

# THE CENTURY MAGAZINE.

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## THE CAPITOL AT WASHINGTON.

WHEN in the early days Congress turned its back upon the cities in which it had been hospitably entertained, to adopt Washington's cherished idea of founding a "Federal City" on the bank of the Potomac, no time was lost in inviting proposals for a plan of a "Congress House." The architectural competition thus solicited was a serious disappointment to the young French engineer who had laid out the future city—Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant. He had served gallantly under Baron Von Steuben in the Revolutionary War,—his artistic taste had been recognized by the Society of the Cincinnati when it had adopted his designs for its insignia,—and his architectural ability had been formally approved by Congress, after he had fitted up a building for its accommodation in the city of New York. Commissioned by President Washington as the engineer who was to plot the Federal city, Major L'Enfant had selected the most commanding spot as the site for the legislative halls, which he was the first to designate, on his map, as "the Capitol." From this site, and from that selected for the erection of an executive mansion, a mile and a quarter distant, radiated broad avenues, intersecting at a variety of angles, rectangular streets laid out like those of ancient Babylon and modern Philadelphia.

President Washington approved Major L'Enfant's plan as well adapted for a great city of the future, and was especially pleased at the adoption of his suggestion that the Capitol should be placed at such a distance from the executive offices as to prevent the too frequent visits of congressmen. East of the site of the proposed Capitol was a broad plateau, where it was expected that the finest residences would be erected. The

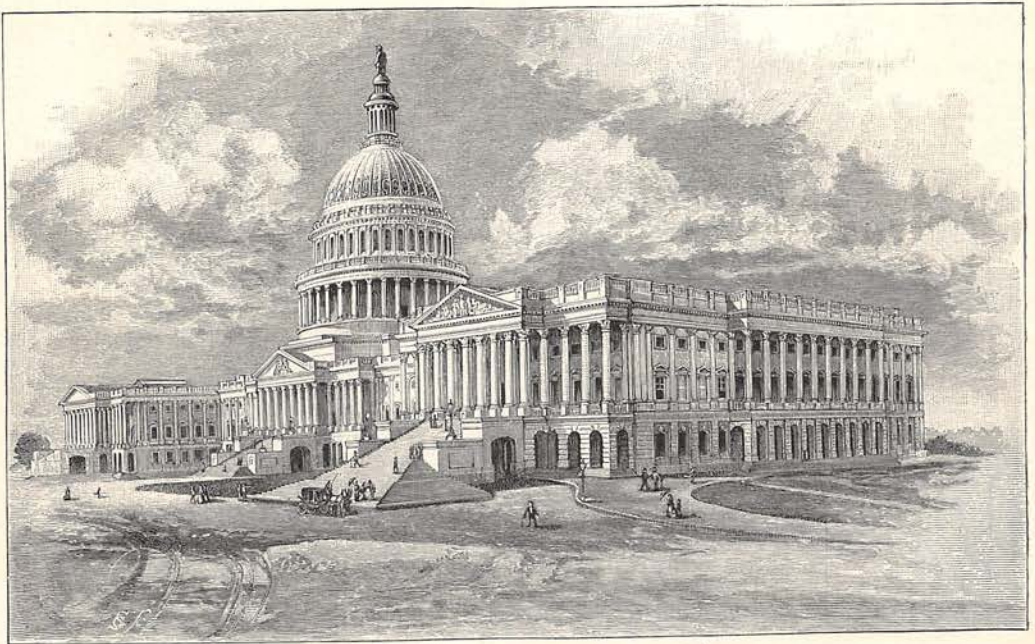
greater portion of this land, therefore, was immediately purchased by the agents of foreign capitalists, who then asked such high prices for building-lots that no one would purchase, and it was for this reason that the new city was begun in the swamps and on the hillocks west of Capitol Hill, and now lies mainly at the back door of the Capitol. Major L'Enfant meanwhile quarreled with the commissioners, and one of the rebukes which they administered to him was their advertisement for designs for the "Congress House," offering a premium of five hundred dollars, or a gold medal, for the best plans offered. Sixteen designs were submitted, and they have all been pronounced by modern architects very bad,—many of them below contempt, and some bordering on the ludicrous. When they were shown to President Washington, he was "more agreeably struck with Judge Turner's plan than with any other," as it embraced a dome, which, in his opinion, "would give a beauty and grandeur to the pile." The President finally gave his formal approval to a plan drawn by Dr. William Thornton, a native of one of the British West India Islands, who had been made the first clerk in charge of patents, and who possessed many accomplishments, among them an acquaintance with architectural drawing. Of his water-color sketch of the proposed edifice, showing a central rotunda, crowned by a dome, Washington wrote that, in it "grandeur, simplicity, and convenience were combined." But Thornton was not a practical architect, and the commissioners were obliged to engage Stephen Hallett, a professional French architect, to reduce Thornton's designs to practical form.

President Washington, aided by his brother Freemasons of Georgetown and Alexandria, laid the corner-stone of the Capitol under what is now the Law Library, on the 18th day of September, 1793. The exterior walls were constructed of yellow sandstone, from a quarry opened for the purpose on a small island at the mouth of Acquia Creek, where it empties into the Potomac River. The brick for the interior work was made and burned in kilns upon the spot, and much of the timber was cut on the neighboring hills. The north or Senate wing was first erected. The architect and the commissioners soon disagreed, and Hallett was superseded by James Hoban, an Irishman, who had come from Charleston to superintend the erection of the President's house. Nor was it long before Hoban was in turn superseded by George Hatfield, an Englishman, who was recommended by Benjamin West as possessing a knowledge of the theory of civil architecture superior to that of any other young man in England.

The Federal Government migrated from Philadelphia to Washington in October, 1800, and it became necessary to crowd both Houses of Congress into the north wing, which was the only finished portion of the building. The Senate Chamber was an imposing and beautiful apartment, modeled after the ancient Greek theaters, with a gallery behind the chair of the presiding officer, supported by caryatides representing the States. North

and South Carolina stood as sisters, with interlocked arms, while Massachusetts led, as a child, Maine, then a district dependent on her. When Thomas Jefferson, as Vice-President of the United States, called the Senate to order for the first time in its new chamber, on the 17th of November, 1800, there were only thirty-two senators representing the sixteen States. Now there are seventy-six senators, representing thirty-eight States. As the Senate generally sat with closed doors, all that is known of its deliberations is what has been preserved in the private journals kept by some of the senators. These show that the men who are now alluded to as dignified and patriotic statesmen, who shaped with unswerving purpose and firm hands the new system of national government, were very much like the senators of to-day,—some of them possessing fiery tempers, great personal ambition, sensitiveness to criticism, and obstinate adherence to hastily formed opinions. Speeches were then never written in advance of their delivery, to be read from the manuscript or from printed slips; but it was a common thing for senators to write full reports of what they had said, for publication in the newspapers. The first House of Representatives which met at Washington had Theodore Sedgwick of Massachusetts as its Speaker, and was, as a legislative body, far abler than the Senate.

