

military forces for ulterior operations, and it was determined by the Government to erect an arsenal and depot somewhere in the rear of that city, to afford the facility of supplies to the forces operating in the immediate vicinity, as well as those permanent military posts constructed for the defense of this section of our maritime frontier. In the selection of the site for this establishment, two things presented themselves — the topography of the country, and the means that an enemy might have in operating upon it, and it is believed that on a proper view of the country adjacent to Baltimore, the site for this depot was as judiciously chosen as the nature of the case would admit of ; secondly, it will be seen from the extent of these works (the drawings of which accompany this report,) that they combine in themselves the advantage of an arsenal of construction, as well as a depot of military supplies, and can usefully employ one or two companies of citizens, as the nature of the service may require.

This arsenal is situated on the Reisterstown turnpike road, eight miles from the City of Baltimore. This road is smooth and firm at all seasons of the year, and affords the best land transportation ; it extends back north and northwest of the arsenal and passes through the upper counties of Maryland and into the productive counties of Pennsylvania, and is a great land thoroughfare to Baltimore, thereby presenting to the establishment the advantage of procuring land transportation in time of war with ease and on advantageous terms. The general aspect of the country around the arsenal is remarkable for its fertility of soil, gently rolling and well wooded, and is watered by Jones' and Gwynn's Falls, whose head waters take their rise in the vicinity of the post and present on both sides a number of springs of pure water. The situation is very healthy, the whole country around is remarkable for its salubrious air, and but few local diseases prevail ; these advantages render it a proper position for an encampment of troops and of military supplies. The means by which stores are transported from this arsenal to the permanent posts intended to be supplied from it, are by hauling them to Baltimore, or to the head of the navigable waters of the Severn River and from thence by water. The navigation of the Patapsco is obstructed by ice a part of the months of December and January, but no longer than from twenty to thirty days ; unless the season is unusually cold, it is kept open for commercial advantages. The navigation of the Severn is not usually obstructed by ice, hence this route can be resorted to in case the first fails, and in the event of both these routes being obstructed by the ice, the posts for the interior defense can be supplied by land transportation at short notice, and the fortifications for exterior defense can be readily supplied by taking the stores to Annapolis, where the navigation is scarcely ever known to be closed by ice, and from thence shipped. The distance of this arsenal from Baltimore is eight miles ; to Fort McHenry, eleven miles ; to the head of the navigable waters of the Severn River, eighteen to twenty miles, and to Fort Severn and Annapolis, thirty-five miles. The roads are firm and passable at all seasons of the year. The posts on the interior line of defense can be supplied with stores at all times : the nearest to the arsenal, three and a half hours or four hours : the most remote, from about eighteen to twenty-four hours. The fortifications on the exterior line