



AUGUST.—GROUSE SHOOTING.

OPENING OF THE GREAT EXHIBITION MAY 1, 1851.

Of all the events of the present eventful epoch, none has been of more deep and enduring interest than the opening of the Great Exhibition of 1851. The pageantry of peace with which it was conducted, will form, if we mistake not, the brightest page in Queen Victoria's brilliant reign. Never dawned a brighter morn than on that ever-memorable "May-day;" the sky clear and blue, the sun coming forth in undimmed splendour, the air crisp, cool, yet genial, as a poet's spring morn should be. London, with her countless thousands, was early afoot; by six o'clock, the hour fixed for opening the park-gates, streams of carriages, all filled with gaily-attired company, came pouring in from all parts of the metropolis and the surrounding districts, while whole masses of pedestrians marched in mighty phalanx towards the scene of action. All St. James's Park, all the way up Constitution Hill, all the way along Knightsbridge and Rotten-row, was one sea of heads, whose owners were all intent upon one object—to catch a glimpse of her Majesty and splendid suite on her way to the Palace of Industry. The procession was of what is termed "half state"—instead of the cumbersome carriage, her Majesty and Prince Albert went in a private "dress" carriage and pair, their suite occupying seven other similar carriages.

Within the Crystal Palace the fortunate ticket-holders had begun to assemble at nine o'clock. The Duke of Wellington, the hero of a hundred fights, was one of the earliest arrivals, and was loudly cheered, as with unmistakable interest and pleasure he paid his homage to the Genius of Industry. These plaudits were perhaps dealt with increased warmth and volume on account of the auspicious day itself being the Duke's birthday. Of other arrivals, including the Ministers, it is unnecessary to speak; suffice to say that by eleven o'clock the Crystal Palace was filled with such an assemblage (30,000 in number), as had never before been brought together under one roof: though this number was far surpassed—doubled, tripled—on many subsequent days during the Exhibition.

At twelve o'clock a flourish of trumpets proclaimed the arrival of the Queen,

signified outside by the elevation of the Royal standard at the northern summit of the roof of the transept. As her Majesty and Prince Albert, accompanied by the Prince of Wales and Princess Royal entered under the crystal arched roof, through the handsome bronzed and gilded northern gates, erected by the Coalbrookdale Company, through the adjacent spaces decorated by gorgeous exotics, sparkling fountains, and choice statuary, and as the flourish of trumpet and clarion proclaimed this their state entry, a most deafening burst of applause came from the concourse of loyal subjects around her, who rose to welcome the Royal pair. The sight was overwhelmingly grand. The Queen having taken her seat in her chair of state—the Royal Commissioners, Foreign Ministers, and members of the Cabinet, in their Court dresses and splendid uniforms, being ranged around her chair—the National Anthem was performed by a choir of nearly a thousand voices, accompanied on the organ by Messrs Goss and Turl.

His Royal Highness Prince Albert then descended from the dais, and, taking his place with the other Commissioners, read an address; to which her Majesty made a gracious reply. And then after a prayer for the occasion, read by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Royal Procession was formed, which made the entire circuit of the building; the organs playing, and the choirs singing, the "Hallelujah Chorus." On her Majesty's return to the platform, the Queen declared the "Exhibition opened;" which was announced to the public by a flourish of trumpets, and the firing of a Royal salute from the *Serpentine*. The Queen then retired, and the barriers were thrown open, and the public allowed to circulate through the wondrous pile.

The ceremonial was one, it may be said, without precedent or rival. While the race of man exists, this solemn and magnificent occasion will not readily fade away from his memory like the "baseless fabric of a vision;" it commenced an era in which the sons of toil shall receive honour and reward; at the same time stimulating the energies of man to conquer "fresh domains," and discover new faculties of nature and her products, for the well-being and use of his fellow-creatures.