

March 3rd, 1908, the building was opened free of debt, thanks largely to Father's generosity of paying off the last £100. There was a full choral service conducted by the Bishop of St. Albans, then a luncheon in the Public Hall at which Sir Charles [Lawes] presided and a great many queer pompous speeches were made. Unfortunately it was a cold snowy day so that neither Father nor Mother were able to be present and Anna and I had to do the honours for the family which we considered a great bore.

This spring we were able to have our missionary working parties again and so gradually we have taken up the threads of parish work... I am afraid, however, that the University local lectures are quite run out. Last autumn's course was a miserable failure, and even Father came to the conclusion that Harpenden refused to be educated along these expensive lines. There are so many other means of mental improvement now – various reading circles among girls and older ladies, and up at the new co-education school there have been several good lectures open to the public from such men as Canon Rawnsley and the engineer who is conducting the restoration of Winchester Cathedral by means of “grouting machines” and diving. Father and I went to both these lectures and we think now we will let the new school enlighten Harpenden by way of advertisement and not attempt more lectures.

“the new co-
education
school”

[*There was an*] extraordinary snow storm on St. George's Day, April 23rd. It was the heaviest snowfall we had all the winter and for one morning the garden was a perfect fairyland, but of course it did not last long and we experienced something of the shock of Alpine climates that week for, when the



One of two photographs of 23rd April 1908 snow, from page 148 of Volume Six.

sun came out it was quite hot, even while the snow still lay on the ground, and in only a week's interval we were panting under a temperature of 75°F and summer sunshine, with a rush so that winter sports and winter garments were suddenly discarded and we set about preparations for tennis and garden enjoyment in a hurry. [*Alterations to the Rivers Lodge garden are detailed.*]

We have made some very pleasant new friends... The Clutterbucks [*are*] a delightful family of mother and daughters – a clergyman's widow from the Eastern side of the county – who came last autumn to the house in St. Nicholas estate where Mrs. Luard used to live. The daughters are all more or less artistic and intellectual and quite different from the ordinary run of Harpenden people. The eldest is quite an artist... She helped a good deal this year in getting up an art exhibition in connection with the G.F.S. annual show.

Mrs. Meiklejohn is another charming young married woman with two dear babies and a clever, rather delicate husband. The Gerald Hodgsons too have come to live near their parents... Gerald has been taking a great interest in the St. Hilda's sports and has coached the children in rounders.

[*More on excursions from Restmore, and comments on political matters.*]

Before leaving the story of 1907 I must not forget the various Pageants which have marked it and our own St. Albans one in particular, which was such a success a year ago. This form of entertainment has become very popular lately, and on the whole it seems a healthy outlet to the dramatic instinct. It rouses national interest and local patriotism and, in the case of St. Albans, all events promoted social intercourse very pleasantly – everyone took a hand, from the county ladies and gentlemen who rode as King Edward or Warwick or Cassivelaunus and Boadicea to the shop girls and children of the elementary schools who took their share in the dances and gay crowds. All worked together and all together obeyed one guiding hand. Our postmaster ran as one of the Lancastrian soldiers and we used to see him in the evenings riding home on his bicycle in his armour with his lance. Our baker was another actor. The Edwardses went as Roman ladies and the Lydekkers and Elliots as Elizabethan courtiers.

“St. Albans
pageant”