THE

Colonial History of Vincennes,

UNDER THE

FRENCH, BRITISH AND AMERICAN GOVERNMENTS,

FROM ITS FIRST SETTLEMENT DOWN TO THE TERRITORIAL ADMINISTRATION OF GENERAL WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON, BEING AN ADDRESS, DELIVERED

BY JUDGE LAW,

BEFORE

THE VINCENNES HISTORICAL AND ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY,

FEBRUARY 22D, 1839,

WITH ADDITIONAL NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

VINCENNES:
HARVEY, MASON & Co.
1858.

LETTER OF DEDICATION.

Hon. Lewis Cass:—

Thirty-five years since, in the month of June, 1822, we made our first acquaintance at "The Post"—you on your exploring expedition to the head waters of the Mississippi—I then a young man, just commencing my professional career in the new State of Indiana.

What changes have been effected since that period, in and along the Valleys, formed by the streams you navigated, and flowing into the "Father of Waters," whose fountain head you were probably the first white man to visit? Leaving Detroit in your *birch canoe*—ascending the Maumee—crossing the portage and descending the Wabash and Ohio, you entered the Mississippi and pushed your frail bark to the sources of that great river. How few were the resources of the immense inland coast, along which you voyaged at the time mentioned? What wealth, population and power, are now to be found along its borders. The most sanguine among us, though we have lived to witness the alteration, would have been deemed insane to have predicted it, or anything like it for a half century past. What it will be in another half century, neither you or I will be permitted to witness. Our fervent prayers should be, that the same Providence that has hitherto watched over and protected us, may continue its guardianship, and preserve us and those who are to come after us, the same prosperous, happy, and above all, *united people.*

Aside from my high regard for you personally, I dedicate this small volume of the incidents connected with the colonial history of "Post Vincennes" to *you*, because you yourself have for the great-

er portion of your long and active life been intimately associated with the rise and progress of the North-Western Territory. To *you*, whose early life and mature years have been devoted to the advancement and prosperity of the "Great West," of which for so many years "The Post" was the centre, and around which, as a nucleus, four of the great States of the Union have clustered.

With great regard,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN LAW.

Vincennes, Feb. 24, 1858.

PREFACE.

The great interest which has been taken in the Colonial History of "Post Vincennes" and its intimate connection with the Colonial History of the whole North-Western Territory, in addition to the fact, that the whole edition of the "address" delivered before the "Vincennes Historical and Antiquarian Society" in 1839, amounting to two thousand copies, has long since been exhausted, has induced the author, at the earnest solicitation of others, to issue another edition with notes and illustrations, which it was impossible to combine with the address—but which are interesting as still further elucidating, the subject matter of the address itself. These memorials of the early settlement of the North-Western Territory, it is due to ourselves and those who come after us, to preserve if possible. The field is a large one, and what is more, rich and productive in incidents of the most interesting character. I have but gleaned a few connected with the early settlement of "The Post" so called "par excellence," as the rallying point of an Empire, extending from the Lakes to the Ohio, from the Miami to the Mississippi—and now containing within its borders the four great States of Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin.

I know of no portion of our country richer in historical incident. For surely a town which is one of the oldest on the Continent—one for the possession of which, the greatest nations of the earth have contended—France, England, and the United States. One located upon the beautiful stream which flows before it, the "Ouabache." A river known and noted on the maps of the West long before the Ohio was known in the geography of the Mis-

sippi Valley. A river which for nearly a century bore upon its waters the bateaux of the three great powers above mentioned, bringing their armed warriors to occupy, and if possible, to preserve it. One which has seen within its garrison the Mousquetaire of Louis XV, the grenadier of George the III, the riflemen of Clark, and the regular troops of Harmar, St. Clair, and Harrison—one above which has floated the "Fleur de Lys," the "Cross of St. George" and the glorious "Stars and Stripes" of our beloved country—is surely worthy of at least a passing notice by those who are now reaping the rich fruits of a conquest, made under the most adverse and trying circumstances, and with a skill and bravery not unsurpassed in the most glorious triumphs of the revolution. The reader need not be informed that I refer to the conquest of "Post Vincennes," and the capture of Hamilton and his troops, on the memorable 24th of February 1779, by General George Rogers Clark. To *him*, in my opinion, considering the results of that conquest, the vast addition of Territory acquired by it, and the incalculable advantages to the people who now occupy it, and to the country at large, the United States are more indebted than to any other General of the Revolution—Washington alone excepted.

In conclusion I would say to you who inhabit the Territory thus acquired, by the valor and sufferings of Clark and his gallant followers, nearly eighty years since, if I should impress upon *your* minds and those of *your children* who are to succeed you, the debt of gratitude which you owe to these brave men, long since gathered to their fathers, I shall not have labored for nought or written in vain.

JOHN LAW.

Vincennes, Feb. 24th, 1858.

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ADDRESS.

Having been solicited by that portion of my fellow-citizens, who are members of the "Vincennes Historical and Antiquarian Society," to prepare an address, connected with the early settlement, the rise, and the progress of our ancient Borough—I have thought that no occasion could, perhaps, be more appropriate for its delivery than the one on which we are assembled. Dating its origin long before the birth of the "Father of his Country," a solitary spot in the wilderness long after his advent on the stage of action—scarcely known even at the date of his decease, we have seen it in the present century forming a *nucleus* from which has arisen three great States—embracing a population probably five times as large as that which belonged to our parent State, Virginia, at the treaty of peace in 1783, and one of them, our own State, at the last Presidential election giving, of the free white suffrage polled on that occasion, the fifth highest vote of all the States in the Union. Could it be permitted to him, who was "first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen," to look down from the mansions of bliss, where "he rests from his labors," upon the work of his hands, and see an empire called into existence since his departure

—abounding in wealth—in intelligence—in patriotism, and love of country; inhabited by freemen, the descendants of those whom he had led to battle, strong in their attachment to liberty, and able and willing to maintain it; proud of the appellation of American citizens, and deeply imbued with the republican principles so admirably set forth in his Farewell Address;—could he see the country northwest of the river Ohio, which, even at the period of his departure for another and a better world, was the abode, for the most part, of the Son of the Forest, or the game which constituted his daily subsistence—now dotted with cities and villages—covered with cultivated fields—and the residence of upwards of two millions of beings, most of whom have come on the stage of action since that period; how would his heart swell with joy, his bosom throb with pleasure, at the reflection, that these glorious results, are but a part and parcel of that admirable system of government, the foundation of which was cemented by the blood of his fellow patriots of the revolution, and the superstructure of which was the work, in part, of his own hands. For aught we know, my countrymen, his spirit may at this very moment be hovering over this assembly. That Being, who is all wise and powerful, and who created him, like Moses of old, to lead our fathers from a "land of Egyptian bondage to the Land of Promise"—may, for aught we finite beings know, and for the same purposes for which he created him, permit him to see, and to watch over, and to guard the rights and happiness of their descendants. Let us at least act

as if we felt the influence of his counsels, and preserve them, as the richest legacy we can hand down to those who are to come after us. If there is any one subject which should engage the earnest attention of the human mind—if there is any one in which mankind are particularly interested, it is the history of their species. The interest in the subject is much increased by the particular relationship which we bear, to the country whose history we are so anxious to thoroughly understand. There is a sort of selfishness in the matter, which, after all, constitutes the true love of country. It is this feeling which is the father to all genuine patriotism, and without it, there would be but little inducement for action. We read with infinitely more pleasure, in childhood, the relations which are given us of the struggle for independence *here*, than we ever did, or ever can that of any other republic, which has heretofore, either in ancient or modern time, acquired its liberty. We may, and no doubt do, dote on isolated cases of patriotism, and love of country, as we find them recorded in other times and in other places. Our feelings are enlisted—our blood comes quicker through our veins, while reading the stories of Grecian and Roman struggles for independence—and it is the same with the more modern contests, between the sovereign and his oppressed subjects. We enter the lists—we fight over the battles, in our mind's eye, of Marathon and Thermopylæ. The strongest feelings of the human heart are enlisted in behalf of the oppressed, and of those contending, as we believe, for their rights.

But what boy who reads of the struggle at Concord, and the battle of Bunker Hill, but that feels an interest in the story, which no pen, ancient or modern, has ever given to similar engagements. He feels that his fathers were there before him—that the very ground is holy—that the same blood which waxed warm in that contest, when bayonet crossed bayonet in deadly strife, is running through his own veins; and the names of those who fell there, become as "household words" to him. Stand on its gory heights and look around you—does one experience the same emotions on the heights of Athens, on the Acropolis, rich as it is in classic association, and in the recollection of a gallant nation struggling for existence? No: The American feeling predominates, and it is right it should be so. "*Romanus sum*" is the true watch word and battle cry of all who love their country. If this feeling exists to the extent which I have described in relation to country, does it not run through all the geographical divisions into which our country is divided? The citizens of one section will point you to the fields of Trenton and Princeton, as among the most gallant exploits of the revolution; another to the Brandywine. The Carolinian will tell you, that the battle of Eutaw was among the most sanguinary fought; while the Virginian points to the siege of Yorktown, as the last and brightest page in our struggle for independence. These feelings are natural, they are proper; and I should think little of that man's heart, whatever I might of his head, who did not feel and express them. It is this attachment

to our own state, to our own abiding place—to the land of our nativity, or our domicil, which forms one of the strongest links of that chain which binds us to our common country. But I will go farther. There is, or should be, not only an attachment to our common country, and to the state which we live in, but a strong and abiding attachment to the *very town* in which we are located. Without it, we cannot feel personally interested in its welfare, in its prosperity, in its improvement—in all which should render it dear to us, as the abiding place of ourselves and of those connected with us. I lay it down, therefore, as a principle not to be contested, that he, who, with the ties which should bind him to the place of his birth or his adoption, does not feel warmly, nay deeply interested in its history, in its prosperity, in its adversity;—who, whether "through good or evil report," will not protect, defend, and uphold it, is neither a good citizen, attached to the state he lives in, or devoted to his country. Let others gainsay us as much as they may; let envy detract from our merit, or jealousy decry our position, our capabilities, our business, or our taste; it is our duty to stick to the "Post."

As to the early history of "Chippe Coke," (the town of Brush Wood,) or, as known in later days, Vincennes, clouds and darkness rest upon it. At what date it first became established as a military position, it is almost impossible, at this late period, actually to determine. It is well known that it was first settled by the French. That nation, with a tact and judgment which is wonderful, and with a

prescience which seems to be more than realized at the present time, in relation to the country watered by the Ohio and the Mississippi and the tributary streams; in the latter part of the 17th century attempted a union of their settlements on the Mississippi, with their possessions in Canada. In order to effect this, they established a cordon of posts from the Lakes to the Balize, including one or more military stations on the Illinois and the Wabash. We know, that early in the 18th century, at least, there was one here, one at Kaskaskia before that period, another at Peoria, and one at Ouiatanon, or the mouth of the Wea, a short distance below the present site of the town of Lafayette. The project was a grand one, and but for the concurrence of circumstances, usually attendant upon national schemes, when colonies are to be formed at a distance—and which in the event of a war with a rival power, are the first objects of attack and conquest, might have been successful. And "New France," for that was the intended designation of this Transatlantic Empire, might, in all the elements which constitute wealth and power, by this time have rivalled its founder; and we, instead of being plain republican citizens, have formed a portion of the subjects of the "Grand Monarque." But the war with Great Britain, which was concluded by the peace of 1763, transferred Canada to the British dominion, and Louisiana by the secret treaty with Spain in 1762, to the latter power. France was thus stripped of all her possessions in the New World—possessions acquired by immense expendi-

ture both of blood and treasure. It was in the accomplishment of this bold and magnificent scheme for western empire, on the part of the French Court, that the settlements on the Illinois and Wabash were formed. But it was not the military subjection alone of the western country that France had in view. There was another and a higher consideration—it was the establishment of the Catholic religion—the established religion of France, which she wished to introduce into her possessions on the continent. Wherever, therefore, she sent a detachment of her troops, she accompanied it with a Missionary of the Cross—and while the aborigines of the country were kept in awe by the force of her arms, it is no less true, and certainly more creditable, that the child of the forest was led to obedience by the milder but not less powerful influences of the new creed, which their fathers, the "Robes Noir," or Black Robes as they called them, introduced to their understanding. It is probably their imagination may have been as much influenced as their judgment. But be this as it may, it is an admitted fact, that the Jesuits who accompanied their expeditions, did much to soften their feelings and civilize their manners, during the short period they occupied the country; and the influence of their doctrines, and the amenity and kindness of their manners, are yet remembered by the tribes who occupied a few years since the country between the Lakes and the Ohio. No set of men, in pursuit of any object temporal or spiritual, ever endured greater hardships, suffered more perils, or made

greater sacrifices, than these Reverend Fathers. Not content simply with the establishment of their "tabernacles in the wilderness," they followed the Indian to his hunting grounds—threaded forests—swam rivers—crossed prairies in the midst of winter—frequently for days without food, and often nearly without raiment. The supposed conversion of a single Indian to the doctrines of the Catholic church—the baptism of an infant, seems to them to have been an ample reward for all their labor, for all their toil, and for all their sufferings.—With us in these latter days, differing as most of us do in our religious opinions from this school of ecclesiastics, it is almost impossible to do them justice. As a whole, their history has been but little studied, and less understood. They have neither had their Livy or their Polybius. If the history of these men—of their exertions, of their influence, of their actions, for good or evil, ever be written with candor, it *must be in this country*, the scene of many of their labors, and I might well add of their sufferings and their death. "No subject would form a more imposing or interesting theme for the historian, none demand higher qualifications, more laborious research, and above all the most dignified superiority to all the prepossessions of age, of country, and of creed." It is well known, that according to the rules of the order of St. Ignatius, annual reports were required from his followers wherever located. The Jesuit, whether in the cold regions of Labrador, in the Tropics, in Cochin China; in fine, in Europe, Asia, Africa, or America, transmitted

to his superior, at the end of the year, an account of his stewardship, in the shape of a pastoral letter. But it was not simply the spiritual situation of his vineyard he delineated. He described the country, its geography, its topography, its customs, manners, habits, traditions, language, dialects; in short, every matter which, either in a religious, and I might add political view, would enable his superior to judge of the necessity of further exertion or additional aid. And, strange as it may seem, the best and only authentic account of the country bounded on the north by the Lakes, east by the Miami, south by the Ohio, and west by the Mississippi, one century since, is in the relations made by the Jesuit Fathers, giving an account of the Missionary labors in that quarter. And I am indebted to one of these communications in the "*Lettres Edifiant et Curieuse*," (Letters Edifying and Curious), published in Paris in 1761, for the first written notice of the "Post." It is contained in a letter written by "Father Gabriel Marest, Missionary of the company of Jesus, to Father Germon of the same company," dated at Kaskaskia, an Illinois village, otherwise called the "Immaculate Conception of the Holy Virgin," November the 9th, 1712, one hundred and twenty-six years since. Cast your eyes back, my friends, to this period, and in your mind's eye run over the period since intervening. Where now is the good Father, and the friend to whom he communicated? Gathered to their fathers: generation after generation have passed away—the priest and the catechumen have returned to the dust from whence they

came, and the places which "once knew them, know them no more for ever." One hundred and twenty-six years since, and the country now abounding in all the materials which constitute a great nation, was all but a desert to the banks of the Delaware.

It is a singular fact, yet no less true, that the Wabash was known and navigated by the whites long before the Ohio was known to exist. Indeed, all the maps—and I have seen two before the year 1730—call the Ohio at its confluence with the Mississippi, "Ouabache." The reason is obvious, when one reflects for a single instant, that the whole course of travel to the Mississippi was either by the *Illinois* or the *Wabash*. The only communication with the the Mississippi *was by the French* in the latter part of the 17th and early in the 18th century, and was from the Lakes. The priest and the soldier were the the only travelers. They ascended the Maumee, crossed the Portage, and descended the Wabash to this post. The nations of Indians on the south side of the Ohio were at war with those on this side. They wished to cross to Kaskaskia; the Indians here told them there was danger in descending further. They wend their way across Illinois, aiming at the Mississippi; they descended that stream to New Orleans; and when they found the Ohio pouring its flood into the "Father of Waters," they naturally enough suppose it to be the same stream they had navigated in their voyage here, and delineate it on their maps as the "Ouabache." In corroboration of the remark here made, permit me to quote from a por-

tion of the Reverend Father's letter, above referred to. In page 325 describing the Illinois, he says: "About eight leagues, or 240 miles below this, (he is writing from Kaskaskia,) on the Illinois side, that is the east side, (for the Mississippi runs generally from north to south,) there empties another fine river called "Ouabache." It comes from the north-east. It has three branches, one of which extends as far as the Iroquois; the other runs into Virginia and Carolina, and the third heads among the Miamis." Now it is very evident that the river thus described was the Ohio, and that branch of it which is said to run up to the country owned by the Miamis, was the Wabash. The other branches were the main river, and the Tennessee, or the Cumberland. The writer gives a very graphic description of the country bordering on the "Ouabache;" says it is rich in minerals, especially lead and tin, and that if experienced miners were to come out from France and work the mines, he has no doubt "gold and silver" would be discovered in abundance. That the quantity of "buffalo and bear" which was to be found on the banks of the Wabash, was incredible; and, in the true spirit of an epicure, the good Father says—"the meat of a young bear is very delicious, for I have tried it." Thus we see that in point of antiquity, and virtue of prior discovery and occupation, the stream we live on takes precedence of the "*Belle Riviere.*"*

But to return to the immediate subject of our address. The first notice of *Vincennes* which I have

*See Note A.

been enabled to find, with no little research, is the one given by Father Marest in the same letter from which I have made the above quotation, and is on page 333 of the volume referred to. It will be remembered that Volney, who was here in 1796, and whose active mind, led him to various enquiries in relation to our first settlement, gives it as his opinion, that the first establishment made here by the French was in 1735. And he states the fact, that he conversed with the oldest French settlers, and with all whom he supposed could give any informaon the subject. It will also be recollected that the date of Father Marest's letter from Kaskaskia is November the 9th, 1712, twenty-three years before the period assigned by Volney for the establishment of a post here. In the letter referred to, of Father Marest, he says—"The French having lately established a FORT on the river Wabash, demanded a Missionary, and Father Mermet was sent to them." Now there can be no doubt that the river he mentioned, was the one we live on, and not the Ohio with which it was, as I have mentioned, confounded; and for this very obvious and plain reason, that the French never had a "*Fort*" on the Ohio within the limits either of Indiana, or Illinois. And, it is equally clear to my mind, that the post mentioned, was the one afterwards, par excellence, called "au Poste," or "the Post," and subsequently "Post Vincennes." If I am right in my conjecture, the settlement of this place by the French, may be dated back as early as the year 1710 or '11—probably the former, inasmuch as the *Fort* must have been built

and garrisoned before an application was made for a missionary; and it would take some time to answer the call from Kaskaskia, the nearest point where a priest could be obtained. The first settlement of this place then, by the whites, was in the year 1710, twenty-five years before the period assigned by Volney. But it will not do to let Father Mermet go, without a more particular notice of him and his visit, seeing this was the first "labor of love" ever undertaken in our ancient Borough. It seems, the moving impulse which led this "herald of the cross" to the shores of the Wabash, an impulse which drew many of his brethren into the western wilderness, was the conversion of a tribe of Indians now extinct, but probably a branch of the Miamis—as he says they spoke that language—and called "Mascoutins," who had their village near the Fort; and who, from their strong attachment to the superstitions of their medicine men, were very little disposed to hear "the true faith," as delivered by the Reverend Father. Resolving in his own mind the best method of overcoming their unbelief in the true church, he concluded to have a sort of Owen and Campbell debate, a public discussion with their principal medicine men, in the presence of the nation. But let us hear the father's own account of the matter. "The way I took," says the Father, "was to confound, in the presence of the whole tribe, one of these charlatans, whose 'Manitou,' or Great Spirit which he worshipped, was the 'buffalo.' After leading him on insensibly to the avowal, that it was not the buffalo that he

worshipped, but the 'Manitou,' or Spirit of the buffalo, which was under the earth, and which animated all buffaloes, which heals the sick, and has all power; I asked him if other beasts, the bear for instance, and which some of his nation worshipped, was not equally inhabited by a Manitou, which was under the earth? "Without doubt," said the Grand Medicine. "If this is so," said the Missionary, "men ought to have a Manitou who inhabits them." "Nothing more certain," said the Medicine man;— "ought not that to convince you," said the Father, pushing his argument, "that you are not very reasonable? For if man upon the earth is the master of all animals; if he kills them, if he eats them; does it not follow that the Manitou which inhabits him, must necessarily have a mastery over all other Manitous? Why then do you not invoke him, instead of the Manitou of the bear and the buffalo, when you are sick?" "This reasoning" says the father, "disconcerted the charlatan." But like much other good logic in the world, I am sorry to add, in his own words, "this was all the effect it produced."

A severe malady broke out in the village. The Indians, says the father, gathered around the *fort*, for the purpose of making a great sacrifice to their Manitou. They slew thirty or forty dogs, hoisted them on poles, and forming a procession, danced and sang around the *fort*. Finding their own efforts unable to stop the pestilence, they appealed again to the Missionary, to stay the destroying angel, who was carrying them off daily. But it seems,

neither the "Manitou" of the French or of the Indian was able to arrest the plague. For, says the father, "notwithstanding all my attention, more than half the village perished." How long Father Mermet remained here, we are unable to say. We find he returned to Kaskaskia, and ultimately died there. His place, no doubt, was supplied by the labors of another; but by whom and when, is unknown. The records of the Catholic church here make no mention of a missionary, until the year 1749, when Father Meurin came here; and from that time, until the present, there has been a regular succession of the priesthood.

From the period to which I alluded, and for the term of nearly half a century, there would be but little to notice in the progress of this settlement, even if we had the materials of its rise and progress to operate on. Isolated as it was, there were no events either in its political or social character, which would afford much interest. There was probably a succession of priests and commandants, who governed the little world around them, with infinite power and authority; from whose decrees spiritual or temporal, there was no appeal, and none desired. "No colony can long remain separated from its parent stock until it exhibits a peculiar, and distinct character. Climate, situation, and country, although not exclusively the agents in forming the character, must nevertheless be admitted to have great influence." The character of the society was a mixture of military and civil; more however, of the former, than the latter. The white portion of

the population was, it must be remembered, essentially French. In this remote country there were few objects to urge to enterprize. Beggary was unknown. The necessaries of life were easily procured; and beyond these, there were no wants to be supplied. Hospitality was exercised by all—for there were no taverns. Of what use were codes of law, judges, prisons, in such a society. Each district had its commandant; and their proceedings were singular enough. The party complaining obtained a notification from the commandant to his adversary of his complaint, accompanied by a command from the commandant to render justice. If this had no effect, he was notified to appear before the commandant, on a particular day, and answer the complaint; and if the last notice was neglected, a sergeant and file of men were sent to bring him. It was a very short and summary process, of the John Doe and Richard Roe kind—no Sheriff, no taxation of costs. The party recusant was fined and kept in prison until he did his adversary justice; and when extremely refractory, the cat-o-nine tails brought him to a sense of justice. And I am not quite sure, that in many cases, the same speedy and exact method of dispensing justice might not be practiced in these latter days. Sure I am, if it was, much unnecessary litigation would be avoided. In such a state of things, of what use were learning and science? Few could read, fewer write; and as to arithmetic, it was a lost art. Their dealings were marked by honesty and integrity, and peltries

were their standard of value.* Honorable, punctual in their dealings, hospitable to strangers, and with great kind feeling and brotherly love towards one another;—these may be considered as their virtues. In opposition to them, it must be said, that they were devoid of public spirit, enterprize, or ingenuity; were indolent and uninformed. They told me, says Volney, (the Americans) in his visit here in 1796, "that the Canadians had only themselves to blame for their hardships. We must allow, say they, that they are a kind, hospitable, sociable set of fellows; but in ignorance and idleness they beat the Indians. They know nothing of civil or domestic affairs; their women neither sew nor spin, or make butter, but pass their time in gossiping and tattle. The men hunt, fish, roam in the woods, bask in the sun. They do not lay up, as we do, for winter, or provide for a rainy day. They can't cure pork or venison, make sour krout, or spruce beer." But I doubt much, my friends, whether all these useful and elegant accomplishments of the American, of "curing pork, making sour krout and spruce beer," which have been inculcated by them to their French neighbors, have much improved their social and moral condition. If happiness in this world consists, and it does so in a great degree, in freedom from care, the population of our village were the happiest of the human family; all their desires fulfilled. But the race is nearly extinct; they have become amalgamated with another people; their habits, manners, opinions, nay language

*See Note B.

itself, is changing; and in a few years, the tall, manly, arrowy form of the descendant of St. Louis—mild, peaceful, and always polite—with his blanket *capote*, the blue kerchief round his head, and sandaled feet, will—as some of us have seen them in our younger days, wending their way on Sundays in their untired and unironed cart, to the old wooden chapel of St. Francis Xavier, with smiling faces, and, as I believe, with sincere devotion—be seen "no more forever." A new generation, a new race, a new people have encroached upon their possessions; and the laws of civilization, as sure as the laws of nature, will force them to yield to the manners, habits, customs, dress and language, of their more powerful neighbors. Whether by the change their physical or moral condition is bettered, is a question that might be well mooted. For my own part, I doubt it. I believe they were a happier, better, and more moral people before their connection with the Americans, than since; and that the change of government, has been productive of no good to their social condition. An evidence of their attachment to the old state of things, is the fact, also noticed by Volney, "that the first thing they demanded on their cession to the United States, was a military commandant."

