
CHAPTER 4—1856



Plaster model of the Statue of Freedom by Thomas Crawford, 1859
Architect of the Capitol



"Capitol extension, general view, January 1857" after removal of old dome *Architect of the Capitol*



Meigs' sketch of the way Rogers would divide his door (Mar. 19, 1855) *The Papers of Montgomery C. Meigs, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Shorthand Journal, Volume 1 (Oct. 15, 1852-Dec. 31, 1855)*



The bronze door to the House wing of the Capitol, designed by Thomas Crawford, *Architect of the Capitol*



Randolph Rogers' Columbus doors *Architect of the Capitol*



Meigs' sketch of the way Crawford would divide his door (May 31, 1855) *The Papers of Montgomery C. Meigs, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Shorthand Journal, Volume 1, Oct. 15, 1852-Dec. 31, 1855).*

CHAPTER 4—1856

JAN. 1ST. I begin a new volume of my journal with the new year.

I find myself at Washington engaged as I have been for the last 3 years. I arrived in Washington on the 3rd of November, 1852. I came here to take charge of the survey to supply Washington with water. Having made a survey and a project which met with favor from the people and from the government, an appropriation having been made for building the aqueduct which I had designed, I was placed in charge of the work. At this time a new administration, that of Mr. Pierce, coming into power and the popular belief being that the management of the works of the building of the extension of the Capitol was corrupt, it was determined to place an engineer officer in charge of them. I was selected for this purpose. And I have now for some time been in charge of the Capitol extension, the Washington aqueduct, the building of the new cast iron dome upon the Capitol, the extension of the general Post Office building, and the construction of Fort Madison at Annapolis.

The management of all these works give me ample employment. They have been the means of giving me some name and reputation among my friends. They have also been a means of giving me much knowledge, so that I am at this moment a much more competent engineer and businessman than I was when I was first placed in charge of them.

I believe I have done my duty. I know that I have tried to, and I seem to have succeeded in giving satisfaction to those who, under my direction, are engaged in the control of these great works. To my superiors, the President and the cabinet, I have the best assurances that I have given satisfaction. They treat me with a confidence that is pleasant. I have spent in the past year somewhere near a million of money. I have wronged no man of a cent. The public creditor, the day laborer and the merchant have alike received from me the last cent that they have earned. That this has been done is, I believe, the opinion of all who have had dealings with me.

So far as my public duties are concerned, I begin the new year with a clear conscience that I have tried to do my duty.

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[JAN. 1 CONT.] The year opens upon us with a bright and beautiful day. The ground is covered with ice from the ____ of a late storm, but this day is beautiful.

I went to the President's levee. I found not so great a crowd as I have sometimes seen there. From his levee, I went to call upon the Secretary of War, Colonel Jefferson Davis. He is my superior and my friend. I called also upon General Totten, the Chief Engineer. His house was not open. They have a sick daughter dying of consumption. The General has always in the course of my service treated me with friendship and with confidence. Through his strong recommendation when called upon to detail an officer for the charge of the Capitol extension, I got my present position. For keeping it, I am indebted to Him who gave me the ability to discharge its duties and the wisdom, when attacked by intriguers, to keep my temper and restrain my tongue.

After several other calls, I returned home. We had a pleasant dinner, which the children enjoyed. I have now 4 children: John, who is nearly 14; Mary, between 12 and 13; Montgomery, who is nearly 9; and Louisa, who is 1½. They are bright children whom any parent would be proud of. And with their mother, my dear Louisa, who is in all the trials and enjoyments of life my companion and my comfort, I have nothing to desire except perhaps a little better share of this world's goods; for, while I spend thousands daily, we are poor. My pay is about \$1,800 per year, a sum not sufficient in this city to support my family decently and to pay for the schooling of my children. However, if I succeed in the works I now have under my direction, I believe that Congress cannot fail to vote to me some sum as confidence for the great labor and responsibility which I have borne for the last 3 years.

In the meantime I work, and my father assists me with a yearly allowance of \$300, which he is more apt to exceed than to give less. My wife's mother and sister, Mrs. Commodore Rodgers and her daughter, live with us. The house belongs to her, so that we are free from rent, and she pays for her share of the expense of the household \$600 per year. Thus we live, and I have not the satisfaction of knowing that I am putting anything aside for a time of sickness or misfortune or to support my family if I am taken away. If it were not for this, I should feel little for my small pay.

I find in the daily work of my present charges the employment most congenial to my tastes. The magnificent building which is going up under my direction and which owes much of its beauty and magnificence to me, all its fitness for its purpose, the great aqueduct of which I am the author and the constructor—all of these are subjects to employ the thoughts and time of any man worthily. In building these, and

the aqueduct especially, I am not living in vain, but when I die shall be able to feel that I have done some good in my day and generation.

[JAN.] 2ND. At the office today. Mr. Walter tells me that Mr. Humphrey,¹ who promised to me that he would never again while in my employment taste a drop of any intoxicating drink, has been in a grog shop near the foot of Capitol Hill and there repeated conversations which he had heard between myself and Winter, the contractor. Mr. Walter told me of this but under charge of not repeating it. I am not therefore able to act upon it. This young man was dismissed from the Engineer Department, where he had been for many years, in consequence of his having become so irregular in his habits that General Totten could no longer put up with him. He is smart and intelligent, a most excellent draftsman, quiet and useful. But these habits, which I knew of when I took him, taking him indeed only upon the solemn promise that he would amend and out of pity for his forlorn and destitute situation, for he has a family, make him unreliable. I am sorry for his lapse, which will no doubt soon show itself in such a way as to compel me to take notice of it, the only notice possible being his discharge.

I had the old cornice of the Senate building examined under the portico today. It is built, as my outside inspection showed, in 3 courses. They go nearly through the wall. Every alternate stone seems to be intended to cover the whole wall. The bed of the upper blocks is 5 feet 6 inches; that of the lower, 2 feet 6 inches. I am concerned about the price of Provost and Winter's cornice, for it is a heavy work and one upon which they must make money if they are to make money out of this contract.

I ordered today some books upon photography. Mr. Rives says that he would like to study the art. The reduction of our drawings of the Capitol and other works, especially the details, would be a work of great cost if done by draftsmen in the ordinary way. By photography, I think it can be done for a small sum, and they can be brought into small compass.

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[JAN.] 3RD. I was principally engaged at the office today in working out the cost of the cornice of the old building that is of the mode of construction adopted in the old building. With this I can perhaps make a proper estimate of the price which should be paid to the contractors for making the cornice in the manner which I have adopted for the new one. They should lose no money by the change but should be

¹G.C. Humphrey was a draftsman on the Capitol extension, 1855-1860.

paid so as to receive the same profit that they would have had upon the old mode of construction.

I found that Mr. Sonnemann had made a bad mistake in the design of one of the parts of the derrick for the dome. He had made a block in such a way that the rope could not run without coming in contact with the cast iron cover of the [sheave]. This will require changing, and I fear that I will be obliged to alter a good deal of the arrangement of this derrick. It is difficult to get the boom to pass under the stays.

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JAN. 4TH. I spent today almost entirely upon the discussion of the price of the cornice. I find that the workmanship of the cornice alone will cost about \$71.46 per running foot. So that a section of the cornice 10 feet long will cost \$714.60 for work alone. Adding the cost of material, this would make the whole cost of 10 running feet of cornice about \$1,000 to 1,100 dollars.

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[JAN. 4 CONT.] Mrs. Meigs and Kate paid me a visit in the afternoon. They stayed only a little time. Governor Pratt of Maryland also came in with Colonel Lee. They came to look at the specimens of marble from Maryland.

The day is a beautiful one, bright and cold. I have some other parts of the marble work to price and have brought home with me the materials for the purpose. I must now go to work upon them.

[JAN.] 5TH. Today I fixed the price of several different pieces of work. I gave Mr. Harkness the ___ measurement in the letter written last night upon the cornice, but I added to it a clause with a further allowance for each line of the two ___ upon the top of the cornice. [Sketch]

I find by a rough calculation, which I will make more carefully, that in the saving of material and work though I have made a much more durable and strong cornice than the 4-course one proposed in the contract, I have saved about \$22 per foot; and as there are 1,800 feet of this cornice, this is in the whole a saving of \$39,600.

I fixed the price of the following work also, among others of less note: capitals of Corinthian columns and pilasters for vestibules of Senate and House principal story. These are the capitals with corn, tobacco and magnolia. \$930 each. Pilaster capitals, \$537 each. Setting mantels, \$8 each. Preparing and setting skirting of polished marble, the slabs having been furnished polished to the contractors, but without the molding which they cut and polished upon each, \$1.25 per running foot. Column shafts for the stairways of Tennessee marble for all the work except polishing, \$190. Base for the same, \$77. The polishing to

be priced as hereafter. For cutting and molding and setting the pilasters of the stairways, not including polishing, I adopted the price of the contract for the exterior pilasters, which they much resemble, \$10. They can be cut for this upon a lathe. Cutting them by hand costs \$20 each. Indeed, the only one finished which was cut and polished by hand is reported to me as costing \$16, but I believe that includes a demand of $\frac{1}{2}$ profit.

Bases for the columns of the vestibules of the principal story cost \$70; for the pilasters, \$35. The architraves of the vestibules of the interior I have placed at the price of the exterior architraves, much to the discontent of the contractors, who wished to have them valued for the time they have taken to cut them. But they are, except that they are smaller, very much like those. And a specific price being put upon them, I followed the contract ____, 87 cents per square foot, and \$3.00 per running foot added for each foot of the upper or regular molding.

In the 3 letters thus written today to Mr. Harkness, I have fixed the price to be paid for over \$200,000 worth of work. This is a great power and influence. I believe I exercise it fairly. Certainly, I do to the best of my ability. But I ought to be paid so much for it as would at least enable me to be free from need. For the work I do this month, I shall be paid \$155.43. This sum is less than $\frac{1}{10}$ of one percent upon the payrolls alone which I have paid this month, our payrolls amounting to over \$15,000 upon the Capitol and Post Office.

There is a heavy snow upon the ground tonight. It snowed all day upon a foundation of sleet and ice, so that we have a prospect for good sleighing. I have no sleigh here, so that I could not give my children and family the treat of a sleigh ride.

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[JAN. 6] The mail failed this morning, as I suppose the railroads are blocked up with snow. They do not keep the snowplows ready here as in the North, and a snow which there would be nothing is here a stopper for all traveling for a time.

[JAN.] 7TH. A cold day. At 8 a.m. it was 6 degrees below zero. I spent the day at the office making out an estimate of the difference in cost of the cornice as I am now constructing it and as at first proposed by the contracts. I find it to be about \$29,000. But this I must go over and make with greater accuracy.

JAN. 8TH. Mr. Symington came to see me today. He had a specimen of marble of a gray color variegated with white. The color is gold, and the stone is without beauty. He talked a good while about his Danby marble quarry in which he is still at work, though without as

yet getting anything of value. He says he has spent about \$10,000, which is all sunk thus far. He wants me to go with him next summer to look at it, in hopes that I will give him encouragement to go on with it. I asked him how they were satisfied with the last month's work. He said he had not yet seen the result. Upon being asked whether the contract was paying them, he said that they were not losers but that it was not a splendid contract. It did not pay very high. And he did not say, though, that it did not pay enough. He would not tell me how much they had invested for this work. But he did not deny that they had put away money. They have lived upon it, no doubt; and if they have yet put away anything, as they have \$15,000 back percentage in the hands of the United States, they are not doing ill.

Winter told me that they had, when they paid off, overdrawn their account in bank \$10,000. Now I paid them \$22,000 for the month's work, and if they had paid off their hands by overdrawing \$10,000, as he said, this enabled them to replace that money and gave them a surplus of \$12,000. At this rate, they will not starve. I found that in this last month's estimate of \$22,000, about \$12,000 were for work the price of which I had fixed as not specified in the contract or work changed in some way from the specification so as to require my action to determine the price to be paid for it.

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[JAN. 8] I have tonight an invitation from the Secretary of War to dine on Thursday at 6 p.m. I must, of course, accept it, and yet I do not know that I have the proper clothes for such an occasion.

I write today my reports for the past month for the Capitol, aqueduct, Fort Madison, and Post Office. For the dome, I did not get through. They are later than usual, for I have been occupied with the settling of so many items in the contractors' estimate.

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[JAN. 9] Above, I have put the part of the report of the Secretary of War which refers to my works.² He speaks of them in terms of praise. I hope that his recommendation for the early appropriation for the aqueduct will be successful in getting us the means to carry on this work.

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[JAN.] 10TH. The cold continues intense. There has not been for years such a spell of cold weather. The snow is hard and dry and the sleighs fly down and up the avenue like the carioles³ upon the ice at Detroit.

²See Appendix, page 784, for excerpt from the secretary of war's report on the Capitol construction.

³A cariole is a kind of Canadian sleigh.

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[JAN. 10 CONT.] I dined today at the Secretary's, Jefferson Davis. A grand dinner and a pleasant one. Bache, Henry, Davis of the *Nautical Almanac*⁴ were there. Mrs. Davis had the small silver snake upon the center ornament of the table and passed it around for the examination of the guests.

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JAN. 11TH. The Senate has passed a resolution permitting the President of the Senate to assign temporarily the rooms not finished in the north wing to the use of the Court of Claims. Mr. Bright has been over with the clerk of the court and assigned all the rooms at the west end of the wing. I have promised to give the key of the corner room up to the clerk tomorrow. They are putting the second coat of paint upon the iron and woodwork now. These rooms have encaustic tile floors, marble skirting, cast iron door and window casing, and are as permanent and indestructible as it is possible to make rooms. The doors and the window shutters and sashes are all wood, for the sake of the swiftness and ease with which they are maneuvered. 6 of these rooms are nearly ready for use, and the court will have the use of the whole of them. Furnaces have been put in the cellar and have been kept going for some weeks to try to warm them.

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[JAN. 11 CONT.] I sent to the Secretary of War today the designs for the statue and crown of the dome, with Crawford's letter in regard to it.

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JAN. 12TH. Saturday. Today it snowed again, and quite a smart fall of snow covered the ground with a depth of fresh snow of some 3 inches. I drive home in the carriage, which has been mounted upon runners. At night this snow changed to rain and thaw set in.

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[JAN. 12 CONT.] The room for the Court of Claims is finished, and I have taken the key from the workmen and placed it in the office for the officer of the court. They meet in this room on Monday. The other rooms will be ready for them in a day or two.

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⁴Charles Henry Davis (1807–1877) was a naval officer engaged in scientific work, who helped to establish the *American Ephemeris and Nautical Almanac* in 1849 and oversaw its publication. He was later a founder of the National Academy of Sciences.

[JAN. 12 CONT.] I ordered today the buggy in which I ride to be fitted with runners according to the plan so common here, but I believe I am too late. The snow goes so rapidly tonight.⁵

JAN. 14TH. I have today prepared an index of letters, papers and notes which I do not wish to put into the files of the office, notes upon construction and details of machinery which, as matters of business reference, would never be found in the files of the office. I receive many pamphlets which I have difficulty in filing in such a way as to have easy reference to them. All this, and all notes I may make here for all calculation, I intend to have filed in a book and paper case which I have ordered made and indexed, as letters are in the business files.

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[JAN. 14 CONT.] The Court of Claims did not get their room arranged today in time. Mr. Huntington⁶ told me that they would adjourn till the next day. They were putting down the carpet.

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JAN. 15. I attended the first business meeting of the Court of Claims in the north wing of the extension. The court thanked me for the accommodation they had got, seemed much pleased with their rooms, and I found that with a carpet, though the reverberation from the arches was still considerable, as the room is small and the speaker's stand near the judges, there was no difficulty in speaking or hearing.

I found today one of the copperhead snakes dead. We put two mice into the cage [a] few days since. This cage contained, besides the others, one large rattlesnake and 4 copperheads. One of the mice was killed the same night and partly or wholly eaten. But the other was let out today, having been unhurt and having partly eaten one of the copperheads. Whether this snake had died from the cold, for the rooms get cold upon a Sunday—and indeed every morning the snakes are found quite torpid and stiff from the low temperature during the night when the fires go down—and been then eaten by the mouse, or whether the mouse had had the courage, impelled by hunger, to attack the semi-torpid snake and kill him, I cannot tell. But it is a case in which the eater has been eaten.

Mr. Brumidi brought to me today a drawing of the mantel for the Senate Receiving Room, to be of bronze, as I requested him—or, rather, of bronze for the figure and sculpture and of marble for the back-

⁵Two days later, Meigs discussed further the procedure for turning a buggy into a sleigh, pointing out, "This is a very easy way of making up a sleigh. It took but a few hours' work and a little iron to change my buggy into a very comfortable sleigh."

⁶Samuel H. Huntington was chief clerk of the Court of Claims.

ground. It is very beautiful but not so good, I think, as his sketch, in which he used winged figures, while in this full-size drawing he has taken off the wings.

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[JAN. 15 CONT.] Dr. James MacDowell of Virginia today brought me a letter from my father. He wishes to sell iron for the Trenton Iron Works, in which he is a stockholder. I told him to send me the name of the firm and I would give them the same chance as others to bid for any job of magnitude.

* * *

The expenditures of the month of December have been as follows:

Cap. Ext.	\$44,588.90	Spent	Available	\$588,953.78
Wash. Aq.	34,701.60		.....	61,218.42
Post Office	16,988.10		.....	190,245.66
New Dom	3,544.43		.....	81,943.11
Fort Madison _			.....	442.50
			
Total	\$99,793.03		.....	\$922,803.47

It is a large sum to spend in one month and a large sum to have subject to one's own disposition.

* * *

[JAN. 16] Mr. Winter today came to offer a memorandum of the cost of doing the work in the 6 rooms of the north basement. He says that the price I have paid does not cover the cost, for the work was done in a hurry and that it therefore cost more than if it had been done more deliberately. He also offered me a note of the price of the cornice, as they had intended to be paid for it upon the old construction. He makes out that it would have come to about \$80 per running foot. I have paid them at the rate of about \$70, and he thinks that he ought to have the difference. I told him I had considered the whole matter and that I had given them a price which would give them the same profit as they had upon the old mode of construction. He wants a higher one.

Brumidi today I found at work to make the two new figures in design for the mantel and base. He had at first made a sketch with two winged figures which I like better than the larger drawing which he afterward made of two [vestals ?]. He has begun the winged figures.

I ordered today the bell of the capital for the dome peristyle to be placed upon the lathe which is turned off sufficiently to finish this one bell and abacus. The whole number of bells has been shipped from

Baltimore to us and most of the abaci. I made a sketch of the dimensions of the bell and abacus showing the mode of fitting them together in the lathe.

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[JAN. 16 CONT.] I sent in my quarterly accounts today to the Secretary for the Capitol extension, dome, and Post Office. The aqueduct accounts are delayed by some outstanding vouchers.

The amount spent in the 4th quarter is, upon these 3 works, about \$198,000, which is at the rate of about \$800,000 a year. Adding to this the aqueduct, 200,000, I have spent in the last year about a million of dollars.

I today received from the Secretary of War an answer to my letter submitting Crawford's design for the dome to him for approval. Mr. Davis writes a letter approving it highly. He still objects to the use of the liberty cap, the cap of the freedman, the slave [given] liberty, by his master, but he leaves the matter to the judgment of Mr. Crawford. I sent to Crawford copies of my letter to Davis and his answer and gave the order to begin the model. This is a colossal statue of Liberty, 16 feet 6 inches high, to be made of bronze, to be placed upon the top of the lantern of the dome. I hope he will succeed in making of this a fine work of art. When finished, which it is likely to be long before the dome is finished, I suppose that we will put it up in the eastern park till the dome is ready for it.

I have received a copy of a circular from the Treasury in relation to the practice of allowing to the officers and employees of the United States a day as 6 hours, office hours, and then by working more than 6 hours, make an increased amount of money earned as _____. This practice is declared by the Secretary to be against the law and improper. He uses the word "employee," which is French and means anybody who is employed. But I do not believe he intends to apply this to the case of laborers and mechanics, who are in fact employed by the day, and the day is established as 10 hours in summer. I must write upon this subject to the Secretary of War and ask to have a decision on the point, for I have a number of men who work after night and thus earn extra pay. Men working at the sawmill, in the machine shop, etc.

The sleighing continues good. I rode up tonight rather late from the office, a bright moonlight and a smooth snow road. It was quite like the old times at Rouses Point.

* * *

[JAN.] 18TH. At the office. I took from Mr. Heebner some marble which was rejected for not filling its size as ordered, and which I have changed to other parts of the building, for the corners.

I ordered also from him a large quantity of marble from Italy for the ceilings of the stairs of the building.

I tried to break a piece of wire rope, but I found that the machine had not been properly prepared. The weights were in the ice and so frozen that I could not get them up. I then directed all these things to be properly arranged and deferred a trial to another day. Tomorrow I expect to take up the construction of the dome.

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[JAN.] 20. Woke up to find it snowing violently, a proper Rouses Point snowstorm. I went to church through the loose snow, which falls rapidly in fine wheels and stars and rosettes, which are so light that they broke before the slightest wind. We shall have another interruption of the railroads and the mails. Snow, however, does not interfere with the telegraph, so that we have the means now of hearing all the news from all parts of the country, even though the travel be interrupted.

JAN. 21ST. Fine sleighing today. The snow lies deep upon the streets and roads, and the swift-footed horses fly through the drift.

I found the boa at the Capitol, which I have been feeding, ready for the foliage.

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[JAN. 21] . . . [T]here is in the last number of *The Illustrated News*⁷ for December a description of a cast iron lighthouse built in London. This lighthouse is built in sections of not very large plates which are all fitted together by planing the edges. This is said to have been done by a machine contrived by the builder for the purpose. I find that the more I go into the construction of the dome, the same plates are to be fitted. I shall have to buy a large slotter, I believe. I may then be inclined to make one myself. The machine I want is the little one which I had arranged by Gage, Warner and Whitney. This has done us a vast quantity of work.

I have today discussed the matter with Mr. Walter, determined to make the door jambs of the principal story in iron. Those in the basement look so well and substantial that I think nothing else will do, unless we build them of marble, and that takes too long.

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⁷*The Illustrated London News*. London, 1842- .

JAN. 22ND. Today I have a letter from Senator Johnson of Arkansas, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Printing, asking me if I can finish one or two rooms for the use of the Superintendent of Printing, as in consequence of the crowded state of the rooms of the committees of Congress, the public business is subject to great inconvenience. I must answer him that I will push forward the finishing of the rooms which are covered with all possible dispatch, but that over their use I have no control; that I will prepare that of the department as fast as ready for occupation, and that then Congress will be able to assign them as it may see fit.

* * *

[JAN. 22 CONT.] For the dome, I found that I must have the interior designed before I can go much further with the design of the construction. At the first point I am stopped for want of this design. The small drawing does not fit. The inner and outer work together.

I had a visit today from a Captain Carey, South Carolina, who brought a letter of introduction from Senator Jones of Tennessee, and also brought his friend, Mr. Sage of Charleston, with him. Mr. Sage, it seems, is an agent for the house of Minton and Company, for their encaustic tiles. He wishes to put them down in the Capitol. I told him that if he could furnish the tiles cheaper than the New York agents, he could have the work. Not otherwise. He, like so many Southern men, thought that it ought to be given to the South, the North getting the majority of the contracts. True, because the North has the enterprise to make the means to execute them well; the South has not.

[JAN.] 23RD. I directed the bill for the blocks of marble for the capitals of the exterior columns to be made out today, so as to order them and get them early in the spring, to be able to keep employed the men who have cut the pilaster capitals.

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[JAN. 23 CONT.] Ordered the doors and windows to be furnished with their carpentry generally, so as to push forward the finishing of the rooms in the basement⁸ of the building which are covered in safely from the rain. The committees of Congress are so crowded that they wish to get into the extension before it is finished.

JAN. 24TH. Today I found that the steam hammer was cracked at the junction of the lower flange and the cylinder. I ordered a bridle to be put over it and so arranged with a screw as to force it down into place and make it answer till I can order a new one from Philadelphia.

⁸Now called the first or ground floor.

The horizontal lathe for the turning for the bases and caps of the columns of the dome is nearly finished. We have been for several days turning for its face plate, a slow and tedious operation. It works, however, very true and smoothly. I have directed that the edge of the plate be divided into 16 parts by small holes, to be used with a catch like a ___ engine for ___ gear wheels. By this means, I shall be able to lay out the bells into divisions for the holes to be bored for the attachment of the foliage by screws.

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[JAN. 24 CONT.] I have seen a mode of sawing marble and stone mentioned in the papers which I propose to try. It is to use a wire instead of a saw. The wire runs at great speed, about 40 feet per second, and by passing, I suppose, over a pair of wheels it runs like a belt, always in one direction. It is said in the London *Mining Journal*⁹ to cut granite at the rate of one square foot per hour. Marble, of course, it would cut much more rapidly.

I studied with Mr. Walter the stairs for the dome. He wished to put them into the circular form, but I do not think we can get in this way stairs of sufficient width and ease. I believe the stairs to be very important parts of such a structure. I find that in St. Peter's and in St. Geneviève they have been obliged to put the stairs in the piers, interrupting in some measure the colonnade for that purpose. In the photograph of St. Geneviève, this buttress is not seen, so that I do not think it can be much of an interference with the dome.

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[JAN.] 28TH. I made today bargains with Butti, the artist, for carving of the Soldier from Crawford's model. This he is to do for \$1,600. He undertakes also to model the figures of the two ___ with wings and the flower ridges and their decorations of the mantel designed for the antechamber of the Senate by Brumidi for the sum of \$500, finishing them in plaster to a proper degree for the bronze founder. I also agreed with him for the models and the cutting of the sculpture of the Post Office gateway for the sum of \$3,000. This includes making the models and cutting in marble the sculpture. The materials, marble, etc., are to be furnished to him by the United States, and the tools are to be sharpened for him. He is an artist of skill and taste and I think will do these things in a manner which will be creditable.

Vincenti came to me today to complain that Gagliardi had given him rude words upon his speaking to him about some part of his work. I told him to send Gagliardi to me. He came and abused

⁹*Mining Journal, railway and commercial gazette.* London. v. 14-82, 1844-1907.

Vincenti, whom he accused of not knowing his business and of finding fault with Crawford's models and with him. Said he was jealous of him and of Brumidi and Casali and Butti. I told him that he must obey the directions he received from Vincenti, and if he received wrong ones, to show him by the compass that he was wrong and then to appeal to me if he still insisted upon the erroneous directions, when I would have his work examined; and if it proved to be wrong, I would sustain him. If not, I would discharge him. They are a jealous set, these Italians, and I suppose we shall have trouble with them yet before we get through with this work. I drew up the written agreements with Butti for these different works, so that there should be no mistake when we come to settle for them.

I wrote to the Secretary today, asking for the approval of my purchase of the necessary instruments and materials for the use of the photographic process for reducing the drawings of the Capitol extension. We have a large number, some hundreds, of working and other drawings, many of which are upon too large a scale to be conveniently preserved or referred to and the reduction of which by hand would be tedious and expensive, as we pay our draftsmen from \$3 to \$4 per day. I wish to leave in the Library of Congress and in that of the Department of War and the Engineer Department each a book containing a complete set of drawings and designs and details of the public buildings upon which I have been engaged. Mr. Rives will take the matter in hand, and I hope to be able to make a complete set of drawings of all these works.

* * *

[JAN. 29] I discussed with Mr. Walter the mode of carrying up the stairs of the dome, and we fixed upon the outside stairs after some discussion. He seemed to incline to the stairs running through the windows, but I think that upon the whole, they will be a more visible ___ than the addition of a small projection to the outside under the portico or peristyle. This is done in St. Geneviève, and in the photograph which I have, it is not seen at all. This leaves our windows untouched, except that two of them will be darkened by the passage of the stairs outside of them. I thought of making them niches, but Mr. Walter thinks it will be better to leave them as windows and let the stairs be seen through them. [Sketch]

The columns are so close together that this projection cannot be seen if placed upon the north or south side when looked at through the east or west. I thought of putting one upon the north and one upon the south, but do not know if it will be better to have but one and that upon the north, where it will not interfere with the light from

the south sun. No sunshine ever coming in at this north window, the darkness will not contrast with the adjoining windows.

