

butions are those which it is most important to have sketched. We are informed that original information of much value and interest has been communicated to the compilers of the catalogue, from the different countries which have taken part in the Exhibition, and that this will form a prominent feature of the work when completed. At present, while the public mind is saturated with the subject, the introductory position of the book may not attract the notice to which it is entitled; but when we are able to look back upon the whole undertaking from a point in the future and proceed to take its exact measure as an historical event, we shall not fail to be duly impressed with the remarkable character of the information there contained. Within the limits of 107 pages are compressed Mr. Cole's account of the way in which the Exhibition was got up, Mr. Digby Wyatt's description of the Crystal Palace, Dr. Lyon Playfair's classification of the artificial world, the directory of the scheme, the list of jurors, and the preliminary notice of the catalogue by Mr. Robert Ellis, its editor. Mr. Cole's narrative is especially worthy of attention for the insight which it affords into the machinery by which vast projects like the Exhibition can be successfully carried out. Even in this country, where the principle of association is so thoroughly understood, that machinery must be pronounced to be a masterpiece of skillful combinations.

Let us recal for a moment its chief incidents. A small body of men, without any influence of rank or wealth, and forming the council of what had previously been regarded as a useless society, conceived, as early as 1845, the idea of an Industrial Exhibition, national in its character. After one fruitless attempt, they engaged in a series of preparatory measures calculated to render their scheme acceptable to the public and secure of its support. Four years of indefatigable labour elapsed, and they had gathered around their undertaking an amount of support which they conceived justified them in again bringing it forward. They had placed it under the direct patronage of the Crown, and had secured for it, as an appropriate head, the name and the personal exertions of the Prince Consort. A Royal Commission was appointed, in which men of all parties, irrespective of politics, were included. In the mean time, the views of the projectors had expanded, and they resolved to give their scheme a cosmopolitan character. The great seats of our manufactures were successfully canvassed for aid, and foreign Governments responded to the invitations given to them, and promised co-operation. Yet even this powerful combination did not exempt the undertaking from perils that more than once threatened to be fatal. The question of ways and

means was for some time a stumbling-block in the path, and the Commission long hesitated to assume the pecuniary responsibilities which, in some way or other, it was necessary to provide for in consequence of the determination of Messrs. Mundy's contract. At a most critical juncture Mr. Peto came forward, and, with a degree of public spirit and liberality which cannot fail to be appreciated, pledged his name for a startling amount. Then, when other difficulties had been overcome, the question of a building presented almost insuperable obstacles. At the last moment Mr. Paxton and Messrs. Fox and Henderson rushed to the rescue of the perplexed Commission, and, after a succession of dangers, the scheme of the Exhibition was in safety. Had Mr. Cole's narrative been more detailed, it might have been rendered still more attractive, but the author, no doubt, prudently preserved silence on points which it would perhaps have been indiscreet to touch upon, and the leading men in the Council of the Society of Arts, having gained their object, are seen quietly resigning to more exalted names the honour and the glory of an enterprise which they not only originated, but rendered practicable by their exertions. Of Mr. Digby Wyatt's account of the building, and of Dr. Lyon Playfair's classification, it is unnecessary to speak, as the public is already well informed on these subjects, but to the directory of the Exhibition and to the list of jurors some amount of attention is fairly due. In these names are comprised an extent and variety of practical and scientific talent, the union of which on any one occasion, and for any given purpose, is altogether unprecedented. As the eye glances over the seemingly uninviting array it is impossible not to be struck with the curious combinations of persons which they present. Leading tradesmen and manufacturers rub shoulders with the most eminent philosophers of the day, and Science, descending from her pedestal, mingles freely and unostentatiously with the followers of hard-handed Industry. Not only so, but all the nations of the civilized world send the most distinguished of their citizens in the peaceful arts to sit in judgment upon the comparative excellences of rival products, and to determine, at polyglot conferences, the stage of industrial progress which mankind have attained. The directory of the Exhibition and the list of jurors, taken together, form one of the most remarkable organizations that the world has ever witnessed—an organization which, considering its objects, implies not only an act of homage to industry, but a guarantee to civilization. The pages of the *Illustrated Catalogue* which contain these names are as instructive and reassuring as any within its limits.