

EIGHTH AVENUE CIRCLE.

The Municipal Art Society has done the public service of issuing, in a simple and intelligible shape, its plan for simplifying and regulating the problem of traffic presented at the "Circle," at Eighth Avenue, Broadway, and Fifty-ninth Street.

The case is so clear, the improvement that would result from these dispositions so manifest, that the wonder is why the Metropolitan Railway Company has not already made the change, so plainly in its own interest, at its own expense. Even including the "monumental" feature of the change, the "jacking up" of the Columbus Monument and the establishment of the colonnade suggested by Mr. LAMB, the transformation would be clearly in the interest of the company. To the question why the company does not do it the only rational answer is that the company hopes that it may be able to "stick" the municipality with the expense, while itself reaps the benefit. And, we regret to say, the Municipal Art Society fosters this delusion by admitting that the expense is properly chargeable upon the city.

A generation ago the Hudson River and New Haven Railroad Companies killed so many people at grade crossings between Forty-second Street and the Harlem River, and found the homicide so expensive, that they nobly offered to make arrangements whereby they should cease to kill citizens, provided the city would stand half the expense. This "cheeky" proposition the city was soft enough to accept.

We can see no reason why the Metropolitan people should not emulate this noble and magnanimous example of the Central people and the New Haven people of 1870. It is true that the Metropolitan people do not kill so many persons at the Eighth Avenue Circle. They only scare the lives out of several hundreds every day. And they have made it perfectly clear that they will not spend a dollar to relieve the situation, so long as they think they can get the city to stand the cost of the improvement. The Municipal Art Society is, of course, unconsciously playing into their hands. We should suggest that the Mayor and the appropriate head of department should take counsel whether the city has not the power to compel the Metropolitan to this decent and civilized step, at the Metropolitan's own expense. If this proves to be legally impracticable, then let the corporation take the odium of its own action. And, at any rate, let us not hear any more of this improvement in facilities of transit at the expense of the city until it is made quite clear that it cannot be effected at the expense of the benefited corporation.