

# DEATH OF LADY MARLING

## BELOVED THROUGHOUT THE DISTRICT

### WONDERFUL RECORD OF KINDLINESS

It is with deep regret that we have to record the death of Beatrice Lady Marling, of Stanley Park. This regret will be shared by thousands of friends and acquaintances, not only in the immediate neighbourhood, but in many parts of the country. From the time that she and the late Sir Percival Marling came to reside at Stanley Park, following the death of Sir William Marling, she had devoted herself whole-heartedly to the welfare of the district. Her support of all deserving causes was not confined to financial aid alone. She was indefatigable in her personal co-operation with those responsible for the organisation of social, philanthropic and public welfare causes. All our local societies and institutions were indebted to Lady Marling, whose charm of manner and sweet disposition endeared her to so many of every class and creed who were privileged to know her.

The Stroud General Hospital, the Stroud District Nursing Association, the local secondary and elementary schools, the British Legion, were among the varied objects in which she took an abiding interest, but her wonderful record of personal kindness was not restricted to these. Her hospitality, too, was unbounded and unprecedented, and Stanley Park became the venue of innumerable parties and assemblies which widened year by year her circle of friendships. It was characteristic of her, too, that when Sir Percival died in 1936 she carried on the numerous activities and charitable deeds which hitherto had been their joint concern. And her busy life, for Lady Marling was indefatigable to the end, was rewarded by the respect and love it engendered. William Congreve wrote, more than two centuries ago, that "blessings ever wait on virtuous deeds," and never was a phrase more applicable than in the life of Lady Marling.

It was on Saturday, July 12th, that Lady Marling entered Stroud General Hospital to undergo an operation. She hoped to return home on Wednesday last. On the previous Friday she was very bright and cheerful, attended to her letters and sent a number of messages. In the "Stroud News" appeared the message:

"Beatrice Lady Marling deeply regrets that owing to being in the Stroud General Hospital undergoing an operation, she has been unable to take any part in the War Weapons Week."

On Saturday, too, she had a good day, but at 10.30 p.m. on Sunday she suffered a heart attack, from which she passed away at 6 a.m. on Monday.

Lady Marling, who was the eldest of the Marling family, was born on October 10, 1870, at Stanley Park, Stroud.

On Saturday, 16, she had a good day at a heart attack, from which she passed away at 6 a.m. on Monday.

Lady Marling, who was the eldest daughter of the late Mr. F. H. Beaumont, of Buckland Court, Surrey, and a great grand-daughter of the fifth Duke of Manchester, was 80 years of age last March.



BEATRICE LADY MARLING

Her marriage to the late Sir Percival Marling, Bart, V.C., C.B., took place on May 18th, 1899. In his book, "Rifleman and Hussar," Sir Percival writes:

"I got married at my wife's place, Buckland Court, Surrey, at the little church in my father-in-law's garden, and the dear old Archbishop of York, Maclagan, tied the knot. The night before, my mother-in-law gave a dinner party, at which there were the Archbishop of York, Bill Beresford, and Lily, Duchess of Marlborough, my wife's uncle, Sir William Colville, Master of Ceremonies to Queen Victoria, Princess Amélie of Schleswig-Holstein, the Kaiser's aunt, Mrs. MacLagan, my father and mother and my three sisters, Lady Colville, and a lot of other people.

"My wife and I had nearly 600 wedding presents between us, and all our friends were most kind. We had eight bridesmaids—Margaret and Helen Marling, Lady Mabel Egerton, Lady Clemmie Hay, Lady Norah Fitzherbert, Betty Fuller, Dora Maclagan, Bertha Joliffe—and two pages—Rainée Fuller and Lord Edward Hay.

"The tenantry on the Stanley Park and Sedbury Park estates were most kind, and gave us lovely silver salvers, and I was also presented with six illuminated addresses, and the workpeople at the Ebley and Stanley Mills also gave us very beautiful presents."

It was during their honeymoon, which was being spent on the Continent, that the Boer War broke out, and they hurried home to enable Sir Percival to report for service. Lady Marling accompanied her husband to Capetown and thence to Ladysmith. She was one of the last women to leave Ladysmith before the historic siege began.

The last words in Sir Percival Marling's book are: "And above all, I thank God for a good wife!"