I have before remarked, that from the advent of Father Mermet as missionary here, in the year 1710 or '11, for nearly half a century, there were no important events connected with the history of our "Post," but a continued succession of commandants and missionaries. I should, however, fail in a very

important part of our history, were I not to notice, during that period, the commander after whom our town is named. Francois Morgan de Vinsenne ("*Vinsenne*," for so he spelled his name,) was an officer in the service of the King of France, and serving in Canada probably as early as 1720, in the regiment "de Carignan." At any rate, as we are informed, he was engaged in some service with another officer on the Lakes towards Sault St. Marie, for the Governor of Canada, M. de Vaudriel, in 1725. At what time he took possession here, is not exactly known; probably somewhere about the year 1732. There is nothing on our records to show, but an act of sale made by him and Madame Vinsenne, the daughter of Monsieur Philip Longprie of Kaskaskia, and recorded there. The act of sale, dated 5th January, 1735, styles him "an officer of the troops of the King," and "commandant *au poste du Ouabache;*" the same deed expressing that Madame Vinsenne was absent at the Post. Her signature being necessary to the deed, she sent her mark, or cross, which is testified to as hers, "X the mark of Madame Vinsenne," and showing that the good lady was not very far advanced in the rudiments, though her husband was commandant, and her father the wealthiest citizen of Kaskaskia. The will of Monsieur Longprie, his father-in-law, dated the 10th of March, 1735, gives to him, among other things, 408 lbs. of pork, which he wishes "kept safe until the arrival of Mons. Vinsenne," who was then at the Post. There are other documents there signed by him as a witness, in 1733–'4; among them

one of a receipt for 100 pistoles, received from his father-in-law, on his marriage. From all these proofs, I think it evident that he was here previous to 1733, and left with his command, on an expedition against the Chicasaws, in 1736, by orders from his superior officer at New Orleans, "Monsieur d'Artagette," commandant for the King in Illinois, and in which expedition, according to "*Charlevoix*," M. St. Vinsenne was killed. But as the facts are not generally known, I quote his words among the last of his volume: "We have just received very bad news from Louisiana, and our war with the Chickasaws. The French have been defeated; among the slain is 'Monsieur de Vinsenne,' who ceased not until his last breath to exhort the men to behave worthy of their religion and their country." Thus perished this hero and gallant officer, after whom our town is named. We may well be proud of its origin. On looking at the register of the Catholic church, it will be found, that the change of name from Vinsenne to Vincennes, its present appellation, was made as early as 1749. Why or wherefore, I do not know. I wish the original orthography had been observed, and the name spelled after its founder, with the *s* instead of the *c*, as it should be.

The war between France and England, which broke out about 1754, deprived the former of all her possessions in this country; Canada was added to Great Britain, and Louisiana, as before remarked, to Spain. The English, anxious to acquire possession of the country, soon after the peace of 1763

took possession of it. The subsequent events will introduce the American population on the stage of action; and a brief but accurate history of the events which have occurred since, will close my notice of it. The inhabitants occupying the Post, seem to have but little considered or regarded the change. Their old laws, customs, manners, and habits, were continued; and, as remarked by one who was present, "the change of government would have hardly been known." The difficulties, however, between the mother country, and her colonies, were about to produce a change, which has been felt to the present day among the ancient inhabitants of the "Post." I refer to the capture of it by Gen. George Rogers Clark, February 23, 1779—sixty years from the day after the one, which we are now commemorating. Of this expedition, of its results, of its importance, of the merits of those engaged in it, of their bravery, of their skill, of their prudence, of their success, a volume would not more than suffice for the details. Suffice it to say, that in my opinion—and I have accurately and critically weighed and examined all the results produced by any contests in which we were engaged during the revolutionary war—that for bravery, for hardships endured, for skill and consummate tact and prudence on the part of the commander, obedience, discipline and love of country on the part of his followers; for the immense benefits acquired, and signal advantages obtained by it for the whole Union, it was second to no enterprise undertaken during that struggle; I might add, second to no undertaking in ancient or modern war-

fare. The whole credit of this conquest belongs to two men—Gen. George Rogers Clark, and Col. Francis Vigo. And when we consider that by it the whole territory now covered by the three great States of Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan, was added to the Union, and so admitted to be by the commissioners on the part of Great Britain, at the preliminaries for the settlement of the treaty of peace in 1783; and but for this very conquest the boundaries of our territories west, would have been the Ohio, instead of the Mississippi, and so acknowledged and admitted both by our own, and the British commissioners at that conference—a territory embracing, as I have before remarked, upwards of two million of people, the human mind is lost in the contemplation of its effects; and we can but wonder that a force of one hundred and seventy men, the whole number of Clark's troops, should, by this single action, have produced such important results. That they did so, all history attests; that they did so, our very assembly here this day proves.

"It was on the 10th day of December, 1777, that Col. Clark opened the plan of the Illinois campaign, against the British interests in this quarter, to the celebrated Patrick Henry, then Governor of Virginia." It is unnecessary now to go into all the causes which led to the adoption of a western campaign as suggested by General, then Col. Clark. Suffice it to say, that it was not without doubt as to its success, and great difficulty in preparing the material for the enterprise, that it was undertaken. Virginia herself, from whom the aid was demanded,

and assistance in men and money was expected, was in the most critical period of her revolutionary struggle; her finances exhausted, her sons drawn from the cultivation of the soil, and from all the avocations of civil life—for the most part in the field, battling for freedom—it is not to be wondered at, "that the counsels which advised so distant an expedition should have been listened to with doubt, and adopted with caution." Fortunately for the country they were not unheeded. Gov. Henry, encouraged by the advice of some of Virginia's most prominent and patriotic sons, yielded to the solicitations of Clark; and, on the 2d of January, 1778, he received two sets of instructions—"one public, directing him to proceed to Kentucky for its defence; the other, secret, ordering an attack on the British Post at Kaskaskia,"—and with the instructions, *twelve hundred pounds in depreciated currency*, as his *military chest* for conquering an empire. On the 24th of June, 1778, and during a total eclipse of the sun—a sad foreboding, as the party thought of their future success, but which ultimately proved "the sun of Austerlitz,"—this patriotic band of four companies, under the command of Captains Montgomery, Helm, Bowman, and Harrod, crossed the falls of the Ohio, on their apparently "forlorn expedition."

It is a well known matter of history, "that during the commencement of our revolutionary struggle, the heart-rending scenes and wide-spread ravages of our Indian foes on the Western frontier, were caused principally by the ammunition, arms, and

clothing supplied at the British military stations of Detroit, Vincennes, and Kaskaskia, then garrisoned by British troops." To divert the attention of the enemy from our own frontier, and to occupy them in the defence of their own positions, it was necessary to carry war into their own dominions. The active mind of Clark saw that, by doing this, a diversion would be created in our favor. "His first intention was to march directly to Vincennes; but on reviewing his troops, the paucity of the number, and the want of all the material necessary for the attack of a fortified town, induced him to abandon this object, and to prosecute the one originally contemplated by his instructions—the capture of Kaskaskia." It forms no part of the plan of this address to enter into the details of that expedition. Suffice it to say, that it was eminently successful, without the loss of a single man; and that, on the 4th of July, 1778, Kaskaskia yielded to the supremacy of American enterprise and valor, and with Cahokia, surrendered to the American arms.

It must be recollected, that previous to this event, a treaty of peace had been concluded between France and the United States. The intelligence of it had been communicated to Clark, on his descent down the Ohio. The effect of *this treaty* had a wonderful influence upon the subsequent events of the campaign. Among the individuals at Kaskaskia, at the time of its capture, was M. Gibault,* the Roman Catholic priest, at Vincennes. The capture of Vincennes, as Clark himself admits, "had never

*See Note C.

been out of his mind from the first moment he undertook the expedition westward." His success at Kaskaskia served only to inspire a wish for the accomplishment of the long desired achievement. Affairs being regulated at Kaskaskia, he sent for M. Gibault, and explained to him his views. This patriotic individual, who subsequently received the public thanks of Virginia for his services, and whose attachment for the American cause is well known, readily and cheerfully sustained him. Dispatched by Clark, to sound the French population here, over whom he had great influence, he, on his arrival, assembled them in the church, explained the object of his mission, the alliance with France, and the negotiations with which he was entrusted. He had no sooner finished, than the population *en masse* took the oath of allegiance to the Commonwealth of Virginia. A commandant was elected, and the American flag displayed over the fort—much to the astonishment of their Indian neighbors, who for the first time saw the glorious stars and stripes, instead of the Cross of St. George, unfurled to that breeze in which it has so often since waved triumphantly.

M. Gibault, returned to Kaskaskia with the gratifying intelligence of the perfect success of his mission; not less, it may be presumed, to the astonishment of Clark, than to his gratification. Captain Helm was appointed commandant "and Agent for the Indian affairs in the department of the Wabash," and repaired to the "Post," at which it was the intention of Clark to place a strong garrison, on the arrival of the reinforcements expected from

Virginia. These reinforcements never arrived; and a new and important leaf in the chapter of our history is about to be unfolded, and another individual, no less celebrated, and to us equally dear with the conqueror, and whose name will go down to posterity with his, in the history of our place, and, on the same bright page which records the valor of the commander, is to be introduced to your notice.

It was on the first of August, 1778, that M. Gibault returned to Kaskaskia with the intelligence of the submission of the French inhabitants here, to the American government, and of the circumstances above detailed. It was well known that Governor Abbot, the commander here, at the time of Clark's expedition to the Illinois, had gone to Detroit on business; and that no great time would elapse before reinforcements would be sent from that post to Vincennes. Clark could not, even had he desired it, detailed any of his own command to garrison the place. Helm was here, a commandant in name simply, without a single soldier under his command. From the first of August, when M. Gibault returned, until the 29th of January, 1779, Clark had not received a single communication from Vincennes. How he obtained it, and the consequences resulting from the communication, it is now my purpose briefly to unfold.

Francis Vigo, better known to us under the military title of Col. Francis Vigo, a rank which he held during the territorial government, was born in Mondovi, in the kingdom of Sardinia, in the year 1747. He left his parents and guardians at a very

early age, and enlisted in a Spanish regiment as a private soldier. The regiment was ordered to the Havana, and a detachment of it subsequently to New Orleans, then a Spanish post, and which detachment Col. Vigo accompanied. At what time, and under what circumstances he left the army, is not actually known. It is believed, that his attention to his duties, his natural intelligence, and high-minded and honorable deportment, gained him the esteem and confidence of his commander; and that he received his discharge without any application on his own part. We find that shortly after his discharge—and probably by the aid of the same powerful friend who had obtained it—he was supplied with goods, and engaged in the Indian trade on the Arkansas and its tributaries; and that a few years after, he made a settlement at St. Louis, also a Spanish post, and was connected in the closest relations of friendship and business with the Governor of Upper Louisiana, then residing at the same place, and whose confidence and affection he enjoyed in the highest degree. That a private soldier, a man without education—for he could simply write his name—should in a few years, thus be enabled to make his way in the world, and, in so short a period, become so extensively engaged in business, so highly respected and beloved, as we know him to have been at the period to which I allude, as well as to the day of his death, shows him to have thus early been possessed of a goodness of heart, a purity of mind, a high, honorable, and chivalric bearing; qualities which grew with his

growth and strengthened with his strength, until the very close of his long and useful life. At the time of Clark's capture of Kaskaskia, Col. Vigo was a resident of St. Louis, and extensively engaged under the patronage of the Governor in the Indian trade up the Missouri. A Spaniard by birth and allegiance, he was under no obligation to assist us. Spain was then at peace with Great Britain, and any interference on the part of her citizens was a breach of neutrality, and subjected an individual, especially of the high character and standing of Col. Vigo, to all the contumely, loss, and vengeance, which British power on this side of the Mississippi could inflict. But Col. Vigo did not falter. With an innate love of liberty, an attachment to republican principles, and an ardent sympathy for an oppressed people struggling for their rights, he overlooked all personal consequences; and as soon as he learnt of Clark's arrival at Kaskaskia, he crossed the line—went there and tendered him his means, and his influence, both of which were joyfully accepted. Knowing Col. Vigo's influence with the ancient inhabitants of the country, and desirous of obtaining some information from Vincennes, from which he had not heard for several months, Col. Clark, in a conference with Col. Vigo, proposed, that he should come and learn the actual state of affairs at the Post. Col. Vigo did not hesitate a moment in obeying this command. With a single servant he proceeded on his journey; and when on the river Embarrass, he was seized by a party of Indians, plundered of every thing he possessed, and

brought a prisoner before Hamilton, then in possession of the place, which, with his troops, he had a short time before captured, holding Capt. Helm a prisoner of war. Being a Spanish subject, and consequently a non-combatant, Governor Hamilton, although he strongly suspected the motives of his visit, dared not confine him; he accordingly admitted him to his parole, on the single condition, that he should daily report himself at the Fort. On his frequent visits there, his acute and discerning mind, aided by the most powerful memory I ever knew, enabled him early to ascertain the state of the garrison, its numerical force, means of defence, position, in fine all the matter necessary to make an accurate report, as soon as liberated. Hamilton, in the mean time, embarrassed by his detention, besieged by the French inhabitants of the town, by whom he was beloved, for his release; and finally threatened by them, that unless released, they would refuse all supplies to the garrison, yielded, on condition that Col. Vigo would sign an article "not to do any act during the war injurious to the British interests." This he absolutely and positively refused. The matter was finally adjusted, on an agreement entered into on the part of Col. Vigo, "not to do any thing injurious to the British interests *on his way* to St. Louis." The agreement was signed, and the next day he departed in a *pirogue* down the Wabash and the Ohio, and up the Mississippi with two voyagers accompanying him. Col. Vigo faithfully and religiously kept the very *letter* of his bond. On *his way* to St. Louis he did nothing injurious in

the slightest degree to British interests. But he had no sooner set his foot on shore there, and changed his dress, than in the same *pirogue* he hastened to Kaskaskia, and gave the information, and arranged the plan, through the means of which, and by which alone, Clark was enabled to succeed, and did succeed, in surprising Hamilton, and making captives of him and his garrison. Spirit of the illustrious dead, let others judge of this matter as they may, we who have lived to see the immense advantages of that conquest to our beloved country —so little known, and so little appreciated when made—will do you justice, and we will also teach our children, and our children's children, who are to occupy our places when we are gone, to read and remember, among the earliest lessons of the history of that portion of the country which is to be also their abiding place—*our own lovely valley*—that its conquest and subsequent attachment to the Union, was as much owing to the councils and services of Vigo, as to the bravery and enterprise of Clark.

It was on the 5th of February, 1779, that a Spartan band of one hundred and seventy men, headed by as gallant a leader as ever led men to battle, crossed the Kaskaskia river, on their march to this place. The incidents of this campaign, their perils, their sufferings, their constancy, their courage, their success, would be incredible, were they not matters of history. In my opinion, as I have before remarked, no campaign either in ancient or modern warfare—taking into consideration the force employed, the want of material, the country passed

over, the destitution of even the necessaries of life, the object to be accomplished, and the glorious results flowing from it, is to be compared to it. And what is even yet more astonishing, is the fact, that a battle which decided the fate of an empire, a campaign which added to our possessions a country more than equal in extent to the United kingdoms of Great Britain, Scotland, and Ireland, has scarcely even a page of our revolutionary annals devoted to its details, or making even honorable mention of the brave and gallant men who so nobly and successfully conducted it.

Time would fail me, and your patience would be perhaps exhausted, were I to follow step by step, and day by day, this small, but brave, devoted, patriotic and chivalrous corps, through the wilderness from Kaskaskia to this place. It would be but a repetition of daily sufferings, of fatigue, of peril, of constancy, of perseverance, and of hope. Day after day, without provisions, wading in ice and water to their necks, through the over-flowed bottoms of the Wabash, carrying their rifles above their heads, their gallant chief taking the lead, foremost in difficulty and in danger, did these patriotic soldiers struggle on, faint, weary, cold and starving, until the prize was in view, and their object was accomplished. Look around you, my friends, and see what this portion of our beloved Union is now! Look ahead, and tell me, if you can, what it is to be a half century hence, supposing the improvements to progress as they have the last twenty years—and the advancement will be geometrical—and then go

back with me sixty years since, *this very day*, and learn from an actor in the scene—one holding command, and from whose unpublished journal I make the extract, what the country was, and the difficulties and dangers, the perils and sufferings those endured for you, and yours; and should you, or those who are to come after you, to the latest generation forget them, "may your right hands forget their cunning."

"February 22nd, 1779. Col. Clark* encouraged his men, which gave them great spirits. Marched on in the water; those that were weak and famished from so much fatigue, went in the canoes. We came three miles farther to some sugar camps, where we stayed all night. Heard the evening and morning guns at the Fort. No provisions yet. THE LORD HELP US.

"23d. Set off to cross a plain called Horse Shoe Plain, about four miles long, all covered with water breast high. Here we expected some of our brave men must certainly perish, the water having froze

*Without food, benumbed with cold, up to their waists in water covered with broken ice, the men composing Clark's troops at one time mutinied, refusing to march. All the persuasions of Clark had no effect upon the half starved and half frozen soldiers. In one of the companies was a small boy who acted as drummer. In the same company was a sergeant, standing six feet two inches in his stockings, stout, athletic, and devoted to Clark. Finding that his eloquence had no effect upon the men, in persuading them to continue their line of march, Clark mounted the little drummer on the shoulders of the stalwart sergeant, and gave orders to him to plunge into the half frozen water. He did so, the little drummer beating the *charge* from his lofty perch, while Clark, with sword in hand, followed them, giving the command as he threw aside the floating ice—"FORWARD!" Elated and amused with the scene, the men promptly obeyed, holding their rifles above their heads, and in spite of all obstacles, reached the high land beyond them safely.

in the night, and so long fasting. Having no other resource but wading this lake of frozen water, we plunged in with courage, *Col. Clark being first.** We took care to have boats by, to take those who were weak and benumbed with the cold into them. Never were men so animated with the thought of avenging the ravages done to their back settlements, as this small army was. About one o'clock we came in sight of the town. We halted on a small hill of dry land, called "Warren's Island," where we took a prisoner hunting ducks, who informed us that no person suspected our coming in that season of the year. Col. Clark wrote a letter by him to the inhabitants, as follows:

"*To the inhabitants of Post Vincennes*—

"GENTLEMEN: Being now within two miles of your village with my army, determined to take your Fort this night, and not being willing to surprize you, I take this method of requesting such of you as are true citizens, and willing to enjoy the liberty I bring you, to remain still in your houses. And those, if any there are, that are friends to the King, will instantly repair to the Fort, and join the HAIR-BUYER GENERAL, and fight like men. And if any such as do not go to the Fort shall be discovered afterwards, they may depend on severe punishment. On the contrary, those who are true friends to liberty, will be well treated.

"G. R. CLARK."

In order to give effect to this letter, by having it communicated to the French inhabitants, the army

*See Note C.

encamped until about sun down, when they commenced their march, wading in water breast high, to the rising ground on which the town is situated. One portion of the army marched directly up along where the levee is now raised, and came in by the steam-mill; while another party under Lieut. Bradley, deployed from the main body, and came in by the present Princeton road. An entrenchment was thrown up in front of the Fort, and the battle commenced from the British side by the discharge, though without effect, of their cannon, and the return on our side of rifle shot, the only arms which the Americans possessed. On the morning of the 24th, about 9 o'clock, Col. Clark sent in a flag of truce, with a letter to the British commander, during which time there was a cessation of hostilities, and the men were provided with a breakfast, the *first meal which they had had since the 18th, six days before.* The letter of Clark is so characteristic of the man, so laconic, and, under such trying circumstances, shows so much tact, self-possession and firmness, that I will read it:

"SIR: In order to save yourself from the impending storm that now threatens you, I order you *immediately* to surrender yourself, with all your garrison, stores, &c., &c.; for if I am obliged to storm, you may depend on such treatment as is justly due a *murderer.* Beware of destroying stores of any kind, or any papers or letters that are in your possession, or hurting one house in town, for by Heavens, if you do, there shall be no mercy shown you. "G. R. CLARK.

"To GOV. HAMILTON."

Since the days of Charles the XIIth, of Sweden, I doubt whether ever such a cartel, under such circumstances was sent to an antagonist. Prudence, as Clark well knew, would indeed be a "rascally virtue" on such an occasion. Hemmed in on one side by ice and water, with a fortified post bristling with artillery in front, with one hundred and seventy soldiers—part Americans, part Creoles, without food, worn out, and armed only with rifles, it was, as Clark knew, only by acting the victor instead of the vanquished, (as was the real state of the case, if Hamilton had only known the fact) that he could hope to succeed. He acted wisely and he acted bravely; any other course, and he would have been a prisoner instead of a conqueror. The very reply of Hamilton to this singular epistle shows he was already quailing:

"Gov. Hamilton begs leave to acquaint Col. Clark, that he and his garrison are not disposed to *be awed* into any action unworthy British subjects."

The battle was renewed; the skill of our western riflemen, celebrated even in our days, wounded several of the men in the Fort through the port-holes, the only place where a shot could be made effective. Clark, with the skill of a practiced commander, must have seen and felt from the answer returned to his communication, that another message would soon be delivered to him from the same quarter, and he was not long in receiving it. The flag of truce brought him as follows:

"Gov. Hamilton proposes to Col. Clark a truce for three days, during which time he promises that

there shall be no defensive work carried on in the garrison, *on condition* that Col. Clark will observe on his part a like cessation of offensive work; that is, he wishes to confer with Col. Clark, as soon as can be, and promises that whatever may pass between them two, and another person mutually agreed on to be present, shall remain secret until matters be finished; as he wishes, that whatever the result of the conference may be, it may tend to the honor and credit of each party. If Col. Clark makes a difficulty of coming into the Fort, Lieut. Gov. Hamilton will speak with him by the gate.

24th Feb'y, '79. HENRY HAMILTON."

If Gov. Hamilton had known the man he was dealing with, he would have found, ere this, that he would have made light of any difficulties "in coming into the Fort;" and if not already convinced of the daring of the foe he was contending with, one would have supposed Clark's answer would have set him right:

"Col. Clark's compliments to Gov. Hamilton, and begs leave to say, that he will not agree to any terms, other than *Mr. Hamilton surrendering himself and garrison prisoners at discretion.*

"If Mr. Hamilton wants to talk with Col. Clark, he will meet him at the church with Capt. Helm."

