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DEATH OF MRS. HARMSWORTH.

MOTHER OF VISCOUNT NORTHCLIFFE.

Mrs. Harmsworth, of Poynter's Hall, Totteridge, widow of Mr. Alfred Harmsworth, barrister-at-law, and mother of the late Viscount Northcliffe, passed away at her residence on Saturday night, aged 86.

The mother of so remarkable a personality as Alfred Harmsworth Viscount Northcliffe may well have been a remarkable woman. And she was remarkable, most of all, because she typified in a special degree the many British women who, by their character and energy and wisdom dominate homes, often straitened and limited in means and opportunities, from which the children go forth to make for themselves great positions in the world.

Geraldine Mary Maffett was born on December 24, 1838, a younger daughter of Mr. William Maffett, a Dublin land-agent. The Maffetts were descended from a Scottish family settled in County Down; and it may be said of Mrs. Harmsworth that she retained to the end of her long life those characteristics of her native Ulster, that tenacity and directness and clear outlook on life



Mrs. Harmsworth, from the portrait by Mr. Philip de Laszlo.

which has placed the men and women of Northern Ireland among the definite assets of the British Empire. In her, loyal Ulster had the most devoted and unswerving of friends. Nothing could deflect her from her affection.

At the age of 26, when she married Mr. Alfred Harmsworth, then a master on the staff of the Royal Hibernian School, Dublin, Geraldine Maffett was a travelled and well-read woman. She had a talent for music; and it was no impulse of courtesy or compliment which made those who heard her play the piano in the later years of her life wonder at the beauty of her execution, sometimes of compositions which she had managed to produce in the leisure moments of her busy life.

Three years after their marriage Mr. and Mrs. Harmsworth moved to London and made their home in Hampstead. It indicated a real adventure: The young wife did not feel that the career of an assistant schoolmaster was one worthy her husband's abilities. She induced him to enter as a law student, first at the King's Inns, Dublin, and, in 1866, at the Middle Temple. He was called to the Bar in 1869. Fifty-five years later (1924) his widow and their eldest surviving son, Viscount Rothermere, presented £60,000 to the Middle Temple for the establishment of a benevolent endowment to be known as the "Alfred Harmsworth Memorial Fund" in his memory.

ENERGY AND OPTIMISM.

Success comes slowly to most men at the Bar. At 52, the age at which Mr. Alfred Harmsworth died, many barristers consider themselves lucky, and are considered prosperous, if they have achieved a precarious four figures. In his case, the inevitable time of waiting was handicapped by ill-health. His

achieved a precarious four figures. In his case, the inevitable time of waiting was handicapped by ill-health. His family grew faster than his practice; means were not large. Even the cost of taking "silk" was his reason against it. It was mainly due to his wife's energy and optimism that the courage of that home never failed.

Her eldest son, Viscount Northcliffe, was then near the beginning of his journalistic successes, and his prosperity became hers. Thenceforward, first in the house in London which Lord Northcliffe and Lord Rothermere bought for her, later in her home at Poynter's Hall, Totteridge, she lived into old age, respected by her friends for her simple and direct nature, revered by her children, always their wisest counsellor. The affection existing between her and her eldest son was a very deep one. And the instances when he followed her advice with regard to the conduct of his papers testified to the sanity and soundness of her judgment. Her influence was never used in an ignoble cause. As the compass points steadily to the north, so her mind strove ever to serve the great interests of her country.

ROOSEVELT'S ADMIRATION.

Mrs. Harmsworth took the deepest interest in her grandsons and granddaughters, and she was especially pleased when one of the former, Mr. Esmond Harmsworth, was returned to the House of Commons in 1919 as member for Thanet, which constituency he still represents. He was then 21 years and 5 months old and was the youngest M.P. who had sat in Parliament for over a century.

Mrs. Harmsworth is survived by seven sons: Viscount Rothermere, Mr. Cecil Harmsworth, who was for some years Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs; Sir Leicester Harmsworth, Bt.; Sir Hildebrand Harmsworth, Bt.; Mr. St. John Harmsworth, Mr. Charles Harmsworth, Mr. Vyvyan Harmsworth, and by three daughters, Lady King, Mrs. Wild, and Mrs. Burton.

A friend of many years adds these few recollections:

Mrs. Harmsworth was the most truthful, sincere human being I have ever met. I do not believe that she ever deceived anybody even by way of polite equivocation, and—a more difficult thing among human beings—I do not think that she ever was in her life the victim of self-deception.

She is said to have been the only person who in later years was able to influence the public policy of Lord Northcliffe.

Mrs. Harmsworth's most interesting travel experience was her visit with her eldest son to the United States and Canada at the time of Theodore Roosevelt's tenure of office. She had luncheon at the White House with the President, who treated her with exceptional distinction and always retained a great admiration for her.

THE FUNERAL.

The funeral will take place at St. Marylebone Cemetery, East Finchley, at 12 noon on Wednesday.