

ROYAL OPENING OF NABURN LOCK.

PRINCE ALBERT VICTOR
AND THE
FREEDOM OF YORK CITY.

SPEECHES BY HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS.

York yesterday was the scene of two ceremonies which will long be remembered by those privileged to witness them, and which also will occupy important places in the history of this ancient city. The first of these ceremonies was that of conferring upon his Royal Highness Prince Albert Victor the Freedom of the City, and the other was the formal opening of the New Lock at Naburn, the performance of which his Royal Highness was graciously pleased to undertake. By the first of these York honours itself in adding to the list of honorary freemen the eldest son of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, thus affording another proof, were it needed, of the loyalty of the citizens, and, by the second, the Ouse Navigation Committee testified their desire to increase the trade and promote the welfare of the city.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE AT NABURN.

For many years the desirability of improving the navigation of the river has been admitted, and every now and again the question of how it could be accomplished has been brought forward. More than half a century has elapsed since the subject was first discussed, and during that time it has been periodically brought forward and discussed, but nothing has been done of a practical character. There is no doubt that since the York Corporation became the trustees of the river Ouse the navigation has been admirably managed. Some time ago there was a general expression of opinion by all interested in the development of the river traffic that some improvement should be effected which would enable larger vessels to come to York. But the silting up of the river and other difficulties which presented themselves were thought to be insurmountable, and so the subject was again dropped. Nearly two years ago the question was brought forward again, when the Ouse Navigation Committee received an application on behalf of the War Department for permission to erect a jetty near Selby, for the landing of stores brought by sea from Woolwich, for the use of troops stationed in York and other parts of the Northern District. At once it was seen to be most desirable that the jetty should, if possible, be erected at York. The application was taken as an indication that the time had indeed arrived when the navigation of the river should be improved. Mr. J. Fowler, who for about a quarter of a century had held the office of engineer to the Tees Conservancy Commissioners, and who was known to have effected wonderful improvements in the estuary of the Tees, was consulted on the subject. The old lock, which was built in 1757, he regarded as the greatest obstruction to navigation, and he recommended that a new one be built at the side of the old one at an estimated cost of £11,400, and that the old one be used as a subsidiary lock. The scheme involved the removal of the lockhouse and office and part of the store sheds, also cutting off part of the vacant ground

between the shed and the mill intake. For the purpose of enlarging the area of the ground, Mr. Fowler proposed to reclaim a portion from the river by the construction of a timber breastwork extending from the round head to the point near the outlet from the mill. That would, he said, give a true direction to the river, and in itself be an improvement. With respect to the river, he did not propose a large scheme of training and dredging, but to remove the worst bars first, following up with further deepening as the trade required and circumstances permitted. This would permit of steamers of 400 tons burden being brought up to York. The receipts from tonnage dues during the past five years averaged £2,237 per annum, and the expenditure had been £1,334. The subject was fully considered by the committee, and it was found that the receipts from tonnage dues would justify the expenditure. Subsequently at a meeting of the York City Council held in February, 1887, a resolution was passed authorising the Ouse Navigation Committee to carry out the recommendations contained in their report for the construction of a new lock at Naburn, in accordance with Mr. Fowler's plans, and they were also authorised to raise £12,000 to execute the work. The contract was let to Messrs. Nelson and Co., of York, twelve months ago, the first sod was cut by the then Lord Mayor, Sir Joseph Terry, and yesterday York was honoured by his Royal Highness Prince Albert Victor performing the ceremony of opening the new lock. The length of the lock opened yesterday is 152 feet, it is 26 feet broad, and the depth of water over the lower sill at spring tide is 13 feet 6 inches. The advantage of such a lock will be at once perceived when it is stated that the old one is about 90ft. long, 21ft. broad, with a depth over the lower sill of 10ft. 6in. The new lock is constructed almost parallel with the old one, there being at the upper or York end about 20ft. between the two, and at the lower end about 15 feet. The walls of the old lock having been built so long ago, the work has not been carried on without some difficulty, but comparatively little time has been lost, and it is now believed that the delay which occurred has been more than compensated for by the substantial character of the work. Every precaution has been taken to ensure good workmanship. No concreting was done during excessive frosts, and every night the day's work was protected by a layer of sand, and thus the strength and permanency of the concrete was secured. The stone work embraces the top coping the hollow quoins in which the lock gates turn, the square quoins or corners of the recesses in which the lock gates lie when open, and the facing of the stop chases provided for temporary gates, sluice holes, and chain holes. The lock will be filled through a circular sluice 4ft. 9in. in diameter, worked by a cast-iron drum or stop-valve, and will be emptied through four square openings in the lower gates, closed by wrought-iron flaps. The estimated time for taking a vessel through the lock is twelve minutes, but it will accommodate three barges, while the old lock could only take in one, so that it will benefit the existing traffic as well as provide accommodation for sea-going steamers of 400 tons burden. Half-an-hour will be saved each time the tug comes up with its full complement of barges. The Ouse Navigation Committee intend dredging the shoals between Naburn and Selby to give an increased depth of water, which is very much required at neap-tides. With a view to provide for the increasing river traffic, the Ouse Navigation Committee have given an order to Messrs. Heppell, of Shields, for a powerful tug-boat, fitted with compound surface condensing engines and twin screws, which will be capable of towing at one time double the amount of tonnage towed by the steamer formerly used by the committee. By the construction of the new lock, barges which were formerly detained many hours before they could proceed up the river, will be enabled to pass through the lock at all times of the tide, and it is gratifying to know that the trustees of the York Navigation are determined to keep abreast with the times, and to avail themselves of every advantage the river Ouse may afford.