

houses at an inconvenient distance apart, and produce great annoyance while the alterations were in progress.

The Report states that the duty of ultimate selection between these plans belongs to the President of the United States, and it therefore recommends no action on the part of the House.

Whatever may be the decision, we sincerely hope this opportunity may not be lost of promoting the progress of High Art in the United States. With the example before us of several European nations which, within the last few years, have added to every public building of importance they have erected, the decorations of sculpture and painting, it would be shameful for us, who are not inferior to any of them in power and wealth, to permit the extensive additions which are projected to be finished without these most important ornaments. It would indeed be a noble act, if Congress should appoint a commission of the most distinguished connoisseurs and artists to inquire and report as to the best manner in which the proposed object can be accomplished. We doubt not that such a commission would produce a plan which might be executed easily, and at no very great expenditure of money; and the success of which would change the entire character of artistic effort in this country. To carry such designs into effect, the most distinguished native painters and sculptors would return from Europe, others would come hither to remain permanently, and we should see the beginning of that which has been often talked of, but never realized, an AMERICAN SCHOOL OF ART.

The artists of New York have already, at a meeting during the winter, discussed the subject of adorning public buildings with characteristic specimens of American Art, and determined, we believe, to memorialize Congress and the State Legislatures in relation to it. The President of the American Art-Union, in his address on the evening of the distribution, brought forward the particular occasion of the enlargement of the Capitol as a conspicuous topic, and we observe that his recommendation has been taken up and approved by the press generally. We doubt not that the people at large would cordially ratify any measure which Congress should pass upon the subject, provided the direction of the affair should be intrusted to competent hands, and not made a mere *job*, as has been the case, we are sorry to say, with some previous Art commissions given by the government.

EXHIBITION OF PICTURES AT READING, PA.—We notice with pleasure that an exhibition of works of art, took place at Reading, Pa., in the course of last winter. About 175 pictures were collected, the rooms were opened for three weeks, the outlay amounted to between \$250 and \$300, and the total receipts fell a little short of \$500. That such an exhibition could be made to pay for itself, with a surplus left for future operations, is a highly gratifying fact, to which we desire to call the attention of the readers of our Journal, throughout the country. If this affair succeeded so well in Reading, why might not a similar undertaking prosper in many other of the smaller cities? There is no way in which the pleasure and improvement of the inhabitants of any of these places, could be promoted so effectually at a small cost, as by collecting all the fine art stores of the neighborhood, including family

portraits and good engravings, under the supervision of some respectable artist, and opening an exhibition, with a moderate charge for admission. Such a place would afford an agreeable variety to the usual routine of Lectures, Lyceums, &c., and introduce fresh topics of conversation, and a new class of studies. The objection to such projects has generally been their supposed expensiveness; but the experiment at Reading shows that they may not only be made to pay their own expenses, but to produce a handsome surplus.

NEW WORK BY MATTESON.—Since the publication of our last regular number, we have seen a clever picture, by Mr. T. H. Matteson, painted for a gentleman in this city, and representing a *Justice's Court in the Backwoods*. It is thus described by the Artist:—

'The principal figure in the foreground is the portly justice, who is a sort of *mulsum in parvo*, being, in addition to his office of justice of the peace, a shoemaker—as will be perceived by his leather apron and his 'kit' of tools—and post-master—which is indicated by the post-office boxes at the left hand side of the room. The next figure of importance is the 'Pettifogger,' who is represented as an overgrown and over-green rustic dandy law student, in the act of pleading his first cause. The justice is all absorbed, so far as so stupid and *Dogberryish* a face can be, with the pettifogger, unmindful of a lawyer on his left, who is referring him to the law in the case, which is one of assault and battery. The plaintiff is leaning upon the table, with his bruised head bound in a handana, and listening eagerly to the argument of his juvenile advocate, while the defendant, who by his dress it will be seen is a butcher by vocation, sits disconsolate and despairing at the opposite side, while his daughter, who has been subpoenaed as a witness, is making rueful attempts at consolation. Seated directly behind the justice is the lawyer's clerk, making notes of the trial. Spectators, in various moods and attitudes, are seated and standing near the table; in the background is a group discussing the merits of the case. These are the main features. Other collaterals will be apparent when it is seen.'

