



TEN YEARS IN WASHINGTON

LIFE AND SCENES IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL,
AS A WOMAN SEES THEM

Mary Clemmer Ames

Here we have three chapters transcribed from Ames's 1873 book about the capital of the United States. We've done our best to accurately retype Ames's work. So, what might be oddities to modern eyes – hight instead of height, or irregularity in the use of the serial comma, or a comma before a close parenthesis, for example – are (as best we can tell) all in the original. Enjoy!

– *The Editors*

CHAPTER XIII

THE CONGRESSIONAL LIBRARY

[list of topics covered in chapter omitted]

The most remarkable fact of the present connected with the Congressional Library, is its Librarian, Mr. Ainsworth R. Spofford.

Mr. Spofford was appointed Assistant Librarian by President Lincoln, December 31, 1864, and upon the resignation of Mr. Stephenson the same month succeeded him as Librarian. Mr. Spofford was formerly connected with the secular press of Cincinnati, Ohio, and was also engaged in the book trade in the same city. But neither fact accounts for his almost unlim-

For background on Mary C. Ames, see pages 139-141 above.

ited practical knowledge of books of every age and in every language. He is himself a vast library in epitome. If you wish to inform yourself upon any subject under the sun, if you have any right or privilege to inform Mr. Spofford of that fact, in five minutes you will have placed before you a list, written down rapidly from memory, of the best works extant upon the subject named, and in as few moments as it will take to find them, and draw them forth from their dusty nests, you will have them all heaped on a table before you, ready for your search and research, and all the headaches they will be sure to give you.

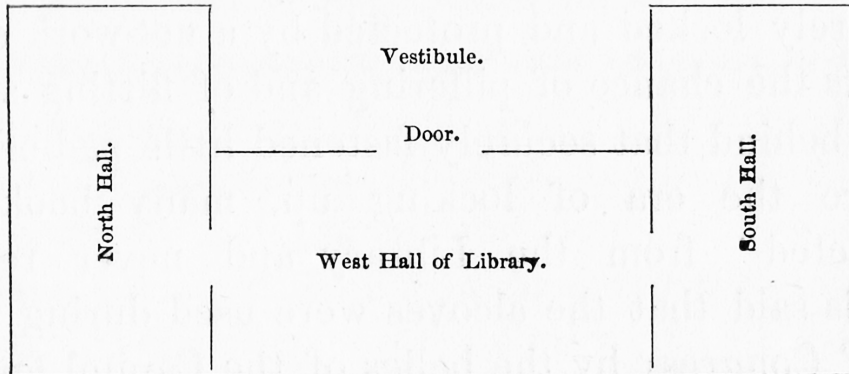
Mr. Spofford has the credit among experts of writing many Congressional speeches for honorable gentlemen whose verbs and nominatives by chronic habit disagree, and whose spelling-books were left very far behind them, but who nevertheless are under the imperative necessity of writing learned speeches of which their dear constituents may boast and be proud. By the way, a lady in private life in Washington,— a scholar and caustic writer,— used to earn all her pin money, before her ship of fortune came in, by writing, in the solitude of her room, the learned, witty and sarcastic speeches which were thundered in Congress the next day, by some Congressional Jupiter, who could not have launched such a thunder-bolt to have saved his soul had it not been first forged and electrified by a woman. The Librarian of Congress is too much absorbed by his routine labors to have much time or strength to spare for the writing out of Congressional speeches. But daily and almost hourly he suggests and supplies the materials for such speeches. When a member whose erudition is not remarkable, stands up in his seat, backing every sentence he utters on finance, law or politics, by great authority, more than one mentally exclaims, “Spofford!” We know where he has been. Mr. Spofford is a slight gentleman in the prime of life, of nervous temperament with very straight, smooth hair, classic features and a placid countenance. Always a gentleman, his patience and urbanity are inexhaustible, if you have the slightest claim upon his care. If you have not, and he has no intention of being “bothered,” his “shoo fly” capabilities are equally effectual. Like most book-people, Mr. Spofford’s nervous life far outruns his material forces. He needs more sunshine, air and out-of-door existence, as most Americans do. Therefore I here cast him a crumb of sisterly counsel, born of gratitude and selfishness. Spend more time on the Rock Creek and Piney Branch roads, on the hills

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DIAGRAM OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.



and by the sea, Mr. Spofford. Then may you live long, prosper, and grow wiser, for the sake of my books, and everybody's!

