

A BOROUGH PORTRAIT-GALLERY.

The practice of hanging portraits of distinguished personages in places of public resort serves an important two-fold purpose. By its means, a simple act of justice is performed in handing down the features as well as the name of one to whom honour is justly due, and a vivid encouragement is given to posterity to earn a similar distinction by deeds of equal or even greater renown. The features of our benefactors are thus rendered familiar to our view and their memories are preserved fresh and green for those alike who knew them and for those who will hereafter benefit by their good actions.

Derby has had many noble benefactors whose almshouses and charitable bequests abound in the town, but her public portrait gallery is somewhat limited at present. For many years the Guild-hall was devoid of all such decorations; then the gift of the Arboretum was followed by the elevation of Mr. JOSEPH STRUTT's portrait into the place of honour in the Council-Chamber, from whence it was dislodged by the disastrous fire which burnt the Town Hall, to re-appear like a Phoenix with the present structure. The public and private worth of Mr. STRUTT was thus substantially recognised during his life-time and his portrait remains after his demise as a monument of merit.

In later times Derby has been fortunate in attracting the notice of one who is as generous and able to follow the dictates of his generosity as any who have preceded him in the good cause. Mr. BASS has been a firm and consistent friend to this borough and its inhabitants, during the long series of years with which he has been politically connected with it. His acts of private and unostentatious charity have not been few because they have not been blazoned abroad; many a suffering family has had timely relief from present want, and substantial guarantees against the future at his hands, and no subscription was ever opened for a laudable purpose to which his name was refused. Latterly he has worthily followed in the footsteps of Mr. STRUTT, or rather has struck out a new path for himself, by presenting the town with two most desirable gifts—a free playground, and free swimming-baths for the poor. The value of such appendages to local civilization cannot be over-estimated now that the open spaces near our towns are rapidly becoming enclosed, and the streams are rendered unfit for personal ablution by the modern plan of converting them into sewers. Mr. BASS, seeing that the Arboretum was practically useless to the children of the working classes as a play-ground, determined to provide them with one which shall be free and open to all for ever, and purchased from the Corporation the land now used for this purpose. More recently, acting upon a suggestion to the Corporation which first appeared in these columns, Mr. BASS has completed his scheme by providing for the erection of swimming baths upon the same piece of land, thereby enabling poor lads and men whose means will not allow them to use the baths in Full-street, to gratify their natural instincts for cleanliness with decency and safety.

The Committee who have determined to hang Mr. BASS's portrait in the Council Chamber of the town, have acted with wisdom and discretion. It was wise to perpetuate the memory of such valuable services in a manner which, as we have already shown, is perfectly praiseworthy, and it was discreet to base the claims of Mr. BASS to this distinction upon his impartial public services to the borough, which have been hemmed-in by no niggard chain of political partiality. Tory and Radical, Churchman and Dissenter, may gaze upon the benevolent features so well depicted by Mr. EDDIES, without a shade of regret to dim the universal feeling of gratitude which the sight will always evoke. This is not the place, nor is the present the time, to discuss Mr. BASS's character as a politician; for the present, we know him only as the honoured friend whose kind deeds command our sympathy, respect and esteem. Therefore in doing honour to Mr. BASS, Derby has reflected credit upon herself, by showing that all party differences can be adjusted, and all uncharitable feelings merged in the pleasing duty of giving expression to the sentiment of gratitude, which is confined to no one party. May the time be far distant when the value of the portrait will be enhanced by the absence of its original from amongst us.