

THE NEW BARONETS.

A SUBSTANTIAL and very honourable addition has just been made to the ranks of the baronetage. Her Majesty has conferred this distinction upon six gentlemen. They are:—Mr. William Brown, of Liverpool; Mr. Frank Crossley, of Halifax, M.P. for the West Riding; Mr. David Baxter, of Dundee; Mr. Daniel Cooper, the first Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales; Mr. Henry Rich, for many years a constant supporter of Liberal principles in the House of Commons; and Mr. Thos. Davies Lloyd, of Bronwydd, a Welsh gentleman of ancient lineage, and very popular throughout the principality.

All these gentlemen will be recognised as fit recipients of the honour, however varied may be their claims. In each of their persons a compliment is paid to some interest occupying a claim in public esteem. Ancient hereditary traditions, identification with the commercial and constitutional growth of those colonies that are fast rising into the dimensions and importance of new kingdoms, and long and faithful political services to the Liberal cause in its least prosperous days, each receive a tribute. But it is in the case of the two gentlemen we have first named that the public ratification of the official act will be the most cordial and sincere. The Fountain of Honour has seldom more completely expressed the feeling of the community than by the bestowal of a permanent mark of distinction upon men like Mr. William Brown and Mr. Frank Crossley. Both have by magnificent gifts to the people created for themselves in their respective localities monuments as enduring as any hereditary dignity the Crown can confer, monuments which must last to the public advantage and to their own honour as long as the landmarks of the country. Both typify a perseverance and enterprise founded on probity, resulting in splendid success, and furnishing a noble example to young Englishmen in industrial life, while in the pattern they hold out by the manner in which they use their wealth for the benefit of those who have contributed to its great proportions may almost be considered a theme for national pride. No conventional prefix will add to the veneration with which the name of William Brown is regarded where his worth and discriminating munificence are household words, nor increase the respect that Frank Crossley has gathered round him among the community upon which he has bestowed such princely benefits. But it is not inappropriate that a formal mark of distinction should follow the honours the public voice has already conferred, and that the Sovereign should conspicuously recognise careers so largely devoted to the interests and welfare of the people.

A Portrait of Mr. (now Sir William) Brown, of Liverpool, and a sketch of the magnificent Free Library and Museum founded by him in that city, will be found among our Engravings.

THE BANK-NOTE FORGERY.

A KIND of panic (observes the *Times*) was recently caused by the announcement that a quantity of the paper used in the manufacture of bank-notes had been stolen from the mills at Laverstoke, in Hampshire, which for a great number of years have exclusively supplied the Bank of England. The well-known qualities of this paper have always been looked upon as the best safeguard against forgery. Its texture and strength, with the watermark and other peculiarities, have hitherto been inimitable by the most clever fabricators. The mills were founded as long ago as 1720, and during the whole of this period the Messrs. Portal from generation to generation have been manufacturing paper for the Bank of England. And this has been done with such skill that, according to the statement of Sir F. Kelly on the late trial, during the century and a half which had nearly elapsed not one sheet of notepaper has ever been successfully imitated. But the security which has been caused by this long exemption from fraud seems to have induced too much confidence. Crime in these days is practised with a skill which requires ever-increasing watchfulness to meet it. The precautions taken at the Laverstoke Mills, though, no doubt, sufficient to prevent any novice or blunderer from becoming possessed of the paper, were no obstacle to a man trained to a knowledge of the process, and watching his opportunity day after day. Hence the comparative ease with which the witness Henry Brown, who appeared as Queen's evidence at the trial, was able to abstract quantities of the paper. This young man was tampered with by the prisoner Burnett, who, no doubt, was on the look-out for such an instrument. Brown, according to his own account, at first refused, but after his scruples had been removed he set to work to steal the paper, and succeeded without much difficulty. He first took three sheets, enough for six notes, and then five sheets of £10-note paper, and ten sheets of "fifties," and then larger and larger quantities,—enough to manufacture an immense sum of false money. This is the most important part of the whole business, inasmuch as it shows that the machinery for preventing fraud by the workpeople at the mills is not thoroughly efficient, and that in the interest of the public it must be revised.

But it certainly is not a matter of wonder that a manufacturer should be occasionally the victim of a fraud of this kind, when we consider the facilities of wrongdoing possessed by the persons employed, and the skill of which they are masters. The prisoner Brewer, who was accused, but acquitted, of stealing part of the paper and delivering it to Brown to be given to Burnett, was a man of posi-



SIR WILLIAM BROWN, BART.

