

correspondent says it has in his State, to produce this healthier tone in public sentiment throughout the country, this sounder, because more intelligent, view of financial principles and economic laws, it has accomplished the purpose it had in view in publishing the series. The result is gratifying in many ways, but chiefly so in confirming the belief, profound and abiding, which we have always maintained in the intelligence and honesty of the American people. The history of all the financial delusions which have possessed this country from time to time shows that the duration of each of them has been short—that it has in fact kept its hold upon popular opinion only so long as was necessary for the people to inform themselves as to its real character. The duration of this hold would have been much shorter in every instance if the professed leaders of the people, the men whose duty it was to guide them aright in all such matters, had been worthy always of the positions they occupied. If, when a "craze" breaks out, such leaders, instead of yielding to it, for fear opposition might cost them votes and place, were to explain to the people its real nature and its powerlessness to bring to them any of its promised blessings, it would make very little headway. The leaders have opportunities which the masses of the people do not have for informing themselves upon these questions, and if they were true leaders instead of false, they would impart their information when it was most needed. No one who has studied the history of popular "crazes" can fail to be struck with the fact that all of them have received their death-blow from a few courageous men or journals that have had sufficient faith in the American people to tell them the truth without fear or favor.

The Metropolitan Museum.

NOTHING could bring to mind more forcibly the rapid growth of artistic expression, and of the interests of art generally, in this city within a short time, than to turn, as we did the other day, to what we said on the subject in these columns not quite eight years ago (April, 1884), and contrast our remarks with the present condition of affairs. We have not reached the millennium yet,—nor, to be sure, is there any immediate danger of its approach,—but how much there is in that article which we could not say to-day, even were we so inclined!

We said, while urging the importance of an architectural department in the museum, that in this city "more bad architecture has been perpetrated in the last thirty years than perhaps ever was accomplished elsewhere"; but hardly were the words out of our mouth when matters began to improve. The down-town buildings began to express the dignity and solidity of our wealth, where before they had illustrated only its less attractive characteristics; corporations straightway took unto themselves souls, and demanded that their structures should be more artistic, as well as bigger, than those of their neighbors; the Washington Arch, undreamed of then, is a well-nigh accomplished fact; and now the joyous beauty of the Madison Square Garden has come to teach that even the every-day places of amusement are not unworthy of the highest efforts of the architect.

We believe we mentioned "blue china, and Capodi-Monte and Limoges enamel" as the only kinds

of acquisitions to be expected from American millionaires, fearing that great masterpieces were hardly to be looked for from their generosity. Since that time one of these same millionaires has given the Metropolitan Museum a collection of old masters which any museum in Europe would be glad to possess, a gift of which a prince justly might be proud. Others have followed his example in giving of lending splendid pictures for the benefit of the public,—though the number of such benefactors is by no means as large as it might be,—and while it is still true, as we then said, that there is not in this country, to our knowledge, any really great Italian painting, the northern masters are worthily represented in quality, if not in numbers, in both public and private collections. The Sunday-afternoon opening, which, like many another good and Christian work, was accomplished only with toil and sorrow, has proved to hard-working people of all classes the greatest blessing which the trustees had it in their power to confer.

It was the Metropolitan Museum, its methods and its management, which formed the burden of our lament in the article we have in mind. More than once we have had occasion to say a serious word upon this topic, a duty which we felt the more imperative because of our interest in the institution itself, and our ambition to see it occupy the position it should in a community like that of the New York of to-day. For the same reason we hail with pleasure so much the keener every movement in the right direction, every endeavor to make its usefulness broader and more substantial; and our pleasure is no less genuine because the advances and reforms at the museum have been most conspicuous in the line of the program suggested in the editorial first referred to. In the light of recent events, we look back with peculiar satisfaction to what we said upon the subject of casts. It will be remembered that at the time we wrote the museum possessed no casts or plastic reproductions of whatever kind. The only conception of Greek sculpture which the visitor could acquire was that offered by the Cyprian statues; and even their most enthusiastic friends must admit that these suggest little of the glories of Pheidias and Praxiteles. They are hardly the examples which our sculptors would select for inspiration, and it amounted to a libel upon Greek art that these should be its chief representatives in a museum intended to be educational. It was with this fact in mind that we said: "It would seem natural that the first attention of a great American museum should be directed to such things as these; that one of the first acquisitions should be a collection of casts of all the great Greek sculptures. Sculpture has the immense advantage that it can be more adequately represented than any other art," and so on. We will not quote our own wisdom, but notice what has happened since those words were written. In a most overwhelming manner have those been discredited who once despised the plaster cast as unworthy a place in an institution of the first rank. First, the president of the museum, with characteristic liberality, realizing the necessity of including reproductions in the museum collections, gave \$10,000 with which to form a nucleus. Then we began to reap the benefit of Mr. Willard's magnificent bequest of \$75,000 for the purchase of architectural casts and models—a sum probably much larger than has ever been devoted to this purpose by any museum in Europe, with the ex-