The halls of the Library of Congress are among the most chaste, unique and indestructible of all the halls of the Capitol. The Library occupies the entire central portion of the western front of the original Capitol. The west hall extends the entire length of the western front flanked by two other halls, one on the north the other on the south side of the projection.

The west hall which a few years since made the whole Library, is 91 feet 6 inches in length, 34 feet wide and 38 feet high, the other two halls of the same height are 29 feet 6 inches wide and 95 feet long. The halls are lighted by windows looking out upon the grounds of the Capitol and by roof lights of stained glass. The ceiling is iron and glass, and rests on foliated iron brackets each weighing a ton. The pilasters and panels are of iron painted a neutral hue tinged with pale green and burnished with gold leaf. The floors are of tessellated black and white marble. The iron book-cases on either side rise story on story, floored with cast-iron plates, protected by railings, and traversed by light galleries. Including the Law Library, these halls contain 26,148 feet, or nearly five miles of book-shelving, and contain over 210,000 volumes. The iron floors are covered with *kamptulicon* floor cloth, a compound of India-rubber and cork, which possesses the triple advantage of being clean, light and cheap. The leg of every chair has a pad of solid India-rubber under it. Nobody is allowed to speak above

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a whisper; thus the stolid turning, or the light flutter of leaves make the only sound which stirs the silence. Alcove after alcove line the halls, but with the exception of two devoted to novels and other light reading, left open for the ladies of members' families, they are all securely locked and protected by a net-work of wire, and thus the chance of pilfering and of flirting are both shut in behind that securely fastened little padlock.

Before the era of locking up, many books were "abstracted" from the Library and never returned. And it is said that the alcoves were used during the sessions of Congress by the belles of the Capitol for reception rooms in which they received homage and listened to marriage proposals. The story is told of "a wealthy Southern representative gleaned materials for a speech in an upper section," who was suddenly stopped in his pursuit after knowledge above by the knowledge ascending from below that "a penniless adventurer" was that moment persuading his pretty daughter to elope in the alcove under him. It did not take the parent long to descend into that alcove. The daughter did not elope.

The halls are lined with wide tables and arm-chairs provided for all who wish to make use of the treasures of the Library. Tickets with blanks can be filled with the name of any book desired, over the signature of the applicant, who retains the book while remaining in the Library. On the back of those tickets are printed the following regulations of the Library:

1. Visitors are requested to remove their hats.
2. No loud talking is permitted.
3. No readers under sixteen years of age are permitted.
4. No book can be taken from the Library.
5. Readers are required to present tickets for all books wanted, and to return their books and take back their tickets before leaving the Library.
6. No reader is allowed to enter the alcoves.

No books can be taken out of the Library except on the responsibility of a member of Congress. Till within a very few years, books were allowed to be taken by strangers who presented a written permit to do so from a Congressional official. This courtesy resulted in the destruction and loss of so many valuable works, it had to be abolished and the stringent rules of the



THE CENTRAL ROOM, CONGRESSIONAL LIBRARY,
INSIDE THE CAPITOL.—WASHINGTON.

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present time established and strictly enforced. An act of Congress provided that books can be taken out of the Library only by the President of the United States, Members of the Cabinet, Judges of the United States Supreme Court, Members of the Senate and House of Representatives, Secretary of the Senate, Clerk of the House and members of the Diplomatic Corps. This privilege of course includes the families of these official gentlemen.

