

of sapphires and diamonds, bears the inscription, "No obli-viscaris." The Ladies and Gentlemen of Her Majesty's House-hold—One large single candelabrum for five lights; four smaller ditto for three lights each; a very complete toilette service in silver-gilt, with the cipher and coronet engraved on each article. Her Majesty's late Household—A silver tea and coffee service, with table mounted in silver. The Bridesmaids—A very handsome gold bracelet, rubies and diamonds. The Duke of Roxburgh—A silver-gilt tea kettle, to correspond with the service presented by their Royal Highnesses Prince and Princess Christian. The Duchess of Buccleuch—A richly-chased antique pattern silver toilet casket. The Countess of Macclesfield—A case of silver-gilt coffee spoons. The Viscountess Beaconsfield—A neck ornament, with border of fine brilliants, emerald cross centre.

Presents equally costly were also made by Maharajah Dhur-keep Singh, Earl Russell, Baron and Baroness Mayer de Rothschild, Duke and Duchess of Northumberland, Earl of Roseberry, Duchess of Wellington, &c., &c.

Mr. McIver, of Notre Dame st., Montreal, presented H. R. H. with a superb set of mink furs.

## OUR ENGLISH LETTER.

### THE OPENING OF THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL.

(From an Occasional Correspondent.)

LONDON, March 30, 1871.

The opening of the Royal Albert Hall of Arts and Sciences by Her Majesty the Queen took place yesterday as announced. The interesting ceremony was assisted at not only by all the members of the Royal Family, the Princes of the land and the great officers of the State, but also by the masses of the people, who assembled to do honour to their Sovereign, and to greet with acclamation the gigantic task which is now completed. The opening, therefore, was an event of considerable interest, the original idea being attributed to the late lamented Prince Consort. The hall, which is of considerable elevation and immense extent, is nearly a true ellipsis in form, and has its long axis at right angles to the Kensington road, its northern and principal entrance facing the memorial to the late Prince Consort (now nearly finished) in Hyde Park. On the south it joins the conservatory of the Royal Horticultural Gardens, from which there is another entrance.

The style of architecture is Italian renaissance, adorned with a rich and elaborate frieze in mosaic, and the materials of the facade are composed of red brick and terra cotta. The interior is a large room or hall, containing numerous tiers of seats, encircled by an outer shell of corridors and staircases giving access to it at every different level of the seating with which it is filled.

The flat central floor of the hall, called the arena, is 102 feet by 68 feet. This is reached by six different staircases, and can accommodate about 1,000 persons, seated. Raised about five or six feet above the arena and entirely encircling it is a tier of ten rows of seats, capable of holding about 1,300 persons. The seats in this part of the building are called the stalls, and a great many of them have been sold for £100 each—for a period of 550 years—free admission to all that takes place in the building.

Above the stalls are three tiers of boxes seating about 1,100 persons; and above these is the grand tier, and above a second tier of boxes. The forty boxes on the grand tier have been sold for £1,000 a piece, and some of the second tier at from £500 to £800.

Above the boxes is the balcony, and above the balcony, outside the main hall, but communicating with it by means of thirty large arches, is the picture gallery, 20 feet wide, which entirely surrounds the building above the staircases.

I had a most striking view of the ceremony from this gallery—directly opposite to the Royal Chair (and facing the grand organ), at a level of about 60 feet above the arena. Four staircases and two elevators (or lifts) provide ample means for reaching the gallery.

It is estimated that about 8,000 persons can be accommodated comfortably.

With regard to the roof—a most difficult problem in the designing of the hall was the construction of the iron roof. No building of a similar form, it is said, had been ever covered in, and the principle adopted is that of a solid plate, which surrounds the building on the top of the wall.

There is another plate or curb in the centre of the roof to which iron ribs from the lower plate is attached, making the whole strong and secure. There is a double flooring, an external one on the upper flange of the girders, and an inner one resting on the lower flange.

At the southern end of the hall is the organ, which is about 65 feet wide, 70 high, and 40 deep, and cost about £10,000 sterling.

