

Potomac to a point high upstream, and thence opening a road to join the western waters.

This commission recommended to the Legislatures of the two States, the appropriation of a sum of money towards rendering the Potomac navigable to a point considerably west of Cumberland; thence to form a road cleared 80 feet wide to the Dunker bottom, or the Cheat river, and thence to form a batteau navigation to the Monongahela.

This action clearly indicates that Washington and his compatriots looked upon the improvement of the Potomac merely as forming a link *in a great route west*.

At that early period no one believed it practicable to surmount the Allegany, by a continuous navigation, the demonstration of this momentous fact was reserved for those able officers of Engineers, who under the direction of the U. S. Board of internal improvements, made in 1826, the preliminary surveys for the present Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, and who then established in a most scientific and conclusive manner, that the Allegany summit of this work, actually possesses a command of water, ample to meet the exigencies of trade.

In 1784 the Potomac was chartered by the commonwealths of Maryland and Virginia, who subsequently commenced operations under that charter and effected an essential amelioration of the navigation of the river, especially at the Great and Little Falls; but their improvements being found in 40 years to fall far behind the wants of the country, they were superseded in 1824 by the charter of the present Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company, to whom all the rights, interests, and privileges, of the Potomac Company, were ceded by a deed of surrender, dated the 16th of May 1825.

The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company was organized in 1825, and on the 4th day of July 1828, the first ground was broken upon the canal, by his Excellency John Quincy Adams, the Chief Magistrate of the Republic: since that day, with various fortune, this great work has struggled onward, deserted within a few years by all her early patrons, except the commonwealth of Maryland, in whose bosom alone she has of late been fostered.

Although this important enterprise is evidently destined for many years to be nothing more than the Georgetown and Cumberland—or at the most, the Baltimore and Cumberland canal—still as it was originally designed to connect the western waters with the sea, by an artificial navigation, and as the day