Forgetting this fact, the long list of story-books and new novels often “charged” to these State names would be something ridiculous. Dealers in light literature suffer somewhat from this privilege. The copyright law and the Congressional Library together provide society and State with all the surface literature that they want during their sojourn in Washington. For reference the books are most extensively and thoroughly used by all seekers after knowledge. American and foreign authors line the tables in these quiet halls daily, and the results of their research are usually given to the world. Legal, political, and historical works are the ones most constantly called for and searched.

From 1815 to 1864 the Library was catalogued on the system adopted by Mr. Jefferson according to Bacon’s Division of Science. This classification adapted to a small library was inadequate to the necessities of thousands of consulting readers. Mr. Spofford, on his advent as Librarian, went to work to simplify the system. The result was a complete catalogue of all the books in the great Library arranged alphabetically under the heads of authors. A proof of the perfection of this arrangement is, that any book hidden in the farthest corner of the most distant alcove is handed to a reader at the tables within five minutes after his application, while in the British Museum he would do well if he got it in the space of half an hour.

Till the reign of Mr. Spofford, newspapers, as valuable documentary history, had almost been ignored by the guardians of the Library. This great defect Mr. Spofford has done much to eradicate and remedy. Files of all the leading New York dailies are now regularly kept. Some unbroken files have been secured, including those of the *New York Evening Post*, from its beginning in 1801, the *London Gazette* from 1665, the French *Moniteur* (Royal, Imperial, and Republican,) from 1789, the *Illustrated London News*, the *Almanac de Gotha* from 1776, and a complete set of every newspaper ever published in the District of Columbia, including over one hundred now no more. Before the last progressive regime, even after Congress had appro-

priated \$75,000 for the replenishing of the Library, the entire national collection did not contain a modern encyclopedia, or a file of a New York daily newspaper, or of any newspaper except the venerable *Washington National Intelligencer*. *De Bow's Review* was the only American magazine taken, "but the *London Court Journal* was regularly received, and bound at the close of each successive year!"

The Congressional Library is the only one in the world utterly fire-proof, without an atom of wood or of any combustible material in its miles of shelving. Before it attained to this indestructible state it suffered much. First from the British. On the evening of August 24, 1814, after the battle of Bladensburg, General Ross led his victorious troops into the Federal City. As they approached the Capitol a shot was fired by a man concealed in a house on Capitol Hill. The shot was aimed at the British general, but only killed his horse. The enraged Britons immediately set fire to the house which contained the sharp-shooter, who, it is said, was a club-footed gardener-barber Irishman. The unmanageable troops were drawn up in front of the unfinished Capitol, a wooden scaffolding, occupying the place of the Rotunda, joining the two wings. They first fired a volley into the windows and then entered the building to prepare it for destruction. Admiral Cockburn ascended to the Speaker's chair, and derisively exclaimed:

"Shall this harbor of Yankee Democracy be burned? All for it say Aye!"

It was carried unanimously, and the torch of the Englishman applied to the hard-earned treasures of the young Republic. The Library of Congress, used as lighting paper, was entirely destroyed. With it, two pictures of national value were burned; portraits of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette, which, richly framed, had been sent to the United States Government in Philadelphia, by the unfortunate French King.

While the Capitol was burning, clouds and columns of fire and smoke were ascending from the President's house and all the other public buildings of the young city. The conflagration below was dulled by the conflagration above; one of the most dreadful storms of thunder and lightning ever known in Washington, met and lighted on the British invaders, dimming and quenching their malicious fires.

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THE NATIONAL CAPITOL,

As seen from Pennsylvania Avenue.

