

The distance in other parts on its upper portion might probably have been further shortened by occasionally crossing the river, had the ground not been previously secured for the use of the canal. At two points the extreme curvatures of the river are avoided by tunnelling the points of projecting mountains. These are through masses of slate rock, the crumbling texture of which is such, that it was found necessary to protect the perforation by strong side walls, covered with an arch of brick masonry. Four or five miles below Cumberland, the rail road again crosses the Potomac into the State of Maryland, and passing over the canal also, proceeds on the north side of it to its present termination, near the proposed canal basin in the centre of the town.

I have remarked that the canal is yet unfinished, that is, the water is not let into it, for a distance of 50 miles, extending from Dam No. 6 to Cumberland. It was arranged that the visiting party should pass over this part of the route on horseback, for the purpose of examining minutely the advance which was made in the work, before its suspension in 1841, and the present state of the finished as well as unfinished portions of it. As the horses which had been ordered for the accommodation of the party, would not have arrived at No. 6, and as the accommodations for lodging so many, or even any number of persons would probably not be found of the first order, it was concluded to proceed by rail road to Cumberland, and to return to Dam No. 6, by the same conveyance on the following morning, for the resumption of the survey at that point.

We accordingly arrived at night, as I have before stated, at Cumberland. This town is remarkable for being one of the principal gateways to the Western country. Situated on the Eastern margin of the Alleghany Mountains, it has long been known as the starting point for the celebrated national road, which was constructed at the charge of the Treasury of the United States, extending in the first instance to Wheeling, on the Ohio river, and subsequently in a westerly direction through the State of Ohio. The importance of the town has been greatly increased by the recent opening of the rail road to it, and the expected extension of the canal to the same point, as well as by the commencement of works at the iron and coal mines in the vicinity. The impulse thus given to it may be judged of, from the fact that the population of the town is now 7000, it having been doubled within the last 18 months. It is already the second town in point of population in the State, and it is manifestly destined to a rapid increase. A great number of substantial brick buildings have been erected within the last two years, and within that period not less than five miles of pavement have been laid in the streets of the town. There is a handsome Court House, many handsome private houses, and large stores, and several commodious public houses.

At 8 o'clock, on the following morning, we resumed our seats in the rail road cars and retraced the course of our journey of the preceding evening, to Dam No. 6, where we were set down in a