

BOURNEMOUTH.

Ami, dont le cœur haut, les talents, l'espérance,
Le don d'imaginer avec facilité,
Pourroient encore, malgré ta propre expérience,
Rallumer les désirs et la vivacité.

Laisse-toi gouverner par cette enchanteresse,
Qui seul peut du cœur calmer l'émotion ;
Et préfère, crois moi, les dons de la Paresse
Aux offres d'une vaine et folle ambition.

*Charles Auguste
Marquis de la Fare.*

It struck me that those amongst the Matrons of our Council who do not know my present metropolis, Bournemouth, might like to hear something about the scene of our next meeting place. I assure them the town is a most excellent spot for a summer outing—it makes absolutely no demand upon our energies beyond those leading to placid enjoyment. Antiquities, curiosities, grand natural scenery, great manufacturing or docks—Bournemouth has none of these. She is the city of calm and correct pleasure—she does not cater for the fervour and turmoil of toil; stretched her lazy length on the beach; basking in the sun before her background of dark pines and breezy downs—she is the very archpriestess of well-conducted enjoyment and sanitary health. Nothing rude and boisterous—all orderly, clean and well conducted.

Dotted all along the Hants and Dorset coast to right and left of her lie brave little towns with stormy brave times behind them, who lived with hand on hilt—towns that fought the Romans, the Danes, the French, and sent ships to the Armada, who took their part in the stirring commerce of those days. Within a tram ride is Christchurch Priory—with all its memories of vigorous and businesslike old Priors, and Poole near by rests after a stormy and tempestuous but far from blameless past; Weymouth, Swanage further along, are all full of wonderful old stories of long ago glories and prowess. But Bournemouth is not excited, she yawns—“Did they really?” she queries—“how enterprising of them! Well—I wasn't there to see.”—And she spreads her wares before you—her modern picture palaces (all films have passed the censor), her pretty winter gardens with delightful popular concerts, her piers, her neat little family theatre, her arcades, her showy shops, her char-à-bancs, her fleet of pleasure steamers, her endless restaurants, hotels, boarding houses and tea shops: and the peaceful blue sea lapping on the yellow sands in front of it all. “There!” she says, “is not all this more to the point than musty fusty, long

dead and gone pirates and smugglers and men-at-arms? Come along, eat and drink and be happy.” And people take her at her word—for Bournemouth understands, and the modern holiday makers come in their tens of thousands to buy her wares—whilst Bournemouth waxes fat and wealthy, and builds more and more pretty villas amongst the pines, and cleans and polishes herself with commendable vigour. Even the little river Bourne that trickles, neatly bordered, through her tidy public gardens has (it is typical of Bournemouth) its little bed carefully swept out and cleaned periodically.

Strident modernity is the keynote of Bournemouth. Some seventy years ago a handful of fishermen's cottages marked the place where it now stretches expanding day by day and reaching long red brick tentacles inland, and in the height of the season it is quite as well worth seeing as one of the great northern pleasure towns of which it may be well considered the southern prototype.

I need not dwell much on one side of Bournemouth to nurses—Bournemouth as a health resort. If holiday makers swarm so also do a sadder crowd—invalids. Doctors, nurses, nursing homes, sanatoria are all well to the fore to enjoy not only the sea but also the pines, which, it may not be so generally known, were planted by the enterprising designer of Bournemouth. “Highways and Byways in Hampshire” writes: “Even the pines that overrun the neighbourhood are a modern introduction—rather, it should be said, re-introduction—for they do flourish where pines grew in geologic times, though the native forest vanished pre-historically, and only the fossil remains on the foreshore tell of fir-woods at the mouth of the Bourne when it was a tributary of the river Solent.”

I hope many Matrons will come to see this almost unique English mushroom town—not a town grown up feverishly round a great industry, but just an open air health and pleasure palace that has arisen in answer to the great modern needs of happiness, air and health—it is well worth seeing. One point I forgot which is not uninteresting—it contained at the last census the highest average of single women of any town in the kingdom.

M. MOLLETT,

Hon. Secretary Matrons' Council.

The Quarterly Meeting of the Matrons' Council will be held in the Bourne Hall Hotel on July 25th at 3 p.m. At the open meeting State Registration will be discussed at 3.45, after which Miss Forrest will entertain the members to tea.

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