In 1851 the magnificent new library-room of the Central Capitol, which now held 55,000 volumes and many works of art, was discovered to be on fire. The destruction was immense. Thirty-five thousand volumes were destroyed. Among the valuable pictures burned at the same time were Stuart's paintings of the first five Presidents; an original portrait of Columbus; a second portrait of Columbus; an original portrait of Peyton Randolph; a portrait of Boliver; a portrait of Baron Steuben; one of Baron de Kalb; one of Cortez, and one of Judge Hanson, of Maryland, presented by his family. Between eleven and twelve hundred bronze medals of the Vattemare Exchange, some of them more than two centuries old, were destroyed; also, an Apollo in bronze, by Mills; a very superior bronze likeness of Washington; a bust of General Taylor, by an Italian artist; and a bust of Lafayette, by David.

The divisions of Natural History, Geography, and Travels, English and European History, Poetry, Fiction, and the Mechanic Arts and Fine Arts were all burned. The whole of the Law Library escaped the fire.

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It indicates the intellectual vitality of the nation that an appropriation of \$10,000 was immediately made for the restoration of the Library, and by the close of the year \$75,000 more for the same purpose.

Like most beginnings, that of the Congressional Library was humble in the extreme. The first provision for this great National collection was made at Philadelphia by an act of the Sixth Congress, April 24, 1800, appropriating \$5,000 for a suitable apartment and the purchase of books for the use of both Houses of Congress. The first books received were forwarded to the new seat of Government in the trunks in which they had been imported. President Jefferson, from its inception, an ardent friend of the Library, called upon the Secretary of the Senate, Samuel Allyne Otis, to make a statement on the first day of the session, December 7, 1801, respecting the books, the act of Congress having provided that the Secretary of the Senate, with the Clerk of House of Representatives, should be the purchasers of the books. The Congressional provision for the Library in 1806 was \$450.00.

In a report made by Doctor Samuel Latham Mitchell from New York to the House, January 20, 1806, he says:

“Every week of the session causes additional regret that the volumes of literature and science within the reach of the National Legislature are not more rich and ample. The want of geographical illustration is truly distressing, and the deficiency of historical and political works is scarcely less severely felt.”

President Madison always exercised a fostering care over the Library and an act approved by him, December 6, 1811, appropriates, for five additional years, the sum of one thousand dollars annually for its use.

The whole number of books accumulated in fourteen years, from 1800 to 1814, amounted only to about three thousand volumes. The growth of the Library may be traced in the relative sums appropriated to its benefit by successive Congresses. In 1818, \$2,000 were appropriated for the purchase of books. From 1820 to 1823, \$6,000 were voted to buy books.

In 1824, \$5,000 were appropriated for the purchase of books under the Joint Committee; also \$1,546 for the purchase of furniture for the new Library in the centre building of the Capitol.

The yearly appropriation for the increase of the Library, for many successive years after the accession of General Jackson, was \$5,000; these

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were exclusive of the appropriations made for the Law Department of the Library. In 1832 an additional appropriation of \$3,000 was made for Library furniture and repairs. In 1850 the annual appropriation of \$1,000 to purchase books for the Law Library was increased to \$2,000. Within a year of the burning of the Library in 1851, \$85,000 had been voted by Congress for the restoration of the Library and the purchase of books.

The west hall of the New Library was completed and occupied July 1, 1853. It was designed by Thomas A. Walter, the architect of the Capitol. The appropriation for miscellaneous books alone in the years 1865 and 1866 amounted to \$16,000. In 1866, \$1,500 were set apart for procuring files of leading American newspapers, and the sum of \$4,000 was voted June 25, 1864, to purchase a complete file of selections from European periodicals from 1861 to 1864 relating to the Rebellion in the United States. July 23, 1866, the amount of \$10,000 was voted by Congress for furniture for the two wings of the extension. The present magnificent halls of the Library of Congress were built at an expense of \$280,500. The main hall cost \$93,500, and the other two halls \$187,000. The last two have been built under the superintendence of Mr. Edward Clark. Beautiful and ample as these three halls are in themselves, they are already too small to hold the rapidly accumulating treasures of the Library. The next appropriation will take the Congressional Library out of the Capitol altogether into a magnificent building, built expressly for and devoted exclusively to the uses of the Grand Library of the Nation.