Laconic enough, surely, and easily understood; and so it was. For in less than one hour afterwards, Clark dictated himself the following terms, which were accepted, a meeting having taken place at the church:

"1st. Lieut. Gov. Hamilton agrees to deliver up

to Col. Clark, "*Fort Sackville,*" as it is at present, with all its stores, &c.

2d. The garrison are to deliver themselves as prisoners of war, and march out with their arms and accoutrements.

3d. The garrison to be delivered up to-morrow at ten o'clock.

4th. Three days time to be allowed the garrison to settle their accounts with the inhabitants and traders.

5th. The officers of the garrison to be allowed their necessary baggage, &c.

Signed at Post St. Vincents, this 24th of February, 1779. Agreed for the following reasons:

1st. The remoteness from succor. 2d. The state and quantity of provisions. 3d. The *unanimity* of the officers and men in its expediency. 4th. The honorable terms allowed; and lastly, the confidence in a generous enemy.

HENRY HAMILTON,
Lieut. Gov. and Superintendent.

It was on the twenty-fifth day of February, 1779, about ten o'clock in the forenoon, that the British troops marched out, and the Americans entered that Fort, acquired with the tact, skill, judgment, bravery, peril, and suffering, which I have so briefly attempted to describe. The British ensign was hauled down, and the American flag waved above its ramparts; that flag,

> "Within whose folds
> Are wrapped, the treasures of our hearts,
> Where e'er its waving sheet is fanned,
> By breezes of the sea, or land."

Time would not permit me, my friends, to dwell on the important results growing out of this conquest to our common country. A volume would be required to delineate fully, all the advantages which have been derived from it to that Union, a portion of which we now constitute. Calculate, if you can, the revenue which the government already has, and will continue to derive from its public domain within the territory thus acquired. Bounded by the Lakes and the Miami on one side, and the Ohio and the Mississippi on the other, embracing three large States, with a population now of upwards of two millions, with a representation of six Senators in one branch of our National Councils, and eleven Representatives in the other; and which, within the last half century, was represented by a single Delegate, but, in the next half century to come, will have fifty Representatives; mild in its climate, rich in its soil, yielding in the abundance, variety, and excellence of its products, perhaps, a greater quantity than the same space of territory in the civilized world; inhabited, and to be inhabited by a race of industrious, hard working, intelligent, high-minded, and patriotic people, attached to the institutions of their country; lovers of order, liberty and law; republicans in precepts and in practice; trained from their earliest infancy to revere and to venerate, to love and to idolize the Constitution adopted by their fathers, for the government of themselves and their posterity;—calculate, if you can, the increase within this territory, of just such a population as I have described, within sixty years to come

—its wealth, its influence, its power, its improvements, morally and socially—and when your minds are wearied in the immensity of the speculation, ask yourselves to whom all these blessings are to be attributed; and whether national gratitude, in the fullness of national wealth and prosperity, can find treasures enough to repay those gallant men, and those who aided them in their glorious struggle, which I have attempted feebly to describe. But I am warned by the time which I have already occupied, that this address should close—not that the subject is exhausted, or can be. No other, that I can conceive of, presents a finer field for the historian; and the few incidents which have been gathered here and there, "few and far between," in relation to our early history, but stimulates to further enquiry. A brief notice of the principal events which have occurred since the capture by Gen. Clark, and I shall close this long, and, I fear from the nature of the subject, to you on this occasion, uninteresting address.

The first object to be obtained, after the fall of the Post, and the consequent change resulting from it, was the establishment of a civil government. Col. Clark returned to Kaskaskia, leaving Capt. Helm in command, both as civil and military commandant. The result of the campaign was made known as early as possible to the government of Virginia, and Col. Todd was sent out as the governor and commandant, by the Executive Council there. How long he remained, I do not know; probably long enough to form a provisional govern-

ment; for we find that he delegated his power to M. Legras, as Lieut. Governor, and proceeded to Kaskaskia. I have had no opportunity of ascertaining from the records in Virginia, the continuation or names of the Governors after Todd, until the transfer of the territory to the United States, and the territorial government then formed under the act of Congress.

The act of the Virginia Legislature, transferring the North-Western Territory to the United States, passed on the 20th of December, 1783, and the Delegates on the part of Virginia, Thomas Jefferson, Samuel Hardy, Arthur Lee, and James Madison, by their deed of cession, conveyed, on the first of March, 1784, "all the right, title, and interest of the State of Virginia in the country acquired northwest of the river Ohio, to the United States." And in 1787, the celebrated ordinance for its government was passed by Congress; an ordinance, which in its effects, at least to us, is second only to the Constitution of the United States. An ordinance, which for its wise and wholesome provisions—for its beneficial and lasting results—for its effects not only upon those who were to be the immediate subjects of its action, but for the blessings and prosperity which it will carry down to the latest posterity, as long as we remain a part of the confederacy, is unequalled by any legislative act ever framed here or elsewhere. The author of this act, Nathan Dane, of Massachusetts, for it alone, if he had done nothing more, deserves a place in our affections, and in those of our children to the latest generation. The

act provides, "that there shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude within the territory thus ceded;" creates for its government, a Governor, Secretary, and three Judges; the Judges with the Governor "to make laws for the territory, subject to the approval of Congress."

The laws thus made were selected from the codes of other States, and applied to our local condition. They were few, but effective, and I doubt much whether all subsequent legislation has been enabled to frame a code superior to that of the *old territorial code.*

Gen. Harmar, then commanding in the west, was appointed civil Governor and superintendent of Indian affairs. He was here in 1787, and I believe, had charge of our civil affairs by himself or deputy, until 1790, when Gen. St. Clair was appointed, and took command. He came here in 1791, and went to Kaskaskia, from whence he made a long report to the Secretary of State in relation to the situation of affairs here. Some of his suggestions, considering our present advanced state of improvement, are singular enough. "He recommends the establishment of a printing press in the Western Territory," and gives as a reason, "that as the laws are not binding upon the people until approved by Congress, there is no way of giving publicity to them, but by having them read in the courts." "But few people," says he, "understand them, and even the magistrates who carry them into execution are perfect strangers to them." There seems, however, to have been no great difficulty after all. The French

complained that as the County Court was composed of five justices, three of whom were Americans, and but two Frenchmen, whereas, the French population was treble that of the Americans, and there was occasionally a little leaning by their Honors, on the American side of the bench, towards their countrymen; and, as none of the American governors assigned to keep the peace, understood French, there was some difficulty in making their cause fully understood. But there were no mobs, no tarring and feathering of the Judges, no pulling down the court-house. If the law was not well understood by these modern Mansfields, they decided the case, "*ex equo et bono*," according to equity and good conscience; and, in nine cases out of ten, no doubt, did more complete justice to all parties, than with a row of "gentlemen learned in the law" before them, to confuse them with their sophistry, or perplex them with a quibble.

In 1800, Congress passed the act dividing the Indiana territory, from what was called the territory north-west of the river Ohio, and in 1801, Gen. William Henry Harrison was appointed Governor. There were at this period, but three settlements in the whole of this immense territory. The one at the Falls, called "Clark's Grant," the one here, and the one on the Mississippi between Cahokia and Kaskaskia; the whole population of which did not exceed five thousand souls. It does not fall within the limits which I had assigned to this discourse, to trace our progress farther. The history of the town, the seat of government of the territory until

1816, is the history of Indiana during that period; but the facts connected with it are familiar to you all. Suffice it to say, that our progress since has been onward, and will continue to be, should we be true to ourselves and to the interests committed to our hands.

Members of the "Vincennes Historical and Antiquarian Society" and citizens of Vincennes, I have finished the task assigned me on this occasion—not by any means in the manner it should be, or, indeed, in the manner I propose to finish it hereafter, if I have leisure.

I have thrown together a few of the leading incidents of our history, fitted only to be woven into an address on the present occasion. The historian of our ancient borough, must gather for his work more materials than I have been furnished with, to do full justice to his subject. He should search the archives of other countries—of France, of England, the colonial records of Canada, and the revolutionary ones of Virginia; in fine, devote to it more time, labor and research, than I have been enabled to do, in order to make it the work it should be. The history of this Post has been the history of the Western country. It has been the stake for which nations have played; the prize for which princes have contended—France, England, Virginia, and the States have, in turn, held it in subjection—have governed it with their laws, and regulated it with their codes, civil and military. Our position has been an important one, while our history, but little known, has been more full of stirring incident, of

revolution, of bloodshed, and of battle, than the history of any town on the continent. One hundred and thirty years since, we have seen it occupied as a post in the wilderness, forming one link in the chain by which France attempted to hold her possessions in this country. Fifty years after, we have seen it yielding to British dominion and subject to British power. The war of the revolution, and the severing of those ties which bound us to our parent state, wrested *it* also from its conquerors. The bravery of Clark, and that of his compatriots in arms, formed a new era in its eventful career. It became the emporium of an empire—the seat of government of a territory now composing three large States. The history of our town, since the division of the territory, is familiar to you all. But even since then it has not been without its interest. The same stern devotion to country, the same love of liberty, the same valor and patriotism, has been displayed in modern times by its citizens, which gave to it an *eclat* in times gone by. The battle field of Tippecanoe was fertilized by the blood of our brethren. And more daring, brave, and chivalrous and patriotic men never gathered under their country's banner, than rallied in its defence on that eventful field, from the town in which we are now assembled.

And am I right in saying, that the same spirit still exists here? That should our country again make its call "to arms," that here, in the very cradle of liberty, on this side of the Alleghanies, the spirit which animated Clark and his followers, has

been handed down to those whom I address; and that if occasion offered, you would emulate them in the privations they underwent, the sufferings they endured, and the glory they acquired? Am I right in saying this? Fellow-citizens, *I know that I am right.* The response to this question in the affirmative, is answered by every breath that heaves from the bosoms of those who hear me. It is answered by the silent homage which you yourselves, on this occasion, have paid to bravery and patriotism, such as I have delineated.

Young men of this assembly, this feeling must be kept alive—you must neither forget your origin or your destiny. Many of us will soon pass off the stage of action:—

> "The eternal surge
> Of time and tide rolls on, and bears afar
> Our bubbles; and the old burst, new emerge,
> Lash'd from the foam of ages; while the graves
> Of empires heave but like some passing waves."

Generation after generation will succeed us. But let it be ever impressed on your minds, and the minds of those who come after you to the latest posterity, that the same wisdom and valor which acquired the "Post," must always *sustain, protect* and *defend* it.

NOTES.

NOTE A.

Since the delivery of the foregoing address, I have read Article II, in the January number of the *North American Review*, being a review of the "Life of Father Marquette," by Jared Sparks—"Library of American Biography, Vol. 10th." The original work of Mr. Sparks, the "Life of Father Marquette," contained in the 10th volume of his American Biography, I have never seen.

The reviewer, however, in the article referred to, has, I conceive, made a sad mistake in relation to the "labor of love" of Father Mermet to the "Mascoutens," a tribe of Indians now extinct, or, what is more probable, amalgamated with other tribes, and hence have lost their original appellation. The "Mascoutens" were a branch of the "Miamis"—*vide* Mr. Gallatin's letter published in the "Transactions of the American Historical and Antiquarian Society;" they never lived on the Ohio, but occupied the country along Lake Michigan, and down the river Wabash. In page 99 of the article referred to, the reviewer says: "An attempt was also made to build up a settlement at the point where the Ohio and the Mississippi join, at all times, a favorite spot among the planners of towns, and at this moment,

if we mistake not, in the process of being made a town. The first who tried this spot was Sieur Juchereau, a Canadian gentleman, assisted by *Father Mermet*, who was to christianize the *Mascoutens*, of whom a large flock was soon gathered." The reviewer then goes on to describe the *modus operandi* by which Father Mermet *syllogistically* undertook to confound the high priests of this deluded band, and gives an account of his conference with their principal medicine men, very similar to that given in the preceding address. Now the only matter in relation to which we differ is the *venue*. I assert that the conference and "theological discussion" took place on the banks of the Wabash, and not "at the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi:" and that it happened at the "Post," or the "*Poste*," (contraction for the French word "*au*,") or, par excellence, "The Post Vincennes." And I believe I prove it from two circumstances; the one referred to, to-wit: the "Mascoutens" were a branch of the Miamis, and inhabited the country watered by the Wabash; they never occupied any portion of the country bordering on the Ohio. If the object of the good Father was, (as Father Marest states it was—and we both derive our account of the matter from him,) the conversion of the "Mascoutens," he would go where they dwelt, which was on the Wabash, and not on the Ohio; and if Father Mermet was with the Sieur Juchereau at the mouth of the Ohio, it is hardly credible, that the "Mascoutens" would "gather in a large flock from a distance of upwards of two hundred miles, from the banks of

the Wabash, to the confluence of the Ohio and the Mississippi, for the mere sake of a public discussion on "mooted points of theology," between their "Medicine Men" and Father Mermet. They might follow the chase of their enemies that distance, but I doubt much, whether they would travel that far, to learn whether the "Manitou" of the Frenchman or the "Manitou of the Mascouten" was the one to be worshipped.

In the second place, the French had no settlement on the Ohio in the early part of the 18th century—by a settlement I mean a fixed establishment, a garrison, a town. Sieur Juchereau, for aught I know, may have had a trading house there, but there was no regular French establishment; and, according to Father Marest, it was to such an establishment already garrisoned—"a Fort," that Father Mermet went with the primary object of accomplishing the conversion of the "Mascoutens" to the true faith. I quote from the original letter of Father Marest to Father Germon, volume 6th, page 333 of the "*Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses*," dated Kaskaskia, November 9th, 1712:

"*Les Francois itoient itabli un* FORT *sur le fleuve* 'OUABACHE,' *ils demanderent un missionaire; et le Pere Mermet leur fut envoyé. Ce Pere crut devoir travailler a la conversion des* MASCOUTENS *qui avoient fait un village sur les bords dumeme fleuve—c'est une nation Indians qui entend la langue Illinoise.*"

Now I have mentioned the fact, and given the reasons why the Ohio was called "Ouabache" by the same Father, and by others, a reason, as it ap-

pears to me perfectly satisfactory. And as the French settled Vincennes, and established a *Fort* there early in the 18th century; and as the "Mascoutens" were located on that stream, and not on the Ohio, and being a branch of the Miamis, and a portion of the Algonquin race, of course supposed to understand the "*Illinoise*," I think it conclusive that the "*local*" of Father Mermet's labors was the "Post" or "Fort" at Vincennes, and not the site at the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi, where Sieur Juchereau may, or may not, have made a settlement. At any rate, until some further evidence is produced, I shall, as I have done in the text, claim the honor of Father Mermet's first visit for "*Post Vincennes.*"

Note B.

It was a very difficult matter to induce the French inhabitants at Kaskaskia, after Clark's arrival there and capture of the place, to take the "Continental paper," which Clark and his soldiers had brought along with them; and it was not until after Col. Vigo went there and gave his guaranty for its redemption, that they would generally receive it. Peltries and piastres were the only currency known to these simple and unsophisticated Frenchmen. They could neither read nor write, and Col. Vigo had great difficulty in explaining the operations of this new financial arrangement to them. "Their commandants never made money," was the only reply to the Colonel's explanations of the policy of the "Old Dominion" in these issues. But notwith-

standing the Colonel's guaranty, the paper was not in good credit, and ultimately became very much depreciated. The Colonel had a trading establishment at Kaskaskia after Clark's arrival. Coffee was one dollar per pound. The poor Frenchman coming to purchase, was asked "what kind of payment he intended to make for it?" "*Douleur*," said he. And when it is recollected that it took about twenty continental dollars to purchase a silver dollar's worth of coffee, and that the French word "*douleur*" signifies "grief," or "pain," perhaps no word, either in the French or English languages, expressed the idea more correctly, than "*douleur*" for "continental dollars." At any rate, it was truly "*douleur*" to the Colonel; for he never received a *single dollar* in exchange for the large amount he had taken in order to sustain Clark's credit. The above anecdote I had from the Colonel's own lips.

Note C.

I am indebted, and much indebted, to my friend Prof. Bliss, of Louisville, Kentucky, for the letters of Gen. Clark, and the extract from Major Bowman's journal of the capture of Vincennes, now for the first time published. I cannot but again repeat, what I have in the address so pointedly remarked, how little is known of the campaign of 1778, 1779, and the capture of Kaskaskia and Vincennes by Clark and his gallant followers. With the exception of a short notice of this in "Marshall's Life of Washington," and the more extended one of Butler in his "History of Kentucky," a modern work,

the incidents of that campaign are hardly noticed. Yet it was, as it regards its ultimate effects to the Union, decidedly the most brilliant and useful, of any undertaking during the revolutionary war.—Clark by that campaign added a territory embracing *three* of the finest States in the Union, to the Confederacy, to-wit: *Indiana*, *Illinois*, and *Michigan;* a territory, which, but for this very conquest, must now have been subject to British dominion, unless like Louisiana, it had since been acquired by purchase. For the only pretence of title which our commissioners, in the negotiations which resulted in the treaty of peace in 1783, set up to this immense territory, was "the capture of it by Clark, and the possession of it by the Americans at the date of the conference." The argument of "*uti possidetis*" prevailed; and the mind would be lost in the calculation of dollars and cents, to say nothing of the other matters "which constitute a State,"—men "who know their rights" inhabiting it, and which the government has gained from the contest—as to what will be the wealth and population of this same North-Western Territory a half century hence.

Most of the facts connected with the capture of Kaskaskia are derived from "Butler's History of Kentucky," a new edition of which has lately been published. It is a very useful and valuable work, and contains more incidents connected with western history, particularly the campaign of Clark in Illinois in 1778–'9, than any other work heretofore published.

Since the first publication of this address, my

friend, Professor Bliss, was killed in a rencounter at Louisville. Of the circumstances attending his death, I am not sufficiently informed to give the particulars, nor would it be at this late period proper for me to do so, even were it in my power to detail them. All who knew him will admit that a more amiable, intelligent, and high minded man never existed, and none whose death, under the circumstances attending it, was ever more lamented. "*Requiescat in pace.*" At the time of his death he was preparing for publication the "Life of General George Rogers Clark," and had been for several years acquiring the materials to enable him to do so. It is much to be regretted that in the dispensations of Providence, he was not spared to finish the work. I knew no man more capable of such an undertaking; and I have no doubt had he lived, we should have been furnished with a life of General Clark, which not only would have done justice to that great man, but have been highly creditable to the author. What became of the materials which he had with great labor collected for the undertaking, I do not know. If in the hands of his friends, they should be carefully preserved for the use of some future historian. The life of "General Clark" would be a *national work*, and it is to be hoped that some *western* Prescott or Bancroft will, ere the materials are lost, get hold of them and furnish us with one of the most interesting volumes that has ever been printed. I know of no work that would be more eagerly sought for in the *west*—the field of his patriotism, enterprise, and valor.

APPENDIX.

I.

FATHER GIBAULT.

SERVICES TO CLARK AND HIS PATRIOTISM BUT POORLY COMPENSATED.

Pierre Gibault, Parish Priest at Vincennes, and occasionally performing his apostolic duties on the Mississippi, was at Kaskaskia in 1778–9, when Gen. Clark captured that place. The services he rendered Clark in that campaign, which were acknowledged by a resolution of the Legislature of Virginia, in 1780—his patriotism, his sacrifices, his courage and love of liberty, require of me a fuller notice of this good man and pure patriot, than I have been enabled to give in the published address. Father Gibault was a Jesuit missionary to the Illinois at an early period, and had the curacy of the parish at Kaskaskia when Clark took possession of that post; and no man has paid a more sincere tribute to the services rendered by Father Gibault to the American cause, than Clark himself. It was a matter of deep importance, especially after the arrest of Rochblave, the commandant at Kaskaskia, for Clark to conciliate, if possible, the ancient inhabitants residing at Kaskaskia. This he effectu-

ally did through the agency of Father Gibault. Through his influence, not only were the French population of Kaskaskia induced to supply the troops with provisions and other necessaries, but to receive the depreciated *continental* paper currency of Virginia at par, for all supplies thus furnished, Vigo adding his guaranty for its redemption, and receiving it dollar for dollar, not only from the soldiers, but from the inhabitants, until it became entirely worthless. Father Gibault, but especially Vigo, had on hand at the close of the campaign, more than twenty thousand dollars of this worthless trash, (the only funds, however, which Clark had in his military chest,) and not one dollar of which was ever redeemed, either for Vigo or Father Gibault, who, for this worthless trash, disposed "of all his cattle, and the tithes of his parishoners," in order to sustain Clark and his troops, without which aid they must have surrendered, surrounded as they were, by the Indian allies of the British, and deprived of all resources but those furnished by the French inhabitants, through the persuasion of Vigo and Father Gibault. But more than this. Through the influence of these men, when Clark left Kaskaskia for the purpose of capturing Hamilton and his men at post Vincennes, a company of fifty young Frenchmen was raised at Kaskaskia, who joined Clark's troops, under the command of Captain Charlevoix, who shared in all the perils and honors of that glorious campaign, which ended in the capture of the Post, and the surrender of Hamilton, an event more important in its

consequences than any other occurring during our revolutionary struggle.

It was entirely through the means of Father Gibault that Hamilton released Col. Vigo, when sent by Clark to ascertain the true situation of affairs at Vincennes. He was captured by the Indians and taken to "Fort Sackville," where he was kept a prisoner on parole for many weeks, and released, entirely by the interference of Father Gibault, and the declaration of the French inhabitants at Vincennes, who, with their priest at their head, after service on the Sabbath, marched to the fort and informed Hamilton "they would refuse all supplies to the garrison unless Vigo was released." Of that release, and the important effect of Vigo's information to Clark on his return to Kaskaskia, in reference to the capture of the Post by Hamilton, I have already spoken. Next to Clark and Vigo, the United States are indebted more to Father Gibault for the accession of the States, comprised in what was the original North-Western Territory, than to any other man. The following memorial from this excellent man, to Gen. St. Clair, then Governor of the North-Western Territory, dated "Kahokia, May 1, 1790," so true, so delicate, so modest, so unassuming, so free from self-laudation, so perfectly characteristic of this good father, deserves publication in connection with the facts above described, in reference to his services to the Government, in the most trying period of its colonial history:

"KAHOKIA, May 1st, 1790.

The undersigned, memorialist, has the honor to

represent to your excellency, that from the moment of the conquest of the Illinois country, by Col. George Rogers Clark, he has not been backward in venturing his life, on the many occasions in which he found that his presence was useful, and at all times sacrificing his property, which he gave for the support of the troops, at the same price that he could have received in *Spanish milled dollars*, and for which, however, he has received only *paper dollars*, (continental currency,) of which he has had no information since he sent them, addressed to the Commissioner of Congress, who required a statement of the depreciation of them at the *Belle Riviere*, (Ohio river) in 1783, with an express promise in reply, that particular attention should be paid to his account, because it was well known to be in no wise exaggerated. In reality, he parted with his tithes and his beasts, only to set an example to his parishoners, who began to perceive that it was intended to pillage them and abandon them afterwards, which really took place. The want of seven thousand eight hundred livres, (or upwards of $1,500 our currency,) of the non-payment of which the American notes has deprived him the use, has obliged him to sell *two good slaves*, who would now be the support of his old age, and for the want of whom, he now finds himself dependent on the public, who, although *well served*, are very rarely led to *keep their promises*, except that part who, employing their time in such service, are supported by the secular power, that is to say, by the civil government.

The love of country and of liberty has also led your memorialist to reject all the advantages offered him by the Spanish government; and he endeavored by every means in his power, by exertions and exhortations, and by letters to the principal inhabitants, to retain every person in the dominion of the United States in expectation of better times, and giving them to understand that our lives and property having been employed twelve years in the aggrandizement and preservation of the United States, would at last receive an acknowledgment, and be compensated by the enlightened and upright ministers, who sooner or later would come to examine into, and relieve us from our situation. We begin to see the accomplishment of these hopes, under the happy government of your excellency, and as your memorialist has every reason to believe, from proofs which would be too long to explain here, you are one of the number who have been the most forward, in risking their lifes and fortunes for their country.