The grounds around the Capitol were roughly graded, and stables were erected for



THE CAPITOL AT WASHINGTON (EAST FRONT).



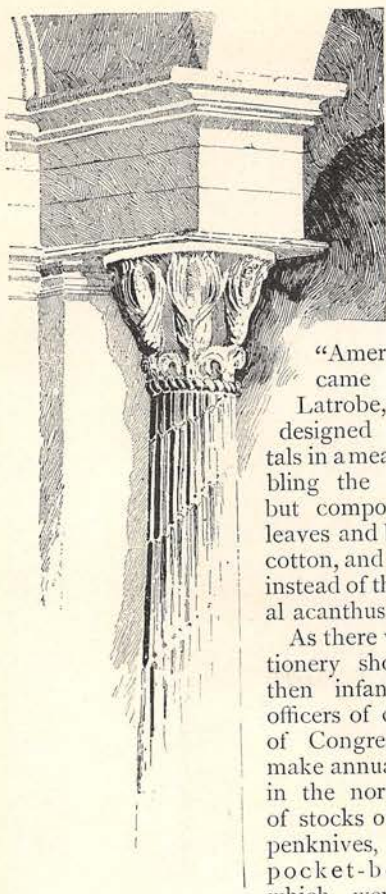
THE CAPITOL, FROM PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE (WEST FRONT).

the accommodation of those congressmen who came from Georgetown to attend the daily sessions on horseback, or in the English mail-coach belonging to the Union Tavern there, with seats on the top and behind, which John Randolph christened "The Royal George." Near the Senate wing of the Capitol was a barber's shop, the interior of which was surrounded by glass cases filled with the wigs belonging to those senators and representatives who had not discarded them. They would visit the barber's shop in the morning, be shaved, and have a freshly dressed wig put on, leaving the wigs that they had worn to be combed, oiled, and brushed for the next day.

The House of Representatives, at first located in a room designed for the Secretary of the Senate, removed in 1801 into a low building of elliptical shape, which had been temporarily erected within the foundations of the external walls of the south wing, and which, from its general appearance, was familiarly known as "the oven." Seven years

later, the House took possession of the majestic hall designed for it, although the decorations had not been completed. This hall, which is modeled after the theaters of ancient Greece, is now the National Statuary Gallery, containing what a wag told a verdant sight-seer were "the United States statutes at large."

The central rotunda (*rotundo* it was always called in the "National Intelligencer") had not then been begun, and the extremities of the Capitol, in which the Houses of Congress were located, were connected by a covered wooden passage-way. President Jefferson appointed Benjamin Henry Latrobe, a well-educated Englishman, architect, under whose direction a great deal of ornamental work was sculptured in freestone by a number of Italians imported from Rome. Jefferson, when President, used personally to supervise the work of these sculptors, in which he took a great interest, especially in the columns supporting the dome of what is now the vestibule to the Law Library. The design for these was composed of a bundle of corn-stalks with



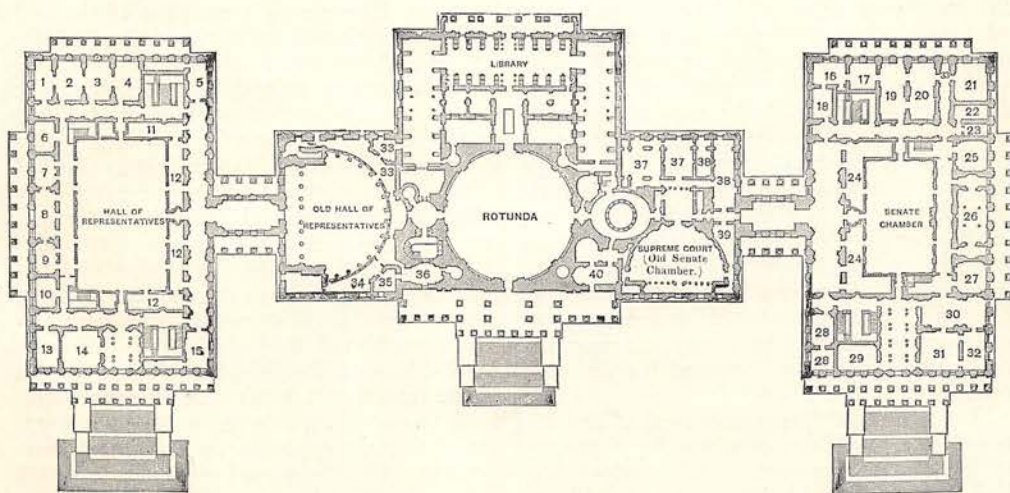
LATROBE'S CORN COLUMN.

the half-husked ears as the capitals—"the corn-cob capitals," as John Randolph called them. The suggestion of this "American order" came from Mr. Latrobe, who also designed some capitals in a measure resembling the Corinthian, but composed of the leaves and blossoms of cotton, and of tobacco, instead of the traditional acanthus.

As there were no stationery shops in the then infant city, the officers of each House of Congress used to make annual purchases in the northern cities of stocks of stationery, penknives, scissors, pocket-books, etc., which were disposed of to Congressmen at

cost,—a practice which has been continued to this day. It also appears, by the accounts of the "contingent expenses" of Congress early in the present century, that large quantities of "sirup" were purchased for consumption at the Capitol; and there is a tradition that this "sirup" was French brandy, Holland gin, and Jamaica rum. Each House had among its officials "pen-makers," who became acquainted with the exact kind of pen used by the senator or representative whose goose-quills were intrusted to their care, making or mending pens which had "fine points" or "broad nibs." There was also in an anteroom of each House a "sealer," who stood behind a table on which was a lighted candle, and sealed with red wax packages or letters brought him, using the private seal of the member sending them, or an official seal.

