

Abroad.

BY P. W. GEER.

Washington monument should command the first attention of a visitor to our national capitol. This massive stone structure, built on a slight rise of ground, west of the capitol building, extends into the air a distance of 555 feet. From the windows near the top one can get the finest view of the city of Washington and the surrounding country that it is possible to get, unless one goes up in a balloon. This is about as near an approach as you can get to a balloon ascension. The elevator was not running the day I visited the monument, and I had to climb the stairway. What a climb it was! It didn't take as long as it did to climb the Bunker Hill monument, for there were not so many people and plenty of room to pass. I pulled off my coat and started to climb. The weather was hot, and before I had climbed one-third of the way I was wet with perspiration. By the time I had reached the half-way point, my long legs, instead of wearing off, seemed to be twice the original length, and it was almost impossible for me to lift my feet from one step to another. I stopped to rest and wipe the perspiration from my face, and then climbed on and on until I finally reached the top platform, with five hundred feet, besides my own, between me and the ground. The wind was blowing a gale at that high altitude, and I stopped in front of one of the windows to cool off. The keeper gave me his field-glass so that I could get a good view of the scene below me. Directly to the east extends the long park toward the capitol building a mile away. In the center of the park are the Smithsonian Institute and the National Museum. Walking to the north window I looked down upon the White House, the large buildings of the War, Treasury, Interior and Pension departments, and the city with its beautiful streets, avenues, and parks. In the distance are the hills covered with trees and suburban residences. From the windows in the west I gazed out upon Georgetown, lying along the bank of the Potomac, which flows to the south-east. In the distance is the Naval Observatory. From the south, one can look out across the Potomac into Virginia, and see the National Cemetery in the distance, with the old Lee mansion, all beautiful and white, standing among the trees. Directly in front of you the route of the Potomac can be followed as it turns toward the south, with Alexandria and Mt. Vernon in the distance.

I did not stay half long enough in Washington, but I saw some beautiful sights and some splendid

people, as well as selling some stock in the Liberal University. I consider that it was two days well spent, and after having a farewell visit with friend Croffut, I started for Philadelphia, where I stopped long enough to see Mr. Bently and Mr. Wilber, and visit the United States mint, where they make the money. I saw twenty million dollars worth of gold and silver in one vault, and it didn't even make me hungry. I saw a man rolling out bars of gold ready to be stamped into ten dollar pieces. There is \$700 in each bar. I wanted the man to give me one of the bars for a sample, but he wouldn't do it. I told him that I was all the way from Oregon, but he said that is where gold grows and I didn't need any samples. I saw one woman making copper cents, and she had more "cents" than any woman I ever saw before. The only thing she needed to be an up-to-date woman was more brass—she had copper enough.

I arrived in New York City that evening too late to hear Mr. Wake-man give his farewell lecture before the Manhattan Liberal Club. I am glad I didn't get there, for I am afraid the people would have mobbed me for inducing their high priest to leave them to be a professor in the Liberal University of Oregon. Of course they will miss him, but they will not lose him entirely, for in the Liberal University his work will extend throughout all the land. He is simply changing to a more congenial locality to enlarge his field of labor. This change will be applauded by all true lovers of human progress.

I spent another two weeks with my headquarters at Homer Davenport's house in East Orange, and had a fine time. One morning Homer took me in the buggy, behind his fine Arabian steed, and we rode up to Llewellyn Park, where the laboratory and factory of the great Edison are located. After considerable ringing of an electric bell at the gate of the high fence surrounding his laboratory, we were admitted. I held the horse, while Davenport went with his three bull terriers in search of the wizard. The dogs didn't have to do any tracking; Homer knew about where to find his friend, and the dogs simply followed through force of habit. In a short time Homer and the dogs returned, and found the horse surrounded by a mob, and a face at every window of the large building. The mob was not there to harm me. The workmen had all quit work to see the finest horse in America, while we were visiting the greatest inventor in the world. Homer and Edison are great friends, and Homer had gone to inform the inventor that a western Infidel wanted to see him. I don't know whether he consented through a friendly feeling for a fellow heathen

or through fear of the bull dogs. He said when he saw Davenport coming with the dogs, "Good God, Davenport, do you want my money?" "Have you got any?" said Davenport. "Not a cent. That is what makes it so damn ridiculous," Edison replied, with a laugh.

