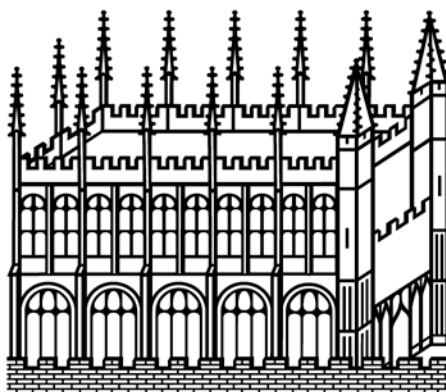




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A HERO OF THE WORKSHOP
AND
A SOMERSETSHIRE WORTHY,
CHARLES SUMMERS

MARGARET THOMAS

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A Hero of the Workshop

AND

A SOMERSETSHIRE WORTHY,

CHARLES SUMMERS,
SCULPTOR.

The Story of his Struggles & Triumph.

BY

MARGARET THOMAS.

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TO

Robert Arthur Kinglake, Esq., J.P.

WHO HAS LABORED TO IMMORTALIZE

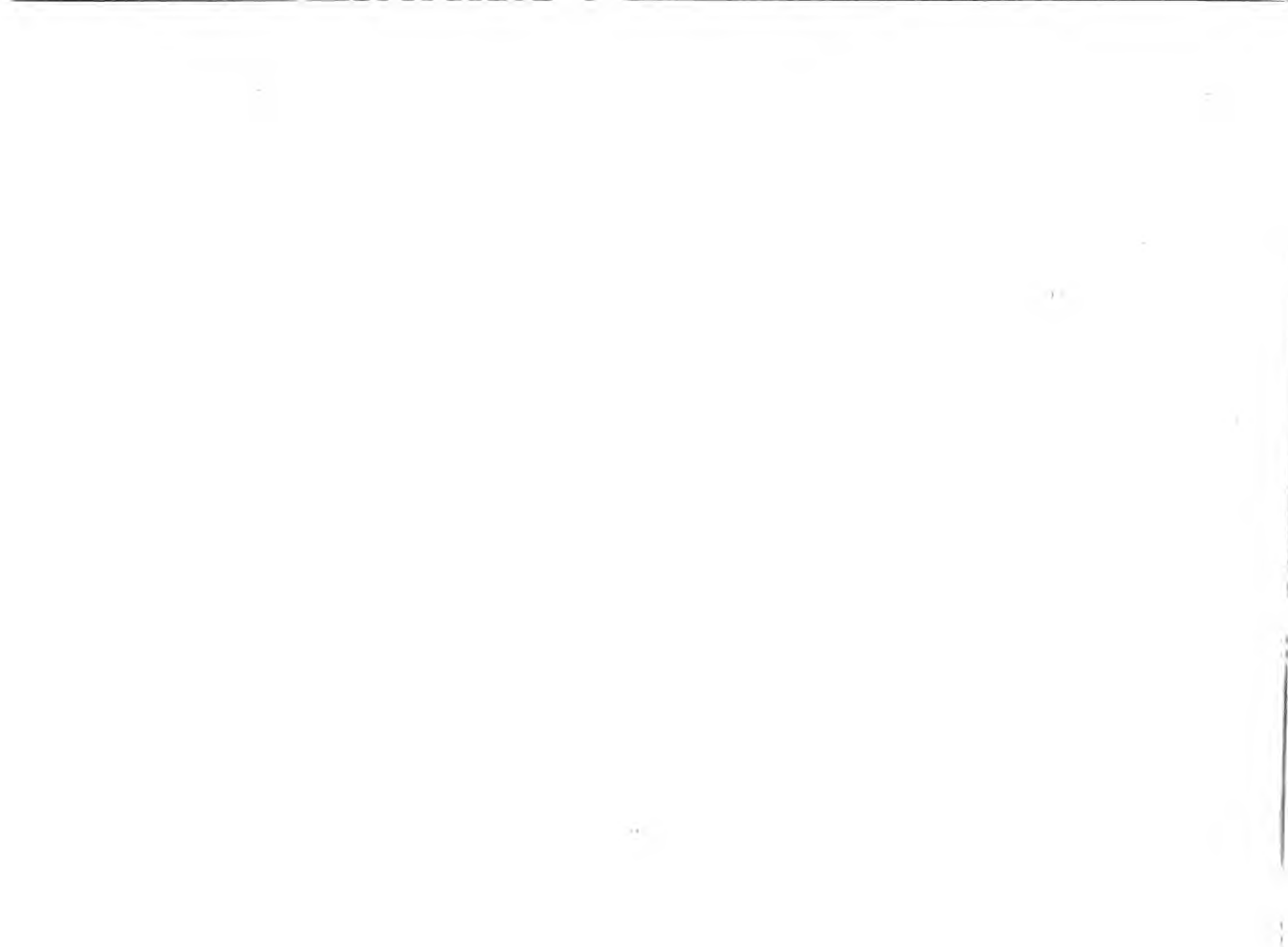
THE GREAT AND GOOD OF SOMERSET BY

ERECTING MEMORIAL BUSTS IN THE SHIRE HALL,

AT TAUNTON,

THIS MEMOIR IS INSCRIBED BY

M. T.





Memoir of Charles Summers.

CHARLES SUMMERS was born in the obscure village of Charlton, seven miles from Ilchester, in Somersetshire, on the 27th July, 1827, and was the eldest but one of a family of eight children. At the time of his birth, his father, a mason and small builder, was in the enjoyment of a humble patrimony, which might have served to educate and keep his increasing family respectably, but this, unhappily, he soon squandered. Thus it happened that his son Charles, instead of learning to read and write in his childhood, was sent as soon as he could walk, into the labour market, to earn a shilling a-week by scaring crows from a wheat field.

It would be tedious to relate how, as the boy grew older, he was employed in the most arduous and difficult tasks, while his father consumed both time and money in the ale-house. Often was he reproached with exacting too much from his son; but the active, willing spirit of the brave lad and his unvarying energy and strength made him too valuable for his labour to be surrendered for any future advantages which education might be supposed to give him. At the ages of eight and nine years, many a time has he been compelled to make night journeys alone with a horse and cart to the pit to procure coals for the family consumption. And on one occasion, being delayed by a heavy storm, the horse's life became a sacrifice to his burdensome duty, and very nearly that of the future sculptor. It was about this time that to repair his fallen fortunes, the father conceived the idea of starting a candle manufactory, and Charles and his elder sister were employed in preparing the wicks. It was also the duty of the former to drive his father to the markets of Wells or Bristol to

obtain the tallow necessary for their branch of industry. Want of attention, however, on the part of him who should have been most devoted to the business, produced its natural result, and what would otherwise have proved a lucrative business, failed most ruinously. The humble home at Charlton was sold by the mortgagee, the furniture sacrificed at a public auction, and George Summers, his exemplary wife Ruth, and their family, obliged to commence the world anew.

