

**THE BOOK OF THE PUBLIC
LIBRARY, MUSEUMS,
AND NATIONAL GALLERY
OF VICTORIA, 1856-1906**

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The Book of the Public Library, Museums, and National Gallery of Victoria, 1856-1906 by
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EDMUND LA TOUCHE ARMSTRONG

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PREFACE.

The Book of the Public Library, Museums, and National Gallery of Victoria, issued on the occasion of the Jubilee in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Library, makes no claim to be a complete history of the Institution. It is but a chronological record of the main facts connected with its progress during the first half century of its existence, and some notes on those who have served it well in the past. The Library contained about 5,000 volumes when it was opened, in 1856, and the building consisted of an Entrance Hall and a Reading Room about fifty feet square. It now contains 220,000 volumes, and the buildings connected with the Institution cover about 2 acres of land. The Reading Rooms, the Art Galleries, and the Museums are open to all reputable visitors without restriction of any kind. The Public Library was one of the first in the world to open its doors thus freely, and the Trustees have not found it necessary to alter this policy. They have never lost sight of the fact that they hold the Institution in trust for the people of Victoria, and it is hoped that some, at least, of those people will be interested in the records of an Institution to which they have ever given a generous support.

E.L.A.T.A.

PUBLIC LIBRARY, MUSEUMS,
AND NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA.

1856.

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1906.

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1906.

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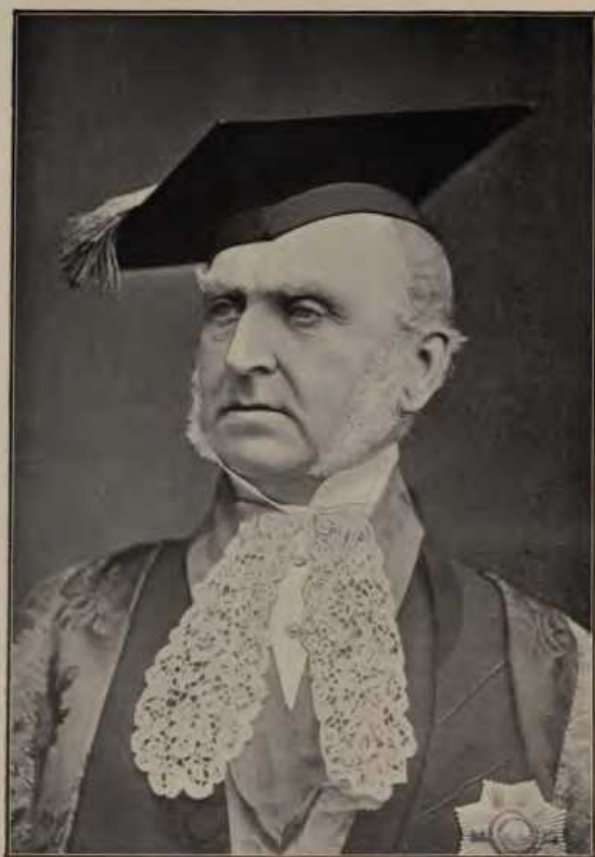
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SIR REDMOND BARRY, K.C.M.G., LL.D.

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In the opening sentence of the Preface to the Catalogue of the Public Library, which was published in 1861, it is stated that the establishment of a Public Library in Victoria, supported by the State, and stamped with the characteristics of a national institution, was made the subject of early consideration by our first Governor, Mr. Latrobe. By whom the idea was first seriously suggested we shall probably never know. Mr. Hugh Culling Eardley Childers, a member of the Government of the young colony and a prominent citizen, claims to have suggested the idea to Mr. Latrobe. The Governor himself was a man of some literary taste, and one to whom the advantage of the establishment of a Public Library would appeal strongly. He placed upon the estimates a sum of £13,000 for the erection of a building and the purchase of books, and this amount was passed in the Appropriation Act, which was assented to on the 20th January, 1853. By a proclamation in the "Government Gazette" of the 20th July, in the same year, His Excellency appointed the first Trustees of the Public Library. The names are stated in the following order, viz. :—

His Honour Mr. Justice Barry,
The Honourable William Foster Stawell,
The Honourable James Frederick Palmer,
Hugh Culling Eardley Childers,
David Charteris McArthur.

Mr. Justice Barry, afterwards Sir Redmond Barry, was thus made the senior Trustee, and acted generally as Chairman of the Board. He became the recognized Head of the institu-