

Letter from the State Capital

[Correspondence of the Baltimore Sun]

ANNAPOLIS, August 23, 1859.

A visit to the Capital of Maryland cannot fail to awaken in the mind of every patriot reminiscences of the most gratifying character. The stranger is at once attracted to the large and well-proportioned edifice known as the "State House," built of brick, with an upper structure of wood, surmounted by a handsome dome and cupola, the height from the base to the top of the spire being about two hundred feet. The internal improvements—new library, armory, record office, &c.,—constructed under an appropriation of the General Assembly, are nearly completed. Besides being beautifully lighted with gas, heated by steam, with all the conveniences of water, &c., Mr Wm. Cogan, of Alexandria, Va., to day fitted up the gas lamp-posts in the grounds, and has the contract for the entire gas-light arrangements throughout the building and grounds. An appropriation is expected to be made by the next Assembly for the steam heating.

On entering and taking a glance at the public hall or vestibule, which is decorated with the coat of arms of the State and other emblematical devices I notice an old cannon, truly a relic of antiquity, which, for the sake of comparison, should be placed side by side with one of Dahlgreen's brass howitzers, in the Washington navy-yard. This gun was taken from St. Mary's river, doubtless left there by the early settlers, and presented to the State of Maryland by the Rev. Mr. Carberry.

Here the eye of the visitor is directed to the door of the Senate chamber—a very neat, well-finished room—apparently of sufficient size for the accommodation of the Senators and a moderate number of spectators. Its walls are decorated with full length portraits of four illustrious signers of the declaration of independence—Charles Carroll, of Carrollton, Samuel Chase, William Paca and Thomas Stone, the first named of whom was the last survivor of that noble band who signed that glorious instrument. A portrait of the "hero of the Cowpens," John Eager Howard, is also conspicuously placed there. The portrait of the elder Pitt, the friend of America, now over the mantel, is soon to be removed to make room for the magnificent picture of "Washington resigning his commission," which has just been completed under resolution of the General Assembly. It was in this room, too, that the illustrious Washington resigned his commission into the hands of Congress, and in this room the treaty of peace with Great Britain of 1783 was ratified, recognizing our independence.

Immediately opposite is the chamber of the House of Delegates. This has been recently considerably enlarged and well furnished. Originally there was here displayed a large picture, a full length likeness of Washington, attended by General La Fayette and Colonel Tilghman, his aid de camp—the continental army in review. It is quite probable that that this valuable picture will soon adorn this room as heretofore.

Then we note the State Library, Armory, Record Office, the Treasurer's Office, the Executive Chamber, etc. The walls of the Governor's room are decorated with two letters in Washington's own hand writing—one of them is dated Camp, near York October, 1781, and transmits to his excellency "the terms upon which Lord Cornwallis surrendered the garrison of York and Gloucester," and the other—addressed to O. Richmond, Esq., is dated Mount Vernon April 6th, 1783, relative to his accounts of continental certificates.

The officials here are Col. Llewellyn Boyle, librarian, James R. Partridge, Esq., Secretary of State; R. D. Sellman, Esq., private Secretary to the Governor; Samuel Brooks, Messenger of Executive Departments; and Mr. William Thompson, keeper of the building. To several of these gentlemen I am under obligations for special attention to day.

The Naval Academy was founded in 1815 under the administration of President Polk, Mr. Bancroft being Secretary of the Navy. It requires but a glance to perceive that in every respect this is the most available location in the Union for such an academy. The mansions and grounds are admirably arranged and beautified, presenting a picturesque view which cannot fail to elicit the admiration of every beholder. After a survey of the rich scenery of the exterior, pass, if you please, into the practicing battery, once old Fort Severn, and equipped for service, surrounded with shot, shells, rainmers, sponges and other paraphernalia of a gun battery. In this institution the young midshipmen are taught all the mysteries of practical seamanship, naval gunnery, and naval tactics. Here is exhibited a yard for a sloop of-war, rigged complete, without the aid of a sailor. It was a subject of regret that the embryo American commodores were now absent on their annual summer cruise in the government practice ship Plymouth. They will, however, return about the 20th September, and by the first October it is presumed there will be sixty additions to the list.

The course of study here also embraces the mathematics, astronomy, navigation and surveying, natural and experimental philosophy, field artillery and infantry tactics, ethics and English studies, French and Spanish languages, besides drawing and draughting. For every class of studies there is appropriate, well furnished, well-ventilated rooms, abundantly supplied with all the scientific instruments, philosophic apparatus, &c.

Throughout these fine buildings there is perceptible the most perfect cleanliness and admirable arrangement. No pains are spared under this head. The library contains about 8,000 volumes, well adapted to the use of the students. The lyceum possesses objects of great interest. Here we have the identical flag which the gallant Perry wore at his fore in the celebrated battle of Lake Erie. That flag is large, black ground, with the letters plainly displayed in white, "Don't give up the ship." There are also flags taken in conflict with the Guerriere, Lady Prevost, Boxer, and many others, an interesting model of the line of battle ship, the Ville de Paris, upwards of one hundred years old, presented by Vattamore, collections of coins from various parts of the country, a fine assortment, a mace belonging to the speaker's chair in the Provincial Assembly at York, Upper Canada, April 29, 1813, and Mexican lances taken at Tobasco, bearing little flags, on each of which was inscribed "death to the Americans."

On the grounds, in full view from the river, there stands a noble monument, erected by the passed and other midshipmen to the memories of H. A. Clemson and J. R. Hynson, who were lost with the U. S. brig Somers, and also to midshipmen Pillsbury and T. B. Shubrick the former drowned off Vera Cruz, July 21, 1846, the latter killed at the naval battery near Vera Cruz, March 25, 1847 whilst in discharge of their duties.

The Hon. Secretary of the Navy is highly applauded for the able manner in which he has sustained the discipline of this academy. Captain Blake the very gentlemanly and efficient superintendent of the academy, is entitled to high praise for the manner in which he discharges his duties, as well as the kindness with which he receives every visitor.

The "Female Orphan Asylum" of Annapolis is, as are such institutions every where, a most benevolent institution. There are now several interesting little girls well cared for, fed, clothed and educated, whilst special care is taken with their religious training. Their preceptress is Miss Annie Johnson, assisted by her mother—ladies who appear to be well qualified for their important duties. The ladies under whose auspices the asylum is supported are Mrs. Dr. Smith, Mrs. Dr. Stewart, Mrs. Handy, Mrs. Swann, Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Hagner, Mrs. Nourse and Mrs. Craven.

There are four fine churches, viz. The Protestant Episcopal, Rev. Mr. Davenport; Catholic, Rev. Father Jacobs, Methodist Episcopal, Rev. John Thrush; Presbyterian, Rev. J. J. Graft, African Methodist, Rev. H. Price. The three first named have nearly completed new, enlarged and beautiful edifices, which it is quite probable will be occupied during the ensuing fall.

In the postoffice there are 690 boxes numbered, but few of them taken by the merchants. The postmaster has, in a very good position, fixed a box for contributions to the "National Washington Monument," at Washington, and that appeal is far from being disregarded.

The temperance cause is, I learn, quite prosperous here.

The opening of a railroad to Annapolis was a noble enterprise, binding so closely the Ancient City—the beautiful capital of Maryland—with Baltimore and Washington. The road is now represented as in order, runs with regularity, and Mr. Hammond, the conductor, has won the good opinion of those generally who travel with him. Another brilliant excursion spent the day at Annapolis Junction, where they were well provided for.

Yours, &c.

MERCURY.