

## WASHINGTON, D.C., U.S.A.

## CITY OF TREES.

After the Congress was over, a visit to Washington, D.C., capital city of America had been planned, and the visit was to commence on Monday, May 19th, 1947. Leaving Philadelphia at 10 a.m. (Eastern Standard Time), I took my seat in a luxurious, air-conditioned parlour car, where cool iced drinks could be had on tap, and I arrived in the capital just before noon. Alas—the heat and humidity had arrived the day before me and to give you some idea of the heat and “wetness,” an Indian professor admitted that he could live comfortably in New Delhi (India), but found life very difficult in the hot months at Washington.

Union Station is the only station of the capital and it was built by the United States Government and the Pennsylvania, Baltimore and Ohio Railroads. It is the most beautiful railway station structure in the whole world, built of white granite, 760 ft. long and 343 ft. wide. In the short space of time I spent looking around, I felt myself become weak with the heat, my clothes were wet and I felt near to collapse.

Fortunately friends met me with a car and I am afraid I presented a sorry sight—heat sickness and sea sickness are very similar. I went straight to bed in a shaded room, and a good English cup of tea soon revived me. After a devastating thunder-storm, I set out by car in the evening's cool breeze and drove through the beautiful avenues and streets, each and every one of which is lined with lovely green and shady trees.

Washington, D.C., is the second home of every American citizen. It was founded by George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, and planned by Major Pierre L'Enfant. Major L'Enfant dreamed of, and planned, a leafy city. One hundred years later, i.e., in 1870, thousands of seedlings arrived in the city and to-day magnificent elms grace all the spacious avenues.

The White House is the oldest public building and 31 Presidents have lived in it, George Washington being the only exception. Washington himself selected the site and laid the corner stone in 1792 and saw the building completed. The British set fire to it in 1812 and only its walls were left standing. After its restoration it was painted white to hide its scars and thus it remains today, a gleaming white building in a lovely green garden. By night, the graceful and lovely public buildings are floodlit, and it is a wonderful experience to drive around and see the tall and slim Washington Memorial, with a full moon in the background and a halo of cherry-tree blossoms all basking in pale blue and golden flood-lighting. To the left lies bathed in a silver glow the lovely Lincoln Memorial, which is a most graceful structural gem.

Another fine sight by night is the famous U.S. Capitol, one of the largest and stateliest buildings in the world. Again, the corner stone was laid by George Washington, in 1793, and it was first occupied by Congress in 1857. It is built on a height overlooking the amphitheatre of the Potomac and on the evening when I saw it floodlit against the background of a summer night sky, it was a most awe-inspiring sight.

Next morning my kind friend again took me into Washington and we drove to the beautiful Library of

Congress, which is another architectural gem, its dome and lanterns being finished in black copper, with gilded panels of gold leaf. The daily collection of newspapers from all parts of the world reveals the cosmopolitan identity of Washington's citizens, and it really did give one a thrill to walk in and read the previous day's *Daily Telegraph* and *The Times*. It is a most marvellous library, and I simply could not attempt to describe it in this short article.

We next visited one of Washington's largest stores and did some shopping. It was most bewildering to see such a profusion of glorious articles for sale. Glamorous undies made in stocking-stitch nylon, perfumes, creams, stockings, dresses, furniture, furnishings, in fact, everything one could possibly think of or wish for. Escalators carried the shoppers from one floor to another, and when our very tiring tour was completed, we journeyed down to the soda-fountain bar and enjoyed a toothsome caramel ice and orange squash.

The churches in Washington too, are most wonderful buildings. Americans always give very liberally to the support of their churches—whatever their denomination. They are furnished so richly and lavishly, utterly different from our churches in England.

In the afternoon I visited the School of Nursing Education at the Catholic University of America in Brooklands, outside Washington. The Dean of the Nursing School, Sister M. Olivia, O.S.B., very kindly escorted me around, and allowed me to remain in and hear some of the lectures. I marvelled that the students could be so alert and attentive, for I found the heat and dampness most oppressive to bear, and the bright hot sunlight dazzling to a degree. I was invited to take part in one class, which was discussing a new proposed curriculum for the training and education of Nurses. Twelve of the students had formed themselves into a committee for work outside school hours. They elected their own chairman and as a result of 40 to 60 hours of hard work had produced a most enlightening curriculum, illustrated by scholarly charts showing the hours of study to be apportioned to each subject. The students have kindly promised to send me a copy of the draft syllabus and the accompanying charts, which we hope to reproduce in this Journal. I was invited to applaud or criticise the plan, and my criticism was that a Nurse thus obtaining her degree as Master of Nursing might not be keen on the practical side of Nursing. The students disagreed with me, and when our readers see the charts, they will be able to form their own opinions.

There was no doubting the earnestness and keenness of each individual present in the class, and if Nursing is to be judged by students of this calibre, the future of the profession of Nursing in America seems bright indeed.

When I left Washington, the lovely Cherry Blossom trees were past their early splendour.

In Springtime each year, they attract numerous visitors, and they are indeed, a truly magnificent sight. Their slim branches are massed by delicate and fragrant pink blossom, which overhang the blue waters beneath them. Away in the distance, and romantically visible through the riot of pastel pink, stands the stately and slender Washington Monument, and the two combine to leave a lingering memory of beauty and great men. G.M.H.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)