He also hopes that his demand will be listened to favorably. It is this: The missionaries, like lords, have at all times possessed two tracts of land near this village; one three acres in front, which produces but little hay, three-quarters being useless by a great morass; the other of two acres in front, which may be cultivated, and which the memorialist will have cultivated with care, and proposes to have a dwelling erected on it, with a yard and orchard, in case his claim is accepted. Your excellency may think, perhaps, that this might in-

jure some of the inhabitants, but it will not. It would be difficult to hire them to cause an enclosure to be made of the size of these tracts, so much land have they more than they cultivate. May it please your excellency then, to grant them to your memorialist as belonging to the domain of the United States, and give him a *concession*, to be enjoyed in full propriety in his private name, and not as missionary and priest, to pass to his successor; otherwise, the memorialist will not accept it.

It is for the services he has already rendered, and those which he still hopes to render, as far as circumstances may offer, and he may be capable, and particularly on the bounty with which you relieve those who stand in need of assistance, that he founds his demand. In hopes of being soon of the number of those who praise heaven for your fortunate arrival in this country, and who desire your prosperity in everything, your memorialist has the honor of being, with the most profound respect,

Your excellency's most obedient
and most humble servant,
"P. GIBAULT, *Priest.*

"To his excellency, ARTHUR ST. CLAIR,
Major General of the Army of the United States, and Governor of the Territory possessed by the United States, north-west of the river Ohio, &c., &c."

Whether "a concession to be enjoyed in full propriety" by the venerated father, "in his private name, and *not* as *missionary* and *priest*, of the *two acres* in *front* of the *village* of *Kahokia*," on which he proposed to have "a dwelling erected, with a gar-

den and orchard on it," was ever made, I do not know; if there was, there is no record of it. Gov. St. Clair, in his report to Mr. Jefferson, Secretary of State, in 1791, makes the following remarks in relation to this memorial:

"No. 24 is the request of Mr. Gibault, for a small piece of land that has long been in the occupation of the priests at Kahokia, having been assigned them by the French, but he wishes to possess it in propriety, and it is true that he was very useful to Gen. Clark upon many occasions, and has suffered very heavy losses. I believe no injury would be done to any one by his request being granted, but it was not for *me* to give away the lands of the United States."

In the concessions made by Winthrop Sargent, at the "town at post Vincennes," while acting as Governor in place of Gen. St. Clair, I find the following concession made in July, 1790: "Rev. Peter Gibault, a lot about fourteen *toises*, one side to Mr. Millet, another to Mr. Vaudrey, *and to two streets*." Rather an indefinite description of the boundaries; but the "ambitious city" of 1856, I presume in 1790, had neither a Mayor, or City Engineer, to run out the good father's lines. Judging from the description of the concessions as then made, it would be somewhat troublesome in these modern times, to find them. A few examples may not be uninteresting, as evidencing the loose mode in which surveys of town lots were made nearly seventy years since, at the "O Post:"

"*The widow of Peter Grimare*—A house and lot,

the *boundaries not expressed*, but to be surveyed agreably to *possession*, not *interfering with the streets*."

"*For the Church*—Four arpents front upon the Wabash, by the usual depth; a lot where the church stands, about twenty toises, for the church or Mr. Antoine Gamelin."

"*Luke Decker*—A lot twenty-five toises by fifty-one, side to Sullivan, and three sides to streets; a tract of two acres in front by forty deep, on river *du Chi*, one side to Martin. This tract is said to have been by French concession, but none has been produced. His house is built thereon."

"*Robert Buntin*—A house and lot in Vincennes, front to the Wabash, back to the *Indian fields*, one side by Maonaman, on the other by *Francis the Cats-paw*, about one acre in length each way."

Among the numerous concessions made to *Vigo*, we find the following:

"Three pieces of land in the old Indian village, sold by Montour and other chiefs to Spring and Busseron, in May, 1786."

"Five pieces of land formerly held by the *Kettle Carrier*, sold by *Quiquilaquia*, the grand son of *Kettle Carrier*, with the approbation of Montour and the other chiefs."

"Five pieces of land in the old Piankeshaw town at Vincennes, sold by Montour."

"*Henry Vanderburgh*—A piece of land, twelve arpents more or less, a part of sundry fields, formerly the lands of the *Piankeshaws*, lying at the east of the VILLAGE. A piece of land containing two fields joining each other, on the old Indian village,

sixty toises on one side, forty on the other, bounded in front by the street where Du Betz lives, and on the rear partly by the fields of Allebomane, and partly by that of Nisbrache, part of Samuel Bradley's land on one side, and on the other the field of Saspacona and Nez du Carlin, sold by Nez du Carlin to Pierre Gamelin."

It would be very difficult for a surveyor, with chain and compass at the *present time*, to run out these *ancient boundaries*.

II.

HAMILTON.

HIS IMPRISONMENT AND CAREER AFTER HIS CAPTURE BY CLARK.

At the surrender of Burgoyne, in 1777, about four thousand British troops fell prisoners of war, into the hands of the Americans. By the capitulation, they were to remain prisoners in the hands of the Americans until arrangements were made between the mother country and ours, in relation to exchanges of prisoners. They were first ordered to Boston, where they remained about a year, and were then ordered to Charlottesville, in Virginia, near to Monticello, for greater security. They arrived there in January, 1779, and aside from the hardships of a long journey by land, in the midst of winter, to their destination, they found themselves with barracks unfinished, with a great insufficiency

of provisions, and with but a poor prospect of supplies. Great alarm was excited among the inhabitants by this accession to their population, and great fears were entertained lest a famine should be created, this portion of Virginia then being but poorly supplied with bread, and other articles of necessity for its own use. Through the influence of Jefferson, then at Monticello, and his appeals to the planters, all their wants were fully supplied. Not only this, but he personally engaged in providing barracks for the men and quarters for the officers. It is true they were the enemies of his country, but they were human beings, and in his judgment, as much entitled to those kindly offices due to his fellow-men in distress, and prisoners of war, as those of his countrymen would be, united though they were, by the strong ties of national alliance and affection. No means were left untried by this great and good man, to render the situation of these captives as comfortable as circumstances would allow. Aided by the philanthropy of his fellow citizens, to whom he made more than one appeal, and by the humane and generous disposition of the commissary, his entreaties were crowned with success. The barracks were comfortably fitted up, and a plentiful supply of provisions furnished the prisoners. All this had hardly been effected, when Governor Henry, who had been invested by Congress with certain discretionary powers over these "*convention troops*," (as they were called,) alledging the inability of the State to supply them, determined to remove them from Charlottes-

ville. This intelligence produced the greatest regret and disappointment among the prisoners.—They complained against the inhumanity of the order, charged the government with a want of good faith, and gave evident symptoms of a mutiny. The citizens of Charlottesville strongly disapproved of the measure, and received the proposition with regret and disapprobation. Mr. Jefferson coincided with them, and addressed a long and elaborate letter to Gov. Henry, suggesting that such an act would be indicative of bad faith and "a character of unsteadiness and imbecility, and, what was worse, of cruelty in the councils of the nation." In conformity with these views, the proposition was abandoned, and the prisoners permitted to remain at Charlottesville. The effect of this conduct of Mr. Jefferson, his universal kindness to the men, and his uniform amenity and courtesy to the officers, endeared all to him; so that when exchanged, both men and officers, on taking leave at Charlottesville, addressed him verbally and by letters, expressing their gratitude and good feeling, and bidding him an affectionate adieu. Speaking of Mr. Jefferson's conduct on that occasion, a French historian narrating the circumstances, beautifully says: "Surely, this innocent and bloodless conquest over the minds of men, whose swords had been originally hired to the oppressors of America, was in itself scarcely less glorious, though in its effects less extensively beneficial, than the splendid train of victories which had disarmed their hands." I mention these circumstances in order to draw a

parallel between the conduct of our people, and those of the British on similar occasions during the war of the Revolution, when the Americans fell into their hands. Through the whole course of that contest, whenever the fortune of war placed our people in their power, their treatment to them was savage in the extreme, and unprecedented in the history of civilized nations. On our side, the treatment of British prisoners was uniformly marked with moderation, and kind, good feeling. We were, like our foes, children from a common stock, of the same blood, speaking the same language. When they yielded to our arms—became prisoners of war —we supplied them on all occasions with the necessaries of life, such as our fathers themselves were accustomed to, with comfortable quarters. We permitted them to live in American families, on their parole to range at large, to labor for themselves, hold and enjoy property, participating in the benefits of society while sharing none of its burdens. To their officers captured ours were always hospitable, always courteous. If any one doubts this, let him read the letters of Gen. Phillips, Baron Rudisel, and others, who surrendered themselves prisoners with Burgoyne's army, after their exchange, addressed to the officers of the continental army, expressive of their lasting attachment and gratitude, and bidding them an affectionate adieu.— While on the other hand, is it not a matter of history, that British officers, civil and military, throughout the whole war, had pursued a most savage and relentless course towards all who fell into

their hands—that they loaded with irons all American officers and soldiers captured by them, making no distinction between them, as they acknowledged none, all were rebels—that they consigned them to prison-ships, crowded gaols, and loathsome dungeons, often without food, or when supplied, with quantities that were small, unsound and loathsome—that the wounded were uncared for and unattended, the sick unprovided for—that our men were transported beyond seas, or compelled by brute force to take arms against their countrymen, and by a refinement in cruelty unknown to the cannibals of New Zealand, to become the murderers of their brethren? All these things were known and felt then. History has recorded in bloody pages the Briton's wrath, the Briton's malice, and murder of our countrymen.

Mr. Jefferson, than whom no one who took part in our revolutionary contest knew better the contrast between the conduct of the two belligerents than he did, and from personal observation, was elected Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, in June, 1779. The executive of that great State, elected by the unanimous vote of her people to take the helm, in the most critical situation of her affairs, had no sooner taken possession of the executive chair, than "he felt himself impelled by a sense of public justice, to substitute a system of vigorous retaliation." In the language of his own impressive order, "he felt called on by that justice we owe to those fighting the battles of our country, to deal out miseries to their enemies, measure for measure,

and to distress the feelings of mankind by exhibiting to them spectacles of severe retaliation, where he had long and vainly endeavored to introduce an emulation in kindness."

Singular enough, the "fortune of war" and the conquest of Clark had placed in his hands some of those very individuals, who having distinguished themselves above their fellows in the practice of the most atrocious cruelties; who had whetted the scalping knife of the Indian, who, in this remotest west, had planned and plotted the massacre of the frontiersman, "and fattened their cornfields" with the blood of their wives and children, and who, more cruel than the savages whom they had incited to murder and rapine, were on this account proper subjects on which to begin the work of retaliation. HENRY HAMILTON, whose capture by Clark at "Post Vincennes," on the 24th of February, 1779, is briefly noted with its attending circumstances, in the address to which this note is appended, and who for some years before his surprise of that Post, and the capture of Helms, had acted as Lieutenant and Governor of the British possessions at Detroit under Sir Geo. Carleton; Phillip Dejean, Justice of the Peace for Detroit, and William Lamothe, Captain of Volunteers, taken prisoners of war by Clark, had been sent under guard by him to Williamsburgh early in June, 1779. Proclamations—*under his own hand*, offering a specific sum for every American scalp brought into the camp, either by his own troops, or his allies, the Indians, and from this fact denominated the "HAIR-BUYER GENERAL" by

Clark in his proclamation to the French inhabitants of Vincennes—as well as the concurrent testimony of many unprejudiced witnesses, all prove Governor Hamilton a remorseless destroyer of not only men, but of innocent and unoffending women and children. A cruel, heartless and savage monster, instead of an open and honorable enemy. He not only excited the savage to perpetrate their accustomed atrocities upon the citizens of the United States, but with a blood-thirsty barbarity of which history in modern times gives but few examples, he exhibited such an eagerness and ingenuity in planning these murderous forays, as evidenced, that the hunting and scalping of this human game harmonized with his own peculiar and savage instincts. While he gave a standing premium for scalps, he offered no reward for prisoners, so that his Indian allies, after forcing their prisoners to carry their plunder into the neighborhood of the Fort, butchered their captives, and carried their scalps to the Governor, who welcomed their return and success with a salvo of cannon, and an abundant supply of "fire-water." Even the few Americans who were spared by these blood-hounds, were doomed by Hamilton to a series of lingering and complicated tortures, worse even than those inflicted by his savage allies, and ending finally in their death. Dejean and Lamothe were, as it is well known, the ready instruments of Hamilton's vengeance. The former acting in the double capacity of judge and jailor to the tyrant; the other as a commander of the volunteer scalping parties of Indians and whites, spar-

ing neither age nor sex, but devoting all to indiscriminate slaughter, and by his own example stimulating the barbarian ferocity and cruelty of his savage compeers. (See Jefferson's works, vol. 1st, appendix A.)

I have myself been informed by some of the "*ancient inhabitants*" of the Post, long since gathered to their fathers, but who were old enough at the time of Clark's capture of the Post, to recollect the circumstances attending it, that after the surrender, the English flag was kept flying, and that from the large stores of clothing on hand, Clark dressed some of his men in *red*, the uniform of the British soldiers, and placing a sentry with British uniform at the gate of the fort, after directing the French inhabitants to give no intimation of the surrender, awaited the arrival of the Indians, who were on one of their murderous forays to the south-side of the Ohio, and were to return to Vincennes to join Hamilton in his meditated campaign in the Illinois, for the purpose of attacking Clark and his troops at Kaskaskia. Sullen and silent, with the scalp-lock of his victims hanging at his girdle, and in full expectation of his reward from Hamilton, the unwary savage, unconscious of danger, and wholly ignorant of the change that had been effected in his absence, passed the supposed British sentry at the gate of the fort, without enquiry or molestation. But the moment he had entered, a volley from the rifles of a platoon of Clark's men, drawn up and awaiting his coming, pierced their hearts, and sent the unconscious savage, reeking with murder, to that

tribunal to which he had so frequently, by order of Hamilton sent his American captives, from the infant in the cradle, to the grandfather of the family, tottering with age and infirmity. *It was a just retribution*, and few men but Clark would have planned the *rule*, or carried it out so successfully. It is reported that upwards of fifty Indians met this fate within the walls of "Fort Sackville" after its surrender by Hamilton. It is easy to judge what must have been the feelings of the "HAIR-BUYER GENERAL," who was in the fort a prisoner, and no doubt a witness of these transactions.

Mr. Jefferson, then Governor of Virginia, having in his possession these three *prominent subjects* of his Britanic majesty, captured by American enterprise and valor unequalled in any campaign during our revolutionary contest, was well aware of the atrocities committed by them, and by their Indian allies, on our western frontiers by their orders. And sensible as he was that acts of kindness and generosity to the vanquished, had been met on the part of the enemy by continued and wanton outrages—by conduct towards the American prisoners, who fell into the hands of their opponents, at variance with every law human and divine, and contrary to every rule exercised and acted upon by civilized nations—he determined to try the force of *example*. He accordingly issued an order, by advice of his council, directing that Hamilton, Dejean and Lamothe "should be put in irons—confined in a dungeon—deprived of the use of pen, ink and paper, and excluded from all conversation except with their keep-

er." Maj. General Phillips, second in command under Burgoyne at his capture, and who himself was then a prisoner of war, on parole in the vicinity of Charlottesville, on hearing of the order immediately remonstrated. In his letter to Mr. Jefferson in regard to this order, he "endeavored to invalidate the testimony against Hamilton—expressed great doubts whether any *single State* of the Confederacy had authority to make an order of retaliation, asserting that *Congress alone* possessed the power—dwelt largely on the *sacred nature* of capitulation, which, in the case of the prisoners, he contended exempted them from the severe punishment awarded, whatever their previous conduct might have been, and finally wound up in the following flattering appeal. "That from his (Phillips,) residence in Virginia he had conceived the most favorable idea of the gentlemen of this country, and from his personal acquaintance with Mr. Jefferson, he was led to imagine it must have been very dissonant to his feelings, to inflict such a weight of misery and stigma of disgrace upon the *unfortunate gentlemen in question*." Whatever Mr. Jefferson's private feelings may have been—and no one knew better than Gen. Phillips what they were—he had a duty to perform, which required in *this case* a stern subordination of them to the service of his country, and the good of mankind. There could be no better principle of international law settled and acknowledged, than that all persons taken in war—whether their surrender was by capitulation or by discretion—were, by all the rules of war, *pris-*

oners, and liable to the same treatment—except, only so far as they were protected by the express terms of capitulation. In the surrender of Hamilton, no such exception was made—the terms of it are set forth in the address, to which these notes are appended. In signing his capitulation, Hamilton had set out a flourish of reasons, it is true: "Remoteness of succor—the state of his prisoners—*unanimity* of his officers and men, in advising a surrender;" and last, but not least, "the *honorable terms* allowed, and his *confidence in* a generous enemy." What these *honorable terms* were, the reader will ascertain readily, by reading the address in which they are set out. They were simply those granted in case of an *unconditional surrender*. No exceptions whatever were made, and Mr. Jefferson continued in the belief that the capitulation did not exempt Hamilton and his associates from confinement. In a *national point of view*, however, his conduct, it was feared, might be questioned, and his high sense of propriety induced him to submit the question to the Commander-in-Chief. Gen. Washington approved of his conduct, but with his *great prudence*, having some doubts as to the real bearing and extent of the terms of the capitulation, and having a sacred respect for the laws and usages of nations, he recommended to Mr. Jefferson a relaxation of the severities imposed on the captives. After a fair trial of the effect of the proceeding in ameliorating the condition of the American prisoners, then in the hands of our enemies, a serious warning would be given to the British Government

by the act in question, Virginia would have it in her power to repeat it. Reformation might be produced, and then the necessity of *individual* chastisement for *national* barbarities removed. This advice of the "Father of his Country," accorded well with the better dictates of Mr. Jefferson's heart, and without compromising the right, he issued a second order of council, mitigating the severity of the first. A parole was drawn up and tendered to Hamilton and his fellow-prisoners. It required them to be inoffensive in *word* and *deed*. To this they objected, insisting on abusing the Rebels as much as they pleased *verbally*. They were remanded to their prison; but with their irons removed. Dejean and Lamothe soon after subscribed the parole, but Hamilton remained obstinate; but upon being informed by General Phillips, who had been exchanged, that his further confinement would be entirely *gratuitous*, he finally with great reluctance yielded. These stern but necessary measures, had the desired effect in time. At first the British threatened retaliation in the severest mode. They issued a proclamation "That no officers of the Virginia line should be exchanged, until Hamilton's affair should be settled satisfactorily." When this was received, Mr. Jefferson at once ordered all exchange of British prisoners to be stopped, with a determination expressed, to use them as pledges for the safety of the American prisoners in the hands of the enemy. The practical application, however, of such a lesson had its effect upon the enemy during the subsequent progress of the war. British

pretension was finally forced to yield to the cries of their own countrymen, and the admonitions of experience. What ultimately became of this trio of distinguished officials, I have never been able to ascertain. It is more than probable that before the close of the war, they were exchanged for much better men. They probably all three returned to Canada—Hamilton it is certain did. He was at Quebec after the peace in 1783, as Lieut. Governor, disposing of *American property*, without a shadow of right to do so, to British subjects, as late as the year 1785. For in the examination of the claims to lots granted at Detroit, made by the United States Commissioners in 1806, we find among their entries the following:

"QUEBECK, Sept. 9th, 1785.

Whereas, Matthew Elliot has for some time occupied a certain lot, lying near the dock yard at Detroit, by the water-side, this is to signify to all whom it may concern, that if any person has pretensions to the aforesaid lot, they are to produce the titles; otherwise, the said Matthew Elliot is to hold peaceable possession thereof, until further orders.

Given under my hand, and seal at arms, at the Castle of St. Louis.

HENRY HAMILTON.

(American State papers, vol. 1 p. 256.)

Now, this authority of Gov. Hamilton to Matthew Elliot, (given under his "*seal-at-arms, at the Castle of St. Louis,*") to hold possession of *American soil*, "until further orders," is decidedly rich, and perfectly characteristic of Henry Hamilton, the

"Hair-Buyer General". For it will be remembered by all readers of history, that two years before the date of that grant his master, the King of Great Britain, relinquished by the treaty of peace in 1783, "all claims to the government, property, and *territorial rights* of the United States to the *people thereof*," and in this grant was conceded all the "territorial rights of Great Britain to *Detroit* as well as the whole of Michigan." There is no doubt that in his hatred of every thing American, he *died game;* but when or where, we are ignorant. The facts above stated are derived from Rayner's Life of Mr. Jefferson—a work extremely rare, but the best life of Jefferson extant.

III.

TECUMSEH.

We should fail in our duty as historian of the "Old Post," if we omitted to notice an individual who has played an important part in the history of the North-Western Territory, especially in the campaign of 1812–'13, on our North-Western frontiers. The reader will at once understand that the individual alluded to, is the one whose name heads this article. For all those qualities which elevate man far above his race; for talent, tact, skill, bravery as a warrior; for high-minded, honorable and chivalrous bearing as a man; in fine, for all those ele-

ments of greatness which place him a long way above his fellows in savage life, the name and fame of Tecumseh will go down to posterity in the West, as one of the most celebrated of the Aborigines of this continent. As one who on this side of the Alleghanies at least, had no equal among the tribes who dwelt in the country watered by the Mississippi and its confluents. Such was the opinion of those who knew him when he died, and such is now, I believe, the opinion of the majority of the four or five million of inhabitants who people the region occupied by the tribes, which once acknowledged his supremacy.

The tribe to which he belonged was the SHAWNŒ. The tradition of the nation held, that they originally came from the Gulf of Mexico; that they wended their way up the Mississippi and the Ohio, and settled at or near the present site of *Shawneetown*, from whence they removed to the Upper Wabash. Be this as it may, they were found on the Wabash early in the eighteenth century, when the French took possession of the country, and were known and esteemed as the "*bravest of the brave.*" This tribe has uniformly been the bitter enemies of the white man, and in every contest with our people have shown a skill and strategy that made them a most dangerous foe. In every battle-field in the North-Western Territory, previous to and during the war of eighteen hundred and twelve, the Shawnœs were found in the ranks of our enemies. From the attack on Fort Harrison, then garrisoned with the troops under the com-

mand of Captain Taylor, subsequently the hero of "Palo Alto and Ressaca de la Palma," and President of the United States, down to the battle of Tippecanoe in 1811, where General Harrison commanded the American forces; at Fort Meigs; at the River Raisin; in fine, in every engagement where the American and British troops, met in hostile array the war-whoop of the Shawnœ was heard above the din of the battle-field, and his unerring rifle carried the message of death to many of the bravest of our countrymen. Of the early history of this warrior, of course, but little can be known. Related as he was to the "Prophet," the head chief of the Shawnœs, and possessing the skill and bravery which all acknowledge, his tact and talent, added to his position in the tribe, must have early given him power and influence with them, such as no other chieftain ever possessed over the children of the forest. At what period of his life he made his first appearance at Vincennes, is also unknown. Most probably from boyhood he had been accustomed to visit it, inasmuch as the tribes dwelling on the Wabash were in the constant habit of going there, either for the sale of their property, or the more important purpose of holding a Council. Vincennes in the early part of the present century, being the place where treaties were made and Councils held, with all the nations of Indians dwelling between the Lakes and the Ohio. A brother of the "*Prophet*," who had an immense influence, *spiritual* and *temporal*, with the Indians not only of his own tribe, the Shawnœs, but with the other tribes

residing on the waters of the Upper Wabash. Who, like the founder of Mormonism, not only held *direct communication* with the "Great Spirit," but whose oracles, like those of the Sybils, were held by the untutored son of the forest as worthy of all credence, he must from this circumstance alone, have held a high position in his tribe. It is, however, doubtful whether Tecumseh himself was gulled by the charlatanry of his brother. His own natural good sense must have taught him, however, that whatever his own *private opinion* might have been on this subject, policy would seem to require that he should not divulge it. Well instructed in Indian character, he knew full well that *fanaticism* was one of the strongest impulses to reckless bravery and daring. For if the follower of Mahomet, wounded and dying on the battle-field, in defence of his country and his faith, believed he went to the full enjoyment of "Houries and Sherbert" in the seventh heaven of the Mahomedan creed, the no less infatuated Shawnœ would seek danger and death in his contest with the "pale face," with the firm belief that his departure from this world would usher him at once into the hunting grounds of the next. Born to command himself, he used all appliances that would stimulate the courage and nerve the valor of his followers. Always in the front rank of battle himself with his enemies, the whites, his followers blindly followed his lead, and as his war-cry rang clear above the din and noise of the battle-field, the Shawnœ warriors as they rushed on to victory, or the grave, rallied around him—"foemen worthy of

the steel" of the most gallant soldier that ever entered the lists in defence of his altar or his home.