* * *

JAN. 30. Determined with Mr. Walter to make the stairs of the dome run around the drum within the walls instead of putting them outside. In this way we will less interfere with windows than in any other, though interfere a little with all of them.

* * *

FEB. 1ST. I drew today my pay for the past month. It is \$155.43. I have in this included the allowance for fuel and quarters. My expenditures for the works under my charge have been about \$79,000 to \$80,000. A large percentage of pay is upon the work.

* * *

[FEB. 1 CONT.] Our payroll for the past month is much smaller than common, so much has work been interrupted by the cold weather. For the Capitol and dome, it is about \$12,000; for the aqueduct, only about \$1,800; for the Post Office, \$4,700. We are making good progress with the turning of the caps for the dome columns. They turn off about 3 bells a day upon one end. The other ends have to be turned yet. The horizontal lathe is a beautiful machine, turning very steadily and truly. I have as yet received no column shaved.

* * *

FEB. 2ND. This morning it is said that the Speaker will be elected before night, the plurality rule having been adopted.

* * *

[FEB. 2 CONT.] I made out and sent in my monthly reports for the month of January, except the report for Fort Madison, in which the same mistake was made by the clerk in taking out the expenditures. I have spent about \$79,900.00 in the past month. This is payday.

* * *

[FEB. 2 CONT.] The Speaker was elected today, Mr. Banks of Massachusetts having been elected upon the first ballot, under the plurality rule. This is a great disappointment to the Democrats who have hoped that the long dispute between the isms would end in their own success.

Banks, I believe, is a man of ability. He has good physical and mental qualifications for the post to which he has at length been elevated. But I do not believe that he is as much moved in his public actions by the desire to do his duty to the public as by a desire to elevate

Mr. Banks. I remember a speech which he made upon the military superintendence of the armories, which was an able one for his purpose, calculated to gratify the feelings of those whom he represented, the mechanics, but intended to pander to their prejudices and inflame them, a speech which was honest or dishonest. If honest, he is weak enough to feel these prejudices and to be influenced by them. If dishonest, he pandered to them, which he knew to be wrong and did injustice to the officers of the army whom he slandered. He slandered them, whether honest or dishonest, for he represented them as tyrants instead of the fair and impartial men that those who have had the charge of the armories have really been.

A great triumph for the Republican Party, as it calls itself. They will now have to make their cause and to regulate the affairs of the nation their own way in the House of Representatives. The Senate being against them, they can do but little.

* * *

FEB. 5. I went to the reception of Secretary Davis tonight. Very cold day. I made some studies of the window and door frames of the principal story of the extension and have determined to send the windows to Janes, Beebe and Co.

* * *

[FEB. 5 CONT.] I wrote to Janes, Beebe and Co. of New York to ask them at what price they would make me the windows of the principal story of the extension. To Anthony¹⁰ of New York to ask the price of photographic materials.

* * *

[FEB. 6] I have had no time lately to read much. My office duties occupy me all day, and at night there seems to be some interruption or some visit which interferes. I wish I could make a better arrangement of my time. I rise too late and yet I go to bed so [late] that I cannot rise earlier. I must have 8 hours in bed. With less than this, I am sleepy all day. I have tried that and I find that I cannot do with less. If I go to bed at 12, I cannot thereafter rise before 8. I am as apt to go to bed at one as at midnight. The lateness of the hour of retiring comes from my wish to read something at night and not getting through with it earlier.

* * *

¹⁰Edward Anthony of New York was a pioneer in American photography who provided the cameras and supplies used to document the progress of construction at the Capitol.

[FEB. 8] Two of the columns, or rather of the shafts for the columns have arrived. They are fine casting, but they do not look so large as I had supposed they would. This begins to give me a notion of the magnitude of the dome itself.

* * *

FEB. 12TH. I have been today studying bridges again. I went with Mr. Walter to look at the [model] of the capital of the dome column, in which I fear we have, as in the capital of the corridor column, south wing, made the foliage a little too much exceed the diameter of the shaft. I called Mr. Walter's attention to it and left him to consult the _____ details and decide whether it would not be better to reduce it before the foliage is cast in iron. Casali is now making the two patterns.

* * *

FEB. 13. I called to see Mr. Douglas this morning. He has just returned to Washington, having suffered from a severe attack of bronchitis and laryngitis brought on by the labor of a severe canvass of his state during the past recess of Congress. He came near dying. He looks well in flesh and has quite recovered, with the exception of a tenderness of the throat which makes it necessary for him to keep out of the cold.

I think he could make himself heard in a favorable place by 30,000 people. Says that he has frequently spoken to many thousands. He prefers for public meetings in the open air to have the people arranged upon the sides and slopes of a ravine above the orator, placing himself at the lower end of the ravine and thus speaking upwards, like an actor upon the stage of a Roman theater. If time allows to build a stage thus placed, with a screen of boards behind the speaker, he has no difficulty in being heard for 3 or 400 yards.

In the western towns built upon the waterworks, there are generally brooks in the neighborhood which empty into the main streams and by their ravines give very good sides for such purposes. He says that he almost always finds the arrangement made before he reaches the spot wrong, the audience being seated below the speaker's stand, and he gets some farmer to drive his wagon to the lower end of the ravine, calls upon the people to face about, and then begins his speech.

* * *

[FEB. 13 CONT.] I promised Heebner to give him an order for the lower parts of the porticoes and some parts of the corridors. We want, too, a good deal of cornices, for he has as yet sent less than one-half of them for the parts of the building outside the porticoes.

FEB. 14TH. The committees were announced yesterday by Mr. Banks. The Committee upon the District is composed as follows: Meacham,¹¹ Dodd,¹² Goode,¹³ Cumback,¹⁴ Dick,¹⁵ Harris,¹⁶ Bennett of Mississippi,¹⁷ Trafton,¹⁸ Bell.¹⁹ On Public Buildings and Grounds: Ball,²⁰ Todd,²¹ Puryear,²² Keitt, Roberts.²³ Ways and Means: Campbell of Ohio, Howard,²⁴ Cobb²⁵ of Georgia, Jones of Tennessee, excused, Davis²⁶ of Maryland, Sage,²⁷ Phelps, Campbell²⁸ of Penn., DeWitt. Jones asked to be excused as he had been broken down by long service upon Ways and Means. Another must be put into his place.

* * *

[FEB. 14 CONT.] Mr. Rives brought up tonight his friend, Mr. Richard Hunt,²⁹ a young architect who for 13 years [resided] in Paris where

¹¹ James Meacham (1810–1856), Whig of Vermont, served in the House of Representatives, 1849–1856. He was chairman of the District of Columbia Committee in the Thirty-fourth Congress (1855–1857).

¹² Edward Dodd (1805–1891), Whig then Republican of New York, served in the House of Representatives, 1855–1859. He chaired the District of Columbia Committee in the Thirty-fourth Congress.

¹³ William O. Goode (1798–1859), Democrat of Virginia, served in the House of Representatives, 1841–1843 and 1853–1859. He was on the District of Columbia Committee in the Thirty-fourth Congress and chaired the committee in the Thirty-fifth Congress (1857–1859).

¹⁴ William Cumback (1829–1905), Republican of Indiana, served in the House of Representatives, 1855–1857.

¹⁵ John Dick (1794–1872), Whig then Republican of Pennsylvania, served in the House of Representatives, 1853–1859.

¹⁶ J. Morrison Harris (1817–1898), American party of Maryland, served in the House of Representatives, 1855–1861.

¹⁷ Hendley S. Bennett (1807–1891), Democrat of Mississippi, served in the House of Representatives, 1855–1857. During the Civil War, he served in the Confederate army, 1861–1862.

¹⁸ Mark Trafton (1810–1901), American party of Massachusetts, served in the House of Representatives, 1855–1857.

¹⁹ Peter H. Bell (1812–1898), Democrat of Texas, served in the House of Representatives, 1853–1857.

²⁰ Edward Ball (1811–1872), Whig then Republican of Ohio, served in the House of Representatives, 1853–1857. He was chairman of the Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds in the Thirty-fourth Congress.

²¹ Lemuel Todd (1817–1891), Republican of Pennsylvania, served in the House of Representatives, 1855–1857 and 1873–1875.

²² Richard C. Puryear (1801–1867), Whig then American party of North Carolina, served in the House of Representatives, 1853–1857.

²³ Anthony E. Roberts (1803–1885), Independent Whig then Republican of Pennsylvania, served in the House of Representatives, 1855–1859.

²⁴ William A. Howard (1813–1880), Republican of Michigan, served in the House of Representatives, 1855–1859 and 1860–1861.

²⁵ Howell Cobb (1815–1868), Democrat of Georgia, served in the House of Representatives, 1843–1851 and 1855–1857. He was Speaker of the House, 1849–1851. Cobb was secretary of the treasury, 1857–1860.

²⁶ Henry Winter Davis (1817–1865), American party then Unconditional Unionist of Maryland, served in the House of Representatives, 1855–1861 and 1863–1865.

²⁷ Russell Sage (1816–1906), Whig of New York, served in the House of Representatives, 1853–1857.

²⁸ James H. Campbell (1820–1895), Whig of Pennsylvania, served in the House of Representatives, 1855–1857 and 1859–1863.

²⁹ Richard Morris Hunt (1827–1925), who worked briefly under Thomas Walter in the Capitol extension drafting room, later became a well-known architect in New York.

he studied in the School of Fine Arts, where he was a pupil of Lefuel,³⁰ the architect to the Emperor, who succeeded Visconti³¹ in the charge of the works of the completion of the Louvre, and being thus his pupil, was employed by him upon the Louvre. He is about 28 years of age, very smart, very French in his manners and style. Has, in fact, in some measure lost his mother tongue. He gave me an interesting account of the works of the Louvre, upon which have been employed 3,000 men in the shops and upon the scaffolds.

He says the building will cost \$9,000,000, that 300 sculptors are employed upon the sculpture. He has taken an office in New York and established himself there as an architect.

* * *

[FEB. 15] Mr. Grow³² of Pennsylvania came in with Mr. Perry,³³ also a Member of Congress. He got Wetman to introduce him to me. He asked me to show them what was curious. In the painted room,³⁴ I met also Mr. Hale of New Hampshire, Senator. He had a large _____ of ladies with him. I took Mr. Grow and his friend over the building and to the atelier to see the studios. While with them, I met in Mr. Walter's room another Member of Congress to whom I was introduced but whose name I did not hear. They expressed themselves well pleased with what they saw.

Mr. Washburn of Maine also came in and asked after Senator Hale. This day has been bright, though without being warm, and it brought a great many people out to look at the building. Burlingame³⁵ also came in.

Mr. Rives says that he believes his friend, Mr. Hunt, would like to come to the Capital and stay for a year, that he finds himself troubled by the want of knowledge of the common technical building terms in use in this country, having been so long abroad. I told him that I thought it would be better for him to cast his fortune in New York at once, but that if he should come here, I thought he could be useful to us. He will see him about it. I fear that the difficulty will be with Mr. Walter, who is very jealous of anything like design upon the part of another than himself.

³⁰ Hector-Martin Lefuel (1810–1881) was a French architect who designed parts of the Louvre restoration starting in 1853.

³¹ Ludovico T.G. Visconti (1791–1853) was an Italian architect who worked in Paris.

³² Galusha A. Grow (1823–1907), Democrat then Republican of Pennsylvania, served in the House of Representatives, 1851–1863 and 1894–1903. He was Speaker of the House, 1861–1863.

³³ John J. Perry (1811–1897), Republican of Maine, served in the House of Representatives, 1855–1857 and 1859–1861.

³⁴ The "painted room" refers to the first room in the Capitol decorated by Brumidi, now room H-144, assigned to the House Appropriations Committee.

³⁵ Anson Burlingame (1820–1870), American party then Republican, of Massachusetts served in the House of Representatives, 1855–1861.

* * *

[FEB. 15 CONT.] I wrote today a note to the Secretary of War, asking him if he did not think it would be sufficient advantage to the United States, in the gain of experience and knowledge which I should have by visiting Europe, to pay for the expense of the journey. Just at this time, our operations are so much interrupted by the cold weather that I have less correspondence and less payments to make than I have had for the whole time I have been at work upon these public works. Now is the time, if ever, for me to go abroad, and I think I ought to see the buildings of Europe before finishing this great edifice. I have never seen anything to compare with these, and I am not therefore as well educated by taste and experience as I ought to be. A few weeks spent in the principal European capitals would give me all that I want. If not now, I can never go while thus engaged. At the same time, I know that there are engagements which make it difficult for me to leave now. But now or never.

* * *

[FEB. 16] At home tonight, I found a reply from the Secretary to my letter about going to Europe. He says that he appreciates the advantages of the visit but that he thinks it would not be judicious for me to be absent from the work for so long at this time as would be necessary; that I must have learned to look as well to the work itself in a matter which may be affected by popular clamor. He asks me to see and talk freely with him about it. I gave the matter up, therefore, seeing no prospect of my being able to visit these great cities of art and science.

* * *

[FEB. 17] One cold day. A severe gale of wind has been playing all day. Tonight it has become quite calm. I fear that some of the unfinished roofing of the Capitol may have suffered during this gale. It is all open, so that the wind can get under it.

[FEB.] 18TH. After going to the office today and dispatching my letters, I went to the department to see Mr. Davis, who had expressed a desire to see me about the proposition to go to Europe. He said that he did not think in the present state of the House of Representatives it would be good policy for me to be absent, but that he thought there would be advantages in my visiting Europe and that he had thought I might, after all things were well regulated next summer, perhaps be able to find time to go. I told him no, that then the expenditures would be too great for that and that I could not, in justice to myself and to the public, leave that to be carried on by others; that I gave up the project

of which I had had doubts from the first and willingly gave it up, as I did not think well of it but that it was given up altogether.

* * *

[FEB. 18 CONT.] I sent off the drawings of the window dressing to Janes, Beebe and Co. for their bid for their manufacture. I talked with the Secretary about it, and we concluded to make them of iron, as Congress' committee had not seen fit to do anything to signify their wish in regard to them, and that it would be better to save money in some other way than by making them of wood.

* * *

FEB. 20TH. Mr. Ames came today with some specimens of bronze casting done in his works. Among them were several of an eagle, a bear, a dog, and some others by H. K. Brown. They seemed to me to be well done, though not with quite so much spirit as I think might be given to such works. I have a photograph by Brown of the design for the abutment remodelled by him. I do not like to take it up to examine, as I do not believe I should like it. He could not so change what he had before as to put into it the spirit and the connected story which it wanted. Ames says that he wants very much to cast this statue for the dome, which is 16½ feet in height, and that he will be willing to do it for such a sum as will pay for the material and just pay for the labor, as he wishes to do it for the sake of accomplishing a great work and not for the money to be made by it. He is the only person in the United States who is prepared to do such a work. He has just cast the horse for the Washington monument in New York by Brown.³⁶ The horse is about 15 feet long. He thinks the statue of the Liberty will weigh about 7,000 pounds. For the horse, he gets 35 cents per pound for the metal and is paid for the work of casting and molding.

Senator Hunter came to see me today. . . .

* * *

[FEB. 20 CONT.] He also asked me for a room for the Finance Committee. I went with him to the north wing to show him the present condition of the rooms and told him that the Court of Claims had more rooms than they really needed and that I thought he might get one of those, that I would finish them as fast as possible once the weather moderated, but that now I could get nothing on account of the navigation being closed. I have ordered the rooms measured for the flooring tiles and for the marble skirting. These I will order at once for all the rooms in the outer tier.

³⁶Henry Kirke Brown completed the equestrian statue of Washington for New York in 1856.

I studied today the plan of making foundations by blocks as used in India.

* * *

[FEB. 20 CONT.] I gave today to Butti the drawings of the bronze mantel, the model.

* * *

[FEB. 21] I went for the first time today into the shop where they are turning the pilasters. I found that they use an engine lathe for the lathe work, like the common lathes for metals. They use also the slide rest, and the motion of the lathe is about as swift as in turning cast iron. The tool is of this shape, made of an old file [Sketch]. A rather more rapid motion is given to the finishing lathe, to which they are transferred, and the moldings are brought and shaped with a tool like a brass turning tool, this, also an old file [Sketch]. They are then put upon a fast lathe to be rubbed with sand, which finishes them.

The marble block is first roughed out by chipping so as to take off the corners. The whole work is about 3 days to each, I believe. Our Lee magnesian limestone or marble, he says, turns about as well as Italian. But the man who does the work is such a lying fellow that I do not know whether to believe this or no. He is a pure specimen of the worst sort of cute, cunning, suspicious Yankee. And yet when so cunning, one sees at once it is so conspicuous as to offend all who speak with him.

* * *

FEB. 22. Today I settled with Mr. Walter distribution of the mantels in the building. We have about 14 designs and have arranged them for the several rooms. I must, I think, go to New York and buy some mantels ready-made. These would serve to vary our selection, and they would serve also a good purpose as being standards of the price it may be proper to pay contractors for such as they make for us from our own designs.

Mr. Hunt, late of the Louvre, has taken, Mr. Rives tells me, into serious consideration the proposal to spend a year with us upon the Capitol extension. I think his skill in design might be serviceable in this mantel question. I have provided for a figure of caryatid mantels for the principal public rooms. These we will make of bronze.

* * *

[FEB. 23] I ordered from Janes, Beebe and Co. the iron casting of the window casing of the principal story.

* * *

[FEB.] 24TH. Sunday. I received this morning the report of the commissioners and architect of the Ohio Statehouse. It is a large building and cost about \$1,500,000. Seems to have been badly built under previous management. The new architect abused the old one, whose name is West.³⁷ The new one is N. B. Kelly.³⁸ He does not write like a scholar and gentleman. The contracts made during the year for the work are printed. Among others is one for the Speaker's desk and those of the clerks about it. They are to be of Italian marble and to cost \$13,000. I must show this to Mr. Walter, with whose designs for the Speaker's desk in the House of Representatives I am not satisfied. They are not imposing enough for the House of Representatives.

* * *

[FEB. 25] I wrote today to Mr. Blake, Commissioner of Public Buildings, and asked him to try to get from Congress an early appropriation for the purpose of running a sewer through the public grounds to the canal, so as to enable me to make a connection with our drains and finish our water closets. I have not been able to supply the Court of Claims with proper water closets because we have no outlet as yet to our drains.

* * *

[FEB. 25 CONT.] Winter came to ask me about the joints of the upper member of cornice. I believe he is right in thinking that the joints may be put in more places than I had at first directed, but I can not agree with him that they may be put into any part of the molding.

* * *

[FEB. 25 CONT.] Mr. Calhoun and Mr. Brent called at the office. They wished to set in motion a proposition for selling the two squares at the sides of the eastern park in order to finish the public grounds about the Capitol.

[FEB.] 26TH. I sent to Janes and Beebe today the drawing of details of the windows of the principal story of the expansion. I also sent to General Totten the report upon the experiments and the discussion of the results upon Cooper and Hewitt's and upon Booth's beams. Cooper and Hewitt is [Sketch]. Booth's is thus: [Sketch]. Of thin boiler iron.

³⁷ William Russell West resigned as architect of the Ohio capitol in 1854.

³⁸ N.B. Kelly served four years as the architect of the Ohio capitol.

I examined into the cost of the plain rubbing of marble. I find that rubbing by hand the large pillars of the vestibule of the south wing of this section cost about 12½ cents per square foot. The half boilers cost about 18 cents per square foot [Sketch]. At this rate, it would certainly pay to make use of a steam engine, especially as we will want a steam engine for the warming and ventilation when the building is finished. Mr. Brooks is making some experiments upon the power used in driving the rubbing bed at the Capitol shops. I caused the fronts of the Post Office to be gone over today to determine the quantity of surface to be rubbed.

I visited today the rooms of Brumidi, Casali and Butti. . . .

* * *

[FEB. 26 CONT.] Provost and Winter have got a large quantity of upper courses of cornice work ready for carving.

* * *

FEB. 27. Snow and sleet today. . . .

. . . I wrote to Miller, Coates and Youle about the tile work they have done, telling them of the criticism made by their rival from Charleston. I received a bid for the water tanks from Ellis. He offered at 10 cents per pound. Poole and Hunt offers at 7¾.

* * *

[FEB. 28] At the office, I had a long discussion upon warming and ventilation of the committee rooms, the corridors of the Capitol, and we settled that we would use cold-air supply passages under the cellar floors and a fan to insure a steady supply in all winds. I left Mr. Nason and Briggs to work out the details of the plans and then report to me. This took up all the day, and I did not make progress with my bridge, though I had brought the book home the night before and studied out the arrangement of the center.

* * *

[FEB. 29] We had several visitors today. Among others, Emory³⁹ came to look, as he had promised to, at the model and design for the dome. This, he had been saying to the Secretary, he expected to see spoil the building, calling it a steeple and abusing it. But he now saw it for the first time and he admired it.

* * *

³⁹This is probably William H. Emory, the topographical engineer in charge of the Mexican boundary survey, mentioned by Meigs on September 4, 1854.

MARCH 1ST. The payrolls for the past month have been about as follows: aqueduct, \$1,200; Post Office, \$5,688.88; dome, \$216.50; Capitol extension, \$10,568.17. About 17 or \$18,000 in wages besides those paid by the contractors.

The river still continues to be closed, though a steamboat has pushed through the ice to the beleaguered vessels below Alexandria and has brought up to that port the vessel loaded with marble which has been in the ice all winter.

* * *

[MAR. 1 CONT.] Senator James was in the painted chamber today with some friends, and I went in to ask him how he liked it now the paintings are finished. He praised it.

I studied a little upon the subject of a hydraulic lift for the books and papers in the Capitol and have come to the conclusion that a turbine engine will be the least expensive and the best machine I can make for this purpose.

I must have the water pipes divided into two systems, so that when the aqueduct is finished, we can supply the principal and lower stories by the aqueduct and the attic by pumps, as the attic floor, though low enough for the aqueduct in general, is too high for the head when there is any great draft upon the pipes in town. The reservoir level is 14 feet above the attic floor, and I cannot see how much less can be the level to which the pipes at this distance can lift the water.

Mr. Nason and Briggs came in with some results this evening. They say that they have compared the building with others, made calculations of the space and pipes necessary for it, have come to the conclusion that one square foot to 100 cubic feet is about the proper thing. They use this in some places at Attica that do have one foot to 50 cubic feet but do not use the whole of it. At Raleigh[?] they have 1 foot to 75, I think.

This building will be much warmed by the air escaping from the halls of Congress which have an independent heating and ventilating arrangement. The walls, too, are very thick, so that there will be less loss than in most buildings, and there will be less necessary expenditure of fuel than in most buildings of this size.

* * *

[MAR. 3] Messrs. Edward Ball of Ohio and [Lemuel Todd] of Pennsylvania, who are members of the Committee on Public Buildings, wished to know whether there is not some room in the extension which I could give for the use of their committee. I told them there was none but that I was about to push forward the fitting up of some rooms as rapidly as possible and that I would, as soon as finished, report

them for occupation. They seemed disappointed and said that their own room was so bad and cellar-like that they did not wish to occupy it, and they thought that some one might perhaps be partly finished which I could give them.

* * *

[MAR. 4] The clerk of the Committee on Ways and Means came to ask if the letter of Mr. [Lewis D.] Campbell [chairman] had been referred to me by the Secretary of War for answer. I told him yes and showed him the drawing which I intended to send in to the committee, that they might see for themselves the original design and the present drawing. Thus they can judge of the changes which they seem to suppose have been made in the design as ordered by Congress.

Mr. Walter says that he can have the drawings ready by tomorrow morning, when I will send them into the room of the committee. He also wrote out his report and estimate and read to me the rough. I advised some changes. He had some weeks since made a rough estimate and given it to me, making the cost of the dome \$1,500,000. After taking the iron at 10 cents per pound, now he takes 6 cents and makes the cost \$945,000. I told him that he had better think again before sending this in, especially as he said he did not believe that it could be built for that money, but that he had taken the price of the library, the ceilings of the extension, as a standard, while he believed that the cost would be greater. I thought 10 cents too high and the 6 cents too low. He then concluded that he would take the thing home and think over it tonight before giving it in.

Mr. Coates, of Miller and Coates, who laid the tiles in the basement of the north wing, came and showed me all his correspondence with Minton and Co. in regard to this work. Webb and Sage of South Carolina had told me that the tiles were in the first selection and that they could get better. I find by the letters that pass between Coates and Miller and Minton and Co. that they have always ordered the best that can be made and made complaints where there was any difficulty. Minton and Co. promised to be very choice in the selection for shipping, and I believe that the work is as good as the material admits of. I promised him drawings of the other rooms for preparing the lower floors immediately.

I also undertook to prepare drawings of the upper floors, showing upon them the ceilings, so as to enable him to send them to Minton and Co. for designs suitable to the purpose of the rooms.

* * *

[MAR.] 5TH. I took this morning the drawings of the dome, both old and new, to the room of the Committee on Ways and Means and laid

them before them. The report upon their letter I had sent, enclosing Mr. Walter's estimate, to the Secretary of War. After a night's consideration, Mr. Walter had stuck to his estimate of \$945,000. I talked with him about it and told him that was his affair and I did not wish to interfere with him in it. He sends in this estimate and still thinks the cost may exceed this. I do not endorse the estimate, though I think he has probably put the weight too high and the price rather low.

At the committee room, I found a large part of the committee: Phelps; Letcher;⁴⁰ Davis; Campbell of Ohio, the Chairman; Campbell of Pennsylvania; Howard of Michigan, and DeWitt. They received me with much politeness; when the drawing was opened, looked at it with evident interest and admiration. Asked many questions about it and expressed their admiration of it.

At last, Letcher says, "And, Captain, what will it cost?" "It will cost a great deal of money, Mr. Letcher." "Yes, but how much?" "Well, I have sent to the Secretary of War my report in answer to your official letter upon the subject, and I prefer that you should receive an official answer through him. It is hardly proper for me to give an answer to an official letter except through my commander." Mr. Campbell, the Chairman, of Ohio, says to Letcher, "I will take 10 percent upon the cost and retire from Congress."

* * *

[MAR. 5 CONT.] Mr. Coates came today to get the drawings of the floor of the basement. I gave him the drawings of the north wing, upon which I wrote notes and made sketches relating to the styles to be used in each room. He is to send me estimates of the cost of each floor.

* * *

[MAR.] 6TH. Spent the day principally in discussing the warming and ventilation of the south wing of the Capitol. We found that it will be necessary to use 22 coils of pipe contact, about 22,000 square feet surface, 7,300 feet lineal of the 1 inch pipe, as one foot of pipe has a surface of $\frac{1}{3}$ of a foot. The position of the ducts, which will be brick conduits laid below the cellar floor, except for one conduit which must pass overhead in order to avoid a sewer. The ventilating power will be a fan in the southwest room of the cellar. This whole thing was pretty thoroughly discussed. The kind of boilers to be used. A quantity of great surface which will be 120 feet, divided probably into two boilers. All the boilers can be got into one room in the cellar under the painted chamber.

⁴⁰John Letcher (1813–1884), Democrat of Virginia, served in the House of Representatives, 1851–1859. He was governor of Virginia, 1860–1864.

* * *

[MAR. 7] With Mr. Coyle, I looked at the sewers about the Capitol grounds. It is difficult to make the connection of these sewers and those of the extension, as they do not run in the proper direction for the best drainage of the building. They carry the water out through Purdy's boardyard and then empty into the Tiber, so as to cause whatever filth passes through them to be washed through a considerable distance. Yet, I believe it will be better to make this connection than to wait for the general appropriation bill and make new sewers.

* * *

[MAR. 7 CONT.] Mr. ____ came to see about his letter from Powers. I gave it to him and read to him the correspondence with the Secretary in regard to his statue of *America*. Confidentially. Advised him to write to Mr. Everett, through whom the correspondence had been carried on. He says Mr. Powers has not heard from the government. I advised him to write to Mr. Everett, who was in correspondence with the President upon the subject.