MRS. MADISON'S PICTURES.—The late Mrs. Madison's effects, among which were her paintings, have been sold. They brought moderate prices, as follows:—The bust portrait of Washington, by Stuart, \$300; of Jefferson, by the same artist, \$260; of James Madison, \$235; of Mrs. Madison, \$270; of John Adams (the elder), \$160; of Monroe, \$50. Several other paintings went off at from \$5 to \$25. One of the large pictures, for which Mrs. Madison refused \$3000, and others of less value, were withdrawn by the administrators, there being no bids for them.

ANTIQUITIES FROM NICARAGUA.—We find the following in the *Literary World*:—

'The ship Brewster, from the Pacific, entered this port a few days ago, freighted, amongst other things better known to the mercantile world, with some tons of ancient monuments from Nicaragua, recovered by our late minister, Mr. SQUIER, and presented by him to the Smithsonian Institution, at Washington. With other relics, previously forwarded by the same gentleman, they will constitute a very good beginning to the Grand American Archæological Museum, projected under the auspices of the above institution. The monuments brought by the Brewster consist of six pieces of Aboriginal statuary, three of which were taken from the little island of Momotombita, in lake Managua. The others were exhumed for Mr. SQUIER, by the Indians of Subtiaba, from their hidden depositories. One of these represents a warrior bearing a shield upon his arm, and has a head-dress representing some animal with distended jaws. The

dress somewhat resembles that of some of the monuments at Copan, though less elaborate. The largest figure, which weighs upwards of a ton, is cut from black basalt, or trachytic rock, of intense hardness. The head is clearly and boldly sculptured, but the rest is rudely carved. There is no attempt at drapery, and there is reason to believe that its worship was in some way associated with that of the Phallus. One of the statues, which is unfortunately broken in the middle, has a face of great dignity, well proportioned, and displaying no small advance in art. It has a head-dress very much resembling the Egyptian; projecting in a broad fold above the forehead, and falling in masses upon the shoulders. These are amongst the smaller and ruder monuments discovered by Mr. SQUIER. The more elaborate ones are much too large to be removed by any of the artificial appliances at command in the country. When communication is opened, some of these may yet be transported to Washington. Having obtained this starting stock, we trust the Smithsonian Institution will neglect no means to augment its collection. We conceive that an Archæological Museum may be made one of its most interesting features, for no public collection, worthy of mention, exists on the continent. Our deficiency in this respect has lately been made painfully striking, by the publication of a Catalogue of American Antiquities contained in the Museum of the Louvre, by M. de LONGPERIER, "*Conservateur des Antiquités*." It extends over one hundred and thirty pages, and refers to upwards of one thousand valuable relics. French students, therefore, in comparative research, have advantages superior to those of our own country.

The American Antiquarian Society at Worcester has a fund of not far from \$20,000, set apart by its founder for a collection of this kind, but it has never been used. The collection of the Society is insignificant, and not worth visiting.

NEW WORK BY PALMER.—Our readers may remember the beautiful bas-relief of *Morning*, which was included in the last distribution. We have seen a daguerreotype of the model of a pendant to it, *Evening*, which has been commissioned by a distinguished member of the Legislature.

[NOTE.—We had prepared a copious digest of news relating to the Fine Arts in foreign States, which we are obliged by the pressure of other matter to omit entirely. It will be given with additions in our next number.]

AFFAIRS OF THE ASSOCIATION.

ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT FOR THE YEAR 1851.

An account of the proceedings, at a general meeting of the members of the Association, on the 20th day of December, 1850, was given in the last number of this journal. It will be remembered that all the seven managers of the retiring class were re-elected, and the Committee therefore remained as before.

On the 23d day of December last, the resignation of Mr. HENRY J. RAYMOND was communicated to the Board, and on the 20th day of February Mr. GEORGE TREDWELL was elected to fill the vacancy.

