

little more than two hours. We were thence to find our way back to Cumberland, in the course of the two succeeding days, by following the course of the unfinished canal. This dam, like the others on the river below, is built across the Potomac for the purpose of retaining a sufficient portion of its waters, for the feeding of the canal, and also for forming a navigable basin by which boats and rafts from either shore of the river, may be admitted into the canal, or passed from the canal into the river. This dam is built with great strength, to enable it to resist the very high freshets to which this river is subject. The bed of the dam is wide, giving it a gradual slope not only on the upper side, but also below the summit, so that the water may shoot over it, to a distance from its base. The masonry at the extremities of the dam, on the two banks of the river, including the locks on the northern shore, for passing boats into the basin and receiving the proper supply of water at all levels of the river, and also for passing with boats into the canal above, is of a very substantial character, and it is in every respect in excellent order. From this dam, as well as from that at Shepherdstown, and at other places where the canal receives its supply of water, the river is rendered navigable to a considerable distance above. These basins afford the means of entering the canal by boats from the Virginia shore. At a short distance above this dam, a landing is provided, for receiving into the canal boats, coal and other loading, which may be brought to this point on the Baltimore and Ohio Rail Road. A turn out track is here made, for the accommodation of this trade, and during the last year, four or five thousand tons of coal, from Cumberland, were here delivered into canal boats for the District of Columbia.

By the time the party had completed their examination of the works at this dam, and of the canal below for some distance, the horses arrived, and after each had provided himself, from the joint store, with his supply of provisions for the day, we mounted for our journey along the canal. Fortunately for us, our horses proved to be, in general, very good ones, and we made our journey with a good degree of speed and comfort.

Should I attempt to describe the incidents of this journey, with the interesting portions of the work and the varied and striking features of the country, in detail, I should be compelled again to leave my narrative but half finished. I can only describe it in the most general terms, and without leisure for a careful condensation. The canal proceeds as before, for the most part along the base of a precipitous mountain ledge, terminating at the river, with a margin constantly varying in width. The skill of the engineer was constantly taxed, to determine whether the bed selected for the canal was such as would contain the water, and resist filtration and the consequent washing away of the bank, from the constant action from within, and also whether it was of sufficient strength and elevation, to resist the force of the river upon the bank without, particularly in periods of inundation, which some-