CHAPTER XIV

A VISIT TO THE NEW LAW LIBRARY

[list of topics covered in chapter omitted]

A little more than a month after the burning of the Library by the British in 1814, a letter was read in the Senate, from Thomas Jefferson at Monticello, tendering to Congress the purchase of his library of nine thousand volumes.

The collection of this library had been the delight of Mr. Jefferson's life, and, long before, he had written of it as "the best chosen collection of its size probably in America." Pecuniary embarrassments had already begun to cloud his closing years, and the double hope of relieving these, and of

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adding to the treasures of his beloved Republic, impelled him to this personal sacrifice. In his letter to the Committee he said:

“I should be willing indeed to retain a few of the books to amuse the time I have yet to pass, which might be valued with the rest, but not included in the sum of valuation until they should be restored at my death, which I would cheerfully provide for.”

The sum of \$23,950 in Treasury notes, of the issue ordered by the law of March 4, 1814, was paid him. The actual number of volumes thus acquired was 6,700. Although a Mr. King, of Massachusetts, more burdened with zeal than knowledge, made a motion which called out a loud and long debate, that all books of an atheistical, irreligious, and immoral tendency should be extirpated from the Library and sent back to Mr. Jefferson, the department of Theology in his library was found to be large, sound, and valuable.

In 1866 the custody of the Library of the Smithsonian Institution, with the agreement of the Regents, was transferred to the Library of Congress. It brought forty thousand additional volumes to the Congressional Library.

When you come to Washington, you will see in the gallery of the Smithsonian Institution the bust of a noble man standing on a simple plaster column, bearing the name PETER FORCE. He, during his life, did more than any one American to rescue from oblivion the early documentary history of the United States. He came from his native city, New York, to Washington, as a printer, in 1815. In 1820 he began the publication of the *National Calendar*, an annual volume of national statistics, and also published the *National Journal*, the Administration organ during the Presidency of John Quincy Adams. In 1833 the Government entered into a contract with Mr. Force to prepare and publish a “Documentary History of the American Colonies.” Nine volumes subsequently appeared under the title of the “American Archives.” In preparing this work, Mr. Force gathered a collection of books, manuscripts, and papers relating to American History, unequalled by any private collection in the world. At the request of the Joint Library Committee of the Thirty-ninth Congress, Mr. Spofford, the Librarian, entered into a thorough examination of the Force Library. After spending from two to three hours per day on it for two months, he presented to Congress an exhaustive classified report of its treasures, which resulted in the purchase of the entire Force Library by the Joint Library

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Committee for the sum of one hundred thousand dollars, the sum offered by the New York Historical Society for the same collection. It occupies the South Hall of the Congressional Library.

Before this purchase, the largest and most complete collection of books relating to America was tucked away on the shelves of the British Museum. Among the treasures of the Force Library is a perfect copy of Eliot's Indian Bible, the last copy of which sold brought \$1,000; forty-one different works of Cotton and Increase Mather, printed at Boston and Cambridge, from 1671 to 1735; complete files of the leading journals of Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and other States, from 1735 to 1800, with 245 bound volumes of American newspapers printed prior to 1800; and these make but a small proportion of its priceless historical wealth.

February 18, 1816, a bill was introduced in the Senate to establish a Law Library at the Seat of Government, for the use of the Supreme Court of the United States. It passed that body, but never went into effect, from the non-action of the House of Representatives on the bill. July 14, 1832, [Andrew Jackson, President,] a bill was approved, entitled, "An Act to increase and improve the Law Department of the Library of Congress," which, in its four sections, contained the following provisions:

"For the present year a sum not exceeding five thousand dollars, and a farther annual sum of one thousand dollars for the period of five years, to be expended in the purchase of law books."