The impeachment of Judge Samuel Chase of Maryland, in 1805, marks an era in the chronicles of the Capitol. The Senate chamber was elaborately fitted up as a high court of impeachment, with the senators sitting as judges on a semicircular platform on either side of the Vice-President presiding,—Aaron Burr. Places were assigned for the members of the House, the Diplomatic Corps, and a few spectators. The trial demonstrated the violence of party feeling, and showed that while Judge Chase was an arrogant and impulsive man, with strong political prejudices, he had not rendered himself liable to dismissal from the bench. It was said of Aaron Burr at this trial, that he "presided with the dig-

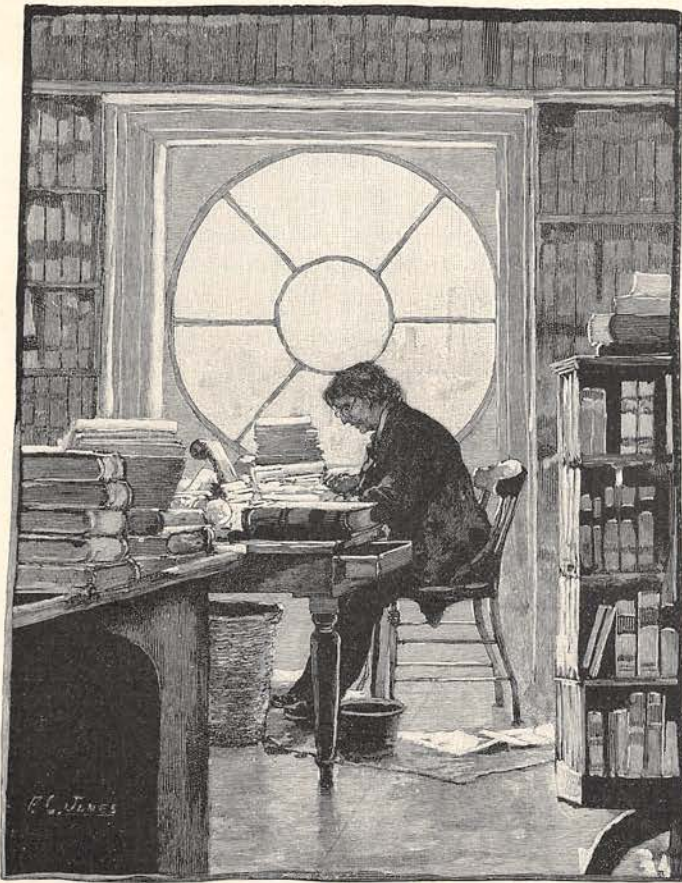


SOUTH WING.

GROUND PLAN OF THE CAPITOL.

NORTH WING.

1. Office of the Speaker. 2. Office of the Sergeant-at-Arms. 3. Engrossing Clerks of the House. 4. Journal and Printing Clerks. 5. Office of the Clerk. 10. Lobby. 12. Cloak-rooms. 13, 14, 15. Committee-rooms. 16. Office of the Secretary of the Senate. 17. Executive Clerk. 18. Financial Clerk. 19. Chief Clerk. 20. Engrossing and Enrolling Clerks. 21. Committee on Appropriations. 23. Committee on Enrolled Bills. 24. Cloak-rooms. 25. The Room of the President of the United States. 26. The Senators' Withdrawing-room. 27. The Vice-President's Room. 28. Committee on Finance. 29. Official Reporters of Debates. 30. Reception-room. 31. Post-office. 32. Office of the Sergeant-at-Arms. 33. House Document-room. 34. House Stationery-room. 35, 36. House Committee-rooms. 37. Office of the Clerk of the Supreme Court. 38. Robbing-room of the Judges. 39. Withdrawing-room of the Supreme Court. 40. Office of the Marshal of the Supreme Court.



IN THE SENATE LIBRARY.

nity and the impartiality of an angel, but with the vigor of a devil." A few years later he was himself on trial for treason, while Senator John Smith, of Ohio, one of those who had sat in judgment in the Chase impeachment trial, only missed by one vote expulsion for his connection with Burr and Blennerhassett.

The "War of 1812," as it was called, gave great importance to Congress, and both Houses often sat with closed doors, discussing plans submitted by the Executive for organizing success. In August, 1814, an invading force ascended Chesapeake Bay, landed without opposition, and marched on Washington. After the main body of the British troops had reached the Capitol, Admiral Cockburn (who commanded jointly with General Ross), ordered a regiment to march into the hall of the House of Representatives, the drums and fifes playing "The British Grenadiers." When the hall was filled with troops, Admiral Cockburn seated himself in the Speaker's chair and said: "Attention! Shall this harbor of Yankee Democracy be burned? All for it

will say Aye! Contrary opinion, No!" There was an affirmative shout, and the soldiers soon scattered themselves through the building, firing army rockets through the roof and building fires on the floors with the books, papers, and furniture. Much of the lumber which had been used in the interior construction was pitch-pine, which burned freely, while the columns and ornamental work of sandstone were calcined into dust.

The people in every section of the United States appeared to feel deeply the wanton and barbarous destruction of the Capitol and other public buildings at Washington, and urged their reconstruction in accordance with the original plans. Liberal appropriations for this purpose were voted with great unanimity, and Latrobe, who had gone West, was recalled to superintend the rebuilding of the Capitol. He resigned, however, in 1817, and Charles Bulfinch, of Massachusetts, an educated and accomplished architect, was placed in charge of the work.

The halls of the Senate and of the House of Representatives were immediately rebuilt,

Congress meanwhile occupying a structure erected by the citizens of Washington for their temporary use. The Senate chamber, now the Supreme Court room, was the first portion of the Capitol reconstructed, and it became the scene of the famous oratorical contests that took place between the intellectual giants who occupied its curule chairs, whose memories, like the remains of the mastodon, will long excite the wonder and admiration of posterity. Generally speaking, the proceedings in the Senate were colloquial, resembling the meetings of boards of directors of banks or similar institutions. A resolution would be offered, amended, discussed, and passed, within a quarter of an hour; and the Senate, with an occasional day for set speeches, managed to transact its business between twelve and three o'clock, invariably adjourning over from Thursday until the following Monday. This dispatch of the real business of the session was ended when the proceedings were reported verbatim by stenographers. When every word was recorded, to be printed and distributed over the land at public expense, senators became prolix.

