PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS

RICHARD W. THOMPSON

RECOLLECTIONS

OF

SIXTEEN PRESIDENTS

EDITION DE LUXE

IN TWO VOLUMES

List of Portraits

VOLUME I

Yours very truly.
R. W. Thompson

RECOLLECTIONS

OF

SIXTEEN PRESIDENTS

FROM

WASHINGTON TO LINCOLN

BY

RICHARD W. THOMPSON

"Let us forget party and think of our country. That country embraces both parties. We must endeavor, therefore, to serve and benefit both. This can not be effected while political delusions array good men against each other."—GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

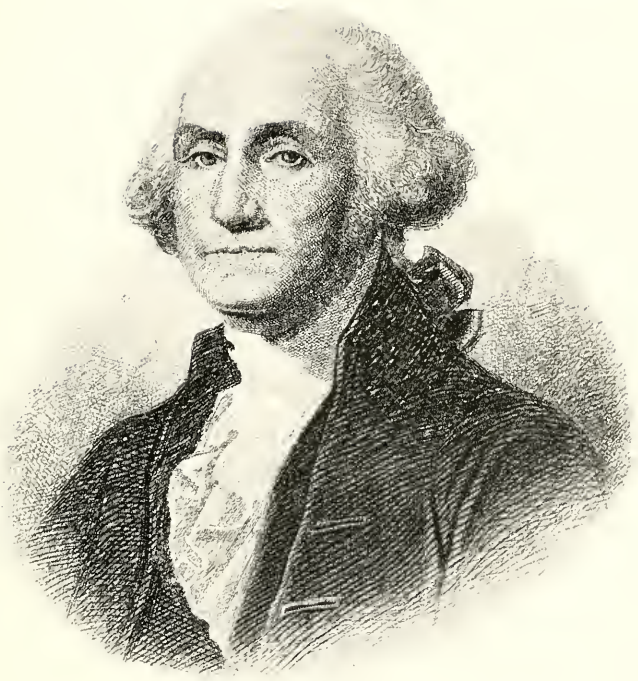
"Three-score and ten I can remember well;
Within the volume of which time I have seen
_____ ings strange."
—SHAKESPEARE.

VOL. I.

INDIANAPOLIS
THE BOWEN-MERRILL COMPANY
1896

PRESS OF
CARLON & HOLLENBECK
INDIANAPOLIS

GEORGE WASHINGTON



G. Washington

PREFACE

It having been understood among my friends that I have seen all the Presidents of the United States, except Washington and the elder Adams, their partiality has prompted the request that I should communicate to the public my recollections of them, and of other public men whom I have known personally during a life now past four-score years. To this request I have frequently replied that when my active intercourse with the world had ceased and the bustling affairs of life were laid aside, I would undertake the task. That time having arrived, I now begin the fulfillment of my promise.

My personal recollections do not reach back far enough to embrace any portion of the period covered by the administrations of Washington, the elder Adams, Jefferson, and Madison; and are only shadowy with reference to that of Monroe. But my early associations were such as to bring me from boyhood into immediate intercourse and under the direct influence of men of the Revolution, who stamped impressions upon my mind, with regard to early events and those who were the chief agents in producing them, which nothing intervening, howsoever stirring, has been able to remove. The scenes and incidents which attended this intercourse often re-appear with the vividness of present reality, and memory has lingered about them with so much

profit and pleasure that these impressions of early life have ripened into the opinions and convictions of my old age. Their admonitions of fidelity to the institutions they aided in creating are as "fresh about me" as if uttered yesterday, and are so noted in my "book of memory" as to have become indelible.

The complete history of a nation is not found in printed books, nor can it be compressed in the mere recital of events. Its spirit is embodied in the united energy of a whole population. Its philosophy can be discovered only in the unwritten occurrences which are preserved in the memories of those contemporaneous with them. It was well said by Shakespeare:

> "There is a history in all men's lives,
> Figuring the nature of the times deceased."

History has been called a labyrinth in which one may easily be lost. Be this as it may, it is undoubtedly true that some historians indulge in excessive flattery and others in indiscriminate detraction. The former find merit where it does not exist—the latter ignore it where it does. The excesses of both are misleading. Consequently, it often requires acute discrimination to ascertain what is true and what is false, as regards both events and individuals. And the patient investigator often finds his difficulties increased by the barriers which political parties have thrown up, and which confront him unexpectedly.

Nevertheless, we should not visit censure too lavishly upon political parties. Under a popular form of government like ours, they are beneficial when harnessed and restrained by discreet and moderate counsels. They then

become a safeguard against undue encroachments upon the just authority of the National Government, the States, and the people,—holding all the sources of power in proper equipoise. They become dangerous, however, when brought under the dominion of ambitious rulers who employ them to reward their friends and punish their enemies, without any regard to what the public welfare requires. When this occurs they threaten to corrupt the sources of political authority and breed disorders which, if allowed to remain unchecked, may become as fatal to the cause of good government as the fevers produced by miasmatic poison are to the human body. The wrecks scattered along the pathways of destroyed nations sufficiently attest this. When party excitement is responsive to honest and intense convictions it is commendable and not censurable. But when allowed to degenerate into animosity and hatred, it tends to obliterate the distinction between right and wrong—between justice and injustice. Those who then submit to its dominion are apt to delineate the characters of their associates in glowing colors, whatsoever their vices; and to cast censure and reproaches at their adversaries, no matter how virtuous they are. This is calculated to exterminate all confidence between individuals and is a menace to the peaceful intercourse of society.

It is not likely the time will ever come in this country, so long as our popular institutions survive, when party animosities will entirely cease. Such a time has not hitherto existed. It was more nearly reached during the peaceful administration of Monroe than ever before or

since. But that was a period when they were only smoldering, like pent-up fires, ready to break out again when the inciting causes re-appeared. When Jefferson, in his first inaugural, ventured to assert,—"We are all Republicans—we are all Federalists,"—he drew largely upon his imagination; for however much he may have desired this, he must have known that former antagonisms were not entirely extinguished, but had sown seed that would sprout, and grow, and bear the same fruit again. The political atmosphere was poisoned by their influences even during the administration of Washington, when all his energies were employed in patriotic efforts to fix the pillars of the government firmly in their places, and when a single false step upon his part might have wrecked our infant institutions. As the history of these partisan conflicts was among the lessons I learned from some of those who followed "the flag of liberty" during the Revolution and who vindicated the honor of Washington and the policy of his administration, it ought not to be wondered at that I have been thus furnished with a rule for the interpretation of much of our early history which might otherwise have seemed obscure. It is proper, therefore, to say that in many of the opinions expressed in these pages, I have been guided by this rule, which has been, during a long life, satisfactory to myself.

R. W. T.

CHAPTER I

GEORGE WASHINGTON

It is not easy to conceive of difficulties surpassing those encountered by Washington, from the beginning of his administration. No man had ever before been trusted with higher duties. He had to mark out paths for a new and untried government,—to reconcile conflicting opinions,—to pour balm upon bleeding wounds,—to quench factional and sectional fires,—and to steer the Union safely by the whirlpools that had engulfed the Confederation. Upon none of these had any light been thrown by the past experience of the country. Hence, it must have been manifest to him, and to all others, that if these ends were to be reached, it must be done by untried but affirmative measures of National policy which should operate alike upon all the sections of the Union,—neither permitting the large States to impair the just rights of the small, nor both combined to impair those of the Union. As the north star guides the mariner through the trackless seas, so was the "general welfare" of the united body of the people to be recognized by him as the chief object to be attained.

After Rhode Island had entered the Union by ratifying the Constitution he expressed himself in these words: "Since the bond of union is now complete, and we once

more consider ourselves one family, it is much to be hoped that reproaches will cease and prejudices be done away; for we should all remember that we are members of that community, upon whose general success depends our particular and individual welfare; and, therefore, if we mean to support the liberty and independence, which it has cost us so much blood and treasure to establish, we must drive far away the demon of party spirit and local reproach." And in speaking of the form of government, during the same year, he said: "The establishment of our new government seemed to be the last great experiment for promoting human happiness by a reasonable compact in civil society. * * * * To me there is nothing in it beyond the luster, which may be reflected from its connection with a power of promoting human felicity. * * * * That the government, though not actually perfect, is one of the best in the world, I have little doubt." Thus he exhibited, at the beginning of his administration, that lofty and patriotic spirit which animated him throughout, and which should be carefully held in remembrance when interpreting the measures of public policy with which his name is identified. That these sentiments were continually present in his mind, throughout his administration,—giving direction to all his official acts,—is as certain as anything in history. Even now, after so many years have elapsed and the borders of the nation have been stretched from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and the country has passed through the most serious and alarming trials, the public sentiment is fixed in the conviction that he, above all other men, is entitled to be known as "the father of his

country." If a single individual could be found to antagonize this popular belief, the very name of such a man would be odious.

Washington's administration represented a "consolidated" Union,—not centralized with the purpose to lessen any of the just powers of the States by creating a National Government with power either to absorb or impair them; but to protect and advance the "general welfare" by doing whatsoever was requisite to that end. The States were left with such of their original powers of sovereignty over their own legitimate affairs as would enable each one to exercise absolute authority over the interests and happiness of the community composing it. But as it was essential to a National Union that the interests and happiness of the whole body of people who compose the nation should be guarded by powers general in character, the Constitution wisely conferred these upon the National or General Government. The Union means this—nothing more nor less—and could not have been otherwise formed. Those who, by lessening its powers, endeavored to limit its authority in the necessity of dealing with foreign governments and affording protection against them, unwisely overlooked the more commanding necessity for holding the States in the bond of unity, so that by growth and material development, "the last great experiment for promoting human happiness," should be a complete success and not a failure. Washington, therefore, became not only the advocate but the exponent of these principles; and when he realized, early in his administration, that others in conflict with them were entertained, he was grieved by the

necessity which constrained him to call their advocates "ill-boding politicians, who prognosticated that America never would enjoy any fruits from her independence, and that she would be obliged to have recourse to a foreign power for protection;"—meaning France, as her revolution then seemed to assure the ultimate triumph of popular government over monarchy. The idea he then entertained, and cherished until his death, was that as the Union had been created by the American people for themselves and their posterity, it could be preserved and perpetuated only by freeing it from all entangling alliances with foreign powers and holding it in dependence, solely and entirely, upon the popular will. While he hoped, therefore, that the right of self-government would triumph throughout the world, and that kings would be dispensed with for the better security of human happiness, he steadily cherished the conviction that as Providence had guided this country to independence through all the perils of the Revolution, the same Providence had enjoined upon the people who composed the nation the sacred obligation of preserving it alone by such systems of domestic measures as were necessary to its unity and their own security. No man felt a deeper or keener sense of gratitude than he for the assistance rendered by La Fayette and his gallant comrades to the cause of independence. But when he said, with reference to the French Revolution, "My greatest fear has been that the nation would not be sufficiently cool and moderate in making arrangements for the security of that liberty, of which it seems to be fully possessed," he not only displayed his great wisdom and thorough knowl-

edge of the philosophy of history, but expressed, in advance, a fact now amply verified. It requires but little intelligence for the present generation to understand his wise and prudent statesmanship in resisting the efforts of "ill-boding politicians" to link our national fortunes with those of any European country.

