

A NATION'S HOMAGE

From Marlborough House, where died Queen Mary, march the massed bands of the Brigade of Guards in the solemn procession that takes her on the first stage of her last journey from London. Only thirteen months ago, Queen Mary had watched her own son's funeral procession from Marlborough House. Now she is borne, as was he, upon a gun-carriage, through the streets of the capital which she loved, and which loved her so dearly.

Behind the cortege march the four Dukes; Edinburgh, Windsor, Gloucester and Kent - two of her sons, a grandson, and the husband of her grand-daughter, our Queen. With measured tread, the procession passes the stands built for Coronation Day - the day we had all hoped might be a climax in the twilight of her life.

Troops of Queen Mary's own regiments march, with arms reversed, behind the coffin as it moves slowly down the Mall. Along this royal road, Her Majesty journeyed many times from Buckingham Palace when it was her home during a reign of twenty-five years as Queen.

High above London, flags fly at half-mast in salute to the great Lady who was ever a Queen in the long and often tragic years through which she lived.

The royal car arrives at Westminster Hall, and the Archbishop of Canterbury meets the ladies of the royal household: Her Majesty the Queen, the Queen Mother and Princess Margaret - all in sombre black.

A wreath of golden roses, white carnations and lilies of the valley (a tribute from the Queen) rests upon the coffin, draped with Queen Mary's standard. In the shadow of Big Ben, the cortege enters the gates of Westminster Palace and moves across the square to Westminster Hall: the coffin bright with the colours of a Queen, on a grey afternoon in March.

The six black horses drawing the gun-carriage, come to a halt before the entrance to Westminster Hall. The Guard of Honour presents arms, and eight bearers of the Queen's Company of the Grenadier Guards lift the coffin upon their shoulders.

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Within Westminster Hall a service, simple as she would have wished, is held. And, then to pay their own personal tributes to the great lady now at rest, come the ordinary people. In their thousands they gather, in a queue a mile long: the people of London, the people of her country.

For more than two hours they wait, silent in their grief. Here only a year ago, they waited to honour her son.

Within the great hall, Queen Mary lies, peaceful in her sleep. Upon the catafalque is draped the Alexandra Pall, the same richly embroidered cloth that was used for the lying in state of the Unknown Warrior, Queen Alexandra and King George the Fifth.

At each corner of the purple-covered steps stand Gentlemen at Arms and Yeoman of the Guard as sentinels, keeping a vigil through night and day. At the head of the catafalque stands the golden cross from Westminster. A queen is at rest: a queen loved and admired by all --- a queen who will live forever in our hearts.

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 For more than two hours they wait, silent in their grief, ~~waiting for~~
~~but a glimpse of the face upon which she now rests~~ Here only a year
 ago, they waited to honour her son. ~~As they came in 1936 to pay homage~~
~~to her husband, King George the Fifth~~ Within the great hall, Queen Mary
 lies, peaceful in her sleep. Upon the catafalque is draped the Alexandra
 Fall, the same richly embroidered cloth that was used for the burial of
 the Unknown Warrior, Queen Alexandra and King George the Fifth.

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 At each corner of the purple covered steps stand troops of the Gentleman
 at Arms as sentinels, keeping a vigil through night and day ~~over their~~
~~place~~ At the head of the catafalque stands the golden cross from
 Westminster Abbey. ~~In 1936 it would have been thousands of miles away.~~
~~With them they will take a memory of simple beauty - A queen is at rest:~~
 A queen loved and admired by all - a ^{queen} ~~body~~ who will live forever in our hearts.