

PROGRESS IN CIVILIZATION BETWEEN 1800 AND 1860

"What hath God wrought?"

This sentence was written from Washington by me at the Baltimore Terminus, at 8 h. 45 min A. M. on Friday, May 24, 1844, being the first ever transmitted from Washington to Baltimore by Telegraph, and was indited by my much-loved friend Annie G. Ellsworth.

Saml. F. B. Morse, Superintendent of Elec. Mag. Telegraphs.

Introduction.—Since the election of Lincoln was a turning-point in our national history, it will be well here to leave for a while the course of political events in order to study the progress in civilization made by the American people between 1800 and 1860. In this chapter, therefore, and in the next, we shall follow the story of our country's progress from the days of Jefferson to the days of Lincoln.

217. Agriculture.—In 1800 we were a nation of farmers (p. 179), and for a long time thereafter agriculture was the chief pursuit of our people. As we advanced westward there were ever at hand vast quantities of rich land which could be cheaply bought. The settlers on this land were men of brains as well as brawn, and in the tilling of the soil they used better methods than had ever been used before. By 1825 they had thrown aside the wooden mold-board and were using the cast-iron plow. By 1835 they were using threshing-machines to separate the grain from the straw instead of beating it out with the flail or treading it out with the slow feet of oxen. By 1840 scythes were being cast aside and the McCormick reaper—first patented in 1834—was making it possible for one man with a team of horses to cut as much grain as ten men could cut with a scythe or cradle. Of course with such a boundless supply of rich soil, and with such great improvements in farm machinery, agriculture must flourish. In 1840 our farm products were worth about a billion dollars; in 1860 they were worth about two billion dollars. The leading products of the farm were cotton, tobacco, wheat, and