Turning his attention, therefore, to the internal condition of the country, he was "sorry" to see that there were existing jealousies between the sections, which, if not allayed, might become dangerous to the Union. Tracing these to "a diversity of interests in the Union," he could readily see that as "common danger" had brought the States together, they could be kept so only by the same "spirit of accommodation" which constituted "the basis of the present Constitution." Consequently he employed all the authority placed in his hands by the Constitution and all the influence of his administration, to remove the existing jealousies between the sections, and to cultivate and strengthen the spirit of concession and compromise which had produced the Constitution and formed the Union. To his clear and comprehensive mind it was apparent that by this alone would it be possible to preserve the new government. And, therefore, he threw the whole weight of his character on the side of the national cause, because of the conviction that its defeat would imperil the Union and thereby extinguish the rays of light created by a constitutional government, and overshadow the future of the country with clouds foreboding a storm.

There is nothing I remember better than the opinions I frequently heard expressed upon these subjects, by the

Revolutionary compatriots of Washington,—men who, without being politicians, had aided in gathering together the materials out of which the National Union was formed. They seemed to me as sacred as was the utterance of the oracle to the ancient Greeks; and as, in my old age, my mind runs back involuntarily to them, I think I see with perfect distinctness, that some of the saddest events that have occurred in my own time have been produced by the neglect of Washington's counsels. I have no conviction more firmly fixed than this, and sometimes, as I have deplored these events, I have almost fancied that I could hear the protests of these Revolutionary veterans against the causes which produced them, and against the reckless partisans who have spurned their admonitions as if they had been the counselors of evil instead of sharers in a work which made the humblest of them of more value to mankind than a crowned king.

History furnishes the means to every intelligent man to review the administration of Washington, and it would go far towards assuring the future progress and prosperity of the nation if this were done by all in whose hands the ballot is placed. But it must be done, if done effectually, in the quiet of home—where the peaceful surroundings intensify the sense of responsibility;—for in the periodical tumult of partisan warfare, when passion dethrones reason, whatsoever does not serve the purpose of the moment is considered idle and unprofitable. There are even some who, having full consciousness of this, intentionally pursue the wrong because it gives assurance of temporary triumph. No matter what claims

to statesmanship such men may set up, or others claim for them, they are simply demagogues, who should be shunned as carefully as the ocean reefs are avoided by the watchful navigator. Washington was not one of this class. He was a statesman and not a mere politician. He built up no party and obeyed the commands of none. All his motives and impulses were patriotic, and he kept his eye steadily upon the welfare of the body of the people, as the polar-star that guided the whole policy of his administration.

The first difficulty he encountered arose out of the necessity of adjusting the relations between the National Government and the States, under the Constitution;—in other words, he was required, by the proper interpretation of that instrument, to keep these relations in harmony, or by a wrongful interpretation to create discord throughout the nation. His cabinet was composed as follows: Thomas Jefferson, Secretary of State; Alexander Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury; Henry Knox, Secretary of War; and Edmund Randolph, Attorney-General. Jefferson, some years before, had been sent by the Continental Congress as Minister Plenipotentiary to France, which position, at the solicitation of Washington, he resigned. Two of the cabinet—Jefferson and Randolph—were from Virginia. The former, having been in France, had not participated, as a member of the National Convention, in framing the Constitution, and the latter had opposed it originally but voted for and urged its ratification in the Virginia State Convention. Such considerations as these would embarrass an administration in our day. But it neither embarrassed Washington

nor created any discontent in the country; for such was the public confidence in the purity of his motives and in his patriotism, that no suspicion of either was entertained in any section of the Union. There were no parties, and any attempt at that time to form them would have been unavailing, for the reason that as it was the beginning of the experiment of self-government by the people, there was but little, if anything, to excuse their formation. The former jealousy between the large and small States had not died out, but was held in a state of suspension, as was shown by subsequent events. With this jealousy Washington himself had no sympathy; nevertheless, it was impossible even for him, with all his unbounded influence, to extinguish it entirely. The influences it had created under the Confederation were of such a character that the impression left by it could not be eradicated. It ultimately became the basis of a sectional animosity, of which political parties have since frequently availed themselves to the peril of the Union. For this Washington was not, in the least degree, responsible; although there were some so maddened by mistaken zeal as to suppose that his devotion to the interests of the whole Union would ultimately tend to subordinate the small States to the large, and in the end lead to a dangerous consolidation of power in the National Government. And it happened then, as it has happened often since and probably will again, that those who supposed they could see in such agitation the source of their own success, were not slow to employ this imaginary danger as the means of producing sectional discord.

In his first annual message Washington recommended

the creation of a uniform currency—that is, a currency of uniform value throughout the Union—as the necessary means of developing the latent resources of the country. Both domestic and foreign commerce, in his opinion, demanded this. In 1781 the Congress of the Confederation had chartered the Bank of North America, but, although organized under general protection, it had accepted another charter from the State of Pennsylvania, and had, in this way, become a State institution. This led, upon the part of some, to the conception of a policy which should ultimately center exclusively in the States the authority to supply domestic currency, except in so far as Congress was empowered by the Constitution "to coin money, regulate the value thereof, and of foreign coin." Manifestly, those who incited this idea in the minds of others did not contemplate the organization of a party based upon it; but as the relative rights of the National Union and the States had not been practically defined, their object was to produce a common understanding with reference to them, at the beginning of the government. Whatever their motives, however, the country is not yet rid of the consequences which followed.

During the first Congress under the Constitution, Hamilton—Secretary of the Treasury—was instructed by the House of Representatives to prepare and report a plan for the institution of a national bank. In response, he pointed out what, in his opinion, the advantages of such an institution would be to the government and to the country at large,—to the former, by furnishing greater facilities in conducting its financial affairs, and to the latter, by augmenting the active and productive capital.

To his discriminating mind it seemed necessary to the general commercial prosperity that this augmentation should be procured, inasmuch as, at that time, there were but three banks in the United States,—the Bank of North America in Philadelphia; that of New York, in the city of New York; and that of Massachusetts, in the city of Boston. In the Senate Hamilton's report was referred to a committee of five Senators from the following States: Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New York, South Carolina, and Connecticut; and upon a report made by this committee a bill was passed by that body chartering the Bank of the United States. Upon being reported to the House of Representatives it there led to an animated debate, during which its constitutionality was denied and an effort made to place limitations upon the meaning of the words "general welfare," as they are employed in the Constitution. The chief of these was, that it would interfere with the powers of the States to charter banks of their own when they deemed them expedient, and to prohibit the circulation of notes of banks thus chartered beyond their borders. And thus there was inaugurated, in the first Congress, a controversy relating to the powers and rights of the National Government upon one side, and those of the States upon the other, which will probably continue, in some form or other, so long as the Federal Union shall stand. The discussion at that time, however, was conducted, upon both sides, by those who desired to see the foundations of the National Government well laid, and so firmly as to provide for a perpetual Union. Nevertheless,—notwithstanding the purity and patriotism of their motives—it led for the first time

to a sectional division, and ultimately, through other agencies, to the formation of sectional parties. The bill passed the House by a vote of *yeas* 39 to *nays* 19; but by an analysis it will be seen that the affirmative consisted entirely of those who represented constituencies north of the Potomac river, except two—one from North and one from South Carolina; whereas the entire negative vote represented constituencies south of that river, except two from Maryland.

This is not referred to censoriously, but because the comments upon it by the Revolutionary associates of Washington made lasting impressions upon my mind. To them it seemed impolitic for the government to act upon the hypothesis that the commercial interests of the North and the agricultural interests of the South were antagonistic to each other, whereas it seemed to them indispensable to the prosperity of all that these interests should be blended in harmony, in order to keep alive the spirit of concord which had led to the formation of the Union. Subsequent events have vindicated their wisdom, and it has always been to me the source of abiding consolation that my youthful mind was impressed by such advisers.

The bill having been passed by both Houses of Congress, was submitted to Washington for approval or rejection. This was the first serious question that arose under his administration,—for up till that time the course of public affairs had run smoothly. It is not at all probable that, if it had involved mere matters of expediency, he would have hesitated about its approval,—for the country was then too near the time when monarchy was

discarded, for executive resort to the *veto* power as the means of protecting the people against themselves. But as the question of constitutionality had been discussed by the ablest men in the House, and he did not profess to be a constitutional lawyer, he decided to take the opinions of his cabinet upon the subject. In pursuance of this plan, three separate opinions in writing were laid before him; one by Randolph, Attorney-General; one by Jefferson, Secretary of State; and one by Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury. By the two first, the constitutional power to pass the bill was denied, whereas, by the latter it was affirmed.

The main ground of disagreement arose out of the difference between express and implied powers. Upon one side, it was contended by Randolph and Jefferson that such limitations had been placed upon the powers of Congress that it could not act beyond the sphere of exclusively national duties, and consequently could derive no power for that purpose by employing mere implication or construction to enlarge its express powers, even with a view to promote the "general welfare," because the power to do that was limited within the same sphere; that a bank was not necessary to the execution of any of the expressly defined national duties,—and that, as all the powers not delegated to the government were reserved to the States and the people, therefore, the charter of one by Congress was an unconstitutional interference with the rights of the States. Upon the other side, it was contended by Hamilton that the express grants of power to Congress carried along with them, necessarily, such implied powers as were essential to the execution of

the express powers,—that these powers were conferred, some expressly and others by necessary implication, in order to promote the "general welfare" or prosperity of the nation,—and that as a national bank would afford material assistance to the government in conducting its financial operations, and to the whole country by supplying a uniform currency, the pending measure was clearly constitutional. Washington accepted this latter view and approved the bill.

