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the surface it will therefore give off vapour which coming to the surface will be frozen but why in columnar form? Exp on this!²

Henry Papers, Smithsonian Archives.

1. Willard Cowles, who was employed to assist in the experiments on marble for the Capitol. U.S. Senate, 32d Congress, 1st Session, *Message from the President of the United States, Communication, In Answer to a Resolution of the*

Senate, Calling for Information in Relation to the Extension of the Capitol . . ., Senate Executive Documents, No. 52 (1852), pp. 9, 11.

2. We have found no further Henry experiments.

156. TO GEORGE PERKINS MARSH

Smithsonian Institution
Nov 18th 1851

My Dear Sir

Your very interesting letter of the 13th ult.¹ has just been received and I hasten to thank you for the pleasure and instruction which I have received from its perusal. After consultation with Prof Baird I have concluded to send copies of your letters to Silliman's Journal omitting your name and every thing which might expose you to the carpings of narrow minded and designing politicians.

I am happy to inform you that all the affairs of the Smithsonian Institution are still in a prosperous condition. The third volume of contributions is in the press and we have on hand sufficient matter of the best quality to make a fourth and fifth volume. The only draw back on our prosperity is the want of funds to meet the many demands for objects of interest and importance. The expense of the building which will cost upwards of 300000 dolls is a drain which must be supplied for several years to come; I trust however that with careful and judicious management we shall be able to get through our difficulties and establish the Institution on a firm basis. It is every day enlarging the sphere of its influence and usefulness and in many ways unseen by the public eye is affecting the public mind.

The Regents for the last two years have interfered very little with our affairs and all things have consequently gone on smoothly and harmoniously— Our library is constantly increasing with the exchanges for our publications and the Reports of Congress and under the energetic operations of Professor Baird there will be no danger of our rooms appearing empty for want of specimens in natural history.

There are however some persons who complain that our doings are

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not sufficiently of a "useful character" and that it were better to confine them to experiments and publications on agriculture than ~~on~~ to waste the funds on matters pertaining to the moon. This was the remark of a candidate for the presidential chair made in an address delivered a few days ago at Baltimore.² I have said in answer that if the highest cravings of the human soul were confined to the desire for good potatoes this might be true.

I have nothing [I]^A fear, to communicate which you have not seen in the news papers. Washington is improving with astonishing rapidity and one of its most important advances has been made through the influence of this Institution. I allude to the improvement of the public grounds of the city on a general plan under the direction of a gentleman of taste and science; I refer to Mr Downing whose plans have been adopted and are now in process of being carried out. From the capitol to the Patomac the whole space is to be laid out in a public park with several miles of carriage roads and walks. The fields between 7th street & 12th streets have been thrown into one—traversed by under drains and are now adorned with trees of considerable size which have been brought from a distance by Mr Downing. The city of Washington is almost the only one which has been laid out on a definite plan and which is capable of being imprved in accordance with the original design. The object of the "magnificent distances"³ will be realiz[ed]^A and this term used ↑in due time↓ as an expression of pride rather than one of derision.

Who is to be the next President cannot as yet be conjectured. Douglas was quite prominent a few weeks ago but it is said that he has declined a little of late.⁴ General Scot⁵ on the other side has made but little noise for a month or two past but will probably make a further "demonstration" at the proper time. The arrival of Kossuth⁶ is looked forward to with much interest.

Dec 11th This letter was commenced on the 18th of last month but something prevented my finishing it at that time and I have suffered it to remain until now— Congress has assembled but the interest in its doings is merged in the enthusiasm which is manifested on account of the arrival of the Hungarian. The papers are filled with the report of speeches from and to him. He is now in New York but is expected in Washington in the course of a few days.

The most prominent candidates for the presidency just now are Gen Scott and Gen. Butler.⁷

I^B am glad to learn that Mrs Marsh has so far recovered her health as to be able to travel. Please present to her my kind regards and be

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assured that I remain very truly your friend & servt Joseph Henry
Dec 16th 1851 Since writing the foregoing I have learned from a reliable
source that President Fillmore will [---] decline a nomination and that
Gen Scott is to be the Whig candidate.⁸

Marsh Papers, University of Vermont Library.

1. Not found.
2. Stephen A. Douglas, Democratic senator from Illinois, gave an impromptu address to the annual agricultural exhibition and cattle show of the Maryland State Agricultural Society. Douglas called for the establishment of a national agricultural society, to which the Smithsonian might become an adjunct. He asserted, as paraphrased in a newspaper report, that "the development of genius and art, as it relates to the cultivation of our broad territory, is quite as useful and beneficial as discoveries in the moon, or attempts to establish abstract theories in science without practical results." *Baltimore Sun*, October 25, 1851; the paraphrase was reprinted in the *National Intelligencer*, October 29, 1851.
3. For the use of this term to indicate Washington, see *Henry Papers*, 6:19n.
4. Douglas, Lewis Cass, and James Buchanan were the leading candidates going into the May 1852 Democratic convention. None of them were able to secure the necessary two-thirds majority, and the convention finally turned to

Franklin Pierce. David M. Potter, *Impending Crisis, 1848-1861* (New York, 1976), pp. 141-142.

5. Winfield Scott was commander of the United States Army. *Henry Papers*, 7:365n.

6. Louis Kossuth (1802-1894), one of the leaders of the unsuccessful Hungarian revolution of 1848, was received as a champion of liberty when he visited the United States in December 1851. He came in response to an invitation authorized by a joint congressional resolution. John H. Komlos, *Louis Kossuth in America: 1851-1852* (Buffalo, 1973).

7. William Orlando Butler had been the Democratic candidate for vice-president in 1848. Like Scott, he was a hero of the Mexican War. *Henry Papers*, 7:367n.

8. Fillmore did run for the Whig nomination against Scott, but failed. It took fifty-three ballots at the June 1852 convention before Scott, the candidate of the North, defeated Fillmore, who had the support of the delegates from the South. Potter, pp. 232-234.

157. TO INCREASE ALLEN LAPHAM

Smithsonian Institution
Nov. 22nd 1851

Dear Sir

In answer to your letter of the 15th inst^l I am pleased to inform you that the resolution of the antiquarian society turning over to this institution the results of your explorations for publication is as gratifying to me as to yourself. This resolution is in the true spirit of science and in strict accordance with the plan of Smithsonian operations. We wish to co-operate with all other institutions and with individuals in the important cause of the advance of truth and the extension of the bounds of human knowledge and human power.

I have no suggestions to make which have not probably presented themselves to your mind. The value of observations of the kind on which you are engaged depends almost entirely on their minute accu-