The lighting of the hall at night will be affected by means of a central oval of stars; besides which are 30 clusters, of 105 jets each, making a total number of jets to be lighted of 4,210. The clusters are so arranged that one jet on each cluster will light the rest, and the one jet will be kindled by the spark of an induction coil—a plan devised by a Mr. Ead.

The ventilation and heating of the hall has received considerable attention, and I believe with success. There are two air shafts which have their apertures at some distance from the hall, and which convey the air to the building through fine sieves, washed by means of water sprays. The warming is effected by hot-water pipes, the water being heated by steam generated in three 25-horse tubular boilers.

The project of this Hall dates from the first exhibition in 1851, when a scheme was drawn up by the late Prince Consort; but owing to some difficulties in arranging matters it remained in statu quo till 1865, when a number of influential noblemen and gentlemen resolved to erect a Hall for "holding national and international congress for purposes of science and art"—for the purposes of choral and instrumental music; for the distribution of prizes by public bodies, etc.; exhibition of pictures, etc.

The foundation stone of the building was laid with great magnificence on the 20th May, 1867, by the Queen in the presence of the Royal family, and a large concourse of spectators.

The original design was prepared by the late Captain Fowke, R.E. On his death the work was taken up by Lieut.-Scott, R.E., to whose indefatigable energy the public are now indebted for the completion of the building. The cost of the Hall is estimated at £200,000 stg. the site of the building, which is valued at £60,000, having been granted by the Commissioners of the Exhibition of 1862, for a term of 999 years. The money has chiefly been derived from those who have leased the boxes and seats in the House—the sum of £10,000 having been subscribed within a few months after the scheme was put forward.

Having thus given a brief view of the building and its history, I will now give you a short notice of the ceremony of the Opening as witnessed by me yesterday.

I started about 11 o'clock, and on arriving near the building, found a large crowd of people assembled, and a string of carriages conveying the ticket-holders,—perfect order being kept by a large body of "bobbies" mounted and on foot. The royal entrance was of course the central point of attraction. Above it streamed the Union Jack and standard of Great Britain, and on either side were ranged those of the United States, and most of the European nations.

Along the Queen's drive might be seen the bright uniforms of the Cavalry and Foot Guards, marching to take up their position along the line of route.

Carriages were continually setting down their occupants at the entrances to the Hall, and the bright dresses of the ladies—mostly the University colours—the scarlet or black official costumes with gold and silver lace continually succeeding each other; the arrival of the Lord Mayor, Mayoress and Sheriffs of the City of London, in their state carriages and gorgeous liveries, were to me objects of particular interest.

It was announced that the Queen would leave Buckingham Palace at twelve, and notwithstanding the extreme cold and threatening aspect of the weather, the vast spaces in front of the Palace and the line of route to Kensington were filled with spectators. Shortly after noon Her Majesty left the Palace, accompanied by a field-officer's escort of 1st Life Guards.

The procession consisted of nine state carriages, the first six of which contained the ladies and gentlemen in attendance, among whom were the Marchioness of Caermarthen, the Duchess of Roxburgh, Duchess of Sutherland, Earl of Lucan, Viscount Sidney.

In the seventh carriage were the Marquis of Lorne (in Highland costume), Prince Christian and Prince Leopold. In the eighth carriage were Princesses Louise, Beatrice and Christian, and Prince Arthur. In the ninth carriage were H. R. H. the Duke of Saxe-Coburg, H. R. H. the Princess of Wales and the Queen.

The royal party, on entering the Hall, proceeded across the arena to a dais erected at the foot of the orchestra.

The Queen was dressed in simple black, with black bonnet—no ornaments or jewellery: Princess of Wales in rose-coloured velvet; Princess Louise in white; and Princess Beatrice in green.

The Prince of Wales had been received previously by the Provisional Committee—he being president. On the dais beneath a suspended canopy or state chair was placed, on which the Queen sat while an address was read in a clear and audible voice by the Prince. To this Her Majesty, bowing profoundly, handed to him a written reply, and also audibly saying: "In handing you this answer, I have to express my great admiration of this beautiful hall, and my earnest wishes for its complete success."