Homer said Edison wanted to see me, and told me where to find him. I entered at the end of a long brick building, and after passing through several doors, and winding around among a wilderness of apparatus, with the odor of chemicals strong enough to kill bed-bugs, I saw a room at the extreme end of the long building. I walked up to the door, and saw a man seated at a long table, with a lot of jars of chemicals before him. The man was Edison, the prince of inventors. He was clad in a gray suit, which was literally plastered with dirt and dust. His face was full and smooth shaven; his hair is turning gray in places; his eyes have a hungry expression, a relic, I suppose, of his past life. You often hear of people who don't know enough to eat when they are hungry, Edison knows too much to eat when he is hungry.

The wizard motioned for me to enter, and as I approached he held out his hand to welcome me. As I grasped it he spoke, and his voice sounded like his head was in a barrel, that is on account of his deafness. "Well," said he, "I am reading the bible." "Yes," I replied, "the bible of nature is a splendid book if one understands how to read it." "The best damn bible in the world," said Edison, enthusiastically; "its laws are perfect and grand, and all the prayers in the world can't change them. There is intelligence and law in this world, and there may be supreme intelligence and law, but so far as the religion of the day is concerned it is all a damned fake." Mr. Edison is a pleasant talker, and his swearing is not harsh, it is simply amusing. I explained in a few words what we are doing in Oregon, and he said he was very glad to hear such glorious news, and asked me for some literature, which I gladly gave him. I did not wish to detain the world's great benefactor from his work, so after a few moments chat and exchange of ideas, I bade my friend goodbye and soon joined Homer and the dogs, where I found them with the mob still around the horse.

Mr. Edison is indeed a wonderful man. He spends twelve hours a day in his laboratory, and it is hard to get him to stop long enough to eat. He sleeps only four hours a day, and has been known to work sixty hours without sleep. At present, I believe he is superintending the construction of twelve different inventions. All day long he walks from one department to another, where the various machines are building. He seems to have no

difficulty in carrying the twelve inventions in his head at once, and developing each simultaneously. What a grand blessing that he is not hampered with superstition.

In response to the invitation of Mr. and Mrs. John Brisben Walker I spent a very pleasant evening at their home on the Hudson, at Irvington. Mr. Walker is the well-known editor of the *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, and I was very glad to learn that both he and his wife are Secularists. Both are delightful company and splendid entertainers, and they have a fine family of boys. The *Cosmopolitan* stands at the head of the great magazines, and it is undoubtedly due to its editor. Mr. Walker is just now building a factory for the construction of automobiles. He is very enthusiastic in his new line of business, and I have every reason to believe that he will succeed in that as well as other enterprises in which he is engaged. He is also deeply interested in a correspondence school, which has grown to some magnitude, and is doing a vast amount of good. Mr. and Mrs. Walker are, of course, anxious to see the Liberal University succeed, for they know it to be a step in the right direction. After we had dined sumptuously, and chatted for some length, I bade goodbye to the Walkers and started for the station. It was dark and stormy so the son David went with me as far as the *Cosmopolitan* building, and was kind enough to show me the printing plant. They do all the work under one roof, except making the paper. They have a lovely building, and employ an army of people.

I waited at the station for the midnight train for Hudson, when I climbed aboard and rode until daylight, when the conductor said he wouldn't take me any further without extra pay. I didn't want to go any further then anyway, so I stepped off the train and put in my time writing and viewing the Hudson and the Catskill in the distance until the inhabitants of Hudson had finished their breakfast. I then sought out the home of Mr. Geiger, my Infidel friend. Mr. Geiger is an inventor, and like other inventors he usually suffers encroachments on his rights from unprincipled manufacturers. He is the man who covers the bullet with a copper jacket, which gives it great power of penetration. Mr. Geiger is a reader of the *Torch of Reason*, and expressed his desire and intention to help the Liberal University, in which he is enthusiastically interested.

I did not have long to stay in this delightful place as the train soon went to New York City, and thither I went to finish up my business preparatory to my return to Silverton. I arrived in New York a little after noon, and called on the editor of the *Popular Science*