

LEITH HALL GARDEN PARTY.

TENANTRY ENTERTAINED.

GIFTS TO MR AND THE HON. MRS LEITH HAY.

Seldom have the grounds of Leith Hall presented such a scene of animation and gaiety as did yesterday afternoon, when the tenants, farmers, employees on the Rannoch and Leith Hall estates, and the ex-service men in the parishes of Insh, Premnay, Leslie, Clatt, and Kennethmont were entertained to a garden party, with their wives and friends, by Mr and the Hon. Mrs C. E. N. Leith Hay. The occasion was the presentation by the tenantry, farmers, and estate employees to Mr Leith Hay of a handsome portrait of his wife. Mrs Leith Hay received a beautiful silver brooch, while the young laird, Mr Charles Arthur O'Neill Leith Hay, who has already celebrated his first birthday, received the balance of the subscriptions to the painting in War Savings Certificates. The portrait was to have been presented in August, 1914, but the ceremony was deferred owing to the outbreak of war.

The portrait, a three-quarter length, was painted in the spring of 1914 by Mr John M. Aiken, the well-known Aberdeen artist. It was exhibited in the Royal Academy, London, in August, 1914, and attracted much attention. It is a study in rich, deep colouring, and shows the lady in evening dress with an Oriental wrap thrown loosely over her shoulders, about to enter a room, on the doorway curtain of which her right hand is resting. On a plate at the bottom of the picture is the following inscription: "Portrait of the Hon. Mrs Leith Hay, a gift to Mr C. E. N. Leith Hay from his tenants, farmers, and employees on the estates of Rannoch and Leith Hall. 31st August, 1914."

The artist was in Palestine and Syria with the Royal Engineers for the past two years, and while there painted Viscount Allenby and Lady Allenby, and also several generals and officers serving with the Egyptian Expeditionary Force.

The ceremony took place in front of the Hall, where a platform had been erected for the occasion. The grounds were gay with flags and bunting, and no effort had been spared by Mr Watson, estate manager, and a band of willing helpers to make the gathering a memorable one. As the guests arrived, they were received at the Hall entrance by Mr and Mrs Leith Hay, who shook hands with each of them. The "young laird" was also present in his perambulator, and came in for his share of attention and good wishes.

After the guests, to the number of about 650, had been received, the presentation ceremony took place. Mr and Mrs Leith Hay were accompanied on the platform by Mrs Hirst (Mr Leith Hay's sister); Mr William Law, S.S.C., factor, Elgin, and Mrs Law; Mr J. M. Aiken, Aberdeen (the artist), and Mrs Aiken; Mr W. A. Mitchell, Auchnagathle; Colonel W. F. G. Dawson, Insh; Mrs Stables, Bankhead; Mrs Bruce, Inshfield; and Mr Watson, estate manager.

TRIBUTE TO MR LEITH HAY.

Mr Mitchell, Auchnagathle, in making the presentation to Mr Leith Hay, said he thought he was quite in order when he ventured to call the entertainment provided that afternoon a peace celebration, for until now there had not been a real public acknowledgment of that happy event in the parish. (Applause.) In the first place, he considered that even on that afternoon specially arranged for entertainment to those who had returned from the war, it was becoming that they should remember with the deepest respect and reverence of those who gave the supreme sacrifice for the cause of honour and truth and liberty for their country and for them. (Applause.) He was very sure that none could appreciate more than they who were returned the wonderful work the women throughout the whole land had done in their homes and in the hospitals to alleviate the sufferings and privations to which

gave it her consideration and support. (Applause.) He was sure they all felt proud of the part Mr and Mrs Leith Hay had taken in the war, more especially the grand example they gave in giving up their fine house and home as a hospital for wounded soldiers, and devoting themselves wholeheartedly to its management. Many a time he had heard these fine fellows heroes he might call them, expressing appreciation of the good time they had and the kindness shown them at Leith Hall. In that connection he gave all of them the greatest satisfaction and pleasure to hear during the last few days of the signal honour conferred on Mrs Leith Hay, the bestowal of the Royal Red Cross. (Loud applause.) The tenantry considered that she ought also to have some tangible souvenir of the occasion for herself, and he was deputed to present to her that brooch as a token of their goodwill and esteem, along with the sincere wish that she might be long spared to wear it, and that it might be a source of joy to her and to her descendants. (Loud applause.)

Mrs Stables then pinned the brooch on Mrs Leith Hay's dress amidst a prolonged outburst of cheering.

Mrs Leith Hay said she felt absolutely overwhelmed at the extreme kindness which had been shown them that day. She could not possibly find words to thank them enough or express her feelings and also her very great surprise. She had no idea that she was to come in for a share of the good things that were going that day. She admired the brooch very much, and would always value it exceedingly, first, because of its very great beauty; second, because of its usefulness; and last, but not least, because she felt that it was a token of their great kindness and friendship towards her. (Applause.) With regard to the award of the R.R.C. to her she was very grateful and pleased to have such an honour, but she looked on it more as a reward for the work done by the hospital than as a personal honour. She was deeply grateful to them all for their kindness on that and many other occasions. (Applause.)