They removed to a village called Street, near Glastonbury; and here it was resolved that the father should endeavour to procure employment as a mason, aided by his eldest son, who was his chief reliance in all matters of labour, and whom he invariably termed "the boy." I should here state that a resolution of emigrating to New Zealand was nearly carried into effect, and only negatived by an assurance from the lord of the manor that "the savages always devoured those who were unfortunate enough to settle in that country." Carrying, then, simply a change of

clothing, the father and son set out on their journey to Bristol on foot. Here there was a strike among the masons, and they lost no time in obtaining the work they came in search of. But on the conclusion of the first day's labour, they were met by some of the men on strike; and the father, always easily induced to enter a public house, promised, on the offer of three days' wages being paid to him, not to work except on such terms as the men insisted on. The Summers' then took steamer across the Channel to Pontypool. For the father it was not difficult to obtain work; but all the employers declared that they did not want boys; and young Summers was then rather short for his age. However, the father asked them to try the boy, and give him what he was worth. He was then employed at fivepence a-day to carry mortar, and that remuneration was in time increased to sevenpence, the lad's industry and quickness never failing to make head even under the most adverse circumstances. In about a month George Summers became anxious to see his wife and family, and

again crossed the Bristol Channel. Arrived at Bristol with a few pounds in their pockets, they were again met by the Society men; and the record of that tedious journey to Street of thirty miles, is that of a boy bringing home an intoxicated man. About eight miles from home, overcome with fatigue, they sat down in the snow, six inches deep—though it was May—and fell asleep, but were awakened by some wagons passing, in which they performed the remainder of the journey.

At this time was commenced the building of the Wells Union, eight miles from Street, and here the Summers' again obtained employment, taking lodgings in Wells for the week, and returning home from Saturday evening till Monday morning; and here the activity and intelligence for which Charles Summers was always remarkable, began in reality to display themselves. Strong and industrious by nature, his work soon surpassed that of the whole yard; and a wager as to whether he or a lad nearly double his size and age could best square and face a stone, was decided by the

umpires, their fellow-workmen, in favour of the former. During an election in the city, the public houses were for four days thrown open free to the "independent electors," an opportunity we may be sure not neglected by the elder Summers, and Charles during these days went to work alone. Finding remonstrances unavailing, he walked home exasperated one Thursday evening to tell his beloved mother everything, but changed his resolution on entering the house, unwilling to give her trouble, and merely said "he had come for a brown loaf, as he knew it was her baking day." The next morning found him again at his labour, adding by it every day something more to the comforts of their little cottage. He and his father were the last workmen retained, but at last the Wells Union was completed.

Relying as usual on the abilities of "the boy," his father took small contracts on a line of rail then in course of formation at Weston-super-Mare. Here Charles Summers' ability in carving fancy stone work are still a matter of notoriety, and he was particularly celebrated for skill in cutting

ornamental gate posts. During this period he was *the sole support of his mother and her family*; but earning a considerable sum of money by his indomitable industry, was also enabled to leave a few shillings a-week in the hands of his employer, which in time became pounds, and for which he received a small amount of interest. About this time, the celebrated sculptor, Henry Weekes, R.A., completed a monumental figure in the attitude of prayer, for a member of the Pigott family, to be erected in the parish church at Weston-super-Mare. The man who came down to erect it, wanting assistance, was led from the accounts he heard of the skill of young Summers to seek him out and obtain his services; and from this circumstance may be dated the anxiety of the future artist to go to London, and perhaps become a sculptor. This desire he communicated to his employer—a Mr. Price—but was warmly urged not to go. This was also the opinion of Mrs. Price, who said that a young man doing so well for himself, should not leave it for a place full of such dreadful wickedness and temptations as

London. But with Mr. Summers a resolution once made remained unbroken, and drawing £10 of the £20 in his employer's hands, he started, accompanied by two young friends, to London.

At the age of nineteen, then, our enterprising countryman found himself in the great metropolis of England, and at once sought the studio of Mr. Weekes. Finding, on application to his former acquaintance, the foreman, no other position vacant, he accepted that of polisher, at a remuneration of one guinea per week. The sight of the models of the great sculptor was indeed a treat to him, and he thought wetting the cloths and cleaning the modelling tools, the most pleasant of tasks. He soon became conspicuous from his industry and cheerfulness, and frequently Mr. Weekes, visiting the studio unexpectedly, found one man alone at his post—the polisher. At this time Mr. Summers employed his evenings in learning the art of pointing marble, and applied his knowledge to copying some of Fiammingo's beautiful models of boys. Thus he was steadily laying in that stock of practical knowledge of

the mechanical part of his art, which is too often, from its arduous nature, neglected by sculptors, but of which he was a consummate master, often in after life *cutting his idea at once in marble without forming it in clay.*

Mr. Summers had not been more than ten or twelve months in the studio, before Mr. Weekes received commissions to execute two colossal statues in bronze; and the men in his employment erected the foundry, and made other preparations for casting in that metal. The ability and energy of the subject of our memoir also caused him to be occupied with far other duties than that which he considered his legitimate employment—that of cutting marble. Under these circumstances he informed Mr. Weekes that he wished his engagement to cease, and to that artist's great regret, returned to Somersetshire.

He remained there for a month, endeavouring to put into practice the knowledge his constant habit of observation had enabled him to acquire. He modelled medallions of his relatives, a bust of the Mayor of Bristol, and of Mr. Moody,

M.P., for Somerset, and several other works, all marked by an originality of execution and vigorous resemblance, arguing well for his future success. On his return to London, through the instrumentality of a friend, to whom the value of his services to Mr. Weekes were known, he received a note from the late eminent sculptor, M. L. Watson, to the effect that he wished to see him next morning. The interview proved so satisfactory to both parties that Mr. Summers was engaged, at two guineas per week, to point the immense group of Lords Eldon and Stowell, upon which Watson was then employed. Of the vigour with which he entered on his duties there are still witnesses; so eager was he indeed to perform his work that Watson often besought him to rest for a day and visit some exhibition, and bring him back his opinion of the works. This pleasing incident illustrates the cordial understanding that existed between master and servant.

