

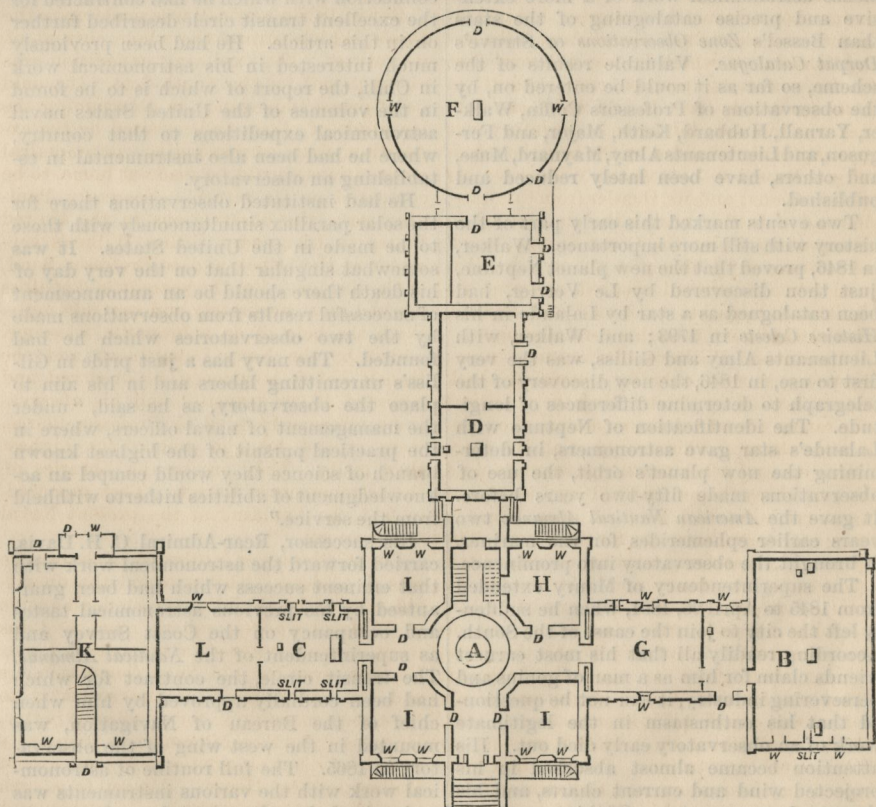
for the benefit of the Cambridge Observatory. It gained the day for Gilliss, and for an observatory at Washington. He had closely observed Encke's comet, and read a paper on it before the National Institute. When he made, shortly after this, his last intended visit to the Senate committee, Preston of South Carolina asked, "Are you the one who gave us notice of the comet? I will do all I can to help you." In a week a bill passed the Senate; and, strangely enough, passed the House also, without discussion, on the last day of its session. It appropriated \$25,000; but still "for a Dépôt of Charts and Instruments."

But the Secretary of the Navy was no longer officially bound by the name. The report of the committee, which secured the bill, was so expressly in favor of astronomical, meteorological, and magnetic objects, that Congress was justly understood to sanction them. Gilliss was sent abroad for instruments and plans for an observatory.

The site chosen by President Tyler for the building was fraught with historic interest. It embraces the whole of "Reservation No.

4," made, by the old commissioners for laying out the city of Washington, for a national university—a favorite idea of General Washington. It was the landing-place of Braddock, April 11, 1755. At a later day it was known as Camp Hill, from its being occupied by the American forces the day before their unfortunate advance and retreat from Bladensburg. The square embraces a little more than nineteen acres in measurement. It is now tastefully laid out and ornamented. Nearly central within it stands the building of which the front elevation is given on page 531. It is on the second highest eminence within the city limits, commanding the view of the public buildings, of the neighboring cities of Georgetown and Alexandria, and of Arlington.

In 1844 Gilliss reported the completion and equipment of the central building shown in our plate. He had secured the excellent equatorial, the meridian circle, the transit, prime vertical, and mural circle on which so much valued work has been done. He had begun a library, to which nearly two hundred volumes of the highest standard



THE UNITED STATES NAVAL OBSERVATORY—GROUND PLAN.

A, Pier of Equatorial. B, Transit Circle. C, Mural Circle and Transit. D, Prime Vertical. E, Computer's Room for Great Equatorial. F, Great Equatorial. G, Library. H, Superintendent's Office. I, I, I, Offices. K, Superintendent's Dwelling. L, Chronometer-Room. D, Door. W, Window.