

LAYING THE FOUNDATION STONE OF THE EXHIBITION BUILDING, MELBOURNE.

The foundation stone of the International Exhibition Building, which is about to be erected in Carlton Gardens, was laid by His Excellency Sir George Bowen on Wednesday evening (says the *Ballarat Courier*). It was intended that the affair should be as imposing as the importance of the ceremony deserved, and the commissioners' arrangements were elaborate. In the first place a large stand, capable of holding several hundred ladies, and reserved exclusively for the fairer portion of humanity, had been built on the western side of the stone. Between this and the spot where the stone was to be deposited, was a platform for the vice-regal party; whilst on the south side were other platforms for the accommodation of the members of the executive committee and the guests generally. At a minute or two past four a park of artillery in the rear commenced to operate, and, as it did so, His Excellency the Governor, accompanied by Lady and the Misses Bowen, Bishop and Mrs Thornton, and Major Pitt, arrived, and entered the box reserved for them. After the cheering which greeted the arrival of the vice-regal party had subsided,

The Hon. W. J. Clarke, president of the commission, read the following address:—"To His Excellency Sir George Ferguson Bowen, Knight Grand Cross of the most distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over the colony of Victoria and its dependencies, and Vice-Admiral of the same, &c., &c.—May it please your Excellency.—We, the commissioners for the Melbourne International Exhibition of 1880, desire to assure your Excellency of our continued loyalty and devotion to our

beloved Sovereign Queen Victoria, and of our respect for yourself personally, and as Her Majesty's representative in Victoria. Two years ago the proposal to hold an International Exhibition at Melbourne was submitted for your Excellency's consideration, and was approved by you. Although some differences of opinion existed as to the probable utility and success of the undertaking, you were, we believe, constant in your encouragement and support. It is, therefore, peculiarly gratifying to the commissioners that your Excellency is enabled to accede to their request and to formally lay the foundation-stone of this building, designed for the display of all that can be achieved by the science, art, and labor of mankind. The place where your Excellency will to-day lay the foundation-stone of a palace of industry was, within a generation, part of an unknown forest, in an almost unknown land. It is now the site of a populous and well built city, presenting all the evidences of wealth and civilization, taking rank with the foremost cities of the world, and surpassing in many respects the capitals of ancient and powerful States. The rapid progress of Australasia is one of the marvels of modern times. But yesterday it was colonized by a few enterprising men, while to day it possesses an extensive trade and a population of millions. In erecting this young empire in the Southern Hemisphere, our colonists have obtained the surer suc-

cess in the Southern Hemisphere, our colonists have obtained the surer success when closely following the example of the mother country, by jealously adhering to her regard for law, by preserving her national customs, and by maintaining her well-ordered freedom. Though separated from the capital of the Empire by the diameter of the globe, loyalty to the throne is as earnest in Melbourne as in Middlesex, and in Sydney as in Surrey. Under the benign rule of our Gracious Sovereign, the colonists of Australasia have been enabled to give uninterrupted attention to the development of its natural wealth and resources, to the establishment of industries and manufactures, to public instruction in all its branches, and to the promotion of the moral and material welfare of its people. In this building the nations of the earth will meet in peaceful competition for the display of their products, manufactures, and works of art, and we are hopeful that the undertaking will afford Australia many useful lessons, will inculcate a spirit of commercial rivalry, and will stimulate to increased exertions in every branch of industry. Only twenty seven years have elapsed since the first great exhibition was held in London. Europe and America have since enjoyed the advantage of several similar competitive displays, in nearly all of which Australia took part—latterly evoking more than ordinary attention by the evidences of its rapid and solid progress. The invitation to form a nation to join in our Melbourne Exhibition has been accepted in a generous spirit, and hopes are entertained that the forthcoming display will not only be interesting and instructive, but will also lead to such a friendly sympathy and intercourse as will improve and extend the trade between these colonies and the great continents of Europe, Asia, and America. In conclusion, the commissioners desire to express their earnest good wishes for the future welfare and happiness of your Excellency, Lady Bowen, and your family."