Summers at this time declined an offer to enter Baily's studio, and became a great favourite with Watson, whose failing health rendered him unable

to work. He lived with the greatest frugality, and his evenings and mornings were constantly devoted to modelling; and finding, through the friendliness of the family from whom he rented his apartments, that his precious time was likely to be encroached upon, he removed from Euston-road to Pimlico. Watson's health now entirely gave way, and sending for his favourite assistant, he desired him to break up all his models. Mr. Summers hesitated to perform this task, begging a few might be spared, but the dying sculptor, wrapped in a blanket, was determined and watched his beloved works shattered one by one. He has often commented since on the wisdom of Watson in doing this, saying it would be well for the fame of many sculptors if they followed his example. At one time Watson was so ill as to be unable to superintend his works for three weeks, and during that time of precious leisure, Mr. Summers conceived a wish to enter the Royal Academy; and, unknown to anyone, commenced the necessary model.

About a week after his models were destroyed, Watson died, but not before he had given

Mr. Summers one of the most eulogistic letters that could be penned, and which would have secured his entrance into any sculptor's studio. I know not if it be worth recording, but he always related that on the night, nay, the very hour of Watson's death, he heard the death knock at the head of his bed.

By the terms of Watson's will, Mr. Nelson, his foreman, and Mr. Summers, were appointed to complete his works—the Eldon Group, now at Oxford, and the statue of Flaxman, which stands in a hall of the London University. By this time the latter had been admitted probationer of the Royal Academy, and it now became necessary for him to execute similar models and drawings in the Academy to be admitted student. He therefore proposed to Mr. Nelson to change his hours of work. He was obliged to attend at the Academy from ten to three ; before and after those hours he worked at Watson's group. This did not meet the approval of Mr. Nelson, and it was reported to Dr. Franks, to whom was left the charge of seeing to the execution of the terms of

the will, that on the occasion of Lord Eldon coming to see the progress of the statues, only one man was at work on them. Dr. Franks hearing the circumstances under which this occurred, could see nothing to find fault with ; but Mr. Summers having met with great encouragement at the Academy from the late Mr. Jones, the keeper, resigned his position in the studio of Watson.

Pleased at his model being so highly approved, he was less sanguine as to the fate of his drawings, in which he had had no practice. For his anatomical drawings, in place of choosing the model by Houden, usually selected by students, he took the ecorché figure of the "Dying Gladiator." His success was complete, and in 1850 Charles Summers was admitted student of the Royal Academy.

Following up this success, he at once placed his name in the list of competitors for the silver medal for modelling from the antique. This competition takes place in October ; but at the commencement of that month he received a letter to hasten to Somersetshire, if he wished

to see his mother before she died. The affectionate son lost no time in proceeding thither, but arrived two hours after she had breathed her last. She had been an exemplary wife and mother, and his grief was intense; indeed, he never after spoke of her without tears. He modelled her bust while she lay a corpse, and returned to London ten days after the other competitors had begun work for the medal.

We may be sure there were some jokes among the students at the countryman who had put down his name, but had not courage enough to come forward. Undaunted by the delay, however, he commenced a relief from "Silenus and the Infant Bacchus," the subject for that year's competition. Several students endeavoured to discourage him, but he was re-assured by the approbation of Brown, the clever modeller of Hunt and Roskell's cups, etc.; and in spite of all, carried away the silver medal.

A year's hard work brings us to the close of 1851, when he had the honour—*but once since repeated*—of receiving on the same evening the first silver medal for the best model from life;

and the gold medal—given once in two years—for the best group of historical sculpture. The subject of the latter was “Mercy interceding for the Vanquished,” and few gold medal works possess equal merit. There was not a little surprise and a great deal of cheering in the hall of the Academy, when the unassuming student from the country received from the hands of the president, Sir Charles Eastlake, the honours so quickly won and so well deserved. The same year—so fruitful to our artist—procured for him a bronze medal from the International Exhibition, for a “Boy with a Shell;” and to complete its record, he entered into a matrimonial engagement.

He now became an exhibitor at the Royal Academy Exhibitions, and taking a studio in Warwick-street, Pimlico, received much praise for the busts and medallions he executed. Among his works at this time I may mention the bust of Lawson, in the Observatory at Nottingham, and that of Dollond, the optician.

But the career which seemed opening so brilliantly became speedily clouded. The strong

and vigorous constitution he had brought with him from his native county, gave way under his intense application, and he was ordered rest and change of air by the celebrated Dr. Snow, who apprehended the approach of consumption. He accordingly went to Weston-super-Mare; and such was his appearance on his arrival that it was reported that he had come back to die. The sea air was found too strong for his enfeebled constitution, and he retired to spend six weeks with a friendly farmer in the quietude of his native village. Here his health became gradually recruited, and he returned to London to resume his beloved occupation. Again he succumbed to the unfavourable atmosphere and his unrelaxed exertions, and he was told that the only means of preserving his life was a sea voyage. One of his brothers having previously settled in Australia, whence arrived those wonderful accounts of gold discoveries, which unsettled the minds of men at that time, he resolved to proceed thither; and purchasing a ready-made house and many other articles which he fancied might be of use, set sail for Melbourne in 1852.

After a pleasant voyage in the ship "Hope," and during which his health was completely restored, he occupied himself with oil painting, for which he had great talent, he arrived in Melbourne, and fixed his house on a piece of land which he bought in what is now called Docker-street, Richmond. The wages of labouring men in the Colony were then twenty shillings or thirty shillings per diem; and not caring to pay so extravagantly for work he could perform himself, Mr. Summers commenced to build a six-roomed brick house with his own hands, and actually completed it, even to the roof. There are many persons still living there who saw the apparently untiring man work from daylight till dark, and needed the confirmation of the medals to believe that he was an artist. His evenings he solaced with playing the cornet, an instrument on which he performed with some skill, having acquired it during a connection with a Rechabite band in the town of Wells.