A loud cheer and clapping of hands greeted this announcement from the royal lips. The Bishop of London then offered up a prayer, at the conclusion of which the Prince of Wales stepped up to the dais, and the Queen whispered to him her command, which he announced as follows: "By command of the Queen, I declare this hall now opened."

Again enthusiastic cheers rent the hall, and the glorious National Anthem struck forth—performed by the united orchestra, organ, and choir, with an effect such as I never heard before. Outside the building the trumpets sounded, and the guns in Hyde Park fired a royal salute.

The Queen then descended from the dais and withdrew to her private box, being greeted with cheers as she passed, which she graciously acknowledged; the Princess Louise, and the Princess of Wales also being loudly greeted.

Her Majesty on taking her seat had the Princess of Wales on her right, on her left the Prince of Wales, to his left the Princesses Louise and Beatrice, and in rear Prince Arthur.

On the right of the Princess of Wales the handsome Duke of Saxe-Coburg, in his white Prussian uniform, the Princess Christian, and in rear the Marquis of Lorne.

The royal box has been carefully selected with reference to its acoustic advantages, and is placed a little on one side of the central point, opposite the orchestra—the Prince of Wales' box being directly opposite.

The Biblical Cantata, composed expressly for the occasion by Sir Michael Costa, with words selected from the Old Testament, was then performed by an orchestra and chorus of 1,200 performers. Her Majesty then quitted the hall, and with her suite were escorted to the royal carriages, which formed in procession as they had come, and from the upper window of the hall the whole scene was most imposing as the carriages drove off to Buckingham Palace.

The rest of the concert was then continued, and after listening to the fine clear notes of Madame Lemmens-Sherrington, I quitted the hall, having thoroughly enjoyed the opening scene of the Royal Albert Hall, Kensington Gore.

I forgot to mention that the Yeomen of the Guard—*vulgo*, Beef-eaters—were ranged on each side of the passage to the dais through which the Queen and royal party passed. Their appearance in their quaint Tudor costume, with long halberds in their hands, created a good deal of laughter as the veterans took up their positions.

On Saturday I purpose going to Putney to witness the contest between the dark and light blue, and shall give you a brief account of same next week.

W. M. F.

### A CUTTING ON THE CARLETON BRANCH OF THE E. & N. A. RAILWAY, N. B.

The Carleton branch, so-called, connects the Western Extension from Fairville to the United States boundary with the city of St. John and the European and North American Railway eastward, tapping the Intercolonial at Monkton Junction. The American portion to Bangor will be open for traffic during the coming autumn, thus bringing St. John

into direct communication with all the great lines of the United States and Canada westward, and Halifax eastward. Carleton, or more properly speaking, St. John West, will connect with St. John East, or the city proper, by large and powerful ferry-boats. The sketch shows the last cutting on the line, the new Breakwater Wharf, the mouth of the St. John harbour, the barracks and an outline of a portion of the city. St. John contains a population of about forty thousand, and will compare with any city in the Dominion for enterprise. An immense hotel is now nearly completed, to be called the Victoria; an opera house is in course of construction, and other buildings of a public character which will from time to time appear in these pages.

### THE ICE SHOVE ON THE DANUBE.

Every year about this time (says the Austrian correspondent of the *Times*, in a letter dated Vienna, Feb. 14) if you pass through the districts of Vienna lying in the vicinity of the Danube Canal, which separates the Leopoldstadt from the rest of the town, you may see heaped up at intervals ladders, boats and wooden stages. A special committee is sitting in the town, using the telegraph freely along the Danube line, and receiving regular information on the state of the weather, and the state of the ice. Nor are the precautions superfluous, for a portion of Vienna is every winter at the mercy of the elements. It all depends upon whether the thaw sets in first on the Upper or Lower Danube. In the former case the ice coming down from above gets blocked up at Nussdorf, above Vienna, where the canalised branch of the river separates from the main stream, and forces itself down on the smaller branch which is less ice-bound, but, finding its career obstructed at the outlet, drives the water back. This year the severe winter, which has now lasted with little interruption since the beginning of December, was well calculated to cause uneasiness. Only no one believed the danger impending. After a few days of thaw and rain the frost had again set in, so that no one thought of taking extra precautions; on the contrary, the population no less than the authorities were lulled in a state of false security, when, about noon on Sunday, all at once the rumour spread that the ice had started and was coming down.

