

## THE HATFIELD NURSING ASSOCIATION.

### A DAY OF PLEASURE AND PROFIT.

On August 7th, Hatfield House, and its magnificent grounds and park, the stately Elizabethan home of the House of Cecil, were thrown open to the public and the profits accruing from the admission money, and the teas served, were devoted to the Hatfield Nursing Association, which should considerably benefit thereby.

Fortunately the date fell on one of the rare summer days of this season, and both house and grounds showed to the best advantage, and their best was very beautiful indeed.

The lovely pile of buttressed buildings of red brick, approached by magnificent avenues of elms and limes, shed an atmosphere of departed spacious days, which not even the crowd of sightseers could dispel.

On the right of the approach to the mansion are the remains of the old Palace which originally formed a quadrangle, three sides of which were demolished by an ancestor of the Cecils, the bricks being used to construct the present house.

In the reign of Henry VIII, the old Palace was used as a nursery for the royal children, so that Elizabeth, whose name is bound up with Hatfield, was familiar with it from her infancy, and in later years it became the scene of her captivity.

The gardens remain exactly the same as in those far off days and one might think that her prison was a very desirable one. The pleasure gardens surrounding a lily pond blazed with colour and they themselves are surrounded by a walk enclosed at roof and sides by interlaced lime trees, thus securing complete privacy. But all the same our imagination pictures her, pacing these walks clad in hoop, and silk and ruffs raging at the indignity placed on her.

Immediately in front of the Palace is a lovely sunk garden approached by steep steps of brick.

The remaining wing of the old Palace is comprised solely of the banqueting hall which up to the beginning of the present century was used for stabling. It was in process of restoration at the outbreak of the Great War, in which the late Marquess lost three of his sons, as the window in the adjoining Church testifies, and has never been completed. The wing is in a good state of preservation and is of immense historical interest. It was here that the first Council of State was held.

After climbing the narrow and winding staircase, a beautiful outlook is the reward. Close at hand is the ancient Church and immediately below, is the peaceful burying place of the family of Cecil. The property passed from royal possession in the reign of James I, who had no liking for the place, and he exchanged it with an ancestor of the present Marquess for the property of Theobalds.

The mansion itself was shown on August 7th by one of the parish church clergy, who made a most interesting and humorous guide.

The galleries contain many royal portraits. Those of Elizabeth are numerous, the most famous being one by an Italian artist named Zuccro.

Henry VIII surrounded by paintings of his six wives looks down over the stately carved staircase.

There are, of course, also many interesting paintings of the Cecil ancestors, one being of a Marchioness who hunted at the age of eighty, and met a tragic death by burning.

She was never seen again after her maid bade her "good night," a heap of charred bones being all that remained of her.

It is supposed that her clothing caught fire from her candle; the fire raged furiously and destroyed one wing of the house, the reparation of which is clearly defined by the slightly different tone of the brickwork.

There is no known architect of Hatfield House, and it is supposed that the first Marquess was his own architect, as there are records of an order for 200 bricks in his papers. However, he did not live to see its completion.

Among the records also is a letter from Elizabeth's Mistress of the Robes, containing a request to her royal sister for certain articles of underwear of which she appeared to be greatly in need.

A glass case contains Elizabeth's garden hat and a pair of her silk stockings. Her cradle of carved oak on rockers is also exhibited. There are fine specimens of Flemish tapestry representing the four seasons on the walls of the Armoury, and also two panels of English tapestry said to be very rare, as the art only flourished in England for about 50 years and died out with the death of its originator.

One felt reluctant to leave these beautiful surroundings dreaming in the sunlight—so poignant with memories and intrigues of the past.

Does the girl Elizabeth with the flaming hair and turbulent spirit ever come back, we wonder, to wander in the maze or on the lawns under the mulberry trees? Well! there are more things than are dreamed of in our philosophy.

Be that as it may—may Heaven preserve these stately Homes for the refreshment of those whose souls are sickened with modern ugliness and unrest.

"True house of joy and bliss  
Where sweetest pleasure is  
I do adore thee;  
I see thee what thou art,  
I love thee in my heart  
And fall before thee."

H. H.

### 437 MILES ON A STRETCHER.

An unusual piece of ambulance work has lately been carried out with the aid of the Great Western and London and North Eastern Railway Companies.

It was desired to remove a Dutch seaman, suffering from a fractured pelvis, from a Fowey hospital to Flushing, but essential that he should not be moved from the stretcher throughout the journey.

The ordinary hospital stretcher, which is too wide to pass through the carriage doors, could not, therefore, be used, so the G.W.R. Company arranged for a "Parratt" stretcher, the invention of one of its Taunton carriage cleaners, to be placed at the disposal of the hospital authorities.

This stretcher can be lifted in or out of a compartment from, or to, the platform or ambulance and rests along one seat, leaving the other free for the attendant or relative. It can be fitted to any ordinary stretcher and has handles that slide in flush with the ends, which enable it to be manoeuvred in confined spaces or to negotiate passage corners.

The patient was placed on the stretcher at Fowey, conveyed by night train to Paddington, where he was met by an ambulance and driven to Liverpool Street Station. Here he was placed on the boat train for Harwich and put on the L.N.E.R. steamer. He arrived at Flushing 19 hours after his departure, having made the 437 miles' rail, motor and steamer journey without being moved from the stretcher.

This is the first time a "Parratt" type of stretcher has been used for a journey outside this country, but so satisfactory have they proved, especially in cases of paralysis, broken limbs or severe surgical operations that they have been made available by the G.W.R. at Paddington, Bristol, Exeter, Plymouth, Gloucester, Cardiff, Swansea, Birmingham and Chester from which they may be obtained immediately by any G.W.R. station.

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