Opportunities then occurring of letting his houses, he did so; and leaving Mrs. Summers, went to try his fortune at the diggings, where

his brothers were already realizing much money. He laboured there assiduously for six months, but the old love of art had not died out. He saw an advertisement for modellers, signed by Captain Pasley, Chief Commissioner of Public Works in Melbourne, and determined to send in specimens of his ability. The work required was for the Houses of Parliament, then in course of erection. It need scarcely be added that he was successful in getting it; but within a week of his departure from Poverty Creek, Tarnagulla, gold was found there in such abundance as to make the fortunes of all concerned. Mr. Summers gained nothing thereby.

He then began to model the female figures and boys on the ceiling of the Council Chamber. Delighted to be again with his clay, he modelled at the same time many busts—some for payment, some gratuitously. He also exhibited some busts at the first Intercolonial Exhibition, held in Melbourne in 1854. At this time were executed busts of Frederick Wilkinson, Esq.; J. P. Fawcner, Esq., M.L.A.; J. Hodgson, Esq.; and

J. G. Knight, Esq. His Government work finished, he took a studio in Collins-street, and becoming more generally known, received a commission to model a Faun for the Melbourne Public Library, and several busts and medallions, in which latter branch of art he was peculiarly successful. Soon finding his studio too small, he took on lease a large piece of land higher up in Collins-street, and erected a commodious building. Here he executed many works. His services to art in Melbourne cannot perhaps be over-estimated. He was the pioneer of art there; for by the exhibitions which he, at his own expense, held annually, was implanted that taste for it which now bids fair to produce a rich harvest. He instituted them regardless of his own labour, and—sometimes—interests; and ever, by example and precept, inculcated the true style of art. He was the first President of the Victorian Academy of Fine Arts. His own productions at this period consisted principally of portrait busts; some in marble, executed entirely by his own hands, for it was impossible to procure

skilled labour of the kind at that time. He modelled also the medal for the Exhibition of 1862, and a colossal statue of Shakespeare, which, it is to be regretted, was never erected. Among the busts I may mention those of Sir Redmond Barry, for the Public Library ; Captain Hovell ; a posthumous bust of James Bruce, Esq. ; John Moffat, Esq. ; His Excellency Sir Henry Barkly, and Colonel Neild.

In 1864 occurred the fatal episode of the Burke and Wills Expedition, and a monument to the explorers was resolved on, partly through the generosity of a private individual, Ambrose Kyte, Esq. After a competition, Mr. Summers' design was selected for execution in bronze. The colossal group, thirteen feet high, which now adorns Collins-street, was modelled and cast in plaster and bronze by his own hands, aided only in some of the mechanical parts by labourers, whom he had instructed. A reverberatory furnace was erected ; and to such perfection did he carry the art of bronze founding that the whole of the figure of Burke was cast in one piece, at present the largest casting ever

made; he destroyed his first effort—cast in two pieces—because he objected to have his work joined in any way. The clever reliefs which adorn the pedestal were then added. The sum given to the sculptor for this work, which will carry his name down to posterity as one of the greatest artists of our age, was £4000.

Many spirited sketches of the natives of the Colony, numerous busts and medallions, the spandrel figures of the Bank of Victoria, reliefs of boys carrying flowers and fruit, for the Bank of New South Wales, and the zinc group erected in Sydney, over the Provident Institute, belong to 1859—1861.

On the formation of a Gallery of Art at the Library, Mr. Summers undertook the arrangement of the sculpture, and was one of the commissioners for the purchase of pictures. Having laboured so much for so many years, he began to think of realizing the dream of all artists—a visit to Rome. He received two public commissions for marble busts—the great tragedian, G. V. Brooke, and his Excellency, Sir Charles

Darling ; also two of private individuals, and these he determined to execute in England. Accordingly, he set sail in May, 1867, made himself so popular during the voyage as to be presented with an address and purse of sovereigns by his fellow passengers, reached London, and set himself in an obscure studio, to execute these works and a marble bust of Captain Sturt, the explorer. He then made a tour of the principal cities in Europe ; and his correct taste and unerring judgment prevented his being bewildered by the vast art-treasures they contain. After his return, having conceived an intense desire to dwell at least for a time in the Eternal City, he went to Weston-super-Mare to endeavour to obtain commissions enough to enable him to carry out his design. He was beyond measure successful. His townspeople vied with each other to do him honour, a public dinner and address were given him, and he carried several commissions thence with him to Rome. Mr. Knyfton's bust is one of these. In Rome he met with much encouragement, and executed busts of General and Lady Macarthur, and several groups

in marble. His return to London, in 1869, was the signal for fresh successes ; and he went back with many excellent commissions from those who knew how to appreciate his wonderful genius for portraiture. Four splendid busts modelled in one week, will give an idea of his power with the clay ; and as works of art I cannot speak of them too highly.

Among the works executed about this time, were busts in marble of Admiral Sir Philip Broke, the celebrated hero of the naval battle between the Shannon and Chesapeake, and his distinguished descendant, Admiral Sir George Broke Middleton, and Lady Broke Middleton. His bust of Viscount Canterbury, at one time Governor of Victoria, is also one of his finest and most characteristic works. I am inclined to think that his name will live longest as a portrait sculptor, and that his greatest genius was for this branch of art. The record of the noble race of portrait sculptors, which includes Chantrey, Behnes, and Weekes, is not complete without the name of Charles Summers.

The record of the remaining years of his life is one of unvaried energy, labour, and success.

Some of his greatest works were executed during this period—a recumbent figure of Lady Macleay, erected in Godstone Church, Surrey; a boy and dog, of which I believe three copies were sold; a colossal group of Lynceus and Hypermnestra, exhibited in the Royal Academy; Resignation—a monument in the Melbourne Cemetery; Nydia; two groups of a mother and child; a child and dog, executed for General Macarthur; Instruction—a group; Innocence; Hero; Samson and Delilah; and a number of magnificent busts. “The Illustrated London News,” “Graphic,” and “Art Journal” have on several occasions given engravings of his works. That he worked too hard for his health may easily be inferred from this list, which is nevertheless imperfect; and when I add that he always did the whole of the modelling, and much of the marble work himself, we can but wonder at his unceasing industry. He went into his studio early in the morning, and seldom left it till late at night. His studio was the finest in Rome, and he employed latterly as many as 20 men. He was present in

Rome during the siege and entry of the Italians in 1871, after narrowly escaping being shut up in Paris. It was at this period, the Roman citizens, desirous of recording their admiration of the talents of the English sculptor, honoured him with a commission to decorate the hilt of Garibaldi's sword.