The number of law books owned by the Library at that time was 2,011; 639 of these belonged to the Jefferson collection. From this beginning, within forty years has grown the finest law library in the world. It contains every volume of English, Irish and Scotch reports, besides the American; an immense collection of case law, a complete collection of the Statutes of all civilized countries since 1649, filling one hundred quarto volumes. It includes the first edition of Blackstone's Commentaries, an original edition of the report of the trial of Cagliostro, Rohan and La Motte, for the theft of Marie Antoinette's diamond necklace – that luckless bauble which fanned to such fury the fatal flames of the Revolution. When Andrew Jackson became President, in 1829, he appointed John S. Meehan, a printer of Washington, the first editor and publisher of the *Columbia Star* and *United States Telegraph*, Librarian of Congress. He continued in that office, till the

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accession of Mr. Lincoln – a period of thirty-two years. His son, Mr. C.H.W. Meehan, relinquished his boy pageship under his father, in 1832, to be transferred to the new Law Library. The lapse of forty years finds this gentleman still the special custodian of the Law Library. In 1835 he was entrusted with the choice of all books purchased for the Library, which trust he continues to hold. He adds another to the many faithful and learned lives whose entire span is measured by devoted service to the State, under the shadow of the Capitol. In December, 1860, the Law Library was removed into the basement room of the Capitol, just vacated by the Supreme Court. This room is unique and beautiful. Its vestibule is supported by pillars in clusters of stalks of maize, with capitals of bursting ears of corn, the design of Mr. Latrobe. The chamber itself is of semi-circular form seventy-five feet in length. The arches of the ceiling rest upon immense Doric columns. The spandrels of the arches are filled in with solid masonry – blocks of sandstone, strong enough to support the whole Capitol. Their tragic strength springs from the fact that the arch above fell once, burying and killing beneath it its designer, Mr. Lenthall. The plan of his arch in proportion to its height was pronounced unsafe by all who examined the drawing, except himself. To prove his own faith in his theory he tore away the scaffolding before the ceiling was dry. It fell, and he was taken out hours after, dead and mangled, from its fallen ruins. It will never fall again. The tremendous masonry which now supports a very light burden makes it impossible. The Doric columns diverge from the centre to the circumference like the radii of a circle. From this centre diverge the alcoves lined with books in the regulation binding, likened by Dickens to “underdone pie-crust.” On the western wall near the ceiling is a group in plaster, representing Justice holding the scales, and Fame crowned with the rising sun, pointing to the Constitution of the United States, the work of Franzoni, the sculptor of the History-winged clock, in the old Hall of Representatives. In this room, Daniel Webster made his great speech in the Dartmouth College case, and Horace Binney his argument in the case of the Girard Will. The Librarian’s semi-circular mahogany desk, with its faded green brocade draperies, once stood in the old Senate Chamber and re-echoed to the gavel of every Vice President who reigned in the Senate from 1825 to 1860.

CHAPTER XV
THE HEAVEN OF LEGAL AMBITION –
THE SUPREME COURT ROOM

[list of topics covered in chapter omitted]

One of the few rooms in the Capitol wherein harmony and beauty meet and mingle, is the Old Senate Chamber, now the Supreme Court Room of the United States.

Here Clay, and Webster, and Calhoun,— those giants of the past, whom octogenarians still deplore with all their remembered and forgotten peers,— once held high conclave. Defiance and defeat, battle and triumph, argument and oratory, wisdom and folly once held here their court. It is now the chamber of peace. Tangled questions concerning life, liberty and the pursuit of personal happiness are still argued within these walls, but never in tones which would drown the sound of a dropping pin. Every thought is weighed, every word measured that is uttered here. The judges who sit in silence to listen and decide, have outlived the tumult of youth and the summer of manhood's fiercer battles. They have earned fruition; they have won their gowns – which, while life lasts, can never be worn by others. Theirs is the mellow afternoon of wise judgment and wine-dinners.

