

neither the antecedents, the actualities, nor the futurities, have been fully appreciated in their national tendencies and relations, by those masses whom they most seriously affect.

From the days of Henry VIII. the nobility, and aristocracy, of England have almost unceasingly patronised the Fine Arts; and, during the reigns of Elizabeth, Charles I., Charles II., and Anne, with remarkable success: but it is only with the present century that the *bourgeoisie* have greatly interested themselves in analogous pursuits. Even in the age in which we live, we can but recognise the dawn of an extension of the sympathies of art through the great body of the people of England.

To remedy this want of balance in the scale, by which alone the merits of true and high art can be appreciated, will probably be one of the noblest missions of the Crystal Palace; since the more popularly the varied contents of that edifice become known, the more surely will a genuine admiration and love for what is good extend, and the voice of educated public taste will assuredly preponderate, as it has ever done, to the true and noble in Art, as in Religion, and in Politics. The judgment in all æsthetic matters of the few is eminently fallible,—while that of the *vox populi* has almost invariably given its verdict as "*vox Dei*."

Although the Exhibition Building of 1851 and the Crystal Palace of 1854 are, to a certain extent, identical in structure, it is not altogether in the former that the prototype of its successor is to be sought. Their points of identity, beyond the actual structure, may be traced in the principle of the enclosure with a transparent covering of large areas, suitable for purposes of exhibition, and for the reception of large masses of people,—the demonstration of the value of comparison, as a tangible test of merit,—and the system of relying upon the shillings of the public as a great commercial element. With these, and perhaps some minor items, the analogy ceases; for while the earlier Exhibition was in all things eminently and specially *practical*, that which has succeeded it has superadded a higher element, in the form of the *ideal*. The products, no less than the interests, of the Exhibition of 1851 were limited to time *present*. The contents of the new Crystal Palace, from their intimate alliance with the philosophy of the *past*, are calculated to operate far more energetically upon the *future*.

It is rather to France that we must look for the true origin of the Crystal Palace. Although England has been beforehand with that country in the execution of a colossal scheme, combining instruction with amusement, it may be doubted whether that scheme would ever have had existence, but for the success which has attended every effort made by the government of France, having for its object the elevation of the people, either in their studies or their amusements. Such efforts we should remember have been neither few nor unimportant, dating from that period of revolution, and mental gestation, from which (as we have elsewhere remarked in reference to industry*), "we may trace a gradual attempt to disseminate, from the *few*, to the *many*, the luxury of beautiful design in all objects of daily and universal use." The Great Museum of Antiquities, commenced in the year 1790 in the desecrated Convent of the *Petits Augustins*, by the celebrated Alexandre Le Noir, presented the model of those extensive collections of national art, which are amongst the leading ornaments of the Crystal Palace. The splendid Museums of Sculpture, both antique and modern, in the Louvre and the Luxembourg,—the noble illustrations of the art and industry of the Middle Ages, brought together in the Hôtel Clugny by M. de Sommerard, and acquired for the public benefit by the Government,—the collections of Drawings, Metal-work, and Furniture, in the Louvre,—the admirable

* "A Report on the Eleventh French Exposition of the Products of Industry." London, 1849. Chapman & Hall.