[MAR.] 8TH. Today I had a visit from Mr. Cavitt of the *United States Magazine*.⁴¹ He asked whether I had seen anything of Mr. Gildimeist [?], who had been hired by him to make drawings of the Capitol for his magazine. He said that he had disappeared after having some money advanced to him. Mr. Walter came in and asked for his man Gildimeist[?], who had borrowed a daguerreotype of the model and had not brought it back. Mr. Cavitt says that he is about to change the form of the magazine into that of *Harpers*, that he wishes to give 3 articles upon the Capitol. He is about to publish, also, a business directory and gazetteer of the United States. He brought a specimen number of this. It will, if finished to the drawing of the plan, be a great work. He says that he now has 300 men engaged upon it. He wishes me to write an article upon the aqueduct, giving in a few lines its general description and history. He leaves an artist—Mr. Corbin I think is the name—to make drawings of the Capitol and prepare the material for the articles. I promised to give my assistance.

I received a letter from the Committee on Ways and Means, referred to me by the Secretary of War, for a report. They ask what is the weight of the dome and has any examination been made of the walls of the Capitol to see whether they are able to bear the weight. I wrote the report and sent it back by this evening's mail. Mr. Walter estimates the weight of the dome as if it was a shell of cast iron 6 inches thick which would weigh 15,000,000 pounds. This is distributed over a sur-

⁴¹ *United States Magazine*. New York: J.M. Emerson and Co., 1856–1857.

face of wall 5 feet thick and 300 feet long—1,500 square feet—which is the section of the walls of the Rotunda, gives 10,000 pounds per square foot. The stone of Aquia, of which this wall is composed, breaks with 5,245 pounds per square inch—755,000 pounds per square foot. It is therefore stronger than that of which St. Peter's is built, and I believe the wall is about as well built. Upon the main pillars of the dome of St. Peter's, the pressure is 33,400 pounds per square foot, more than 3 times as great as upon this one.

Upon St. Geneviève, Paris, the pressure per square foot upon the main pillars is 60,000 pounds, and the stone is given in the tables as not so strong as the ___ stone, 456,000 pounds. So that this dome does not, so far its support goes, offer any very bold example of construction.

* * *

[In these omitted entries, Meigs was pressing Congress to pass an appropriation for the aqueduct.]

[MAR. 10] Mr. [Corbin], the artist of the *United States Magazine*, came in. I put him in communication with Mr. Walter and laid our portfolios before him.

* * *

[MAR. 11] Mr. Cavitt was here today with his subscription book for his great book on business. I think the man is so much excited that he is a little crazy. He talks like a crazy man. Asked for my name; after that, of Professor Henry, Mr. Maury⁴² and some others. Wished to have some portrait to go with the article upon the Capitol extension. He wished also to publish that of Mr. Walter. I declined, and he said that he would therefore not propose to Mr. Walter the publication of his. But he talks as if he had the world at his fingers' ends.

* * *

[MAR.] 15. Today I went to call upon Mr. Campbell of Ohio in order to ask him to go with me to see a part of the aqueduct. Colonel Lee of Maryland went with me. Mr. Campbell said that he was too much occupied to go then but that he would talk with the committee and appoint a time when they could go, that about the next Saturday he thought they might be able to go. I took the opportunity to tell him that I thought there might be some feeling in the committee as if I was trying to avoid giving information about the dome and that I wished him to know precisely how it was. I then explained to him why I did not feel as if it was right to give them the information

⁴²Matthew F. Maury (1806–1873) was a naval officer and oceanographer.

Letcher asked for before it came from the Secretary of War, to whom the official inquiry had been addressed. And I said that I had expected the questions which came forward but that I had rather thought they would come by calling me or Mr. Walter before the committee.

He said that he had not thought anything of the kind but that perhaps there was such a feeling with one member of the committee, the one who had put the question to me. That was Letcher of Virginia. And he said that he thought I had better appear before the committee and he would have me sent for.

I found at the office that while I was absent at the falls yesterday, Mr. Hunter had come to see me and, not finding me, had gone up to Mr. Walter. He was full of wrath about the dome and said that he understood it would weigh 15,000,000 pounds, that it must crush the walls. Mr. Walter told him that it would weigh that much but that was not much, and then went over the discussion about strength which I had sent to him. And then the cost. "I intend to stop it." "Well," said Mr. Walter, "we are ready to do as Congress wishes. They directed us to build the dome according to certain drawings. We could do nothing but obey. We have taken down the old wooden one and are now ready to begin to put up the new one. We can put up the old one again in wood and cover it with shingles, or we can make one like it of iron, or am ready, if Congress wishes it, to make a new design for a cheaper one in any manner which may be preferred. But the dome was ordered by the representatives of the people. If they choose to spend \$3,000,000 upon it, they have the right to do so, and they can do it. If they choose to spend a million, let them do it. If only \$100,000, why, we can do that, and it is entirely in their hands, as it has always been." Mr. Hunter found that he had no case to stand upon and said that he felt very differently now from what he had done when he came in and he should go better satisfied.

I wrote to Campbell, telling him that as I found the committee had entered into the question of the origin of the dome, I took the liberty of referring him to the debate published in the *Globe*, where he would find that on 22 February 1855, Mr. Stanton of Kentucky had moved the appropriation and had been asked by the Chairman of the Ways and Means, Mr. Houston, if that motion came from any committee. Stanton answered that it did not; he offered it upon his own responsibility. I also told him that the dome, by Mr. Walter's estimate, would cost no more than one steam propeller and would cost nothing to keep up and would be a thing of value to the people of the United States long after all the steamers now being authorized would have laid their bones at the bottom of the ocean.

Mr. Blake came [in]. He says that the Speaker wants 3 rooms by the first of April. I told him it was impossible but that I would get them ready as fast as possible.

I wrote to Miller and Coates to send the tiles as fast as they could ship them.

I began a letter to Mr. Winter, putting upon paper for his use some of the facts in reference to the dome. . . .

* * *

[MAR.] 16TH. Sunday. . . . Coming out of church this evening, Commodore Smith⁴³ said to me that he had heard them in the Committee of Ways and Means the other day scoring my dome. I asked what they said and who said it, whether it was not Letcher. He said Letcher declared he would go against it, that he would cover it with shingles. The Commodore said he had no idea it would weigh so much. "Why," I said, "it is no more than one of your steamers." "No, but that is a great deal. Saint Peter's cannot be heavier." I told him that 18 feet of stone was heavier than one inch of iron, and gave him some facts as to the weight per square foot. "But then it is to cost so much, a million." "Not more than one of your steam propellers; and when the propeller is at the bottom of the sea, it will still be a good dome." He laughed and said, "True." "And it will not cost as much to keep up." I told him I was going to tell the committee all this.

* * *

[MAR. 17] I paid Poole and Hunt, Mr. Hunt being here today, for several column shafts. They weigh too much—10,000 pounds instead of 9,000. He promised to bring down the weight in the rest, acknowledging that it is too much over the intended weight.

Tom Florence came in again with Mr. Oliver,⁴⁴ who seems to think that he can do nothing in the way of business without having his Member's assistance. I took his offer, which he had reduced to writing. After that, he had put the price of skirting at 60 cents. I told him that I could make a purchase at this rate. After some conversation, however, of ____, he left; and upon looking at the proposition of Mr. Oliver, I found that he had offered at 60 cents per running foot. As I pay for polished marble, the same thickness, sawed into skirting and requiring only the molding upon which to make it ready to set, 95 cents per square foot, which is about 50 cents per running foot, I told him that his price was too high, that I had misunderstood it, and that I could not buy at that rate. He asked me to mention a price at which I would be willing to purchase. I fixed 30 cents per running foot for

⁴³ Joseph Smith (1790–1877) was chief of the Bureau of Navy Yards and Docks, 1846–1869.

⁴⁴ Mr. Oliver was a soapstone contractor from Pennsylvania.

the skirting, sawed, molded and polished, $6\frac{3}{4}$ inches by $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch. He brought in his partner, who talked for some time and told me that the soapstone was worth more than marble, being worth in Boston \$3 per cubic foot. I told him that if this was the case, skirting was not the proper thing to use it for, as this made it more costly than marble, while it was not near so beautiful or hard. After some talk, I told him that at 30 cents I was willing to give an order for 1,600 feet of it and I could not go higher. He then filled up his order at that rate, and I gave the order for skirting of the storerooms of the basement, 1,600 feet.

He asked me to give him a report of the breaking of this stone, also to give him a letter saying that I had adopted it for the Capitol and Post Office. I told him I would give him a letter stating the facts exactly, that I had had the stone tested and would give the results, that I had given him an order for some skirting for the storerooms of the Capitol extension, which I hoped to receive soon from him; but I could not say I had adopted it until I received it and found it to answer.

I sent today to the contractors an order for cornices for the exterior. I also sent to Miller and Coates a tracing of the basement of the south wing for the floors of encaustic tiles and urged upon them to send the tiles as soon as possible.

Carstens is making progress with the ceiling of the room in the north wing. He will make a beautiful ceiling.

* * *

[MAR. 18] I went, after going through the routine business of the office, into the Senate Chamber. I had heard that Douglas was to give his speech today, but I found that the floor was occupied by Sam Houston, the Senator from Texas. He was pouring out all the vile abuse with which he had been furnished by the officers who have been retired and who feel themselves aggrieved by the action of the late board, against the private and public characters of the members of the board. He abused, after I entered the room, Shubrick⁴⁵ and du Pont⁴⁶ particularly. He said something about [John S.] Missroon's broken leg, but Mr. Miller⁴⁷ stopped that at once by telling the true story of that leg. He was so unfortunate as to have his leg broken while on duty on board his vessel. After having it set on board ship, he found that he limped. He did some two years sea duty upon this leg; then, after

⁴⁵ William B. Shubrick (1790–1874) was a naval officer who was chairman of the Lighthouse Board, 1852–1871.

⁴⁶ Samuel F. du Pont (1803–1865) was a naval officer who served on the board considering the efficiency of the navy. Its report that more than 200 officers were incapacitated or incompetent caused a heated controversy.

⁴⁷ There was no Miller in the Senate at that time. Perhaps the reference is to Senator John B. Weller (1812–1875), Democrat of California.

his return home, had it broken again by a surgeon in order that by being better set, he might have a straight leg of the same length as the uninjured one. After this narrative, even Houston could not go on. When done, he was terribly scored by Butler⁴⁸ of South Carolina, who defended Shubrick.

Then Bayard of Delaware triumphantly defended his friend and constituent, du Pont, and convicted Houston of giving false coloring to papers by reading parts only of them, with wrong dates and particular emphasis. Convicted him also of having assumed that a word ought to be in an official letter to the Secretary of the Navy which is not in the official record and is not necessary to the sense. This, too, with the printed letter accurately printed before him. Miller [Weller?] then rebuked him in a sharp and feeling speech, and the evening ended by Clayton's obtaining the floor to score him tomorrow.

It is strange that any man who has reached the position of a Senator should be found willing to be made the gutter out of which such filth was today poured into the ears of the Senate. Mr. Slidell said to me that it would do no harm; it was simply disgusting. Expressing my disgust to Senator Fish⁴⁹ of New York, he said that nature provided outlets for all such filth, and afterwards that he had never in that body heard such a scathing as Houston was getting.

It is near 1 a.m. of tomorrow, and I must go to bed. I have written and looked over a vast quantity of written matter tonight.

* * *

[On March 19, much to Meigs' delight, the Senate voted 34 to 5 to insert in a deficiency appropriation bill an amendment providing a \$300,000 appropriation for the aqueduct. The next step would be to persuade the House to approve the amendment.]

[MAR. 21] Butti came today to tell me that Gagliardi had been threatening his life. It seems that there is no love between these people and they are jealous of the favor given them. Gagliardi has done his work better than any of the others, so far as I can judge.

Mr. Fitzpatrick got me a memorandum of the payments to artists employed upon the old Capitol. They paid about \$1,500 to \$1,200 a

⁴⁸ Andrew P. Butler (1796–1857), Democrat of South Carolina, served in the Senate, 1846–1857.

⁴⁹ Hamilton Fish (1808–1893), Whig of New York, served in the House of Representatives, 1843–1845, and in the Senate, 1851–1857.

year to Franzoni⁵⁰ and Iardella⁵¹ besides house rent and \$500 for taking themselves and families home to Italy.

* * *

[MAR. 22] Mr. Bogardus, the eccentric mill patentee and builder of iron houses, came to see me today. He said that he was in Washington, and as everybody asked him if he had seen the new Captain Meigs, he had felt as if he must come and see me. I received him with distinction and took him around to see my arrangements, which he said were very complete and excellent. He told me that he was formerly a bank-note engraver, but for many years he has been engaged in building iron houses, making the eccentric mill.

He did not seem to me to be a very intelligent man, and I am pretty well convinced that he is not well grounded in engineering or construction. He says that he turns off the ends of all his columns and frequently planes off the whole of the cornices of his buildings.

I found Mr. Hunt today studying the vestibule of the Senate and wishing to open its roof and make it two stories high. This vestibule is dark, and I am not displeased at the idea, though we can ill spare the room. Afterward, upon speaking to Mr. Walter about it, I found that he had already had some conversation with Mr. Hunt about it and that he had very decidedly put it down. He is not willing to take any hint from another. This is natural enough but not quite the thing I think for his own advantage. He said that we had discussed all these things and he did not wish them reopened. I told him that I had no objection to their being changed if it was necessary to get rid of a defect.

Today has been a fine day with our setting stone upon the Capitol, the Post Office, and making some progress with our marble work. The granite setter has returned from the North and will go to work upon Monday. I find a good deal of the brickwork at the Post Office looking the worse for its winter exposure. Putting up brackets for the ceiling in the House of Representatives. They are nearly all in upon one side of the room.

* * *

[MAR. 24] Mr. Walter showed me today a letter from Skirving,⁵² the furnace man. He says that they have lately ordered all the work of

⁵⁰ Giuseppe Franzoni (d. 1815) and his brother Carlo Franzoni worked on the sculptural decorations of the old part of the Capitol. Guiseppe carved the corncob capitals in the first floor vestibule, and Carlo was responsible for the *Car of History* clock over the north entrance to Statuary Hall and the relief of *Justice* in the old Supreme Court chamber.

⁵¹ Francisco Iardella (1793–1831) was a decorative sculptor on the old part of the Capitol, 1816–1827.

⁵² John Skirving was an architect who was considered an expert on heating and ventilation.

Dr. Reid and Sir Charles Barry⁵³ in the way of warming and ventilating out of the building and that they have now in successful operation the plan by Mr. Gurney.⁵⁴ This, I suppose, must be, if true, the steam jet. He says that Reid's works cost 220,000 pounds, not dollars—that is to say, over a million of dollars. I do not believe this. I suppose that he has included in the cost of the works for ventilation the cost of the Victoria Tower. This is a great tower and is a most striking feature in the building, a very elaborate work which might as well be charged to the beauty of the building as to any other thing. It certainly is not part of the ventilating expenses, though it is perhaps used in the ventilation.

Mr. Walter seemed to be apprehensive about the result, and I brought out my notes and explained to him what I proposed to do, after which he said that he did not look upon it as an experiment. He is so little able to understand the principles upon which this is to work that he feels doubtful about it yet and is disposed and elevated more to the views of the person with whom he converses upon the subject.

* * *

MARCH 25. I went into the Senate today for a short time to hear part of the debate upon the public book publishing. The Senate seems to have come to the conclusion that they have published too much and too expensive books.

Mr. Copeland (Charles W.),⁵⁵ the engineer, was at the office. He came to witness the test of the wire rope. We pulled with 60,000 pounds the rope out of the shackle. I then, by his advice, sent the pieces of rope and the two shackles to Trenton, to Mr. Roebling, the manufacturer, that he might put the shackle in himself. When returned, we will try it again.

* * *

[Work was resuming on the aqueduct after being halted for the winter.]

[MAR.] 30TH. Sunday. I went to church in the morning, and after dinner I went with Monty to see Mr. Slight, my master carpenter, who, on Thursday last, by a fall in the extension, dislocated his collarbone. I found his house on the island. He was lying upon the sofa and seemed to be getting along quite well; did not suffer much pain except when he moved. I sat with him for a time and then walked by the Smithsonian and the monument, home.

⁵³ Sir Charles Barry (1795–1860) was an English architect who designed the Houses of Parliament.

⁵⁴ Sir Goldsworthy Gurney (1793–1875) was an English inventor who invented the steam jet.

⁵⁵ Meigs' parenthesis.

* * *

[MAR. 30 CONT.] After tea, I called upon Mr. Everett at his daughter's house. He is staying with her. . . .

I wished to see Mr. Everett about the appropriation of Congress for a work of art by Powers. He said that he had heard nothing from the President since he wrote last September and that he had called to see him yesterday about it. He found the President evidently indisposed to pay \$25,000 for the statue of *America*. He said at first that he would not make a contract for a work that he had not seen, then that he would pay Mr. Powers for the work his own price if he tendered it to him. But he seemed to think that the President did not feel well disposed towards him and that he, at the end of their interview, concluded that he could not pay so much for a single statue. He said he seemed to think that it was a kind of job on Powers' part. I think it is, myself. It is simply ridiculous for him to ask for this figure unless it excels anything that Thorvaldsen in modern times or [Phidias]⁵⁶ in antique ages did. It would be very pleasant, to be sure, to be able to say that his country had paid him for a single figure such a price. But if he offers it to his country at that price, then he asks an unreasonable one and swindles his country, which has expressed its confidence by voting him such a sum.

The President promised to write to Powers and show his letter to Mr. Everett before he left here. I fear the whole thing will fall through by this attempt of Mr. Everett to make too much capital for his friend Powers out of it. I should like to know at what price he is making the statue for Everett, himself.

He asked me whether it would do for him to offer the *America* and a copy of the *California*, which he has just sold to William B. Astor of New York. I told him that I thought this might do very well, but I did not tell him that I think this is not the way for an artist to treat his country, to try to make out of every generous appropriation an advantage over his brother artists.

It is all a job. He spoke disparagingly of Crawford's figures for the pediment. Powers could no more make them than fly.

* * *

[MAR. 31] In the Senate today, where I had gone to see Mr. Iverson, I heard the latter part of the speech of Mr. Crittenden⁵⁷ upon the Navy Board. He is a very eloquent man. I do not think I ever heard a speech in the House, Senate or anywhere else which would compare in beauty

⁵⁶ Phidias (c. 490–430 B.C.) was a renowned Greek sculptor.

⁵⁷ John J. Crittenden (1786–1863), Whig then American party then Unionist of Kentucky, served in the Senate, 1817–1819, 1835–1841, 1842–1848, 1855–1861, and in the House of Representatives, 1861–1863.

of language, in earnestness, carrying away with it the hearer, as this did. I did not agree with him, and thus the effect of his speech was only that more to make me admire the man. The beauty of his elucidations, of his language, did not convince. I began to doubt the use of eloquence. It is certain that, unless perhaps in the pulpit some parts of a carefully written sermon may have equalled it, I have not heard the like. This, too, was spontaneous, pulled out of the full heart, apparently. His voice rises and falls with his periods, like that of an actor, like Booth's sweetest tones.⁵⁸

* * *

[During this period, Meigs was busy lobbying the House for the aqueduct appropriation, while growing concerned about reports of attempts to block it.]

[APRIL 1] Blake tells me that he saw the Speaker, Banks, the other day and told him that I would have some rooms ready for use by the first of May. Banks swelled up and said, "He won't do it. He won't do it." And when reasoned with, he said he had nothing against Captain Meigs, "But these officers of the Army never did accomplish anything."

What a little mind the man must have. I thought there was more in him than this seems to indicate. I must really get introduced to him and let him see that some officers of the Army are not such fools as he seems to think.

I believe I will finish the painting of the agricultural room and report it to the department as ready for occupation. Then let his committees fight for it.

Blake was highly indignant about his conduct and seemed rather surprised to find I took it so coolly. He said I ought to have seen the little peacock swelling up with his own importance; that such men, who had risen from nothing, always felt themselves uneasy in their new situation and thought they must, by their own conduct, assert the importance they could not command by true dignity of bearing. I have ordered the painted chamber made ready for occupation, and I think I shall give it to them.

* * *

[APRIL 1 CONT.] At the War office today, I got copies of the last letters of the Secretary to the Committee of Ways and Means, sent on the 14th of March, upon the dome; the other of the 29th, with my report

⁵⁸Junius Brutus Booth (1796–1852) was an English-born actor who performed in the United States. His sons, also actors, were Junius Brutus Booth (1821–1883), Edwin Thomas Booth (1833–1893), and John Wilkes Booth (1838–1865), who assassinated President Lincoln.

upon the water works question. This last letter I wish to send to Mr. Meacham.

In the Senate today, I heard a part of the debate between Mr. [John] Bell and Mr. Clayton. Mr. Clayton of Delaware had been speaking in reply to Houston's speech and had exposed Maury, treating him pretty severely, I suppose. Bell was answering very angrily when I went in and denounced the manner in which Clayton had attacked him. The hour grew hot, and when Bell at length yielded to the entreaties of his brother Senators to allow an adjournment to be moved, Clayton denounced any such proceeding as unjust, demanding the time and opportunity to answer upon the spot such an attack. He cried out, pointing and approaching Bell, "Am I to submit without opportunity of reply to that man's insolence?" The Senate put an end to the scene by adjourning. I suppose they will have it again tomorrow. Someone said to me they thought Bell had been drinking too much before dinner, but I did not suppose that this was his practice.

APRIL 4TH. For the last 3 days I have been so much occupied during the day and so tired at night that I have not been able to write up my diary.

* * *

[Meigs noted that, in his lobbying for the aqueduct appropriation, "I have had access to the floor during the 3 days past and have had much conversation with the different members."]

[APRIL 4 CONT.] I met in the House today General Webb⁵⁹ of the *Courier and Enquirer* of New York. He was looking for his correspondent and wishing to blow him up for writing an article in the *Courier* abusing the dome. He told him never to oppose any appropriation for the District, that it was the only thing to keep the city government east of the mountains and that he wished them to spend if needs were 50,000,000 here.

The correspondent said that he had already taken back part of what he had said in his letter, that he had said that the dome would crush the walls, thinking that it was a thing which I had not approved, that Captain Bowman had told him since that I had approved it, and he had written to the paper to say that he was mistaken and believed that, as I had approved it, there was no reason to fear its fall.

Greeley, the editor of the *Tribune*, the Horace Greeley so famous for his oddities and his strong writing, came by. He spoke to Webb, and I requested to be introduced. He has been writing an article or two

⁵⁹James Watson Webb (1802–1884) edited the *New York Courier and Enquirer*, 1829–1861.

against the aqueduct, and I wrote to him the other day, telling him that I thought he was doing me injustice and doing harm to a good cause; that he was working into the hands of speculators without knowing it. His answer to me is a curiosity. But he denies that he had any human being to prompt him in the writing of the letter to which I alluded. Today we had some talk about the aqueduct, and the expenditure upon it and upon the public buildings here he calls robbery.

In speaking of the estimates, he asked if I had not made an estimate for the extension of the Capitol. I told him no, that it was built to the ground floor when I took it in charge. How much had it cost between the estimates? Not so much yet as the estimate. We have spent \$2,222,000 and have about \$450,000 of the estimate yet left. What, of the original estimate? Yes. He seemed surprised at this. Said that I paid too high wages to labor, over \$3.00 a day. I told him he was misinformed; we paid \$1.00 and \$1.75 per day for labor but have stone cutters. "Don't you pay them over \$3?" "No. The highest is \$2.75, most of them \$2.50. Bricklayers, \$2.50; carpenters, \$2.00; painters, \$1.75. In New York, you pay painters \$2.00, which is higher than the wages here. Most wages are a little higher here than in New York."

I gave him an argument upon the aqueduct, which I suppose made little impression upon him. But the mistake he had made as to the estimate for the Capitol and the rates of wages seemed to impress him somewhat.

He is an odd-looking man, very light hair and complexion. Rowdy-looking coat and clothes and appearance generally. Does not look like a man of character or of strong personality and honesty of purpose.

* * *

[APRIL 4 CONT.] The result of my 3 days' labor is that I have confidence that we will get the appropriations, without being able to be positive upon the subject. Greeley says that we will not. Most members say that we will.

It is fatiguing work, this looking at the members, explaining and arguing to them upon a subject which they do not understand.

* * *

[APRIL 7] I went into the House of Representatives about 12½ p.m. and found that they had not taken up the bill. After some time, they went into the Committee of the Whole, and the bill was taken up. Mr. Keitt of South Carolina had the floor, and instead of speaking to the bill before the House, he gave a violent slavery speech. He has wonderful flow of language and good gesticulation, except that he has a way of dancing up and down with a jerking, undulating motion which,

though he shows great excitement, does not add much to the dignity of his oratory. He squirms and sneers in a way that either excites rage and indignation in his hearers or excites their ridicule. When the hour was out, Mr. Millson of Virginia spoke a few words to some appropriation for grading about the Norfolk Custom House, was answered by Phelps, and then the committee rose.

* * *

[APRIL 8] Mr. Fowler and Mr. Coates arrived today. The former took charge of the putting up of the ceilings and skylight frames, the other to put down the floors. I set him to work at once in getting ready some committee rooms for occupation. And I advised the Secretary, in a private note, to send the notice to the Speaker, as I had feared there might be some attempt upon the part of one of the committees to get and keep possession of the room, which I thought might lead to a collision with the Speaker and the committee, which could do nothing but harm.

* * *

[APRIL 9] At the office today, I had to settle some questions relating to the roof. The standards of the lower part of the skylight frames have been made too long by Janes and Beebe. Their man really is very unwilling to believe that he could have done wrong; and as the settlement of all these disputed points has to be made by myself, I had to climb again to the top of the roof and measure. He is wrong, and I sent him orders to make new ones at once.

I made a bargain for the windows of the attic story. Janes and Beebe, 9 cents per pound for the iron work, delivered. It costs us about 1½ cents to put it up.

* * *

[APRIL 11] In the House, I saw many Members, had a talk with some here and Mr. Brooks⁶⁰ of South Carolina about the cost of the aqueduct and the dome and the cheating which I find has been practiced upon the House by Mr. Stanton in regard to the cost of the dome. Mr. Greenwood⁶¹ and Mr. Wheeler have both told me that Stanton expressly told them that it could be built for \$100,000. I explained to

⁶⁰ Preston S. Brooks (1819–1857), Democrat of South Carolina, served in the House of Representatives, 1853–1857. Several weeks after this entry, on May 22, 1856, Brooks beat Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts with a cane in the Senate chamber.

⁶¹ Alfred B. Greenwood (1811–1889), Democrat of Arkansas, served in the House of Representatives, 1853–1859. During the Civil War, he served in the Confederate house of representatives, 1862–1865.

Mr. Orr⁶² the circumstances and I believe satisfied him on the subject. I told him, too, that it was only the cost of a steam sloop-of-war to be spent upon it and that I regretted much the manner in which it had been introduced. I was quite clear of all connection that they cheated. It could have been, in proper time, got through without such conduct.

Mr. Ames of Springfield was here today to ask about the prospect of success in getting a cast of the bronze door and the bronze statue. I could give him no final answer yet. I gave him tracings of the gallery prints and the plaster model of the mask of Justice for the key of the gallery front. He has to make an estimate for the front and to cast one of the heads in bronze by way of a specimen, at a cost not to exceed \$100.

* * *

[APR. 11 CONT.] I have not had time to make my regular monthly reports for the past month. [Because of his continued efforts to secure the aqueduct appropriation.]

We began laying the tile floors in the committee rooms of both wings. The painted chamber, the agricultural room, is finished and cleaned out. The key has been sent by the Secretary to the Speaker of the House of Representatives. I think that whatever committee takes possession of it will have a hard time with the public who throng to see it. I gave to Jones of Tennessee, who asked me the cost of it the other day, saying that he supposed it was something under \$20,000, a statement of the actual cost. It is about \$3,700. He said it was much less than he had supposed.

* * *

[On Saturday, April 12, Meigs took a group of some 25 House members in a barge to tour the aqueduct, providing them with ample food and drink on the way. He reported that "The quiet, temperate men from the North had the beauty of the scenery and looked with interest upon the works of the aqueduct. The rollicking, roistering sons of the South had the good entertainment of the wines and whiskey."]

