



Wedding Festivities at Wilton

The Wilton Carpet Factory was the scene of joy and rejoicing on Saturday on the occasion of the marriage of George Lapworth Esq, one of the partners of the firm of Messrs. Lapworth Brothers to Elizabeth Attwaters, only child of the late Charles Attwaters Esq., of Queen Street, London.

At 1.00 p.m. the whole of the men, women and children employed in the factory were led by the Wilton Brass Band and accompanied with numerous flags and banners marched to Grovely Hill. Here they engaged in rural sports, cricket, dancing and other amusements. The day being very fine, the workpeople, especially the younger portion, appeared much delighted with their holiday. At 5.30 p.m., the party again formed in procession and marched back to Wilton, the band playing lively airs. Shortly after 6.00 p.m., about 100 people of the workmen and a few of the inhabitants of Wilton sat down to a very excellent dinner which had been liberally provided at the expense of Mr. George Lapworth. It was served in one of the work-rooms of the factory.

The chair was taken by Mr. S. P. Yates the manager, who after the cloth was cleared, proposed the customary loyal toasts, which were most enthusiastically received. In proposing "The Health of the Prince and Princess of Wales" the chairman particularly alluded to the liberal manner in which the Prince had patronised The Wilton Carpet factory, observing that scarcely a fortnight had elapsed since his marriage without some order for carpets having been received from His Royal Highness. Mr. Yates then proposed "The health of the newly wed pair", which was drunk amidst loud and long continued cheering. A visitor from Salisbury "Proposed success to the Wilton Carpet Factory, and coupled it with the toast "The health of Messrs. Lapworth."

He said the town of Wilton although small in size, was one of the most interesting places in this part of England. At an early period it was the seat of the West Saxon Kings and long before the spire of Salisbury Cathedral reared its lofty head. Wilton was the seat of Bishops, who presided over an extensive diocese. It also contained a monastery for nun's founded in Saxon times which had very extensive possessions and the ancient records spoke of there having been numerous churches in the town. He observed at a later period in history, it was famed on account of Wilton House, the seat of the Pembroke family, which contained many rich treasures of sculptures and painting, and which was erected by those great masters of art, Holbein and Inigo Jones. But there was another interesting circumstance connected with this place, and that was the fact that the first carpet ever made in England was manufactured in England, under the direction of a native of the Netherlands, who in the 17th century was

bought over here by the 9th Earl of Pembroke for the purpose of teaching “the art and mystery of carpet weaving.”

From that period down to the present time Wilton had been famed for the excellence of its carpets, and he believed that he was speaking the truth, when he said that it was now the only place in England in which the Axminster carpets-the most luxurious branch of this species of manufacture-were made. He then alluded to the impetus which had been given to the manufacture of carpets in Wilton, since the factory had been in the hands of its present proprietors, and observed that monarchs, princes, nobles and even the Rajahs of the East adorned their palaces and dwellings with the productions of the skillful workpeople of the Wilton Carpet factory, which were known and appreciated in all parts of the civilized world.

He then proposed the toast, which was duly honoured. Other toasts followed, and many glees and songs were sung. At 11.00 p.m. the company separated, highly gratified with the day's proceedings.

We must do the workmen the justice to say that their conduct was most orderly, sober and praiseworthy on this festive occasion.

During the evening the females and young boys employed in the factory, to the number of 240, were regaled with an excellent tea and with cake at the Temperance Hall, the proceedings being carried out under the arrangements of Mrs. Yates, the wife of the manager of the factory. After tea the party amused themselves with singing and various innocent recreations. At 10.00pm the company broke up, and the young people left the building in high spirits and much pleased with the liberal entertainment which they had received on this occasion.

During the evening the outside of the factory was illuminated with a large number of Chinese coloured lamps, and over the entrance door were the letters V. and R. in gas. The buildings round the square were also lit up with Chinese lamps.

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