But this transaction involves something more than this simple statement. The President submitted to the Secretary of the Treasury the opinions of the Secretary of State and the Attorney-General, to be reviewed by him,—obviously desiring to have all possible light thrown upon the question, as he must have been aware that the effects following his decision would reach far into the future. Hamilton's dissent from the views of Jefferson and Randolph was clearly and vigorously expressed, but upon carefully reading these several opinions, it is difficult for one not to conclude that those of Jefferson were criticised with some severity. Whether this was intended or not is of no consequence now, inasmuch as, by common consent, a rivalry ensued which was terminated only by death. It gave rise, almost immediately, to the first formation of political parties, which then respectively took the names of Federalists and Republicans, and have continued ever since to influence, in some form, the polity of the government. They were both men of eminent abilities. Hamilton was distinguished both as a soldier and a statesman,—Jefferson in the latter capacity alone. Hamilton was a profound lawyer of extensive

practice,—Jefferson was learned in the theory, but not experienced in the practical application, of the law. Hamilton had aided materially in framing and defending the Constitution,—Jefferson had done neither. Howsoever they may be regarded now, it is certain that if Washington had then limited the powers of Congress according to the argument and theory of Jefferson, and had discarded the advice of Hamilton, those measures of domestic policy which in the greatest degree have promoted the prosperity of the country by developing its natural resources, would not have found place upon the statute-book. The States would have deprived the National Government of the most essential powers conferred by the Constitution, and their varied and conflicting legislation would have paralyzed our industry, hampered our energies, and limited our development. Washington saw all this with the eye of a wise and sagacious statesman, and keenly alive to the necessity of guarding all the interests involved, both of the nation at large and of the States, he started the country, by this great act of his administration, upon the highway of prosperity and happiness that it is still pursuing.

These relations between Jefferson and Hamilton gave to Washington great distress of mind, and he endeavored, by all the means in his power, to restore their former kindly relations, not only on account of his personal friendship for both of them, but because, as he expressed it, their continued strife would "inevitably introduce confusions and serious mischiefs" in public affairs. Notwithstanding these efforts, however, he did not escape the vituperation of opposing partisans, whose malevo-

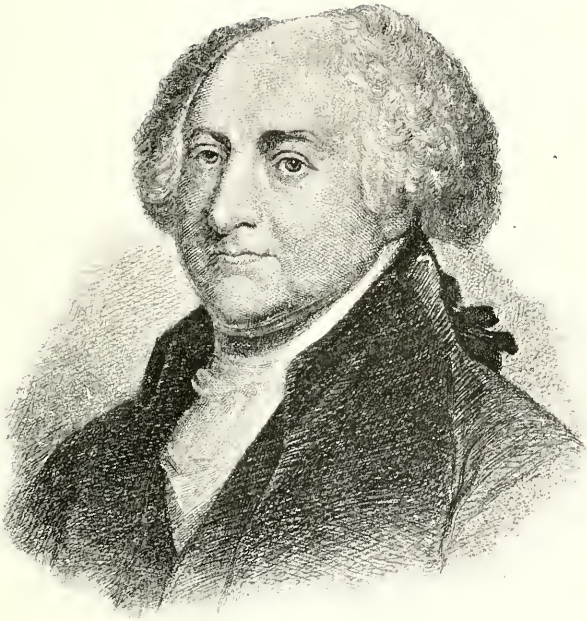
lence towards him was exhibited in a great variety of ways. The supporters of his administration were accused of endeavoring to convert the government into a monarchy; and the public levees given by him, "and the evening parties of Mrs. Washington, were said to be imitations of regal institutions, designed to accustom the American people to the pomp and manners of European courts." It was charged upon his administration that it wasted the public money in order to increase the national debt,—that its policy was intended to take money out of the pockets of the people, with which to corrupt the national legislation,—that the monetary system adopted by it would produce poverty and distress throughout the country,—that it was endeavoring to get rid of the limitations placed by the Constitution upon the powers of Congress,—and that its policy tended to the absorption of all power by the National Government, to an invasion of the rights of the States, and to "converting the federal into a consolidated government." And "when," says one of the most eminent men this country has produced, "it was recollected that the division of opinion was marked by a geographical line, there was reason to fear that the Union would be broken into one or more confederacies."

I have a distinct remembrance of a pamphlet having been put into my hands when a boy, by a Revolutionary veteran, who desired me to see how Washington was denounced and vilified by his enemies in Virginia. It was entitled "*The Prospect Before Us*," and was written by an Irishman named Calender, who was hired for the purpose, and supplied with whisky, in order to stimulate his

faculties, from a distillery the ruins of which were pointed out to me. It was the foulest and most mendacious publication I ever read—exceeding, by far, anything to which the readers of the present day are accustomed. I personally knew the survivor of a bloody duel it produced, and all who have studied our history closely will remember the impeachment of Judge Chase of Maryland, which grew out of it.

It does not seem to me, therefore, in any degree wonderful that the companions of Washington, who followed him through the Revolution and revered his name as they did that of no other man, should exhibit their indignation when recounting these assaults upon his administration. To him, more than to any other man, they attributed the independence of the country, and when, in my hearing, they recounted his services and commended his patriotic devotion to the cause of human liberty and his abhorrence of monarchism, it was impossible for me to avoid the impressions then made upon my youthful mind and which have never been erased. They are so indelible that they seem to be actual realities,—an essential part of my personal experience which I would not willingly exchange for other and more modern influences.

JOHN ADAMS



John Adams

CHAPTER II

JOHN ADAMS

At the close of Washington's administration there were two distinctly formed political parties, among the politicians—the Federal and the Republican. The masses of the people had not then attached themselves to either, but were satisfied that the experiment of eight years under the Constitution had demonstrated the advantages of the new government over the Confederation. The questions of constitutional interpretation concerned them very little, for the reason that they involved abstruse and technical rules with which they were not familiar. Convinced that their condition had been improved, they were, in the main, content with that of the country, and not disposed to depart from the line of policy established by the first administration. The beneficial effects of this they could see and feel.

The meaning of the party names taken by the politicians was, by no means, clear. The republic was the natural outgrowth of the Federal Union, and as the idea of popular self-government was embodied in either name, the general public were disposed to consider the distinction made by the politicians as without a difference. This quiescent state of things, however, did not long continue, for it required but little time after Washington had retired to show that the Republican party of that day

based its claim for public favor, mainly, if not exclusively, upon opposition to the policy he had inaugurated Nor did it take long to demonstrate that the party divisions were traceable directly to the animosity which had existed between Hamilton and Jefferson while members of Washington's cabinet. Consequently the Presidential election of 1796 practically involved the simple question whether or no the condition of affairs produced by Washington should be continued or abandoned. There were then 16 States, casting 139 electoral votes, and the result was that Adams—who approved of what Washington had done—received 71 electoral votes, and Jefferson—who opposed Washington's policy—received 68; which elected the former President and the latter Vice-President. The readers of our early history are often reminded of the excitement which that party contest occasioned, but the character of it can not be well understood without keeping in mind the fact that Washington's administration was upon trial. The partisan artillery was pointed at Hamilton, who had incurred the enmity of Jefferson, but the old Revolutionary associates of Washington well understood that he, and not Hamilton, was aimed at. No wonder, therefore, that there was excitement; for even now, after nearly a century has elapsed, no American whose heart is in the right place can read the violent attacks then made upon the foremost man in that or any other age, without feeling his blood course with increased velocity through his veins, and without exhibiting indignation by his flushed face. As imagination carries me back to the parental roof under which some of the Revolutionary companions of Washington were

accustomed to assemble, and I remember their indignation as they recounted these events, still fresh in their own minds, nothing seems more natural to me than the party excitement of 1796, when to them it seemed as if their Revolutionary labors were without avail.

In the view taken of this election by the politicians it was the triumph of the Federal over the Republican party. While it was so in its immediate effects, this does not convey a proper idea of its actual meaning; for stripped of its influence upon the fortunes of individuals, it is historically true that it was an expression of the popular desire for the continuance of the policy of Washington's administration. In so far as Adams and Jefferson were personally concerned, neither had any special advantage over the other, on the score of ability or meritorious services to the country. Both had been of the congressional committee from which the Declaration of Independence emanated, and the patriotism of neither exceeded that of the other. And although there were some evidences of rivalry between their respective States —Massachusetts and Virginia—it had not yet assumed a sectional aspect so far as to become actually threatening to the national unity—the necessity for which was universally recognized. My Revolutionary instructors did not object to being called Federalists, but preferred to be known as Washingtonians, for the reason that they were thereby designated as the defenders of Washington's measures of policy. Their purpose was to promote, as far as they could, the "general welfare," and this they believed could be assured only by affirmative measures of the National Government, operating alike

and equally upon all the sections. They had witnessed the defects of the Confederation, as a mere league between independent States with separate and distinct interests, and needed nothing but their own experience and observation to teach them that if the Constitutional Government remained inactive, with merely negative and not affirmative powers, the constitutional system would waste away and the nation itself become too imbecile for self-preservation. They did not reproach Jefferson unkindly, for they were proud of him as a Virginian, but they placed Washington before and above him and all other living men. They admired the one—they venerated the other.