[APRIL 12] . . . seemed to enjoy themselves in their own way, and I think the trip will have a good effect in making the Members more familiar with the subject they are discussing, for many of them saw a canal lock for the first time, and most of them got today their first idea of the shape and construction of the aqueduct.

⁶²James L. Orr (1822–1873), Democrat of South Carolina, served in the House of Representatives, 1849–1859. He was Speaker of the House in the Thirty-fifth Congress (1857–1859). In 1861, Orr served in the Confederate senate; he then served in the Confederate army.

* * *

[APRIL 12 CONT.] I had the opportunity to say something in relation to the dome appropriations and estimate; and while explaining the mode in which that appropriation had been moved by Stanton, Mr. Pringle⁶³ said that he must confess some guilt in that matter, that he had drawn the motion up himself and got Stanton to offer it, supposing that it would be built for 250 to \$300,000. I thought it had originated entirely with Stanton.

* * *

[APRIL 16] I had another visit from Dr. Reid of Edinburgh, the ventilator of the Houses of Parliament, who wrote the first books upon ventilation which I ever read. He brought to show me the printed drawing of the system of ventilating and warming the great St. George's Hall, Assize Courts, in Liverpool. These were carried out under his direction. The doctor did not talk much of the Houses of Parliament. He seemed to have some disagreeable memories connected therewith. He and Barry had war all the time they were pulling against each other. He seems to have been engaged all his time in finding and pointing out difficulties which no other man would ever have seen and then engaging in the task of meeting them. His arrangement at St. George's Hall is very complicated, though I suppose effective.

I had also a talk with Mr. Nason upon boilers and steam pipes, etc. We will adopt a boiler with pipes put into a vault outside of the building between the new and old buildings.

* * *

[APRIL 17] I learned today that Mudd, the foreman of Provost and Winter, had been telling the pie man at the eating stand at the stairs of the Senate that I had taken 10 percent from the contractors and that this had made a disturbance. Captain Dunnington told me of this, and I said I would see Winter upon the subject and have Mudd holed up. But I think it is hardly worth my while to do this. Mudd is small game and will do no great harm.

In the House of Representatives today, I tried to read some of the [shorthand] reporting notes which had been thrown down by the reporters, but I could make out not one word. They write so fast and use so many phrase signs that they mix up their words together in a very illegible way.

* * *

⁶³ Benjamin Pringle (1807–1887), Whig of New York, served in the House of Representatives, 1853–1857. Pringle was questioning Meigs about the aqueduct appropriation.

[On April 21, in spite of all Meigs' efforts, the House voted 59 to 86 not to approve the appropriation for the aqueduct that the Senate had included in the deficiency appropriation bill. The next step would be a conference between the House and Senate. Later that same day, Meigs had to travel to Philadelphia, having received news of the sudden death from cholera of his brother-in-law, Jonathan Williams Biddle, the husband of his sister Emily. Meigs returned to Washington on April 24 after attending the funeral.]

[APRIL 25] I signed my accounts, current abstracts, etc., today for the first quarter of 1856. They cover an expenditure of some \$200,000.

* * *

[APRIL 25 CONT.] Judge Collamer⁶⁴ of the Senate was in the office today. I found him looking at the model and, introducing myself to him, took him upstairs and showed him the drawings and other objects of interest there.

I received on Monday last, not noticed because of my leaving here, a photograph from Mr. Crawford of the crown figure for the dome, which he has remodelled. I think he has much improved it in design and that it is both more graceful and more vigorous than the first and second. This figure is fully draped. She holds in one hand a sword upon which she rests the hand. In the other, she holds a wreath and shield upon which she leans. The figure is dignified, full of grace and beauty, and will be 18 feet 9 inches in height.

* * *

[APRIL 29] A marble-setter at the Capitol, one of Provost and Winter's men, today was spreading a joint of mortar under an architrave, the 3 from the east corner of the south front of the south wing, when the strap of block used in hoisting the stone gave way and the block fell upon him and crushed his arm. He was taken at once to the infirmary and the arm cut off near the shoulder.

The block was entirely too weak for the stone, which weighed probably some 3 or 4 tons. The accident was not an accident but the result of ignorance and carelessness. The block had been raised to the top of the wall and set upon its bed to try it, then lifted to spread the mortar while the man's arm was under it.

And these contractors are in the habit of criticizing my machines as extravagant. They talk about the cost of the derricks at the Post Office which safely lift every stone there used, while they use such machines as break and maim their workmen.

⁶⁴Jacob Collamer (1791–1865), Whig then Republican, of Vermont served in the House of Representatives, 1843–1849, and in the Senate, 1855–1865.

The very platform upon which the derricks and shears used by Provost and Winter at the Capitol move has cost, since I have been at the work, in repairs, \$10,000, which is more than my derricks at the Post Office have cost all together.

* * *

[APRIL 30] The Secretary is very much pleased with the last design of Mr. Crawford. He writes upon the letter that he thinks it fulfills every condition. I have not yet sent to Mr. Crawford this announcement.

* * *

[MAY 1] I wrote today to Crawford to tell him that the Secretary was pleased with his design for the dome figure as revised and to ask him to send me a sketch for the other pediment.

* * *

[MAY 2] We had this afternoon a severe rainstorm with thunder and lightning. I went in the midst of it up upon the scaffold to see how my copper roof behaved. It is the first hard rain I have seen upon it. It did not leak a drop. They began today to put the glass into the skylight. The cornice of the ceiling of the House of Representatives is nearly up. The rain today has filled the building with water. While up upon the scaffold, there was a sudden and severe stroke of lightning which I think must have discharged itself upon the roof of the building. It sounded as if in the room itself and had a quick, sharp sound, with a hissing following it and some smell of sulfur. If it struck, however, the iron carried it off without affecting anything.

Mr. Henry Carey⁶⁵ of Philadelphia, with Mr. Colwell, Dr. Elder,⁶⁶ and Dr. _____,⁶⁷ came to the office today. I took them over the building and showed them the works that are in progress. These are men of taste, and Henry Carey has a fine collection of paintings.

Mr. Rives of the *Globe* sent me word this afternoon that the aqueduct appropriation is safe, that some amendment had been made which would make it acceptable to the House of Representatives. I hope this is true. Rives is thought to have good judgment and discretion in these matters.

Dr. Elder had a letter from [Sartain],⁶⁸ who writes to ask some information about the Capitol. I told him I would answer it if he left it with me.

⁶⁵ Henry C. Carey (1793–1879) was an economist and publisher.

⁶⁶ William Elder (1806–1885) was a physician and writer from Philadelphia.

⁶⁷ Meigs left this name as a blank.

⁶⁸ John Sartain (1808–1897) was an engraver.

I told Mr. Fowler today that I would give to him, or rather to his firm, Janes, Beebe and Co., the gallery front of the House of Representatives. They are to do that for 8½ cents delivered, ready to put up. Upon looking over the drawings and signing them today, I have concluded that this is cheap. There is a vast amount of work upon this iron.

I heard in the Senate today a part of the debate between Benjamin and Seward.⁶⁹ Benjamin has gone over to the Democrats. He says that the Whig party is dead. I was sorry to miss his speech, which is said to have been a most beautiful one. When I heard of it, I went in and found Mr. Seward answering him. His face and manner are not happy when he speaks thus offhand. Benjamin rejoined and was followed by Hale of New Hampshire, who congratulated the party upon this acquisition to their ranks, complimenting his friend for his eloquence and regretting that he had not many such acquisitions to the ranks of his own party to felicitate them upon. He then said that he never answered personal speeches when Senators so far forgot themselves and the place they occupied as to descend to offensive personality. But he would say before he sat down that malignity could not rescue imbecility from the contempt it deserved.

This called up, Clay⁷⁰ of Alabama said that he supposed the Senator from New Hampshire alluded to him, and he demanded to know if that was so. Hale replied he did. Clay then, in a short speech, gave him such a denunciation as I have never heard before, to which Hale listened with a broad grin upon his face, replying, when it was over, that he had already expressed his rule not to answer personal speeches or attacks, thus having answered the speech before it was made. But as for eating his own words, he would only say that if he did, he would have a more palatable meal than the Senator from Alabama when he came to eat his own.

It was a curious passage at arms. Hale bore the assault with apparent indifference. Clay retorted with spirit. I think both have spirit enough and that no one who heard the debate can think that either fears the other. I did not think, when I heard Clay reading his speech from printed slips the other day, that he had so much in him offhand. He has been sick, I am told, which is the reason for his having written out his speech beforehand. The friends of both parties will probably be satisfied that their own friend has been most successful in this bout.

⁶⁹ William Henry Seward (1801–1872), Whig then Republican of New York, served in the Senate, 1849–1861. He was secretary of state, 1861–1869.

⁷⁰ Clement C. Clay, Jr. (1816–1882), Democrat of Alabama, served in the Senate, 1853–1861, until his seat was declared vacant after the state's secession. Clay served in the Confederate senate, 1861–1863.

MAY 3. My birthday. 40 years.

* * *

[MAY 3 CONT.] I wrote today to Crawford, telling him of the Secretary's approbation of his new sketch for the dome figure. I also advised him to send in a sketch for the second pediment. I wish to have something at last which will serve as a standard of comparison for the design, that I may be able to say to those who wish to make a sculpture, this is better, and I can take nothing inferior. If he sends in a very good one, we will probably adopt it. I wrote to Janes, Beebe and Co., accepting their offer for the gallery fronts of the House of Representatives, with the ceiling of the corridors under the galleries and the ceiling of the Retiring Room.

Mr. Ball, the Chairman of the [Public Buildings and Grounds] Committee, called with General Morrison of Virginia and some stranger. They went to look at the building, and Ball and his friend climbed up to see the roof. We are now putting on the glass of the skylights. This is thick glass, obscured, rough plate, $\frac{3}{8}$ inch thick.

I wrote to Ames of Chicopee to tell him that he had not been successful in his bid. He bid $8\frac{1}{2}$ cents delivered, with some extra sums for parts of the work. I have accepted Janes, Beebe and Company's offering, which is $8\frac{1}{2}$ cents throughout for the work fitted, ready to put up, including patterns and everything complete. For putting it up, 4 cents per pound. Making the cost of the work, put up and finished, $12\frac{1}{2}$ cents per pound. It is difficult work to do, and I do not think the price is high. The plates of the House of Representatives ceiling, I am assured, cost them, delivered upon the scaffold, 6 cents per pound. They have then to put them up, which requires much fitting. Rives thinks we are safe with this new committee upon the aqueduct. I do not feel so confident as he does.

* * *

[MAY] 5TH. Today I made my monthly reports upon the works under my charge. I have spent upon the Capitol extension during the month \$85,000. If I were paid for this work at the rate given to Sir Charles Barry by the British nation for his work upon the Palace of Westminster, which is 4 percent, I should have for my month's pay, for the Capitol alone, \$3,400. I have received only about \$155 for all the different works I have had under my charge.

I wrote to Janes and Beebe giving them the drawings of the galleries of the House of Representatives today. Some of them are kept for making patterns; others to be returned, that we might make copies of them. They, as well as myself, are desirous of getting the work under way, and I have sent the drawings without taking time to make copies.

Mr. Walter goes tomorrow to Cincinnati to act with Mr. Upjohn⁷¹ as a commission upon the alterations which have been made in the Columbus State House of Ohio. He has been invited by the Governor and commissioners to give his opinion as to the propriety of these changes. The original architect, Mr. West, was a pupil of his. A new board of commissioners made great changes in the building, under the advice of an architect named [Kelly], with whom they acted. I do not know how the ___ matter stands.

* * *

[MAY 6] This is a bad day, or rather, evening. We have about ½ of the glass in the skylight of the south wing. I have ordered the connections made with the sewer in the cellar, so as to be able to carry off the water from the roof. It begins to be troublesome.

* * *

[MAY 8] Mr. Herbert⁷² of California, a Member of the House of Representatives, this morning shot an Irish waiter at Willard's Hotel. He asked for his breakfast late in the day, and the waiter is said to have told him that he would have to get permission from the office to get his breakfast from the kitchen, it being after breakfast hours. An altercation ensued, and Herbert drew a revolver and shot him through the lungs. He died in five minutes. This is one example of the evil of carrying weapons. What need had Mr. Herbert to carry a pistol in this city and in the House of Representatives? He was arrested and examined and is, I believe, now in jail.

* * *

[MAY 8 CONT.] I have caused some designs for furniture to be made by a German from New York for the room of the Committee on Agriculture. They are very good, and I have approved them and recommended them to General [William] Cullom, the Clerk of the House of Representatives, for adoption. He has the purchase of the furniture for committee rooms at present.

M. J. Bacon,⁷³ who is writing for the [*United States Magazine*] an article upon the Capitol, called today to get some information. I had a long talk with him upon the subject of Mr. Walter's and my relations, in which I explained to him how matters really stood. He said Mr. Walter had spoken to him and told him that I was the engineer and that he was the architect, showing some jealousy. I showed him how

⁷¹ This is probably Richard Upjohn (1802–1878), who was an architect, although it could possibly be his son, Richard M. Upjohn (1828–1903), who was also an architect active in the 1850s.

⁷² Philemon T. Herbert (1825–1864), Democrat of California, served in the House of Representatives, 1855–1857. During the Civil War, he served in the Confederate army.

⁷³ Bacon is described on February 1, 1858, as Marshall D. Bacon.

I had done and what I had done. He expressed a wish to do justice. Cavitt, the editor, promised to me that he would send me the article for examination before printing it and would make such alterations in it as I desired.

* * *

[MAY 9] Kate leaves here tomorrow. I shall be sorry to miss her sweet face, which has been with us now all winter and which begins to wear a less gloomy look. Not that she mourns her husband less truly but that she begins to feel a softened sorrow.

* * *

[MAY 9 CONT.] I saw the Committee on Public Buildings today and had some talk with them about the fitting and decoration of the extension and about the furnishing of the rooms. They seemed to be disposed to look for the best decoration that I could give it. And they feel a pride in it which, as the constituents never objected to the cost, makes them more liberal towards the work.

[Henry] Winter Davis made a speech today in the House which was very telling. He is a most capable debater and one who will rise. I fear that policy more than principle moves him, however.

* * *

[MAY 12] Green from Philadelphia, the glass maker, came today. He found only 7 sheets of the roof glass of the House of Representatives skylight broken instead of the great number which the workmen and foremen seemed to expect. He thinks that no more will break. I suppose that they have not been well annealed and that those that are better annealed will stand.

* * *

[MAY] 13TH. The conference committee made its report today, and the 26th amendment, \$300,000 for the aqueduct, was lost in order to save the quartermaster deficiencies for transporting troops for the Indian War on the Pacific. I could not help agreeing with the committee that of the two, the Indian appropriations were the most necessary to the government. But I regret much the loss of the season.

* * *

[MAY 14] I engaged a Mr. Wood⁷⁴ to come as a draftsman and make reductions in photography of our drawings.

⁷⁴John Wood was a photographer who worked with Meigs at the Capitol, 1856–1861, documenting the construction of the wings and dome.

Today a Mr. Leslie⁷⁵ brought me a specimen of encaustic painting, which is very beautiful. He had a letter from Digby Wyatt of London. He had been engaged for 13 months upon the Crystal Palace in Siddenham.

* * *

[MAY 15] A resolution to refer Mr. Herbert's case to the Committee on the Judiciary was tabled. He was in his seat. The House declined to take notice of the affair while he is untried. How he can sit there with the guilt of murder upon his hands, in the face of his fellowmen, I do not see.

I gave to Mr. [Henry] Sharp and Mr. Leslie of New York, decorators, tracings of the rooms number 64 and 62, principal story, the south wing of the Capitol extension. They are to make sketches of the decoration they propose and submit them with estimates. The encaustic painting in the specimen he showed me is well done. I have one ceiling by Carstens finished in the northwest corner of the north wing basement.⁷⁶ It is very beautiful, though not so high a style of art as the fresco in room number 17 of Agriculture. The coloring is gay and cheerful, with striking contrasts but very harmonious. The effect is very beautiful, and at first sight it pleases as much as the higher art in the other room. But it does not wear so well. The mind finds nothing to study in it. A few scrolls and bunches of fruit and flowers are the whole; and after a few minutes, the novelty wears off, though the impression of beauty and harmony remains.

Two more panes of glass have broken in the roof of the House of Representatives. They broke last night.

I wrote today and telegraphed a countermand of the order sent on a day or two since for the billings of the glass for the roof. I do not feel safe with this glass continually breaking.

* * *

[MAY 16] Mr. Walter has returned from Cincinnati. I have not yet had any talk with him of his affairs there. I learned from Clark today that Mr. Walter has also set up a carriage. He bought it sometime since, and it is a very handsome one. Provost bought his just after, apparently not to be outdone by the architect. The contractor surely ought to be able to do as much as the architect. [P.T.] Barry has also set up his carriage. He is the granite contractor upon the Patent Office. I have not set up mine, for the reason that my pay does not enable me to support it. I have at this moment only about \$5 to \$7 cash. With Mrs.

⁷⁵James Leslie (d. 1860) was an English artist who helped to decorate the Capitol.

⁷⁶The room is now S-126, assigned to the Committee on Appropriations. Carstens' decorations were painted over in the twentieth century.

Rodgers' \$600 a year for herself and Jerusha and the \$300 a year which my father gives me, and no rent to pay, I have at the end of the month nothing to put away. And now in the middle of the month I am out of money. This happens, however, from my having paid for the premium upon life insurance \$123.50 at the beginning of this month.

Mr. Kennett⁷⁷ of St. Louis, a Member of the House, a man of wealth and taste, asks me to endeavor to find employment for a Frenchman, Mr. Pomerade,⁷⁸ who has painted some building and ceilings in St. Louis—the ceiling of the variety theater, some churches, and a private house of Mr. Hoffman. He painted in the theater Apollo and the Muse. Mr. Kennett says well done. I must write to him.

* * *

[MAY 17] Mr. Huntington, Clerk of the Court of Claims, informed me today that his court was to take possession for a time of the room of the Supreme Court and that he would have the furniture removed and give the room up to me for painting next week.

I have thought it would be well to make one of these rooms fit for the use of the Committee on Naval Affairs.⁷⁹ I think of writing to Hamilton⁸⁰ of Philadelphia and asking him to paint a set of naval battles upon the lunettes of the walls. Every battle with the British in the last war would serve as good subjects for this purpose. I do not know whether he would have the sense to do it at such a price as I would be justified in paying, but I believe I will give him the opportunity.

* * *

[MAY 17 CONT.] I had a talk with Mr. Walter, who has returned from Cincinnati. He says that they have supported [William Russell] West, the first architect, and reported against the alterations which have been made.

* * *

[MAY 19] Mr. Green came today to see about his glass. I told him he could have time to make any experiment as to the cause of its breaking but that if he could not arrest it, I must condemn the glass and could not buy or use any more of it.

⁷⁷Luther M. Kennett (1807–1873), Whig of Missouri, served in the House of Representatives, 1855–1857.

⁷⁸Leon D. Pomerade (c.1807–1892) was a French painter who worked in New Orleans and St. Louis. He wrote and visited Meigs offering to work at the Capitol but apparently never did so.

⁷⁹The room is now S-127, assigned to the Committee on Appropriations.

⁸⁰James Hamilton was a painter of marine subjects.

MAY 20. Today Mr. Walter tells me that he finds his draftsmen object to the hours of work which he had directed. They came in in a body this morning and at 9 a.m. instead of 8. And yesterday they all left at 5 p.m. instead of staying till 6 as he had ordered. He has had a talk with August Schoenborn, who is the best of them and the one who has been the longest with us, and he says that they get no credit from this work. They look for money, not fame, and he has a standing offer of \$5 per day for hours from 9 till 3; that he could get \$6; that [Clement] West, who left us sometime since, was employed by the Treasury Department at \$6 for Clerk of Department Arts [?], 9 till 3, which is true. If he has such an offer, it must be from Bowman's office or from the young architect of that office, who likes to get Mr. Walter's draftsmen, as they draw in better style than those he brings up himself. Mr. Walter proposed to compromise the matter by keeping August at an increased pay and making him agree to the hours and making some arrangement with Shruck and letting the rest go. Some of them are of little value.

August also told Mr. Walter that Sonnemann had said to him that he worked only from 8 to 5 p.m. and would not work more. I must inquire into this. A strike will leave us brittle for a time, as we have a vast amount of drawing to do.

I find today that in addition to the resolutions of Mr. Pringle offered yesterday, Mr. Ball, from the Committee on Public Buildings, offered a long string of questions about the Capitol extension and Post Office extension, which can do no good, take a long time and much labor and much money to answer and play only into the hands of the contractors who have lived here by plundering the government and workmen heretofore, and who now ride in their carriages with the money thus acquired. They went into the cost of my derricks, machinery, stone cutting, iron, etc., etc., horses, carriages, wagons, etc. Questions thrown out yesterday in the hope to find in the answers something of value to them in future bids and contracts or something upon which they can lay a foundation of accusations against me. They find their business in a measure cut off and now fight for the mastery. I felt today more disturbed and incensed than I have been since I have been here.

* * *

[MAY 22]⁸¹ I have a letter from Sonnemann in reference to the hours of work in the office. I had been told that August Schoenborn had

⁸¹It was on this day that Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts was beaten by Representative Preston Brooks of South Carolina on the floor of the Senate. The onset of Meigs' illness may have prevented him from commenting on the incident in the diary.

said, in justifying himself for refusing to work from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., with dinner taken out, that Mr. Sonnemann had said he worked only from 9 to 5 and would not do more. So I wrote to ask him if this was true. He replies satisfactorily enough, except that he speaks with unkindness of Mr. Walter. I answered him in such a way as to point out that he was wrong in this and to do no violence, I trust, to his feelings.

I learned from Mr. Walter that the difficulty with draftsmen has been arranged. They agree to the hours, except Camerhoover, who came at 9 again today and was told he could not work. Mr. Walter is quite elated at the victory and says he was determined to carry the thing through. The fact is he is insolent in success and servile in defeat or trouble. He was annoyed and ready to give up when they told him that they would not submit to the hours he proposed, and he would have given that up, too, if he could have got encouragement from me. When they gave in, he became elated and told Camerhoover on dismissing him, when he asked for a letter of recommendation, that he would give him none, did not desire to see his face again, he was an ungrateful fellow, etc., etc. Now, all this was tyrannical and wrong. He should have given him a note saying that he was skillful and giving the reasons of their parting—namely, that Camerhoover was not willing to give as many hours' attention to the duties of the office as its necessities required—and there should have been no quarrel.

* * *

22ND MAY TO 2ND JULY. Sick and convalescent.

JULY 2. A long interval during which I have been through the severest illness I have had since my childhood. After going on the afternoon of the 22nd May to the funeral of Mr. Riggs'⁸² child, I returned home much fatigued, and the next morning I found myself so unwell that I consulted the doctor. Coolidge⁸³ advised me to stay at home and gave me a dose of calomel and 40 grains of quinine to be taken in 4 doses, night and morning, after the operation of the cathartic. I went through this process, but it did not relieve me. It would have probably done had I been suffering only from the ague, of which I have had so many slight attacks. My disease took the form of bilious remittent and at last seemed to degenerate into a kind of typhoid form. I was very much reduced in flesh and strength.

My brother John was sent on by my father to see me and let him know by telegraph whether it was worthwhile for him to come to see

⁸²George W. Riggs (1813–1881) was a banker in Washington, founder with W.W. Corcoran of the forerunner of the present Riggs Bank.

⁸³Richard Henry Coolidge was an army doctor.

me. John, on seeing me so much reduced and in such a nervous state, telegraphed to my father and mother to come on at once, and they did so. They arrived about the crisis of my disease.

Father stayed a day or two only, and Mother remained to help my wife nurse me for about a week, when she was called home to take care of Mary, my youngest sister, who had a return of the disease which some two years ago gave them so much uneasiness about her. She was relieved, however, in a few days.

From this time, I slowly gained strength, sitting up a short time daily, but it was not until today that I was able to go to the office for a few minutes, even. I rode up today, stopping at the Post Office to look at that work, and then at the Capitol I found myself much fatigued by this exertion. I found the work apparently going on well, but I think there is still much for me to do, to pick up things left undone during my sickness.

I found by being weighed at the Capitol today that I am now 22 pounds lighter than when last weighed. Then 198 pounds, now 175³/₄. I suppose that I have gained some 8 or 10 pounds since I left my bed and that weight thus lost by this sickness was 30 pounds.

My visit to the office today fatigued me much more than I had supposed it would. I have much to be thankful for in this sickness: The tender care of my wife, who did her duty faithfully in a fatiguing confinement to which she was subjected by my helpless condition. My mother's kindness and my father's liberality. He not only came on to see me from Philadelphia, very busy with his own professional duties, but he gave me, while here, a check for \$300 to meet the expenses of the sickness.

I had found myself at the end of the month of May, or rather just before the end of the month, in bed without a dollar to send to market. I went to the paymaster a day or two before the end of the month to draw my pay for May, which enabled me to carry on the house.

Doctors Coolidge and Edwards⁸⁴ of the Army attended me with faithful care and high skill. I believe that I was as judiciously treated as I could have been. Though very sick, I did not suffer much. At first, a good deal of headache, though not of a very violent kind. A throbbing at every pulsation. I was cupped⁸⁵ upon the back of the neck for this. I was cupped upon the stomach and cupped upon the spine.

To all these and many other kind friends to whom I am indebted for sympathy and assistance, I feel very grateful. To God, who directed

⁸⁴Lewis A. Edwards was an army doctor.

⁸⁵Cupping was a medical procedure in which blood was drawn to or from the surface of the body by creating a partial vacuum over a certain spot.

all things for my recovery, I am thankful for having spared me the acute suffering which generally accompanies so severe an attack of disease, and for restoring me to health at last. I was at no time delirious and was able every day or two to attend to the necessary business of signing checks to pay the debts of the different works under my charge. I was unable to make my monthly report at the end of May and have now, therefore, to make out reports for the past two months.

JULY 3RD. I remained at home today and fixed the prices of a quantity of work done by the contractors Provost, Winter and Co. upon the Capitol extension in their contract. Among these are the mantels in the Agricultural Committee room, which for the work alone costs \$393. Polishing the bases of Tennessee marble for the columns of the stairs. These things cost to cut \$77, and I have allowed for polishing \$21.50, which is about $\frac{1}{2}$ what the ___ cost them. They polished it by hand. It can be done upon a lathe for about $\frac{1}{3}$. Carving the entablature of the vestibule of the main story, Senate and House. The ___, I have a price of \$7.33 per lineal foot. For the lathe [?] and enrichment at \$5.50 per lineal foot.

I found for the first time in the reports of my foreman Rutherford and those sent in by Provost and Winter, as the time employed upon the work to be priced, an important discrepancy. Upon the mantel in the Agricultural room number 17, mantel 842, they agree. But upon 3 other mantels they differ about 20 days on each. Provost and Winter's report on time exceeded ours 20 days. I sent for Rutherford to look over his account and notes again, as I do not think such an error could have been made intentionally by the contractors, as they have acted honestly heretofore in this matter.

Mr. [William] Bryan came in. He has nearly stopped all work upon the aqueduct. Will be able to close up in a few days [because the appropriation was not passed]. Rode out after dinner.

* * *

[JULY] 5TH. I rode to the office today and measured the figures of America and the Pioneer for the pediment. I ordered the blocks of marble for them.

Heebner was at the office and took the order. Gianpanculi [?] measured them the other day and brought me drawings of blocks of 224 cubic feet, 40,000 pounds weight. I have reduced them $\frac{1}{2}$ by leaving out some of the accessories which might as well be in separate blocks. I make each figure and the eagle of America out of single blocks—that is, I cut the eagle out of the same block with the America and I make the sun of a different block.

I went for the first time into the room of the photography. Mr. Wood was at work copying a drawing of a gun carriage, line drawing, for the Crimean Commission. The lines in the reduced copy were well given, but the paper is not white, the whole surface being somewhat blackened by the effect of the printing. This must be corrected before we can have satisfactory drawings. In definition and clearness, it is perfect.

Signed and approved a quantity of drawings for the gallery doors or door frames and their iron work.