The "Battle of the Thames," in which he fell fighting *single-handed*, with the gallant leader of one of the most distinguished corps of that bloody field, and to whose pistol shot, if all history of that hard-fought fight and glorious victory is to be credited, he owed his death, and ended his career, bears witness to his skill and courage. It is not, however, with his acts for good or evil elsewhere, that I propose to speak of him. It is only of the incidents connected with his life while residing in the *Indiana Territory*, and possessing *even then* a control and influence over his own tribe, and the tribes that surrounded it, which no Prophet, Warrior or Priest ever held on this continent, over the aborigines of the country, from the time of Phillip of Narragansett, down to that of the most distinguished of the Indian Chieftains of our time, that I propose to speak.

It is well known to those who have paid the slightest attention to our colonial history in the early part of the present century, that it was the ardent wish, the deep-seated thought and burning desire of Tecumseh, to sever the tribes whom he could influence, (who then held possession of all the country from the old boundary line, about twenty miles above Vincennes, to Lake Michigan,) from any connexion with the whites—then commencing the first settlement of the country, and but few in number. His object was, and openly and boldly avowed, to form a confederacy of the Indian tribes,

not only north, but south; not only of the Shawnœs, the Miamies and the Pottawatomies of the Wabash and the Illinois; but the Creeks, Cherokees and Chickasaws of the Mississippi. To make an alliance with every tribe from Lake Erie to the Gulf of Mexico; a league offensive and defensive as against the whites, and to expel from the country all who dwelt on the north-west side of the river Ohio, or who were residents on the south-side of the same river below the mouth of the Cumberland. The principle with which he started out, was one which would have great weight with the native tribes of the country, and one which, whatever we may say to the contrary, carried with it a great semblance of right and justice, so far, at least, as Indians were concerned. The principle was this: that the "Great Spirit" had created the distinction between the "pale faces" and the "aborigines" of the country, with a view of keeping them apart as two distinct races. To the Indians he had given the Great West. Here he had established their hunting grounds: the mountain and the valley—the hill and the prairie—the forest and the rivers were theirs. He had furnished the forest and the prairie with the Buffalo, the Deer and the Elk for their sustenance; their skins for their robes; their flesh for their food; the waters of the rivers and lakes he had abundantly stocked with fish. The Indians never were, and never would be fitted for agriculture. They were warriors and hunters. When game was scarce they hunted one another. That from the day of Nimrod to the present, such

had been the destiny of the "red man." The consequence must be that there could be no fraternization, no affiliation with the white man. That when he came here he was an interloper, a trespasser on their rights, an intruder on *their soil*, and must be expelled. That, as the necessary result of all this, they must drive him off from their hunting grounds, which he had seized unlawfully and unjustly, and was cultivating for himself and those who were to come after him. That it was a death-struggle between the white man and the red, and that now while the whites were sparse in population, weak in numbers, and wanting in strength, was the time to strike the blow, and if possible, exterminate the race, who already were encroaching upon the Indian territory, where if a foot-hold was ever obtained, it would be difficult to remove them. How far the views of Tecumseh were right, let the history of the West for the last half century answer. Their progress, like that of the buffalo, has been westward. The waters of the Pacific will alone stay their march, and the *last war-whoop* of the Indian on *this* continent, as he makes his final struggle with his implacable foe, the white man, will mingle with the roar of the ocean, as it rolls its breakers upon the rocks and head-lands, which form the last barrier to the further progress of either race towards the setting sun. A fitting *requiem* for the last of a people who once lorded it, from the St. Lawrence to the Columbia, from Lake Superior to the Gulf of Mexico.

Another principle which he advocated, and which at least has some plausibility, was this: "that the

Great Spirit had given the Indians *all their lands in common*, to be held by them as such, and not by the various tribes who had settled on portions of it—claiming it as their own. That they were mere squatters, having no "*pre-emption right*," but holding even that, on which they lived as mere "tenants in common" with *all* the other tribes. That this mere possession gave them no title to convey the land without the consent of *all*. That no *single tribe* had the right to sell, that the *power to sell* was not invested in their *Chief*, but must be the act of the *Warriors*, in council assembled of *all the tribes*, as the land belonged to *all*—no portion of it to any *single tribe*. Hence, in all the councils which he held with the whites, he uniformly refused, as did his tribe, until after his death, to acknowledge the validity of any treaty made between the Indians and the Government, utterly denying the power of one or more tribes of Indians to convey the land they occupied without the consent of all.

In the Spring of 1810, General Harrison being Governor of the north-western Territory, and residing at Vincennes—the seat of Government—had learned from various quarters that Tecumseh had been visiting the different Indian tribes, scattered along the Valleys of the Wabash and Illinois, with a view of forming an alliance and making common cause against the whites, and that there was great probability that his mission had been successful. Aware, as he was, that if this was the case, and that if the combination had been formed, such as was represented, the settlements in the southern portion of

Indiana and Illinois were in great danger; that *Vincennes* itself would be the first object of attack, and that, with the handfull of troops in the Territory, a successful resistance might not be made; and not probably fully aware of the extent of the organization attempted by Tecumseh, and desirous of avoiding, if he could, the necessity of a call to arms, he sent a message to him, then residing at the "Prophet's Town," inviting him to a council to be held at Vincennes at as early a period as possible, for the purpose of talking over and amicably settling all difficulties which might exist between the whites and the Shawnoes. It was not until the month of August, of the same year, that Tecumseh, accompanied by about seventy of his warriors, made his appearance. They encamped on the banks of the Wabash just above the town, and Tecumseh gave notice to the General that, in pursuance of his invitation, he had come to hold a talk "with him and his braves." The succeeding day was appointed for the meeting. The Governor made all suitable preparations for it. The officers of the territory and the leading citizens of the town were invited to be present, while a portion of a company of militia was detailed as guard—fully armed and equipped for any emergency. Notice had been sent to Tecumseh previous to the meeting, that it was expected that himself and only a *portion* of his principal warriors, would be present at the council. The council was held in the open lawn before the Governor's house, in a grove of trees which then surrounded it. But two of these, I regret to say, are now remaining. At the time appointed, Tecumseh

and some fifteen or twenty of his warriors made their appearance. With a firm and elastic step, and with a proud and somewhat defiant look, he advanced to the place where the Governor and those who had been invited to attend the conference were sitting. This place had been fenced in, with a view of preventing the crowd from encroaching upon the council during its deliberations. As he stepped forward he seemed to scan the preparations which had been made for his reception, particularly the *military part* of it, with an eye of suspicion—by no means, however, with fear. As he came in front of the *dais*, an elevated portion of the place upon which the Governor and the officers of the Territory were seated, the Governor invited him, through his interpreter, to come forward and take a seat with him and his counsellors, premising the invitation by saying: "That it was the wish of *their* 'GREAT FATHER,' the President of the United States, that he should do so." The Chief paused for a moment, as the words were uttered and the sentence finished, and raising his tall form to its greatest height, surveyed the troops and the crowd around him. Then with his keen eyes fixed upon the Governor for a single moment, and turning them to the sky above, with his sinewy arm pointing towards the heaven, and with a tone and manner indicative of supreme contempt, for the *paternity assigned him*, said in a voice whose clarion tones were heard throughout the whole assembly:

"*My Father*?—The sun is *my* father—the earth is *my* mother—and on her bosom I will recline."

Having finished, he stretchd himself with his warriors on the green sward. The effect, it is said, was electrical, and for some moments there was a perfect silence.

The Governor, through the interpreter, then informed him, "that he had understood he had complaints to make, and redress to ask for certain wrongs which *he*, Tecumseh, supposed had been done his tribe, as well as the others; that he felt disposed to listen to the one, and make satisfaction for the other, if it was proper he should do so. That in all his intercourse and negotiations with the Indians, he had endeavored to act justly and honorably with them, and believed he had done so, and had heard of no complaint of his conduct until he learned that Tecumseh was endeavoring to create dissatisfaction towards the Government, not only among the Shawnœs, but among the other tribes dwelling on the Wabash and Illinois; and had, in so doing, produced a great deal of mischief and trouble between them and the whites, by averring that the tribes, whose land the Government had lately purchased, had no right to sell, nor their chiefs any authority to convey. That he, the Governor, had invited him to attend the Council, with a view of learning from his own lips, whether there was any truth in the reports which he had heard, and to learn from himself whether he, or his tribe, had any cause of complaint against the whites; and if so, as a man and a warrior, openly and boldly to avow it. That as between himself and as great a warrior as Tecumseh, there should be no concealment—all should

be done by them *under a clear sky, and in an open path*, and with these feelings on his own part, he was glad to meet him in council." Tecumseh arose as soon as the Governor had finished. Those who knew him speak of him as one of the most splendid specimens of his tribe—celebrated for their physical proportions and fine forms, even among the nations who surrounded them. Tall, athletic and manly, dignified, but graceful, he seemed the beau ideal of an Indian Chieftain. In a voice, at first low, but with all its indistinctness, musical, he commenced his reply. As he warmed with his subject his clear tones might be heard, as if "trumpet-tongued," to the utmost limits of the assembled crowd who gathered around him. The most perfect silence prevailed, except when the warriors who surrounded him, gave their *gutteral* assent to some eloquent recital of the red man's wrong, and the white man's injustice. Well instructed in the traditions of his tribe, fully acquainted with *their* history, the councils, treaties, and battles of the two races for half a century, he recapitulated the wrongs of the "red man" from the massacre of the "Moravian Indians," during the revolutionary war, down to the period he had met the Governor in Council. He told him "he did not know how he could ever again be the friend of the white man." In reference to the public domain, he asserted "that the 'Great Spirit' had given all the country from the Miami to the Mississippi, from the Lakes to the Ohio, as a *common property* to *all* the tribes that dwelt within those borders, and that the land *could not*, and *should not* be

sold without the consent of all. That all the tribes on the continent formed but *one nation.* That if the United States would not give up the lands they had bought of the Miamis, the Delawares, the Pottowatomies, and other tribes, that those *united with him* were determined to fall on those tribes and annihilate them. That they were determined to have no more Chiefs, but in future to be governed by their warriors. That unless a stop was put to the further encroachment of the whites, the fate of the Indians was sealed. They had been driven from the banks of the Delaware across the Alleghanies, and their possessions on the Wabash and the Illinois were now to be taken from them—that in a few years they would not have ground enough to bury their warriors on this side of the "Father of Waters." That all would perish—all their possessions taken from them by fraud, or force, unless they stopped the progress of the white man further westward. That it must be a war of races in which one or the other must perish. That their tribes had been driven towards the setting sun, like a galloping horse, ("NE-KAT-A-CUSH-E KA-TOP-O-LIN-TO.") That for himself and his warriors, he had determined to resist all further aggressions of the whites, and that with his consent, or that of the Shawnoes, they should never acquire another foot of land." To those who have never heard the Shawnoe language, I may here remark, it is the most musical and euphonious of all the Indian languages of the West. When spoken rapidly by a fluent speaker, it sounds more like the scanning of Greek and Latin verse,

than any thing else I can compare it to. The effect of this address, of which I have simply given the outlines, and which occupied an hour in the delivery, may be readily imagined.

William Henry Harrison was as brave a man as ever lived. All who knew him will acknowledge his courage, moral and physical, but he was wholly unprepared for such a speech as this. There was a coolness, an independence, a defiance in the whole manner and matter of the Chieftain's speech which astonished even him. He knew Tecumseh well. He had learned to appreciate his high qualities as a man and a warrior. He knew his power, his skill, his energy, his bravery. He knew his influence not only over his own tribe, but over those which dwelt on the waters of the Wabash and the Illinois. He knew he was no braggart—that what he said he meant—what he promised he intended to perform. He was fully aware that he was a foe not to be treated lightly—an enemy to be conciliated, not scorned—one to be met with kindness, not contempt. There was a stillness throughout the assembly when Tecumseh had done speaking, which was painful. Not a whisper was to be heard—all eyes were turned from the speaker to the Governor. The unwarranted and unwarrantable pretensions of the Chief, and the bold and defiant tone in which he had announced them, staggered even him. It was some moments before he arose. Addressing Tecumseh, who had taken his seat with his warriors, he said: "That the charges of bad faith made against our Government, and the assertion that injustice had been done

the Indians in any treaty ever made, or any council ever held with them by the United States, had no foundation in fact. That in all their dealings with the red men, they had ever been governed by the strictest rules of right and justice. That while other civilized nations had treated them with contumely and contempt, ours had always acted in good faith with them. That so far as he individually was concerned, he could say in the presence of the "Great Spirit" who was watching over their deliberations, that his conduct, even with the most insignificant tribe, had been marked with kindness, and all his acts governed by honor, integrity and fair dealing. That he had uniformly been the friend of the red man, and that it was the first time in his life that his motives had been questioned, or his actions impeached. It was the first time in his life that he had ever heard such unfounded claims put forth, as Tecumseh had set up, by any Chief, or any Indian, having the least regard for truth, or the slightest knowledge of the intercourse between the Indian and the white man, from the time this continent was first discovered." What the Governor had said thus far had been interpreted by Barron, the interpreter, to the Shawnœs; and he was about interpreting it to the Miamis and Pottowatomies, who formed part of the cavalcade, when Tecumseh with his warriors sprang to their feet, brandishing their war-clubs and tomahawks. "Tell him," said Tecumseh, addressing the interpreter in Shawnœ, "HE LIES!" Barron who had, as all subordinates (especially in the Indian Department have,) a great reverence and

respect for the "powers that be," had commenced interpreting the language of Tecumseh to the Governor, but not exactly in the terms made use of, when Tecumseh who, although understanding but little English, perceived from his embarrassment and awkwardness, that he was not giving his words, interrupted him and again addressed him in Shawnœ, said: "No, NO; TELL HIM HE LIES." The gutteral assent of his party showed they coincided with their Chief's opinion. General Gibson, Secretary of the Territory, who understood Shawnœ, had not been an inattentive spectator of the scene, and understanding the import of the language made use of, and from the excited state of Tecumseh and his party, was apprehensive of violence, made a signal to the troops in attendance to shoulder their arms, and advance. They did so. The speech of Tecumseh was literally interpreted to the Governor. He directed Barron to say to him, "*he would hold no further council with him*," and the meeting broke up.

One can hardly imagine a more exciting scene—one which would be a finer subject for an "Historical Painting" to adorn the rotunda of the Capitol, around which not a single picture, commemorative of Western history is to be found. On the succeeding day, Tecumseh requested another interview with the Governor, which was granted, *on condition*, that he should make an apology to the Governor for his language the day before. This he made through the interpreter. Measures for defence and protection were however taken, lest there should be another outbreak. Two companies of militia were

ordered from the country, and the one in town added to them, while the Governor and his friends went into council fully armed and prepared for any contingency. The conduct of Tecumseh upon this occasion was entirely different from that of the day before. Firm and intrepid, showing not the slightest fear or alarm, surrounded as he was with a military force, quadrupeling his own, he preserved the utmost composure and equanimity. No one could have discerned from his looks, although he must have fully understood the object of calling in the troops, that he was in the slighest degree disconcerted. He was cautious in his bearing, dignified in his manner, and no one from observing him would for a moment have supposed he was the principal actor in the thrilling scene of the previous day.

In the interval between the sessions of the first and second council, Tecumseh had told Barron, the interpreter, "that he had been informed by the *whites*, that the people of the territory were almost equally divided, half in favor of Tecumseh and the other adhering to the Governor." The same statement he made in council. He said "that two *Americans* had made him a visit, one in the course of the preceding winter, the other lately, and informed him that Governor Harrison had purchased land from the Indians without any authority from the Government, and that one-half of the people of the territory were opposed to the purchase. He also told the Governor, that he Harrison, had but two years more to remain in office, and that if *he*, Tecumseh could prevail upon the Indians who sold

the lands, not to receive their annuities for that time, that when the Governor was displaced, *as he would be*, and a GOOD MAN appointed as his successor, he would restore to the Indians all the lands purchased from them." After Tecumseh had concluded his speech, a Wyandot, a Kickapoo, a Pattawatomie, an Ottowa, and a Winnebago Chief, severally spoke, and declared that *their* tribes had entered into the "SHAWNOE CONFEDERACY," and would support the principles laid down by Tecumseh, whom they had appointed their leader.

At the conclusion of the council, the Governor informed Tecumseh "that he would immediately transmit his speech to the President, and as soon as his answer was received, would send it to him; but as a person had been appointed to run the boundary line of the new purchase, he wished to know whether there would be any danger in his proceeding to run the line." Tecumseh replied "that *he* and his *allies* were determined that the *old boundary line* should continue, and that if the *whites* crossed it, it would be at their peril." The Governor replied, "that since Tecumseh had been thus candid in stating his determination, he would be equally so with him. The President, he was convinced, would never allow that the lands on the Wabash, were the property of any other tribes than those who had occupied them, and lived on them since the white people first came to America. And as the *title* to the lands lately purchased, was derived from those tribes by fair purchase, he might rest assured that the right of the United States would be supported by the *sword*."

"So be it," was the stern and haughty reply of the "Shawnœ Chieftain," as *he* and his *braves* took leave of the Governor and wended their way in Indian file to their camping ground. And thus ended the last conference on earth between the chivalrous and gallant Tecumseh, the Shawnœ Chief, and he who, since the period alluded to, has ruled the destinies of the nation as its Chief Magistrate. The bones of the first lie bleaching on the battle-field of the Thames—those of the last are deposited in the mausoleum that covers them, on the banks of the Ohio. Each struggled for the mastery of their race. Each, no doubt, equally honest and patriotic in their purposes. The weak yielded to the strong—the defenceless to the powerful, and the hunting-ground of the Shawnœ, not only on the Wabash, but the Kansas, (where the small remnant of their tribe has been expatriated,) is giving place to the field of the husbandman—their tomahawks converted into plough-shares, and in a few years more the race will be extinct. Such is the inevitable destiny of the red man on this continent. Tribe after tribe, nation after nation, are passing away. So that in a few years their very name and existence will be unknown. And while the *pseudo philanthropist* busies himself with the wrongs, real or supposed, of the negro, he has not a tear to shed over the utter and entire destruction of a race, to whose kindness and hospitality to his ancestors, he owes his very existence as an American citizen. William Penn says "no *Quaker* blood ever soiled the tomahawk of an Indian." How much better for

the Indian and the white-man, would it have been if the whole Anglo-Saxon race had been *Quakers*? Truly, as a nation, we shall have a sad reckoning in the court of Heaven for the injustice done to the red man—whatever it may be for our conduct towards the black one.

As soon as the council had ended, Tecumseh embarked in his birch canoe, with four of his braves, for the mission he had long contemplated, to the tribes of the south and south-west, with a view, if possible, to form a confederation and an alliance, offensive and defensive, between the north-western and south-western Indians, with a view of driving the whites out of the North-Western Territory, and preserving intact the whole region of country lying between the Lakes and the Ohio, the Miami and the Mississippi, from the settlements of their hereditary foes.

It is very doubtful whether at this period, Governor Harrison was aware of the object of his visit. At any rate, whether he was or not, no efforts were made to detain him. Descending the Wabash, the Ohio and the Mississippi, he visited every tribe on the south-side of the two last rivers. The Choctaws, Cherokees, Chickasaws, and extended his visit to the Creeks, then occupying the country embraced in the present States of Mississippi and Alabama, and around the Gulf of Mexico. With all these tribes he held councils, and in fervent and eloquent terms, described the white-man's wrong and the red man's injuries. Enforcing, as far as he could among the respective tribes he visited, the more

modern, national sentiment that in "union alone was their strength." His motto, like that of our fathers' during the revolutionary struggle, as evidenced in the Colonial papers of that day, which have been preserved to the present time, was a disjointed snake with the words, "Join or Die." His argument, that the tribes of this continent, although speaking different languages, were but *one people*, created by the Great Spirit, with different habits, feelings, opinions, social and religious, from the whites, who were their hereditary enemies, and who, in the first settlement of the country, having been treated with kindness and hospitality by the Aborigines, had repaid these acts of friendship by the destruction of every tribe among which they had been located east of the Alleghanies. That in the north-west, under the pretence of purchasing from various tribes, who had no right to dispose of the *national territory* of the Indians, which was the *common property* of all the tribes on the continent, they were dispossessing them of their property by fraud and force, and would soon drive them from their hunting grounds, beyond the "Father of Waters," and ultimately into the Pacific. That the system of robbery committed on their brethren on the north-side of the Ohio would be extended south of that river, and that the tribes who dwelt there, the Choctaws, Cherokees, Chickasaws and Creeks, would be driven from their possessions, and that but a few years would roll round until they would not have a foot of ground to hunt on or cultivate, from the mouth of the Cumberland to the Belize. The history of the last half century will

answer how far these predictions have been verified in the action of the white man towards the red one, whenever the selfishness or greed of the one was to be satisfied by the spoil of the other.

Before Tecumseh left the Prophet's town at the mouth of the Tippecanoe river, on his excursion to the south and south-west, he had in different interviews with his brothers enforced upon him the absolute necessity of preserving peace with the whites, until his arrangements were completed for a confederacy of the tribes dwelling on both sides of the Ohio river, and with those dwelling on the Mississippi. He had in various conversations laid before him the propriety and benefits to be gained from such an alliance, and the immense power and influence to be derived from such a confederation in any future contest with the whites. That no blow should be struck against the settlements in Indiana and Illinois, until the means were provided by the Indian "*cöup d'etat*," to ensure their extermination, or at least, to force them out of the country they occupied, and drive them beyond the Ohio. The Prophet promised that in his absence no warlike measure should be undertaken, and that while strengthening his forces and enlisting the other tribes on the Wabash into his service in the common cause, he would preserve amicable relations with the whites, and by deception and chicanery, those potent weapons of Indian warfare, lull any suspicions that Governor Harrison might have in reference to the peaceable intentions of the tribes over whom the Prophet had so great an influence.

That no act should be done in the absence of Tecumseh, calculated to disturb the friendly relations between the tribes residing on the Wabash and the Government of the United States. No act done—no expedition undertaken, until Tecumseh carried out his plan by a union of the tribes north and south, for the common purpose of avenging their wrongs and expelling their enemies, the whites, from that portion of the territory in which they had commenced the work of settlement and civilization.

Believing that the Prophet would fully carry out his views under the pledges made him, Tecumseh felt no disposition to return until his plans were fully matured, and the co-operation of the southern tribes in this work of the expatriation of the white race from the valleys of the Wabash and Illinois secured. It will be recollected that he left Vincennes after his interview with Harrison, in the month of August, eighteen hundred and eleven. In the meantime, the latter through the traders and others, who were acting as his spies in the Indian country had been apprised, that movements were making among the northern tribes, that boded no good to the settlements in the southern portion of the territory. Frequent councils had been held by them, and frequent visits made by their chiefs to the Prophet's town, at the mouth of the Tippecanoe. There could be no doubt that some plan was concocting, and none more likely than that a descent was to be made at an early period upon Vincennes, and the settlements around it, with a view to their destruction, and the massacre of their in-

habitants. So strongly impressed was Governor Harrison with this belief, that he immediately made preparations to march with his troops, consisting of about eight hundred men, including the 4th United States regiment, under the command of the gallant Miller, to the Prophet's town to compel them to make a peace, which should be permanent, or to chastize them. The battle of Tippecanoe, fought on the seventh day of November, eighteen hundred and eleven, and the important results flowing from it to the whole north-western territory, form some of the brightest pages of Western history, and need not be recapitulated. Suffice it to say, that the defeat of the Prophet and his party frustrated the "coalition"—the results of which were looked to with such interest by Tecumseh—and destroyed the grand idea for which he so long and ably struggled, the confederacy of the Indians of the continent against their implacable foe, the white man. What the consequences of such an union might have been, it is fortunate for our race that we have no means of determining. He who holds in the hollow of his hand the destinies of men and of nations, for his own wise purposes gave us the victory, as he had done to our fathers forty years before, in the long and arduous struggle for our independence.

