

SONGS OF FOUR NATIONS,

We had a rare musical treat on Saturday, March 14th, when a concert took place to which we had been looking forward for weeks. Once we had a somewhat similar feast of song when, in the early days of "our adventure" in Queen's Gate, Mrs. Kennedy Fraser and Miss Margaret Kennedy gave us a selection of Highland melodies.

To Sir Harold Boulton, Bart., C.B.E., C.V.O., we owe this latest enjoyment, and it was indeed a most wonderful privilege for members of the R.B.N.A. to gather, in the large, double drawing-room to hear such famous artistes as Miss Jane Croft and Mr. Ernest Groom. Our delight in their exquisite rendering of our national music was added to by Sir Harold's thoughtfulness in giving a short address in explanation of the type of songs selected for the programme (with very enlightening comments on certain of them), thus helping us to enter the world of national poetry and song with a clearer understanding. His words did not merely act as an introduction, calculated to add to the pleasures of anticipation, but they opened up to us fresh vistas of the interest and strange charm, inherent in the poetry of the four nations. In a subtle way, due, perhaps to his great love for these almost living treasures of song, Sir Harold touched chords that lie usually far beneath our everyday consciousness, that have nothing to do with the intellect, but are part of the race spirit itself; an afternoon such as this can bring to the surface of the consciousness still, aspirations and feelings that are kindred to those that inspired the songs. True it may be that beneath many of these lovely melodies there may lie much in our national story that, written in the hard language of materialistic history, savours of selfishness, hatred and wrong, but above all this—or, at least, so we felt it to be this afternoon—there has risen a wealth of music that rings down the ages to tell us of light-hearted courage, of love, of revelry sometimes, of gaiety and often of sorrow too, but sorrow that has had its poignancy so transformed that it lives in our national life in one sweet melody after another.

The concert commenced with "The Mackintosh's Lament," sung by Mr. Ernest Groom, and then came "The Skye Boat Song." Surely never before had we heard it like this, so gay it seemed with the courage of the Highland lassie as she sang at her oars and sped "the bonnie Prince Charlie" over the wild waters that surge high against the cliffs of the land of which he was "born to be King." The whole rendering of the song made it like a breath of that courage that knows no defeat. Then, with an odd, delicate sense of contrast, came the songs "The Gentle Maiden," and "Little Mary Cassidy." Next we listened to Miss Jane Croft's beautiful voice singing the old English ballads, "Go from my window go," and "Gathering Daffodils," and then that quaint melody from the dim sheilings in the Western Isles. "Oh can ye Sew Cushions?" As a duet we had that wonderful classic, "My Dearest, My Fairest," by Purcell. It was enchanting and we held our breath still as we listened to the haunting song from Wales, "All through the Night," sung by Mr. Groom. We were led to fresh phases of feeling by his "Drink to me only with thine Eyes," and the grand old English drinking song, "The Leather Bottel." Then from Miss Croft we had "Robin Adair," an Irish song which until to-day we had proudly claimed for Scotland. Next she sang "The Rising of the Lark," and then "Loch Lomond," followed each time by rounds of applause. After some encores, the programme closed with "Come, Let us Wander," by Purcell. Miss Gwen Jacob was at the piano.

At the request of the members who were present, Miss Macdonald thanked Sir Harold Boulton and the artistes for one perfectly delightful afternoon. The house at Queen's Gate was, she said, full of associations with the kindness of Sir Harold and Lady Boulton to the nurses of the Empire; the R.B.N.A. would not soon forget their goodness when the

house closed down as a war hostel and the Association took over the lease. She could inform Sir Harold that since then it was still having adventures, for the nurses had done pretty well everything from eating haggis to adopting a baby, from producing light comedy to listening to professional lectures (these not so well attended as other things), but she was sure that, of all the memories that linger with the nurses of their Home in Queen's Gate, none would prove more fragrant than that they were taking away to-day. It would last "All through the night" and through many a day in the background of their consciousness, to lighten the sadness and the difficulties so inseparably connected with their work.

After singing the National Anthem, we adjourned for tea and the nicest thing that happened next was a sentence from Sir Harold Boulton—"Some day we'll have another—all Scotch."

CLUB FIXTURES.

The various fixtures for the month of April appear on page i of our advertisement supplement.

We have not fixed any very definite programme for the Ramblers' Club on April 3rd. It is proposed that we should adopt pretty much the same course as when we went through Chelsea, and we shall visit this time places of interest from the Strand to St. Paul's.

We hope that as many members as possible will make a point of attending Sir d'Arcy Power's Lecture on Saturday, April 11th, when he will tell us about that illustrious Scotsman, John Hunter, one of the most brilliant men in the history of medicine. We know how fascinating Sir d'Arcy Power can make his subject, for many of us remember a wonderful lecture he gave to us, dealing with the whole evolution of surgery, soon after we came to Queen's Gate.

On Saturday, April 18th, we are to have our usual monthly dance, and on April 25th there is to be a Staff Dance. Many members have expressed appreciation of the courtesy shown to them by the domestic staff, and they can realise the extra work that is involved by the numerous entertainments and lectures at the Club, so that now there is an opportunity for showing kindly appreciation of this. The Secretary will be glad to hear from Members who will help in any way towards making the staff party a real treat.

It has been found necessary to change the date of Mrs. Atherton Earp's concert to April 27th, we shall have a delightful afternoon then when Miss Lomax sings her wonderful fairy songs at the piano and other friends of Mrs. Atherton Earp take part in the programme.

On May 2nd, at 3 p.m., Mrs. Willoughby Hodgson will give a talk on "Pottery and Porcelain."

THE PASSING OF A VERY TRUE FRIEND.

While we do not wish to overlap matter which will undoubtedly appear in another part of the JOURNAL, we feel that our Members would wish to have placed on record in their Official Supplement an expression of the profound sorrow they all feel on hearing the news of the death of Dr. McGregor Robertson, of Glasgow. Our Association had no more loyal Member, the nurses no friend more true than this eminent Scotch Physician. Only those of us who have been most closely associated with the long struggle to gain legal status for the Profession of Nursing can realise the sacrifice of time, and health, and money that the cause of the nurses has cost Dr. McGregor Robertson. But while we grieve for our own loss we are overwhelmed with the sense of what his death must mean to the Scottish Nurses' Association and the Scottish Nurses' Club. We can, indeed, enter into their sorrow in the loss of a splendid champion and a friend who never failed them, and to both organisations we offer the deep and sincere sympathy of the Royal British Nurses' Association.

ISABEL MACDONALD,
Secretary to the Corporation.

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