* * *

[JULY 7] Mr. Denham had to leave the office today with a fever, a returning of his fever and ague. He was out of his head in the afternoon. I signed a check for Rice, Baird and Heebner and one for Mr. Harkness' pay for the last quarter. Denham must go away for a while and recruit. I suppose he will leave for a week during my absence.

I shall go as soon as the Secretary sends me my orders, which were sent to him today.

* * *

JULY 8TH. A very rainy day. I stayed at home and contented myself with signing some papers and writing some letters, etc.

Mr. [Alfred] Rives came up with some question about the beams for the roof of the stairways which have been sent on but short by a half inch. He dined with us.

[JULY] 9TH. To the department and to the office. The Secretary was not in, and I left a card for him. I found my orders signed and determined to go tomorrow to the North.

* * *

[JULY 9 CONT.] At the office, I signed a vast number of drawings which have been prepared during my sickness. Gave general directions about the work in my absence. Gave to Mr. Denham, at my house afterward, a check for \$700 to meet expenses during my absence. Wrote a letter to Wetman putting him in charge of the clerks if Denham goes away, as I expect him to do while I am absent.

In the evening I received a copy of a letter from the Committee on Public Buildings to the Secretary of War with his answer. They ask the cost of the windows of the Capitol extension as executed and as contracted for. Also the cost of the statues for the Capitol and for the Post Office and the authority by which they had been ordered. The Secretary, in reply to their letter, which requests him to send in the answers either in conjunction with those to the resolutions of Mr. Ball

of the 26th of May or in separate communication, tells them that he could not put into the answers to resolutions of the House of Representatives, calling for specific information, other matters not asked for. The resolutions had been addressed to the President, and it would be interpolation for him to introduce other matter. He also tells them that as the House of Representatives has asked for specific information in regard to buildings, he prefers not to send in any communication in relation to them to be used in the House of Representatives unless asked for by the same authority as the last.

* * *

[On July 10, Meigs traveled to Philadelphia, where he visited his family for several days on his way to look at marble quarries. On July 13 he received mail from his office.]

[JULY 13] Some vouchers are also sent to me. One for Miller and Coates for tiles, \$4,921.25. One for Miller, Coates and Youle, tiles, \$257.51. Thompson, plumbing, \$902.37. Checks of these to be signed and sent by mail.

* * *

[JULY 14] . . . Signed and sent off checks and vouchers to Miller and Coates; Miller, Coates and Youle; and to Thompson, the plumber, at Washington. Sent the last to the office, the rest sent directly.

* * *

[On July 15 Meigs traveled on to New York.]

[JULY] 16TH. I went to look at some patterns at Janes and Beebe's for the iron ceilings of the rooms under the corridors. They are well modelled.

* * *

[JULY 16 CONT.] Rode up to Union Square to see Mr. Brown's statue of Washington. It is a bronze equestrian statue of about 14 feet in height. The new bronze is of a golden color. It is perhaps a little larger than the Jackson statue in Washington by [Clark Mills].⁸⁶ I think it is a good figure, but I do not find in it any of the moving effect which the efforts of great genius are expected to produce.

* * *

⁸⁶Clark Mills (1816–1883) was an American sculptor whose equestrian statues of Andrew Jackson and George Washington stand in Lafayette Park and Washington Circle, respectively, in Washington, D.C. Crawford's bronze statue of *Freedom* for the Capitol dome was cast at his foundry.

[JULY 16 CONT.] I met Provost, my contractor, here. He spoke of Mr. [Edward] Ball's attack and said that he had been to his office. Ball talked with him a good deal, wished to know what would be the effect of stopping the appropriation for one season. He says that Ball spoke very highly of me as a man of intelligence, to be relied upon, and of great energy, but he seemed to have, in Provost's words, the devil in him, determined to make trouble.

Provost says that he had some difficulty with [Samuel] Strong when he began his work upon the Capitol and that Strong was the greatest rascal to be found. He asked one day why Provost had so many laborers. He told him, to do his work. "Why, there is no need of your keeping laborers. Whenever you want 20 or 30 men, come to me. I'll give them to you." Provost told him that he had been upon public work in Washington for many years, and though he did not pretend to be very scrupulous, he knew enough to know that such a thing as that could not go on without detection. Strong never forgave him for this and did what he could to injure him, till he went to him and threatened to appeal to the President, telling him that he knew nothing of his business and that he might know something of plain brick and stone work but that of marble work he was as ignorant as a child; that if he was interfered with, he would insist upon having a special superintendent of marble work appointed. This cowed Strong, who came to his office the next day and offered to be friends, said there was no use in their quarreling, and they had better join together to make money.

He told Provost that he did not come to superintend the Capitol for \$2,000 a year and could make that anywhere. He says that Strong showed him his bankbook one day, with a credit of \$6,000.

He thinks that Strong got a good deal of the money stolen in all possible ways, for he was in some way connected with [Matthew] Emory. Used to give him men to haul his granite into his shops for him and to the building from the shops. He thinks Emory a very slippery man, in which I believe that he is quite right.

He says that Emory's bid for the Treasury is to be understood as Bowman understands it, not as Ball with Emory's advice interprets it.

It is a curious affair. I wonder whether when Strong gave the order to Emory to haul the marble from the shops to the Capitol, for which Emory is now work [?] at his claim, he was not acting under his offer to do his labor for him. Provost said, too, that Strong told him he would give him as many stone cutters as he wanted to be kept jobbing and taken sometimes into the shop. "Why not make money?" he said. "I know you're an old contractor, and you did not take this contract to lose money."

* * *

JULY 17TH. By railroad to Lee [Massachusetts]. The ride over the New Haven road to Bridgeport [Connecticut] was very uncomfortable. It was a very hot day, and the road is one of the dustiest in the country. I was in the last car.

* * *

[JULY 17 CONT.] We reached Lee about 3½ p.m., having left New York at 8 a.m. I went to the quarry with Heebner, and have never found them in so good condition. The Capitol's quarry is very much enlarged since I was here last. The stone is of good quality, and they are getting it out rapidly. They have less difficulty in getting cars now to carry it.

* * *

[JULY 17 CONT.] Heebner complains bitterly of Rice, who is only a partner in the contract for the Capitol, doing nothing for the work. The whole is done by Heebner, and Rice draws money. Sends it to him more regularly than he did last year. Heebner says that he has spent \$14,000 upon the quarry for the Post Office.

* * *

[On July 18, Meigs started back to New York, arriving there early on July 19 and continuing on to Philadelphia. He visited his parents again on July 20 and did some shopping in Philadelphia on July 21, before returning to Washington that evening.]

[JULY 21] Leaving Philadelphia at 1 p.m., I reached Washington by railroad at 7 p.m. Thus, having left on the 10th and returning on the 21st, I have been absent just 12 days. I find that I have spent in the traveling expenses \$44.38, about \$3.70 per day. But I stayed some part of the time at my father's house. One can't travel ____ at this rate per day or stay at a hotel for such a sum.

* * *

[JULY 21 CONT.] I found a letter from the Secretary upon the table, in which he says that he understands that great misrepresentation has been put abroad about the case of Powers and Crawford and attempts made to induce the belief that the Secretary and myself have proscribed him as a Northern artist and to give everything to Crawford. He wishes the whole facts to appear in the answers to the inquiries.

* * *

[JULY 22] Mr. Crawford has arrived in New York, but has not yet made his appearance here.

I have a long list of questions in the form of a resolution from the House of Representatives, asking the cost of windows, the sculpture and other work and the authority for making the sculpture upon the Post Office. How much has been paid or is to be paid to Crawford and how much to Powers and to other sculptors. All this I hope to be able to answer satisfactorily. These are questions contained in the letter of the committee to the Secretary which he declined to answer unless asked for by the House of Representatives. They are, I suppose, Ball's questions.

I saw Ball in the House of Representatives today and shook hands with him. I saw also Mr. Pringle at the same time. I found Mr. Meacham had been asking for me and went into the House to see him. They have adopted a resolution to adjourn by the 18th of August. This will set them to work. They meet now at 11 a.m.

* * *

[JULY] 23RD. At the office today, where I was engaged in giving directions for the answers to the questions of Mr. Ball and Barksdale.⁸⁷ I had a visit from Mrs. Secretary Davis with an aunt. Captain Bowman also called. Denham had been in before and said that he was coming, leaving a note for him. They are anxious for the success of a provision for the increase of the Corps of Engineers, which they think has now a good chance of success. They wished me to speak to some Members of Congress on the subject. I promised to try to do so, but I had not time to go into the House.

Mr. Walter is sick. He had an attack of dysentery last night, and I found him upon a sofa. He says the doctor prescribed rest in a horizontal position and a ___ pill. He had been awake all night and was very much dispirited. I promised to come to see him on my way to the office in the morning and made him promise to stay at home until I came.

* * *

[JULY 24] I went over the north wing of the Capitol extension today. The work is making good progress upon the ceiling. Several rooms are nearly ready for the painting; some are being decorated.

The application from the clerk of the Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads of the Senate for a room to be prepared for them by

⁸⁷ William Barksdale (1821–1863), Democrat of Mississippi, served in the House of Representatives, 1853–1861. During the Civil War, he served in the Confederate army.

the first of next session. They wish to have it assigned now. I promised to endeavor to report one as fit for use in a short time.

Mr. Burlingame and Mr. [Preston] Brooks have had a correspondence, and Burlingame has answered to Brooks' demand that he would be at the Clifton House, Niagara Falls, Canada side, ready to discuss with him the matters in difference between them on Saturday. Brooks declines having anything more to do with him, on the ground that it is too far and that the road is through the enemy's country, so that he would be killed if he went there, and if he killed Burlingame, he would never get back. He has made a great mistake in this refusal, after having challenged him. He has made a mistake in attempting to resort to the foolish practice of the duel at all; but if he resorts to it, he should not decline the meeting on account of the danger of getting back from the place of the meeting.⁸⁸

JULY 25TH. I went today to the committee room to meet the committee on expenditures upon public building, as I had been told by the Chairman, Mr. McMullen,⁸⁹ that he intended to call them to conference this day and wished me present. They were called in the room of the Committee on Agriculture, the frescoed chamber. Only two Members, including the Chairman, assembled, so that as there was no quorum, there was no business done. The fresco painting, if thought by some extravagant, is evidently popular with the Members. Of committees, no less than 4 committees have met in this room.

I made out today the cost of the doors for the Capitol extension. The front doors will cost about \$13,600 each; the interior door, Columbus, about \$14,000; the pediment about \$46,000; while the Columbus group of Persico, of two figures only, cost \$26,000, and the Peace and War, which cost \$10,000 for single figures. The sculpture for the gate of the Post Office will cost about \$3,000.

* * *

[JULY 25] I received some sketches by Mr. Leon Pomerade, St. Louis. They are not as well drawn as I could wish. I fear that he has not been well taught in drawing and figure, though he sketches it with apparent facility.

⁸⁸On June 2 a House committee that had investigated Brooks' caning of Sumner recommended that Brooks be expelled. In the floor debate that followed, South Carolinians defended Brooks, while many northern representatives attacked him. Anson Burlingame, a Massachusetts colleague of Sumner, made the most vehement charges against Brooks, who challenged him to a duel, the result of which is reported by Meigs. On July 14 the House failed to achieve the necessary two-thirds vote to expel Brooks.

⁸⁹Fayette McMullen (1805-1880), Democrat of Virginia, served in the House of Representatives, 1849-1857. Later, he served in the Confederate congress.

JULY 26TH. At the office. Made out answers to more of the questions of the House of Representatives. I find that the joint resolution of the 20th of February, 1854, comes in quite conveniently when they are charging me with building too strong and too well. It was passed upon the recommendation of the Committee on Public Buildings, and it gives express authority to change the contracts so as to obtain larger blocks of marble than at first intended. So that I am, by the action of Congress, endorsed in making the changes in contracts of the windows upon which the intended attack seems to be founded.

* * *

JULY 28TH. Today's *Intelligencer* contains a card from Mr. Burlingame and his friend, Mr. Campbell,⁹⁰ in which they reply to Mr. Brooks' card, and I think show conclusively that Mr. Brooks has not acted wisely in this affair. Burlingame says that he left the city at once upon sending his message that he would be ready to receive any negotiation, while Brooks lingered until he was arrested. Campbell says that General Lane,⁹¹ without informing him of his intention, allowed Brooks to publish the correspondence and declined to go to Canada because he thought there was danger in going there. If he was afraid to go, he should at least have asked for some other place to which he was not afraid to go.

I think that Mr. Brooks is without doubt a brave man and, probably wishing to fight, made a mistake in not following his adversary to the end of the world if necessary.

I finished today the answers to the questions asked in regard to the Capitol extension and Post Office in the resolutions of the House of Representatives offered by Mr. Barksdale.

Mr. Brumidi brought me today 3 sketches in oil of the pictures for the decoration of the antechamber of the Senate. They represent Washington thanking Congress for the election as Commander-in-Chief, the signature of the Treaty of Paris, the representation of the French Ambassador, Gerard, in Congress. He has been very successful in them all, I think, having made good positions and attained a pleasing variety of attitude and harmony of color.

JULY 29. I went to the War Department this morning and showed the Secretary the words I had devoted to Powers in the answers to the questions of July 17th. He thought that it was enough.

⁹⁰It is not clear whether this is Lewis Campbell of Ohio or James Campbell of Pennsylvania, both of whom were serving in the House of Representatives in 1856.

⁹¹Joseph Lane (1801-1881), who was brevetted a general in the Mexican War, was a Democrat who served as a delegate in the House of Representatives from the Territory of Oregon, 1851-1859. After Oregon became a state, he served in the Senate, 1859-1861.

I have been much dissatisfied with Mr. Fitzpatrick today. I read over and corrected his copy of the answers last night and found many mistakes, so many that I had to direct their being written over again. Today I read over the new copies and found in some pages no less than 5 mistakes. I left the work at the office, having marked the mistakes in pencil. They came home still imperfect. This carelessness on his part has deferred sending in the answers for today.

In the *Globe*, I find that when the Army bill was up yesterday, Mr. Ball moved a proviso to transfer the public buildings from the Secretary of War to the Secretary of the Interior and to make it illegal for an officer holding a commission in the Army to be engaged upon any public building unless it is one necessary for the defense of the country. It was ruled out of order, and he then moved to strike out the appropriation of \$300,000.

General Quitman⁹² made a short speech in which he said he disapproved of the employment of officers upon civil works but did not think this the time or way to correct the evil. He paid a tribute to the honesty of the officers.

I wrote tonight a note to General Quitman, whom I do not know, to tell him of some aspects of the question which he does not understand. Are we, because we have a commission of the country, to be excluded from all its employments of want in our own profession? We are excluded from the field of civil engineering, upon railroads and canals and other works carried on by the states or by private enterprise. And now we are to be declared incapable of being employed in the direction of any work of sufficient importance to be the object of ambition of any civil engineer and confined entirely to building forts.

I suppose that Ball will push his proviso, but I do not think that he can carry it.

JULY 30. Today I sent to Ball and Quitman letters in consequence of their speeches in the House of Representatives. To Ball, I gave an account of the reasons for the delay in answering his resolutions, which are that they required much work and time and I have been too sick to do my part of it. To Quitman, I tried to present in a plain way some of the effects of his proposition to prevent the officers from being employed upon civil works of the government. It is too bad that our commissions, obtained with toil and study at West Point, should be the obstacles to our being employed upon the national works of engineers, though we are the national engineers.

⁹²John A. Quitman (1799–1858), Democrat of Mississippi, served in the House of Representatives, 1855–1858. He had been a general in the Mexican War.

I sent a copy of this note to the Secretary. I sent also to him answers to the resolutions of Mr. Barksdale. These are identical with the questions asked by Ball and his committee of the Secretary.

* * *

[JULY 30 CONT.] Mr. Collamer, of the Senate Committee on Post Roads, came to ask for a room for his committee. I promised to report by tomorrow one or two rooms and told him to make interest with Mr. Bright, the Vice President,⁹³ to secure one for his committee. He fancies the northwest room of the basement of the north wing.

* * *

[JULY 30 CONT.] I have been under the impression that the gutters of the building, from a rough estimate, at 4 cents per pound, would cost some \$20,000. I find that at 8 cents, the price at which these are offered to me by Janes, Beebe and Co., they will not cost over \$16,000. I do not know yet whether I shall give the job to them at this price. It seems high, but the patterns are not often repeated, and they will cost some \$3,000.

* * *

[JULY] 31ST. Having finished the answers to the resolutions of the House of Representatives on the 17th of July, I sent them in this morning.

* * *

[AUG. 2] Engaged yesterday and today upon the answers to the questions of the House of Representatives.

* * *

[AUG.] 4TH. In writing out my answers today to the resolutions of the House of Representatives, I find that I spent last month over \$100,000.

I am surprised at the results of the estimate which I am having made by Mr. Walter and others of the cost of finishing the extension. Mr. Walter gets for the marble work and marble \$1,200,000. There remains to be done marble work, the workmanship of which will cost over \$600,000. Now, Provost and Winter's bid for the marble and marble work of the exterior was \$773,000, about. The walls of the main building of the wings are up, the architrave generally in place, and yet there remains for porticoes and connections some \$400,000 worth of work.

⁹³As noted earlier, Jesse Bright was serving as president pro tempore of the Senate. In that role, he was carrying out many of the functions of the vice-presidency, which had been vacant since the death of William R. King in 1853.

Besides this, there is the interior, which was not included in their own bid, though it is in the contract.

* * *

[AUG. 4 CONT.] The ceilings of the two rooms in the north wing, now painted by Carstens, have cost about \$440 each. This is quite as much as it would have cost to paint them in fresco by Brumidi. But I have not time to use Brumidi in them.

I have made some progress in my replies, but there is still much to be done, and I hope to be in the House of Representatives tomorrow when the District of Columbia business comes up.

[AUG.] 5TH. Today I stayed at home most of the morning in order to make up some business. I had some prices to fix for work done by the contractors not specified in the contracts. There were 6 patterns of mantels and the shafts of the columns of the Corinthian vestibules of the principal story.

* * *

[AUG. 5 CONT.] On my return to the office, I found Mr. Crawford and went with him over the building and through the shops. He seemed quite satisfied with the ways in which the figures for the pediment are being executed and was much pleased with the marble. He says that it looks like the Greek marble. Is quite as pure in color as he would desire. The height of the boy in the group of youth is finished, and with it he seemed entirely satisfied. I told him I was not quite pleased with the head of the mechanic, and he told Vincenti that he would come in in the morning and try to chisel a little upon the head. But I said that it was as good as he could expect, that the delicate touches which he missed were very difficult to copy.

He says that he will not be able to let the figure for the top of the dome off with less than 20 feet of height, that he was by his contract for the Washington Monument at Richmond obliged to make the equestrian group into less than 15 feet and should end by making it 22 feet, though per foot in bronze cost him \$1,000.

Mr. Crawford seems to me a man of somewhat rough manners. He has a pleasantness which is honest, no doubt, but which looks like the effect of a rather rough early education. I have had it upon my tongue today several times to ask him from what state he came, but I was prevented by some turn in the conversation. He will be at the office again tomorrow, when I expect to go with him to see the Secretary of War.

* * *

[AUG.] 6TH. Today I spent with Mr. Crawford mostly. I went with him to call upon the President and Secretary of War and Navy. I told Mr. Davis that I found upon making an estimate of the cost of completing the Capitol extension, it would come far beyond my expectations and that I would, in sending him the estimate, send him a letter explaining it; that I had supposed for some time and until lately that the original estimate had been a good one, but I found that after doing most of the work for the ____, there remained more marble and marble workmanship for the porticoes and connecting corridors than the whole offer of Provost, Winter and Co. for the furnishing and working of the marble for the whole exterior at first.

We called upon the Secretary of the Navy, Mr. Dobbin, who was to make some decisions upon the application of the Governor of Virginia, Mr. Wise,⁹⁴ for a national vessel to be sent to Amsterdam for the equestrian figure of Washington for the State of Virginia, just finished by Mr. Crawford.⁹⁵ They think of sending the *Merrimac*.

I then took him to the President, whom we saw, and we had a pleasant visit there. The President spoke very kindly about the trouble given me by the constant attacks in Congress. He spoke of his negotiation with Powers for the statue of America.

. . . Mr. Crawford dined with me, and we had a pleasant dinner.

* * *

[AUG.] 7TH. Today I heard from Mr. Ball that he was about to attack the military superintendencies. He had sent to the committee room, to his clerk, the message of the President in answer to the resolutions of the 17th of July, and the page came to my room and asked me for the report which was being prepared for Mr. Ball. I went to his seat and asked him what he needed, as I did not understand it. I found him occupied making notes from my answers in reference to cost of windows and doors, etc. He said the message to me was a mistake and that he was going to attack the military presently.

I asked Mr. Clingman and Mr. Tyson⁹⁶ to defend me if I gave them some notes and went to the office to write out the notes, which took me some ½ hour. When I got back, the matter was over. He had moved his proviso to the civil bill and it had passed. He made a speech

⁹⁴ Henry Alexander Wise (1806–1876), Democrat, was governor of Virginia, 1856–1860. He had served in the House of Representatives, 1833–1844. During the Civil War, he served in the Confederate army.

⁹⁵ The monument is in Richmond.

⁹⁶ Job R. Tyson (1803–1858), Whig of Pennsylvania, served in the House of Representatives, 1855–1857.

of 5 minutes in which he charged extravagance and was replied to by Mr. Cadwalader⁹⁷ and without information from me.

Cadwalader came from his seat to see me and told me he wished to prepare me for a great deal of trouble for the next 2 or 3 months. He said that attacks upon public men were made so as to throw them upon the defensive, and when they defended themselves upon one point, it was abandoned and the attack was changed.

He says that they have failed in the formation of their committee. They have not the means of getting such a report, as they wish to make it a minority report. They intended to get up a bundle of charges and use them in the Presidential election. They wished General Pierce to be the candidate and let Ball's speech pass off quietly. It was published in time for the Cincinnati convention. They have failed politically, and now Ball is moved only by the desire to make something out of a move in which he has engaged himself.

I have been very much occupied with writing answers to all this attack and to the resolutions of the 26th of May. The estimate for completing the wings will be over 2,000,000, probably over \$2,675,000. So that the cost of the work will more than double the original estimate. This will be charged against me. In fact, the original estimate was entirely too low. The porticoes alone will cost nearly half, not quite as much as the bid of Provost, Winter and Co. for the whole exterior marble and marble work. And in these porticoes I have made no change of design to affect the cost of workmanship.

[AUG.] 8TH. I discharged Mr. Copeland, who has for some time past done little, if any, good. The work in the smith shop is too low for him to be of any great service. I found him the other day during working hours sitting in the studio, which I did not think was his place. He should have been with his men in the smith shop. The poor old man is too old to earn his wages.

I tonight wrote a letter to Severson discharging him from the work after tomorrow. I put it upon the ground that he was no longer needed, as the roof was done and the iron work of the windows did not require the services of a foreman of so high a rate of wages. The fact is that he has not done his duty lately and has mistaken his place, which is that of a foreman. He has not spent his time among the workmen and has been in [Francis] Brooks' office reading the newspapers, unless he has been closely [watched]. Mr. Walter, Rives, Jones, etc., unite in saying that this is the place in which he spends his time.

* * *

⁹⁷John Cadwalader (1805-1879), Democrat of Pennsylvania, served in the House of Representatives, 1855-1857.

[AUG. 8 CONT.] Finished the estimate and report upon question of 26th of May.

I wrote a letter also to the Secretary of War, giving him the amount of the estimate for finishing the work. It is so much greater than I had expected that I thought it proper to write to him an explanation of the reasons for which I had a year ago taken it for granted that the work could be done for the estimate of Mr. Walter. I find that the cost of completion will be greater than the whole of the original estimate. That was \$2,675,000. We want to finish about \$2,833,000.

* * *

[AUG.] 9TH. Severson came to ask an explanation of his dismissal. He would have an explanation, and I told him that I had put his discharge upon the ground that his services were no longer needed and that I did not wish to go into any other matters. He asked for it, however, said that his reputation for skill and economy in putting up such structures was his capital, and he wished always to have a testimonial from the engineers and others by whom he had been employed. I told him I did not think any discussion could do any good and that I had desired, in order to avoid injuring him, to put it upon the ground as I had done in my note, that he was no longer needed, but that if he insisted upon it, he should have it frankly and fully.

I then gave him the faults which I had found in him: the absence from the work in working hours; the neglect of his men; leaving everything to Stebbens, who is his son-in-law and his sub-foreman; the sitting in Brooks' office reading newspapers instead of being among his men; his declining to put up the rafters until Stebbens returned, as he did not know the men well enough; his finding fault with all other work than his own; etc., etc.

He said he had been misrepresented by Rives and had enemies. I told him I found he was not liked and I had waited longer for that very reason, to be sure that I did not allow prejudices of others to cause me to do him injustice. He said he could now explain to me how he might have done the work much cheaper and better. I told him that I had always found modesty a prime recommendation and that those who praised themselves most had served me least. I feared he was an instance in point. I regretted his insisting upon the explanation, as it could do no good, would hurt his feelings, and make him leave the work with unfriendly feelings towards me. He said no, and ___ of his bad way of feeling, I suppose. I presume he will now go to this committee of Ball's and tell all kinds of lies against me. I do not feel certain that he has not been doing it for weeks past. He is very bitter against Rives, to whom he attributes his dismissal, says that

he has misrepresented him. Would use a stronger term were it not for respect for me.

This evening I took Mrs. Meigs and Mary, Monty, the baby Louisa and nurse in the carry-all out to the country boarding house in which they are to spend the rest of the summer. They are at Mr. Ignatius Waters, about ½ mile this side of the village of Brookeville [Maryland], which is 20 miles out the 7th Street road. . . .

* * *

[AUG. 11] I dressed and went to the Capitol. I found a note from Bowman, who wished to see me about the vote of the House and the measure to be taken to prevent its passing through the Senate. I told him what I had done and intend to do. He said that he had heard that I had written a letter to General Quitman which had made him very angry and had done a great deal of harm. I showed him the letter, to say whether there was in it anything to which any gentleman would object. He said there was not.

While talking, General Ward B. Burnett came in. He is a man in whom I have no confidence, and I had warned Bowman not to trust him, and he had, I found by their cards, called with Bowman at my house the night before. Bowman thought he could be trusted. I told him that he would want his place or mine. However, Burnett came in and heard our conversation, which could not be quite as unrestrained as it might have been without his presence.

Bowman thinks I had better get Senator Pearce and some other Senator to make a speech contradicting the assertions of Mr. Ball and others when this question was under debate in the House. I have written a note, or rather a letter, to Pearce upon the subject.

I sent in to the Secretary of War today the answers to the questions of the 26th of May. They make a large document. He sent for me and asked me to alter a sentence or two in the letter which I wrote to him, sending the amount of the estimate for completion of the Capitol extension.

He thought he had better send it in as a message from the President to Congress and that I had referred to the debates in a manner which it would be better not to send to the debaters. I struck out the passages to which he referred and had a long talk with him. He is very indignant. Declares that this is the meanest Congress that has ever been brought to govern. He seemed to be altogether disgusted with the manner in which he has been obliged to fight them throughout the session. I asked him if he had read my letter to General Quitman. He said yes, that he did not think it would do much good, but that it was proper.

After dinner, I returned to the office and sent a letter to Mr. Pearce which the Secretary had given to me in regard to the Capitol extension. I sent him, also, copies of my letter to General Quitman and the one to the Secretary in regard to the estimates.

I found that the Secretary is disposed to send these letters in as a message from the President to the House.

The answers to the questions of the 17th of July have been printed. I got a copy today.

[AUG.] 12TH. I am told by Rives that he gave to Mr. Pearce, Senator from Maryland, my letter and the papers with it and that he read them over this morning with care two or 3 times to understand them fully, and that he desired him to say to me that he would take up the subject as a labor of love as well as one of duty. He will see me this afternoon and have a conversation with me upon the subject.