It now remains to mention the last and greatest of his works—and the sad end!

In 1876 Mr. Summers received from Mr. W. J. Clarke, of Melbourne, a commission to execute four colossal statues in marble—the Queen, the Prince Consort, and the Prince and Princess of Wales. After eight months tedious delay, the preliminaries were arranged, the designs approved by the Queen, and he returned to Rome to execute them. A period of preternatural labour ensued, and these works, together with the splendid model of a Guardian Angel for Melbourne, a mother and child, a small marble group, and several busts, were actually completed in August, 1878, and the royal statues forwarded to their destination. He then set out for England,

intending to go to Melbourne by the September mail, and also to consult a London physician, for his health, hitherto almost uninterruptedly good, had failed since May. Arrived in Paris, he visited the Exhibition, and the next day, at the hotel, fell down in a fit, and was taken up apparently unconscious. An English doctor pronounced it a case of acute goitre, and his family were at once informed by telegraph of his dangerous state. He was removed to Neuilly, and became gradually worse, till successive fits necessitated tracheotomy, and the operation was successfully performed. He survived it but three weeks, and now lies buried in Rome—the city he loved so well.

I have only to add that most of these particulars were gathered from his own lips ; and that if I have said anything in this short memoir which may give the least pain to the living, my apology must be, an intense desire to do justice to the dead. He was as much beloved as a man as he was admired as an artist.

LONDON, July, 1879.

LONDON, *July*, 1879.

DEAR MR. KINGLAKE,

You have asked me to write a few more particulars concerning Mr. Charles Summers, the sculptor, to complete the short memoir I have already penned ; and I think I cannot do better in fulfilment of your wish than put together, in the form of a letter to you, who have taken such kind and continued interest, both in the pamphlet and the Memorial Bust, such short reminiscences of his life, work, and character, as first occur to me.

I should certainly think the happiest portion of Mr. Summers' life was that occupied in executing the Burke and Wills Monument in Melbourne—a period of about two years. He was then a comparatively young man, enjoying the most robust health, and possessing almost Herculean strength—able to break a stone with one blow of his fist. His studio, in Collins-street, was the rendezvous of whoever in those early colonial days practised or loved art in any way : and there were a few artists there whose works might have claimed for them

a place even in London. Mr. Summers had always a word of ready advice or welcome for each of his various visitors, and even in the course of his difficult duty of selecting or rejecting pictures, etc., for his exhibitions, never made one serious enemy. Indeed, very few of those who knew him in life but now have a kind and eulogistic word for the genial sculptor. He worked untiringly, night and day, at his great Monument, assisting in all the mechanical details, and invariably going through the dangerous work of tapping the fount at the castings himself. He once narrowly escaped suffocation in the pit, where the pieces of the mould were drying at a charcoal fire. That the figures of the Aborigines in the beautiful reliefs (among the cleverest of his works, and those with which he was best satisfied,) might be truthful, he spent six weeks among them in the "Bush," casting their heads and studying such other details as might render the work perfect.

One of his finest busts was modelled just before this—that of the Rev. Dr. Binney. I believe it was executed in three sittings of about an hour each, in the Doctor's study, and while he was busily engaged in writing.

Mr. Summers would often relate how, when he had received the gold and a silver medal the same night at the Royal Academy, instead of joining in the festivities of his fellow-students, he walked quietly across the Park to where his father and brother were anxiously awaiting the tidings of defeat or success, and, throwing himself in a chair, said not a word; so they, imagining he had failed, began to console him. The party proceeded to supper, and those who knew him will have no difficulty in imagining the mischievous smile with which he produced first one medal and then the other from his pocket, and laid them beside his plate.

His idea of the mission and subject of art were the highest conceivable; he could not bear the thought that anything mean or vulgar should be perpetuated by the brush or chisel, and hence his very small appreciation of the Dutch Masters, Rembrandt excepted. In the last year of his life he refused to make three busts at 120 guineas each because it was made a *sine qua non* that the details of modern dress should be copied. His admiration of the works of Michael Angelo was intense.

One of his most remarkable gifts was that of seeing in a moment if a work of art was good or bad: no second

glance was required. He never forgot a face he had once seen. For him life consisted of but one thing—Art ; for that he lived ; and, almost in the midst of it, died : he could not have conceived existence without it. Always, and under every circumstance, he was thinking of his work, and gathering from whatever surrounded him such information as he thought would prove of service. In omnibuses, railway carriages, etc., he found opportunities of study, and could always reproduce a likeness from memory of the individuals so observed. In the short intervals of repose generally forced upon him by circumstances, he was as playful as a boy, as full of fun, and as easily amused. The utter childishness of his relaxations may have rendered them more completely restful. There was a charming entente cordiale between him and young children. I think I ought to add that, like many west country men, he was rather superstitious.

His death has been noticed and lamented in many newspapers, and in letters from many of his friends, both celebrated and obscure. The correspondent of *The Daily News*, of November 5th, 1878, truthfully remarks, in commenting on Mr. Summers' death, that he worked

indefatigably, going into the studio early in the morning and remaining often till late at night. With such application did he labour for the last nine years in Rome, that few sculptors ever accomplished more work than he did in the same time. He did almost all of it, whether in the clay or marble, with his own hands, having a rare ability and boldness in using the sculptor's hammer and chisel ; while he had an equal celerity in modelling, especially portraits, an instance of which is a bust of Sir Archibald Michie, Agent-General of Victoria, which was modelled in two hours' sitting. . . . The members of the British Academy of Arts in Rome, of the committee of which the deceased was a member, will feel his loss, as he was greatly respected among them."

The Argus, the leading Melbourne paper, observes, "Personally, Mr. Summers was a man whom to know was to esteem. Simple in manners, frank and gentle in speech, modest and unassuming by nature, and entirely free from that self-consciousness and self-assertion which make some artists so intolerable in private life, he was the first to discern and admire ability in others ; and the last to obtrude his own upon your notice. Hence it was a

pleasure to converse with him upon art topics, and to listen to the expression of his views and opinions, which were always the fruit of independent thought and reflection, and were conveyed rather by way of suggestion than by that of positive statement or dogmatic declaration."

The Australasian remarks, "Mort sur le champ de bataille ! Charles Summers has gone down in his harness,—a good way too for a brave and earnest man. Looking back upon some acquaintance with the late sculptor, the impressions which are strongest are of his serene gentleness and the quickness of apprehension which enabled him to secure points of characteristic vrai semblance even from description."

