

from the consequences of our own indifference and neglect of civic duties.

Free Art in America at Last.

FOR many years the fight for free art has been continuously urged by American artists, and by those who are especially interested in the artistic and intellectual advancement of the United States, and sensitive concerning the fair fame of their country in the sisterhood of civilized nations. At last the battle has been won, and won decisively, by the united votes of the most intelligent members of both parties in Congress.

In this successful "campaign of education" the artists have taken a leading part, and their persistence, the cogency of their arguments, the good spirit and devotion shown by them, the breadth and loftiness of the views promulgated, all are worthy of the highest praise.

It is necessary, also, to note the response of congressmen in this case to right ideas lucidly expressed and disinterestedly advocated; and the hopeful citizen of the republic has a right to take new courage when he is able to add so enlightened a measure to the gratifying list of lately accomplished reforms. Many not old have seen, among other reforms, slavery and the slave-trade extinguished, polygamy crushed out, civil-service rules enacted and continually extended, our ballot laws improved, international literary piracy abolished, and now the barbarous tax on painting and sculpture not reduced, but wiped out! Moreover, the same Congress that has given us free art has established the Federal Civil-service Commission on a firmer basis than ever, by legislation which the leading advocates of the merit system declare to be almost as important as the original law creating the commission.

No one can say that American artists are afraid of competition. This new and generous legislation should put a new spirit into them, and should be a fresh reason for the complete removal of that neglect from which they have at times seemed strangely to suffer among their own people.

The Pictorial Side of the Life of Napoleon.

THE CENTURY'S series of "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War" was the record of a military struggle waged by communities at the time virtually without art; the "Life of Napoleon" now appearing in THE CENTURY is the record of wars engaged in by the most artistic of all modern nations. The Art Department of THE CENTURY MAGAZINE had a difficult task to make attractive the art side of the American war series, and the degree of success met with was all the more creditable from the obstacles encountered.

In the Napoleon series, on the other hand, the opportunity is unprecedented, and this series should prove artistically, in many respects, the most splendid papers of a historical character yet published in a periodical.

In the preparation of these illustrations, it is possible to draw upon the most desirable of the portraits and pictures made at the time, and upon the rich stores of French military art subsequently accumulated, and use can be made of the accomplished pencils of living military and other artists of France and America; and as the scene moves from country to country and from period to period,—the panorama meantime decorated by a brilliant multitude of historical characters,—there should be no lack of variety in the story as told in the gallery of pictures which, from month to month, will illuminate the narrative.

OPEN LETTERS.

Sloane's "Napoleon."

IT is almost as difficult to enumerate the qualifications requisite for a biographer of Napoleon, as it is to make a fair estimate of Napoleon himself. It is not simply necessary that he should be impartial and well informed; he must be able to penetrate the motive and weigh the worth of the most conflicting testimony, to unravel the most intricate web of illusion and of detraction ever woven about a human character and career. It is not enough that he should be familiar with the historical forces playing about Napoleon, and those which he set in motion, with the events that shaped or determined his career, but he must be used to study and make allowances for the surprises in human nature.

The time has not yet come when we can expect a perfectly unprejudiced life of Napoleon from either a Frenchman or an Englishman. The tremendous passions of the Revolutionary era still survive on both sides of the Channel. It is not historical knowledge or scien-

tific method that is lacking in either case, but cosmopolitan impartiality. An American, who inherits English traditions and French sympathies, and is removed in space of time far enough to enjoy an undisturbed perspective, has a better chance of success. The American author of the present life has, to my mind, special qualifications for his great task.

William Mulligan Sloane is of Scotch Presbyterian stock, and was born in Richmond, Ohio, Nov. 12, 1850. He was graduated at Columbia College in 1868, and for some years taught Latin and Greek in the Newell Institute at Pittsburg, where his father (James Renwick Wilson Sloane) was pastor of a Presbyterian church. In 1872 he went abroad to pursue his studies in Germany, and attended lectures at the universities of Berlin and of Leipsic. At this time his attention was principally turned to Oriental studies, and it was at Leipsic that he took his Ph. D., his theme being "Arabic Poetry before the time of Mahomet," with metrical versions. While in Berlin he was for a time attached

to the American legation, as private secretary to Mr. Bancroft, and gained large practical experience in research and methods, as the historian's assistant in the tenth volume of the "History of the United States." During his residence abroad he made himself master of German and French, and through his connection with the legation he obtained a large insight into foreign social and political life.