I received a message from Mr. Ball today that he wished to have the original and present plans of the extension in his committee room. I got them out and found that upon the original, the columns of the porticoes of the building were represented as 96 instead of 100 number. I sent off a messenger with a letter to the Secretary to correct the error into which I had fallen in saying that I had not added to the columns of the exterior and wrote a note to Mr. Ball, telling him how the mistake occurred. I also went up to the department and corrected my letter to the Secretary in this respect.

Campbell [the War Department clerk] came to me and said he supposed, in the midst of all this worry, it would not be harmful for him to tell me what a high compliment he had just heard given to me. He said two or 3 persons came out of the Secretary's room and he heard him say, "Captain Meigs is one of the ablest and one of the purest men that I know." He heard Glancy Jones⁹⁸ also: "It shall not be done while I have a vote that will prevent it."

Professor [Joseph] Henry came and asked me what was the reason that the defense in the House was so tame. I told him that I had had no notice the debate was limited to 5 minutes and I had not heard when it was over.

Upon the whole, I have had rather a worrying day. . . .

* * *

[AUG. 12 CONT.] I miss my wife very much.

⁹⁸J. Glancy Jones (1811–1878), Democrat of Pennsylvania, served in the House of Representatives, 1851–1853 and 1854–1858. He was chairman of the Ways and Means Committee in the Thirty-fifth Congress (1857–1859).

Senator Pearce of Maryland sent word to me by Mr. Rives that he would take up my cause in the Senate both as a matter of duty and a matter of pleasure, a thing which he would like to do.

I went to see him this evening and had a long talk with him. I am to meet him after the adjournment of the Senate tomorrow to talk the matter over and give him Ball's speech, with remarks upon it. He seems to have a strong interest in the work and to feel some confidence that it will not be carried out. I have not time to go into the whole affair as thoroughly as I could wish. I do feel somewhat tired and weary with this constant battle in which I have lately lived.

[AUG.] 13. Today I got up early and wrote out my remarks upon the speech of Mr. Ball for Senator Pearce. About 11 I went to the office, and soon after arrived a note from Campbell that the Secretary wished me to make a statement of the amount to be used for the extension up to the 30th of May instead of the end of March. I did so and carried it up to him as requested. The note said the President would be there and wished to see me. I found that he had supposed I had made my estimate to the end of the session in order to leave time for the Congress to act upon the matter of the investigations, etc.

We went over to see the President, and I told him that I thought the mode which I would prefer was to send in the estimate for the amount needed to the time when the next appropriations would naturally be made and to take no notice of the acts of the committee or of the unfinished vote in Congress. He agreed then to have the \$750,000 asked for in a message, and it was prepared to send in at once. I stayed and saw it prepared and then returned to the office.

I found the stairs to the top of the platform of the Senate scaffold finished. Fowler says that several have come up already and that he will have the whole Senate up in a day or two.

I spent the afternoon, after the adjournment, with Mr. Pearce, went over Ball's speech. He said he regretted that the affair had not begun sooner. He had not the time to master the subject. He would do what he could. He said, too, that the bill had been reported to the Senate without the appropriation for the extension, as the message had not come in; that it had not been read if it was received, and they had to report it in order to have it printed. He said it had been kept too late and that it was unfortunate that it was a large sum to be asked at the end of the session thus. I explained my reasons for waiting till the money was reduced in my hands and that my sickness had prevented the earlier completion of the estimates. He said it could yet be put in as an amendment from the Committee on Finance. He told me that the Finance Committee had unanimously struck out the pro-

viso as to employment of officers upon public buildings. So I suppose the case will be a fight.

[AUG.] 14TH. We had a field day in the Senate today, in which I had the victory. The most eminent Senators—Pearce, Cass, Seward, Hunter—defended me with strength and skill. The vote was nearly unanimous to strike out Ball's proviso. Pearce exposed his misrepresentations. Hunter said he would rather, much as he was interested in seeing the Capitol finished, see it crumbled in the dust than have such an injustice perpetrated. I am grateful to Senators and to others and shall keep this debate as the best record to leave my children. Up till 2 p.m., or rather a.m., writing letters of thanks to Senators who defended me. I intend to put this debate in this journal.⁹⁹

[AUG.] 15TH. Today the Senate gave me 3 separate votes of confidence. Having voted almost unanimously to strike out the proviso of the House of Representatives yesterday, they today passed upon the appropriations under my estimates. They gave us \$750,000 for the extension of the Capitol. For the aqueduct, by vote of 36 to 6, \$500,000. For the dome, after some discussion in which Brown of Mississippi read my letter to him in regard to the estimates for the dome and Stanton's assertion that it could be finished for \$100,000, they voted by 27 to 11 the sum I asked, \$100,000 for next year's work.

Capitol		750,000.	no division
Aqueduct		500,000.	yeas 39, nays 6
Dome	x	100,000.	33 to 11
		\$1,350,000	

x—This morning's paper puts it at \$500,000 (wrong).

For me to expend in the next year, and the Army bill contains an appropriation voted some days ago for the Post Office of \$300,000. So that this Senate have voted to give for the works under my charge \$1,650,000 to be expended by me during the next 12 months. I think this is a vote of confidence.

Bayard, Seward and Clayton spoke in regard to the cost of the dome, which Brown put at \$1,250,000. They took the ground that whether it were \$945,000, Walter's estimate, or \$1,250,000, Brown's, they cared not; they were willing to vote it for the purpose of making the building the finest in the world. Douglas came out and said he had seen most of the great domes of Europe—St. Peter's, St. Paul's, St. Isaacs at St.

⁹⁹The clipping of Senate proceedings that Meigs pasted in the journal simply states that the appropriations for the Capitol extension and aqueduct passed but does not give the debate.

Petersburg, etc.—and that he thought the one we had now under construction was the most perfect, the most beautiful of all.

Douglas and Clayton made effective speeches. Seward of New York made a very pretty one. He said he had been opposed to the commencement of the Capitol extension, but he found at that time base and weak men talking about the dissolution of the Union, and he had seized upon the Capitol extension and voted for and encouraged it as a reply to all such weak and foolish talk. He thought that now, when the same foolish words were being spoken, it was a sight well worth its cost to see the Congress, in the midst of all this agitation, going on quietly and voting a million for completing the Capitol of the Federal Union and thus showing the little regard they had for the foolish fears of those who talked about its end.

The debate was a gratifying one to me. The main argument seemed to be against it that I had endorsed the estimates.

AUG. 16TH. Today the appropriations for the dome, Capitol extension and aqueduct came up in the House of Representatives, the Civil and Miscellaneous bill having been sent down from the Senate. The bill was considered at once in the House of Representatives without being referred to a committee. The first vote taken in which I was interested was upon the proviso of Mr. Ball which precluded me from the public buildings, as an officer. It was struck out in the Senate, after a debate of which I have given an account in the preceding page, by a vote almost unanimous. The House, by vote of 83 to 69, agreed with the Senate, thus doing me justice and acknowledging that their proviso action had been hasty and unjust.

The Senate debate and my defense by Mr. Pearce and endorsed by such men as Cass, Seward, Hunter, etc., had produced a great effect in the House of Representatives. It was much talked of in town, and I was congratulated again and again by persons whom I met who said that it was the greatest triumph they had ever known and that the debate was one of which I ought to be proud. The effect in the House was as being a most decided and absolute reversal of their former decisions. I am thankful to the House for this act of justice and will endeavor hereafter to justify the good opinion thus expressed of me.

One Member whom I met told me, "We are rubbing you pretty hard." "No," I said, "you rubbed me the other day and are making amends now." "We are rubbing you bright," was his reply.

The \$750,000 for the Capitol was agreed in the House without any division, I believe. The dome was carried by 102 to 64. The aqueduct lost by 76 to 101.

The bill then went back to a conference committee composed of Hunter, Jones of Tennessee, and Weller of the Senate, and of H. Winter Davis of Maryland, H. Marshall¹⁰⁰ of Kentucky, and Washburne of Illinois on the part of the House of Representatives. They sat it out till one or 2 a.m., when they reported they could not agree, and a new committee was appointed. Senate: Pearce, Bayard, (blank). House: Campbell of Pennsylvania, Harris of Maryland, Harris of Illinois.¹⁰¹

This is a more determined committee for the aqueduct on the part of the Senate than the first. Campbell of Penn. I know to be a firm friend of water. Harris of Illinois, I was told, on sending a friend to ask him in the House, had voted for the water before. I have not the record here now, and I do not feel certain that I have been rightly informed. Banks, the Speaker, has at last affected to be favorable to the work lately. The contractors for the brick, Kellogg and Bates,¹⁰² are from his state, and he told one of them today it was all safe and would pass.

I remained at the Senate and House of Representatives till they adjourned. The great excitement on the public grounds is upon the Kansas question,¹⁰³ in which they all seek the political capital. An attempt is being made by the House of Representatives to put upon the appropriation bills riders to express their disapproval of the conduct of the affairs of Kansas. They gave way tonight upon the important points, but the Army bill is burdened with a rider that the Army shall not be employed in enforcing laws of the legislature of Kansas till the Congress has expressed an opinion upon the validity of those laws. Upon this they say they intend to lose the bill, which is for \$12,000,000. I do not believe they will do it. They will give way in the end. The appropriation for the Post Office building is in this bill, \$300,000. I expect yet to get the \$500,000 for the aqueduct, and if I do, I shall have gained every point I have made.

I feel my heart overflowing now with gratitude to God, Who has granted my prayers in regard to this unjust attack which has been made upon me, has caused such a proud endorsement of my character and conduct by the Senate of the United States, and has caused the House of Representatives to reverse its hasty and unjust decision.

¹⁰⁰Humphrey Marshall (1812–1872), Whig then American party, of Kentucky served in the House of Representatives, 1849–1852 and 1855–1859. Later, he served in the Confederate army and was elected to the Confederate congress.

¹⁰¹Thomas L. Harris (1816–1858), Democrat of Illinois, served in the House of Representatives, 1849–1851 and 1855–1858.

¹⁰²Mr. Kellogg of Massachusetts and his partner Dr. Bates had a contract to lay bricks for part of the aqueduct.

¹⁰³The issue of whether to admit Kansas as a free or a slave territory caused political strife throughout 1855 and 1856. On August 1, 1856, the House had refused to seat either the free state or proslavery territorial delegates.

AUG. 17TH. Sunday. I returned home from the Capitol this morning by the light of the morning dawn. Threw myself upon the bed and fell into a deep sleep caused by the exertion of nature from the strain which has been upon my mind for the last week or two.

* * *

[AUG.] 18TH. Congress adjourned today. They have failed to pass the Army bill. Though it was evident upon the last vote that a majority of the House was ready to recede, they voted down the motion to insist. Upon calls for ayes and nays and points of order, the few remaining minutes of the session were consumed, and the Speaker declared the House adjourned, without date, at noon.

* * *

[AUG. 18 CONT.] I left the city at 5 p.m. to drive out to the country to see my family and tell of my victory. In the afternoon, the President issued a proclamation calling the two houses together for dispatching the business on Thursday. I found all well and enjoying themselves at the country lodgings.

* * *

[AUG.] 20TH. Drove back to town. Brought my wife in with me. We left the house at 6:50 a.m. and reached home in about 2¾ hours.

Went to the office and transacted much business. The whole city talks about the new session of Congress which is to be held tomorrow. It is supposed that the Republican Party will send off enough of their friends to allow the other party to have the necessary majority to pass the Army bill at once.

[AUG.] 21ST. The Congress met again today in obedience to the call of the President.¹⁰⁴ They took up the Army bill, and I am informed they, by a vote of 12 majority in the House of Representatives, rejected it. This conduct surprises everybody, as it was supposed that, having gained their point of rejecting the bill and thus proved that they had backbone, the Republicans, the Black Republican Party, as it is called by its opposers, would have quietly sent away enough of their side to leave the passage of this bill, necessary for the defense of the frontiers, to be carried by the Democrats, upon whom they could thus throw the responsibility.

I saw Mr. Pearce, who read to me a part of his speech. He also sent me a note to say that he wished me to go the *Globe* office tomorrow

¹⁰⁴The extraordinary session of the Thirty-fourth Congress called by President Pierce to deal with the army appropriations ran from August 21 to 30, 1856. The third session of that Congress then convened on December 1, 1856.

and correct any errors that may have crept into the facts of the statement.

Mr. Seward sent for me and asked employment upon the dome for an Irishman in whom he takes some interest. I gave to Mr. Rives a letter of recommendation to Secretary [of the Interior] McClelland for employment in the projects for bridges across the Potomac. I should be sorry to lose him from my office, where he has been very useful, but this, if he gets it, gives him the opportunity for advancement in his profession.

I went over the projects for the ventilation with Nason and Dodge today, and we decided upon the position of the boiler vaults and of the fans, which are different from what I at first proposed. I have also been obliged to give up the downward ventilation of the Senate hall, as the shaft which is left proves to be too small for the two currents to pass each other.

I have written tonight an order to Mr. Sonnemann to go on with the demolition of the masonry of the dome, to make estimates of the quantity of the material we shall want for the masonry to replace what is to be taken down.

We have an active campaign before us now. The boiler vaults and foundations of the corridors are to be built before Congress comes together again.

[AUG.] 22ND. Very busy. Mr. Wood brought me a copy of the reduction of the picture of the Capitol dome from the large perspective drawing.¹⁰⁵ It is a beautiful reduction and a fine specimen of the art. I showed it to Senators Douglas and Seward and others. Seward asked for a copy, which I promised to send to him at Auburn [New York].

The Army bill is still between the two houses. The House of Representatives has resolved to adhere to its proviso, which is a loss of the bill. I suppose, however, that if the Senate remains in session, they will after a time starve them into submission.

[AUG.] 23RD. Saturday. I have had a photographic reduction made of the perspective drawing of the Capitol and the new dome from the last perspective. It is very beautiful, though I think we can still get another and better one. The first was a little indistinct, and I requested Mr. Wood to try again. The second is too harsh in its lights and shadows, and he has tried to remove some of the mistakes of the first, and in doing so has made a fault in the negative. I gave a copy of the second to Mr. Pearce of Maryland and a copy today of the first

¹⁰⁵ See illustration on page xxiii.

to Senator Douglas, who asked for it for Mrs. Percy Walker¹⁰⁶ of Alabama. I had taken them up to the ceiling of the Senate hall, which they admired much, and taken Douglas into the photographic room and promised him a picture of the Capitol, if finished. Only one was mounted, and he asked for that to give to Mrs. Walker. I consented, and he left the room, making such a noise on the loose scaffold boards that I thought he had fallen, but, looking out, I saw The Little Giant on the full run after Mrs. Walker, photograph in hand.

I have attached to this page a copy of the first photograph. I hope to get still better before many days.

* * *

[AUG. 23 CONT.] I went this afternoon to take my wife and John to Brookeville, to the Waters'. We left at 10 minutes before 5 p.m. and reached the house about 10 minutes before 8 p.m. We found all well. Louisa, the little one, is so full of life and health that she seems to be unable to keep still and is embracing and endearing and ____ all the time.

I am much pleased that they have got so good a place, and I hope that so long as we stay here, they will be able to spend their summers in this delightful situation.

* * *

[In the evening Meigs and his wife visited friends.]

. . . I found Mr. Symington there. He says that Winter has been drinking so much that they will have to make Provost take his place.

* * *

[AUG. 25] At the office today. Gave to Mr. Fowler the drawing of the Members' Retiring Room. I saw Mr. Wood and directed him to make another trial at the photograph of the Capitol. I think something still better than anything we have done can be made.

I sent to Mr. Seward, to Mr. Bayard and to Mr. Douglas copies of our last photograph.

Mr. Wood has reduced for me a large drawing of the [trusses?] of the Capitol roof in admirable style. This is done in a day, while it would be the work of several days to do it by hand in the common way. I want this to send to the founder.

[AUG.] 26TH. Today Mr. Pearce told me that the committee had unanimously authorized him to write to France to ascertain whether the best

¹⁰⁶Percy Walker (1812–1880), American party of Alabama, served in the House of Representatives, 1855–1857.

of battle painters, Horace Vernet, would paint for us a large picture for the stair of the extension. They set aside \$10,000. I think I have thus saved at least $\frac{1}{2}$ of the \$20,000 appropriation being used to make a great job. They all, he says, came into it, having a full committee, 3 from each house, and seemed pleased at the idea of getting from the best painter of the day a great battlepiece.

I had written to Mr. Tyson to propose this open hearing of the appropriation. Mr. Campbell of Pennsylvania wished me to help make the whole seem a job for Dr. Stone. He said that the appropriation had been obtained solely and expressly for his benefit and that it would not have been moved or made except for this object. I had already written to Mr. Tyson and to Mr. Pearce and had some talk with the latter about it, suggesting the project and putting away a part at least, and that it would be better for American art to get in this country a really great picture, which it does not now possess, though painted by a foreign artist, than to purchase any number of inferior pictures from the men because they were Americans. Mr. Pearce said he would not allow the thing to be made a job for a man because he called himself a sculptor and poor; that it was not intended by Congress as a charity, whatever the men who moved it might have intended to do with it. He agreed with me as to the policy of getting the picture.

I have furnished him with the cost of the art works of the British Houses of Parliament and the other information about the cost of statues. Crawford said that a portrait statue of 7 feet in height should cost not over \$4,000. He is willing to make that for that price in the best Italian marble.

I sent to Mr. Pearce a photograph of the Capitol and sketch of the stairs and dimensions and a letter describing the place and suggesting that the siege of Yorktown, where the French Marquis de Lafayette led the American troops to the assault, is a good subject for a French artist. The place to be occupied is 20 feet high and 30 feet wide, so that it affords a field for a great picture.

I am glad that I have thus saved this sum for a really good work of art which will be an embellishment to our Capitol.

They have agreed to this unanimously. They have also resolved to have a model for a statue made by Dr. Stone, to be 7 feet in height. For the model they are to pay him \$1,000; and if they approve it, the statue is to cost not over \$5,000 altogether. From this, I confess that I do not expect much.

[AUG.] 27TH. Today I took into the Senate my letter for Mr. Pearce describing the place for the painting on the stairway. I sent him with it a photographic impression of the perspective of the Capitol with the dome. A copy of that is a few pages back in this book. I also had

a small drawing reduced from the large one by photography for the stairway. This drawing I ordered reduced yesterday afternoon. This morning when I went to the office about 9½ a.m., Mr. Wood brought me two impressions of the stairways and two of the Capitol. How much cheaper and better this is than reducing them by hand, which has ever been the work of days and at a great cost.

I met Senators Bayard and Hunter in the room of the Finance Committee, and Mr. Hunter said he wished sometime to go to look at the statues. I proposed to go then. They both went with me and admired them. I took them up to see the Senate ceiling also and the rooms which have been painted in the north wing. Mr. Bayard said he wanted to put into the civil bill a proviso that some of the rooms should be painted with fresco, but he had so much else to get in that he did not attempt it. I told him that I felt, by the acts of Congress upon the attack of Mr. Ball, fully authorized to go on with the fresco painting as far as my available force would permit and that I was doing so. They both said they hoped I would.

Bayard is upon the Library Committee and is in high glee at the prospect they have of getting a picture from Horace Vernet and says that if Stone's model of a statue does not please them, they will not give him the order.

* * *

[AUG. 27 CONT.] Messrs. Sharp and Leslie have brought me their designs for the Naval Committee and one other room. They propose to paint them in encaustic. I like the designs generally, but they are more decoration. Some figures evidently taken from engravings. He has made one of the ceilings too blue. It is dark. I think they may be useful to us by giving Brumidi authority over the figures, at least to employ him to paint these important parts of the work.

* * *

[AUG. 28] Messrs. Sharp and Leslie today were ready to hear the fate of their designs for the Naval Committee room; and after some discussion, they asked for that, executed in oil or encaustic, \$4,000, and for the Speaker's room \$3,000. I told them that that was entirely beyond my limits; that at that rate, the painting of the building would cost about \$600,000, and I had better send to France to engage Paul Delaroche,¹⁰⁷ who I did not doubt would engage himself to us for 3,000,000 of francs.

Asking Mr. Leslie, who is the painter, how much he expected to make by his work in this, he said he ought to clear \$4 or \$5 a day.

¹⁰⁷ Paul Delaroche (1797–1856) was a French painter.

And I told him that was what I paid for such painters, paid to Carstens and to others, and I was willing to engage him at that rate, to pay for as many helpers as he could use, at rates not over \$3.00 for the best of them, and to furnish the materials myself. That then I could take notice as to the cost of any room, and if I found it was getting too costly, change the style of the artist, so as to have it under command. They were pleased with this arrangement, and I made that bargain with them.

When they were here before and showed me the first specimen of their work, which hangs still in my office, they spoke of the probable cost of painting such a room as the Naval Committee room as 6 or \$700. At least, that is the impression they left upon my mind. They say that this price was for the ceiling only. Now the estimate is \$4,000. However, I believe I have made a good arrangement and will have the benefit of the skill and taste which Leslie seems to have, though he is not a Brumidi.

* * *

[AUG. 29] The House of Representatives and Senate are still at a deadlock on the Army bill. Both have now adhered to the last bill brought in, which makes, I think, two bills identical in their form which have been lost during this extra session.

The House has today determined to adjourn over to Monday, so that they have no intention of doing any business. They vote now 101 to 97, so that the House of Representatives is quite full.

* * *

[AUG. 29 CONT.] I sent to New York, by Mr. Fowler, the drawings of the ceiling under the Senate gallery today. They are very ornate and complicated. It will be a task for anyone to work them out in iron.

* * *

AUG. 30TH. The Army bill passed today with a proviso about which the two houses have been fighting for the last fortnight. They brought up some of the absent Democrats and Southern men, and some of the Northern men were absent. The vote stood 101 to 97 for passing the bill with the proviso. The vote has been 101 to 97 the other way once or twice in the course of the struggle.

This is a great relief to all men who have the good of the country at heart. Much excitement has been felt by men high in station, and they are relieved to find that the country is spared the effect of such revolutionary measures as there seemed to be much reason to expect.

* * *

[SEPT.] 3RD. I went to the War Department today to see the Secretary and left with him the small photograph of the Capitol. Met at the office ex-Secretary Wilkins,¹⁰⁸ who is father-in-law of Major Sanders¹⁰⁹ of our Corps. He has come on here, I believe, to see if something can't be got for Sanders to do at Key West besides the fort, so as to give him something to live upon. Sanders, Campbell tells me, has 7 children. I have called to see him but did not find him at home. I saw the Secretary and gave him the photograph. He has ordered [William H.] Emory to Kansas to join his regiment, I understand.

I spent some time upon the dome today, observing the operation of the derricks in moving the stone. They took down 24 blocks of stone yesterday. All works well. The contrast between this mode of getting down this masonry and the hand work of our contractors is wonderful. Picking a stone of 3 tons from its bed, swinging it round the top of the circular wheel, letting it down in a few minutes. It will work as well, too, in raising the iron work for the new dome.

* * *

[SEPT. 4] Berry and Mohen say that they cannot set the stone [at the Post Office] for less than 18 cents per cubic foot. Bowman says that he set the other day [at the Treasury] 410 feet with his boom derricks for \$13, which is about 3 cents per cubic foot. I find by a careful account of Provost and Winter's work for 3 days upon the north wing of the Capitol that they set about 300 cubic feet in the 3 days at a height of about 57 feet and that it cost in wages 14½ cents per cubic foot.

* * *

[SEPT. 4 CONT.] Mr. Wood has made very good photographs of the large drawings of the elevation and section of the dome. They are clear and beautiful.

SEPT. 5. Today our house is made thoroughly uncomfortable by the painters, who are in almost every room. The smell of paint and the dirt which they have made is intolerable.

The fastenings of the various stays of the derricks upon the top of the dome, both inside and outside, give signs of weakness. The sandstone of the old building into which they are secured by lewises¹¹⁰ crushes the spills under the pressure. I had to direct measures to be taken to avoid the danger. In the outside walls, I have directed blocks

¹⁰⁸William Wilkins (1779–1865), Jacksonian then Democrat of Pennsylvania, was secretary of war, 1844–1845. He served in the Senate, 1831–1834, and in the House of Representatives, 1843–1844.

¹⁰⁹Major John Sanders was an army engineer.

¹¹⁰A lewis is an iron dovetailed tenon used in hoisting large stones.

of granite to be inserted, into which the lewises may be placed. These blocks will give a larger bearing upon the sandstone and thus save it from crushing, while the granite itself, being so much stronger, will bear the effect of the lewis. In the inner stays, I directed the lewises to be removed and burrs be run entirely through the walls for the fastenings.

I found the engine broken down in consequence of the engineer having let the eccentric¹¹¹ get dry, failing to oil it. This caused it to twist and break.

* * *

[SEPT. 5 CONT.] I wrote today to the Clerk of the House of Representatives to ask him to cause the person left in charge of the room in the south wing to attend to his duty so far as to keep the room open. So many persons come to look at it from a distance and find it closed that we are annoyed by their complaints. Besides, it is not right that this fellow, who is paid \$1,800 or \$2,200 per annum, with nothing to do, should take such possession of the room, shutting it up and keeping out the people except when he chooses to be there, which is, by his own pretense, only from 10 till 2 o'clock. This is as much of a sinecure as I have seen in my public life. A messenger with over \$2,000 per annum and nothing to do, to take charge of an empty room.

* * *

[SEPT. 5 CONT.] Today, another installment of the photographs of the Capitol, large size, very good.

* * *

[SEPT.] 6TH. Saturday. I rode out to Brookeville today to visit my family. . . .

I left town about 4¼ p.m., taking with me Mr. Wise¹¹² of the Navy. He is an amusing fellow, one of not much delicacy of feeling or much real principle. He has married a daughter of Edward Everett, and they are both as ugly as man and woman can well be. But both witty and agreeable companions.

* * *

[SEPT. 8] I sent back to Major Delafield a ____ drawing which we have photographed for the Crimean Commission.¹¹³

¹¹¹ An eccentric is a mechanical device for moving a rod.

¹¹² Henry Augustus Wise (1819–1869) was a naval officer and author. He was married to the former Charlotte Brooks Everett.

¹¹³ Richard Delafield (see note 170 on page 165) served on the Military Commission to the Crimea to observe the war there starting in 1855 and prepared a report on the war, 1854–1856.

I sent at the same time photographs of the perspective view of the Capitol, large and small, elevation of the dome, section of the dome, elevation of the bronze door and of the bronze statue and crown of the dome. These I presented to the library of the Academy.¹¹⁴ I propose to send a set to Crawford for himself and also a set for the Academy of Rome.

* * *

[SEPT.] 10TH. I engaged Mr. [George] R. West¹¹⁵ today to work upon the painted ceilings of our rooms. He is to go with Brumidi as a pupil or assistant. I think he will be able to earn his wages at once and after a time to be employed in some higher capacity than an assistant only. He seemed pleased with Brumidi when I introduced him to him and invited him to see his panorama of China and Japan. We went down after dinner, and he unrolled it before us. John Rodgers¹¹⁶ went with us.

The painting is very rough, much more so than I had expected to find it. This loose, splotchy habit which he has formed will trouble him in his art.

* * *

SEPT. 11TH. I wrote out today my monthly reports for the past two months. I was so much occupied at the end of July with reports in answer to resolutions of Congress that I forgot the original monthly reports.

I have been studying tonight the tables to determine what I shall take as the limit of strength for cast and wrought iron in the calculations for the dome. I have from Clobell and from the ordnance manual made up my mind, unless I find in Morrin [Moran? see Sept. 16], which I wish to look at tomorrow, something to change it.

For important parts where the effect of a failure would be disastrous, I intend to take not less than $\frac{1}{10}$ as the coefficient of safety. That is both with wrought and cast iron. There are some parts which will be made 20 times as strong as necessary for strength in order to meet other requirements of the work; and some parts which support only themselves, I can take at $\frac{1}{5}$ or $\frac{1}{6}$. In wrought iron subject to tension, I take $\frac{1}{7}$ or 8,000 pounds per square inch.

* * *

¹¹⁴ Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia.

¹¹⁵ This is the same artist whose work Meigs had seen in June 1854 at Thomas Walter's.

¹¹⁶ John Rodgers (1812–1882) was Louisa Meigs' brother. He was a naval officer who led an expedition to explore and survey the North Pacific in the 1850s, returning to Washington in 1856.

