

BRITISH AND FOREIGN.

WELLINGTON COLLEGE.

(From the Times Reporter.)

The first stone of Wellington College was laid on the 1st June by the Queen, in presence of a brilliant and numerous assemblage, who evinced a lively interest in the ceremony.

A brief description of the locality may not be unacceptable, for, though in the neighborhood of the metropolis, it is not one of the haunts with which Londoners are familiar. It may be approached by many railways, but the most direct route is by the South-Western line, through the richly wooded plain of the Thames, by way of Kingston, Esher, Oatlands, and Woking. Northward stretch the Romping Downs,—no other name could so well describe them,—Bagshot-heath, and the Chobham Ridges, through which the line pursues its course to the village of Farnborough in the valley of the Blackwater. Six miles to the north-west of the former place, and lower down in the valley, lies the village of Sandhurst; and it is on a gentle eminence midway between that town and the Military College that Wellington College is to be erected. The site was chosen by Prince Albert, and does credit to his judgment. It is at once elevated and sheltered. The thick groves of fir that crown the crests of the adjoining hills protect it from the eastern blast, while the salubrity of the place is materially enhanced by a bright and rapid stream which rises a few miles above A der-shott, and, after a short course to the north-east, falls into the Loddon, one of the most important tributaries of the Thames. The college will command a noble prospect. The grounds, 125 acres in extent, touch the western lip of the London basin, and the country before, beneath, and around lies outstretched like a map. Here, east and west, crosses the line of the old Roman road from Silchester to London; far to the north rise the Chiltern hills; to the south the long chain through Surrey and Kent; and clear in the east glitters the Crystal Palace, with London, St. Paul's, Highgate, Hampstead, and Harrow in the distance. Richmond and Hampton Court complete the prospect, and the glancing of the sunlight on the Thames gives warmth and brilliancy to the whole picture. The soil in the vicinity of the college is a sandy gravel, admirably adapted for the purpose it is to be applied to, while the extent of the estate will afford many points for effective treatment, not the least important of which will be the formation of a handsome sheet of water designed to cover a surface of 20 acres, allotted by the Prince Consort for that especial object.

On the Queen's arrival at the spot where the stone was to be laid the Governors arranged themselves in the form of a semicircle. The Earl of Derby, Vice-President of the College, then read to Her Majesty an address expressed in the following language:—

"May it please your Majesty.—We, your Majesty's most dutiful subjects, the Vice-President and Governors of the Wellington College, approach your Majesty with the assurance of our devoted loyalty and affectionate attachment to your Majesty's throne and person, and with the expression of our heartfelt gratitude, on our own part, and on that of all interested in this institution, for the unflinching support and encouragement with which your Majesty has deigned to honor it, from the very first idea of its establishment.

"When, upon the death of the late illustrious Duke of Wellington, the country was anxious to testify its deep veneration for his memory, and only doubtful how best to give effect to the general feeling, your Majesty was graciously pleased at once to adopt (if, indeed, it may not be truly said that the idea originated in your Majesty's own mind) the suggestion of combining with a building, of which the architectural character should be worthy of the occasion, an institution which should perpetuate the name of the great deceased in conjunction with a permanent endowment in favor of the service to which he owed his fame, and on which he has conferred imperishable lustre.

"Surrounded by all the blessings of domestic life, which your Majesty well knows how to prize far above the splendor of a throne, your Majesty's maternal heart could sympathize with those less fortunate mothers whose lot it might be to look with anxiety upon a rising family, orphaned in their country's service, and doomed to struggle with all the evils of severe, and, above all, uneducated poverty. An institution which should mitigate these evils, should soothe these anxieties, should shelter, protect, and educate these orphans was the monument which your Majesty invited the country to raise to the lasting memory of the Great Duke.

"Your Majesty most munificently headed the subscription for this object, and the public have liberally responded to the call.

"On every occasion on which the powers of the Crown could be brought to bear upon the end in view, as in granting and facilitating the passing of the Charter of Incorporation, we have gratefully to acknowledge your Majesty's continued and unvarying support. Our deliberations have been constantly aided and guided by the presence and advice of your Majesty's illustrious consort, the President of the College; and, in approaching the accomplishment of our design, we have to tender to your Majesty the expression of our humble gratitude for the sanction and encouragement given to our undertaking by your Majesty's presence and participation in a ceremony originally intended to have marked the day which gave the world the great Captain of the age, and supplied, in addition to your Majesty's domestic happiness, a touching incident for the pencil of one of our greatest artists.

"It is believed that the building about to be erected on the site on which we stand will be visible from the domain which a nation's gratitude bestowed in perpetuity on the illustrious Duke; and his descendants will have before their eyes at once a memorial of the greatness of their distinguished ancestor, and of their country's recognition of his unequalled services.

"It is our anxious hope that within these walls, at no distant period, 200 orphans of officers of your Majesty's and of the East India Company's service may be lodged, boarded, partially clothed, and provided, between the ages of 11 and 16, with the elements at least of such a religious, moral, and intellectual education as may fit them for their future career in life, whatever that career may be; and if not gratuitously, at least at a scale of expense far below what any other institution could afford them. The admissions will be regulated by strict attention to the claims of the deceased officer and the circumstances of the surviving parent, without requiring any further disclosure of such circumstances than may serve to shew that the total provision for the family, if equally divided, would not exceed a given amount.

"Notwithstanding the munificent contributions of your Majesty and the public, we are not yet in a condition to carry out our plan to its full extent; but, looking to the circumstances of the time, to the many claims which may be urged upon us consequent on that which we may happily term the late war, we have deemed it desirable not to delay the erection of our intended building, and to rest satisfied with the partial application of our plan, both in respect of numbers and terms of admission, until the proved efficacy of our system may induce such increased support as may enable us to augment the former, and render the latter yet more liberal.

"With these views we are assured that your Majesty will join us in commending our infant institution to the protection of that God 'who is the father of the fatherless, and defendeth the cause of the widow;' and to that Almighty Protector we offer our fervent prayers that your Majesty may long be spared to witness the increasing prosperity of this institution, which, we trust, will for ages associate the memory of your Majesty's happy reign with the glory and patriotism of Wellington, and shew with what judicious liberality enduring honor was paid to the greatest man of his age by the gratitude of his Sovereign and his country."

To this address the Queen returned the following gracious reply, which Her Majesty received from the hands of Sir George Grey:—

"I have received with sincere gratification the address which you have this day presented to me.

"It affords me the greatest satisfaction to avail myself of this occasion to testify anew my warm and heartfelt participation in the general feeling of affection and veneration for the memory of the illustrious man whose name will be associated with the institution which we are met to inaugurate.

"That satisfaction is enhanced by the character of the monument which you propose to raise to the lasting memory of the Duke of Wellington, and also by the circumstances of the time selected for its erection.

"There could not be a more worthy record of a country's gratitude to its greatest soldier than a permanent endowment for the protection and education of the orphans of brave men whose lives have been laid down in the service of which he was the chief ornament and pride. Nor could there be a more appropriate time for raising such a monument to his memory.

"While gratefully admiring the gallantry and devotion which have been so conspicuously displayed by my army in the late war, I have deeply sympathized with the domestic sorrows and privations (the inevitable results of war) which have made so many mourners.

"I feel that we cannot better celebrate the re-establishment of peace than by laying the foundation of an institution, which, while it will tend to soothe those sorrows and to mitigate the severity of those privations, will