His Excellency read the following reply:—"Mr President and Gentlemen of the Commission—I thank you, in the name of the Queen, for this assurance of your continued loyalty and devotion to the person and crown of our beloved Sovereign—the living symbol and link of the unity of the British Empire. On my own behalf I thank you for your expressions of respect for myself, both officially and personally. In my many visits during the past six years to every district in Victoria, it has ever been a source of gratification to find that loyal and patriotic sentiments prevail throughout this colony, as indeed throughout Australasia, and that the presence of Her Majesty's representative is especially welcome everywhere as affording an occasion for their display. I believe that time will clothe with fresh grace and vigor these national feelings, which add so much strength and glory both to the mother country and to that 'Great Britain, the United Empire. It has been observed that 'the happy inspiration of the genius of the late illustrious and lamented Prince Consort inaugurated, in the year 1851, a new era for exhibiting the state of development of the arts and manufactures of all nations. For the first time in history an admirable opportunity was afforded for instituting a comprehensive comparison of their relative progress in those sciences and inventions which con-

comparison of their relative progress in those sciences and inventions which constitute the types of an advanced civilization. We all know that the splendid conception of His Royal Highness was a brilliant and triumphant success. The impulse it gave to trade was immense. The rapid improvements which subsequently took place in every art and manufacture were everywhere most marked and conspicuous. Abundant proofs of the wonderful extent to which this progress has been carried are apparent to all those who have witnessed the exhibitions of Paris in 1852, 1867, and 1878, of London in 1862, of Vienna in 1873, and of Philadelphia in 1876. "The whole world appears to have been stimulated to put forth its utmost energies in waging this vital and critical contest of Peace. Each separate community has competed in keen but friendly rivalry to excel every other, and has advanced at railway speed along the road of improvement in the arts and manufactures of its own individual nationality." It has, moreover, been truly said that the pains and cost expended on International Exhibitions cannot be in vain, for they place as it were on record, for present use and future reference, the arts and inventions, the products and capabilities of various lands, thus affording the means of comparison between different countries, and determining the localities on which commerce can rely for its supplies, and the fresh channels which it may be expedient to open. The abundant resources of this group of colonies, and the contributions expected from the old world and from America, will render easy the work of collection; it is the task of selection and arrangement which will require experienced judgment and enlightened care on the part of the commissioners. I trust that the result will show that the forthcoming Exhibition will draw attention not only to the great staples of wool and gold, which have hitherto constituted the chief riches of Australasia, but also to many new and valuable products and sources of wealth as yet undeveloped,

but which, as population increases, will furnish alike the material and the reward for the exercise of intelligent enterprise and of victorious industry. And here I may express the hope that the display at the Exhibitions to be held at Sydney this year and at Melbourne next year, of the collective products of the Australasian colonies, may prove a foreshadowing of that inter-colonial federation, which is the aspiration of every wise and patriotic colonist. These forthcoming Exhibitions can hardly be deemed premature, when it is recollected that Australasia, if federated like Canada, in one dominion, in loyal allegiance to the Crown, would at once rank, in point of wealth and commerce, among the ten or twelve nations of the world, for it would have an aggregate annual value of about sixteen millions sterling, and an aggregate trade exceeding in value ninety millions. It has been already said that the idea of holding an International Exhibition was originally the happy inspiration of the late Prince Consort—the "silent father of our Kings to be." Let us hope that the opening of the Melbourne International Exhibition may be graced by the presence of his son—the heir of England and of the British empire. It is well known that the success of the recent Exhibition

of the British empire. It is well known that the success of the recent Exhibition at Paris was due, in no slight degree, to the personal tact and energy of the Prince of Wales; that His Royal Highness paid special attention to the contributions from the colonies; and that he is animated by a desire to visit in person, should high reasons of State permit it, our Australasian colonies, as he has already visited India and Canada. Meanwhile I am proud, on the eve of my departure from that Australasia which I love so well, and in which I have spent nearly twenty years—the best, the happiest, and, I trust, not the least useful years of my life—as Governor successively of the great colonies of Queensland, New Zealand, and Victoria, to inaugurate, at the request of the commissioners, the construction of the noble building destined to hold the Melbourne International Exhibition. The building will be completed under the auspices of my distinguished successor, the Marquis of Normanby. I earnestly pray that this Exhibition building, together with the railways and the various other public works commenced during my administration in Queensland, in New Zealand, and in Victoria, may realise the expectations of the Governments and Parliaments which sanctioned them, and endure through the great future of Australasia as sources of permanent and ever-increasing prosperity.

His Excellency was cheered at the conclusion and several times during the reading of the speech. His Excellency then proceeded to the foundation stone, and having first deposited underneath it a bottle containing copies of the daily papers, documents relating to the exhibition, and the coins of the day, applied the mortar with a gold trowel, manufactured for the occasion by Messrs Walsh Brothers. The stone was then lowered into its place, and Sir George, mounting upon it, declared it to be well and truly laid. Cheers having been given for the Queen, Lady Bowen, and His Excellency, the proceedings were brought to a close.