WELL KEPT SECRET.

Mr Leith Hay said that the secret was out at last. He had kept that brooch a secret from his wife for five long years. He was now going to write a play entitled, "The Laird's Secret, or how he kept his wife in the dark." (Laughter and applause.)

A bundle of War Savings Certificates were then presented to the young laird by Mrs Bruce.

Mr Leith Hay, in reply, thanked them all for their kindness towards his little son, who, he said, was saying "Dada" to show how he appreciated what was done for him. (Laughter and applause.) He hoped that before long his son would be able to express to them himself his gratitude for all they had done for him. He would also like to draw their attention to the fact that Mr J. M. Aiken, the artist who had painted the portrait, was on the platform that afternoon. He had been in Palestine for the past two years, and was now home on a short furlough. He was sure that everyone who saw the picture could have only one opinion of it, that it was a most admirable work of art. (Applause.) In conclusion Mr Leith Hay expressed the indebtedness of his wife and himself to Mr Watson and his staff, joined with the name of Mr Davidson, who had worked assiduously to get everything in order for that afternoon's entertainment. He trusted that before the evening was out all would have enjoyed themselves. (Applause.)

Tea was afterwards served in two large marquees, the catering being in the hands of Mr Alexander Mennie, baker, Premnay. The guests spent a most enjoyable afternoon in games and dancing, while an attractive exhibition of boxing was given by Bobby Stevenson, the well-known Aberdeen boxer, and Billy Matthews, Altrincham. Stevenson was at one time a patient in the V.A.D. Hospital at Leith Hall recovering from wounds. A number of side-shows proved a great attraction, while the dancing board was crowded till darkness set in. Excellent music was provided by the Hantly band.

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efforts for the improvements of the estate and the amelioration of his tenants. The war had, however, prevented that, and brought sad changes to them all. That an aspect, however, which he did not think should be enlarged on on an occasion like the present, and he would rather speak of the unceasing efforts for the welfare and comfort of the active soldiers and the noble and patriotic spirit shown by Mr and Mrs Leith Hay in caring for the wounded and the convalescent. (Applause.) He assured them that they recognised and appreciated very highly the honour recently awarded to Mrs Leith Hay for the unselfish and laborious tasks she imposed on herself during the years of war, tasks which they knew Mr Leith Hay fully endorsed and supported her in. Five years ago Mr Leith Hay said that the most acceptable gift to him would be that of a portrait of Mrs Leith Hay. (Applause.) He (Mr Mitchell) had had the honour of being chosen by his fellow-tenants and the farmers on the estate to unveil the portrait and present it to him, with the sincere wish that Mrs Leith Hay and himself might have a long and happy life together. (Applause.) They must further congratulate them both on having such a fine, healthy boy—(applause)—to whom the portrait would be an heirloom, and show in some degree what a lovely lady his mother was. (Removed applause.)

A LABOUR OF LOVE.

Mr Leith Hay, in reply, said that had his language sufficiently eloquent to convey to them the feelings that welled up in his heart at that moment he could not possibly express what those feelings were or how deeply touched he was by the presentation of the portrait of one who was dearest to him on earth, and of that he was perfectly certain they were all well aware. (Applause.) When it was suggested five years ago that they all wished to give him some recognition of the small part he had taken in trying to do his duty, he was overwhelmed with gratitude. When he was asked what form the presentation should take he thought and felt that to have the portrait of the lady who shared his joys and sorrows would be something that he could not possibly think of better. Had it not been for the terrible war that broke out the portrait, he understood, would have been presented on the 31st of August, 1914, but, owing to that world-wide catastrophe, the occasion had to be postponed, but now they had reached the day when they would see it accomplished. (Applause.) Mr Mitchell had very kindly referred to the work which his wife and himself had done in their house when they opened it as an hospital. He made one little mistake only, and that was when he called it a laborious task. It was not laborious—it was to them the greatest privilege that they could have had to care for the wounded and the convalescent men who had brought out at the front and had saved their homes from devastation. (Applause.) If it was a labour, it was a labour of love, and they entered into it heart and soul, and did everything possible to try and make these gallant lads feel the deep appreciation and the heartfelt gratitude that they felt towards them. In the presentation of that portrait it was only another part of the whole that made up all the extraordinary kindness that he had ever received from the tenants and farmers on the Leith Hall and Rannes estate and from his friends in the neighbourhood. Ever since he had taken over the property from his uncle in 1898, time after time had it been shown to him that the feelings of those with whom he was associated were not only ones of friendship, but also of true affection. He could assure them that the feelings were heartily reciprocated. He might have been rather trying at times, but after the hour they had always shaken hands as they did at boxing matches. (Laughter.) He could not thank them enough for that further evidence of their kindness towards him, and he was sure that in years to come, when the little man whom they saw there in the perambulator came to years of discretion

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