

The opening of the Oldham Lyceum took place yesterday. It was to be celebrated by a procession and lunch in the morning, and by a tea party and *soirée* in the evening. Among the guests invited and who honoured the ceremony were—Lord Stanley, M.P., Sir J. K. Shuttleworth, Mr. W. Brown, M.P., Mr. James Heywood, M.P., Mr. J. Fox, M.P., Mr. J. M. Cobbett, M.P., Colonel and Lieutenant-Colonel Burns (sons of the Scottish bard), the Rev. Dr. Vaughan, and the Mayors of Manchester and Ashton-under-Lyne.

The procession, which included the authorities of the borough, the guests, and most of the leading inhabitants, formed at the Town-hall soon after 12 o'clock, and headed by a band of music proceeded through the principal streets to the new building, which is situate in Union-street. The building is an exceedingly handsome erection of stone, in the Italian style of architecture, in two stories, with underground rooms for schools, and attics for class rooms, above which is an observatory, commanding an extensive range of the country. The two principal stories contain an exceedingly fine newsroom and lecture-hall, besides club, board, and other rooms. The cost of the building has been upwards of 5,000*l.*

The procession arrived at the front door of the new building a little before 1 o'clock at noon, when

Mr. JAMES PLATT, the president of the institution, addressed an immense assemblage crowded before it from the steps. He said:—My Lord and Gentlemen,—It is now little more than twelvemonths since I had the honour to lay the first stone of this splendid building, and it is now my pleasing duty to formally open the Lyceum. The directors wish that I should say a few words on this occasion, and it will not be inappropriate that I should refer to the origin of this great and good work—a work that has enlisted the sympathy and co-operation of all classes, and I am happy to say of all parties. (Hear, hear.) About three years ago we began to consider how best we might promote the interests of the institution. It had then attained a very respectable position, but we thought it was possible very greatly to promote the interests of the Lyceum if we could raise funds for the new building. The difficulty was, however, as usual, how to raise the funds. We ultimately decided to do it by means of an industrial exhibition, and we hoped, by the manner in which it was got up and by the completeness of its several departments, to show the public that we were deserving of their support. But I shall never forget the zeal and anxiety displayed by the officials and members of the institution, and the efforts that were made to obtain contributions. Such self-sacrifice must always attain success, and could not fail to inspire all those who took an interest in the wellbeing of such an institution. I will not say more than that the result was that 100,000 people passed through the walls of the exhibition; and at the close the following passage occurs in the report issued by the directors:—

“That, notwithstanding the immense crowds that often thronged the room, almost to suffocation, not a single article of value was either destroyed, injured, or taken away. The result financially was equally gratifying, a surplus of more than 2,000*l.* remaining after paying all expenses.”

We then thought we might make a direct appeal to the pockets of our fellow-townsmen; and here I must express my acknowledgments for the great kindness with which we

way, making 4,000*l.* altogether; and so far, therefore, we had succeeded very well. We have obtained a building which I hesitate not to say is eminently adapted for the purpose for which it has been erected. But the question has been already asked me,—Will the working classes avail themselves of the advantages which it affords to the extent which we anticipate? The reply I made to that question, at the moment, was, “I shall leave the working men to answer that question for themselves. Their honour is now in their own keeping.” (Hear, hear.)—Gentlemen, I did not expect in so short a time to be able to say that that question has already been satisfactorily answered. Within the last three days I have had sent in to me the names of no less than 200 individuals as additional subscribers. (Applause.) At the same time we must not conceal from ourselves the fact that our work is only half accomplished. In the words of Lord Ashburton, in addressing the Society of Arts in London on a recent occasion,—“A man goes forth into the world as a soldier goes into a campaign; his wants are boundless, his means of carriage are small; can any service be greater than that of planning out and assorting his pack, of rejecting all that may encumber his movements, and of selecting all that shall afford materials for the work he has to do?” In other words, that the knowledge sought to be conveyed shall be of a thoroughly practical character, especially adapted to the circumstances of those whom it is our object to benefit. Now, in order to give consistency to the efforts which are being made by the directors of this institution, in rearranging the classes, I propose that we have a general annual examination,—a public examination; and, in order to set the matter going at once, I beg to say that I shall have very great pleasure in contributing a silver medal annually, and a sum of five guineas, to the best mathematician. (Applause.) I have no doubt other prizes will be given, and I have no doubt also that these prizes will be greatly valued by the young men who obtain them,—not so much on account of their intrinsic worth, as for the mark of distinction which they undoubtedly confer. Gentlemen, every county has some peculiarity of which it can boast, and I fear that most of them can boast of a more favourable climate than we enjoy (this allusion to a smart shower which had just commenced was received with much laughter), and certainly of greater richness about the scenery; but when I consider the enormous increase in population and in material wealth which is here taking place day by day, and the activity of mind and body which it necessarily induces, I feel that we too have something of which we may be proud; and I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that the northern manufacturing districts of England are destined to exercise a most important influence on the future policy of our country. If this be so, surely it is a noble ambition to endeavour to