When he returned to America in 1877, although he had a powerful impulse toward metaphysics and history, his chosen field was Oriental languages, and he went to Princeton in some expectation of making use of his Arabic and Hebrew. But as there was little call for his services in either, he became an instructor, and shortly after the professor, in Latin. In the reorganization of Princeton in 1883 upon a broader basis, he took the chair of professor of the philosophy of history, in which he at once distinguished himself as a most brilliant and inspiring lecturer. His scheme of philosophical exposition included universal history, but he brought this philosophy to bear chiefly upon modern times, and lectured especially on the English, American, and French revolutions. The only published result of this work is a successful volume devoted to our period of the French war and the revolution, which has received the highest critical indorsement for its philosophical interpretation of causes and events. In his connection with Princeton he has been recognized as one of the chief forces in the new era of the college.

Before he conceived the idea of writing the life of Napoleon, he had, by repeated and sometimes protracted visits to France, and residence in the provinces and in Paris, become familiar with French life and character, and had given much study to the French educational system. It was probably through his intimacy with M. Taine that his attention was finally directed to this work, and that he was given uncommon opportunities for investigation. I have heard that M. Taine said of him that "he knew France better than any other foreigner he had ever met."

With his accustomed thoroughness, industry, and vigor, he threw himself into the long preparation needed for this work. He had access to the archives of the French Foreign Office (the only ones not heretofore thoroughly studied), to papers examined, indeed, by no one so fully before, except by Lanfrey. His study of these papers was particularly concerned with the two obscure periods — the beginning and the end of Napoleon's career. He has also investigated documents little used, and in some cases little known, in Florence and in the British Museum.

But he has not contented himself with the literature or the written records of the subject. He has traveled more or less over Napoleonic ground, and made himself familiar, to a considerable extent, with the fields of the emperor's combinations, and victories, and defeats.

Aside from Professor Sloane's historical learning and power of investigation, I think I should put his fitness for this work upon his knowledge of the world, and his combination of openness of mind to new ideas with conservative habits of thought. He sees clearly and far, but he is little subject to illusions. It is rare also that so excellent and trained a scholar is so much a man of the world, so interested in whatever is vital, or simply entertaining, in social and political life, so well

informed of what is going on around him. This keen sense of life, with his stores of information and experience, his dialectic power, his dramatic force of narrative, and his charm of expression, makes him equally welcome in the club and the drawing-room. I mention these various qualities that seem to me desirable in one who attempts to interpret the character and career of Napoleon.

Charles Dudley Warner.

A Coincidence in Napoleon's Life.

THE facsimile of the last page of Bonaparte's exercise-book at school [printed on page 19] is one of the most curious human documents, to use a current phrase, that it would perhaps be possible to find. It treats of the youth of the great Napoleon. A mine of unexplored documents full of curious revelations has come down to us — documents, be it well observed, that are authentic and above all suspicion. During the Consulate, Napoleon, who already saw himself in history, as he said later at St. Helena, was mindful to place in safety all the papers that referred to his youth. He put them in a large official envelop on which were placed the words: "Correspondance avec le premier consul." This inscription he canceled with his own hand, to substitute the words: "A remettre au Cardinal Fesch, seul." The envelop, which was wrapped in paper ruled in colored squares and fastened with a large seal of red wax, on which can still be seen the impress of the imperial eagle, remained in the hands of the Cardinal Archbishop of Lyons until 1839, the year in which the prelate died. The envelop survived the glorious fortunes of the Empire and the Restoration, and, after having passed into the hands of various owners, fell into those of Guglielmo Libri, an Italian who had extraordinary honors and favors showered on him in France, where he rose to be professor of mathematics at the Sorbonne, and in which country he also wrote his celebrated "Histoire des Sciences Mathématiques." He closed his brilliant career in obscurity, under the accusation of having collected with too great zeal documents and codices from French libraries that had been given over to him to inspect. Libri sold these precious documents, together with his valuable library, to Lord Ashburnham. After the latter's death his library was disposed of, partly in England, partly in Italy, and partly in France. The Napoleonic documents were included in the lot which were acquired by the Italian government in 1884, for the sum of 585,000 francs, and which now, together with other codices of great value, are preserved in the historical and monumental Biblioteca Mediceo-Laurenziana, Florence, where the curious document is exposed, under a glass case, to public view in the new and splendid exhibition room devoted to manuscript treasures.

Bonaparte was never a literary man, or even a correct writer. French orthography ever remained a great mystery to him, and the desire to hide this lacuna caused him to employ an undecipherable calligraphy well adapted to cover his orthographical defects. It is said, in connection with this, that in the early days of the Empire a man of very modest aspect presented himself before the emperor.

"Who are you?" asked Napoleon.

"Sire, I had the honor at Brienne for fifteen months to give writing-lessons to your Majesty."