Adams and Jefferson both participated in framing the Declaration of Independence. The committee of five appointed by Congress referred the matter to them as a sub-committee, with authority to prepare it. Upon coming together each suggested that it should be done by the other, but Adams was so urgent that Jefferson should do it, that the latter finally agreed. He assigned two principal reasons for this preference: the first was that the Declaration ought to be drawn up by a Virginian, and the second, that he had, as he expressed it, "a great opinion of the elegance" of Jefferson's pen. The result is known to all:—the original draft as reported by the committee was amended in several important particulars before it was finally agreed to, and when signed became, and yet remains, our National *Magna Charta*. The relation each of them bore to this great state paper entitles them, if they had done nothing more, to be classed among the illustrious builders of the Nation. Therefore, whatever differences may have separated them

in the great political contest of 1796, the American people must have been assured that the experiment of self-government upon which they had entered would not be imperiled by the election of either. The pending questions involved domestic policy alone, — the best method of so laying the foundations of the government as to secure its future greatness—and it ought not to surprise any that at that period—so soon after the Constitution had been adopted—the people were content that the policy of Washington's administration should be continued. He had given so many evidences of his wisdom, both in peace and war, that the opponents of Adams were not prepared to risk their reputation by assailing it. Jefferson and Adams—whatever their respective supporters were to each other—were friends; they had been so long associated in the common cause of the country they could not be otherwise. Jefferson, therefore, spoke from his heart when, upon taking the chair as presiding officer of the Senate after Adams's election to the Presidency, he said that the chief magistracy had been "justly confided to the eminent character who preceded him, whose talents and integrity have been known and revered by me through a long term of years; have been the foundation of a cordial and uninterrupted friendship between us; and I devoutly pray that he may be long preserved for the government, the happiness, and prosperity of the country."

Adams did not propose to disturb any of the administrative measures put in operation by Washington. He spoke of them, in his inaugural address, as having been established "under the administration of a citizen, who,

by a long course of great actions, regulated by prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude, conducting a people inspired with the same virtues and animated with the same ardent patriotism and love of liberty, to independence and peace, to increasing wealth and unexampled prosperity, has merited the gratitude of his fellow-citizens, commanded the highest praises of foreign nations, and secured immortal glory with posterity. * * * * His name may still be a rampart, and the knowledge that he lives, a bulwark against all open or secret enemies of his country's peace. His example has been recommended to the imitation of his successors by both houses of Congress, and by the voice of the legislatures and the people throughout the nation."

There were very few of the contemporaries of Adams who had discharged more important public duties than he, before his election to the Presidency. As early as 1770, while a member of the Colonial Legislature of Massachusetts, he incurred the enmity of the royal governor of that colony, because of his manly and patriotic protests against British oppression. In 1774 he was elected to the Colonial Council, but the royal authority interposed and refused him permission to serve, on account of his devotion to liberty. He then became a member of the Continental Congress, and served in that capacity with great distinction until the Declaration of Independence. In 1777 he was appointed by Congress minister to France, where he remained until 1779, when he was superseded by Benjamin Franklin. In 1779, he was sent to Great Britain by Congress to negotiate a treaty of peace. He was sent also to Holland, where,

besides negotiating a large loan for the benefit of the Confederation, he obtained from the government of that country the first recognition of the United States as free and independent. Along with Franklin and Jay he negotiated the definitive treaty of peace in 1783. In 1785, he was appointed by Congress minister to Great Britain. While there he negotiated a favorable treaty with Prussia, and in 1788 returned to the United States. The Constitution of the United States was formed and adopted and the Union created, while he was serving the country abroad. But for this undoubtedly he would have been a member of the National Convention, where his wisdom and fervid patriotism would have been most valuable and influential. As it was, he advocated and defended the Constitution with such earnestness and zeal that he was elected Vice-President, when Washington was elected President in 1789, over ten other distinguished men, who received votes for that office. He served in this office during the eight years of Washington's administration—having been re-elected in 1792, over Jefferson, George Clinton, and Aaron Burr. A public life of such varied and responsible duties could not have continued so long if there had been the least suspicion of his patriotism, nor without the exhibition of the very highest qualities of statesmanship. No people ever lived more competent to take the true measure of patriotism than those who followed Washington through the flames of the Revolution, and rallied again under the banner he unfurled in peace, when striving to build the government upon sure and firm foundations.

Pursuant to the purpose of Adams not to unsettle the

policy of Washington's administration, in so far as internal and domestic measures were concerned, he continued in office the same cabinet officers—the only instance of the kind in our history, and one which furnishes such an example of unity between the sections as was calculated to rebuke the spirit of discord which some restless politicians had invoked, an example which if followed would have spared the nation many bleeding wounds. Thus relieved from the possibility of internal disturbance the future development and progress of the country was well assured, and the administration was left to deal mainly with our foreign relations. No man was more familiar with these than Adams, and he conducted them with the greatest circumspection. It is but simple justice to his memory to say that all he did in that direction was done with the design to complete the work which Washington had begun—that is, of avoiding any "entangling alliances" with foreign governments, and making the United States not only absolutely independent but one of the most influential powers in the world.

Our relations with France were in a disturbed condition. There had grown up in the United States a sentiment of sympathy for the French people, arising out of their supposed desire to convert the monarchy into a republic, and to enter, as the people of the United States had done, upon the experiment of self-government. This sentiment had reached the point of opposition to Washington's administration, and he had been constrained to rebuke it by demanding the recall of Genet, the French minister, because of his persistent effort to stir up disaf-

fection towards the government among the people of this country. Washington's influence was sufficient to quiet, in some measure, the agitation thus produced, but not having been entirely suppressed it broke out again under Adams, and resulted in the formation of a party in opposition to his administration,—that is, it was an effort to rekindle the hostility to Washington's administration and to produce such a party organization as would assure success against that of Adams,—the ground of that assurance being the difference in the popularity and influence of the two men. Existing circumstances favored this movement.

The American minister had been driven out of France by the authority of the government, and, as if this were not a sufficient insult to the United States, several Directory decrees were promulgated by which French cruisers were authorized to commit depredations upon our commerce. To have submitted to all this would have placed the United States in a most humiliating attitude. This view was taken of it by Adams, who deemed it proper to convene Congress in extra session and submit the matter to the people, through their constitutional representatives. He accordingly issued a proclamation to that effect, and Congress assembled May 15, 1797. In his special message Adams very clearly stated the relations between the United States and France, showing that diplomatic intercourse between the two nations was entirely suspended by the expulsion of our minister, and recommending the adoption of suitable measures for the protection of our commerce,—the chief of which he considered to be the creation of a "naval establishment," which,

"next to the militia," he considered "the natural defense of the United States." He did not, in direct terms, recommend a declaration of war against France, but submitted a full statement of all the facts to Congress, upon whom, by the Constitution, the responsibility of such a declaration rested. He made no effort, however, to conceal his desire that Congress should adopt such measures as were necessary for the defense of our commerce and for protection against the aggressions of France or any other foreign power.

At this extra session of Congress the sentiment in favor of France was carried so far that Adams's effort to vindicate the honor and interests of the United States was resisted by a combination of politicians in Congress, who made strenuous exertions to defeat every administration measure designed for that purpose. A war with France could not be tolerated, although necessary to avenge a national insult! These efforts, however, were ineffectual, and Congress responded to the recommendations of Adams, by passing the necessary laws to enable him to vindicate our national rights and maintain our national honor. Nevertheless, there was such an exhibition of party feeling that the supporters of the administration were designated the British party, while, by way of retaliation, its opponents were called the French party. These terms were mere party catch-words, but had this significance:—that as there was still left in the country some of the old resentment against Great Britain which dated back to the Revolution, and a sentiment of gratitude to France for her assistance in achieving our independence, the administration lost ground and its opponents made a

corresponding gain. Practically it was a gain of the Republican over the Federal party.

Apart from this, the controversy assumed a somewhat sectional aspect, for the first time in congressional legislation. This was not open and undisguised, but rather by concealment of the real design. To have been the former would have been such an approval of the insulting conduct of France as would have aroused public indignation. Therefore, the contest assumed such a shape that the principal supporters of the administration were from the North, under the leadership of Massachusetts statesmen; while its opponents were mainly from the South, under the leadership of Virginia statesmen. It was not possible, however, to carry it far before the two parties took distinctive forms, one being known as the Adams or Federal, and the other as the Jefferson or Republican party.

These things are plainly shown by the published proceedings of the first session of the Fifth Congress. But the student of our political history who should undertake to discover which of these parties was the most censurable, or whether either of them was censurable at all, would likely find himself lost in a labyrinth of most perplexing difficulties;—for so many partial and prejudiced pens have been employed in defense and censure of both, that much of what he ought to find clear and distinct has been made obscure. There are very few, however, who do not know that the party contest thus inaugurated led, at the next Presidential election, to the success of Jefferson and to Adams's defeat.

The credit of having originated the measures which led

to building up the United States Navy—in the face of formidable opposition—can not properly be withheld from Adams. In his message to the extra session in 1797, he called the attention of Congress to the necessity of providing, not only for the defense of our coast, but for the protection of our commerce upon the ocean. To provide for this several bills were passed having reference to the national defense, a naval armament, and a naval establishment—thus creating the nucleus of our present navy. Among the grounds of opposition to this and other defensive measures, it was said that they would be offensive to France and invite war with that power, inasmuch as it would be viewed as preparation for war upon our part. Congress, however, preferred to follow the advice of Washington,—to prepare in peace for the possible exigency of war and avoid entangling alliances with foreign nations,—and the opposition to these measures was silenced by a decisive majority. And thus was laid, by the advice, and under the administration of Adams, the foundation of the system of measures which now, by common consent, constitute a shield of protection to our enormous commerce, and security against foreign aggression. No imagination is fertile enough to conceive the degree of humiliation into which the nation might have been precipitated, if the Republican opposition to Adams, in the Fifth Congress, had triumphed. Party spirit is inseparable from popular government, and when held in proper restraint by prudence and moderation, serves a valuable use in purifying the public service. But when carried to such excess as it was during the administration of Adams, it is invariably followed by conse-

quences injurious to the public. It unsettles the public policy, disturbs the peace of society, and so arouses the passions of party contestants as to incite them to cast their ballots without due regard to the general welfare. If he who does not already know should seek to learn from history why Adams, when steadfastly following in the footsteps of Washington, was warred upon with a degree of malevolence until then unknown in the country, he would find himself confronted by the main and central fact that there were then sown the seeds of sectional strife, which have since sprouted and grown,—bearing noxious and poisonous fruits.