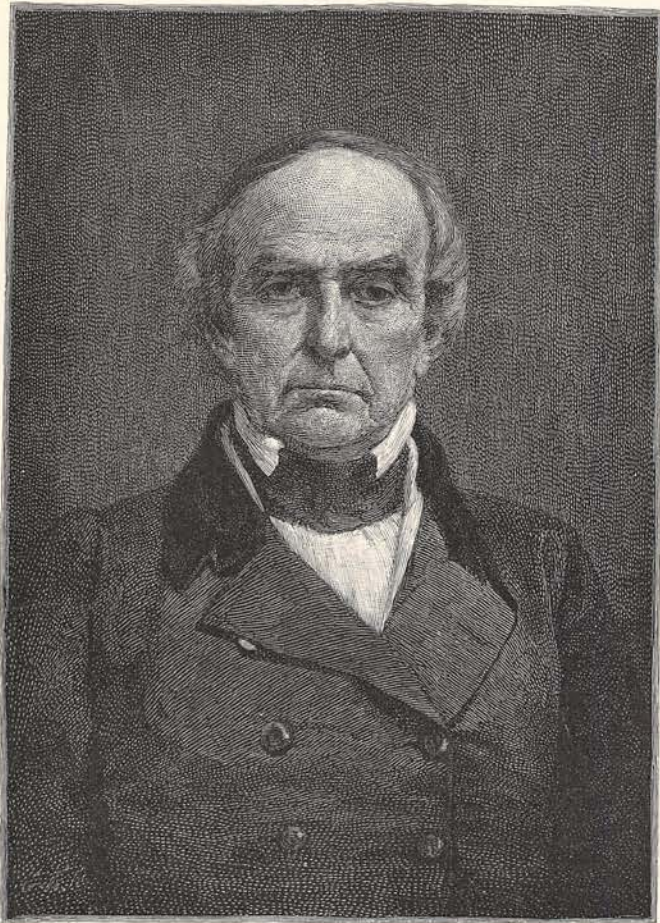
This was the beginning of the period of great constitutional debates, in which the prominent figure was Daniel Webster. When it was known that he was to have the floor in the Senate chamber, it would be crowded by people who often cared but little for the subject under discussion, but wanted to see and to hear Webster. Nor were they ever disappointed, either in the personal appearance of the orator or the intellectual banquet which he provided. His stalwart figure was always arrayed in the old Whig colors of "blue and buff"; his massive head was firmly set on his square shoulders; his swarthy complexion was at times radiant with smiles, displaying his excellent teeth; his black, wily eyes gleamed in cavernous recesses beneath shaggy eyebrows, and his firm jaws showed his mastiff-like grip on whatever question he took hold of. He rarely spoke in the Senate without preparation, and he would never permit the publication of the reports made of his remarks by the stenographers until he had carefully revised them, often rejecting pages and substituting new sentences. His genial and liberal nature made him a great favorite among the senators, who were always ready to enjoy his hospitality, either at Washington or at Marshfield.

Henry Clay, who left a seat in the Senate for one in the House, but after many years' service at the other end of the Capitol returned to the Senate chamber, exercised a powerful control over the politics of the re-

public. Idolized by the Whig party, his wonderful powers of personal magnetism, and his rich, manly voice would enable him to hold an audience for hours. He made but little preparation, and used but few notes in speaking; but when he wrote out his remarks for the press, his manuscript was remarkably neat, without interlineations or blots. He seldom indulged in classical allusions, and his occasional attempts to make quotations of English poetry were generally failures. On one occasion, he used the well-known phrase from Hamlet, "Let the galled jade wince, our withers are unwrung," but misquoted the last syllable, calling it "un-strung." The gentlemen who sat on either side of him noticed the error, and simultaneously whispered "unwrung." This double prompting confused "Young Harry of the West," who straightened himself, and with stronger emphasis repeated "unhung." This raised a general laugh, at the close of which Clay, who had meanwhile ascertained his mistake, shook his head, and said with one of his inimitable smiles: "Ah! murder will out! Unwrung's the word." The fascination which he exercised over all with whom he had personal intercourse,—even his political adversaries,—was remarkable; but he was imperious and domineering, exacting unconditional and unqualified support as the price of his friendship.

John C. Calhoun was among the purest of American statesmen. His political enemies could find no opprobrious epithet for him but "Catiline," and could accuse him of no crime but an inordinate political ambition. As Webster said, when pronouncing his eulogy: "He had no recreations, and he never seemed to feel the necessity for amusements." He never was subjected to that ordeal of newspaper slander through which nearly all of our public men have had to pass, and his only fault was a thirst for political power, to gratify which he would rather "reign in hell than serve in heaven." When he last entered the Senate chamber, during the discussion of the compromise measures of 1850, he looked like a skeleton summoned from the tomb and inspired by indomitable zeal. Unable to speak audibly, he gave the argument which he had prepared to Senator Mason to read, but his eagle eyes followed the utterance of every word, occasionally glancing at Clay and Webster as if to note the effect produced on them. Not many days had elapsed before they were called upon to eulogize him in the Capitol.

Inferior in intellectual ability to Webster, Clay, or Calhoun, Thomas Hart Benton had no superior as a man of iron will and haughty



*Dem. Welton*



GEORGE WASHINGTON

The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia have caused this Statue to be erected as a monument of affection and gratitude to  
**GEORGE WASHINGTON**  
 who uniting to the endowments of a Hero the virtues of the Patriot and exerting his influence in establishing the Liberties of his Country has rendered his name dear to his Fellow Citizens and given the world an immortal example of True Glory Done in the year of  
**CHRIST**  
 One thousand seven hundred and eighty three and in the year of the Commonwealth the



Statuary Hall.



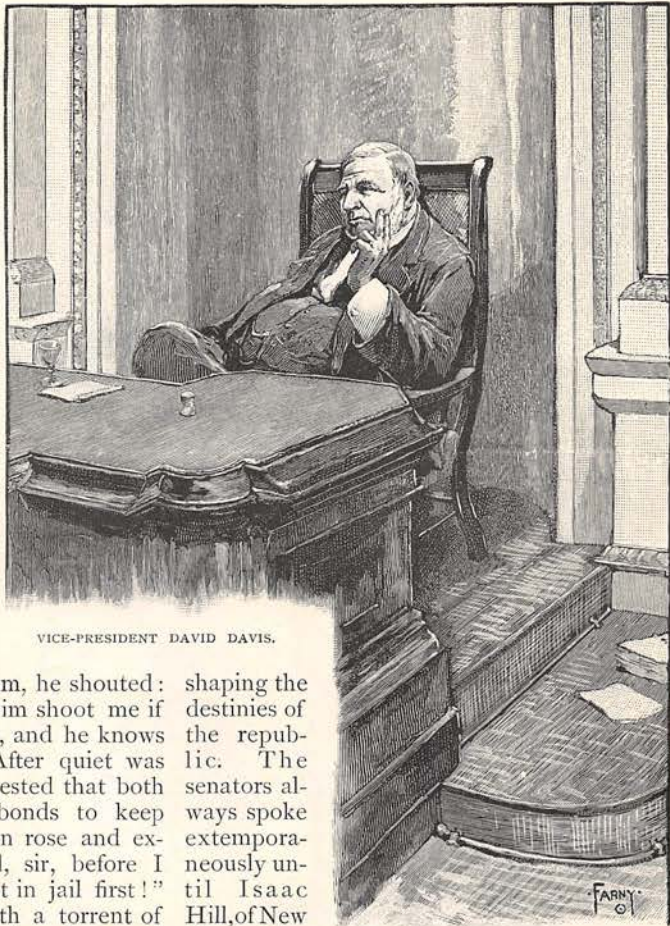
B. H. 1852

PLASTER COPY OF HOUDON'S WASHINGTON.



