

between the States). It is got up by a company, and truly it may whip them all to "immortal smash."

The Fire and Hose Companies we are familiar with, and the frequent fires. The State-house bell, by its numbered tolls, telling them in what quarter the fire is. I do not recollect a single night without a fire; often two or three. It is pretty well known not half are by accident; and yet nobody is accused or ever found out by the police, or by anybody else. Indeed, a good big fire is considered good amusement; it's good for trade, and fine fun for the boys and rabble, who help to drag along the engines, led by the engine *captain*, who with his trumpet keeps hoo-hooing ahead with all his lungs. The firemen fight their own ring-clearance at the fires; no police ever helps, but they stand by each other, and are too strong for the mob. They are rewarded in *foro conscientie*—citizens fork out according to their consciences. To me, from all I can hear, it is a puzzle how these young men like so much trouble and fog (night and day), payless and almost thankless! They build fine engine-houses, too; the engines alone are very expensive. But their pride is touched; they are an order—fast—military!—bands, balls—belles!—flowers and hearts are yielded!—*voilà, le pourquoi?*

Can one wonder the Americans sent us nothing but *utilities* in art. All its taste and beauty here (except afloat) is at a very low ebb indeed. Pictures, wretched daubs. A poor flimsy portrait-painter or two may still pick up a few dollars in spite of the daguerreotypes which eye you with a grim sternness at every window; but all the fine arts are given up to foreigners. French and Germans take the lead in decorations, and all the lighter fashions and elegancies.

No; one must not look for taste of a high order, or the refined elegance in anything, equal to Europe; nor is it at all essential. It will come fast enough, I dare say, when they are less surfeited by the plethora of good living, and when they will have to repine and grumble at the corruptions and anomalies of a more refined state of things.

CHAPTER V.

SOMETHING OF BALTIMORE, WASHINGTON, THE CHESAPEAKE, AND POTOMAC.

PREPARATORY to starting, at a coach-stand in Ninth-street, very near the Philadelphia College, I had hard work to strike a bargain with an Irish cabman to take me to the steam-boat, as a favour, for half a dollar, though his legal fare was only a quarter-dollar to or from any part of the centre of the city;