It is indeed safe to affirm that Mr. Summers was loved and respected wherever he was known. Amusements, commonly so called, had no attractions for him ; literature came in for a very small share of his attention, and his mind, free from traditional bias, was perfectly ready to devote itself entirely to the one object which ever engrossed it. None of the common weaknesses of men can be attributed to him ; he neither drank nor smoked, nor devoted himself to any of the

frivolities of dress and fashion. He would have made at least as good a painter as sculptor, having a wonderful eye for color, and a good perception of chiar-oscuro.

He never had any doubt as to what was right in Art, and always went straight to the end he proposed to himself. To him the Greeks were law, and M. Angelo a wondrous canon to be reverentially studied. Flaxman he revered for his tremendous simplicity and feeling ; and he believed Behnes and Chantrey to be the truest guides in sculptural portraiture. During the last ten years of his life his principles were matured, and in many respects original : no need to tell him the cause of an effect, or the effect of a cause (I speak as regards art) ; his mind knew all intuitively. Regarding the gift of genius, he was second to none ; in culture, some have surpassed him ; and I cannot now stop to consider which has the greater power over the average human soul. To the poet and artist, I know the former is incomparably the most precious. I am inclined to think that his earlier and most studious works are best as examples of sculpture ; but I am sure that his later abound more in sentiment and imagination. His works

may always be distinguished among others by their simplicity and breadth of treatment. No sculptor ever better understood the treatment of the human eye, about which he had formed many theories for himself; or the delicate lines, curves, and folds of their drapery. The latter is carried to great perfection in all his later works, especially in the colossal marble statue of the Princess of Wales now in Melbourne. His intense appreciation of all that was delicate or beautiful, has rendered his female busts most exquisite. The concentrated experience of a life so uniformly devoted to art as his, must be most valuable; but it is gone with him, and only the feeble echo of his inspirations remain; for though in his works he yet speaks, to how few it is given to read the language!

In early life he was most economical, often enclosing the result of his week's labours in a piece of plaster and throwing it into a box, till he had realized enough to enable him to study at the Academy; and though in later life he wanted for nothing that was necessary, he was at no time extravagantly inclined. In his life, as in his work, simplicity was his rule; patience and industry were his guides to the success and distinction he attained.

Of his last sad illness it is not necessary I should speak again, except to say that it was endured with un murmuring patience and never-failing resignation, and in such a manner as to win the esteem and respect of all who came in contact with him for the first and last time during the six weeks it lasted.

And now, dear Mr. Kinglake, permit me to thank you again for the interest you have taken in a real "Somersetshire Worthy," and subscribe myself,

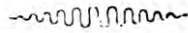
Very sincerely yours,

MARGARET THOMAS.



[FROM "THE MELBOURNE ARGUS."]

Presentation to the National Gallery.



A LARGE number of ladies and gentlemen assembled in the ante-room of the National Gallery, yesterday, to witness the presentation by Mr. W. J. Clarke, M.C.L., to the trustees of the Public Library and National Gallery, of the statues, in marble, executed by the late Mr. Summers, of the Queen, the late Prince Consort, and the Prince and Princess of Wales. The following trustees were present:—His Honour Sir Redmond Barry, Sir James M'Culloch, Sir John O'Shanassy, M.L.A., and Messrs. T. T. A'Beckett, E. Langton, D. C. M'Arthur, and C. E. Bright.

The four statues have been executed in what is known as the heroic size, and the deceased sculptor has chosen a sitting posture for each figure, a method of treatment to which he was greatly attached; and some of our readers will remember the success with which he adopted it in his designs for a monument to commemorate the Shakspeare Tercentenary in this colony; while the figure of Wills, in the bronze memorial of the explorers, will also recur to mind as a further illustration of the artist's predilection. No doubt there is an agreeable sense of repose and an absence of formality and rigidity about the human figure when thus portrayed, which compensates for the loss of whatever additional dignity and impressiveness may be considered as attaching to an erect image; while it must also be acknowledged that modern costume, especially in the case of men, does not lend itself very readily to picturesque and effective

treatment in sculpture. And certainly one of the grandest statues of perhaps the only artist of modern Europe, worthy to compare with the Greek sculptors, is a sitting figure. We refer to the well-known "Il Pensiero," by Michael Angelo, in the sacristy of the Church of San Lorenzo, in Florence. The period of life at which Mr. Summers has represented the Queen and the late Prince Consort was when each was about forty. Her Majesty's face is somewhat idealised, but that of the Prince strikes one as being an extremely accurate likeness. The same remark will apply to the countenance of the Prince of Wales, in whose features it is easy to trace a resemblance to both parents. But we venture to think that of the four works, the statue of the amiable and popular Princess will be the one most generally admired, not merely because it perpetuates in so pure and permanent a material the winsome face and graceful form of a lady who is so universally esteemed and beloved, but because the deceased sculptor is here seen at his best. He seems to have found a thoroughly congenial subject, and it has inspired him to one of his happiest efforts.

Mr. Clarke, addressing the trustees, said:—Gentlemen,—It is my privilege to present to the trustees of the Public Library and National Gallery the statues in this chamber of Her Majesty the Queen, His Royal Highness the late Prince Consort, and their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales. I would be wanting in feeling if I did not refer to the talented artist who created these figures, and who unfortunately died while he was on his way to place them with his own hand in this gallery. (Cheers.) I have also to thank Sir Redmond Barry for the large amount of trouble he took in connexion with this matter in England. Had he not devoted much personal attention

to the matter, we would not have been able to get the Queen's assent to have these statues made, and without that consent the statues would have lost more than half their value. You are, in fact, more indebted to Sir Redmond Barry than to myself for these figures. (Sir Redmond Barry,—“Not so.”) I now declare these figures the property of the National Gallery of Victoria, and I trust they will add to the pleasure of the colonists, and the cultivation of an artistic taste amongst them. (Cheers).

