

VIEW OF EARLY WASHINGTON FROM ANACOSTIA.

period. In 1851 the corner stone of the Capitol extension was laid, and from this beginning the great work was actively prosecuted. A commencement had been made in the improvement of the public grounds, known as the Mall, in accordance with the plans of Mr. A. H. Downing, a distinguished landscape architect of those days, whose death shortly afterward prevented the carrying out of the plans under his personal direction. Nevertheless the work went on and improvements were made in the grounds south of the President's house, and a system of drives and walks were laid out in the Mall, then described as a marshy and desolate waste. One reason, no doubt, for the attention given by Congress to the beautifying of the public grounds was the fact that a beginning had just been made of the expenditure of the money given by James Smithson and the walls of the building of the Smithsonian Institution had just been erected, while to the west arose the column of the Washington monument, which was gradually ascending skyward, and in the year 1852 had reached the height of over 100 feet. Large sums of money were being expended in the erection of new buildings and the enlarging of old buildings at the navy yard. A site for the Government Hospital for the Insane had practically been selected, and plans were being made for establishing the Soldiers' Home on the grounds then recently purchased north of the city.

Lafayette Park, where the statue of Jackson had just been erected, was laid out with walks and surrounded by a fence. The triangular space on the north side of Pennsylvania avenue between 13th and 14th streets was improved, and later Market space, on the north side of Pennsylvania avenue between 7th and 8th streets, was handsomely laid out. The front of the city hall had recently been completed and that building no longer bore the appearance of a ruin, as it had for so many years.

The agitation on the part of the citizens to have the city supplied with water resulted in a report made in the year 1853, by Captain Meigs, and marked the beginning of the enterprise of the Great Falls aqueduct. The city authorities spent large sums of money at this time in an effort to get the canal in a navigable condition, as that waterway had become so choked up that vessels could no longer come in from the river at 17th street, or from the Eastern branch, and pass through the center of the city at Pennsylvania avenue and 7th street. It was necessary to unload the boats, laden with wood and other supplies, at the wharf at 17th street, and have the cargoes taken into the city on scows. During the year 1852 nearly \$50,000 of the revenue of the city was expended on this waterway. When it is considered that the entire revenue of

the city that year amounted to about \$230,000, it will be recognized that the municipal authorities considered the canal of considerable importance.

Some idea of the growth of the town may be gathered from the records of the dwellings erected during the year 1852. A total is shown of 632, which was nearly 200 more than that of the previous year and over 300 more than in the year 1850, while during the year 1849 only 184 dwellings had been built.

Radical Changes.

The increase in the population and the expansion of the business of the city led to the enlargement of many of the facilities of municipal life. It was at this time that the city council had under consideration plans for the establishing of a paid fire department in place of the volunteer companies. Then, too, the public schools were enjoying a degree of prosperity which they never had before. A few years previously the system of requiring a fee from the parents of those scholars who were able to pay, and allowing the children whose parents were shown to be poor to attend without charge, had been abolished, and with it a discrimination between rich and poor, which had such a disastrous effect on the schools. Instead of four schools there were fourteen, and the attendance had increased to 2,500. The school trustees were urging the need of providing a superintendent, and also for adding to the system by establishing a high school.

It was evident that the citizens were no longer satisfied with the transportation facilities of the city, as during that year no less than two petitions were laid before the council asking permission to lay railroad tracks for horse cars from the Capitol to Georgetown, and also from Pennsylvania avenue to the steamboat wharves. In the year 1853 was chartered a steam road known as the Metropolitan railroad, which was intended to be a line from Georgetown northward to Point of Rocks and Frederick, Md. The city authorities were conferring with the directors of the Alexandria and Orange railroad, with a view of having them extend their railroad to some point near the District line. A little later the Baltimore and Ohio had authority from Congress to build their line to what is now known as Shepherd's Point, and in the year 1854 the tracks of the Washington and Alexandria railroad were laid on the Long bridge and on Maryland avenue to 1st street and along the latter street in front of the west gates of the grounds of the Capitol to the Baltimore and Ohio tracks at New Jersey, avenue and C street.

