

Celebration of New Year's Day in Paris.

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Mesures : hauteur : 403 mm ; largeur : 270 mm

Notes : Scène représentant les parisiens faisant des achats dans un grand magasin en vue des cadeaux pour les Etrennes. Malgré la Révolution de 1848, ils ne dérogent pas à cette coutume. For the week ending saturday, december 29, 1849. signature en haut de page : "Best-Leloir à Paris" Best (Jean : Graveur sur bois (1808-1879). Leloir (Isidore) : graveur sur bois. Ami de Jean Best et associé avec John Andrew dans l'atelier ABL de 1832 à 1843.

Mots-clés : Fêtes calendaires

Expression du sentiment familial (lettres d'enfants, de parents, portraits de famille)

Filière : aucune

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FOR THE WEEK ENDING SATURDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1849.

[SIXPENCE.]

RETROSPECT OF THE YEAR.

THE year 1849 approaches to its close; and men and nations begin to reflect upon its history, and to recal the lessons which it was its privilege to teach. It was essentially a year of subsidence—a time of reaction—a period immediately succeeding a great physical and moral convulsion, when men, alarmed at the progress of innovation, held back and asked themselves whether they were going, and what was the ultimate goal of the revolutions that had been effected.

It was not possible that the violent commotions of 1848 could be suffered to continue. In every part of Europe, the scattered, dismayed, and discomfited party whose material interests had been damaged, whose love of order had been outraged, and whose old ideas had been shocked by the progress of revolution, took heart once more, and joined their forces to stay the march of evil. Success rewarded their efforts; and society having been held together, and prevented from a collapse, by the physical force of standing armies, the nations of the Continent had leisure to ask themselves whether they were in reality ripe for the liberty they desired, and to debate upon the measures to be taken for giving stability to newer institutions, and preventing liberty from degenerating into

licentiousness and anarchy. Real liberty has lost nothing by the delay. Reflection has brought wisdom: the violent and the premature have learned to watch and to wait; the over-sanguine have become convinced of the foolishness of hasty theory; and men have been forced to confess that order is not only the first law of Heaven, but the first law of nature and humanity.

If we look around us, we see that in every country of Europe where there was revolution in 1848, there has been reaction in 1849. France, groaning under the weight of an enormous national debt, a yearly increasing deficit in her revenues, an unproductive and much-consuming army of half a million of men, and a general stagnation of trade and commerce, saw no other hope than in order and repose, and the consequent diminution of this fearful police of 500,000 men arrayed by society against itself. The Republic being a fact, was accepted as a fact, and the best men in the country devoted their energies to its consolidation. Germany, torn by factions, her chief cities at the mercy of mobs, her Kings playing at cross-purposes with each other, saw amid all the confusion, which well nigh blinded the eyes of her best and clearest-sighted men, that the time for theorising had not come; that the world was not ready for a free and united Teutonic empire, and that in Prussia, in Austria, in Bavaria—in every state of the confederation

—order was the first necessity of political existence. As in France, order was only secured by the force of standing armies. In Italy we see the same spectacle, though rendered somewhat more difficult and complex by the participation of an alien force in the struggles between a Sovereign and his people. It is, nevertheless, the same story: Liberty made rampant—losing her way—degenerating into anarchy; and, as a last resource, an overwhelming army welcomed in to prevent the total dissolution of society. Yet, in none of these countries has there in reality been a retrogression. Physical force can never wholly rule the world; and moral force is accumulating in each, which will one day restore the equilibrium which has been lost, and secure to each nation such liberty, and no more, as it can understand and appreciate.

Great Britain has been spared these struggles; but she has had other difficulties to contend with of almost equal magnitude. A period of unparalleled commercial distress reached its climax in the year which has just passed. Ireland, which ought to be our strength and our security, was reduced to the lowest ebb of suffering; her peasantry became more wretched than the most degraded savages that roam over the wilds of an uncultivated country; and the experiment of a Poor-law, tried for their benefit with the most humane intentions, became a source of aggravated oppression and



CELEBRATION OF NEW YEAR'S DAY IN PARIS.—(SEE NEXT PAGE.)