On the 23d day of December, 1850, a meeting of the Committee of Management was holden agreeably to the provisions of the Constitution, to organize for the present year. Mr. ROBERT KELLY was called to the chair, and Mr. JOHN H. AUSTEN appointed Secretary. On motion, it was resolved that the officers of the last year should be rechosen to the same places previously occupied by them, and accordingly Mr. ABRAHAM M. COZZENS was elected President, Mr. GEORGE W. AUSTIN, Treasurer, Mr. ANDREW WARNER, Corresponding Secretary, and Mr. NATHANIEL JARVIS, Jr., Recording Secretary.

The following gentlemen have since been appointed members of the Executive Committee: Mr. ERASTUS C. BENEDICT, Chairman, Messrs. ANDREW WARNER, W. J. HOPPIN, FREDERICK A. COE, BENJAMIN H. JARVIS, and the President and Treasurer, *ex-officio*.

PROGRAMME OF THE PRESENT YEAR.

The large engraving for the members of 1851, will be executed by Mr. ALFRED JONES, after WOODVILLE'S celebrated painting of *Mexican News*, in the possession of George W. Austin, Esq. This painting was exhibited for several months in the Gallery of the Art-Union, where it was greatly admired. It represents a group gathered around the porch of a country inn and post-office, listening to the reading of a newspaper, which contains an account of one of the battles in the late war with Mexico. A more particular description of the painting is rendered unnecessary by the etching which accompanies the present number, and which, although intended to give an idea of the general effect only of the piece, shows the skill with which the artist has discriminated the characters and feelings of the persons represented. The slouching bar-keeper, the tavern-haunting scape-grace who finds something in the news to arouse him from his ordinary indifference, the deaf man, the exultant boy who is swinging his cap in the background, and the poor old negro upon the steps, are all treated with extraordinary fidelity to nature.

The subject of this print is perfectly AMERICAN in its character, and this peculiarity is preserved in each of the FIVE ADDITIONAL PRINTS, which are to be distributed among the members of 1851, and which will form the *second part* of the GALLERY OF AMERICAN ART. The first part has met with such a cordial reception wherever it has been seen, that the Committee of Management have not hesitated a moment in deciding to continue it the present year. It is entirely unique in its character, such an enterprise never having been undertaken in the country before. It is proposed to present in this work from year to year engravings of the most celebrated American pictures. The series for 1850 contained specimens of the styles of DURAND, COLE, LEUTZE, EDMONDS, and WOODVILLE. The issue for the present year will be made up from the works of MOUNT, WOODVILLE, RANNEY, KENSSETT, and CROPSEY, viz:

1. MOUNT'S *Bargaining for a Horse*, in the possession of the New-York Gallery of the Fine Arts, and considered by many to be the best picture of the Artist.
2. WOODVILLE'S *Old '76 and Young '48*, representing a young American officer recounting his adventures to his old grandfather, a revolutionary veteran.
3. RANNEY'S *Marion crossing the Pedee*, a scene taken from the history of the partisan campaigns in the South, embracing a large number of figures, and the most successful work of its author.
4. KENSSETT'S *Mount Washington*;
5. CROPSEY'S *Harvesting*, two American landscapes of rare beauty, which have never yet been exhibited, but will attract universal admiration whenever they shall be seen by the public.

One of the great advantages of this set of prints is, that they may be preserved conveniently in a portfolio without framing, or bound in a book. Such persons as were not members of

last year, who may desire to have the first part of the *Gallery of American Art*, may obtain it by taking an additional share in the distribution of 1851.

Each member will also be entitled to such numbers of the BULLETIN as may be issued during and after the month in which his subscription shall be paid.

The proposed changes and improvements in the literary matter and embellishments of this journal for the year 1851, form the subject of the introductory article in the present number, to which we refer the reader.

