

A SCENE FROM HISTORY.

Washington's Resignation of His Commission at Annapolis.

APPEARANCE OF THE OLD CHAMBER.

**Mr. Frank B. Mayer's Description of the
Room as It Was in 1783—Simplicity of
the Ceremony—The Gallery, the Niche
and the Fireplace.**

Mr. Frank B. Mayer, one of the committee to estimate the cost of restoring the old Senate Chamber at Annapolis to its former appearance and to report suggestions for the restoration, said yesterday:

"The ceremony of Washington's resignation of his commission as commander-in-chief of the Continental armies, which took place in the State House at Annapolis in 1783, was conducted with all the decorum and dignity peculiar to the time and befitting so grand an example of patriotic duty. It had been arranged by Congress that he should enter the hall accompanied by his aides, who were to remain standing beside him during the ceremony, but the repugnance to personal pomp on the part of Washington seems to have dispensed with this, as well as other proposed ceremonies. He simply entered the hall accompanied by the secretary of the Senate.

"The president of the Senate and all the members of Congress were seated with their hats on 'as representatives of the sovereignty of the Union.' All other spectators were standing and uncovered. The ladies occupied the gallery overlooking the same. When the General arose to deliver his address he bowed to Congress and also when he retired, 'which they returned by uncovering without bowing.'

"The Legislature of Maryland being then in session, there were present besides Congress the Governor of Maryland and his council, also several general officers, the consul-general of France and many distinguished citizens. It is to be presumed that the General and the military men present wore the Continental uniform, while the ladies and the rest of the audience wore the somewhat formal though picturesque dress of the eighteenth century, as yet untouched by the influences which the French revolution soon after introduced.

"The hall in which this event took place was a stately chamber, credited as is the State House to the design of Sir Christopher Wren, but in all likelihood the work of an able artist of his school. A niche and pediment were over the Speaker's chair and facing the entrance beneath a rich gallery. Windows, with small panes and ample window seats, filled two sides, and on the other was a spacious fireplace, with its elaborate and high mantel. Large fire-dogs, a brass chandelier for lamps or candles and sconces or brackets completed the fittings of the room.

"Over the mantel hung the picture of Chatham standing by the altar of liberty, an early work of Charles Wilson Peale, painted in England during his pupilage under Benjamin West, and presented by the artist to his native State in recognition of the many kindnesses extended to him by citizens of Annapolis. The original still hangs in the State House and a mezzotint engraving from it by Peale is probably one of the earliest prints from the hand of an American artist.

"It is to be deeply regretted that in repairs to the building made in 1876 the original appearance of this room was not preserved or restored. The form of the room and the rich cornice alone remain to present to us an impression of the locality where this great event occurred, as well as the ratification of the treaty of peace with Great Britain, the reception of Lafayette and other notable scenes."