All these activities are indications of a growing, prosperous community. In fact, the city was going ahead so rapidly that the corporate authorities found it difficult

to keep pace with the street improvements, and so it was announced by John T. Maury, the mayor, in his annual message, that houses were being built beyond the limits of graded streets and paved footways.

Sanitary Improvements.

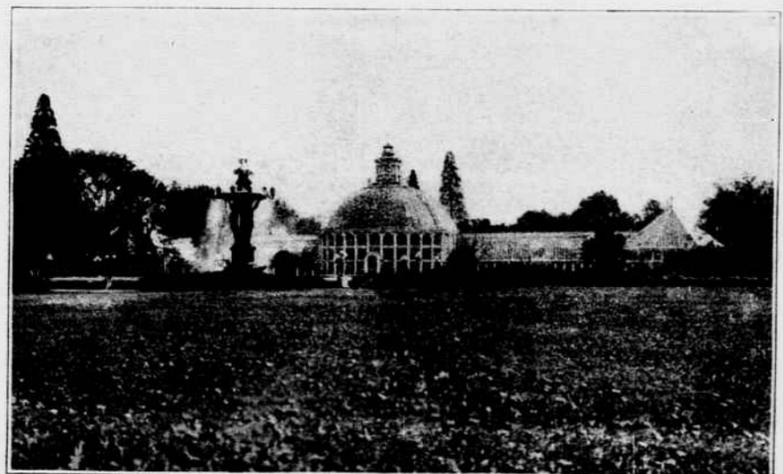
While looking after the material interests of the citizens the corporate authorities were not unmindful of the city's health, and the board of health called attention to the insanitary conditions of the alleys and made provisions for vaccinating the poor. From the same source came a measure to prohibit the establishment of burial grounds within the limits of the city. A proposition was also made to the city council that a plan should be adopted for numbering the houses of the city, as it was found the method followed in the directory of 1853, as in previous issues, of designating the residences by stating that they were on the north side of a street, between such and such a street, was unsuited to the new conditions.

One of the events of the year 1852 was the May day procession of the school children of the city. A large proportion of the pupils, headed by the board of trustees and their teachers, marched to the Capitol, where they were received at the east front by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House. A petition was presented to these officials asking the kindly interest of Congress in the public schools in the District, and the document was received and acknowledged with appropriate speeches.

It may be interesting to note that the winter of 1852 was the coldest known for forty years. The mercury on the 19th of

January fell five degrees below zero, and snow lay on the ground for a depth of seven inches. The Potomac river for three miles below the Great Falls was blocked with ice to the height of thirty feet. Opposite Georgetown the ice on the river was a foot thick. The steamer with southern mails and passengers for the south was all day in reaching Aquia creek. Of course, danger was apprehended then, as so often since, to the structure of the Long bridge, but it seems to have come out damaged but still good for use. The importance of rebuilding the Potomac bridge, as it was then called, was frequently urged at that time. There was, of course, no railroad track over the structure, but it led to the Alexandria turnpike and was the most direct route between Washington and Alexandria. Fourteenth street was the thoroughfare that led to the bridge, and to accommodate the travel an iron bridge was built over the canal where it intersected this street. This bridge contained a draw, so that when the canal was in a navigable condition vessels could pass up into the city. An iron bridge also spanned the canal at 12th street, while there were bridges at 7th street and one about 3d street. From the south end of 7th street ran then, as now, the ferry boats, making hourly trips to Alexandria, while the northern end of that important thoroughfare had been made a plank road all the way from the Boundary to the District line.

In the spring of 1852 appeared the last installment of Mrs. Stowe's famous story, "Uncle Tom's Cabin," which had its first publication as a serial in the columns of the National Era, a weekly paper published in this city.



THE U. S. BOTANIC GARDEN.