In the Court room itself we seem to have reached an atmosphere where it is always afternoon. The door swings to and fro noiselessly, at the pull of the usher's string. The spectators move over a velvet carpet, which sends back no echo, to their velvet cushioned seats ranged against the outer-walls. A single lawyer arguing some constitutional question, drones on within the railed inclosure of the Court; or a single judge in measured tones mumbles over the pages of his learned decision in some case long drawn out. Unless you are deeply interested in it you will not stay long. The atmosphere is too soporific, you soon weary of absolute silence and decorum, and depart. The chamber itself is semi-circular, with snow white walls and windows crimson-curtained. It has a domed ceiling studded with stuccoed mouldings and sky-lights. The technical "bench " is a row of leather backed arm-chairs ranged in a row on a low dais. Over the central chair of the Chief Justice a gilt eagle looks down from a golden rod. Over this eagle, and parallel with the bench below, runs a shallow gallery, from which many fine ladies of successive administrations have looked down on

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the gods below. At intervals around the white walls are set brackets on which are perched the first four Chief Justices – John Jay, John Rutledge, Oliver Ellsworth and John Marshall. There have been but six Chief Justices of the Supreme Court since its beginning. Chief Justice Taney's bust, for years was left out in the cold on a pedestal within a recess of one of the windows of the Senate wing. It was voted in the Senate that it should there wait a certain number of expiatory years until in the fulness of time it should be sufficiently absolved to enter the historic heaven of its brethren.

One more is yet to be added – the grand head and face of Chief Justice Chase. The May flowers have scarcely faded since he held high court here alone. As ever his was the place of honor. A crown of white rosebuds shed incense upon his head – placed there by the beautiful daughter who crowned him in death, as in life, the first of men. Crosses, anchors and columns of stainless blossoms were heaped high above his head. Here in the silence of death, for one day and night, the great Chief Justice held Supreme Court alone.

During the session of the Supreme Court, the hour of meeting is 11 A.M. Precisely at that hour a procession of black-robed dignitaries, kicking up their long gowns very high with their heavy boots, may be seen wending their way from the robing-room to the Supreme Court room. They are preceded by the Marshal, who, entering by a side-door, leads directly to the Judges' stand, and, pausing before the desk, exclaims:

“The Honorable the Chief Justice and Associate Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States.”

With these words all present rise, and stand to receive the Justices filing in. Each Justice passes to his chair. The Judges bow to the lawyers; the lawyers bow to the Judges; then all sit down. The Crier then opens the Court with these words:

“O, yea! O, yea! O, yea! All persons having business with the honorable the Supreme Court of the United States are admonished to draw near and give their attendance, as the Court is now sitting. God save the United States and this honorable Court.”

At the close of this antique little speech, the Chief Justice motions to the lawyer whose case is to be argued, and that gentleman rises, advances to the front, and begins his argument.

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The chairs of the Judges are all placed in the order of their date of appointment. On either side of the Chief Justice sit the senior Judges, while the last appointed sit at the farther ends of each row. In the robing-room, their robes, and coats and hats, hang in the same order. In the consultation-room, where the Judges meet on Saturday to consult together over important cases presented, their chairs around the table are arranged in the same order, the Chief Justice presiding at the head. Both the robing and consultation-rooms command beautiful views from their windows of the city, the Potomac, and the hills of Virginia. In the former, the Judges exchange their civic dress for the high robes of office. These are made of black silk or satin, and are almost identical with the silk robe of an Episcopal clergyman. The gown worn by Judge McClean still hangs upon its hook as when he hung it there for the last time – years and years ago. The consultation-room is across the hall from the Law Library, whose books are in constant demand by the lawyers and Judges of the Supreme Court. This room is in charge of “Uncle Henry,” a colored man, who has held this office for fifty years, and, at the age of eighty, still fulfils his duties with all the alacrity and twice the devotion of a much younger man.