ception of what the French government has done for the Trocadéro. Last, and best of all, comes this new committee of gentlemen, interested both in the subject and in the museum, who have already raised some \$100,000, a large part of which they have contributed themselves, for the purpose of presenting to the museum, on the part of the public, a collection which, supplementing those already mentioned, and devoted mainly to sculpture, will produce a museum of reproductions without a peer in the world. Is there not cause for rejoicing?

The composition of the committee shows that the desire for such a collection is not confined to any one class or profession; and the manner in which the project has been started is the best guarantee that it will be carried out satisfactorily. First of all, amateur knowledge has been discarded. From the beginning the committee have placed themselves under the guidance of experts. They began by inviting experts in this country to prepare for them lists of objects which it would be desirable to have in a collection intended to be illustrative of plastic art in all epochs. These lists, which were drawn up by Mr. Edward Robinson of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and Professors Allan Marquand and A. L. Frothingham of Princeton, were published in a sumptuous style as "Tentative Lists," for the purpose of inviting further suggestions. Copies were sent to the principal European authorities on the history of art, as well as to those of this country. As a result of the replies received, and of Mr. Robinson's visit to Europe in the interests of the committee, the final lists of the collection have been prepared, the or-

ders have been sent out, and we presume that there is hardly an important foundry of plaster casts in Europe which is not occupied with work of which our city is to enjoy the benefit. The prospect of so much that is good and valuable makes us impatient for the time when the ultimate hopes of the committee shall be realized, and all the casts of the Metropolitan collections be brought together in a separate building erected especially for them—a building in which all questions of effective arrangement and proper lighting can be settled without restrictions of space or regard to the needs of other departments. The present structure, even with the addition now being completed, will of course be far too small for all that is to be comprised in these collections, and if the intentions of the committee are fully carried out, we shall be able to boast of a museum which is absolutely unique—a place where students may find all the necessary materials for inspiration and instruction, where painters, sculptors, and architects may enjoy, not indeed a substitute for study in Europe, but a most delightful and useful reminder of treasures seen there, and where everybody may feel the quickening influence of great thoughts expressed in beauty of form and line.

There are other reforms and improvements still possible at the museum, which would bring the institution into still higher esteem throughout the world of art; but as this is a subject on which our views are well known, and as we desire to say only complimentary things at the present moment, we will not be specific on these points. Just now we heartily wish success to the liberal plans of the committee on casts.

OPEN LETTERS.

The Regular Army and the National Defense.

HOW to prepare the republic for war is a topic that has been quite frequently discussed of late in the public journals. The articles upon this subject have been unanimous only in one respect—they have all maintained that preparation is necessary. Each writer has his own theory as to how the preparation should be accomplished, and any one of them would be feasible with a central government that could enforce the measure. None, however, seem practicable under a republican government such as the United States, because our institutions are incompatible with the requirements of military service. We must have a military system adapted to our form of government, and any attempt to assimilate it to the methods of the European powers must fail for the want of an arbitrary power to enforce it. Our statutes have borne upon their pages for nearly a century some military laws that are fundamentally the same as those of the German empire to-day, but for half a century they have been a dead letter. They constitute every able-bodied man between the ages of eighteen and forty-five a soldier, and require of him certain services. These services are never rendered, and the laws are complied with in but few trifling particulars, and in their tendency to the national defense they amount to nothing.

The regular army of the United States is content

with trying in a feeble manner to imitate European methods in such details as the authorities are able to enforce. These imitations are limited mainly to matters of dress, drill, and exercises, and are usually patterned after that military power that was considered to be in the ascendant. So long as the French were victorious we wore the French uniform and taught French tactics, and when the Germans conquered the French we donned the helmet, and now gather our ideas of progress from the German ranks, regardless of the difference of environment. The conditions of our service are so very different that we are not justified in this humiliating imitation and importation of foreign military methods. We should have a purely American and republican army, adapted to our surroundings and our form of government. There are no conditions on this continent that call for anything approximating to the standing armies of Europe. Such preparation here would be a waste of energy and time.

On the continent of Europe the situation requires that the armies should be ever ready for immediate action, and no first- or second-class power can afford to neglect this precaution. No such condition exists on this side of the water. When we consider these facts, it is difficult to understand why we should imitate and adopt so many of the details of their vast preparation. Much of the duty these large armies are engaged in has been instituted to furnish occupation for the troops dur-