

## Commemorating Fierens per Newton

Mr. Prèsident, members of A.I.C.A. (and, if she will permit me to call her so in public, our dear friend Odette) may I first say how conscious I am of the honour you have done me in selecting me to say these few words in memory of our late president, Paul Fierens.

To praise him an easy task, and one which each one of you could do as well as I, for there is no difficulty in keeping alive the memory of a man whom none of us could possibly forget, or in praising a man whose qualities and virtues each of us knew so well.

If I were to describe <sup>in detail</sup> those qualities and virtues, all of us who knew him would at once recognise the truth of my description. Yet if I was to describe them to a stranger who had never met him, that Stranger would doubt the truth of my description, for it is not ~~often~~ that one man unites in himself so many of the qualities that make an ideal president, a profound scholar, a genial companion, a lovable friend and a civilised and wise man of the world, who set a new standard of behaviour wherever he went. <sup>we</sup> ~~he~~ who <sup>served</sup> ~~served~~ him and whom he in his turn served, know that he had all these qualities and I <sup>need</sup> ~~need~~ not repeat what has been said many times, more eloquently than I can do, in the Italian Bollettino which we have all read and in the words pronounced at his funeral by M. Bernard which you will find in the Bollettino.

But it is possible that I found myself closer to him ~~asked~~ than some of us, as a friend, since he had asked me to visit him in Brussels in order to lecture at the university in which he was professor and had visited me in London as a friend and not as the President of A.I.C.A.

It was on these occasions that I, <sup>became</sup> ~~because~~, fully conscious that those qualities which in most men would have contradicted each other, in his case reinforced each other.

It is this power to reconcile contradictory virtues that I would



in this case reinforced each other -

It is this power to reconcile contradictory virtues that I would wish you to consider to day.

Frank There are, <sup>perhaps,</sup> ~~many~~ men who possessed his complete integrity of judgement and his sense of justice in making decisions.

There are also ~~many~~ men who have ~~that~~ innate kindness of heart which would never cause distress to any of his colleagues. Yet how many men could combine that sense of absolute justice with that refusal to wound? How often, in our meetings there have been differences of opinion which might have developed into a quarrel without his profound sense of tact and diplomacy!

Again, there are many men who have his knowledge of art and his scholarship. And there are other men who have his enjoyment and child-like enthusiasm <sup>for</sup> art and <sup>his</sup> for life. Yet how many could combine <sup>the</sup> two without allowing enthusiasm to interfere with accuracy? Or scholarship to take ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> warmth out of enthusiasm?

~~As~~ Again, there are many men who have his genial and rich sense of humour, his capacity for laughter. <sup>There are</sup> ~~There are~~ others who have that deep seriousness of purpose which regards laughter as a negation of the importance of life's problems and humour as a sign of frivolity. Yet how many men could, like him, laugh at life's absurdities and at the same time retain his sense of life's dignity?

It was that dignity combined with that lightheartedness that made us so proud of him on all those occasions when A.I.C.A. met and he became our spokesman in the great cities of the world.

If he had not been a <sup>great</sup> ~~great~~ personality and a good friend in private life he could not have been a great president in the public life in which he was so familiar to us.



I wish therefore to remind you all and to assure our dear Odette on your behalf that we have lost more than a president.

I know how much courage was needed for Odette to be present with us to day. She may feel alone, but she is not alone. She is surrounded by friends, for the friends of Paul are also the friends of Odette. Through her we shall come to know Paul even more truly than we did. And through us she may come to realise even more profoundly than she does, our devotion to the man whom she and we, in different ways, have lost ~~xxx~~ but will always remember as a friend and as a guide in our future conduct.