Tecumseh was in the south, engaged in the mission which took him there, when the battle of Tippecanoe was fought. His chagrin, disappointment, and anger, when he returned and learned what had been done in his absence, are said to have been

overwhelming. He accused his brother of duplicity and cowardice, and it is said by those who knew him, never forgave him to the day of his death. He remained but a short time with his tribe, and on the breaking out of the war with Great Britain, in eighteen hundred and twelve, joined Proctor at Malden, with a party of his warriors, and as in life, so in death, was found the brave and noble, but implacable foe of the white race, when at the river Raisin, in a contest with his old enemies he found a warrior's rest and a warrior's grave—battling bravely with his foes, for what he no doubt honestly believed were the rights of his people, against the aggression of those who had most cruelly and unjustly wronged them. Peace to his ashes.

I cannot conclude this brief and unsatisfactory note, in reference to one of the most distinguished Indian Chieftains that ever figured on this continent, and one who played a most important part in the affairs of the north-western territory during its colonial period, without relating an incident in his history but little known, and which I had from one of the parties connected with it: an incident so expressive of the noble and chivalrous nature of this distinguished warrior, under circumstances which would have led others of his tribe and kindred to play a very different part, that I should be doing injustice to his character were I not to relate it.

In the spring of eighteen hundred and eleven, and previous to the visit of Tecumseh to Vincennes, it

became a matter of deep interest to Governor Harrison to ascertain the true feeling of the north-western tribes towards the whites, and especially that of the Shawnœs, governed by the Prophet, and who it was well understood were by no means friendly. In fact, the Governor had understood from persons he deemed perfectly reliable, that the Shawnœs, aided by their confederates, intended shortly to make a foray upon Vincennes, and the lower settlements of the Wabash. Anxious to ascertain the true state of the case, and if so, to make the necessary preparations to repel the attack, as he supposed, contemplated. He sent Captain W., afterwards Gen. W., with B., the Indian interpreter, and a flag of truce to the Prophet's town, with the *ostensible* purpose of inviting the Prophet, Tecumseh, and the other chiefs of the Shawnœ tribe, to a conference with him at Vincennes. Capt. W. readily undertook the mission. No braver or better man ever lived, and no man better qualified to undertake so important and dangerous a mission. Dangerous, because if the enterprise contemplated, was to be undertaken by the Indians, no great time would elapse before it was executed. And in accordance with all rules of action among the Aborigines, the blow would be struck speedily and secretly. The detention of the messenger at the Prophet's town until the scheme was executed, was almost certain, and in such a case, death inevitable. It was also a matter of great importance to the Shawnœs, whose language he spoke fluently, to get hold of B. the interpreter, for whom they had no affection, and

without whose aid and assistance, it was thought the Governor would be greatly embarrassed.

Reflections of this kind carried no terror to the gallant W. His superior had given him the orders, and at all hazards, personal or otherwise, he deemed it his duty to carry it out. With the interpreter, and carrying a flag of truce, he took his departure from the "Post," and on the afternoon of the fifth day arrived at the Prophet's town. Their reception was of the most friendly character—the hospitality of the Prophet most unexceptionable. A cabin was prepared for them; bear-skins for their resting place, put in requisition, and every luxury in the way of game provided for their table. A proposition for a council on the ensuing day had been made to the Prophet, and cheerfully assented to. Every thing bore the appearance of a friendly termination of their interview, and the Captain was much rejoiced to find matters working so favorably in regard to the object of their mission. The mind of B., the interpreter, was not so much at ease. He was not deceived by these apparently favorable symptoms. He knew the Indian character well; had lived among them many years; spoke fluently the language of every tribe which dwelt on the Upper Wabash. Understood their customs, habits, manners and charlatanry well, and although but imperfectly educated, was one of the most remarkable men I ever knew. It is well known to those who were acquainted with the form of government among the Shawnees at the time I refer to, that the *wife* of the Prophet, under the royal designation of

"Queen," enjoyed an influence and power "behind the throne greater than the throne itself." And that while her husband, the Prophet, had an illimitable influence over the male portion of the tribe, not only by virtue of his office, but by means of his visions and direct communications with the "Great Spirit," whose revelations, through *this medium*, were as much believed in, and held canonical, by these untutored sons of the forest, as those of Joe Smith or Brigham Young are by the most devout Mormon of the Utah territory, she possessed an influence over the female portion of the tribe not less potent than her husband's—an influence felt, and often disastrously felt in the councils of the nation —particularly where the subjects of wrong and injury to the white race were matters of deliberation.

Towards sunset of the day of the arrival of Capt. W. and B., the interpreter, at the Prophet's town, a gathering of the squaws was noticed by the vigilant and wary interpreter, whose suspicions were awakened as he saw them wending their way from all parts of the town to a common centre, and as they passed the hut in which W. and himself had their quarters, they eyed it and them, with evident marks of attention and distrust, and pointed their fingers at B., who stood in the door-way, noticing their movements. B., aware that something was going on among the "softer sex" of Prophet's town, in which he and the Captain were personally interested, expressed his fears to his companion, and suggested that their detention and death was the most probable result of the deliberations of this

female congress, knowing as he did, the influence which the "Queen" exercised over the Prophet, and through him over the tribe. Much to his astonishment, the gallant Captain treated the matter with perfect indifference, as he stretched himself on his bear skin, with a view to a good night's refreshment, after the fatigue of five days' hard riding. The interpreter, however, felt but little disposition to sleep, while his companion gave evident signs of having forgotten all his troubles, if any he had. Matters remained in this situation until near midnight—W. fast asleep and B. awake to every passing sound. The night was exceedingly dark, and a heavy mist had overspread the low ground in which the village was situated, when a knock was made at the door of the cabin, and a low voice was heard calling the interpreter by name, in the Shawnœ language, with the request to make no noise, but open the door and let him in. To this demand an answer was given by B., enquiring in the same language who it was. To this the reply was made in the same still, low voice, "TECUMSEH." The Captain was awakened by the interpreter and informed that Tecumseh asked for admission. The reply was "to admit him." The door was opened and Tecumseh quietly and stilly entered. After making the door fast, and listening intently to ascertain whether there was any noise in the village, or any signs of watchfulness from the tribe, he told W. through the interpretation of B., that the squaws had held a council, presided over by the Queen, in which they had determined to apply to the Prophet to retain

the whites, and if necessary to take away their lives, and this determination having been made known to the Prophet, he had called a council of the tribe, in which the matter had been discussed, and the question settled to do so. That he, Tecumseh, with a portion of his warriors had strongly remonstrated, showing the impolicy and wickedness of the measure, in the strongest terms they could. That they had stated the fact, that these men had come there under the protection of a flag of truce, respected by all civilized or savage nations, ever since the introduction of it on the continent. That they came as bearers of a peaceful message from Governor Harrison, requesting that the Prophet and the other chiefs of the Shawnœs, would meet him in council at Vincennes. That whether they met him or not, his messengers should return in peace, and no wrong should be done them. That they painted in as strong colors as they could, the gross injustice that would be done these men in detaining them; the serious loss and injury to the tribe in so doing; that whatever might be their future determination in reference to the whites—whether peace or war—the result of such conduct must inevitably end in the latter—a war in which no quarter would be given or taken, and in which, illy prepared as the Shawnœs then were for such a contest, the inevitable result must be the capture of their town, and the destruction of their people. For under such circumstances, they could not justify their conduct to the other tribes in enmity with them, who with such a provocation, would take no part in the strug-

gle, but leave the tribe to fight it out with the whites, as best they could without any aid from them. That in a good cause, where the honor or the rights of his people were concerned, he would shed his blood, like water, in their defence; but in a bad one, such as he could not justify himself, such as the Great Spirit himself could not approve, he could not fight; and no good warrior could. That the Prophet and the whole tribe knew well his hostility to the whites, and that he felt no fear—dreaded no danger—sought every peril he could encounter, in every battle-field they met in, and would were it possible exterminate the race. But it must be in a fight that his heart approved and his judgment sanctioned. That they knew but little of him, with all his hatred to the white race, if they believed he would get one of their people into his power by fraud and falsehood, and then detain them by stratagem, or murder them in cold blood, as they would do if they detained these men, and then massacred them. That he was but a war-chief, commanding warriors, and had but little influence in the councils of the tribe, when opposed by the Prophet. That it was the determination of the council, no doubt influenced by the solicitations of the squaws, to keep them prisoners; and as to their future fate, it would depend upon circumstances—most probably they would be tomahawked or burnt at the stake. That the only mode of preventing this was to make their escape—that he had provided for this, if they were cautious and prudent. They must observe the strictest silence, take the

saddles and bridles and follow him. They did so. Cautiously and stealthily they made their way through the town. The darkness of the night, and a dense fog greatly aided them in so doing. Even the Indian dogs, so numerous and noisy at an Indian village, were undisturbed. Tecumseh led the way. After passing through the village, they descended into the bottoms of the Wabash, and when almost half a mile from the town, a sound like the gobbling of a wild turkey was responded to by another of similar character, from the underwood of the forest. They repaired to the spot, where they found their horses in charge of two young men, belonging to Tecumseh's party, mounted on their ponies. A few words in Shawnœ were whispered to them by their Chief. A brief adieu was bidden to the gallant and chivalrous warriors; and having saddled their steeds, accompanied by their guides, they made their way to the "Post" in safety. The Indians leaving them when in reach of the settlements, and returning to their tribe.

Such was the narrative given to me many years since by one of the parties to the transaction, long since gathered to his fathers, and it affords a most beautiful and striking illustration of the noble character of the distinguished Chieftain, the incidents of whose life, as connected with our border history, "few and far apart" I have faintly delineated.

IV.

PUBLIC LANDS.

THE DISPOSITION, SETTLEMENT, AND ALLOTMENT OF THE PUBLIC LANDS IN THE "OLD VINCENNES LAND DISTRICT," UNDER THE FRENCH, ENGLISH AND AMERICAN GRANTS.

The disposition, allotment and settlement of the public lands, within what is called the "Vincennes Land District," is so intimately connected with the history of the town itself, is so peculiar and anomalous, that a brief description of it will not be without interest. A volume would hardly suffice to notice the subject in all its details. Subjects as the citizens of the "Post" have been to the three greatest powers of the world, exclusive of the colonial dependence on Virginia, France, England and the United States, each of whom have had military possession of the place, and each of whom have regulated its civil government within the last hundred years, it may readily be supposed that its titles, and its laws, have been as variant as the codes of these three great nations, to each of whom in turn they have owed allegiance. Their titles have been regulated as well by the "*Coutume du Paris*," the "Customs of Paris," as the Common Law of England, and the Statutes of the United States. Each have made grants to the "ancient inhabitants," and under titles derived from each of the great empires above named, they have, for the most part, held

possession, and these have at different times been confirmed by the authority of the United States. It was peculiarly right and appropriate that this should have been done, and although no doubt many claims were allowed which were not strictly legitimate, yet their long possession, previous occupancy, and prior rights—even though no written grant or concession could be shown—made it the duty of the Government, after the cession of Virginia, to give to these people, where it could possibly be done, a title which from that time would be unquestioned. There being no public records here, whenever grants and concessions were made, (for not one in one hundred could probably read or write,) they passed by *delivery*, and possession of their land or lot was at least *prima facie* evidence of their title. The boundaries of these concessions were not very accurate or well defined; and the honest and unsuspecting Frenchman took *about* the quantity which he deemed conceded by the terms of the grant, which generally was so many "toises" or "arpents," "more or less." There was no action of ejectment known among these primitive settlers, and if the land of his neighbor was encroached upon, the line was settled by the arbitrement of their neighbors, or the "order of the commandant," whose decree in the premises was a finality, from which there was no appeal. Even the original concessions themselves, made by the French and British commandants, were generally made upon small scraps of paper, which it was customary, if placed anywhere, to deposit in the "notary's office." He

kept no record, but committed the most important documents to loose sheets, which in the changes of government, and in the lapse of time, came into the hands of those who fraudulently destroyed them, or thinking them of no consequence, lost or made way with them. By the law which governed these titles, the "Customs of Paris," they were considered "a family inheritance," and often descended to women and children. In one instance during the government of "Monsieur St. Ange," who was commandant at the "Post in 1774," a royal notary ran off with all the public papers in his possession. And in the office of Mr. Le Grand, who was notary from 1776 to 1778, Gov. Sargent, who was acting Governor in 1790, (Gen. St. Clair being absent,) states in his letter to General Washington, of the date, Vincennes, Knox county, July 31st, 1790, "that the records have been so falsified, and there is such gross fraud and forgery as to invalidate all evidence and information, which I might otherwise have acquired from the papers."

In addition to these grants and concessions to the "ancient inhabitants of the Post," there was a grant by one of the French commandants, while the country was under the dominion of Louis the 15th, of one hundred and fifty acres adjoining the village," (being that portion of the town laying between what is now Busseron street and the railroad depot, extending out into the prairie,) to the "*Piankashaw Indians*"—a tribe now, I believe, nearly extinct, but then claiming to bring five hundred warriors into the field. This tract was held by the Indians,

occupied by their wigwams, and by them cultivated and improved until about the year 1786, when they removed to the upper Wabash, and gave, or sold their respective interests as they moved off, to their neighbors, the French. Congress subsequently confirmed their titles. See Act, March 3d, 1791.

Subsequent to the capture of the "Post" by Clark, sometime in the year 1779, Col. John Todd was sent out here as Governor and Commandant, by the Executive and Legislative Council of Virginia, clothed with a "brief authority," for he remained here but a short time, passing on to Kaskaskia and appointing Mr. Le Gras, Lieut. Governor in his place.

During his sojourn, however, he played "some fantastic tricks," and assumed prerogatives in reference to the public lands, by no means to be derived from his gubernatorial powers, as the representative of Virginia, in this newly acquired territory. Notwithstanding, Virginia by act of legislation had expressly declared, before he was appointed, "that the lands north-west of the Ohio were expressly exempted from location, and no person should be allowed pre-emption, or any benefit whatever from settling the same," and the Governor was directed "to issue his proclamation forbidding all persons from settling on them, and in case of disobedience, to *make use of force* to remove them." As early as 1787, Congress passed the following resolution:

"*Resolved*, That the Secretary of War direct the commanding officer of the troops of the United States, on the Ohio, to take *immediate* and *efficient*

measures for dispossessing a body of men, who have, in a lawless and unauthorized manner, taken possession of "*Post St. Vincents*," in defiance of the proclamation and authority of the United States, and that he employ the whole, or such part of the force under his command, as he shall judge necessary to effect the object."

Todd went to Kaskaskia in 1779, where he issued his proclamation descriptive of the fertility and beauty of the "Valley of the Wabash," and strongly intimating that "authority was meant to be implied"—if not expressly given—to the Governor by Virginia, to make grants of land. That the Executive authority under Virginia in the northwestern territory, had the same right to make concessions of land as was claimed by the French and British commandants. Mr. Le Gras, his substitute at the "Post," seems to have had fewer scruples upon the subject of the right than his superior, Governor Todd. Not only did he exercise the power of disposing of the public domain, but he *delegated* it to the County Court, composed of four judges, organized under the act of Virginia, and who held their sessions at Vincennes. They did a wholesale business in the way of disposing of the domain—not only to others, but to themselves—not only by the "arpent," but by "leagues." The way it is stated to have been done is this: Three of the four judges were left on the bench, while one retired. The court then made a grant of so many "*leagues*" of land to their absent colleague, which was entered of record—he returned as soon as the

grant was recorded, and another of these "*ermined*" gentlemen left the bench, while the Chief Justice and the other Judges made a similar grant to their *absent friend*. After the grant was made and duly recorded, he returned—the third departed, and a similar record was made for his benefit; and so with the fourth. In this wholesale transfer of the public land, if continued, Virginia would have had but a small donation to make her sister States of the confederacy, when she gave up the empire she held in the north-western territory "for the common benefit." Governor Sargent complains of their wholesale plunder of the public domain, in his letter to General Washington in 1790, and among the documents accompanying that letter, is the answer of the Judges to his enquiry, "by what right these concessions were made," and is as follows:

"To the Honorable Winthrop Sargent, Esquire, Secretary in and for the Territory of the United States, north-west of the river Ohio, and vested with all powers of Governor and Commander-in-Chief:

Sir:—As you have given orders to the Magistrates who formerly composed the Court of the District of Vincennes, under the jurisdiction of Virginia, to give you their reasons for having taken upon them to grant concessions for the lands within the district, in obedience thereto, we beg leave to inform you that their principal reason is, that since the establishment of the country, the Commandants have always appeared to be vested with powers to give lands. Their founder, Mr. Vincennes, began to

give concessions, and all his successors have given lands and lots. Mr. Le Gras was appointed commandant of "Post Vincennes" by the Lieutenant of the county and commander-in-chief, John Todd, who was in the year 1779 sent by the State of Virginia *for to regulate the government of the country*, and who substituted Mr. Le Gras with his power. In his absence, Mr. Le Gras, who was then commandant, assumed that he had in quality of commandant, authority to give lands according to the ancient usages of other commanders, and he *verbally* informed the *court* of "Post Vincennes" that when *they* would judge it proper to give lands or lots to those who should come into the country to settle, or otherwise, they might do it, and that he gave them permission so to do. These are the reasons that we acted on, and if we have done more than we ought, it was on account of the little knowledge which we had of public affairs.

We are with great respect,

Your honors most obedient,

And very humble servants,

F. BOSSERON,

L. E. DELINE,

PIERRE GAMELIN,

PIERRE QUEREZ, ⋈ his mark.

Post Vincennes, July 3d, 1790.

Whether his honor, "Pierre Querez," made "*his mark*" with his *pen* or his *sword*, as the sturdy Barons did, who wrenched the charter from King John, history gives no intimation. It is however but fair to presume that as one of the "Justices of

the quorum" established at *"the Post"* in 1790 by "John Todd of Virginia," who was *"sent for to regulate the government,"* that it was with his pen.

One thing, however, is very certain, "the schoolmaster was not abroad" much at the "Post" in 1790, or *"Judge Querez"* would have given us a specimen of his chirography, and which, as a faithful annalist, I regret to say, I believe he was unable to do. As an impartial historian, however, of the actings and doings of the "Post" seventy years since, I feel it my duty to state, that the land operations of the *"Honorable Pierre Querez,"* as one of the Judges of the "Court of Common Pleas for the counties of Vincennes and Illinois," have made their *"mark"* as well upon the Records of the Land Office, as those of the Court of which he was an honorable member. I find that in the Report of the Commissioners for "examining claims to land in the district of Vincennes, in pursuance of the act of Congress of March 4th, 1804," in a schedule of "cases *not* embraced by any act of Congress," and rejected, is to be found the following claims: "Thomas Flower claims an undivided third part of an undivided fourth part of a grant made by *the Court* to *"Pierre Querez," father*, and *Pierre Querez, son*, of a tract of land beginning at the River Marie, to White River, and *about ten leagues* deep, excluding from said grant any land that may have been granted, as assignee of Pierre Querez, father."

"The heirs of Isaac Decker, assignee of *Pierre Querez, father*, claim *two thousand acres*, part of the preceding grant."

"Jonathan Purcell, assignee of Pierre Querez, claims *five thousand acres* of the same grant."

"Thomas Flower, assignee of Pierre Querez, claims *twenty thousand acres* of the same grant."

"Thomas Flower claims an *uncertain quantity* of the same grant."

It is but justice to "Judge Querez" to say, that he was not alone of the Honorable Court to whom the whole country, to which the Indian title had been extinguished, was parceled out. Judge Gamelin seems to have come in for a fair share. For in the same document, I find among the rejected claims:

"Thomas Flower, as assignee of *Pierre Gamelin*, claims *forty-one thousand acres.*"

"Jonathan Purcell, assignee of *Pierre Gamelin* and Nicholas Perrott, claims *twenty-seven thousand acres.*"

Truly, if there had been a confirmation of these magnificent grants, the office of Judge would have been much more valuable and lucrative than it is in this hard-working and poorly-paid era, if we take our judiciary as an example.

These immense and unauthorized grants gave a great deal of trouble to the Government in the early settlement of Indiana, and for many years after. For as late as 1802, we find Gen. Harrison, under date of June 19th of that year, being then Governor of the Territory, writing to Mr. Madison, Secretary of State, as follows:

VINCENNES, June 19th, 1802.

SIR—The circumstances mentioned in this letter I have considered of sufficient importance to be communicated to the President. The Court established at this place, under the authority of the State

of Virginia, in the year 1780, (as I before have done myself the honor to inform you,) assumed to *themselves* the right of granting land to every applicant. Having exercised this power for some time, without opposition, they began to conclude that *their right* over the land *was supreme*, and that they could, with as much propriety, grant to *themselves* as to *others*. Accordingly, an arrangement was made, by which the whole country to which the Indian title was supposed to be extinguished, was *divided* between the members of the Court, and orders to that effect entered on the Journal—each member absenting himself from the Court on the day that the order was to be made in his favor, so that it might appear to be the act of his fellows only. The tract thus disposed of extends on the Wabash River, twenty-four leagues from "Point Coupé," to the mouth of White River, and *forty leagues* into the country west, and *thirty* east from the Wabash, excluding only the land immediately surrounding the town, which had before been granted to the amount of twenty or thirty thousand acres.

"The authors of this ridiculous transaction soon found that no advantage could be derived from it, as they could find no purchasers; and I belive that the idea of holding any part of the land, was, by the greater part of them, abandoned a few years ago. However, the claim was discovered, and a part of it purchased by some of those *speculators* who infest our country, and, through these people, a number of others in different parts of the United States have become concerned, some of whom are actually pre-

paring to make settlements on the land the ensuing spring. Indeed, I should not be surprised to see *five hundred families* settling under these titles in the course of a year. The price at which this land is sold enables any body to become a purchaser—*one thousand acres* being frequently sold for an *indifferent horse or gun.* And as a formal deed is made reciting the grant of the Court, (made as pretended under the authority of Virginia,) many ignorant people have been induced to part with their little all to obtain this ideal property; and they will no doubt endeavor to strengthen their claim as soon as they discover the deception, by an actual settlement. The extent of these speculations was unknown to me until lately. I am now informed that a number of persons are in the habit of repairing to this place (Vincennes,) where they purchase *two* or *three hundred thousand acres* of this claim, for which they get a deed properly authenticated and recorded, and then disperse themselves over the United States to cheat the ignorant and credulous. In some measure to check this practice, I have forbidden the Recorder and Prothonotary of this county from recording or authenticating any of these papers—having determined that the official seals of the Territory shall not be prostituted to a purpose so base as that of assisting an infamous fraud.

I have the honor to be, &c.,

WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON.

To the Hon. James Madison, Secretary of State.