As the party conflict waxed warmer, there were more palpable exhibitions of sympathy for the French people, upon the part of those opposed to Adams's administration. The charge that he and his supporters were influenced by attachment to Great Britain in preference to France, was reiterated with violence. His professed desire for neutrality and his repeated protestations to that effect were treated with disdain. But he steadily pursued the policy marked out by Washington, yet deferred to the opinions designed to counteract it so far as to send to France a new embassy instructed to restore, if possible, friendly relations between that country and the United States. France was then governed by a Directory of five members, appointed by the Council of Five Hundred, which itself was a necessary outgrowth of the Revolution. The Directory had no settled policy, but acted impulsively according as the exigencies of each day, and almost each hour, demanded. Dread of Great Britain, upon one side, and of Napoleon, upon the other,

kept this irresponsible and irresolute body in constant commotion, which was imparted by them to the citizen soldiery who constituted the only protectors of France. Adams, at the National Capital, and Washington, at Mount Vernon, both sympathized with the struggling masses in France, but their anxiety for the permanent happiness and welfare of the American people outweighed this sentiment. The former adhered strictly to the policy of the latter's administration, in the determination to observe strict neutrality as between Great Britain and France, so that a new nation might be built up in this country sufficiently powerful to protect itself, and sufficiently promotive of the happiness and welfare of mankind as to influence other nations by its example.

The new embassy sent by Adams to France was composed of three eminent citizens of the United States, who hastened to that country to execute their peaceful and friendly mission without delay. When they reached Paris it took them but little time to discover that they were unwelcome visitors. Instead of being received as ministers from the United States should have been by a friendly power, they were not officially recognized by the Directory. Private citizens of France were appointed to spy out their conduct and to insidiously extort from them their opinions. Anonymous communications were addressed to them, and various other offensive methods were adopted to annoy them. They made every exertion in their power to bring themselves in direct communication with the Directory, and having become satisfied of the impossibility of this, returned to the United States. This necessarily produced an important crisis. The con-

duct of the Directory did not necessarily mean war with the United States, but it admonished the latter of the necessity of preparing for that contingency, in view of the further facts that the French navy was then committing depredations upon our commerce, and that the Directory had issued decrees authorizing the seizure on the high seas of American vessels sailing from British ports, or having British goods on board. Congress, consequently, resorted to retaliatory measures, by directing that commercial intercourse with France should be suspended,—authorizing American merchant-vessels to carry arms for self-defense,—and empowering the President to raise and organize an army, consisting of twelve regiments of infantry, one regiment of cavalry, one of artillery, and one of engineers. Under these circumstances all eyes were turned to Mount Vernon, where the great chief of the Revolutionary army was in retirement, after the eight years of laborious administrative duties. Adams, however, needed no indications of popular attachment for Washington to call his attention to him as the only suitable commander-in-chief of the American army in a war with France or any other foreign power. He, accordingly, tendered that position to Washington, who approved the policy of the administration towards France, and would, doubtless, have acted in that capacity if war had actually broken out. It did not break out, however, for the active preparations in this country, by recruiting and otherwise, convinced France of two things: first, that the United States could not be bullied with impunity by any European power; and, second, that however much the French sympathizers here might embarrass the

administration by placing impediments in its way, they cowered before the patriotic enthusiasm of the people in every section of the United States. France had no difficulty in seeing that the United States was actively preparing for war, and in a little while would be ready for it, either upon sea or land. The old frigate Constitution captured one French frigate and silenced the batteries of another. The army was supplied with the necessary officers, and nothing contributed more to enthuse the people than the fact that these, with Washington at their head, were likely to be taken from among the veterans of the Revolution, who had rebuked the insolence of one of the great European powers and held themselves in readiness to rebuke that of another. France was soon brought to realize that the American blood was stirred as it had not been since the Revolutionary period, and then there was no difficulty in negotiating the treaty of September 30, 1800, whereby the two nations bound themselves to perpetual peace. Napoleon had, by that time, become First Consul, and the shadowy republic—which was at best only so in name—was vanishing away so rapidly that, in a short time, the "Little Corporal" assumed the mastership of France.

The events at home which grew out of these relations with France, taught to the people of the United States a lesson which it would have been well if they had never forgotten. Neither country desired war with the other. The United States had entered upon a peaceful policy; and although the French people had been trained to arms and were among the best soldiers of Europe, the bayonets of neighboring peoples, equally brave, were bristling

upon the borders of France, ready to invade her territory whenever her troops were transported across the ocean. But the French politicians in France and the French sympathizers in the United States, seemed to understand each other sufficiently well to incite in the minds of both the common desire to overthrow the administration of Adams, with the view of inaugurating a new American policy in opposition to that of Washington, through which, in the course of time, the United States should become the ally of France in the prosecution of her European wars, whether for defense or conquest. They failed in this, however, during the lifetime of Washington, who threw his powerful influence upon the side of Adams's administration, and even went so far as to leave his retreat at Mount Vernon and make his last visit to the national capital, only the year before his death, to advise with Adams and aid in the organization of the army so as to put the country in preparation for war with France. His support of Adams's policy with reference to France tended materially to unify public sentiment throughout the country, and, doubtless, contributed towards breaking the alliance between the American and French politicians and bringing about the treaty of peace between the two countries.

As a consequence of these strained relations between the United States and France, Congress responded promptly to the recommendations of Adams to put the country in readiness for war, in the event of its becoming unavoidable. The organization of the army was provided for, and the navy was increased by authorizing twelve

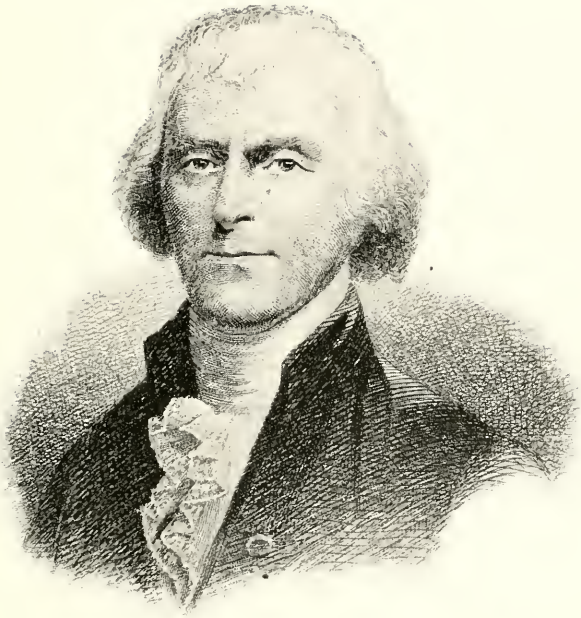
ships-of-war to be built, six of seventy-four, and six of eighteen guns each. The President was authorized to adopt measures of retaliation, and was required to suspend commercial intercourse with France. These measures demonstrated how necessary it is to every nation to prepare for war in time of peace, for they were followed by overtures of peace from France, in the form of notice to Adams that envoys from the United States would be received by the authorities of that country

Besides the measures necessary for defense, Congress passed two laws which were supposed to be necessary to protect the United States against foreign influence. These were known as the Alien and Sedition laws, and were regarded by Congress as necessary to counteract the active influence of the large number of French and other foreigners, who were not naturalized, but availed themselves of the freedom allowed by our institutions to assail openly the measures of the government, attack the administration, and vilify the President and his cabinet. These laws did more than the policy of the administration towards France to shape the future politics of the country. Although they were intended to be applied mainly to foreigners, such appeals were made in behalf of the freedom of opinion, of speech, and of the press, that the whole country was thrown into commotion and confusion, and the party in opposition to the administration was greatly strengthened. It is fair to say that, by these means, the administration of Adams was brought to an end March 4, 1801, twelve years after the inauguration of Washington.

Of Adams it may be most truthfully said that not one

among the most illustrious statesmen of this country was more devoted to the cause of the American Colonies, or displayed more zeal or ability in their defense. In all the varied scenes through which he passed, his patriotism never faltered and was never called in question. During the four years of his administration he endeavored to carry out the measures and policy of Washington, and now that nearly a century has passed since his retirement, and sixty-six years since his death on the same day as Jefferson—the birthday of the nation—the student of American history will find many of its pages illustrated by the record of his patriotic virtues. He defended the nation—its rights and its honor—with unfaltering fidelity. He took the administration of affairs, by popular approval, from the hands of him whose name we still teach our children to lisp with veneration, and strove hard, in imitation of his example, to hold the government firmly in the paths his wisdom and patriotism had marked out. And although our national centennial has passed and the nation stretches from ocean to ocean, with an unbroken cordon of united States between them, we can not rightfully forget that Washington and Adams were in harmonious accord, and that our obligation to hold them in remembrance is, in no sense, lessened by the lapse of time.

THOMAS JEFFERSON



Th. Jefferson

CHAPTER III

THOMAS JEFFERSON

In the spring of 1825, I visited Charlottesville, Albemarle county, Virginia,—where the State University is located—and then had an opportunity to observe Jefferson somewhat closely, but for a much shorter time than I desired. He had come to town from Monticello—which is near by—in a light covered carriage, drawn by two horses and driven by an old negro man. The object of his visit seemed to be the purchase of goods, as I found him in a store thus engaged. I was scarcely old enough to form intelligent conclusions regarding him from observation so casual—especially as he was engaged in such common-place business as purchasing domestic supplies, —yet to a youth like me it appeared something more than a mere privilege that I should be permitted to look upon the author of the Declaration of Independence, who was one of the foremost men in the country and who had reflected honor upon his and my own native State, as well as upon the nation. I scrutinized him so closely that the scene was photographed upon my mind, and memory, every now and then, has summoned him again before me.

He was then two years younger than I am as I now write, but bore the marks of decrepitude—the wearing away of the vigorous energies of manhood. Notwithstanding the thoughts that crowded my youthful mind, I

could not avoid observing the plainness and almost simple rusticity of his dress. His clothing was evidently home-made—probably woven upon a domestic loom—and there was nothing about either its cut or make up to indicate that it had passed through the hands of a fashionable tailor. In fact he belonged to that class of men who, disregarding the frivolities of society, devote their best faculties to other and greater objects. His shoulders were considerably stooped. He did not remove his hat, and I could observe only the face below it. I obtained a position, however, which enabled me to see his eyes with tolerable distinctness; and while they had undoubtedly lost somewhat of their brilliancy, they were still clear, penetrating, and bright. His voice was feeble and slightly tremulous, but not sufficiently so to leave the impression that it was not susceptible of distinct and clear enunciation when there was occasion for it. It appeared to me that he was careful in selecting his purchases, but he did not higgle about the prices. The merchant with whom he dealt exhibited the most marked deference to him, and when his purchases closed, took him by the arm and conducted him to his carriage, which he slowly entered with his assistance and that of the driver. The carriage then drove in the direction of Monticello, and I gazed at it until out of sight, with mingled emotions of pleasure and regret—pleasure at being permitted to see a venerable statesman of such high distinction, and regret at the fear that I should never see him again.

