

therefore decided, without hesitation, that no charge whatever should be made on the admission of such goods. We considered, also, that the office of selecting the articles to be sent should be intrusted in the first instance to Local Committees, to be established in every foreign country, and in various districts of Your Majesty's dominions, a general power of control being reserved to the Commission.

"We have now the gratification of stating that our anticipations of support in this course have in all respects been fully realized. Your Majesty's most gracious donation to the funds of the Exhibition was the signal for voluntary contributions from all, even the humblest classes of your subjects, and the funds which have thus been placed at our disposal amount at present to about 65,000*l*. Local committees, from which we have uniformly received the most zealous co-operation, were formed in all parts of the United Kingdom, in many of Your Majesty's colonies, and in the territories of the Hon. East India Company. The most energetic support has also been received from the Governments of nearly all the countries of the world, in most of which Commissions have been appointed for the special purpose of promoting the objects of an Exhibition justly characterised in Your Majesty's Royal warrant as an Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations.

"We have also to acknowledge the great readiness with which persons of all classes have come forward as Exhibitors. And here again it becomes our duty to return our humble thanks to your Majesty for the most gracious manner in which Your Majesty has condescended to associate yourself with your subjects, by yourself contributing some most valuable and interesting articles to the Exhibition.

"The number of Exhibitors whose productions it has been found possible to accommodate is about 15,000, of whom nearly one-half are British. The remainder represent the productions of more than forty foreign countries, comprising almost the whole of the civilized nations of the globe. In arranging the space to be allotted to each, we have taken into consideration both the nature of its productions and the facilities of access to this country afforded by its geographical position. Your Majesty will find the productions of Your Majesty's dominions arranged in the western portion of the Building, and those of foreign countries in the eastern. The Exhibition is divided into the four great classes of—1. Raw Materials; 2. Machinery; 3. Manufactures; and 4. Sculpture and the Fine Arts. A further division has been made according to the geographical position of the countries represented; those which lie within the warmer latitudes being placed near the centre of the Building, and the colder countries at the extremities.

"Your Majesty having been graciously pleased to grant a site in this your Royal park for the purposes of the Exhibition, the first column of the structure now honoured by Your Majesty's presence was fixed on the 26th of September last. Within the short period, therefore, of seven months, owing to the energy of the Contractors, and the active industry of the workmen employed by them, a building has been erected, entirely novel in its construction, covering a space of more than 18 acres, measuring 1,851 feet in length, and 456 feet in extreme breadth, capable of containing 40,000 visitors, and affording a frontage for the Exhibition of Goods to the extent of more than 10 miles. For the original suggestion of the principle of this structure, the Commissioners are indebted to Mr. Joseph Paxton, to whom they feel their acknowledgments to be justly due for this interesting feature of their undertaking.

"With regard to the distribution of Rewards to deserving Exhibitors, we have decided that they should be given in the form of Medals, not with reference to merely individual competition, but as rewards for excellence in whatever shape it may present itself. The selection of the persons to be so rewarded has been intrusted to Juries composed equally of British subjects and of Foreigners, the former having been selected by the Commission from the recommendations made by the Local Committees, and the latter by the Governments of the Foreign Nations the productions of which are exhibited. The names of these Jurors, comprising as they do many of European celebrity, afford the best guarantee of the impartiality with which the Rewards will be assigned.

"It affords much gratification that, notwithstanding the magnitude of this undertaking, and the great distances from which many of the articles now exhibited have had to be collected, the day on which Your Majesty has been graciously pleased to be present at the inauguration of the Exhibition is the same day that was originally named for its opening, thus affording a proof of what may, under God's blessing, be accomplished by goodwill and cordial co-operation among nations, aided by the means that modern science has placed at our command.

"Having thus briefly laid before Your Majesty the results of our labours, it now only remains for us to convey to Your Majesty our dutiful and loyal acknowledgments of the support and encouragement which we have derived throughout this extensive and laborious task from the gracious favour and countenance of Your Majesty. It is our heartfelt prayer that this undertaking, which has for its end the promotion of all branches of human industry and the strengthening of the bonds of peace and friendship among all nations of the earth, may, by the blessing of Divine Providence, conduce to the welfare of Your Majesty's people, and be long remembered among the brightest circumstances of Your Majesty's peaceful and happy reign."

Her Majesty returned the following gracious answer, handed to her by the Secretary of State :—

"I RECEIVE with the greatest satisfaction the Address which you have presented to Me on the opening of this Exhibition.

"I have observed with a warm and increasing interest the progress of your proceedings in the execution of the duties intrusted to you by the Royal Commission, and it affords me sincere gratification to witness the successful result of your judicious and unremitting exertions in the splendid spectacle by which I am this day surrounded.