

**GREAT EXHIBITION OF THE WORKS OF INDUSTRY OF ALL NATIONS.**

This proposal, for which the world is indebted to his Royal Highness Prince Albert, seems even thus early to have assumed the aspect of a certainty. It was no sooner promulgated as an idea only to be discussed privately, than the manufacturers of the United Kingdom seemed at once to adopt it as a reality with enthusiastic cordiality. We think the great success which has attended the suggestion must have been an agreeable surprise even to its royal originator. With circumspect prudence his Royal Highness took measures for making certain preliminary inquiries in a private manner; but the deputation from the Prince had hardly visited a single manufacturing town before its object became a public one, and an expression of cordial co-operation was voted to the Prince with acclamations, by manufacturers who shrewdly recognised in the idea its immense value to all the best interests of civilisation, art, and commerce.

For the next two years this great exhibition of universal industry will be the talk of the world, and occupy the anxious thoughts of the wisest, most busy, and laborious parts of it. It is obviously the peculiar province of the *Journal of Design and Manufactures* to record the progress and development of this idea; and it will be our aim to collect and present to our readers the most authentic intelligence on the subject, so that they may be in possession of the fullest and most accurate details of its history.

We have already said that this particular idea is the Prince's own. No doubt the public mind has been gradually preparing for some such an event for several years past, and every person and institution shall receive at our hands their fullest share of credit for contributing towards the public education in this matter. But it was the Prince who first said, "Now is the time to prepare for a great exhibition—an exhibition worthy of the greatness of this country; not merely national in its scope and benefits, but comprehensive of the whole world; and I offer myself to the public as their leader, if they are willing to assist in the undertaking." For our own parts we believe it is essential to its success that his Royal Highness should have taken this position, and have matured such a conception of it, that it becomes invested with an originality and individuality making it his Royal Highness's own scheme, in which he takes personal and active interest.

We dare say the council of the Society of Arts, with the official sanction of his Royal Highness as their president, would have been able to mature the plan of a quinquennial exhibition of British industry, and have obtained a certain amount of countenance and sanction from the Government, but we are satisfied they would not have been able to carry out such a world's work as the Prince proposes, unless the Prince himself had personally come forward.

The institutions which have successfully assisted in preparing the public mind to welcome this great exhibition, and therefore deserve honourable mention, are the Society of Arts of London, the Royal Dublin Society, the Royal Manchester Institution, and the Corn-law League, besides those which have been formed for the special purpose of establishing temporary exhibitions, as at Liverpool, Glasgow, Norwich, &c., and last, but certainly not least, Birmingham. It would be invidious to single out individuals who have aided this movement, or we might enumerate several. Justice, however, compels us to mention the efforts of Mr. Theophilus Richards, of Birmingham, who as far back as 1836 was in treaty with the Board of Trade for making an exhibition of foreign manufactures, and the uniform advocacy of the editor of the *Art-Journal*. We shall not attempt to apportion the respective shares of merit either to persons or societies; we feel sure that all will be but too happy to continue their useful co-operation under the chieftainship of Prince Albert, and that his Royal Highness himself will be the first most readily to admit the value of their assistance.

We have now to relate the precise events which we believe have thus far occurred in the proposed great work. On the 30th June last his Royal Highness summoned Mr. T. Cubitt, Mr. H. Cole, Mr. F. Fuller, and Mr. J. S. Russell, members of the Society of Arts, to Buckingham Palace, to discuss his Royal Highness's proposal. We have been favoured with a perusal of the minutes which the Prince directed Mr. Russell to keep of this meeting; and, in accordance with what we are informed is the wish of his Royal Highness, we are privileged to state the general results of that meeting. The Prince proposed that the exhibition should consist of raw materials of all kinds, mineralogical, agricultural, &c.; of machinery and mechanical inventions; of the results of these, namely, manufactures; and lastly, of sculpture and plastic art generally; and that the exhibition should be open to all nations. That portion of Hyde-park between the Kensington-drive and Rotten-row, which consists of about thirty acres of level ground, was considered to be an eligible site for the exhibition. A second meeting of three of these gentlemen, at which the President of the Board of Trade was also present, was held by the Prince's command at Osborne on the 14th July, when some of the general arrangements for giving effect to the plan were discussed. It was proposed that a royal commission should be appointed to arrange and conduct the exhibition, to determine the nature of the prizes to be given away, and to take the responsibility of awarding the prizes. It was settled that the best way of raising the funds for the prizes, the building, &c., would be by public voluntary subscriptions, and that the Society of Arts, as an institution incorporated by royal charter, presented a useful machinery for organising the means of raising such funds. It was proposed that one prize should be awarded as high as 5,000*l.*, and it was thought that perhaps the Queen might be induced to give away some of the prizes; but this subject and all its details will have to be investigated, and nothing we believe can be considered as determined on this point, except that an amount of 20,000*l.* will certainly be given away in prizes.

We have understood that the Prince held a third meeting on the morning of his departure for Ireland, when his Royal Highness instructed his secretary to prepare commissions empowering Mr. Cole, Mr. F. Fuller, and Mr. J. S. Russell to travel through the manufacturing districts of the country in order to collect the opinions of the leading manufacturers, and further evidence, in order that his Royal Highness may bring the results of such inquiry before her Majesty's Government." Mr. Digby Wyatt attended as secretary to the deputation.

Many of our readers will have seen in their local papers notices of the visits of the deputation. Among other places, we believe they have visited Manchester and its neighbourhood, the Potteries, Sheffield, Birmingham, Bradford, Leeds, Glasgow, Paisley, Perth, Edinburgh, Carlisle, Belfast, Dublin, &c.; at each place initiating the formation of a local committee, and obtaining the signatures of the principal manufacturing firms to a declaration expressive of their desire to be promoters of the exhibition, both by personal assistance and by subscriptions. We hope shortly to be able to give a list of the eminent names which have been obtained already. At Glasgow and Dublin the meetings assumed somewhat the character of public meetings. Reports have appeared of their proceedings, and resolutions were passed unanimously approving of the Prince's proposal.

The meeting at Dublin consisted of certain manufacturers in Dublin, and members of the committee of manufacturers of the Royal Dublin Society, and was convened at the Mansion-house by the Lord Mayor and W. D. La Touche, Esq., High Sheriff. It was resolved—

1. That this meeting has learned, with the greatest satisfaction, the anxious interest evinced by his Royal Highness Prince Albert, in favour of the manufacturing interests not only of the United Kingdom but of the world generally, and desires to express its opinion unanimously in favour of opening the great Exhibition of 1851 to the products of the world.

2. That this meeting is of opinion that no less a tribunal than a royal commission is competent to give that general satisfaction in the distribution of prizes which an exhibition open to all nations requires.

3. That the present meeting do constitute themselves into a local committee, for the purpose of corresponding with the Society of Arts in London, and carrying out the details necessary for giving effective co-operation in the Exhibition to be held in 1851 in the British metropolis, it being understood that his Excellency Lord Clarendon has been so kind as to signify his intention of acting as chairman of such committee; this committee to have power to add to its number.

At Maidstone, a centre of agriculture chiefly, at a meeting attended by the county members, on the 20th of September, the following resolution was passed, and a local committee was formed:—

"That it is the opinion of this meeting that a periodical exhibition of industry and art of all nations in London, under the patronage and presidency of his Royal Highness Prince Albert, and under the sanction and control of a royal commission, is highly desirable, and would greatly tend to the advancement of art and science in this kingdom."—*Journal of Design and Manufactures for October.*