No confirmation of the grants made by this "*Honorable Court*" was ever made by the Government;

and as the sums paid, "an indifferent horse or a rifle gun," for "two or three hundred thousand acres of land," were trifling for the original purchasers, no great loss was suffered by them; the purchasers *under them* may have "suffered some." Land speculations in these more modern times are not quite as cheap or extensive, *except in cases of railroad grants.*

I append here a copy of a "Court Grant" made by "Le Grand," Clerk of the Court, *in French*, from the old records of the Land Office in 1785, as a curiosity:

Savant le pouvoirs donnés a Mons'rs Lés Magistrats de la Cour de St. Vincennes, par le Snr. Jean Todd, Colonel et Grand Juge civil pour Les Etats Unis, (Signor John Todd, Colonel and Civil Grand Justice of the United States.) La sus ditte Cour, apres avoir examiné et murement deliberé qu'il est de necessité essentielle, que La Ville (the City of Vincennes) et la campagne, soist etablie par des habitants, pour le soutien et commerce du pais du Conté Des Illinois et St. Vincenne, et voyant le grand quantité des terres incultes, et qui n'ont jamais eté etablie, ni concedé, par aucune personne, et en vertu de les pouvoirs, La Snr. Le Gras, Colonel Commandant et President pe la susditte Cour, a respondre une requette et signeé, on il est ordonné, a moy Gabriel Le Grand, griffiér de la Cour, de concedér et accordér Henry Couprairer (his name was Henry Cooprider,) une terre de quatre cent arpent en circumference, size et située a l'ést du Marais de la ville, du chemaine du fort, aparent Bornée a Jean Couprairer; ét des autres coteés, au

terre non concedée, pour énjuir le dit Henry Coupraiter ses heirs. Et ayant causée en pleinne propriété possessions et jouïssance; comme bien a lui appartenant, en ce soumettant au reglement qui en seront fait par la puissance a ce sujét, et a etablir dans l'an et jour, et e'tenir feu et lieu. Donné au dit Coupraiter, pour lui servir et valloir, ce que de raison. Ce six Juin, 1785.

LE GRAND, Greffier, de la Cour.

En registré du Gref de la ville St. Vincenne, au folio 308.

That is to say in the King's English:

That the Court, knowing the power given to them by "SIGNOR JOHN TODD, COLONEL AND CIVIL GRAND JUSTICE OF THE UNITED STATES," after having examined and duly deliberated on the absolute necessity, not only to the "City of Vincennes," but to the whole country, that the lands hereabouts should be settled, for the supply and commerce of the "COUNTY OF ILLINOIS AND VINCENNES," and seeing the great quantity of land uncultivated, which has never been settled nor granted to any one—the Court, by virtue of the powers given to them, the Signor Le Gras, Colonel Commandant, and President of said Court, has responded favorably to the written request of "Henry Coupraiter," and directed me, "Gabriel Le Grand, Clerk of the Court," to grant and accord to said Coupraiter four hundred arpents of land, bounded, &c. He, the said "Henry Coupraiter submitting to all regulations made between a *potentate and subject.*"

All which is duly enrolled in the Records of Vincennes, folio 308, and was exhibited before the Board of Commissioners, as appears by their record, March 26th, 1804.

"Signor John Todd, Colonel and Civil Grand Justice of the United States," who, *seventy-two years* since, was "Tetrach of these Provinces," now constituting the great States of Indiana and Illinois, and whose word was law (and for aught I know gospel too,) to the simple-minded Frenchmen here and at Kaskaskia, who gave away townships of land on a mere written request; and "Signor Le Gras, Colonel Commandant and President of the Court," and the more humble but not less useful "Le Grand, Clerk," where are they? Echo answers—where? Long since gathered to their fathers—their name and fame unknown, except in the musty archives of the Vincennes Land Office. What would they say if, by the same great power that created and destroyed them, they were permitted to revisit the scenes of their past labors—were again to become denizens of earth—and witness the changes that have *here* taken place—were to stand upon the banks of the "Oubache" and view the population, wealth and enterprise of the Anglo-Saxon race along its borders—to see the towns which have risen as if by magic—the cultivated farms, the manufactories, the churches, colleges and schools?—to see in the place of the bark canoe of the Indian paddling along its clear waters, the steamboat loaded with our rich products destined for the sunny South, and bounding over its surface as if it had the vitality and speed of

the racer? Suppose they stood again upon the "*Indian Fields*," then the location of the *Piankishaw Village*, and extending their vision but a short distance, saw the steam locomotive, with its long train of passenger and freight cars, trailing like some huge anaconda across the commons, black with smoke and wreathed with steam, shrieking with its whistle and sounding afar off, giving out a screech compared with which the war-whoop of a thousand Indian warriors would be insignificant and unheard! Suppose again "Signor John Todd, Colonel and Grand Justice of the United States," wished to communicate with Patrick Henry, Governor of Virginia, or with Mr. Jefferson, and to inform them of his arrival here ,should seek out some "courier du bois," some half breed, to traverse what he thought was still the wilderness between Post Vincennes and Richmond—should be told that if he would walk a square, the message would be sent and an answer be returned in thirty minutes. Would not "the Grand Judge of the United States's" hair stand on end and his voice cleave to his jaws, as all these marvels of the nineteenth century developed themselves to his own and the muddled understandings of his companions, "Signor Le Gras, Colonel Commandant at Post St. Vincennes," and "Gabriel Le Grand, Greffier de la Cour," at the same place, in the year of our Lord, 1787? Such have been the changes, such the wonders, in but little over half a century. What will they be in half a century more? Let those chronicle them who succeed us.

At a very early period, under the confederation, the right of the settlers at "Post Vincennes" to their lots and lands became a subject of consideration by Congress. In the month of August, 1788, on the report of a committee consisting of Messrs. Williamson, Dane, Clark, Tucker and Baldwin, to whom was referred the report of a former committee respecting the inhabitants of Vincennes, the following resolution was adopted: *Resolved*, That measures be taken for confirming in their possessions and titles, the French and Canadian inhabitants and other settlers at "Post St. Vincennes," (this title of "*St. Vincennes*" is used in all the old acts of Congress, where the town is mentioned; though it was never understood by the "ancient inhabitants" that "Captain Francais Morgan de Vinsenne," its founder, was enrolled upon the calender of Saints,) who, on or before the year 1783, had settled there and had professed themselves citizens of the United States, or any of them, and for laying off to them the several tracts which they rightfully claim, and which may have been allotted to them according to the laws and usages of the Government under which they have respectively settled." At the same time, and on report of the same committee, instructions were given to Gen. St. Clair, then Governor of the North-Western Territory, and then on the Mississippi endeavoring "to extinguish the titles of any of the Indians to the east side of the Mississippi above the mouth of the Ohio," to take "Post St. Vincennes" on his route back, and pursue such measures as were directed under the resolution above

mentioned, for confirming the titles of the inhabitants. So far from being enabled to treat with the Indians for their lands on the east side of the Mississippi above the Ohio, the Indians manifested a belligerent disposition, and actually made an attack upon the settlement near Kahókia while the Governor was there, utterly refusing to meet in Council with him, either there or at Vincennes, which latter town was proposed as the place for holding their deliberations. War seemed inevitable; and the defenceless settlements at Kahokia, Kaskaskia, and Vincennes seemed destined for destruction. Governor St. Clair, therefore, without carrying out the instructions contained in the resolution above recited, left the Illinois country and hastened to the headquarters of General Harmar, commanding the troops in the Western Department, having his headquarters at what is now the city of Cincinnati, to concert with him a plan of an expedition against the Indians in the North-Western Territory, "which, if approved by the President, might disconcert the Indians, and place the settlements in safety." Before leaving the Illinois, Gov. St. Clair committed the execution of the resolutions of Congress to Mr. Secretary Sargent, then at Vincennes, upon whom the powers of Governor devolved in the absence of General St. Clair, who proceeded at once "to lay off to the ancient inhabitants of the Post the several tracts which they rightfully claimed, and which may have been allotted to them according to "the laws and usages of the Governments, French and English, under which they respectively claimed." He says

in the report he made to the President, "That a petition has been presented by the inhabitants of Vincennes, praying for a confirmation of the land held by them as Commons, containing about five thousand acres, which had been about *thirty years* under fence, which was intended to keep their cattle within its boundaries and out of their wheat fields. For (says he,) contrary to the usage of farmers generally, *the cattle are enclosed and the cultivated lands are left at large.*" Such was the indifference of these primitive inhabitants in reference to their titles, that although they claimed this land under a grant of one of their Commandants a half a century before, they had not a scrap of paper to evidence their right to it. Congress, however, on the recommendation of Col. Sargent, subsequently confirmed their title, and the property has since been divided and sold out.

"I have (says he) another petition, signed by *one hundred and thirty-one* Canadian, French and American inhabitants, all enrolled in the militia, setting forth that many of them were heads of families, in 1783," "that they were willing to perform an extraordinary share of military duty, and soliciting Congress to make them a donation of lands." "In justice to the petitioners (says Col. Sargent) I deem it incumbent on me to observe, that the commanding officer of the regular troops here, has been obliged, in some instances, to demand their services for convoys of provisions up the Wabash river, and from the weakness of the garrison and the present difficulties of communication with other posts and the Ohio, that he may

have frequent occasion for their aid, which I have no doubt will be yielded at all times with the greatest cheerfulness." By an act of Congress, approved March 3d, 1791, *four hundred acres* of land was given to "each of those persons who, in 1783, were heads of families at Vincennes, or in the Illinois country on the Mississippi, and who, since that time, have removed from one of said places to the other; and the Governor of the Territory north-west of the Ohio was directed to lay the same out for them, either at Vincennes or in the Illinois country, as they shall severally elect." These are what are now styled "Donation Tracts."

Never were a set of men more justly entitled to this grantthan the old French settlers at Vincennes and on the Mississippi. Whether as subjects of the "Grand Monarque," or of George the 2d and George the 3d—as colonists under Virginia or citizens of the United States—they had been loyal and patriotic. The change of Government seems to have made no great difference in their habits or manners; and as to their political opinions, isolated as they were from the rest of the world, a change of rulers troubled them but little. The revolutions of empires went on without any knowledge of theirs, until it was made known to them by a personal acquaintance with the French *mousquetaire*, the English grenadier, the American rifleman, or the United States' regular. Submissive and obedient, they yielded to the powers that were, made no complaint, offered no resistance, cultivated their common fields, sang, danced, smoked their pipes, were regular at the

morning matin and evening vespers, content to take this world as it went, and satisfied with the next if no worse than this. No people, perhaps, on the face of the globe were more contented or happy. But a new generation has arisen, and the progress of "Young America," it is to be feared, is likely, ere this century is ended, to spoil their ancient possessions and overturn the land-marks, which once marked the resting place of these "sons of St. Louis"—once extending from the Lakes to the Mississippi, through the rich valleys of the Wabash and the Illinois.

In addition to the grant of four hundred acres of land made by Congress "to the heads of families at Vincennes in 1783," another grant was made by the act above referred to, "of a tract of land, not exceeding one hundred acres, to each person who had not obtained any donation of land from the United States, and who, on the *first day of August, one thousand seven hundred and ninety*, was enrolled in the militia at Vincennes or the Illinois country, and had done militia duty. (See note in Appendix.) The several grants thus made are embraced in three claims: 1st. *Donations* to heads of families, who were here in 1783. 2dly, *Surveys* under grants or concessions made by the former French and English commandants. 3dly, *Locations* under what were called militia rights, and which have been confirmed by Congress. I cannot close this long note without introducing one more extract from the letter of Col. Sargent, Secretary of the Territory, and acting Governor, to Gen. Washington, then President of the

United States, of the date of July 31st, 1790, as evidence, if any were wanting, of the patriotism of the citizens of the "Post," the sacrifices they had made, the losses they had incurred on behalf of the United States, *not one dollar of which has been paid.* I do not speak of the depreciated currency which they received in the continental paper of Virginia, brought out by Clark and his troops, the only money he had in his military chest, to conquer an empire defended by some of the best troops in the English service during the Revolution, and which miserable trash, to this day unredeemed and worthless, was received dollar for dollar at par by the French inhabitants at Vincennes and Kaskaskia for supplies, without which Clark could not have held the country a week; but of those advances, in "PIASTRES," *silver dollars*, made by Vigo and others, including Father Gibault, and without which advances *in silver*, Clark could never have marched from Kaskaskia to Vincennes, conquered the place, and made Hamilton and his troops prisoners, adding by *that* conquest, and that *alone*, five great States to our Confederacy. Yet of the sum of nearly nine thousand dollars in specie furnished Clark in the campaign in the Illinois, in 1778-9, and for which Clark gave him bills on the "agent of Virginia," that came back protested "for want of funds," Vigo nor his heirs to this day has never got a dollar, either from Virginia or the United States. So with the good priest, "Father Gibault," who, with the same view of aiding Clark and benefitting the American cause, advanced him *seven thousand eight hundred*

livres, French money—equal to *fifteen hundred and sixty dollars* of ours—"who parted with his tithes and beasts only to set an example to his parishioners" to make equal sacrifices for the American cause; and who, for the want of this very money, (see his letter to Gen. St. Clair, Note 1,) "had to sell two good slaves, who would have been the support of his old age, and for want of whom he was dependent on the public." This good man and pure patriot, or his heirs or descendants, never, to this day, have received for these advances one dime, either from Virginia, who received the benefit of these advances, or the United States, who acquired the territory "without fee or reward;" and who, from the sale of it, has placed untold millions in her treasury. I will conclude this long note by a short extract from the concluding part of Gov. Sargent's letter to Gen. Washington, from Vincennes, of the date July 31st, 1790:

"Before I close this letter, Sir, I must take the liberty of representing to Congress, by desire of the citizens of this county, and a matter which I humbly conceive they should be informed of, that there are, not only at *this* place, but in the several villages upon the Mississippi, considerable claims for supplies before and since 1783, which no person as yet has been authorized to attend to, and which is very injurious to the interests and feelings of men, who seem to have been exposed to a variety of distresses and impositions by characters pretending to have acted under the orders of the Government.—The people of Vincennes have requested me to make known their sentiments of fidelity and attach-

ment to the United States, and the satisfaction they feel in being received into their protection, which I beg leave to communicate in their own words, by the copy of an address presented to me on the 23d instant."

True to their habits and instincts, these "children of St. Louis" were transferred from one Government to another—to Great Britain, to Virginia, to the United States—without a murmur and without a thought of the future. The records of the Land Office here show, that after cession of the country by France to Great Britain, in 1763, they took the oath of allegiance before "Rumsey, Sub-Lieutenant of his Majesty's 42d regiment, and Judge Advocate of the Province of Illinois, in 1768," sent out here, as he himself asserts on the record, "with power and authority to examine the land titles of the Province of Illinois, and administer the oath of allegiance to its inhabitants." To Helms, sent here by Clark in 1778. To Hamilton, who captured Helms, and retook the place in December of the same year. To Clark in 1779. To Harmar, St. Clair and Sargeant, on behalf of the United States. In the short space of twenty years, what changes were effected in the political condition of the inhabitants of the "Post!" We have no parallel on the continent. Always brave, always obedient, always loyal, the idea of resistence "to the powers that be" never entered the head of the "ancient inhabitant.' He smoked his pipe, looked at the change with indifference, and acknowledged the power and authority of his "commandant," whether he was a Sub-Lieutenant of his

Majesty's 42d regiment, a Captain of Virginia Riflemen, or a Commander-in-Chief of the United States troops for the Western Department. "*Tout le meme chose*" was the ready reply, as he took the oath, kissed the book, shrugged his shoulders, and gave an additional whiff from his pipe. Happy, thrice happy people, in whose brains the treasonable doctrines of *secession* or *nullification* never entered.

V.

TERRITORIAL ACQUISITION.

THE EXTENSION OF OUR TERRITORIAL LIMITS TO THE MISSISSIPPI AT THE TREATY OF PEACE IN 1783—CAUSES OPERATING TO PRODUCE THAT EXTENSION—ERECTION OF FORTS BY CLARK—SURVEYS.

The foresight of Mr. Jefferson, even during the most arduous struggles of the Revolution, had recognized with the eye of the statesman, the future of that vast region of country lying between the Miami and the Mississippi, the Lakes and the Ohio, denominated the "North-Western Territory," then the property of Virginia, ceded by her to the United States, and now comprising the four great States of Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin. Notwithstanding the trials and difficulties which surrounded him—notwithstanding the cares and troubles attendant upon his office as Governor of Virginia, during the most trying times of the Revolution, and at a time when not only the soil of his

native State was in possession of the foe, but the seat of Government was migratory, as the British troops advanced or retreated—though he himself was a fugitive from Monticello, which had been taken possession of by Tarleton and his troops, he never lost sight of the great western empire, above described, which, thanks to the bravery of Clark and his gallant followers, had, by the conquest of Vincennes, become the property of Virginia. It was in the year 1779, after the capture of Hamilton, and when Clark had returned to Williamsburgh, then the seat of government of the "Ancient Dominion," that strong hopes were entertained of peace between the Mother Country and the Colonies, through the mediation of Spain; and Congress, in settling the basis upon which a treaty, if effected, was to be made, established the *uti possidetis* as the only terms on which a satisfactory arrangement could be made. The object of Mr. Jefferson was to secure, by *actual possession*, the immense Western Territory claimed by Virginia, to its utmost limits, extending to the east side of the Mississippi. He therefore "engaged a scientific corps to proceed under an escort to the Mississippi, and ascertain, by celestial observations, the point on that river intersected by the latitude thirty-six degrees thirty minutes, (36 deg. 30 min.,) the southern limit of the State, and to measure its distance to the Ohio." General Clark, fresh from the field of his victory—the captor of Hamilton, and the "Post," which had secured this immense Territory to his native State—was selected by Mr. Jefferson to con-

duct the military operations in that quarter. The selection was a fit and appropriate one; no better could have been made. He was instructed, as soon as the southern line on the Mississippi should be ascertained, "to select a strong position near *that point*, to establish there a fort and garrison; thence to extend his conquests northward to the Lakes, erecting forts at different points, which might serve as monuments of actual possession, besides affording protection to that portion of the country." Under these orders, *Fort Jefferson*, in compliment to the founder of the enterprise, was erected and garrisoned on the Mississippi, a few miles above the southern limit.

The result of these operations—of this expedition of Clark—was the addition, to the chartered limits of Virginia, of that immense region known as the "North-Western Territory," and comprehending the States above mentioned. At the treaty of peace with Great Britain, in 1783, the only pretence of claim set up by our Commissioners to this vast empire, was the conquest of it by Clark, and the establishment of the forts and garrisons to the Lakes by himself and troops, "serving as the monuments of our possession," and, carrying out the rule of "*uti possidetis*," was adopted as the basis of our negotiations. The British Commissioners had to yield to evidences so apparent of our use and occupation, and the Mississippi became our boundary on the west and the Lakes on the north, through the wisdom of Jefferson and the valor and enterprise of Clark. But where now are these monuments of title?—these emblems of our power?—these land-marks of

our possessions nearly seventy years since? Echo answers—where? Their very foundations are removed. The tall grass of the prairie grows over their dilapidated bastions. The plough-share of the husbandman has furrowed their parade grounds; and the hardy pioneer of the west has long since preëmpted the localities upon which they stood. More than one generation of the "Sons of the West," who have occupied these fields, have been gathered to their fathers; while they, as well as their present descendants, have been for the most part ignorant of the valor by which they were won, or the patriotism and wisdom which secured them. The names of Jefferson and Clark should have been household words in every log cabin, between the Miami and the "Father of Waters," and the present owners of these countless acres should never forget the memory of those, by whose courage and peril this immense empire was added to the Union. To no State but Virginia is the West indebted for this priceless treasure. It is her child; and cold be the tongue and palsied the arm that would not speak our *gratitude* for her princely gift, or *strike a blow*, if required, in defence of her honor and her rights. I very much doubt whether any other State in the old Confederacy, would, under the circumstances, have made such a donation "for the common benefit."

VI.

LA BALM'S DEFEAT.

The expedition of La Balm, undertaken in the year 1780, from the "Illinois Country," against Detroit, then a military post, and occupied by the British, I have never seen noticed in any work connected with the early history of the North-West, except a short notice of it in Mr. Dillon's first volume of the History of Indiana, where he briefly describes the fact, and mentions the defeat of his party. As a portion of the troops engaged in that expedition were raised at the "Post," and many of its "ancient inhabitants" were killed by the Indians, at the battle fought with them by La Balm, near the present site of Fort Wayne, I have thought all the information to be derived from the old records of the Land Office here, in regard to it, may not be uninteresting. It is to be regretted that a more particular account of the expedition cannot be furnished. Of the few parties who were engaged in it and made their escape, none now survive; and we have no record of it but what appears from the depositions taken to prove the actual settlement of parties resident here before the year 1783, and claiming the donation given to the "heads of families" at Vincennes previous to that year, of four hundred acres of land, as provided for by the act of Congress.

In looking over the old records of the Land Office, I find that among other testimony taken before the Commissioners appointed to investigate land claims, in the year 1805, is the following deposition taken in the case of "Antonie Rembault's Heirs," claiming a donation tract in right of their ancestor:

"*Francis Langeudoc* being sworn, deposeth and saith, That Antoine Rembault was here at Vincennes when the Americans took the country; that he was a single man, and lived with his father, until his father left Vincennes. After the departure of his father, which was before the Americans took the country, he lived with his brothers in the house left by their father; that he was killed *in the expedition of La Balm against Detroit;* that the children lived altogether in their father's house before Rembault went on La Balm's expedition."

"*Francis Vigo*, being sworn in the same case, deposeth as to the time when *Helms* and *Clark* came to Vincennes, and when La Balm carried his expedition against Detroit, says, That Captain Helms took Vincennes in June or July, 1778, that *Hamilton* took Capt. Helms, and retook Vincennes, about the 22d of February, 1779; that *La Balm* started on his expedition against Detroit about the beginning of August, 1780, from the Illinois; that deponent has been informed and believes, that La Balm was defeated in September of that year, near where Fort Wayne now stands."

The expedition of La Balm against Detroit was organized at the "Illinois," probably at Kaskaskia or Cahokia, where he enlisted about fifty men, and

marched to Vincennes for more recruits. What number he gathered here is unknown. It is probable his whole force amounted to about one hundred men. The troops marched to the present site of Fort Wayne, where they seized the goods of the British traders, who had establishments there, dealing with the Indians for peltries. It is probable that this was the origin of the attack made upon them by the Miamis at their encampment on the *River Aboite*, a small stream emptying into the Wabash above Fort Wayne. The whole party, but with few exceptions, were massacred There are a number of cases on the old records, where the claimants, in seeking a grant of land to which they were entitled in right of their ancestors as "Heads of Families in Vincennes," previous to the year 1783, state in their memorials, and make proof, that those under whom they claim "were killed in the expedition of *La Balm* against Detroit." The "Post," judging from the records, must have met with a serious loss in the number of its inhabitants, by La Balm's defeat. Great, however, as the loss was, it affords another proof of the loyalty and devotion of the "ancient inhabitants" to their lately adopted Government, and their zeal and patriotism on every occasion where they could in any way benefit the Americans in their struggle for independence.

VII.

ANCIENT GRANT.

The following is the oldest written grant of land to be found among the papers and grants in the Vincennes Land Office. I copy from the original:

"Nous, St. Louis Ange, Capitaine et Commandant pour le Roy, au poste Vincenne, avons concedé a Marie Joseph Richard, veuve, une terre de sept arpent de faces, sur cinquant de profondeur, situé au bas du petit roche, tenant des deux coté a desterres non concedé, la presente et en reconnoissance des bons services, qu'il a rendu, a sa Majesté en servan d'interprete au Sauvage, pour le detachment de Monsieur Aubry, venant des Illinois pour le Detroit, lui ayant concedé pour son utilité; et avons signé au poste, le quinzieme Juin, mille septe cent cinquante neuf. ST. ANGE."

Which, translated, is as follows:

"We, Louis St. Ange, Captain and Commandant for the King at Post Vincennes, have granted to Marie Joseph Richard, widow, a tract of land, seven arpents front and fifty arpents deep, situated below the Little Rock, bounded on two sides by land not granted. The present is in remembrance of the good services which he (her husband) has rendered his Majesty in serving as Indian interpreter for the

detachment of Monsieur Aubry coming from the Illinois, and destined for Detroit, granted as her own. Signed at the Post, the 15th of June, 1759."

Ninety-seven years since!

VIII.

"WESTERN SUN."

THE FIRST PAPER PRINTED IN INDIANA TERRITORY—THE EDITOR—AND THE DIFFICULTIES ATTENDING ITS ESTABLISHMENT.