disposition, during the twenty-nine years and seven months that he served continuously in the United States Senate. Aggressive, bold, and defiant, he would occasionally strike out recklessly at everything and everybody about him, like the huge wild buffaloes of the Missouri prairies, treading his opponents beneath his feet in his angry rush. His greatest display of ungovernable rage in the Senate chamber was when, in an angry debate, he advanced with threatening gestures toward Senator Foote, of Mississippi, who, fearing that he was to be attacked, drew a small pocket-pistol. The sight of this weapon made Benton uncontrollable, and, endeavoring to shake off the grasp of friends who seized him, he shouted: "The cowardly assassin, let him shoot me if he dares. I never carry arms, and he knows it. Let the assassin fire!" After quiet was somewhat restored, Clay suggested that both senators should enter into bonds to keep the peace, upon which Benton rose and exclaimed: "I will rot in jail, sir, before I will do it! No, sir! I will rot in jail first!" and he proceeded to pour forth a torrent of bitter invective on Foote before he could be quieted. Even when he was defeated in seeking a reelection for the sixth time to the Senate, and was forced to accept a seat in the House of Representatives, Benton failed to display a chastened ambition or a softened heart.

There were other senators who were dwarfed by the great reputations of the four great leaders, but who were far above the average senator of to-day as orators and useful legislators. Preston of South Carolina, and Pinckney of Maryland, silver-tongued speakers, would hurl their well-rounded sentences upon their audiences, like the discharge of shot from a Gatling gun. Silas Wright, making no pretensions to oratory, dealt with facts as he found them, and made speeches that the farmers and mechanics of the country regarded as judicial decisions. From the South and West came other noted senators, some of them spicing their sentences with the idiosyncrasies of the "stump" oratory of their respective localities,—men whose utterances exercised a potent influence in



VICE-PRESIDENT DAVID DAVIS.

shaping the destinies of the republic. The senators always spoke extemporaneously until Isaac Hill, of New Hampshire, an editor by profession, set the example of reading long speeches.

The old hall of the House of Representatives, now the National Gallery of Statuary, was rebuilt, after having been destroyed by the British troops, in its original fine proportions, except that the semicircular colonnade was ornamented with columns of breccia, or "pudding-stone," with capitals of white Italian marble, modeled after those in the temple of Jupiter Stator, at Rome. They were once referred to in debate as "colossal Bologna sausages, with the upper ends dipped in table-salt." Noble as are the proportions of this grand old hall, it was found ill-adapted for legislative debate. The representatives could hear the Speaker, but they could not hear each other, and there were perplexing echoes which still remain, and are revealed to visitors by the attendants, who also show curious resemblances to distinguished faces in the cemented pebbles which form the columns.

It was in this old hall that Henry Clay,



JOHN RANDOLPH.

then Speaker of the House, welcomed Lafayette as the nation's guest, and John Quincy Adams pronounced the gallant Frenchman's eulogy. There, the great parliamentary battles were fought over the admission of Missouri, the tariff, the United States Bank, and nullification, with their kindred issues. There, that pernicious doctrine, "To the victors belong the spoils," was infused like a malig-

nant poison into our body politic. There, the old Whig party had its rise and fall, and there the Republican party was launched upon the stormiest of political seas.

The despot of the debates for many years was the eccentric John Randolph, who would ride on horseback from his lodgings in Georgetown to the Capitol, and enter the House, wearing a fur cap with a large visor, a heavy great-coat



EDMUNDS.



LAMAR.



ANTHONY.



BAYARD.



HARRISON.



WINDOM.

A GROUP OF SENATORS.

over a suit of Virginia homespun, and white-topped boots with jingling silver spurs. Striding down the main aisle, followed by his brace of pointer-dogs, he would stop before his desk, upon which he would deliberately place his cap, his gloves, and his riding-whip, listening meanwhile to the debate. If he took any interest in it, he would begin to speak at the first opportunity, without any regard to what had previously been said. After he had uttered a few sentences (and had drunk a glass of porter, which an assistant door-keeper had orders to bring whenever he rose to speak), his tall, meager form would writhe with passion; his long, bony index-finger would be pointed at those on whom he poured his wrath; and the expression of his

beardless, high-cheeked, and sallow countenance would give additional force to the brilliant and beautiful sentences which he would rapidly utter, full of stinging witticisms and angry sarcasm. So distinct was his enunciation, that his shrill voice could be heard in every part of the hall; his words were select and strictly grammatical, and the arrangement of his remarks was always harmonious and effective.

Randolph, having had a dinner-table difficulty with Willis Alston, of North Carolina, never let pass an opportunity for alluding to him in the most bitter and contemptuous manner. Alston, enraged one day by some language used by Randolph in debate,



A CARD TO A "MEMBER."



A PERSISTENT LOBBVIST.



IN THE CLOAK-ROOM.



Hancock. Sheridan. Sherman.  
General Officers of the Army.

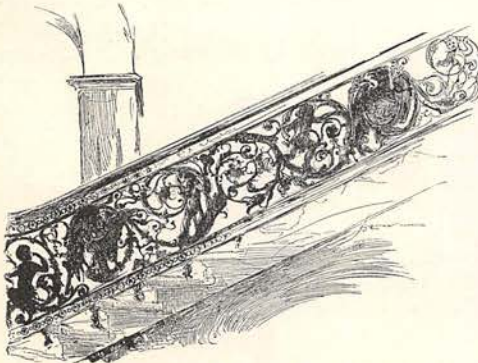
Members of the Cabinet.  
SKETCH OF THE SCENE IN THE HALL OF REPRESENTATIVES

said, as the representatives were leaving the hall and Randolph was passing him: "The puppy has still some respect shown him." Whether the allusion referred to Randolph or to one of his pointer-dogs, which was following him, was afterward a question, but Randolph immediately began beating Alston over the head with the handle of his heavy riding-whip, inflicting several wounds. The next day the Grand Jury, which was in session, indicted Randolph for a breach of the peace, but the court allowed him to offer the remark about the puppy as evidence in extenuation, and inflicted a fine of twenty dollars.