I have no difficulty in reviving the reflections which then passed through my mind. There had stood before me, in full view, one who had been a conspicuous defender

of human liberty,—liberty of thought, of speech, and of the press,—without which popular government is impossible. He had written with his own hand our national *Magna Charta*, every word of which is priceless and every letter golden. He had devoted his best energies to the maintenance of its principles. Although not a word passed between us, my youthful admiration was unbounded. He represented a period which, although passed, I had been instructed to look upon as the brightest and best in the world's history. The scene, consequently, left such indelible impressions upon me, that I still remember, when he and John Adams passed away from earth almost at the same hour, upon the 4th of July of the next year, how my heart was sorrowed at the event, but was, nevertheless, gladdened by the conviction that it was providentially designed to teach the nation that its freedom, which they had united in achieving, was precious in the sight of Heaven.

Few things have occurred, within the course of our history, which have produced such far-reaching and permanent consequences as the disagreement—more appropriately called the quarrel—between Jefferson and Hamilton. It is superfluous to say that, upon the score of ability, each was fitted to become a leader of men. When they met in the cabinet of Washington, everything combined to forbid animosity between them. They had not gone far, however, before it became apparent that there were fundamental differences between them with regard to the powers the Constitution had conferred upon the government. These seem not to have been borne patiently, but, in a comparatively short time, ripened into

positive antagonism, which soon became irreconcilable. What followed is universally known,—each became the head and leader of a party, and imparted to his followers somewhat of his own feelings. These sank so deeply in their minds that they have not all been plucked out yet, for even now their names are bruited about by partisans who round off eloquent periods by undue eulogium upon the one, and undue vituperation of the other. As in other matters, the truth lies between these extremes.

Besides being the author of the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson was immediately identified with the cause of religious toleration in Virginia, and had faithfully served the Confederation as minister in France, when that nation was thrown into the travail of revolution occasioned by the effort to imitate the American example by breaking the fetters of monarchism. His principles, imbibed during our Revolution, were so instilled into his mind as to have become part of his nature. They were founded upon those he had embodied in that immortal instrument which boldly announced to the world as a "self-evident" truth that "all men are created equal." As a logical sequence he had given his sympathies to the struggling people of France, and when he returned home to aid in the administration of the government, he did so with the resolution to popularize our institutions, as far as it could be done consistently with the checks and balances of the Constitution. And thus his mind was naturally and inevitably led to the adoption of such rules for the interpretation of that instrument as contributed, in the largest degree, to produce that result. His naturally vigorous intellect was enlightened by habits of phil-

osophic thought, and having learned from the histories of former republics the causes of their decay, he became convinced that, in all matters concerning the interest and welfare of the people, they were themselves safer depositories of power than kings and princes.

Hamilton had served the country well and conspicuously. He had borne an active and patriotic part in the struggle for independence,—had served in the National Convention which framed the Constitution,—and had contributed largely to the letters of the *Federalist* in defense of the Union. His mind was carefully disciplined by habits of thought which developed its highest faculties. He was thoroughly familiar with the history of nations, and the principles of the English Constitution and Common Law. His methods of reasoning were such that his thoughts were expressed with vigor and clearness. But it is undoubtedly true that, previous to the formation of the Union, he had entertained some fears for the stability of institutions dependent upon popular opinion; as it is equally true that Jefferson at least hesitated about supporting the Constitution, if he did not, in point of *fact*, *oppose it*. Those of us who now stand in the presence of accomplished facts can not suppress surprise at either of these opinions. But, in view of the history of former republics, it is not wonderful that the stability of popular governments should have been questioned; or that the adaptability of the Constitution to the purposes designed should have been doubted, up till the formation of the Union by its actual adoption. He who shall study the history of the National Convention thoroughly, will find that, among the plans of

government submitted, there was not one that did not propose such restrictions upon the powers of the people as were suggested by doubts of their capacity for self-government; and that the Constitution, as finally agreed to, was *alone* the result of mutual concessions and compromises. When this result was reached matters assumed other aspects,—the main question being whether a new government should be established by the creation of a National Union capable of promoting the general welfare, or the country fall back upon the old Confederation, well known to be powerless for that purpose. After the Constitution was adopted and the question of its ratification was pending, Hamilton employed his best energies in its defense, while Jefferson was *either opposing* it or taking no part in its support,—and it does not detract from other eminent men who did the same to say that none exhibited more earnestness or ability than he did. Whatsoever Hamilton may have thought while the proposition to form a new government was pending, does not seem to have influenced him after the National Convention had completed its work. In a conversation with Jefferson—as recorded by the latter—he said that whatever may have been his former doubts, now that the experiment was undertaken he was "for giving it a fair course," because, in his opinion, "that mind must be really depraved, which would not prefer the equality of political rights, which is the foundation of pure republicanism, if it can be obtained consistently with order."

It was a public calamity that hostility should have existed between these distinguished men, while they served together in Washington's cabinet. At that time—more

than at any other since—there was a positive necessity for unity in the administration, because it was engaged in laying the foundations of a new and untried government. A single mistake might have produced incalculable mischief. Why this hostility should have appeared at such a time, suggests an inquiry to which there is no satisfactory answer. Even its nature and precise object are unknown, except in so far as they were occasioned by mere difference of opinion in regard to the rules of constitutional interpretation, and the relative rights of the National Government and the governments of the States. Differences upon questions of this nature ought not to create ill-feeling any more than if they involved merely the distance between the earth and the sun. But in this instance they did, and produced consequences which have extended to the present time.

Whatever may have been Hamilton's feelings toward Jefferson, he does not seem to have left behind him anything to show that they were of a malevolent nature. His works, published by his son, show nothing of this kind, although he was undoubtedly a man of strong resentments. Among Jefferson's letters, one from him to Washington appears, wherein the former makes a somewhat detailed statement of the causes of disagreement between Hamilton and himself. But an examination of the *Anas*, published with Jefferson's correspondence by his grandson, will explain why he considered Hamilton a monarchist. Besides his deductions from Hamilton's line of argument in interpreting the Constitution, he preserves, in the *Anas*, conversations had with Hamilton by others and reported to him. It may gratify the curious

to read all these papers, but they leave the mind still in doubt with regard to the real source of the controversy, otherwise than has been stated. It is sufficient for us now to know that it was injurious to the country from the beginning,—so much so that a revival of the discussion would be likely to do more harm than good. Both were eminently great men, and on account of the services they rendered and their high qualities, deserve to be held in perpetual veneration.

It is proper, however, to note what Jefferson has himself left concerning his charge that Hamilton desired to convert the government into a monarchy. He made several attempts to convince Washington of its truth, but in all these signally failed. This circumstance outweighs any suspicions or opinions of an adversary, for the reason that Washington had every possible opportunity of testing the devotion of Hamilton to the government, and was as competent to do so as any man living. Besides, it was his duty to learn whether or no there was a monarchist in his cabinet, and there is nothing more certain than, if he had found Hamilton to be one, he would have removed him at once. In the *Anas* there is reported, by Jefferson himself, a conversation between him and Washington, in 1792, wherein the latter said "he did not believe there were designs to change the form of government into a monarchy," and that he considered the accusations to that effect "in Freeman's paper" were made with the view of "exciting opposition to the government," and "as attacking him directly, for he must be a fool indeed to swallow the little sugar plums here and there thrown out to him."

Upon another occasion at Mount Vernon, when Jefferson made to Washington the positive and direct charge that Hamilton was a monarchist, Washington replied: "That as to the idea of transforming this government into a monarchy, he did not believe there were *ten men in the United States whose opinions were worth attention* who entertained such a thought." It is not probable that Washington was very greatly misled upon a subject of so much importance, and if he were not, Jefferson must have suffered his dislike of Hamilton to warp his judgment regarding his sentiments. At all events, it is not difficult to discover that, instead of cultivating a spirit of forbearance and mutuality in aid of the administration, their disagreements ripened into a positive breach which Washington was unable to heal. The result was that a little more than a year after this conversation, Jefferson resigned the office of Secretary of State, and retired from the cabinet. Washington regretted this deeply, but there is no reason for believing that the estimate in which he held Jefferson was in any degree lessened. There is much ground for believing, however, that, from that time, the feeling of Jefferson towards Washington underwent a material change,—so much so as to enable others to avail themselves of it in forming a party in opposition to the administration. As late as 1818, Jefferson wrote an "explanation" of many of the events alluded to in the *Anas*, manifestly expecting it to be published, along with his correspondence, after his death, and it was so published. In it he said: "From the moment where they end"—that is the proofs he had submitted—"of my retiring from the administration, the Federalists got un-

checked hold of General Washington. His memory was already sensibly impaired by age, the firm tone of mind for which he had been remarkable was beginning to relax, its energy was abated, a listlessness of labor, a desire for tranquillity had crept on him, and a willingness to let others act, and even think for him." And, alluding to some letters Washington had written, he closed his "explanation" with these words: "Over which, in devotion to his imperishable fame, we must forever weep as monuments of mental decay."

