

objects before him, and the advantages of our day, may largely repay the benefactions of the liberal by the lasting benefits not of mere theory, but of the practical usefulness of discovery.

Will Cincinnati secure such a one, and retain him? Certainly every lover of science and every admirer of the astronomer who laid down his life in our defense will devoutly hope for the highest renewed honors to crown the scenes of his earliest labors of peace, and perpetuate his well-earned and unsullied fame.

II.—THE UNITED STATES NAVAL OBSERVATORY.

The history of this observatory is no little remarkable. It shares with our other government scientific institutions in strange records as to its birth and name. The Military Academy was at first known only as the "School for Engineers," unorganized, and sheltered for its very existence under the wing of the War Department; and the "Naval School" at Philadelphia, and afterward at Annapolis, was for years little more than a rendezvous from which restless midshipmen could escape from study, or the Navy Department could pick them up for sea service. To this day, having no legislative organization, it has Congressional authority by the successive appropriations granted to the Navy Department, and by such legislation as our Congressmen have made when giving to themselves

the nomination of candidates to the academy.

Of the Naval Observatory it may be still more strikingly shown that, although, like the two institutions we have named, it is now firmly fixed in the ideas of the country, its origin and growth have been very strangely secured. Holding the enviable position accorded to it by the much older European observatories, it has to look back upon a very humble birth, and was christened, as one may say, under a false name.

Probably few visitors at Washington have not had pointed out to them from the north door of the Senate wing of the Capitol the site of the old "Washington property." The house named in the General's will stood near the old Capitol until both were burned, in August, 1814, by the English Vandal, Cockburn. Close on this well-remembered site stood, in 1833, an unpretending wooden building but sixteen feet square, erected at the expense of a lieutenant of the navy, and equipped with a five-foot Troughton transit instrument. This was our Naval Observatory in embryo.

The transit was one of the instruments made for the Coast Survey, under the supervision of Mr. Hassler, its first superintendent, during his long detention in England; for it may be remembered that the beginnings of our Coast Survey work also were slow enough. Under the act of 1807 Mr. Hassler was appointed superintendent, but this was not till the year 1811; and on his



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