When Sir Percival Marling relinquished his command of the Hussars in February, 1901, he and Lady Marling came to Stanley Park, where they stayed until mid-April, when they took up residence at Sedbury Park, near Lydney. There for three years Lady Marling took a leading part in local social life, and as she did later at Stroud, endeared herself to the residents of the district.

On the death of Sir William Marling in

October, 1919, and his accession to the title, Sir Percival decided to sell Sedbury Park, and it was then that he and Lady Marling took up residence at the family seat.

To deal adequately with the services Lady Marling has since rendered to the Stroud neighbourhood would be an impossible task. Of her, it is the literal truth to say that she "never tired of well-doing." Throughout the past 20 years she had spent herself untiringly in social and charitable work in the County and the locality immediately surrounding her home, and if, as is indisputable, Lady Marling was fond of Stroud, it can be claimed with equal confidence that the district was fortunate to a unique degree in having in its midst so gracious a lady, whose one desire was to serve it loyally and usefully, and to give happiness and joy to those around her.

In 1924 Sir Percival and Lady Marling celebrated the silver anniversary of their marriage, and there is a permanent memento of this event at Stanley Park, in the pair of beautifully wrought iron gates leading from the north side of All Saints' Church, Selsley, to the park. This was one of Sir Percival's gifts to his wife, and the gates bear the initials P.S.M. and B.C.M. together with the material dates.

Lady Marling's life in Stroud was a very full one. She was always willing to help forward any good and deserving cause, not only materially, but by active personal service. It would be impossible to compile on how many occasions her services had been requested and freely given for the opening of bazaars, fetes and similar functions, and at these events her happy little speeches never failed to strike the right note, and to obtain a response from those by whom she was held in such affectionate esteem.

Lady Marling was called upon to act as president of many organisations, and among these the Stroud General Hospital undoubtedly occupied a very warm place in her heart. Lady Marling often expressed her admiration for the medical and nursing professions, and for many years she had been a generous friend and active worker for the hospital. When in 1930 she was asked to succeed her husband as president, and so become the first lady to occupy that office, she readily consented, and for four years—a year longer than the normal period—continued in that position, which was to her, anything but a nominal one. Almost immediately after her appointment she issued a special personal appeal for a gift of £1,000 to the hospital and this effort met with a remarkable response. As a co-opted member of the Committee of Management Lady Marling was a most regular attendant at the committee's weekly meetings, and since she has been succeeded by her brother-in-law, Mr. Stanley Marling, in the presidency, she has, as vice-president, presided at several meetings of the General Council in Mr. Marling's absence.

She was, too, president of the Hospital Linen League, and her numerous visits to the hospital and its patients will ever be remembered with gratitude.

Lady Marling had also been president for many years of the Stroud and District Nursing Association, and in this capacity, too, had rendered invaluable service.

She was deeply interested in the work of the Red Cross, of which she was County Vice-President, and in her British Legion had a warm and loyal friend. Besides being president of the Stroud, Cainscross and Stonehouse Women's sections, she was also honorary vice-president of the Selsley Men's branch. Not long ago she presented a cup for competition among local lady members of the Legion.

For a long period Lady Marling had been a source of encouragement to the Junior Imperial League, and she had been president of Mid-Gloucestershire Women's Conservative Association, we believe, since its inception.

Throughout her residence in the district Lady Marling had continuously thrown open the grounds at Stanley Park and the house itself for various causes. For several years the Junior Imperial League Whitsuntide

fetes were held there, and each summer there was a long succession of parties, including, in addition to Lady Marling's own garden party, those given to the inmates of the old Stroud Public Assistance Institution, and Roxburgh House, besides those to local farmers, and the children of Selsley. In addition, each Christmas brought its festivities at Stanley Park, including parties for the nurses of the Hospital and the Nursing Association, besides many others. Each Christmas day, too, there were gifts for the Hospital staff and patients, the staff of the Nurses Home, the staff and inmates of the P.A. Institution and the children of Roxburgh Home. She was deeply interested in the work of the National Children's Home and Orphanage at Ebley and Painswick, and was a popular visitor to all the local schools. Each year at Armistice time the ex-Service men of Selsley were invited to dinner at the Park. Lady Marling was a member of the Council of St. Michael's Home, Bussage, a governor of the Stroud Educational Foundation, and had been an honorary member of Stroud Inner Wheel since its inception.

