

**MERSTHAM LODGE.**

**THE PRESIDENT'S ENGLISH COUNTRY HOUSE.**

In the middle of winter the picture in our New Year's Supplement may appear somewhat unseasonable, but at least it is not ill-chosen, in these dark days with their penetrating fogs and cloudy skies, for it brings to us an exquisite and cheering remembrance of summertime and the anticipations that the lengthening days encourage. Merstham Lodge is the charming residence which Her Royal Highness the Princess Arthur of Connaught built for herself some seven years ago. It stands in beautiful surroundings, and the outside of the house and, to a great extent, the interior was designed by the Princess herself. It is so delightfully English in all respects and especially so is the long drawing-room with its large open, old-fashioned fireplace and windows looking across a wide and lovely landscape. The illustration shows that type of an old English garden which is always so rich in colour; to its crazy pavement paths, strange little rock plants creep out from the borders and up between the stones. But perhaps the most delightful thing in the eyes of the Princess is her wood. We have an unforgettable remembrance of it in spring time when, under the trees, it was like a sea of bluebells and one followed a path that seemed only fit for the feet of the fairies, for covered richly with white fallen blossoms, it was like a thread of silver in the blue. And right in the middle of the wood is hidden a charming summerhouse

just such an one as brings up a perfect host of associations with fairy tales and old legends. Indeed, it and the bluebell wood seem to belong to the imaginative rather than to the physical world, and it would cause surprise to none but the most materialistically minded to catch sight of "the wee folk" there; we are sure that it is a pleasurable thing to them that a real blue-eyed English Princess has set her summerhouse there in the wood where bluebells grow. It will not seem amiss that now, in the depth of winter, we help our Members to look forward to the joys of summer time in giving them a picture of this country home of their President, which she took such pleasure in planning and building, and where she loves to spend the days that can be captured from all the round of duties and social fixtures inseparable from her life in town. Perhaps part of the charm of Merstham Lodge lies in the contrast which it presents to the more stately Mar Lodge surrounded by its magnificent mountains and forests. Neither suffers by comparison for both are so completely different. Mar presents a magnificent interpretation of Scottish characteristics, scenery and

tradition. Merstham Lodge is of the essence of the charm that lies about the English countryside.

**BIRTHDAY PARTY.**

A large number of Members gathered to partake of the Association's hospitality on its birthday on December 7th in spite of the fact that a fog hung over London and indeed did prevent a number of Members from coming who had accepted the invitation to be present. The great birthday cake looked very splendid, with its forty-eight candles blazing, in the centre of the drawing-room. The cake grows in size as in candles for each year more and more Members appear to come in and join in this anniversary celebration.

The first candle was lit by Mrs. Bedford Fenwick as Founder of the Association, and then others among its pioneers took part in "lighting the beacons"; while these were burning a replica of the Birthday Cake was presented to Mrs. Bedford Fenwick by Miss E. Swann, the most recently elected Member present. In thanking the nurses

for the cake Mrs. Fenwick spoke of the memories which an anniversary such as this inspired and of those who, nearly half a century ago, had gathered together to found the Association. Most of them had now passed away but they had left splendid work to be carried forward as a result of their lives. She reminded the Members that the Association stood for freedom for the nurses to develop their profession and without such liberty of opinion and conscience as it sought to promote there could



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neither be free professional progress nor proper professional protection for the nurses. She spoke of their inheritance, in the Association, of the ideals that they should seek to uphold for it and of their responsibility to carry forward all that their predecessors had achieved.

The first piece of the great birthday cake was cut by Mrs. Fenwick and after the cake had been divided among the Members present, the cheerful sound of crackers going off seemed to herald the coming of Christmas. "Auld Lang Syne" was sung and so the Birthday celebration closed with many expressions of good will all round.

On the morning of December 7th flowers had been forwarded to Dr. Bedford Fenwick, to remind him of a day forty-eight years ago when, in his drawing-room, the Association had been founded at 20, Upper Wimpole Street, and the nurses received a very kind acknowledgment of their gift.

**CHRISTMAS GIFTS.**

We would thank all those who have so willingly helped us with our scheme for sending Christmas cheer to a large

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