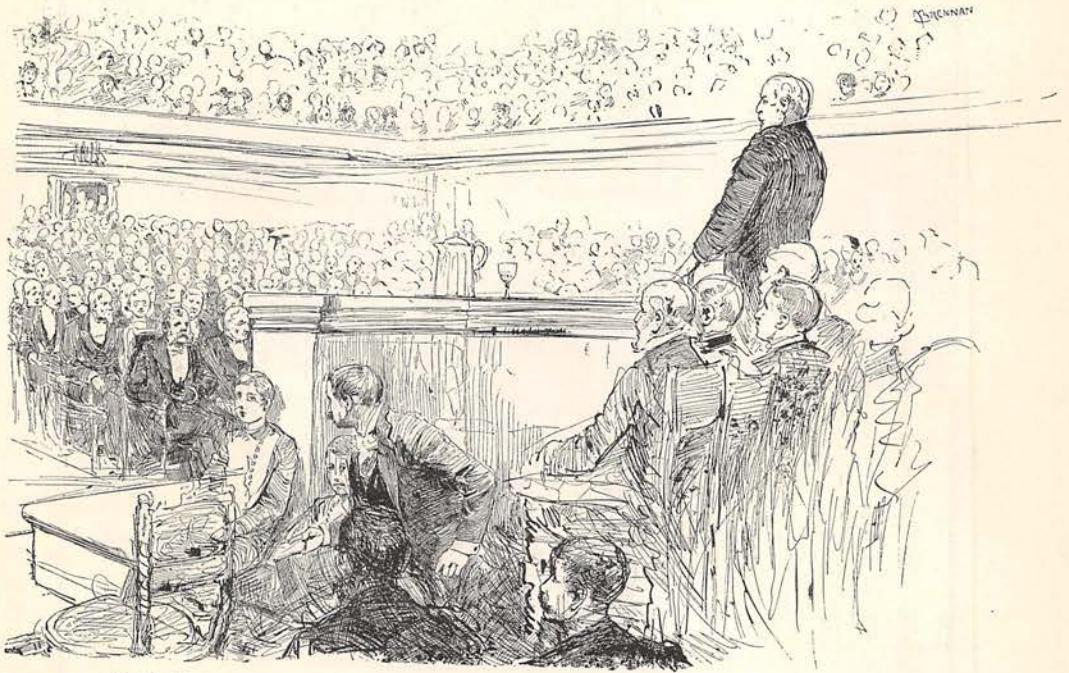
Among a little corps of Congressional

adherents which Randolph ruled with a scepter of iron, was Daniel Sheffey, one of his Virginian colleagues in the House, who had risen by his ability and his industry from a shoe-maker's bench to a seat in Congress. After having obediently followed Randolph's lead for some time, Sheffy ventured, during a debate, to speak and to act for himself in opposition to the "Lord of Roanoke." This Randolph resented, making a personal attack upon the deserting henchman, in which he upbraided him with his low origin, and quoted the Latin proverb: "*Ne sutor ultra crepidam,*"—"The cobbler should stick to his last." Sheffey did not receive his punishment with humility, but retorted pluckily, admitting his humble origin, but asserting that, had Mr. Randolph been in his place, he never would have risen from it, but would have remained a cobbler all his life. Replies and rejoinders were kept up for nearly two days, and the once friendly leader and follower worried each other like angry bull-dogs, until the House dragged them apart.

During the debate on the Missouri question, Mr. Philemon Beecher, a native of Connecticut who had emigrated to Ohio, and had there been elected a representative, became somewhat impatient as his dinner-hour approached, and at last, when Randolph made a somewhat lengthy pause, moved "the



PART OF BRONZE STAIRCASE BY BAUDIN IN THE SENATE WING.



The President.

DURING THE GARFIELD MEMORIAL SERVICES.

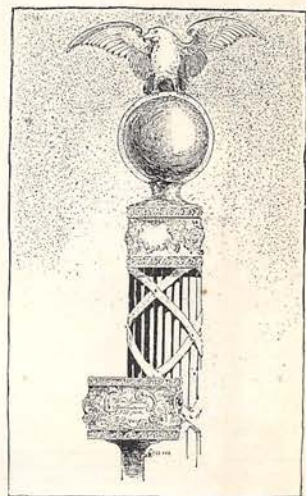
Mr. Blaine.

previous question." The Speaker said, "The gentleman from Virginia has the floor," and Randolph proceeded, to be again interrupted when he paused again to collect his thoughts, by a demand for "the previous question"; nor was it long before the demand was made for the third time. Randolph could stand it no longer, but said, in a voice as shrill as the cry of a peacock: "Mr. Speaker, in the Netherlands, a man of small capacity, with bits of wood and leather, will in a few moments construct that which, with the pressure of the finger and thumb, will cry 'Cuckoo! cuckoo!' With less ingenuity and with inferior materials, the people of Ohio have made a toy that will, without much pressure, cry, 'Previous question! previous question!'" and, as he spoke, Randolph pointed with his attenuated index-finger at Beecher, who did not attempt a reply.

Years afterward, John Quincy Adams rivaled Randolph as a fomenter of discord, whose delight it was to raise a storm of debate. When "the old man eloquent" would rise to address the House, during one of the cyclones of sectional passion which he had started, his bald head resembled a polished globe of white marble; but, as he proceeded (assailed on all sides, but standing like a sturdy oak in a tempest), it began to assume a scarlet look, and would at last be-

come a bright crimson. Cold-blooded, clear-headed, logical, and merciless,—caring nothing about consistency or inconsistency, except as a weapon to use against others,—no insinuation or sarcasm exasperated him, and attacks on him were like throwing fire-crackers at an iceberg.

It was in the old hall of the House that Caleb Cushing displayed that political sleight-of-hand which enabled him to make the flimsiest supposition appear like a "fixed fact"; and there Robert Toombs, towering above those around him like a Titan, poured forth with rapid utterance his caustic antagonism to the budding doctrines of emancipation. There Corwin convulsed his hearers with his wit and humor, and Edward Everett, fresh



THE MACE.



IN THE ROTUNDA.

