

QUEEN MARY DKIS

Queen Mary is dead; this great lady of Britain whose life spanned six reigns. With grief, born of respect and love, the nation learns the sad tidings. For many weeks we knew she had been ill, yet still we cannot grasp that she has gone. Long had she been with us until it seemed that time itself could not overcome that unconquerable spirit that had borne her through the years.

On the day of her death, crowds had gathered outside Marlborough House to read the first bulletin that told that Her Majesty's health had seriously weakened. Speedily the news spread and we learned with sudden shock that Queen Mary's condition which so recently had been reported as improving, had reached a critical stage, and that her family had been called to her bedside.

The Duchess of Kent was seen to be followed by the Duke of Windsor, who journeyed from America a few weeks ago to be with his mother during her illness. Then, just after mid-day another bulletin reported that Queen Mary's condition had worsened. The Queen Mother, her daughter-in-law, arrived to be with her at this anxious moment.

Then the Queen, the Duke of Edinburgh and Princess Margaret came to visit the very gracious lady who lay so ill in Marlborough House. Through the long evening the crowds waited, until at last they learned that Queen Mary had died peacefully in her sleep.

This is how we will remember her, a proud, charming Queen, a lady of vigour to the last. And even when the years gently weakened her energy and she took to a wheelchair, she showed that same enthusiasm that had been among her most endearing qualities all her life. That same genuine love of "being shown around" was the same twenty-nine years ago when she visited the Wembley Exhibition with her husband, King George the Fifth.

And when the traditional duties of state called, as at Royal garden parties, Queen Mary revealed the charm and dignity that made her, above all, a great Queen. Strict to obey each call of duty, she had taught her children to follow the same path.

In 1935 at the Silver Jubilee, our present Queen and her sister watched their grandparents ride through London to celebrate their reign of twenty-five years, years in which they had won the affection of all their peoples.

Within eight months of the Silver Jubilee, King George lay dead and his eldest son became our sovereign; Edward the Eighth, the King who never wore a crown. Instead his brother was crowned in Westminster Abbey as King George the Sixth. Close by that same Abbey was placed a statue to his father, built from a fund subscribed to by his people. Side by side stood his wife and son for the unveiling ceremony.

Needlework was among the private interests of Queen Mary. The same delight she found in old furniture was awakened by a fine piece of embroidery. A brilliant needlewoman, she gave a carpet she had made to be sold to raise dollars. She was over eighty-years old at the time.

Queen Mary became a great-grandmother with the birth of Prince Charles. Her husband and two of her sons had been kings; in her turn her grand-daughter has become our Queen, and one day in the years ahead, her great-grandson will be our King. "A grand old lady" we called her, and in those words we expressed a wealth of affection for the Queen of such simple pleasures. Now she who became so much a part of all our lives, lives no more. The nation mourns the passing of so great and gracious a lady, so kindly and dignified a Queen.