These words were written eighteen years after the death of Washington, thirteen after that of Hamilton, and nine after Jefferson himself had retired from the Presidency. His fame was full and complete, and could not be added to by lessening that of Washington. They would, therefore, better never have been written. But having been, all that now need be said of them is that, in spite of them there is no sentiment more universal among the American people than that of affection and veneration for Washington. Nor is there any belief more fixed in the American mind than that he was not suffering from "mental decay" during his administration. To say of him that he allowed others both to think and act for him is to present him in the character of a weakling, whereas, if history attests anything, it makes clear the fact that till the last hour of his administration, all his faculties continued as clear and vigorous as they had been at its beginning. I repeat, therefore, that, in my opinion, these words would better never have been written. For whatever purpose intended, they have served only the interest of party,—having done Washing-

ton no harm and Jefferson no good. When the *Anas* first appeared there were yet remaining in the vicinity of my birthplace a few of the old men who had shared with Washington the perils and hardships of the Revolution and who regarded him with the deepest veneration. I well remember their indignation when they repeated these censorious reflections upon him whom they almost idolized, and with what strong and emphatic words they expressed themselves. What they said impressed me with the conviction that Jefferson had made a serious mistake by invading the sanctuary of confidential intercourse, to furnish excuses for those who had become the embittered, if not the malevolent, adversaries of Washington. This impression remains, notwithstanding my unwillingness to lessen his claims to grateful remembrance. Few men are invariably right, and even when the best are subjected to the crucial test of close inspection, there are apt to be found some spots and blemishes mingled with a cluster of virtues.

When Jefferson resigned the office of Secretary of State, at the close of the year 1793, he probably expected to remain in retirement at his beautiful mountain home, for which his thoughtful and philosophical mind peculiarly fitted him. He did not then make any public avowal of his want of confidence in Washington, or express the belief that he was surrounded by influences adverse to the public welfare which he was unable to resist. It is quite certain, however, that his action was mainly, if not entirely, on account of the relations between Hamilton and himself, which had then reached the point of open enmity. Besides this it is shown by his

letters that he was not satisfied with Washington's demand for the recall of Genet, the French minister, because of the persistent efforts of the latter to stir up disaffection towards the government among the people. It is also learned from the same source that he must have decided to employ some portion of his leisure in endeavoring to mold and fashion the political sentiments of the people, with the ultimate view of creating a party of opposition to the opinions of Hamilton, notwithstanding the organization of such a party would involve also opposition to Washington's administration. He had been in retirement less than two months when he wrote a letter to Edmund Randolph, in which he said: "I indulge myself on one political topic only, that is, in declaring to my countrymen the shameless corruption of a portion of the Representatives in the first and second Congresses, and their implicit devotion to the treasury;"—which, manifestly, was an insinuation of corruption against Hamilton, who was then Washington's Secretary of the Treasury. This is confirmed by the fact that about four weeks afterwards he wrote another letter to James Madison, in which he referred to Hamilton by name and censured him for having furnished the materials of a speech made in the House of Representatives,—basing his belief upon the fact that he had heard Hamilton express the same sentiments in "various private, though official discussions," which must have occurred while they were both members of Washington's administration. And in another letter to Madison, during the same year, he severely arraigned "the Society of the Cincinnati"—of which Washington

was a member—charging that its members were "dazzled by the glittering of crowns and coronets."

Whether or no he was then "dazzled by the glittering" of Presidential honors is now of no consequence; for if he were, his ambition was both honorable and patriotic, and no man in the country had a higher or better right to entertain it. However this may have been, he made no open opposition to the administration of Washington, but did so to that of John Adams, his immediate successor The general policy of these two administrations was the same, but there were some measures introduced during the latter to which Jefferson was intensely opposed. These were the Alien and Sedition laws, which, as he believed, were not only flagrant violations of the Constitution, but a direct infraction upon some of the cardinal principles of the government—such as were inseparable from popular institutions. That he carried this opposition to a dangerous extent, nearly a hundred years of our national experience have attested. He who shall now investigate the history of that period with impartiality should not forget that such are the frailties of our nature, that the wisest and most patriotic men, when the responsibilities of official position are not resting upon them, are liable, at moments of intense excitement, to be betrayed into errors the magnitude of which they do not, at the time, perceive, and which they would be the first to retract and repudiate when assured that they foreboded peril to the country. Great and deservedly influential as he was, Jefferson was human like the rest of us—subject to the same feelings, emotions, desires, and passions. He had contributed but little, if anything, to the creation

of the Union under the Constitution, but a great deal to establishing and maintaining the independence and sovereignty of the States under the Confederation; and hence looked with suspicion upon what he feared might strengthen the former and weaken the latter.

The Alien and Sedition laws were practically harmless, and both expired by limitation,—being designed only as a temporary expedient. They were passed in 1798, and immediately acted like a spark thrown into a magazine of powder, producing an explosion. The former did not go to the extent of prohibiting the immigration of aliens —as our present law prohibits the immigration of Chinese and discriminates against them after their arrival here— but provided that when they became, in the opinion of the President, dangerous to the peace and safety of the United States, he should cause them to be removed out of the country. Even in this last respect, the principles of our Chinese law are borrowed from it, and stretch out its provisions so far that these aliens are excluded in the first place, and expelled in the next, not for any interference with our institutions but because of controversies about the wages of labor.

The Sedition law prohibited combinations and conspiracies to oppose the government; or to impede the operation of any law,—or to prevent any officer from discharging his duties. It went further, however, and made it criminal to utter or publish any false, scandalous, and malicious writing against the President, or other officer of the government, or against Congress, with intent to defame them,—or to stir up sedition,—or to excite unlawful combinations to defeat any law,—or to aid in any

hostile designs against the United States upon the part of other governments. Some of these provisions were wholesome then and are still found in our American statutes. But it is undoubtedly true that it transcended the limits of congressional power, when it placed restrictions upon the liberty of speech and the press, by which the citizen was deprived of his right to criticise the administration of the government and the conduct of public officers. It was this that excited the ire and aroused the indignation of Jefferson, who had no sentiment, or feeling, or impulse, prejudicial to the fullest liberty of the people. His object was to get rid of these odious provisions with as little delay as possible, and not believing that those who had enacted them would be likely to change their course, he persuaded himself that the only remedy against them was by an appeal to the States. The Union had not then been in existence long enough to demonstrate by its practical workings what were the precise relations between it and the States, and he naturally clung to the rules of constitutional interpretation he had insisted upon while in Washington's cabinet, when the charter of the United States Bank was under consideration. As his object was, at that time, to limit the growth of the national power, so that the sovereignty of the States, to which he had been accustomed under the Confederation—in so far as each State was obliged to protect the rights of its citizens—should not be encroached upon by the government of the Union, he entertained the idea that this right, as well as the obligation, of protection had not been surrendered by the States to the National Government, and consequently that the latter

had, by passing these laws—the Sedition law especially —usurped powers not confided to it. And he was, doubtless, strengthened in these views when he came to reflect that the opposing ideas had their source in the theory of government he attributed to Hamilton, and to which he was strongly opposed, notwithstanding it had the approbation of Washington. Obviously he was mistaken if he supposed—which seems probable—that the States had retained the right to impose limitations upon the powers confided to the government of the Union for its own protection and that of citizens of the United States. And he was equally mistaken in supposing, if he did, that the National Government would be unduly strengthened and the governments of the States unduly weakened, when the former exercised only such powers as were necessary to defend itself against either foreign or domestic conspiracies, in order to preserve the rights of citizenship in the United States; between which and those of citizenship in the States, there could, in the nature of things, be no necessary conflict. But whatsoever view he may have taken of these general questions he deemed it expedient to appeal directly to the States to interpose their authority in direct resistance to that of the National Government. If he had succeeded—whatsoever his immediate design may have been—the Union would have been at an end within less than the period of a single generation after its creation.

He wrote out and sent to friends in Kentucky two sets of resolutions—elaborately worded—which he desired passed by the Legislature of that State. They were accordingly passed—one in 1798 and the other in 1799,

during the Presidential term of John Adams. The first asserted the doctrine that the compact of union was assented to by the several States in the capacity of organized and sovereign governments, and, consequently, each State, as a contracting party, retained the "right to judge for itself, as well of infractions" of the Constitution, "as of the mode and measure of redress." The second was equally emphatic in declaring "that a *nullification* by those sovereignties,"—the States—"of all unauthorized acts done under color of that instrument"—the Constitution—"is the rightful remedy."

A careful study of these resolutions and the interpretation of them within the light of the events then occurring, and a comparison of them with the opinions he expressed in conflict with those of Washington, while in the latter's cabinet, and which he attributed to the influence of Hamilton over Washington, will show, or at least tend to show, that his purpose was to announce by them rules for interpreting the Constitution which would have confined the National Government within the limitations of expressly delegated powers, and have denied to it the exercise of such implied powers as were necessary to the execution of those expressly granted, as Washington had decided when he approved the charter of the Bank of the United States. But since the government has escaped the disasters which would have befallen it if the public sentiment of the country had been molded and formed by these resolutions, their chief importance, at this time, lies in the light they throw upon the events attendant upon the Presidential election of 1800, when Jefferson was elected.

That election has been—and was by many at the time—interpreted to mean a reversal of the policy inaugurated by Washington. Howsoever Jefferson himself may have regarded it, there is nothing clearer than that he desired and intended to fix the popular rebuke upon the doctrines and principles of Hamilton, not merely because he considered him a most formidable rival, but because he believed—as justice to his memory requires to be conceded—that the prosperity and development of the country would not be arrested by the measures of policy he desired to see introduced. Whatsoever may have been his opinions, however, it is certain that the election, fairly considered in its political aspects and result, settled nothing in conflict with the policy of Washington's administration. Nor could it have been properly construed as condemning Hamilton's theory of constitutional interpretation as Washington had approved and sanctioned it, except in so far as it gave increased strength to those who had set up the rights and powers of the State Governments against those of the National Union.

At this election there were cast 276 electoral votes. Of these Jefferson received only 73, while 203—a majority of the whole—were cast against him. These 203 electoral votes were thus cast: Aaron Burr received 73, —the precise number given to Jefferson,—John Adams 65—but 8 less than Jefferson,—Charles C. Pinckney 64, and John Jay 1. The Constitution then provided that each elector should cast two votes, and that, upon counting the whole, whosoever received a majority should be President, and he who received the next highest number should be Vice-President. As Jefferson and Burr each

received 73 votes—precisely the same number—the election devolved upon the House of Representatives, where the votes are counted by States and not by the individual members. In the House there were 36 ballots cast before an election was had. Upon the last ballot 10 States voted for Jefferson, 4 for Burr, and 2 States—Delaware and South Carolina—did not vote for either. In this way Jefferson became President, and, as such an election would be now interpreted, a minority President at that; inasmuch as he received only 73 out of 276 electoral votes, and was only elected by the politicians of the House of Representatives, without the assent of the people. This view of the result, however, would be unjust to Jefferson. He had won all the distinction the Presidency could confer, and was entitled to such a national testimonial. But it was in no sense a party triumph, howsoever tireless the efforts to make it so may have been. And this view is supported by the further fact that Jefferson received the votes of only eight States on the first ballot in the House, while Burr received six, and two States were divided, and he was not elected until the thirty-sixth ballot, and then only by the votes of ten States. All the facts, therefore,—the failure of election by a majority of the electoral votes, and the equal division of the States—combine to show that there could not then have been a very material difference in the strength of the respective parties, and that a result thus obtained can not fairly be considered a repudiation by the people of the measures and policy of Washington's administration.

