief in the future of our profession, in its development, in the grand possibilities that lie before it. Whenever we felt inclined to doubt, or were wearied with the endless and unscrupulous opposition that barred the way, her cheery and courageous optimism heartened us again.

On the square in the old Swedish town of Helsingborg stands the statue of a general with a fine inscription: "He was great in victory, but greatest in misfortune and defeat." That was our late President—most confident, most hopeful when things were at their worst.

Nothing did she desire more passionately than to see the measure passed for which for twenty long years she had fought a good fight. But with victory in sight she died.

A woman such as Isla Stewart is not mourned with words but deeds. It remains for us to honour her memory, as she would have had us honour it, by completing what she aided to begin with such high hopes and such unselfish aspirations. She never failed us; we must not fail her. What she desired must be accomplished.

"Les morts vont vite," but the memory of our President will be fresh and green with the members of this Council for many and many a long day to come. She has bequeathed to us for all time the recollection of a grand woman with high public principles and the rarest private qualities."

THE BUSINESS MEETING.

The minutes of the previous meeting were then read and confirmed, and the correspondence dealt with.

APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP.

The following Matrons, who applied for membership were elected:—

Miss C. B. Leigh, Matron, Central London

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)