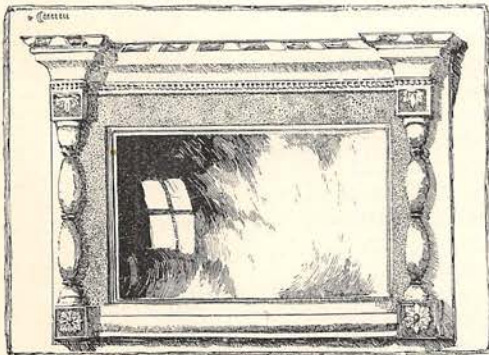
from his pulpit, established his reputation as an accomplished orator.

When the old hall was first occupied by the House, many of the representatives came from the backwoods, and were but little acquainted with the courtesies and refinements of civilized life. There was a striking difference between them and the dignified, polite, soldier-statesmen of the Revolutionary epoch, and occasionally, when angry, they would draw in debate the weapons which they invariably carried, while the sergeant-at-arms, bearing aloft his "mace," would hasten

to place himself between the excited combatants. Yet this type of an American citizen, which has been portrayed in fiction as "Nimrod Wildfire" and "Roaring Ralph Stackpole," possessed many of those stern Roman virtues that teach the personal sacrifice of the legislator to the rights, the interests, and the welfare of his constituents.

It was not until 1818 that Congress made the necessary appropriations for building the central rotunda. When its eastern portico was completed, its tympanum was adorned by an allegorical group, sculptured in high relief from designs by John Quincy Adams, when Secretary of State. Beneath this group, on a temporary platform built over the broad stair-way, the oath of office has been administered to each successive President during the past half-century. The impressive scene reminds one who has passed Holy Week in Rome of the assembled populace congregated before St. Peter's on Easter Sunday to receive the blessing of the Pope. The resemblance is heightened by a salute from a light battery stationed near by, which is echoed by the great guns at the Navy Yard, at the Arsenal, and at Fort Washington.

In the central portion of the Capitol, west



OLD MIRROR IN THE VICE-PRESIDENT'S ROOM. [SEE P. 817.]

of the rotunda, is the Library of Congress. After the destruction of the original library by the British, Congress purchased the collection of books made by Mr. Jefferson, and there are now about six hundred thousand books and pamphlets, many of which are piled up, waiting for shelf-room in the proposed new Library building. For many years, the Library, —with its portico overlooking the city,—its books, and its engravings, was the favorite morning resort of the literary and fashionable society congregated at Washington during the sessions of Congress.

In 1827 Mr. Bulfinch, the architect of the Capitol, reported the edifice completed, and returned to Boston. The stately building, with its low dome and its ranges of columns, was the admiration of architects; and William H. Seward once spoke of it as "perfect in design, perfect in proportion, perfect in all its adaptations." Even Mrs. Trollope, mother of the recently deceased novelist (and the author of a sarcastic book of travels in the United States), was impressed with "the beauty and majesty of the Capitol, standing so finely high and alone,—an object of imposing beauty to the whole country adjacent."

As the nation increased in size and in importance, the Capitol became too circumscribed for the use of Congress, and it was thought by many devoted friends of the Union that the enlargement of the edifice might serve as an additional tie to bind the country together. Several plans were presented, but the first suggestion that north and south wings should be added was made by Jefferson Davis, then a senator from Mississippi, and a member of the committee on public buildings and grounds. Mr. Mills, a Washington architect, adopting this suggestion, submitted to Congress designs for the proposed wings and a new dome. The necessary appropriations for commencing the wings were made, and the corner-stone of one of them was laid with Masonic ceremonies on the 4th of July, 1851, Daniel Webster delivering an appropriate oration. The construction was begun by contract, under the direction of Thomas A. Walter, a Philadelphia architect; but great abuses were discovered, and the inspection of the work was given to Captain M. C. Meigs, of the United States Engineer Corps, an honest and efficient officer, who sacrificed the comfort of the congressmen by so changing the plans as to immure the two Houses in the centers of their respective wings, thus forming two hollow squares, in accordance with military tactics. The wings are built of white marble from the quarries at Lee, Massachusetts, with monolithic columns from Coveysville, Maryland. The Senate cham-

ber has room on its floor for one hundred and twenty senators, and its galleries will accommodate a thousand spectators. The hall of the House is much larger than the Senate chamber, and will accommodate four hundred representatives on its floor, and two thousand spectators in its galleries.

Each House has its "Diplomatic Gallery," set apart for the diplomatic representatives of foreign powers, who, however, are rarely seen there. Above and back of the chairs of the presiding officers are the "Press Galleries," with adjacent telegraph offices, frequented by some sixty quick-witted and generally well-informed representatives of the leading journals of the country, who, like the Athenians, "spend their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing." Through the afternoon and late into the night the telegraph wires leading from the Capitol are busy with the reports of these correspondents, from which millions of citizens derive their daily information concerning legislative action.

The offices and committee-rooms of the Senate and the House, in the new wings, are elegant apartments, handsomely furnished, some of them having ceilings elaborately decorated in fresco. In the Vice-President's room (where Henry Wilson closed his active and useful life), visitors are shown in a closet the modest mirror, used half a century ago, the purchase of which was denounced in debate as a piece of extravagance. The committee-rooms are the hot-beds of legislation, in which the seed sown in the shape of petitions and memorials grows into bills and resolutions.

Descending into the subterranean regions of the Capitol, visitors find themselves in the heating and ventilating departments, where they are shown the intricate machinery, propelled by steam-engines, for removing the foul atmosphere from the legislative halls, and replacing it with pure air, heated in winter and cooled in summer.

During the great and angry discussions of the Kansas-Nebraska questions, the architect of the Capitol gave a supper at a night-session, at which he asked for an appropriation of one hundred thousand dollars for removing the old dome of the Capitol and beginning the construction of one better suited to the proportions of the enlarged edifice. The desired appropriation was made that night, and when Congress re-assembled the following December, the old dome had been removed, and every cent of the appropriation had been expended. There was much grumbling by the economists when another hundred thousand dollars was asked for, for the construction of a new dome; but the money was voted, and

the new structure was constructed of large plates of cast iron, bolted together on huge upright iron ribs, like those of a vessel. Its total weight is nine millions of pounds, and it is crowned with a bronze figure of America, by Crawford, which weighs nearly fifteen thousand pounds more, and stands about three hundred feet above the earth. The statue faces the east, turning its back upon the present location of the city, and looking down on the level plain where it was meant to be.