tion in the mills, as possessed of no mean talents and ingenuity. He had had a share in inventing a machine for impressing the watermark on Bank-note paper, which machine had been patented by his brother, who was then, and is now, employed in the works. When the paper was in their possession the forgers set about forging the notes, and in this a man named Griffiths was employed, who, if his own account of himself be true, must be an eminent character in the criminal ranks, and one whose detection is no small benefit to society. When the police broke into his place of operations they found a printing-press and twenty-one forged Bank-of-England notes without date or signature. On a bed in the room were twenty forged £10 notes finished and twenty-five forged £5 notes. "Mother plates" and copper-plates for making the watermark were also discovered. The proprietor of these extensive works made a clean breast to the police. He said he had some more plates in a field, and this on searching was found to be the case; and he confessed that "he had been engaged in printing forged notes since 1846; that he had printed the whole of the forged notes on the Bank of England for the last seventeen years; that he had printed on genuine paper stolen from the mill 180 £5 notes and 20 £10 notes for a person named Buncher, and 20 £5 notes for another person." Such were the experienced and professional rogues whose machinations have caused such alarm in the trading community. Happily, they have been brought to justice. Brewer has been acquitted, but Griffiths has been sentenced to penal servitude for life; Buncher to twenty-five years; Barnett to twenty years; and Williams, who had been engaged in engraving a plate for the forging of a portion of the notes, but whose character was in other respects good, has been sentenced to four years' penal servitude. Cummings, who had been charged with having a quantity of the stolen Bank-note paper in his possession, but who was acquitted by the direction of the Judge, as there was no untainted corroboration of the evidence of the approvers, was discharged, being warned by the Judge at the same time of the narrow escape he had made. Great credit is due to the police for their energy and skill in bringing the whole to light; and it is now to be hoped that, with new precautions at the mills and at the Bank, such frauds will be made impossible for the future.

THE GREAT FIRE AT PLYMOUTH.

DURING the performance of the Christmas pantomime at the Plymouth theatre on the night of Monday week, at which there was a crowded audience, a strong smell of fire was perceptible, and some uneasiness was displayed; but confidence was restored on a strict examination of every part of the building and a declaration that the sup-

posed smell of burning timber arose from a piece of burning wood from a fire in one of the apartments of the building. The performances were brought to a close, and the audience left in as merry a mood as could be wished. After the house was clear, on a suspicion that a smell of fire still existed, the manager, Mr. Newcombe, his son, and others again went over every part of the premises, and the house was left under the assurance that all was right. Not long after, however, the alarm was given of the outbreak, which showed itself by the smoke making its way into the apartments of the hotel immediately adjoining the theatre. The police and the agents of the fire-offices having engines soon received messages of the occurrence, while signal-guns from the citadel and the guard-ship in Hamoaze aroused the military and naval authorities. The fire-engines immediately attended, but the fire-plugs could not be got up for want of the keys, and the military, though turned out, were kept at "stand at ease" till an official request was made for their attendance. At last a detachment of Royal Marines, under the command of Colonel Clavell, arrived with the barrack fire-engine, followed by a detachment of the 78th, with an engine from the citadel, under the command of Major Wood. The 82nd Light Infantry also sent a detachment, commanded by Major Clapcott. A large party of the Royal Artillery and Engineers were also present, as also was Brigade-Major Keith. The Naval Brigade was accompanied by Captain Vesey of her Majesty's ship *Royal Adelaide*. The Mayor, superintendents, and a strong body of police were early on the spot. The other engines in attendance were the West of England (which arrived first), the County Fire, and the South Devon Railway, making about seven in all.

