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WITH A
NEW INTRODUCTION BY
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Interior of the Crystal Palace, from a photograph by William Henry Fox Talbot.
Courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

PREFACE.

It may be permitted us to state that but for its association with *THE ART-JOURNAL*, it would have been impossible to have published this collection at less than four times the price at which it is now issued: and perhaps, but for the experience and machinery possessed by the conductors of that Journal, it could not have been produced at all. We commenced our labours—and announced this Catalogue—immediately after the promulgation of the plan and the appointment of a Commission: personally visiting most of the principal cities of Europe communicating with all the chief manufacturers of Great Britain: and arranging for such aids as might enable us to complete our undertaking with regularity, and as early as possible after the opening of the Exhibition.

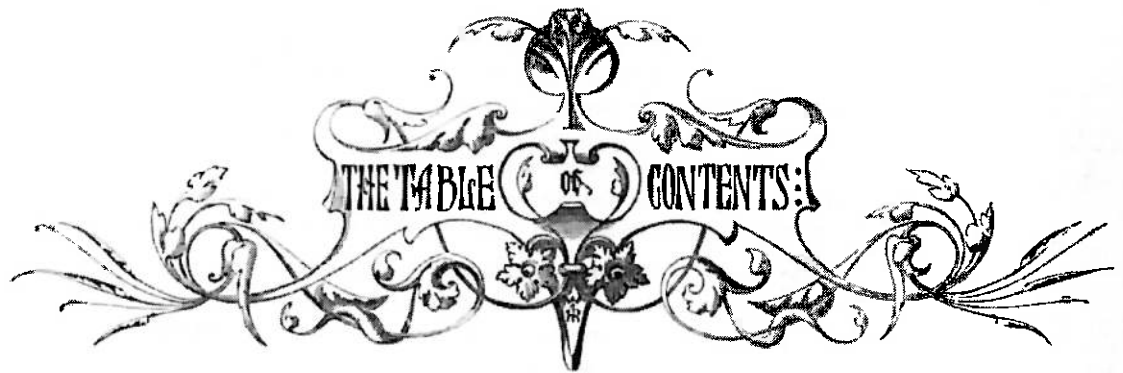
The results of the Great Exhibition are pregnant with incalculable benefits to all classes of the community: the seed has been planted, of which the future is to produce the fruit: among the eager thousands whose interest was excited and whose curiosity was gratified, were many who obtained profitable suggestions at every visit: the manufacturer and the artisan have thus learned the most valuable of all lessons,—the disadvantages under which they had laboured, the deficiencies they had to remedy, and the prejudices they had to overcome.

But it is to the honour of Great Britain that, notwithstanding the generous risk incurred by inviting competitors from all the nations of the world—prepared as they had been by long years of successful study and practical experience—the fame of British manufacturers has been augmented by this contest: and there can be no doubt that when His Royal Highness Prince Albert issues his summons to another competition, British supremacy will be manifested in every branch of Industrial Art.

In terminating our labours, we may hope that a project we have repeatedly and earnestly advocated in *THE ART-JOURNAL*, and which we presume to regard as, in some degree, the issue of our efforts to connect the Fine Arts with the Industrial Arts (a procedure originating with that Journal, having never been attempted elsewhere in Europe, and in which for a long period we had to contend against difficulties that seem insurmountable), will derive some of its advantages from the Report thus made in this Illustrated Catalogue. Upon this topic it is unnecessary for us to dilate: the readers of *THE ART-JOURNAL* are well aware of our efforts to promote the interests of the manufacturer: to induce his advance, on the one hand; and, on the other, to lead the public to appreciate his improvements: to report his progress, and to make him acquainted with the progress of his competitors: to furnish him with such information as might be gathered from the best instructors—and, by immediately connecting him with the artist, to direct him to the safest sources of Art-education.

Our exertions have been fully appreciated: *THE ART-JOURNAL* has obtained a success unprecedented in periodical literature: we have the happiness to contrast the state of British Art-Manufacture in the year 1851 (when our labours in this direction may be said to have commenced), with its position in the memorable year 1852: and we trust that no one who has traced our course will consider us presumptuous in feeling that in the Great Exhibition of the Industry of All Nations, we have received our “exceeding great reward.”





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HISTORY OF THE GREAT EXHIBITION.

"IT IS MY ANXIOUS DESIRE TO PROMOTE AMONG NATIONS THE CULTIVATION OF ALL THOSE ARTS WHICH ARE FOSTERED BY PEACE,
AND WHICH IN THEIR TURN CONTRIBUTE TO MAINTAIN THE PEACE OF THE WORLD"—THE QUEEN



WE commence this ILLUSTRATED CATALOGUE of the principal contents of the GREAT EXHIBITION with a brief but succinct History of the Building—and of the Project from its commencement up to the present time.

The experiment of an Exhibition of the Industry of all the civilised Nations of the World has been tried, and has succeeded beyond the most sanguine expectations of its projectors. It is, indeed, scarcely possible to instance any great enterprise of modern date which has so completely satisfied the anticipations which had been formed of its results. Differing from most other institutions for benefiting the great family of mankind, which have required time and experience to mature, it has sprung, like Minerva from the brain of Jove "full armed," into life and activity; resembling the goddess, however, only in her more pacific attributes; her love of the olive tree, and her patronage of the Industrial Arts. Other nations have devised means for the display and encouragement of their own arts and manufactures; but it has been reserved for England to provide an arena for the exhibition of the industrial triumphs of the whole world. She has offered an hospitable invitation to surrounding nations to bring the choicest products of their industry to her capital, and there to enter into an amicable competition with each other and with herself; and she has endeavoured to secure to them the certainty of an impartial verdict on their efforts. Whatever be the extent of the benefit which this great demonstration may confer upon the Industrial Arts of the world, it cannot fail to soften, if not to eradicate altogether,

the prejudices and animosities which have so long retarded the happiness of nations; and to promote those feelings of "peace and good will" which are among the surest antecedents of their prosperity; a peace, which Shakspeare has told us—

"Is of the nature of a conquest;
For then both parties nobly are subdued,
And neither party loses."

It forms no part of our present object to enter, with any degree of minuteness, into the history of exhibitions of this class; but a brief glance at the origin and progress of such associations in France and England may not be considered irrelevant. So far back as 1756-7, the Society of Arts of London offered prizes for specimens of various manufactures—tapestry, carpets, porcelain, among others—and publicly exhibited the articles which were thus collected; and in 1761 and 1762 the artists of Great Britain formed themselves into two societies for the exposition and sale of works of art. A few years afterwards (1768), the Royal Academy of Painting was established, as a private society, under the immediate patronage of the Crown, and Sir Joshua Reynolds appointed its President. Since then, numerous institutions of a similar character have been set on foot in this country, with considerable advantage to the branches of industry they were intended to benefit. France must, however, be regarded as the originator of exhibitions which are, in character and plan, most analogous to that on whose history we are about to enter. We gather from the historical essay of Messieurs Challamel and Burat, and the pamphlet of the Marquis d'Aveze on the subject, that, shortly after that nobleman's appointment to be Commissioner of the Royal Manufactories of the Gobelins, of Sévres, and of the Savonnerie, in 1797, he found that two years of neglect had reduced the workmen almost to starvation, whilst it had left the respective warehouses filled with their choicest productions. In this crisis,