His Honour Sir Redmond Barry, said:—Mr. Clarke,—The trustees accept gratefully the truly noble donation which you have bestowed on this institution, and undertake to preserve it for the benefit of the community to which you have been so bounteous. At the same time they desire to express their sincere and respectful condolence for the painful occurrence of a domestic nature which prevented you from presenting it to them on an earlier day. It is gratifying to the trustees in many respects that such a conspicuous instance of the liberality of your nature should have assumed this form. Fortunate as you are in being the inheritor of estates and means in extent and amount, far beyond what is usually allotted to an individual, you have shown that it is possible to make a right use of wealth; and I may be allowed to say unblamed in your presence that no walk of public or private benevolence or charity has been untrodden by you. (Cheers.) Amongst the multitudinous objects to which your attention has been spontaneously directed is this institution. You have considered that the labours and aspirations of the trustees would be materially assisted by such a contribution as you have thus made to them. You have graciously acknowledged that this institution, which is committed to their management, is based upon such wide principles of general utility that it

deserves encouragement from every quarter. The comprehensive nature of the subjects included within its range, each of its kind demonstrated on the highest, latest, and most approved principles, and the freedom with which all admitted are allowed to pursue their studies, gratify their tastes, and improve their leisure, have doubtless been recognised by you. You are probably also satisfied, from the numbers which flock daily to avail themselves of these advantages, that the entire community would gladly avail itself of the assistance afforded by you to the trustees. The trustees are thankful that you have selected this institution as an object of your liberality, and also for the manner in which your generosity has displayed itself. You have chosen to present to us an illustration of the art of sculpture, which art, in this generation of all others, is PERHAPS THE LEAST STUDIED and the LEAST SUPPORTED BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC. You have also chosen to present to us illustrations of some of the most illustrious personages of the epoch in which we live, namely, the members of the Royal Family of Great Britain, whose names you mentioned. You could not, it is clear, have selected any gift that would have been more truly acceptable to the whole community than that of the statues. (Cheers.) You might have induced the artist to attempt something in imitation of the past; but originality in art is, you evidently considered, infinitely preferable to anything savouring of imitation. It is almost impossible for a Christian artist to enter into the spirit of Pagan philosophy and Pagan religion sufficiently to evolve out of his own mind representations of the majestic creations that the Pagans delighted to honour. To do that, an artist of the present day would have to devote

to classical studies more time and attention than he could spare from his arduous labours. You might also have commanded the services of the most eminent artist in any of the capitals of Europe; but with a kindness and "delicate perception known to few," you remembered the diligent man of genius whom we may almost claim AS A CITIZEN OF VICTORIA, who laboured hard here for many years, and who has made his name ever memorable. We all lament the premature death of Mr. Summers, which occurred just as he was emerging from that cloud of obscurity which almost invariably enshrouds genius in its early stages, and when he was taking his stand amongst the great artists of the world. (Cheers.) How Mr. Summers succeeded with the task you entrusted to him, let those who inspect the result decide. It is not my intention to detain you at any length either by eulogy or criticism. But I cannot help saying that we must all admit that the figure of the Queen now before us is a work of the greatest genius of modern times. You see in that figure the majestic repose of conscious power—of the power of the august sovereign who rules with beneficent sway over 300,000,000 of the human race. You likewise see in her lineaments the traces of those tender virtues which have adorned Her Majesty's private life, and have distinguished her on the throne. You behold a tender mother, an affectionate relation, and the beloved and adorned mistress of the vast empire of which we form part; and nowhere is she more beloved and adorned than in this colony, which is distinguished by BEARING HER NAME. Turning to the figure of the Princess of Wales, we can see the successful reproduction of those graces and that elegance of form,

clothed with charms peculiar to herself, with which Her Royal Highness is pre-eminently gifted. In fact, we see in that figure the representation of one of the most amiable and lovely women connected with English history. The late Prince Consort is represented as he was—a prince of great sagacity, the prudent director of Her Majesty's counsels, a loving and affectionate husband, and a careful parent. Lastly, in the figure of the Prince of Wales, we see represented one who has shown that he possesses very many talents for making himself admired and esteemed. We know that he desires to emulate his father in all those sterling accomplishments which made that prince so justly esteemed; that it is his earnest wish to promote industrial advancement; also that he takes a deep interest in those of Her Majesty's subjects who have settled in the colonies of the British Empire. It will be observed that the period chosen for the representation of these members of the Royal Family is about the year 1860. There is, therefore, a harmony in the design. The figures are all represented as of the ages of the illustrious originals in 1860. The development of the figures and features has thus been secured; and it is scarcely necessary to say that the result would not have been happy had Her Majesty been represented as of her present age, and the Prince Consort of the age when he died. It is agreeable to be able to state that the Queen was graciously pleased to express her entire approbation of the models submitted by Mr. Summers for her approval, as expressed by Her Majesty's command through the Earl of Carnarvon, while Secretary of State for the Colonies. The question now arises, how can the trustees turn to the best account the donation which you have so muni-

ficently presented to the public? Upon this question I speak with diffidence. It is manifest that the best way to turn this donation to the best account is to afford to all classes of the community the opportunity of inspecting the figures, and deriving from them all possible advantage. A very large majority of the community are prevented, by the obligations of their business vocations, from visiting this institution in the daytime. For many obvious reasons, this portion of the institution is closed daily at five o'clock p.m. The daylight does not serve after that hour, and it is impossible to display these works efficiently by artificial light. Therefore, there remains only one mode of enabling those persons whose occupations prevent them from coming here on week days in the daytime to derive the advantages that they are entitled to, and that is, to open the institution on Sunday afternoons, from, say, 3 to 5 o'clock. (Cheers.) In making these remarks I do not desire to arouse any feeling of antagonism, for I respect the feelings, the religious sentiments, and the deep convictions of those who entertain opposite opinions. This question is of much importance, and has been the subject of controversy by speech and pen for so long a time that it is well nigh exhausted; but I venture to offer a few remarks upon it. In the first place, I will take what is known as the "Sabbath-breaking" aspect of the question. The Hebrew Sabbath and the Christian Sunday are not only different days, but are established under different dispensations. The Great Author of the Christian creed has Himself pointed out that the pharisaical mode of enforcing the keeping of the Hebrew Sabbath was carried to extremes, and when remonstrated with for acts done by Himself and others on that day,