While the new dome was unfinished, the war of Secession broke out, and the Capitol grounds became the rendezvous of numerous regiments of loyal soldiers, who had hastened to the defense of the city. Many of these militiamen were quartered in the Capitol. Every pleasant afternoon they were drilled, and they were often visited by a tall, gaunt, ungainly man, whose high silk hat towered above helmets and pompons, and whose kind words to the soldiers secured their devotion to "Honest Old Abe," as they called him. Twice, during the first years of the war, the Capitol was used as a hospital, and scores of brave fellows died there.

The daily sessions of Congress are much the same. As the hour of noon approaches, the senators begin to congregate in their chamber. Sometimes little groups are formed, which chat merrily until a rap from the presiding officer commands silence. A prayer is then offered by the chaplain, who does not always have many devout hearers, and his "amen" is echoed by an order from the presiding officer that the journal of the last day's proceedings be read. Before he has concluded, nearly every senator is sure to be in his seat. Petitions are presented by senators, received, and referred by the presiding officer to the appropriate committees—usually never to be heard from again. Bills are introduced and ordered to be printed. Executive communications are received and referred to committees, and reports are made by committees on subjects which have been previously intrusted to them, often accompanied by bills which are at once considered and passed, or placed on the calendar, to be taken up in their order. After this routine business, bills on the calendar are successively considered until two o'clock, when the bill which has been made the order of the day is taken up. There is no limit to speaking in the Senate, and entire days are often occupied by a senator in giving his views on some measure which he regards as of importance to his constituents, although he may not have a dozen listeners.

Usually, one of the private secretaries of the President presents himself in the main aisle of

the Senate chamber about two o'clock in the afternoon. The assistant door-keeper stands at his right hand, and the presiding officer, availing himself of the first pause in the remarks of the senator having the floor, arrests him by saying: "The Senate will receive a message from the President of the United States!" The assistant door-keeper, making a profound obeisance, announces "A message from the President of the United States," and the secretary then says: "Mr. President, I am instructed by the President of the United States to present a message in writing." He then bows and hands his package of manuscript to the assistant door-keeper, who carries it to the presiding officer, after which the senator whose remarks were interrupted resumes them. Messages brought from the House of Representatives by its clerk are received with similar formalities. Later in the afternoon, a motion is generally made that the Senate proceed to the consideration of executive business. If it is carried, as is generally the case, the presiding officer directs the sergeant-at-arms to "clear the galleries and close the doors!" Then the proceedings of the Senate, relieved from the restraint of spectators and of newspaper correspondents, become somewhat free and easy. Cigars are lighted, comfortable positions are assumed, and often a good deal of humor—with an occasional dash of bad temper—is displayed in the confidential canvass of the history and the qualifications of the presidential nominees. The proceedings of the Senate while in executive session are regarded as confidential; but senators are often willing to tell correspondents what has happened, in order that they and their political friends may be placed advantageously before the country.

The House of Representatives is opened in the same manner as the Senate, except that after prayers the sergeant-at-arms places on a stand, at the Speaker's right hand, the mace which is his emblem of authority. Petitions are presented in the House by placing them, without any announcement, in a box, from which they are distributed by the clerk among the committees. The order of morning business is unintelligible to strangers, and is merely the successive recognition, by the Speaker, of those members who have obtained from him a promise that they can have the floor. In keeping these promises, the Speaker often pays no heed to members in the front seats who are endeavoring to attract his attention by cries of "Mister Speaker!" in every note in the gamut, accompanied by frantic gesticulations, and "recognizes" some quiet person beyond them.



"I have been a member of this House three successive sessions," said an indignant Tennessean who had vainly tried to obtain the floor, "and during that time I have caught the measles, the whooping-cough, and the influenza, but I have never been able to catch the Speaker's eye."

In the debates on appropriation bills, each member has the right to speak for five minutes, and those closing the debate have an hour each, parts of which they often farm out to their friends. When a member takes the floor for a long speech, especially if he reads it, he receives but little attention. A few of his colleagues and friends, tipping their chairs back to an angle which they suppose is comfortable, pretend to listen; but a large majority of the representatives go on reading the newspapers and writing letters, or retire to the cloak-rooms. When a vote is taken by tellers, a member of each party is named by the presiding officer, and the two take positions in front of the Speaker's table facing each other. Here they shake hands, and the voters pass between them—first those voting in the affirmative, and then those voting in the negative. The voters are counted by each teller as they pass, and a report of the result is made by one of the tellers to the presiding officer.

The proceedings of the Senate and of the House are taken down in short-hand by the experienced official reporters, revised in man-

uscript when those reported so desire, and promptly put in type at the Government Printing Office. Proof-slips are sent out when asked for, and some congressmen change, correct, and polish their sentences until but little of what they originally said remains; while others, notably Senator Edmunds, never look at a proof. The proceedings of each day, no matter how voluminous they may be, appear in the "Congressional Record" of the following morning, when another opportunity is given for correction before the pages are stereotyped for the bound edition. Each congressman receives twenty-four copies of the "Congressional Record." The revised edition is thoroughly indexed, and is bound in volumes at the close of a session.

It is a curious fact that a number of the present senators and representatives were, earlier in life, employés of Congress. Senator Gorman, of Maryland, was a page, and rose by promotion to be postmaster of the Senate. Representatives R. R. Hitt, of Illinois, and Samuel F. Barr, of Pennsylvania, were clerks of senate committees, and Representative N. F. Deering was a clerk in the office of the Secretary of the Senate; while Representatives R. W. Townshend, of Illinois, and George D. Wise, of Virginia, were pages in the House of Representatives. The transfer of these gentlemen from humble positions in the Capitol to seats in Congress illustrates the simplicity of our republican institutions.

*Ben: Perley Poore.*

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REMONSTRANCE.

OPINION, let me alone; I am not thine.  
 Prim Creed, with categoric point, forbear  
 To feature me my Lord by rule and line.  
 Thou canst not measure Mistress Nature's hair,  
 Not one sweet inch: nay, if thy sight is sharp,  
 Would'st count the strings upon an angel's harp?  
 Forbear, forbear.

Oh, let me love my Lord more fathom deep  
 Than there is line to sound with: let me love  
 My fellow not as men that mandates keep:  
 Yea, all that's lovable, below, above,  
 That let me love by heart, by heart, because  
 (Free from the penal pressure of the laws)  
 I find it fair.

The tears I weep by day and bitter night,  
 Opinion! for thy sole salt vintage fall.  
 —As morn by morn I rise with fresh delight,