

AMERICA.

ONE of our most prominent art-scientists gave it as his opinion, at the close of the first World's Fair held in London in 1851, that the organization of art-instruction on the plan then proposed by England would be easiest of achievement, and would work to best advantage, in a country in which no old art-traditions are to be overcome, and which is in possession of the freest institutions, or, in other words, in the North-American Free States.¹ This sentence certainly contains a profound truth. But it may still be questioned, whether, under existing circumstances, an undertaking looking to such a result could meet with success for the present. As long as America is in her development, as long as the material aims of life are the only concern of her people, and as long as all the energies of the country are devoted to these aims, there can be no thought of ideal aspirations. And, whenever any thing of the kind is proposed, the attempt is limited to the continuation of traditions brought over from Europe. But these traditions are more likely to wither, than to flourish, in so strange an atmosphere. The productions of America in art, and especially in sculpture, are of European origin. Industry is bent upon usefulness, rather than upon artistic beauty; and individuality of taste is as yet out of the question. The leading cities of Europe will have to satisfy the wants of luxury in America for some time to come.

Architecture might perhaps be expected to develop an independent character before any of the other arts; but even in this department only European motives are to be seen; and, as there is no lack of means, these motives are frequently used as a pompous decoration of the most daring constructions. The photographs

¹ The passage here alluded to will be found in Semper's "Propositions." (See note, p. 35.)—*Transl.*