In the Royal Jubilee year of 1935, there was a memorable gathering at Stanley Park, when Sir Percival and Lady Marling entertained the tenants to a celebration of the Jubilee and of the 36th anniversary of their marriage. On that occasion Mr. Sidney Hague, the oldest resident of Selsley, on behalf of the parishioners, presented Lady

support to social functions arranged for the raising of funds, often for the local church or chapel. A keen Churchwoman, she was always willing to do everything in her power to serve the Church and in this direction she had achieved much. She was a great advocate for and supporter of missionary movements, and was, we believe, a member of the local committee of the Stroud and District Branch of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

All kinds of organisations, however, had benefited by her aid, and her services were constantly in demand to open various events. Her high sense of duty in this particular direction was admirably illustrated in May, 1936, when on the day before Sir Percival died, she snatched an hour from his bedside in order to fulfil an engagement at Woodchester, where she had promised to open a bazaar in aid of the Y.M.C.A. Club, an organisation in which she was deeply interested.

Children and young people were particular favourites of Lady Marling, who found many ways of giving them pleasure. The children of Selsley—and everyone of them was known personally by her ladyship—have lost a particularly dear friend, and the children attending many local secondary and elementary schools will deeply regret the passing of a kindly personality whose presence at various school functions was highly appreciated.

Lady Marling undoubtedly had a great

Marling with a diamond bracelet watch, to take the place of one—a wedding gift—which had been stolen from the Park with other jewellery a short time previously.

That summer, the last of Sir Percival's life, Stanley Park was the scene of a large number of local gatherings, admirably arranged by Lady Marling.

In May of the following year Lady Marling suffered a shattering bereavement by the death of her husband, and those who saw her on the occasion of the funeral, or immediately after her return from Harrogate, where she spent some weeks following her bereavement, could alone judge the bravery which she displayed when she returned to Stanley Park and again took a full share in the life of the district.

She succeeded her husband as president of the Mid-Gloucestershire Conservative and Unionist Association, and of the Stroud Show. She continued practically all her previous activities, besides accepting the added responsibilities of the offices in which she succeeded Sir Percival.

Each year for a long period she had been a welcome visitor to Stroud Salvation Army Citadel, on the occasion of its May celebrations, and in May, 1938, she opened Stratford Park Swimming Pool, and a few days later the Marling Schools Jubilee sports pavilion.

Only on April 19th of this year Lady Marling had the honour of entertaining Her Majesty Queen Mary to tea at Stanley Park, when, besides inspecting the house and grounds, Her Majesty also visited All Saints' Church, Selsley—where Lady Marling had been churchwarden since the death of Sir Percival—and saw the beautiful lady chapel given by Lady Marling in memory of her husband.

Many references have and will be made to the wonderful example of the late Lady Marling, but no tribute can really be sufficiently comprehensive adequately to express all that the district will feel at the present time.

In every village in the area Lady Marling had, at one time or another, given her

admiration for youth, although she often said that she herself was a Victorian, she had a good deal of sympathy for the greater freedom of action given to the younger people in Georgian days.

Only a few days before her illness—news of which came as a great shock to local residents—Lady Marling was interesting herself in the forthcoming War Weapons Week and was endeavouring to ensure the success of this venture by giving her assistance to the committees engaged in organising the various events, and her inability to take an active part in the effort itself was a great disappointment to her.

The death of Lady Marling is an irreparable loss to the district. By her charm and lovable nature she had earned the esteem of all whose privilege it had been to be brought into contact with her; she had found joy in giving happiness and pleasure to others and everyone in Stroud and neighbourhood will mourn her passing.

Her nephew, Sir John Stanley Vincent Marling, Bart., who succeeded Sir Percival in 1936, is serving abroad in a Lancer Regt.

### LADY MARLING AND THE BERKSHIRE REGIMENT BAND

Among the last acts of Lady Marling was the sending of a message of appreciation late on Friday afternoon, on behalf of herself and the patients of the Hospital to Stroud War Weapons Week committee.

On Friday it was arranged that the band of the Royal Berkshire Regt. should visit the Hospital and render selections to the patients and when this had ended Lady Marling sent a message of thanks to the chairman of the Entertainments Committee, adding an expression of the great enjoyment which the beautiful music had given to everyone at the Hospital.

This incident was reported to a largely attended meeting of the War Weapons Entertainments Committee and its associate sub-committees on Tuesday evening, when those present paid silent tribute to Lady Marling's memory.