The collection of Paintings and Sculptures will be still more attractive than that of last year. It will contain a greater number of drawings in water colors than have hitherto been included in our Catalogue. The Committee feel the importance of encouraging this branch of Art, which has not received the attention in the United States that it deserves. A number of specimens have already been obtained not only of landscape views, but of figure compositions, which will be displayed at the opening of the Gallery, in the course of the present month. Among the oil paintings purchased, may be found a charming illustration of the ballad of the *Babes in the Wood*, by PEEL, of which we hope to furnish a wood-engraving in the next number; a landscape composition by CROPSEY, embracing the *Temple of the Sibyl* at Tivoli, which is the subject of one of our engravings for this month; *Hamlet and Ophelia*, by Mrs. LILY MARTIN SPENCER; a composition by E. JOHNSTON, one of the young American artists in Düsseldorf, whose crayon drawing of the *Chimney Sweeps* was much admired in our gallery last year: landscapes by WHITRIDGE, MULLER, HUNTINGTON, and others: a characteristic work by EDMONDS, four pleasing pictures by CHAPMAN, and several other paintings of much interest and value.

THE HISTORY, PLAN, AND POSITION OF THE AMERICAN ART-UNION.

The example of the London Art-Union in the Fall of 1838 suggested to a few gentlemen in New-York the possibility of doing something for art in a similar manner in New-York. It was obvious to all that it might not be practicable to do here what was easily done in London, the great metropolis of an old compact and populous nation, with its schools of art, its artistic history and renown, and its artistic monuments; with its great public galleries, and annual exhibitions of modern art, and its population of 1,500,000 addicted to the most expensive gratification of their cultivated and refined tastes. In spite of difficulties and doubts, it was, however, finally determined that an effort should be made to form an association that should have for its purpose the patronage of artists and the cultivation of the people, by means of a periodical exhibition of pictures by good artists, ancient and modern; a permanent gallery, and the annual purchase of American works of art, to be distributed among the members of the association. The funds were to be provided by the receipts at the exhibitions, which were to be free to members only, and by annual subscriptions of five dollars; each subscriber indicating whether his means should be devoted to the purchase of

pictures for distribution, or for a permanent gallery; those contributing to the permanent gallery having no share in the distribution.

The association, under the name of the Apollo Association, commenced its career with high hopes and encouraging zeal. The purchase of paintings for distribution was by its first constitution the primary object, and the production of an engraving was contingent and secondary. It was soon found, however, that few subscribed to the permanent gallery, and that there was danger that the mere purchase of a few pictures and the distribution of them by lot, would be so much like a lottery as to be offensive to many good citizens, if not to the laws,—would be sustained by a spirit of gambling rather than the love of art,—and that it could not be highly useful, nor hope for continued success.

It was accordingly determined, after one year's experience, to submit the institution to the Legislature, by a request that it might have the sanction of law, which was given by an act of incorporation in 1840. It was also determined that after a suitable amount of the funds should be invested in paintings for distribution, an engraving should be produced, of which a copy should be given to every member.

The exhibitions, while they were all that we desired in character, greatly disappointed us in the receipts; and our funds, small at best, were so diminished by expenses that little was left to be divided between even a cheap mezzotint engraving and the purchase of a few paintings. The country subscriptions did not increase, and the city list was with difficulty kept up. Convulsive but ineffectual efforts were made to rally the people and the public press in favor of the institution. The committee of managers at their own expense prepared a costly entertainment, to which the press and the friends of art were invited, that, being brought together, their sympathies might be excited in favor of art. Not one soul came to cheer the committee in their thankless labor! Their pictures for distribution were only six! The committee was discouraged, and at the next annual election they declined to be re-elected, with the exception of one or two, who still had faith that there was there a germ which was destined to burgeon and to grow, and they, together with their new associates, determined that a vigorous effort should be made to infuse new life into the institution; to give it a name and character, and usefulness, which should make it in the best sense a national institution; and they never doubted that they should, sooner or later, succeed.

It was resolved to abandon the exhibitions, which had cost, the last year, \$2000 more than their receipts. The subscriptions to a permanent gallery, which in three years had amounted to only \$150, were also discontinued. Office-rent was stopped, and for a time we were indebted to the public spirit of a popular and liberal bookseller (Mr. Francis), who allowed the committee gratis to hold their meetings in the literary parlor of his bookstore. Each member of the committee pledged himself to procure by personal solicitation a certain number of new members, and thus, with our savings, a real increase of funds to the amount of near \$4000 was made. We therefore resolved to give to the subscribers, instead of a meagre mezzotint print, a fine line engraving.