[SEPT. 12] I have written a note to Professor Henry asking him to correct his paper upon the acoustics and the origin of the study of that, if he is rightly reported in the *Tribune*. He was made to say at Albany, at the meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, that a commission was appointed to make changes in the plans for the Capitol halls, while the fact is that I had made the plans independent of any commission, and he and Bache, as a commission, were asked to examine them and report whether they thought them correct. They approved them, and the President adopted them. In the one case I should be a humble member of a commission, a sort of recording secretary; in the other I was the author of the plans, the first intelligent plans, for public buildings. This latter is the true state of the case.

* * *

[SEPT. 13] At the office, I ordered the gutters of the Capitol extension from the foundry of Poole and Hunt. I wrote to them this evening hereafter to put upon every piece of cast iron they may send to me my name. I have also ordered Champion, the foreman of the smith shop, to put upon every bar, board, clamp [?] or other piece of work which is made in our shop my name by means of the stamp.

* * *

[SEPT.] 14TH. Sunday. I rode to the Waters' in Brookeville, found my family all well. I took with me Mr. Wise of the Navy and Mrs. Ervin's son Richard. Wise, talking with me about Powers, informed me that he was in Florence when Powers received my letter asking for the designs for the pediment. His remark was, "If they expect me to make horses or fantoccini, they are most damnably mistaken." Edward Everett afterwards tried to induce him to look upon the affair in its true light, a most liberal one, but he could do nothing with him.

I suppose that Powers is most intolerably puffed up with the praises he has received. Wise says that the Italians adore him, as *Il Professore Powers*, while they do not think so well of Crawford and all other American sculptors.

* * *

[SEPT. 15] I sent some drawings of the doors to Janes, Beebe and Co. and wrote some letters, and came home not feeling very well.

I fear I shall not do much with West. He is not at the Capitol at work upon the ceiling but has had his legions [?] making sketches for the Navy pictures upon the walls. I must have some distinct understanding with him about this matter.

I have written tonight to Professor Henry a letter in regard to his speech at the Albany meeting of the scientific association upon the science of sound applied to public buildings. In this, I think he, without intending it, speaks in such a manner that I am placed, in the opinion of all who read it, in a very subordinate position. They will think that I went by order of the President to Professor Henry and Professor Bache and took their advice as to the plans for the Capitol extension rooms and made plans by their advice and instruction; whereas, the facts are that I had my plans made, the principles upon which I had made them upon paper, when they were referred to them for their opinion as to their correctness. They did not advise me what to do but reported that I had done right.

I also have written a note to Bache, enclosing to him a copy of my letter to Henry. The letters are printed in the message and documents of the President for 1853–4, page 79 to 86. The notes of acoustics and ventilation have been reprinted in the London *Civil Engineer and Architect's Journal*, in the year book of facts, and in their periodicals.

This may be a matter of small importance, but it is of enough for Henry to have made a speech upon it at each meeting of the scientific association since the papers and plans were put into his hands. It is of importance to me that I have the credit of the designs. His lecture room was designed after he had seen my plans and reported favorably upon them. I showed my letter to Dr. Coolidge and to Schaeffer¹¹⁷ and Rogers. All think I am right.

* * *

[SEPT. 16] Studied Moran [Morrin? see Sept. 11] upon the strength of iron, for the purpose of determining the strain to be used in the calculations of the dome. He says that in the cast iron bridges which have been built in France and which have stood without repairs, the pressure has been limited to 4,000 pounds per square inch.

[SEPT.]17TH. Not feeling very well, I stayed at home and studied the bracket for the dome, which I have determined. It will weigh about 7,336 pounds, and the 72 brackets will be equivalent to a wall for cast iron occupying the same height of 7 feet and $\frac{6}{10}$ inches in thickness around that part of the dome.

* * *

[SEPT. 17] I raised today the pay of Magruder,¹¹⁸ Wetman and Wolfe, each $\frac{1}{2}$ dollar per day. An increase of \$156 per year.

¹¹⁷George C. Schaeffer was an examiner at the Patent Office and a member of the scientific club with Meigs.

¹¹⁸Thomas C. Magruder was paymaster for the Capitol extension and the aqueduct.

[SEPT.] 18TH. I wrote to Heebner today asking for a bid for the platforms of the stairways in Italian marble. We seem to be unable to get any Lee marble, having waited now for many months, and he says he has some blocks suitable upon a vessel now 53 days out.

I ordered from Hayward and Bartlett the doors of the closets for watercocks in the wings.

Got the granite blocks for two of the stays in the dome derrick delivered at the Capitol, ready to put in their places. Tomorrow I hope to get the derrick in a state to work again.

SEPT. 19. I received today by a private hand, from Paris, Randolph Rogers' design for a bronze door for the connection between the old building and the south wing of the Capitol. It is the life of Columbus, a door with circular top. The effect of the photograph which he has sent me indicates great richness, but detail of the execution I cannot make out upon this small scale; but if he executes it well, it will be a fine work of art. I think that, in general effect, it will be better than Crawford's. Crawford's photograph, which is only of the ____, looks meager beside this. Mr. Rogers is very urgent with me to let him work out his own design without interference, leaving him to take the responsibility or the credit which may be its due.

The club met here tonight. I showed the photograph of the dome, which meets general approbation.

* * *

[SEPT. 20] I received today also a hundred copies of the answers to Ball's resolutions in regard to the Capitol extension and Post Office extension. They are badly printed. Many mistakes. I have not yet had time to read it. The overseers who prepared the information are very curious to see it. I have directed a copy to be given to each overseer.

* * *

[SEPT. 22] I ordered today a spliner¹¹⁹ from Gage, Warner and Whitney. A large one for the dome. It is to fit upon the bed of our big lathe. To have a stroke of 4 feet and to traverse 8 feet or more. To cost \$800.

* * *

[SEPT. 23] The derrick upon the dome is now in order again, the granite block which I found necessary to replace the sandstone into which the

¹¹⁹A spliner is a slotting machine. *Webster's New International Dictionary*, second edition, 1947, has a number of definitions for spline, including a flexible strip used as a guide in drawing curved lines, but the one that seems to fit here is "a keyway for a feathered key or to cut a keyway for a feathered key, thus to slot."

stay had been fastened having been placed for one stay. We lowered this morning before dinner 33 blocks of stone from the dome. These blocks were about 3,500 pounds each, so that this was a good morning's work. Removing the stone from its bed and lowering it a hundred feet, besides moving it over the roof for 150 feet.

* * *

[SEPT.] 24TH. I today promised to pay to Ernest Thomas, the decorator who has been placed in charge of the ornamental plaster of the extension, \$7 per day. He would not agree to do the work for less, and I do not know where to get a man who is competent except himself. One of the modelers employed under him gets \$5 per day.

The derrick upon the dome yesterday worked to the admiration of all who saw it. We laid down 65 blocks of stone in the course of the day. Dropped them all into wagons with drays and hauled them away to the yard.

I had 3 cubes of 3 inches by 3 inches by 3 inches of the sandstone from the dome, Aquia Creek, crushed today. They broke with per square inch 6,333, 6,666 and 7,222 pounds. Brick from the aqueduct broke a few days ago in 1½ inch cubes ____ from 4,200 to 13,200 pounds per square inch, only 3 or 4 cubes out of 18 breaking under 5,000 pounds. This gives better results than those given by European experiments.

* * *

[SEPT.] 25TH. Yesterday they laid down 67 blocks of stone. Today only 37, as this finished the offset we were demolishing, and it became necessary to remove the brick backing before taking down the [next] course. I have ordered shackles to be substituted for hooks upon the derricks generally. Hooks break and are not safe for heavy loads. Shackles on rings are better.

I ordered from Poole and Hunt today the brackets for the two lower cornices in the Rotunda at 3 cents per pound. He offers the boxes or lacunaria at 6 cents but I refused it. I directed Mr. Thomas to make the patterns for the foliage of these cornices.

I must write tonight to Janes and Beebe for a bid for the coffers or panels of the Rotunda wall. For this I think I had better make the patterns.

Mr. Hunt thinks that he will be able to deliver to us the heavy bracket and other iron castings of the dome at 2 cents per pound. This is very cheap. I hope that he may be able to do so.

* * *

[SEPT.] 26TH. I had a visit today from Mr. Bartlett of Hayward and Bartlett of Baltimore. He says that he wishes to have some one order that he can fill in a short time to show me that he can fill an order in a reasonable time; that the ceiling of the corridor he has been very slow about because the people in Baltimore have urged him so much with work as to keep all his force employed and he has taken the chance of losing my custom rather than that of Baltimore. This is a frank confession.

He offers to deliver the panels for the Rotunda lower series at 6¼ cents per pound. Poole and Hunt sent in a bid while he was examining the drawing. Hunt yesterday thought he could not do that for less than 5½ cents but today, after consulting with his partner, they offered it at 4 cents. I had written to Janes and Beebe and wait now for their answer.

I drove out this evening to Brookeville in order to bring in my family tomorrow. I find them all well and much benefitted by living in the country. John's knee still remains swollen with water.

* * *

[SEPT. 27] We reached home about 12½, having left the Waters' place at 9½ a.m. I changed and went to the office, where I concluded to order from Poole and Hunt the panels of the Rotunda. They offer at 4 cents, which is as cheap as I can get anybody else to deliver them. They promised, too, to make 6 of them per day, which is of importance, as these are the first pieces of iron to be built into the wall.

The demolition of the brick work and stone masonry of the dome progresses rapidly. The derricks work very cheaply. I have had the cost partly made up per cubic yard. It is cheap.

* * *

[SEPT.] 29. At the office. The demolition of the brick and stone masonry of the dome is going on rapidly. I find that it costs about 40 cents per cubic yard to take up the masonry and send it down to the ground by the machinery employed.

Provost, Winter and Co., by the hand of Winter, brought me in a bill for two new mantels which they have made. The cost is enormous. The mantels are well made, but they do not, I think, give such attention to the cutting of them as they should. The men cannot work faithfully. Mr. Rutherford, however, says that so far as he can see, the polishers are steady at their work. I have a quantity of work to price for them this month.

* * *

[SEPT. 29 CONT.] Drew a check for Given and Co.¹²⁰ for \$84 for coal furnished in August, 13 tons of coal and ½ cord of pine wood. This will not be more than one-half of what I shall be obliged to burn this winter.

* * *

[SEPT. 30] Heebner came. He had ordered a number of blocks of Italian marble to fill orders for platforms which were needed much for the main stories of the Capitol. I took such blocks as were suitable. They are now in New York and will be sent on at once. He had enough to make all of these platforms. I bought them at \$3.70 a cubic foot. I have also an offer from him for marble for the balustrade and panel of one staircase at \$2.75; the balustrades sawed out to size, \$666 each.

* * *

[SEPT. 30 CONT.] Finding 3 of the bricklayers smoking yesterday, I directed their discharge. Mr. McFarlan, foreman, the overseer, came in this morning to make an appeal for them. He said that he had advised them to see me; and as he came in, they did address me on the subject, the one to whom I had spoken yesterday telling me that he had broken the rules but would never do so again. I told him that it was of no use to speak about it. To McFarlan I said that I seldom interfered, but if I did, I intended my action to be final. I could not be looking for men who disobeyed the rules. That was the duty of the overseers. But when I saw a willful violation and ordered it to be punished, I thought my order should be carried out without any delay. From what I hear since, it appears that one at least of these men has been in the habit of smoking and has thus led the others into the same fault. I believe that it has been done frequently by these men and that the example will have a good effect, the more that they are said to be very good workmen.

OCTOBER 1ST. I signed checks for the payrolls today. For the Capitol extension, \$15,230; for the dome, \$2,106; for the Post Office, \$8,946. The roll for the aqueduct has not come in yet.

7 blocks of the exterior cornice have been set upon the south front of the south wing. The corner piece upon the northwest corner of the same one has been placed.

I took John Rodgers today upon the top of the dome.

They took down the whole course of stone today. It is the upper course of the lower ____ of the dome above the cornice. In this course there was a band of iron 1 inch by 3 inches let into the stone and

¹²⁰ Given and Company were wood and coal merchants.

joint, thus: [Sketch]. It was set on edge, and the joints are covered with lead run into the groove in the stone around and over them. The iron is almost entirely free from rust. The mortar seems to be a complete preservative. As the lower holes in these stones had been cut up by the letting in of the iron band, we had to sling them all with a chain.

A man assisting to keep a block of stone from falling from the wagon today, by some mismanagement let it fall upon him and broke his thigh. It caused a compound fracture. Poor fellow, I am not able to do anything for him. The accident was one of those which can be attributed only to some misfortune or carelessness of the sufferer, himself.

I determined the prices of some materials today, number 828 and 879. The work of one of these costs \$500; of the other, \$420. The price of the capital of the angle pilaster of the principal story vestibule costs \$145.75, $\frac{1}{4}$ of the cost of the pilaster capital of the same vestibule.

Provost and Winter wish me to revise the price of the cornice, saying that it does not come to as much as it would if done by them as it has bid for.

I have tonight the report of the cost of cutting the upper bed of 7 blocks of the cornice, which will enable me to fix a just price for the working of the ____, which was the only part of the cornice about which I had doubt when I proposed the new cornice. I could not tell with certainty the cost of cutting this ____. I left it undetermined.

Mr. Rives this evening asked me to let him take Mr. Wolfe. He says that he has a strong desire to be an engineer, and he has begged him to take him with him upon his survey. He could be useful to Rives as he understands French and writes a good hand, is quick at figures and intelligent. He says he is determined to be an engineer and is only working now to lay up money enough to start him in this profession.

I told Mr. Rives that I did not desire to stand in the way of Wolfe, who must do as he thought best for his own interest, but that I could not let him leave my office and keep his place open for him; that he had been brought here as reading and writing shorthand and that he was the only person in the office who did; had now been with us long enough to have become useful, and I should regret his leaving me, though I should not have any quarrel with him for doing so if he thought it to his own interest.

[OCT.] 2ND. I found Mr. Fowler, from Janes, Beebe and Co., at the office today. He had come on to see about some work which he has had the drawings of and get explanations before making a bid. They misunderstood the sketch I sent of the panels of the dome, and he came on principally to ask some explanations of them. I told him that I had

given it out to Poole and Hunt. He says that the work of the Senate galleries is so very difficult and costly that Mr. Janes had told him he must ask for one cent in the price, and I agreed, to his apparent surprise, to give one cent more, for I thought it worth a cent more than any other work which he had done for me. This was very satisfactory.

He says that if they could know how much work they were to have from here, they could make arrangements for it. They would put up an establishment that would cost a good deal of money if they could be sure of having a large part of the dome. He wished to know how much of the dome he could count upon. I showed him that I could not make engagements for the dome. The drawings are not in a state to give out the whole upon a contract or advertisement. The bids could be lawfully taken only after 60 days advertisement. The bidders would be many but would offer a price at which they could not do the work. They would fail, and it would not be well done so far as done. There are parts of the work which can be done much more cheaply in Baltimore than by them in New York, and it is better to give them at once to those who can so make them. Much of the work is of such a nature, and they perhaps alone can do well, and this they will get if they do it at moderate prices. Such as to justify my giving it to them, as I said, he might count upon getting a pretty full supply of work so long as the prices were reasonable and no longer. But for simple parts, I must give to those who can do them well and cheap.

I gave him a drawing of the cornices of the dome below the peristyle, for which Poole and Hunt are making the brackets, to take with him and propose a bid. I promised also [to] send him the drawings of the ceiling of the Post Office pavilion. I also promised to send him the drawings of the window dressings of the Post Office.

Mr. ___ brought me today the drawing of the ducts for air in the cellar of the south wing and I signed it. We have begun the excavation for this.

I took Professor Schaeffer upon the dome and all over the building today. He had not seen the ceilings of the House of Representatives and Senate and was much struck with them. Upon the dome, I found them taking down the last course of stone which I expect to remove. We have reached the level of the cornice. The last cornice was so friable that they had to sling the stones instead of lowering them by the lewis. The stone seemed to be less strong than the other courses.

It is said that this masonry was for some 20 years left exposed to the weather and that the rain found its way through it, so as to strain the plaster upon the inside to cause it to fall off in large quantities.

At last, about 1837, they covered the old dome down to the level of the exterior cornice with copper.

The effect of the wet and freezing and thawing has been to disintegrate the stone. The cornice appears to be of good quality, but I must have it cleaned off and carefully examined before I can determine whether to take it up and truss to it. I hope that I may be able to truss to it.

* * *

[OCT. 3] I found at my office Mr. Talcott, He has returned upon receiving my letter and is ready and pleased to take a place in the office of the Capitol extension. He will take Rives' place for the winter, until we get an appropriation for the aqueduct.

* * *

[OCT. 6] Upon the dome, they have demolished for some distance below the cornice which I hope to keep. The stone looks better, and I believe I shall be able to preserve it. Sent in my monthly reports for the different works.

Mr. West has painted his picture of the battle between the *Constitution* and *Guerrière*. He has made a pretty picture of it but not such a one as Turner¹²¹ would have made. It is pretty, rather than fine.¹²²

* * *

[OCT.] 8TH. I agreed today with Janes, Beebe and Co. for the work of the Senate galleries and the two lower cornices of the Rotunda. The Senate galleries at 13½ cents per pound, the dome cornices at 9 cents. The former will be a job of some \$20,000; the latter, \$5,000. Mr. Raleigh from Janes, Beebe and Co. was here. He declares that the base of the House of Representatives gallery fronts is the most difficult part of the work, that it must all be planned and fitted and that they ought to have the same price for this as for the other and more decorated parts of the work.

* * *

[OCT. 8 CONT.] I asked Mr. Talcott up to look at the *Civil Engineer and Architects Journal*, some information upon the use of iron bond which I had collected but which someone has taken from my files and failed

¹²¹ Joseph M.W. Turner (1775–1851) was a noted English landscape painter who also painted many seascapes.

¹²² For the room of the Committee on Naval Affairs (now S-127 assigned to the Committee on Appropriations), Meigs had asked West to paint naval battle scenes designed by Brumidi. The battle scene described here is from the War of 1812. As Meigs noted on December 10, 1856, West later asked to erase his paintings from the walls of that room, and they are no longer visible.

to restore to its place. Mr. Bryan coming in, however, prevented my getting the work, and I lost the evening.

* * *

OCT. 9TH. I went to the department this morning to show to the Secretary and ask his approval of Rogers' door model. I found that he had gone to West Point. . . .

* * *

[OCT.] 10TH. The big backing of the wall of the Rotunda is nearly as far demolished as I wish to take it down. The stone facing is in pretty good condition, but the stone is badly laid. I shall be able to grout it, I think, and thus save the expense of taking it all down.

I am not well pleased with the working of the painters. They are not under efficient superintendence.

* * *

[OCT. 11] Mr. Walter went off this evening upon a holiday excursion. He says that he is quite worn out by his late labors, and he has been very hard at work for some months past. He will be gone two or 3 weeks.

I sent a large quantity of drawings to the house of Janes, Beebe and Co. of New York. The Senate galleries and fronts, the doors of the principal stories of both wings, the ceilings of the Post Office, the doors and windows of the Post Office, etc. These are all to be made of iron, and I have sent some for execution and some for proposals.

I have directed Mr. Carstens to appoint to every gang of painters one man as leader, who should be responsible for the conduct of the others and who should have some increased pay for his responsibility. By this means, I hope to keep them more steadily at their work, which has been badly managed.

* * *

[On October 12 Meigs took several days off to go deer hunting near Alexandria, Virginia, with a Mr. Stabler whom he had met in Montgomery County, Maryland, during the summer. He returned to the office on October 17.]

[OCT. 19] I went last night to the club at Dr. Craig's. I met Professor Henry, who said he had just read my letter, which had not followed him in his northern journey. He had also one from Professor Bache, who asked him to send to him his reply to my letter.

He said that it was very good that I had written to him; that he had dictated his article and had never read it himself; that he of course intended to do justice to me and thought he had included me in his

committee; that he would have been very much troubled had I come out against him like another person who had attacked him in the *Tribune* for his account of the sulfuric acid barometer; and he would see that it was all right. I told him that I had had no feeling about it, I knew him to be a just man, and that he had not intended the effect his published article was calculated to produce, but that my friends, when I consulted them, agreed with me in its effect, and I had thought it right to call his attention to it and to send a copy of the letter to Bache.

* * *

OCT. 20. Tuesday. I had a visit today from Mr. Haskins and Mr. Taft, both architects, the latter a conceited young fellow who was disposed to criticize what he saw at the Capitol. He thinks he knows everything. I showed him some of the work and drawings and was civil to him. I should not be surprised if he should come out in the papers with criticism upon the art of the Capitol. He said he was familiar with all that had been done in Europe in the way of colored decoration, an assertion which is simply ridiculous, for it is impossible for any man in this country, an architect by his profession, to purchase half of the colored works of art in European architecture of the middle and modern ages.

[OCT.] 21ST. The demolition of the brickwork of the dome is nearly completed. A few bricks yet remain in the lower part of the wall under some projecting courses of stone. I find the beds of the stone facing very badly filled with mortar and have directed an injecting syringe to be made in order to inject cement grout into them. I intend to drill a hole into each joint about 2 inches in diameter and then, by a syringe, to force in the grout until it oozes out through the joint in that direction. Thus: [Sketch].

By this means I hope and am quite sure that I can fill these bed joints so as to give to each stone a firm and solid bearing which it has never had. There are many vertical cracks in the masonry, caused, I doubt not, by the bad setting of the stone.

Mr. Hunt was here today. He offered for the large brackets at $2\frac{3}{8}$ cents per pound. They weigh less than I at first expected. We have reduced the pattern to 5,100 pounds. At first they appeared to weigh 7,300. As the labor is as great in mold to cast a bracket of 5,000 as one of 7,000 pounds and the pay is less per pound, he says that he cannot reduce the price below $2\frac{3}{8}$.

Brumidi is painting a portion of the ceiling of the House of Representatives in bright colors as a trial. I fear he will make it too gay for the use of the building. However, he knows much more of the

laws of color than I do, and the work is yet in the state of a painting dead-colored.

I accepted today Janes and Beebe's offer for the windows and doors of the Post Office, 9 cents delivered. For the ceilings of the pavilion and large room in the Post Office on F St., 15 cents delivered and 2 cents for putting them up. These prices are cheap. They ask 200 dollars each for the sash frames of the ceiling of the House of Representatives, and I think it too much, 28 cents per pound. I have written to ask at what price they will furnish the iron sash bar.

* * *

[OCT.] 22ND. Rice was here today. He says that he has told Mr. Heebner that they had not a large enough establishment at Lee and that he has advised him to get more assistance; that he says that the work is much greater than thought at first. Mrs. Heebner has thought that they would get through this year and leave the quarry. She is quite disappointed at finding that this cannot be done, that they have perhaps 3 years' work yet before them. He desired me to speak to Heebner upon this matter.

Winter came in today to say that he was obliged to discharge some of his men for want of work. He is very anxious to have the model of the Capitol finished and put into his hands. I went to urge Butti, who is making it a very beautiful piece of work. He says that they are working upon it as fast as possible, and he has some blocks for the first roughing-out ready.

Mr. West came to see me. He thinks that I do not sufficiently estimate his services. He thinks he is a better painter than I think him, I believe. I told him that the night picture of the *Philadelphia* burning was without light, that he ought to make the burning vessel the source of the light of the whole picture. As it is, it does not look like flame but like a set of yellow streamers.

I am sorry to see that he is about to split [?] upon some rock [?], as all our painters. He says he is not willing to paint scrolls, and I do not think he paints more ambitious subjects well enough to be put upon the walls of the Capitol. He brought me a little sketch of an immigrant wagon running over the prairies, chased by Indians. The sketch had spirit, but the drawing was inaccurate.

I told him that I had written to Mr. [Darley]¹²³ upon the subject of making designs for the rooms, with a view to the room of the Committee on Territories, but I told him to work up the little sketch which

¹²³F.O.C. Darley (1822–1888) was an American illustrator.

he showed me. I may perhaps use it for one of the two committee rooms.

West said that Stanley¹²⁴ would paint an Indian scene well. I do not know but that I had better see Mr. Stanley and ask him to paint a piece in one of the rooms of the Committee on Territories or Indian Affairs. I believe I will write tonight to Mr. West to see him.

* * *

OCT. 25. I notified Poole and Hunt of Baltimore today that I accepted their offer of $2\frac{3}{8}$ cents per pound for the large brackets for the dome. This was the lowest offer I received. The others were one from J. R. Jones of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, at $2\frac{5}{8}$ cents and one from Ellis and Brother, of this place, at $2\frac{1}{2}$ cents. The weight of the 72 brackets is about 367,000 pounds, and the difference made by $\frac{1}{8}$ of a cent is \$459.

I took Rogers' design for the door to the Secretary today. Read his letter to him. He approved the design and authorized me to write to Rogers accepting it.

* * *

OCT. 31. Very busy today, though with only the common business of the office. I went over the building to look at the different operations going on. The roof of the north wing is still not quite covered with copper.

I had a long talk with Mr. West, who thinks himself a much better artist than I do. He is not satisfied to work upon the walls unless he can make a larger rate of pay than I think he can earn. He wants to make designs for himself instead of working upon designs of others. I believe that I shall have to let him go before a great while. He makes sketches which are not like what he wishes to represent. For instance, today he brought me a sketch of a western settlement which, among those who have not seen a western scene, would be a very good picture. But I have never seen such a scene in the west. The figures are not dressed like country men but more like people playing at being in the country. It is altogether trying to my patience to be trying to do something for this young man and to have him all the time discontented and working off instead of on.

I got today photographs of the drawings of the air ducts in the north wing. They are very convenient for the use of the foremen and others at work. They are upon thin paper, easily folded.

Mr. [Zephaniah] Jones appealed to me today in behalf of a young man whom I found the other day in the machine shop filing up a screwdriver. He, upon being asked for whom he was doing this, said

¹²⁴John Mix Stanley (1814–1872) was an American painter.

that he was doing it for the carpenters and that he did it upon Mr. Denham's order. I sent him to find Mr. Denham and asked him if this was so. He had given no orders for it. Both knew that was not proper work for the shop. I told Mr. Denham that he should dismiss him.

He spoke to me this morning himself, saying that he was nervous, knew that he had been doing wrong, and would not do so any more. Jones says that he has a mother and sister dependent upon him and is a good young man generally, that he was alarmed at being thus caught and, interrogated by me, told a lie. I finally said that perhaps he was sufficiently punished by being turned off thus for a time and losing his pay and I would take no notice of it if he was put again to work.

* * *

[Nov. 2] The election is at hand. Tuesday is the day for the selection of the President. There is now, I think, little doubt that the Democratic Party will be successful and that Buchanan is to be elected President. Deserters in Baltimore are feared.

* * *

Nov. 3. I had a long visit this morning from Mr. Washington, a young artist who has lately returned from Dusseldorf, where he has been studying with Leutze. He asked me about the letter of Mr. Leutze, and I read it to him, telling him that it was such a letter that I had been entirely unable to answer it. He said the letter had been read by Leutze to his pupils and that they thought it a good letter. Upon hearing it, however, with the building around him, he confessed that the plan of Mr. Leutze was not a practical or practicable one.

We had a long talk about American art and the manner of employing it upon the Capitol extension. He is a young man of good talent and I believe much devoted to his art. He said he was a student of Leutze and was about to write to him. He was brought in by Mr. West, who had a sketch of the launch of the *Minnesota*. This sketch, though it required some correction of the perception, I told him to go and work upon, pointing out the corrections to be made.

With Washington I was pleased. He says that the artists are about to organize themselves into a club and meet weekly and invited me to assist. I told him that I already belonged to a club which took one evening every week and that that was as much as I could spare, that I would be glad to assist them in their views and to be privileged to attend their meetings occasionally, but I could not be a regular attender.

I directed Mr. Wood to make a regular daily report of his doings. He says we have now about 50 negatives. I sent to Mr. Slight orders

to make a box to send on to Major Delafield the drawings he left with me.