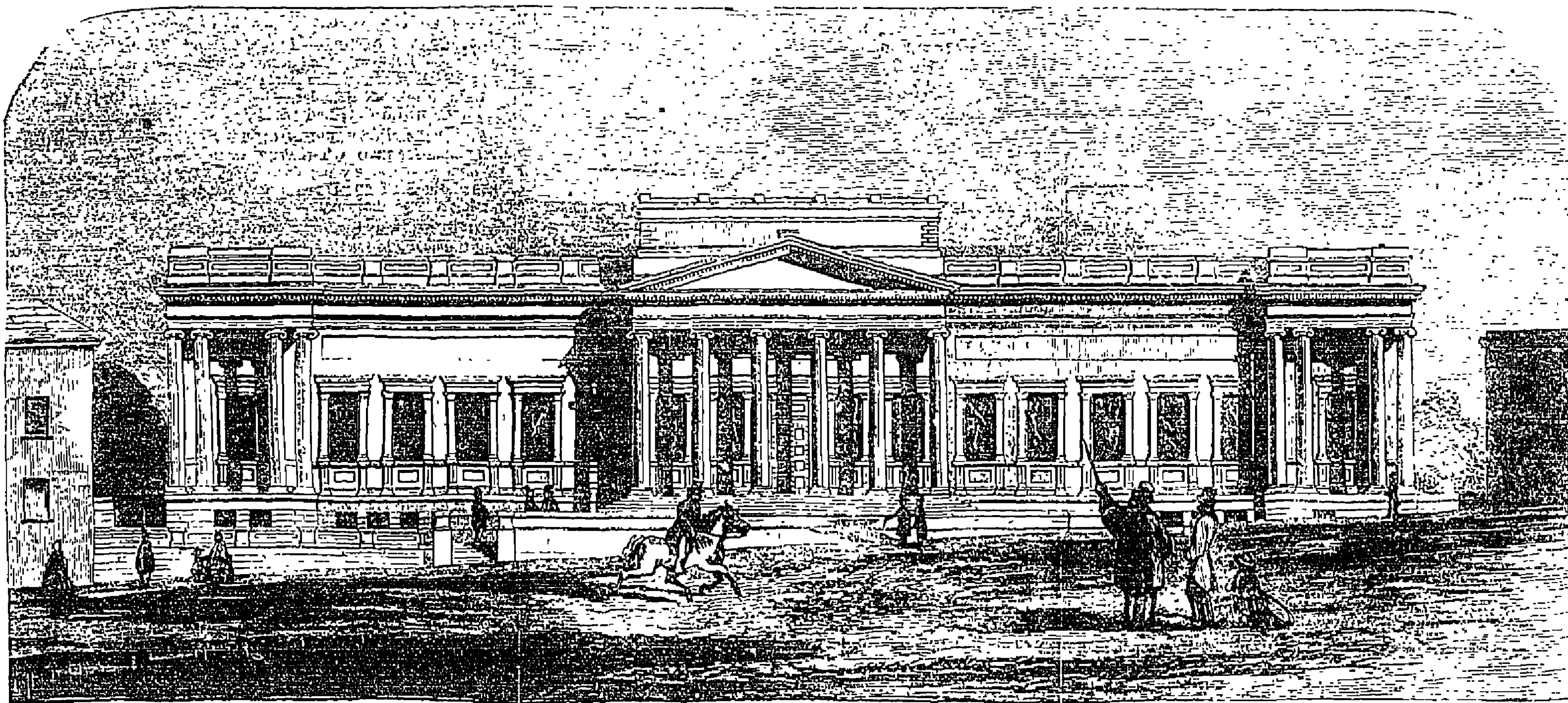
The fire meanwhile had raged furiously, threatening the hotel, the inmates of which were aroused and escaped, and the most valuable portion of the furniture of Mr. Pearse, the landlord, was also removed. A little before one it was evident that the fire was one of the most serious that had ever taken place in the neighbourhood. The fire had, it was clear, spread to the ballroom, and by a little after one o'clock the whole of this splendid room was doomed. At a quarter past one the roof of the beautiful portico fell in with a tremendous crash. A roar as of a gun resounded through the air, and a dense volley of smoke and sparks shot up from the lurid mass. From that time huge rafters all aglow kept on falling, to the no small danger of the men who were working at the engines. In a short time the card-room and the assembly-room of the hotel were destroyed; and towards three o'clock, with a rising wind, the whole building seemed doomed; but by this time the firemen appeared to have got the mastery, and were able to prevent further destruction. By about ten o'clock in the morning the fire had been completely subdued.

A survey was made on Wednesday week by the town surveyor on behalf of the corporation. The damage caused by the fire is estimated at £5500. The grand entrance is one mass of ruins. But though the entrance, ladies' dressing-room, refreshment-room, and other rooms immediately connected are all gone, the interior of the theatre remains to a very large extent uninjured. The preservation of the building is to be ascribed to the good genius of Foulston, the architect. He designed an iron roof, which the trial has proved to be capable of bidding defiance to the ravages of a conflagration. It is formed of hoop iron, arranged in a honeycomb form, and of surprising strength. Though the flames were on all sides it stood the test, and was mainly instrumental in stopping the flames from spreading over the other parts. The seats in the gallery were all destroyed, but here again the wrought-iron girders did good service. Mr. Elliott, builder, who had an intimate knowledge respecting the construction of the theatre, knowing these facts, directed the efforts of the engineers in a manner which very materially helped to save the place from further destruction. The upper and lower boxes were not injured, and the seats which were removed from the latter are nearly as good as ever. The pit and stalls only wanted cleaning to be again ready for occupants. It was at first supposed that the fire and water together had so damaged the scenes, and that other stage properties had been so completely spoiled, that, even if the theatre was repaired in time for performances during the present season, a reproduction of the Christmas pantomime would be an impossible feat. Mr. Newcombe found, says the *Western Morning News*, that, by employing all his resources, he would be able to afford the public an opportunity of seeing it in an almost incredibly short space of time. Indeed, he positively announced his intention of again opening the theatre on Monday last. He chose (as having reference to the calamity) as the first piece, "Sunshine Through the Clouds."

THE PEOPLE OF JAPAN.

In connection with the late news from Japan (see our leader) we publish two Engravings of Japanese people and costumes. The first represents a mother and daughter of Simoda. Many even of the respectable women are barefooted and barelegged; their dress is generally dark-coloured, like nightdresses in shape, secured by broad waistbands or scarves. The married woman of Japan enjoy the exclusive privilege of dyeing their teeth. Their lips are rouged; the rouge of the Japanese toilet being "bing," made of the *Carthamus tinctorius*, and prepared in porcelain caps.

The women, in common with many in various parts of over-populated Europe, are seen frequently at work in the fields, showing the general industry, and the necessity of keeping every hand busy in



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