He said that the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Great numbers of persons and many nations entertain a different view with respect to the Sunday from that held by those who object to what is called Sabbath-breaking. I have travelled over Roman Catholic Spain, France, Austria, Belgium, Italy, Bavaria, and Saxony; over Lutheran, Calvinistic, reforming Germany, Holland, Denmark, and Scandinavia; and through Russia of the Greek Church; and found a universal concurrence in the belief that it is not inconsistent with the tenets of the truest religion to devote a portion of the Sunday, after the religious services of the morning are concluded, to innocent recreation such as that I have suggested. England appears to be the last stronghold of what is known as the party of Sabbath observance, but similar views are gradually spreading there. You see on the table before you two voluminous books, containing the evidence given before the House of Commons many years ago. In that evidence it is clearly shown that a large class of the people of London suffered great, and, as is there contended, totally unnecessary privation of enjoyment of this innocent nature, owing to the closing of museums and similar places on Sunday. However, even in England, I formed one of 8,000 people who on a Sunday inspected the pictures in Hampton Court. One portion of that assemblage consisted of a party of 600 parishioners from the east end of London, headed by the clergymen of their parish. No one is bold enough to say that there is anything improper or irreligious in looking on the Sunday at living animals, and trees, and shrubs. Why, then, should people be prohibited from inspecting on that day the skeletons of animals in museums, or

beholding in glass cases trees and rocks, classified in such a manner as to give some indication of the wonderful works of nature? Indeed, it has been contended that, of the two, the latter afford the most favourable opportunity under certain conditions of deriving knowledge as to the great design of the Creator. In the one, there is only a limited field of observation; in the other, there are almost unbounded means of comparing and contrasting the various forms of structure throughout the extensive domains of natural history. Who can contend that there is anything improper in beholding pictures of natural objects or of charming landscapes, or such figures as are before this assemblage? Is it generous to accuse persons who wish to enjoy the contemplation and matured study of such things on Sunday of a desire to break the Sabbath or act in an improper manner, which means—if it means anything—in a wicked and sinful manner? If there were anything in this chamber or in this building which would raise a blush on the cheek of modesty or suggest impure ideas, it should be banished from the place immediately. It would be as improper and sinful to look on such things on the week days as on Sundays. Nature does not suggest such ideas. It should be remembered by those who oppose the opening of these institutions on Sunday that no one desires to force them or anyone else to visit such places on that day. What is wanted is that those who see no harm in repairing to such places on Sunday should be permitted to do so. It is also said that it would be dangerous to open these institutions on Sunday because it would be admitting “the thin end of the wedge,” and because the result would be the introduction of the “continental Sabbath,” and the opening on Sunday of theatres

and similar places of amusement. From such an illogical, it might be said, so irrational, a conclusion I wholly dissent. That is a matter for Legislature to regulate and control by prohibition and penalty. The trustees of this institution have nothing to do but to say that after divine service on Sunday and during convenient hours, the public shall be admitted to see what can do them no harm. The last argument in defence of the exclusive system has often filled me with surprise, namely, that it is not fair for us to deprive the attendants of their day of rest. To it there is a conclusive answer. We could not deprive them of that day if we so desired. Our attendants engage to serve us during all days in the year excepting Christmas-day, Good Friday, and Sundays. We cannot compel them to do an hour's work on those days. But it would be quite possible to procure the services of volunteers, who would be ready and willing to undertake the duties of watching these chambers for two hours on Sundays. There are such volunteers in London. Therefore, there is not any reasonable ground of objection to this proposal. A return shows that the Picture Gallery of this institution was visited by 256,000 persons during seven months of 1875; by 375,000 persons in 1876; by 434,000 persons in 1877; and by 525,000 persons in 1878. On the first two days of this year about 7,000 persons were admitted, or 3,500 per diem. It is reasonable to suppose that if the institution were open on Sundays the number of visitors would rise to 650,000 per annum. That is a statement deserving much consideration. This is not a homogeneous community. It is composed of men of all creeds, and from all countries, of whom the majority who contribute to the funds required to support the institution entertain no objection to its being opened. The question of

opening this institution on Sundays has never been thoroughly examined in our Parliament, although it has been three times before that body. Nor has it been considered by the trustees except incidentally, when an application was made to throw open on Sunday the exhibition held on the premises in that year. That application was refused. The trustees came to the conclusion that it could not be acceded to, as money could not be lawfully taken at the doors on a Sunday. Neither by the trustees of this institution nor by the Council of the University has the question of opening the doors on Sundays been directly discussed. There a large and most interesting portion of our property is unfortunately deposited in a building, condemned alike by Parliament and the public, to which no access can be had in the evenings or on Sunday without the consent of the Council, even should Parliament approve of the measure. In conclusion, I desire to state that, so far as this subject is concerned, I have only given expression to my own views. Although the trustees are honoured with the administration of the affairs of the institution, as an independent corporation in that respect, it would not be prudent, it would not be becoming on my part, to advocate the adoption by them of such a project, unless assured of the approval by the Ministry and Parliament of what is still considered susceptible of discussion and debate. I may be permitted to add that in making these remarks I have not had the most remote intention of offending the susceptibilities of any person. I desire to convey to you, Mr. Clarke, anew the thanks of the trustees, with the hope that you may be long spared with health and inclination to enjoy your vast wealth, and to continue those acts of benevolence and liberality for which you are so distinguished. (Cheers.) Sir Redmond concluded

by reading and presenting to Mr. Clarke the following address, suitably engrossed and bound:—

“To the Honourable William John Clarke, M.L.C.

“The trustees of the Public Library, Museum, and National Gallery of Victoria, at a meeting of their body, held on the 18th of November, 1878, unanimously agreed to the following resolution:—

“1. That the trustees recognise to the fullest extent the spirit which actuated Mr. Clarke in presenting to them, to be placed in the Museum of Art of the National Gallery, the statues of—

“The Queen.

“His Royal Highness the late Prince Consort.

“His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.

“Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales.

“2. They regard the donation as affording a memorable and lasting instance of his generous and well-directed liberality—one eminently calculated to encourage the successful exertions of a distinguished sculptor, to promote by illustrations of such excellence an intelligent and enlightened cultivation of the Fine Arts, to stimulate in others who have acquired affluence an imitation of the praiseworthy example to enrich the institution, and to inspire and sustain in the hearts of the people of Victoria the highest feelings of loyalty to the Crown, and the most respectful and devoted affection for the persons of Her Majesty and the members of the Royal Family.” (Cheers.)

Mr. Clarke briefly replied, stating that he felt exceedingly gratified by the form in which the trustees had accepted his gift. He should value their address, not only on his own account, but for the sake of his wife and children. (Cheers.)

The assemblage then dispersed.