[NOV. 4] This is the day of the election of the President. Here, as there is no voting,¹²⁵ the day has passed off quietly. The rain which has fallen the greater part of the day has, I trust, been a means of keeping down the excitement of political parties in other places. Great anxiety is felt for the result in Baltimore, which city has lately established for itself a reputation for rioting. It is reported here today that the club of Ripraps has taken possession of one of the Democratic wards of the city and that there is a good deal of disorder.

* * *

[NOV. 4 CONT.] I ordered today from Heebner one stairway of Italian marble, steps and all. I hope thus to get the stairways finished in some reasonable time.

Mr. John C. Rives of the *Globe* came to intercede for Mr. Fitzpatrick¹²⁶ today. He said he believed he had come upon a useless errand but that his friendship for the father had compelled him to make the attempt. I told him of the circumstances, and he feebly supported his cause. Mr. Denham says that his father says he is so penitent that he thinks he would reform if he was allowed to come back to the office. He thinks I might have allowed him to try once more.

* * *

[NOV. 5] The election is yet in some doubt. There is a chance that Fillmore may have carried Tennessee and Kentucky, in which case the election may go into the House. Fremont has carried all the New England states and New York. Buchanan has carried Pennsylvania. Indiana, too, has gone for him. Virginia is supposed to have voted for him. Maryland has gone for Fillmore by a strong majority. This is throwing away her vote, as Fillmore has not the slightest chance of being elected.

In Baltimore, the riots have been dreadful. The *Sun* of this morning contains the names of 34 persons killed or wounded yesterday in the different polls. The mayor, who had refused the assistance of the military, after having desired that they should be held in readiness—which he explained to mean be warned that they might be called upon—was urged by the governor to take proper measures for the safety of the citizens in voting. He declared that he had done so. The result

¹²⁵Citizens of Washington were not permitted to vote for president until after ratification of the Twenty-third Amendment in 1961.

¹²⁶This is the first mention of William Fitzpatrick since Meigs expressed his impatience with the clerk's careless copying on July 29. Meigs did not discuss in the journal the decision to fire him.

was that not one mob was dispersed by the police and that the polls were taken possession of by the mobs and clubs, plug-uglies and Ripraps, etc.

* * *

[NOV.] 8TH. Saturday. . . . I wrote at the same time my monthly reports. They have not yet been [copied]. I miss the assistance of Mr. Fitzpatrick very much. He wrote quickly. What pity that he could not refrain from such indulgence.

He came to see me one morning lately to make a last appeal for his place. But I told him that I could not take him back. I had caused him to be warned over and over again, and I could not, after once taking notice of his habits, justify myself in retaining him. I did not feel as much moved by his application as perhaps I ought to have done. The fact is that he has indulged himself against frequent warnings and that now feeling the effects of his conduct, he mistakes the desire to get back his pay for penitence. If anything can save him, it will be the suffering which must now fall upon him. He will, I suppose, be a charge upon his father. I feel more for the father and the wife than for himself.

* * *

NOV. 12TH. I went to the War Department today. The Secretary had seen a paper which he wished to talk with me about. I spoke to him about the statue of the woodman, telling him that I thought it best to leave the responsibility for the work to Mr. Crawford, who I thought would be very uneasy under any requisition to change his model. He concluded that by changing the tree a little so as to appear to be falling, we might then assume that the woodman was standing after having struck the last blow, waiting to see whether he should strike again, having stepped to one side. He says that attitude is not that of a wood-cutter chopping. I do not think it is, myself. Crawford has not seen much wood-chopping, being himself a New Yorker.

[NOV.] 13TH. The piece of the ceiling of the House of Representatives which Brumidi is doing is nearly finished. He has used much more gilding than I intended, and the effect is most magnificent. I am not quite sure that it is not too gorgeous, but I begin to think that nothing so rich in effect has ever been seen this side of the Atlantic. He has used, as I directed, strong, positive colors—blue and red and yellow—but has bronzed and gilded the molding to the highest degree.

Major Barnard came to see me this morning. I took him up upon the dome and through the north wing.

I found Mr. Sonnemann with a mare's nest.¹²⁷ He said that he found in measuring that the Rotunda was not a circle. He found his triangle carefully laid out to agree at 3 points; but measuring his offsets for other points of the circle, he found a regular difference. I told him that he had made a mistake in calculating his offsets, which he was certain were right. Afterwards, in the office, he found the mistake in his radius.

* * *

NOV. 14TH. I find this morning that Mr. Sonnemann has gone over his calculation of the offsets of the circle upon the dome and he insists that his laying out is correct and that the error must be in the building itself. Mr. Talcott also has gone over it and agrees with him. The difference from a true circle is not so much as I supposed, and it may be that they are right. An error of 2 inches within and without would make the difference. I directed him to lay down the results of his measurement upon a large scale so that I might see what kind of curve it made.

I am anxious about the excavations which we are obliged to make in the cellars. I find the foundations so little below the cellar floors that I have, in putting in the air ducts, to go below them. The air ducts are circular in section, and, leaving a void, I fear that in time there might be some motion produced by them. This will cause cracks. By care, putting in short sections at a time only, we can avoid present danger, but I fear the effect some 5 years hence or 20 years hence. Still, the thing must be done. There is no other practical way of building in these air ducts.

I sent today to the *Star* an advertisement for more bricklayers. The work proceeds too slowly in the cellars.

I have a note from the Secretary, received last night. He sends a note for the report on the time when the building can be finished and the appropriations yet to be made. I think that before I can give an answer to the question of time, I must see the quarry. I propose, therefore, to write my annual report and then to run on to Lee and look at the state of things there.

Mr. Walter says that we will never get a monolithic column from that quarry. If this is the case, we had better at once give up the idea and order two blocks in _____, as in the first contract.

* * *

NOV. 15TH. Last night I sat up late and wrote my report for the year's operations upon the Capitol extension. I sent it down to the office to

¹²⁷ A confusing situation.

be copied, while I remained at home and wrote the reports for the Post Office extension and the new dome.

I sent also to the Secretary of War an order to visit the quarry at Lee and examine it and get the information about the probable delivery to be looked for next year from this source. He is desirous to have the work finished and asked me in what time it might be done. I find that on the 30th of September there remained 220,000 cubic feet of marble to be delivered and complete the work. The delivery from this quarry has never exceeded 60,000 cubic feet per annum. By urging the contractors and in order to finish, I think it is not impossible that the whole amount might be got out in two years. It would be almost impossible to get it in less. If the quarry were in the hands of the United States, it might perhaps be done.

I am tempted to put up more sawing machinery. We have a vast quantity of marble to saw out, and though our saws work rapidly and well, it seems as if we could not get through with it in years. The objection is that we have already such large shops, it looks as if there was waste. Yet I believe it would be true economy.

The Secretary returned my orders, and I hope to go on Tuesday morning. I did hope to get off on Monday evening, but the copying and making up of some information which is called for in the annual report will hardly be finished in time.

* * *

[NOV. 15 CONT.] I wrote to Heebner to tell him that I was coming and to change the order for the top blocks for the column capitals so as to make them deep enough to work the joint at the bottom of the calyculus,¹²⁸ sinking it below the tops of the row of leaves. The joint thus placed crosses no leaf and is invisible.

* * *

[NOV.] 17TH. Monday. At the office I made arrangements to carry on the business during my absence. I found at the Capitol 3 masons who had come upon reading my advertisement in the *Star*. They had been to McFarlan, who had told them he could not take them to work; he had already taken on 2 men and had no room for more. I sent them to him with a message by Mr. Gunnel that I had called for them and intended that they should be set to work. I was tired of this slow mode of doing work, and he must employ them. The old man came up after a time to expostulate, but after an interview with me, concluded that he would find work for them.

¹²⁸ A calyculus is a small cup-shaped structure or cavity in a plant.

A note from Campbell, the chief clerk of the War Department. The Secretary thought I might safely reduce my estimate for the Capitol a little as I could not get enough marble to use so much money. I replied, sending him the ____ estimate he wished, but for the same amount, \$900,000 for the Capitol, \$500,000 for the dome, and [\$]200,000 for the Post Office; that I had reduced it from [\$]1,000,000 to \$900,000 because I did not like to ask for a round million, though I thought I was safe in asking for so little; that we were now finishing and employed a great variety of trades and used money rapidly. I could not reduce. I have asked for [\$]20,000 for Fort Madison and for [\$]1,000,000 for the dome.

I cast up today my expenditures from the time of my arrival here in the fall of 1852, 30th September last. They are as follows:

Year ending 30 September, 1856

Capitol extension	\$ 791,222.89
Dome	36,911.41
Post Office	168,474.07
Washington Aqueduct	153,156.08
Fort Madison	2,889.38
	<hr/>
Total	\$1,153,153.83

Total from 1852 to 1856, 30 September

Capitol Extension	\$2,118,304.09
Dome	43,085.15
Post Office	220,174.83
Washington Aqueduct	360,368.55
Fort Madison	9,363.53
	<hr/>
Total	\$2,751,293.15[*]

[* Figures do not add to these totals.]

A pretty good line of expenditures. I wish I had 5 percent upon them.

* * *

NOV. 18TH. I left Washington this morning at 6 a.m. for the quarries and for the woods of northern New York to visit the quarries and try to make some arrangement [to] get a larger quantity of marble dur-

ing the next year than heretofore, and then go up to Chazy¹²⁹ and visit the Norths¹³⁰ and spend a little time in recreation and hunting.

* * *

[NOV. 18 CONT.] I went to New York by the afternoon line, to reach there about 10 p.m. While in Philadelphia, I received two telegraphic dispatches informing me that about 7 a.m. a fire was discovered in my office which had destroyed the western half of my room, that no vouchers or accounts had been burned but that the loss was confined to the desks and tables and the case of drawings in the half of the office burned.

The fire seemed to have been caused by the heated air from the flue of the furnace. Upon examining the room after the fire was got [out?], they found that a hole had been cut into the flue just below the level of the temporary wooden floor as a drain for the rainwater before the floor was laid. It was not intended to build furnaces in the building when this floor was laid, and thus the hole was neglected. The heat or some sparks which may possibly have escaped from the joints of the iron furnace had set afire the flooring and some shavings which had been left by the carpenters under the floor. These materials had been undergoing a process of charring from the heat of the air for a year.

* * *

[NOV. 18 CONT.] I was informed by telegraph pretty fully upon the matter and did not think it necessary for me to go back to Washington under the circumstances. I could do nothing to recover what was destroyed, and I could do nothing to repair the office that could not be as well done in my absence. So I wrote to Mr. Walter and went on to New York. From New York, I wrote to the Secretary, reporting the facts as reported to me by telegraph.

[NOV.] 19. Took the morning 8 a.m. train for Bridgeport [Connecticut], the Housatonic Railroad. Reached Lee [Massachusetts] about 3½ p.m. Found Heebner at the depot and went with him to his house and to the quarries. They are in better condition than I have ever seen them before. He promised, after a full discussion, to send me 100,000 cubic feet this next season. This is a large quantity of stone but not more than they ought to send. I wrote to the Secretary, reporting the conclusion.

¹²⁹ Chazy is a village in New York State near Lake Champlain.

¹³⁰ The Norths were Meigs' friends, Russell North and Lemuel North, probably from his time at Rouses Point on Lake Champlain.

Heebner drove me over to Pittsfield [Massachusetts], where I took the evening train for Albany [New York], reaching there about 12 p.m. Slept at the Bellaven [?] House overnight, a well-kept temperance house, the largest hotel in Albany.

* * *

[Meigs spent from November 20 to December 1 deer hunting with friends in northern New York state. On November 24 Meigs and a companion took time out to visit a quarry in the neighborhood.]

[NOV.] 24TH. I have long been desirous to see the works for the stone quarry of the Victoria Bridge. The stone is got upon ____, made from the quarries of Hodson and Fisk, from which I used to get the stone for the fort at Rouses Point.

Today I drove to the ferry at Chazy landing with Russell North and, crossing on the ferry, went to the quarry. The stone is quarried by derricks of the common construction. It is placed upon a railroad and run down to the landing. A large space is commanded by a traversing crane or elevated railway. This is made of timber. The timbers are raised to the height of perhaps 16 feet upon posts. They are 60 feet apart and cross railroads upon these carry Jimmies [?], as they call the gearing which is used for raising and handling the stone. The blocks used are large, of 30 to 60 feet in size or larger, roughly cut with hammer. The rest are merely lined off with a blunt chisel upon the edges. They pile the stone up as cut. And last winter when the stone could not be shipped on account of the ice, they say that they had the space between the piles filled full of stone cut.

In the last two years they quarried and delivered here between 18 and 20,000 cubic yards of stone, say, 500,000 cubic feet. This sinks Heebner's efforts into the shade. The stone lays well in the quarry in courses nearly horizontal, of different and proper thicknesses for the purpose. Some of the layers are over 6 feet; others not more than one or two feet. It is blasted out in the first blast, then split to the proper dimensions.

This is the largest operation of quarrying I have ever seen. They had just taken a contract and were making preparations for cutting out the stone this winter.

* * *

[NOV.] 30TH. Sunday. I took North's ____ and drove down to Chazy. He found the hunting so good that he determined to stay a little longer. The snow is about 4 inches deep, good tracking, and still hunting. The deer very abundant. I have had no chance to shoot at a deer, but I have had exercise and sight of the woods and waters of this

wild and picturesque country. I have gained health and strength for the mind and duties of the winter and shall be better able to work for the rest which I have had from the cares and toils of business.

* * *

[NOV. 30 CONT.] Bought of North a pair of horses and a light wagon. One of the horses for myself, one for the Capitol. \$200 each for the horses and \$75 for the wagon. I have taken the mare, 6 years old next spring, and to trot a mile in 3.10. They are to be sent on by Lemuel North's man. I am to pay for them here and to pay the cost of bringing them to Washington.

DEC. 1. At 6 a.m., set out by railroad for home. . . .

* * *

[Meigs arrived in Washington at 6 a.m. on December 3.]

[DEC. 3] At office. My office is not yet in a fit state to be occupied. Sent my table up to Mr. Walter's room for the present. No drawings of prime importance are destroyed. The fire seemed to have smoldered like a charcoal pit for a long time and did not break into flame till they opened the doors, which they did not do until they had procured water to extinguish it.

I have lost the drawings of the bridges at Cabin John, all the original drawings and sketches for the Rock Creek and Little Falls projects, but have saved the sketches for the Potomac aqueduct, as they were in Georgetown. The drawing of the gatehouse is also gone. However, of this I believe a copy in outline exists in the Georgetown office.

[DEC.] 4TH. Went to the department and engineer office. Did not see the Secretary, who was engaged. I saw General Totten.

* * *

[DEC.] 5TH. Drew my pay and fuel and quarters today. The pay is \$118.50; the fuel and quarters, 40; making for the month, \$158.50. I also drew my transportation from this place to Lee and back on public business. So much of my late journey having been made in obedience to orders from the Secretary, the rest being for my own advantage and pleasure, I made at my own expense. This amounted to \$76, the distance being 760 miles. I spent the day upon my correspondence, which has in my absence run into arrear.

[DEC.] 6TH. Macomb having told me that he heard the civil works, transferred to our corps some years since (4 years ago), were to be

retransferred to the Topographical Corps, I went this morning to the office to see if it was true. It would be a heavy blow to the standing and reputation and influence of our corps. It is supposed by General Totten and such as I could [consult] in the War Department that the intention is only to rescind the order of 4 years ago which divided the works geographically between the two corps and leave it to the discretion of the Secretary to call an officer from either corps to take a work of civil improvement in any part of the United States. This is proper. It is said that the officers of Topographical Engineers have little to do and that owing to the failure of appropriations for the works of internal improvement by the United States, they are, many of them, idle and only half employed, while our corps is full of work and some say overburdened. This is proper enough and does us no harm.

[DEC.] 7TH. Sunday. To church. In the evening went to see Mrs. Jefferson Page,¹³¹ who has returned from Florence, a great admirer of Powers, and wishes to know how stands his case for the appropriation of \$25,000.

* * *

[DEC.] 8TH. To the office, where I was driven with work all day. Did not get home till dark. I settled some questions about the roof of the stairways, the ventilation, the setting of marble in the vestibule of the Senate. This room is going to be very beautiful. The columns with capitals varied from the Corinthian are very effective. The sudden cold has put a stop to its progress for a time, though I suppose that we will have days of sufficient warmth to set the whole of it before the winter is over. The alterations to make my office inhabitable are going on.

* * *

[DEC. 8 CONT.] Mr. Briggs brought me today [a] set of drawings of the different forms of fans. They have been made by Mr. Camerhoover and are beautifully drawn. I have ordered them photographed in order to have developed sets of them and have them save our picture.

The figures of the Youths are finished in the marble. I examined them today and directed some very small changes be made in them.

[DEC.] 9TH. I went to the War Office today and gave to the Secretary a copy on large paper of the view of the east front of the Capitol,

¹³¹ Benjamina Price Page was the wife of Thomas Jefferson Page (1808–1899), a naval officer and explorer.

showing its condition upon the last of November. It is a beautiful photograph, and I suggested to him that it was worthy of being framed.¹³²

* * *

[DEC. 9 CONT.] Banks wishes to get Congress to order for the room of the Members and the Speaker the portraits of the Speakers from the beginning of our government. I told him there was plenty of room in the Members' Retiring Room for them all and I hoped he would bring the matter before Congress and have it done.

* * *

[DEC. 9 CONT.] Mr. Seward asked me if I had seen anything of Mr. Palmer, the sculptor, of Albany. I told him that I had been shown some daguerreotypes of his works by [Mrs.] Marcy and that I thought they gave promise of greater excellence than anything I had seen from any other sculptor. He asked if there was anything that I could give him in the Capitol. I told him that the 2nd pediment was not yet given out and that if he was able to undertake this, it was open to him for trial. If he presented a design of great excellence, it would be taken, I thought. He said he would communicate with him upon this subject, seeing Mr. Fish, who was interested for him; that a vote by Congress _____ a quarrel.

* * *

[DEC. 10] I found at home a note from Mr. George R. West, who has painted the marine views in the Naval Committee Room. He takes me to task for want of regard for his value as an artist, desires me to send back to him the sketches made for the Committee Room on Territories and to allow him, if naval men and artists agree with me in my opinion of his paintings, to erase them from the walls, when he will be happy to return to the United States the laborer's compensation he has received for them under my direction. His letter is rude and impertinent, written under the impulse of vanity and self-conceit.

I shall write to him in temperate terms and tell him that I have been sincerely desirous of his success and tried to speak to him in such terms as would as little as possible wound his feelings; that he got $\frac{4}{5}$ as much pay as I did, myself, and that I cannot therefore sympathize with his contempt for his pay.

Heebner, too, writes to say that if I will increase the price of his column blocks on the first contract, he prefers to send them in two pieces. This is not in the spirit of his contract, which assumed that he would be able to send the greater part of the shafts in single blocks,

¹³²Meigs inserted here the report of the secretary of war, dated December 1, 1856. The portions related to the Capitol appear in Appendix, page 785.

and the few without ____ were to be in two blocks. I can manage him, I think, however.

DEC. 11TH. I wrote this morning a letter in reply to Mr. West's note. I told him that I had been sincerely desirous of doing him good; that I had hoped that he would take the position of pupil to Mr. Brumidi and that he would have been willing to return for his instruction and help in his work and, for the pay which he received from the United States, which he calls, with so much contempt, laborer's compensation, work upon the building. I could not sympathize with him in his contempt for the pay because I received but little more myself.

I wrote to Crawford to tell him that I could pay for such work only as might be done; that when the marble was bought and the statues pointed, I could pay for that work and for the marble, but could not pay on account.

I wrote also to Mr. Ames, sending him a copy of the photograph of the statue for the dome and asking him to make a definite offer. The Munich foundry offers to cast and finish the statue, weighing 15,000 pounds, for \$14,000. But whether this includes transportation to Munich or not, I have asked of Mr. Crawford.

* * *

[DEC. 11 CONT.] I inspected the room painted by Mr. Leslie, the room of the Committee on Territories.¹³³ It is well done, with emblems, very rich and appropriate. He thinks that he could take Darley's designs and translate them into color upon the walls. Darley asks for designs of 14 inches by 22 inches \$125 each. They are in black and white only, the only material in which he works.

* * *

[DEC. 12] I have written to Mr. Darley asking him to send me a design for the wall of the Committee Room on Territories. I sent to him a set of photographs so as to show him the character of the building for which he is making the design.

* * *

[On December 12 Louisa Meigs gave birth to a stillborn child, a girl.]

[DEC.] 13TH. With Macomb and Johnny, I took the little one thus cut off before its birth over to the Georgetown Cemetery and buried it in the same grave with our dear Charlie. How mysterious is our being! Was this a human being with a soul or no? It never breathed.

¹³³Now designated room H-128.

John came home from college for his Saturday's holiday a few hours before I set out for our melancholy journey.

Louisa is doing well, though she suffers a good deal from indigestion.

* * *

[DEC.] 15. I was very busy at the office today. Senator Bayard was at the office on Saturday, I am told, and left word that he would call again. He wishes, Mr. Walter tells me, to provide for the filling up of the grounds of the Capitol. He does not want it done by the plans of the Commissioner of Public Buildings but wishes a plan to be prepared in this office in accordance with the design of the building itself. I told Mr. Walter the best way would be for him to prepare such a plan and we would give it to Mr. Bayard, and he could have it signed by the committee and thus secure the completion of it as he wished.

I have a letter from Mr. West, who is not pleased with the result of his correspondence with me. He says he takes my note as a very polite intimation that his services are no longer required by the superintendent of the Capitol extension, etc., etc., and that it is his misfortune, not fault, that he was not born an Englishman, an Irishman, an Italian or a German but an American. What baseness and what stupidity this shows in this man, whom I have taken and tried to make satisfied with his condition but who has not in truth earned 5 dollars since he has been in the employ of the United States.

* * *

DEC. 17. I had a visit today from Secretary McClelland of the Interior. He went over the building and to the studio. Robert Rodgers had come at the same time, and he went with us.

I have received, yesterday, 3 more statues from Mr. Crawford—The Indian Warrior in Despair, The Hunter, and The Indian Wife and Child. The Chieftain is a noble figure in which the passion of despair is well represented. The Hunter is a beautiful figure of a youth but is not an Indian. The Family, I am sorry to say, is not much. It is not Indian, and I do not think there is anything about it remarkable.

I have already been informed by all the sculptors that they would be very glad to undertake The Savage in marble, being the most difficult figure for which to do it. I have told them to make propositions for all the figures.

I hope to be able to find some blocks of marble for some of the smaller figures here. Else I must wait till next spring to get them. Navigation must soon close now.

* * *

[DEC.] 21ST. Received today from John Rice of Philadelphia a note asking the cost of the corrugated copper of the Capitol extension roof. He says that he wishes to have it used upon the roof of the new Pennsylvania bank now erecting. Thus, the good example I have set of construction is spreading.

John Rodgers went up to the Capitol today and, finding one of the watchmen—McGee, I suppose, from his description of him—polite and obliging, he went into the south wing and saw the rooms of the House of Representatives and Committee on Territories. He asked the watchman what people generally said of it all, whether they objected to the cost. McGee told him that so far as he heard, they seemed to have generally come a good way to see the building and were pleased to see something good and were quite willing to have it cost as much as necessary to make it beautiful; that Members who saw the ceiling of the House of Representatives were pleased with it and said [it] cost but they did not care; it was worth it.

He asked McGee what sort of a person this Captain Meigs was. McGee said he was a wonderful man, that he knew more of all that was done than those who did it, seemed to know everything.

I am pleased at this reputation among my own people and feel as much flattered by this praise from the watchman as though it had come in a compliment in the Senate.

* * *

[DEC. 22] I found upon reaching the office that the horses arrived last night. They seem to have had a hard journey. . . .

The cost of the transportation of my horse was \$30.21. I paid $\frac{1}{3}$ of the expenses of the transportation. I paid the man's wages entirely from the United States appropriation. It is enough for me to furnish the horse for public use out of my own pay and to pay his actual expenses here. The wagon and other horses belong to the Capitol.

* * *

[DEC. 23] Upon an application from Mr. Sonnemann to supply him with instruments, I have today written to the Secretary of War to ask him for authority to buy some instruments and books. Some of the books of reference which we had in constant use in the office were burned. I have also bought today a copy of a small edition of Stuart and Revett's *Antiquities of Athens*.¹³⁴

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¹³⁴James Stuart and Nicholas Revett, *The Antiquities of Athens, and Other Monuments of Greece*. London, 1763, 1790, 1795. Reprint, 1825.

[DEC. 23 CONT.] I had some conversation with Mr. Briggs about the fan and fan room for the extension. He says that he has been expecting Mr. Nason for some 2 weeks past and that he supposes he will be here within a day or two; that we had better let the matter stand till he comes; that the fan at Winder's building¹³⁵ works satisfactorily and is the result of our experiments at the Capitol. He has a drawing of it ready for the report upon the experiments. It is the best fan they have ever made, and some experiments upon it upon a large scale will enable us to improve possibly the one for the Capitol still more.

* * *

[DEC. 24] Dougherty¹³⁶ says that he thinks the mechanics of this city are aware that they owe much to me; that they never, before I came here, had such large appropriations to be spent among them; that when Mills was the architect, they built public buildings in a plain style and whitewashed or plastered them over and left them, while I build in the highest style of architecture and mechanical art and employ the best mechanics to do the work here among them; that they know they are better treated by me and my foremen than they ever have been before, and that they are satisfied with me and my treatment. I have not the opportunity to know myself whether this is their feeling. It ought to be. But the contractors have so long been trying to persuade the men that military officers must be tyrants that I do not know how far they have succeeded.

* * *

DEC. 26. The Secretary sent for me today. He had a visit from Mr. Disney,¹³⁷ who, by his perseverance, had at last put him out of patience. Mr. Disney bored him. He would not take an answer but insisted upon having from him information as to the time when his clients might expect an answer. He told him that he had not yet read my report and could not answer till he had. When would that be? When he was ready. At last, Davis got out of patience and told Mr. Disney that he was tired of thus acting upon the defensive and that he would, if the President would sustain him in it, have a board or commission appointed to investigate matters connected with the public buildings and the style of work upon them.

He then sent for me and proposed it. I opposed it, telling him that it was not a subject which excited public interest. Those in Congress

¹³⁵ According to the *Congressional Directory* for 1853, several of the offices of the Interior Department were located in the Winder's Building on 17th Street.

¹³⁶ William Dougherty was foreman of marble works for the Post Office building.

¹³⁷ David T. Disney (1803–1857), Democrat of Ohio, had served in the House of Representatives, 1849–1855. He was apparently representing the contractors Berry and Mohen, who sought work on the Post Office.

who had to do with the appropriations cared little for this matter. The report of persons necessarily selected by himself would not be received with favor. Those upon whom it bore heavily would say that it was a packed jury, etc.; that the game was not worth the candle, etc.

I did not succeed in making him come to my opinion, though I think I shook him a little. He has, I fear, committed himself to it to the President. I think it is not our business to investigate what has been done by our predecessors. So much room is left for the accusation of malignant motives. Upon the whole, I hope that I have so far weakened his determination; that with the help of the President, who I feel sure will not favor it except for the sake of Davis, I may prevent its being carried out. I told him, as I left him, to think the matter over and write to him about it, either taking ground against it or advising him whom to put upon such a commission.

I told him I wished to go to New York to look at [Erastus Dow] Palmer's exhibition of sculpture and at some works at Janes and Beebe, making for the Capitol. I also wished to go to Richmond [Virginia] to see the statues by Crawford which are there.¹³⁸ They were cast in the Munich foundry. He gave me the necessary orders.

* * *

[DEC.] 27TH. I wrote this morning and took to the department an argument against the board of investigation proposed by the Secretary into the construction of the public buildings. He heard it read but did not seem to change his views in regard to it. He asked if I thought of any proper person to be put upon the board and suggest his name before I went, under his orders, to New York, but said that he would not detain me here for this purpose.

* * *

[On December 31 Meigs traveled to Philadelphia to attend the funeral of his sister-in-law, Ann Ingersoll Meigs, who had died from complications of childbirth. She was the wife of Meigs' brother John.]

¹³⁸The Crawford statues are at the state capitol.