Thousands of people flocked to the banks of the canal, which had been quite free from ice in the morning, but where already heavy masses of ice were driving down. These were only, as it were, the advanced guard of the large ice-fields which were descending. Messengers from the police and government commission ran about the threatened districts to order the cellars to be cleared, and to look for the boatmen and the carpenters who were to put together the stages, which were ready prepared; but scarcely more than an hour's time was left for all this, for already, at two p.m., the water had not only filled the cellars, but, in the lower parts, had already penetrated into the houses themselves, driving out the inmates of the ground floor. Great was the confusion; you could see the people of the threatened districts running through the streets carrying their household goods, and seeking for a refuge, but many had to leave everything behind in their haste.

In the meantime, large and larger were the masses of ice coming down, quite ice-fields, which forced their way down with might and main, and were driven over the banks into the streets, becoming in some places quite massive dykes. Still the waters were rushing with fury under the bridges. The wooden ones were closed by way of precaution, so that only the suspension bridges remained open to serve for the communication between the two parts of the town. One moment the ice masses seemed to be diminishing; but the water still rose, and the fish-tanks and wash-houses were carried over the banks.

In several streets the water had already risen four and five feet, and boats had to be got to rescue the inmates of the houses. While this was going on on the banks of the Danube Canal, the descending masses of ice and water got stowed lower, and, penetrating into the old canal which runs through the Prater, soon converted the largest part of this into a field of water and ice, advancing to the great embankment of the Staatsbahn, and threatening to break through it. Several persons had, in spite of warnings, walked to the spot, and had sat down to take their coffee, but before they could finish it they were cut off, and had to be fetched away in boats.

About six o'clock the danger again increased, for the Prater and the neighboring low flats, which had absorbed a large portion of the water, were becoming saturated and the water began to flow back; the ice, which had moved down during the afternoon with rapidity, began to move more and more slowly, until half an hour afterwards it stopped altogether. It was bitter cold, and the ice-fields began to congeal again, so that instead of a passing evil there was a prospect of a renewal and extension of it.

So little had any danger been apprehended that in the Carl Theatre and in several other localities there were to have been the usual amusements. In the Carl Theatre, where a new piece was to be given, the galleries were crowded, in spite of the circumstance that 100 yards lower down the Prater Strasse was already flooded. Half an hour before the representation was to begin it was announced that there would be none. In some of the ball localities the first guests had likewise arrived, but finding the dancing floor already flooded over had to make a hasty retreat.

Thus it went on till 9 o'clock, when the largest portion, not only of the Leopoldstadt on the left bank of the canal, but likewise several districts of the Landstrasse, and the portion of the inner town near the old arsenal, which was, in ancient times, the port of Vienna, and is, therefore, lying very low, were several feet under water.

After nine o'clock, however, things took a better turn, and the water began to fall almost as quickly as it had risen, and by eleven o'clock the water in the canal itself had sunk several feet lower.

Yesterday, matters remained much in the same state. The water had fallen some four feet, and the higher portions of the inundated districts were again free. All about the streets large blocks are lying around. In some places there is such a mass of it accumulated that the people who tried to return to their houses were prevented by it from entering them. Where the water is remaining the sharp frost—15 deg. Reaum., or about 0 deg. of Fahrenheit—has covered it with a smooth surface of ice, in the ice-houses themselves the water on the floor is frozen over, so are the streets covered with a thin layer.

[We copy a graphic illustration of this exciting scene from one of our German contemporaries.—Ed. C. J. N.]