A work professing to be a history of the settlement and early history of Vincennes would be very imperfect indeed, did it not give at least a passing notice of the first newspaper press established in the place; and especially would it be an unpardonable omission, when that event is almost co-eval with the advent to the place of the Anglo-Saxon race. The establishment of a newspaper in a place is an important era in its history. The press in modern times has become the great conduit through which intelligence is generally disseminated among the masses. It brings communities in close contact with each other, and tends in an eminent degree to enlighten, refine and elevate the character of the masses generally. Sometime in the year 1803, my old friend, Elihu Stout, at that time a citizen of Kentucky, determined to emigrate to the Indiana Territory, and commence the publication of a news-

paper at Vincennes, at that time the capitol of the Territory. The entire Territory was then a wilderness, with no roads or other avenues of communication, and the greatest difficulties and dangers had to be encountered in traveling from one part of the Territory to another. The settlements were few and far between, and almost the entire Territory was yet in the possession of the Indians. It was at that time an undertaking of no easy performance, and any individual, to be successful in it, must combine in an eminent degree the qualities of firmness and perseverance. Fortunately, Mr. Stout possessed these qualities, and was not deterred on account of the difficulties in his way; and no sooner had he determined upon the enterprise than he commenced preparations for executing it. For this purpose, about the last of March, 1804, he purchased a press and type in Frankfort, Kentucky, and these, with a small amount of printing material, were shipped on the Kentucky river in a small craft for Vincennes. Mr. S. immediately set out on horseback, and reached Vincennes on the 4th of April, 1804, and procured a room for the reception of the type and press, which did not arrive until sometime in June, having been transported all the way by water on boats propelled by hand. As soon as they arrived, however, Mr. Stout commenced preparations for issuing a paper, which was called the "Indiana Gazette," and on the 4th day of July, 1804, the first number of that paper was issued, and its publication continued with all possible regularity for about eighteen months, when its publication was

suspended, on account of an accident by fire, until other materials could be procured. These were procured, as soon as circumstances would permit, from Kentucky, and the publication of the paper was resumed, its name being changed to that of the "WESTERN SUN." This was the first newspaper established in the Indiana Territory, now comprising the four great States of Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin, and the second in all that district of country known as the "Territory northwest of the Ohio." Its publication was regularly continued by Mr. Stout until the month of November, 1845, when he was appointed post-master at this place, and sold out his press and closed his labors as an editor. The publication of the paper for many years was continued under many and great disadvantages. The Territory was very sparsely settled, and a large majority of the inhabitants of this place were French, who could not read, and assisted in no way to support the paper. All his printing materials had to be transported from Georgetown, Kentucky, that being the nearest point where they could be procured. And there being no public conveyances at the time, he was compelled to provide means for transporting them himself. And for many years he was compelled to transport all his printing materials on horse-back, taking with him three horses, one for riding and two for packing. But notwithstanding these difficulties Mr. Stout continued the regular publication of his paper for upwards of forty years. He has in his possession regular files of his paper, bound in vol-

umes, which contain much interesting and valuable information. I am happy to say that the venerable editor, the "Nestor" of the Western press, is still alive, respected and beloved, and holding the office of Recorder of Deeds, an office conferred on him by the almost unanimous vote of his fellow-citizens. Long may he live to retain it.

IX.

CATHOLIC CHURCH.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AT VINCENNES—ITS EARLY ESTABLISHMENT AND PROGRESS—ITS INFLUENCE UPON THE INDIAN TRIBES ALONG THE VALLEY OF THE WABASH.

It is not beyond the memory of the "oldest inhabitant" of the Post—indeed it is within the recollection of all who dwelt here forty years since—that fronting on Water, and running back on Church street, towards the present cathedral, there was a plain building, with a rough exterior, built of upright posts, "chunked and daubed," to use an architectural expression, purely western, with a rough coat of cement on the outside; in width about twenty feet; in length about sixty; one story high, with a small bellfry, and an equally small bell, now used at the more elegant and symmetrical building—one for architectural design and beauty not exceeded in the State—the Cathedral; and which yet

rings out the "angelus" as it had done for the last hundred years, calling the descendants of those who worshipped here forty years since, to the daily religious duties prescribed by their ancient church. The building I have described—placed in the cemetery where the various mortuary memorials, which piety and affection had dedicated to those who had gone before them, headed with the symbol of their faith, and for the most part of wood, the inscriptions from moss and time almost illegible—was the ancient church of "St. Francis Xavier." When built, and by whom, it is impossible, at this late period, to determine. There can be little doubt, however, that it was erected under the auspices of the Reverend Father, who accompanied the French troops here in the early part of the eighteenth century, and was, without doubt, the only church used here for Catholic worship until the foundations of the new edifice, which has superseded it, were laid, and that building prepared for worship. Around that primitive church on Sundays and Fast days might be seen the patriarch of his flock, with blanket *capot*—a blue cotton handkerchief around his head, with a pipe in his mouth, and with his family seated in chairs, in his untired cart, which had never known the use of iron, drawn by a Canadian pony, and conveying *his* generation, as his fathers before him had done *theirs*, to the worship of the same God, and in the same manner, and after the same creed as their ancestors, for centuries before, had worshipped in "La Belle France," from whose shores they had been transplanted to those

of the St. Lawrence. If perfect and sincere belief in the creed they professed, an ardent and sincere devotion to that Church, a strict observance of all the rites and ceremonies prescribed by that church, the regular attendance on its ministrations, a faith in its teachings and doctrines that knew no change constitute the Christian—and without these no man can be one—the French population at Vincennes were a religious people during the last century, whatever may be their condition now. It is true that the services of morning mass being over, they sought recreation and pleasure wherever they could find it, and sometimes in a mode which, to the Puritan notions of a New England man, might not seem strictly in accordance with his conception of the observance of the Sabbath.

In all the private relations of life they were upright, honorable and honest. Hospitable to an extent probably unknown among people of a different origin, they bid you welcome to their habitations, and were always glad to make you their guest. For many years after the Americans had taken possession of the country, there were no taverns, and "the stranger within their gates" was as much domiciled among them during his stay, as if he had been one of the family.

It is to be regretted that the history of this small chapel, dedicated to "St. Francis Xavier," its patron saint, has not been preserved in the archives of that church now remaining. They open only as late as April 21st, 1749. That before that time, the chapel had been used for worship, and aside

from its regular services, births, baptisms and deaths had been noted on its records, and memoranda kept, there can be no doubt; for as early as 1712, at least, Father Mermet had been sent here as missionary, and had the celebrated discussion with the Indian medicine man, as noted in the address, and from the first settlement in the Valley of the Wabash by the French, there had been a missionary here, as well as at "Ouiatanon," at the mouth of the Wea, just below the present site of Lafayette. I myself have seen, many years since, a manuscript in Indian and French, of the ritual and prayers of the Catholic church, made by the Jesuits at Ouiatanon, and a conversational dictionary in the same language (the Miami), made at a very early period, while stationed among the Indians on the upper Wabash, and both in good preservation. What became of them I never have learned. They were preserved in the library of the church at this place. The settlement at Ouiatanon was broken up—the troops came here, while a portion of the inhabitants returned to Canada, and part came to Vincennes. It is a singular fact, but no less true, and highly creditable to the zeal, the learning, and the piety of the priests here, that the modest and unpretending log chapel, which I have attempted to describe, sent out from its altar four of the Bishops of the American Catholic Church. They were

"Benedict Joseph Flaget, Bishop of Bardstown and Louisville;

"Arch Bishop Blanc, of New Orleans;

"Jean Jean, his colleague here in the church in

1818, and appointed Bishop of New Orleans, but declined the appointment;

"Bishop Chabrat, Coadjutor Bishop of Bardstown and Louisville."

In addition to these, two of the priests who have officiated at the cathedral, have been raised to the high honor of Bishops:

"La 'Hailandiere, Bishop of Vincennes;

"Martin, Bishop of Nachitoches, Louisiana."

So that *six* dignitaries of the Catholic church of the United States, holding high rank and character, have officiated as priests at Post Vincennes, and *three* out of that number commenced their clerical career here.

It would be an interesting sketch, if we had the facts, to trace the history of the church of St. Francis Xavier, from the commencement of the settlement of the "Post," down to the present time, but we are unable to do so. We have no records, and few legends. It is now I think a matter of history, that the Jesuit missionary, Mermet, who officiated at Kaskaskia, in the latter part of the seventeenth century, and the commencement of the eighteenth, was here before the year 1712, accompanying the Sieur Juchereau, a Canadian officer, who came from the French posts on the Mississippi, to establish a military post here. It is fairly to be presumed that "Father Senat," who accompanied "Vinsenne," in the expedition against the Chickasaw Indians, in 1736, in which engagement he was taken prisoner, and burnt at the stake, although he might

have escaped, (preferring to remain and solace and assist the prisoners,) officiated here previous to the departure of the troops on that expedition; but this is but mere conjecture. The first entry on the church records here, is dated April 21st, 1749. There is neither title page nor introduction. The first entry is the certificate of marriage between "Julien Trattier, of Montreal, Canada, and Josette Marie, the daughter of a Frenchman and an *Indian woman.*" The only baptisms recorded during the year, are those of the *Indian adults.* One of the first deaths was Madam Trattier, aged eighteen years, whose marriage we have above recorded. She was but a short time a bride, having been buried in December, 1750, in the church, under her pew, on the "Gospel side"—so says the record. The resident priest was "Father Sebastian Louis Meurin." All certificates except those of deaths are signed by "M. de St. Ange, Lieutenant of Marines and Commandant for the King, at Post Vincennes." Father Meurin left in 1753. His last official act was the burial of "the wife of a Corporal in the garrison, March, 1753." He was succeeded by "Father Louis Vivier." His first recorded act is a marriage, May 20th, 1753. On the 24th of the same month he buried "*Pierre Leonardy, Lieutenant of the garrison.*" His last record is dated August 28th, 1756. The number of baptisms and marriages is small, but increasing. Half of them are of "*Red or Indian Slaves,*" belonging to the Commandant and to the inhabitants. It was a number of years after the

departure of the Jesuits, who had officiated as priests until about the year 1760, that another priest visited Vincennes. During the interregnum, one "Philibert," Notary Public, administered baptism as a *layman*, privately, and duly recorded the names of those to whom he administered the rite, on the register.

In February, 1770, "M. Gibault, Vicar General of the Bishop of Quebec, for Illinois and the adjoining counties," made his first visit to Vincennes. In March he returned to Kaskaskia, the usual place of his residence, but for several years continued to pay occasional visits to the Post. He was for a time the only priest in Indiana. "His zeal and energy were wonderful, his labors almost surpassing belief." We have in a former part of this work devoted several pages to the exertions of this great and good man. We find from the records of the church, that in July, 1778, he was at Vincennes, exerting himself successfully in inducing the French inhabitants to declare in favor of the United States, against Great Britain. In the wooden chapel of "St. Francis Xavier," which we have before described, (and which, if for no other reason should be made historical,) he administered to them the oath of allegiance to the United States, in the most solemn manner. Being from *Canada*, he was an *English subject*, and risked everything in taking part with the Americans. He conciliated the Indian tribes, and rendered them friendly to the Americans. Nor can there be a doubt that the efforts of this good friend, with the aid of Vigo, and the

bravery and skill of Clark, acquired the whole of the North-Western Territory, as a rich appanage to that which the United States already held. "It is a remarkable fact, (says Bishop Spaulding in his life of Bishop Flaget, one of the early pioneers of the church at Vincennes, and to whose work I am greatly indebted for its chronological history,) and highly creditable to the French settlers, and indicative of the humanizing influence of the Catholic religion, that during the period of which we are speaking, there is not found among the numerous deaths recorded, a single instance of a *murder committed by an Indian!* Nor is there in the register any intimation of hostile feelings entertained by even one of the tribes against the whites." In July, 1779, M. Gibault again visited Vincennes, then in possession of the Americans. He remained three weeks, discharging the duties of his office. Five years elapsed without a visit from a priest, when M. Gibault reappeared in 1784, accompanied by the Rev. M. Payet. In May, 1785, M. Gibault established himself at the "Post," as the resident pastor. He remained here until October, 1789, when he finally left Vincennes, having probably been recalled to Canada by the Bishop of Quebec. A layman, Pierre Mallet, acted as "guardian of the church," having been thus appointed by M. Gibault, until the arrival of M. Flaget, in 1792. In 1793, the small-pox raged with great violence. In that year there were no less than *seventy-six* deaths among the parishioners, and M. Flaget, exhausted with his "labors of love" among the people, nearly fell a vic-

tim to the pestilence. M. Flaget remained here nearly two years, when he was recalled to Baltimore by his superiors. No man was ever more beloved by his parishioners than this excellent man and most exemplary priest. The "ancient inhabitants" speak of him to this day, with unqualified love and admiration. So entirely devoted were the people of Vincennes to him, that when he took his final leave of them, to spare their feelings, he took his departure as if going to Kaskaskia. Nor was it until his escort returned, that the people learned that he had probably left them forever. M. Rivet succeeded him as priest, and remained here until his death, in 1804. There appears to have been no regularly stationed priest here for a period of about two years. Those who officiated here were here but a short time, and were attached to the missions in the Illinois, or to the diocese of Kentucky. M. Flaget, consecrated "Bishop of Bardstown," revisited Vincennes in 1814, much to the joy of those of his old parishioners who were living; and again in 1819, in 1823, and 1832, which was his last visit, to meet Bishop Rosati, with a view of recommending some fit person to the head of the See of Vincennes. Their choice fell upon that most excellent man, and learned and pious prelate, Dr. Simon Bruté, of Emettsville, Maryland. The first Bishop of Vincennes, Bishop Flaget, died at Louisville, in the month of February, 1850, full of years, ripe in ecclesiastical honors, and universally beloved by all who knew him. The small chapel of "St. Francis Xavier" has been turned into a cathedral—the

parish, which in the last half century had not even a settled priest, but depended on the ministrations of those who occasionally came here from abroad, has become the head of a diocese. While such has been the progress of the church, that even this, within the last year, has been divided; and instead of the single priest, who once distributed the messages of love and peace to a few poor Frenchmen, Indiana has now two diocesan Bishops, probably sixty priests, one hundred and twenty churches or chapels, and a Catholic population of not less than eighty thousand inhabitants. Truly, the small wooden chapel of "St. Francis Xavier," has been the "Alma Mater" of the Catholic church in Indiana.

It is an historical fact, whatever we Protestants may say to the contrary, that the influence of the Catholic priests, particularly the Jesuits in the eighteenth century, over the tribes which surrounded them, and for whose conversion to Christianity they labored with unceasing devotion and energy, was much greater than those of any other religious denomination that ever ministered to their spiritual wants; this is peculiarly the case with those tribes dwelling in that portion of the North-Western Territory, out of which has been created the State of Indiana. No class of men ever endured greater sufferings, or made greater sacrifices for the cause they were engaged in. From the time when Marquette discovered the Mississippi, in 1673, until the suspension of the order of Jesuits, in 1773, a century after, these followers of the cross were "instant in season and out of season," in their efforts

to convert the Indian tribes dwelling between the Lakes and the Ohio—the Miami and the Mississippi. Even those who were temporarily assigned to duty at the French villages on the Wabash and Mississippi, viewed the conversion of the Indian as the chief object of their missions in the West, and inscribed upon the registers of the church the great fact, that while ministering to the wants of others of their flock, the great purpose which called them here was to convert, if possible, the savage, to the adoration of the only true God. Hence, Father Rivet, one of the most zealous and laborious of the order, inscribed upon the records of the church here, that he was "missionary appointed for the savages, exercising the ministry, *for the moment*, in the parish of 'St. Francis Xavier.'" And the same register shows the baptism and marriage of many Indians of the different tribes residing along the Wabash—the Pottawotomies, Miamies, Shawnees, Piankeshaws, and Weas—while performing his parochial duties at this place. This success was wonderful. Out of one village, composed of six hundred Indians, all of them were baptized, with the exception of five or six. They had to adopt the migratory habits of the Indians—they followed them to their hunting grounds, "lifted up their tabernacles in the wilderness," and administered the ordinances of the church to these sons of the forest, whenever and wherever an opportunity might offer. But it was not only toil, hunger, cold, that these missionaries of the Cross were called upon to endure, but many, very many were toma-

hawked, or what was far worse, burnt at the stake, with a cruelty and malignity which only the savage could feel or perpetrate. It is recorded of one of these followers of Loyala, that after having been tied to the stake, and prepared for the sacrifice, at the suggestion of one of the chiefs he was taken down, and both his hands cut off at the wrist, with a view, as was said, of preventing him from performing the offices of the church. The mangled flesh was seared with a burning brand, and the good man left in the midst of his tortures, to recover as he could. Strange to say, he did recover, and having been ransomed from the tribe, returned to France. When he presented a memorial to the head of the church to allow him, mutilated as he was, to perform high mass, the answer from the Pope was as eloquent as it was affecting:

"Indignum esset, Christi martyrum,
Non bibere, Christi sanguinem."

The gifts of potentates and powers, the resolutions of senates, and the decrees of academies and colleges, to the most meritorious of military, civil, or scientific men, fall far short of the pathos and gratitude expressed in this short answer to the prayer of the petitioner. The history of these men shows that neither danger nor death deterred them for a moment in carrying out the great object of their life, the conversion of the Indian tribes spread along the borders of our Northern Lakes, and along the valleys of the Wabash and Illinois. No sooner was it understood that their predecessors had perished, either at the stake or by the scalping-knife

of the Indian, than new recruits offered their services to fill their places. In fact, if we believe the statements of these men, which have come down to us, and there can be no doubt of their truth, a mission among these barbarous tribes, was a "labor of love" to these heralds of the Cross. Starting from Quebec, long before a white man had ever visited the great West, they traversed our Northern Lakes, established missionary stations along its borders, crossed the portage between the Fox and the Wisconsin, descended the Mississippi, established chapels at Peoria, then called St. Louis, at Cahokia, Prairie du Roche and Kaskaskia, at St. Joseph, Ouiatanon, and Vincennes. In fine, wherever between the Lakes and the Ohio, a chapel could be erected, at whose altar the Indian could be brought to worship, they set it up, and gathered around it every member of the tribe who was freed from the influence and charlatanery of their "medicine men." That their success was great, the love and devotion of that portion of them, small in number, which exist at this date, to the "*Robes Noir*," affords abundant evidence. And there are but few of the chiefs of those tribes, who once lorded it along the valleys of the Illinois and the Wabash, now transferred to their new hunting grounds beyond the Mississippi, but what wear the symbol of their Savior's suffering around their necks, to them a proud memorial of their conversion to the Christian faith. It is not for me to say, what were the influences which gave to these intelligent and well educated men, such an influence with the tribes

among which they lived, such a control over their conduct, that so effectually disarmed their animosity to the white man, and removed their prejudices to a very great degree against our race. But that it was so in a degree far superior to that of any other Christian sect, so far as the Indian race is concerned, is, I think, proved by all experience, in the various missions established among the tribes. The French have almost always succeeded in conciliating them, while the Anglo-Saxon has made but little progress in claiming their confidence or their affection. It may be that the manners of the two races may have something to do with it—the one always affable, always polite, always courteous —the other more a matter-of-fact man, and with but few of those qualifications which, on first acquaintance, give him credit, and induce the stranger to place his trust in him. It may be that the religious forms and ceremonies of the Catholic and Protestant churches, have had their influences in leading the Indian to adopt the creed of the first, instead of the latter. It may be, that that love of gain, so inherent in the one race and not in the other, has had the effect to direct the attention of one, to things temporal, to the neglect of things spiritual. For whatever may be said of the Indian race, they are as quick to discern the motives of men as their neighbors, the whites. A century and a half since there dwelt in the now State of Maine, along the Canadian borders, a large tribe of Indians called the "Abnakis." The Jesuits had established missions among them. The English and French

were at war—one of the villages of the "Abnakis" had been attacked by the English, and the chapel erected in it burnt. Peace having been concluded, and Boston being nearer to the settlements of the tribe than Quebec, the Indians deputized some of the principal men of the nation to go to Boston, for the purpose of engaging workmen to rebuild the church, promising to pay them for their labors. The Governor received the chiefs with great demonstrations of friendship, and treated them with great hospitality. At a council, he addressed them as follows: "My children, I desire above all things to re-establish your church, and will do much more for you than the French Governor, whom you call your 'Father.' It belongs properly to him to rebuild it, inasmuch as in one sense he was the cause of its destruction. In inducing you to make war against the English, what could I do but defend myself; while on the contrary, he, after persuading you to assist him in the war against us, deserted you. I will do much better by you than he ever did, for I will not only provide you with laborers for the erection of your church, but will pay them myself, and defray all the expenses of its construction. But it is no more than right, that being an Englishman, if I rebuild your church, I should also provide you with an *English pastor*, to take care of your church, and to instruct you in your religion. I will send you one, with whom you will be much pleased, and you can send back to Quebec the French Pastor, who is now at your village."

"Your language astonishes me," said the deputy

of the savages, "and I wonder at the proposition you have made us. Listen: When you came here, for you have known us long before the Governor of Canada became acquainted with our people, neither those who preceded you, nor your ministers, ever spoke to us of prayer, or the Great Spirit. They looked at our peltries, at our beaver skins, and our elk skins; and it was of them alone they took a thought—it was these only that they sought with eagerness. I could not furnish them in sufficient abundance; and when I furnished them a large quantity, I was their *great friend*, their *good brother*, and all that. On the other hand, my canoe one day going astray, I lost my way, and wandering for a long time uncertain which course to pursue, I found myself eventually in the neighborhood of Quebec, and in a large village of the Algonquins, whom the "Robes Noir" were teaching. I had merely landed, when a Jesuit came to see me. I was loaded with peltries. The Jesuit scarcely deigned to look at them. He spoke to me of the Great Spirit, of Paradise, of Hell, and of Prayer, as the only means of getting to Heaven. I heard him with pleasure, and enjoyed his conversation so much, that I remained at the village for some time to listen to him. In fact, the prayer pleased me so much, that I employed him to instruct me. I asked to be baptised. I received baptism. At last I returned to my own country. I narrated what had happened to me. Every one envied my good fortune. All wished to participate in it, and were desirous of seeking out the Black Robe immedi-

ately, and demanding baptism. Such has been the conduct of the French towards us. If you had seen us first, and spoken to us concerning prayers, we should have had the misfortune to pray as you English do, for we should not have had the capacity to discern whether we prayed right or not. So I shall stick to the French prayers. It suits me well, and I will adhere to it until the world is burnt and destroyed. Keep your workmen, your money, and your minister. I ask for neither."

MORAL.—In striving for the conversion of the Indian, it is better to talk with him about *prayers* than *peltries*.

X.

LIST

OF EFFECTIVE MEN BELONGING TO CAPT. PIERRE GAMELIN'S COMPANY AT POST VINCENNES, JULY 4TH, 1790.

1 Christopher Wyant, Ensign,
2 Peter Thorn, Sergeant,
3 Frederick Mehl, do,
4 Jeremiah Mays, do,
5 Richard Johnson, Cadet,
6 Robert Johnson,
7 Joseph Cloud,
8 Daniel Pea,
9 John Loc,
10 Godfrey Peters,
11 John Murphy,
12 John Laferty,
13 Frederick Barger,
14 George Barger,
15 Peter Barger,
16 Frederick Midler,
17 Benj. Beckes,
18 Robert Day,
19 Edward Shœbrook,
20 John Westfall,
21 Edward Johnson,
22 Joshua Harbin,
23 John Robbins,
24 John Martin,
25 Abraham Westfall,
26 James Watts,
27 Thomas Jordan,
28 William Smith,
29 Daniel Smith,
30 James Johnson,
31 Ezekiel Holiday,
32 Michael Thorne,
33 Solomon Thorne,
34 Daniel Thorne,
35 Charles Thorne,
36 Christian Barkman,
37 Abraham Barkman,
38 John Rice Jones,
39 Patrick Simpson,
40 John Wilmore,
41 Frederick Lindsy,
42 Mathew Dibbons,
43 Hugh Demsey,
44 John Culbert,
45 Robert Garavert,
46 Isaac Carpenter.