May we not well attribute to this cause the effort of

Jefferson, in his inaugural address, to make it appear that all were Republicans and all Federalists—in other words, that these party distinctions should be entirely eradicated? In our time an effort of this kind would be characterized as a party trick, or at all events, the President who should make it immediately following one of our fierce and exciting party conflicts would be pronounced a visionary—the mere "dreamer of unprofitable dreams." But Jefferson was not a visionary. His mind was eminently practical, and he doubtless desired that party spirit should be extinguished during his administration, in order that he might be thereby better enabled to move the country forward upon the lines of policy he had himself pointed out. He had, in retirement, supplied a considerable share of the fuel needed for kindling the party fires, and none more threatening to the harmony of the national system of government than when he gave his high sanction to the doctrine of State nullification as a remedy against the laws of the Union. If he meant by this,—as possibly he did,—that this destructive power should be held in reserve as the means of preserving the national concord by the fear of its disturbance, even in that view, it can not now be defended, since the practical application of the theory under Jackson's administration so dangerously threatened the existence of the Union as to render it necessary for him to repudiate and condemn it. It is scarcely probable, however, that he could have been elected to the Presidency at the time he was, if it had then been known that he was the author of this nullification doctrine, as set forth in the Kentucky resolutions of 1799—a fact which did not become public until long after. Even in

the absence of that information, he obtained the Presidency only after a protracted struggle against Aaron Burr, and the result did not prove that his political opinions in conflict with those of Washington met with the public approval, but rather that his success was attributable to the position he occupied with regard to national independence and the acknowledged greatness of his intellectual powers. Howsoever that result may be now viewed, after so many years have elapsed, it is certain that he afterwards somewhat modified his ideas of duty by an effort to allay the party excitement he had done so much to encourage, and endeavored to throw the weight of his character in the scale in favor of the cessation of party strife. That he was patriotic in his purposes was admitted on all sides, notwithstanding the fierceness of the controversy which resulted in his election. He had occupied a position far forward among those who achieved our independence, and undoubtedly felt an earnest longing to see the country foremost among the nations. Hence, when, after reaching the Presidency, he endeavored to pour "*oil* upon the troubled waters" and to quiet the turbulence of political parties, he commended to the country that which is now as necessary to its prosperity and happiness as it then was. From how many painful wounds the nation would have been saved if his counsel had been followed!

It would not be proper for me to discuss the general policy of his administration; nor, if it were, have I any disposition to engage in it, for the reason that all its influences have not yet died away. That it had its origin in patriotic motives there can be no doubt among those

who do not measure others by the standard they selfishly set up for themselves. That he erred in the manner of purchasing Louisiana is too palpable to admit of denial; but the error was committed upon the side of the country. The act itself was not wrong, but the method was,—as I believe he would himself be willing to affirm if he were now alive. If there is such a thing as doing right in the wrong way, this was one.

The territory acquired by the purchase of Louisiana is more than sufficient for an empire. It surpasses in value the same extent of country anywhere else in the world. The people inhabiting it are among the best and most intelligent of our population, and from every patriotic heart in the land there goes out towards them a feeling of fraternal regard. They are united to the Union by ties which no patriot ever desires to see broken. Nevertheless, if the purchase of this territory in the method pursued did not sow dragons' teeth, it set an example, by the direct and admitted violation of the Constitution, conspicuously calculated to weaken the popular affection for that instrument and for the fundamental laws established by it. Such an example necessarily breeds evils, as the Pontine marshes do fevers;—with this difference, however, that diseases of the body may be removed by proper remedies; whereas, when a blow is struck at our national fabric by open violation of the Constitution, it threatens to end in incurable paralysis.

Jefferson, in a letter dated August 12, 1803—while the treaty was pending—said: "The Constitution has made no provision for our holding foreign territory, still less for incorporating foreign nations into our Union. The ex-

ecutive in seizing the fugitive occurrence which so much advances the good of their country, have *done an act beyond the Constitution.*" What was this "fugitive occurrence" which excused—it was impossible to *justify*—an act without a single word in the Constitution to warrant it? The American ministers who negotiated the treaty in France were instructed only to acquire New Orleans and the right to navigate the Mississippi river. Beyond this they had no authority. But the emperor, Napoleon, was upon the eve of a war with Great Britain, and needed money. Having no other means of procuring it, he instructed his own negotiator that when the American ministers made their proposition, he should vary it by offering to cede to the United States the whole of Louisiana, notwithstanding France had pledged herself to Spain by treaty she would not do so. The suggestion of the purchase, therefore, came first from Napoleon, and out of his straitened circumstances this "fugitive occasion" arose. Consequently, the exigency was great and urgent, such as might not have existed again. But however great the necessity, it could not have exceeded that which demanded that the Constitution should be held inviolate. Jefferson felt this, doubtless, very keenly, when he remembered that he had charged Hamilton with being a monarchist because he had enlarged the powers of the government by implying whatever was necessary to execute the express grants under the Constitution. But, although the case was one where there was no grant of power whatever, he allowed the importance of the acquisition and the "fugitive occasion," to quiet his scruples to such an extent that when the treaty was

made he assented to it and advised that as little as possible should be said about the constitutional difficulty. In a letter written October 30, 1803, he said: "The less said about any constitutional difficulty, the better; and that it will be advisable for Congress to do what is necessary, *in silence*"—these last words having been italicized by himself. This advice was probably prudent, for it was not a case where an express grant of power had to be enlarged by construction and implication, but one which involved an act *wholly outside the Constitution;*—that is, not to interpret an acknowledged grant, but to engraft upon the Constitution a provision entirely unknown to either its letter or spirit.

He excused himself upon the ground of *imminent* necessity. But it is due to his memory to say that he expected some steps to be thereafter taken, after the ratification of the treaty, to heal what he considered a dangerous breach in the Constitution. In one of the letters just referred to, he expressed his anticipation that the treaty would be ratified, and added: "I suppose they must then appeal to *the nation* for an additional article to the Constitution, approving and confirming an act which the nation had not previously authorized." This is like locking the door after the horse has been stolen. Minimize it as much as possible, such a step can not be taken at any time, without foreboding danger to our institutions. To enlarge a granted power beyond its due bounds by unwarranted construction is bad enough, but it it is far worse to create a new power without a single word in the Constitution to warrant it and trust to the uncertainty of subsequent ratification. In this case there

has been no such ratification,—nor even an attempt to that effect. National necessity excused the act, and party necessity excused this omission! And the country has gone on step by step, under the auspices of the different parties, until we have acquired Florida, Texas, New Mexico, California, and Alaska—stretching out our borders from the Mississippi river to the Pacific—by flagrant and repeated violations of the Constitution! More than that, we talked a few years ago, with perfect composure and quietude, about purchasing Cuba and Hayti, as we do now about annexing Hawaii. What next? Let any reflecting man sit down in quiet by his own fireside—from which the excitements of party are, or ought to be, excluded—and search out an answer to this question, and he will find it echoed back to him—What next?

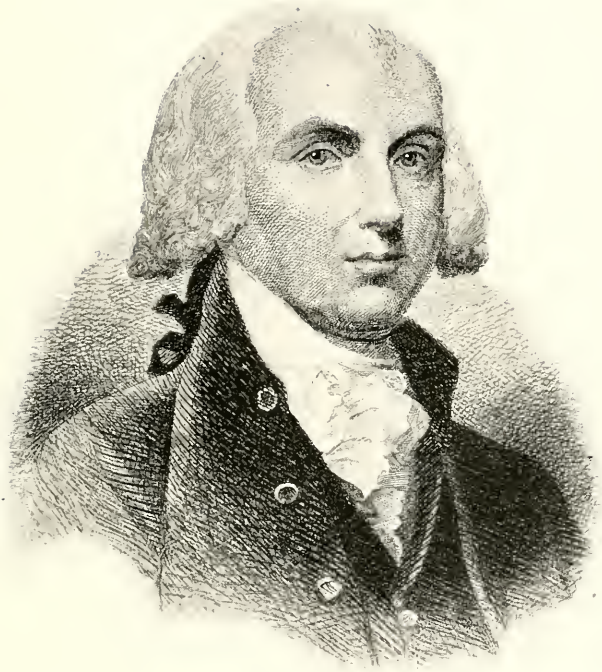
Can the acquisition of territory from a foreign power, at the expense of violating the Constitution, be either justified or excused by necessity? The doctrine that it may be is dangerous for many reasons which will suggest themselves to intelligent minds; but chiefly for the reason that, by party manipulations, the evidences of necessity may be easily distorted; or may be created for a special purpose when none in fact exist. That there have been instances of this kind is well understood, but, nevertheless, one after the other has occurred, until one violation of the Constitution has furnished a precedent for others, and it has become common to hear it said—in imitation of the Common Law courts—that these repeated precedents justify and excuse the violation of the Constitution! We have all heard a great deal about the "general welfare" clause in the Constitution; and Jefferson, in his

opinion upon the bank charter, while a member of Washington's cabinet, said that this clause did not confer "a distinct and independent power;" because, if it did it would reduce the Constitution "to a single phrase," and empower Congress "to do whatever would be for the good of the United States," so that as the United States "would be the sole judges of the good or evil, it would be also a power to do whatever evil they pleased." It has always been a bugbear to those who are in perpetual alarm at the specter of consolidation; and yet some of the most vociferous of them contemplate these precedents with quiet nerves, seemingly unconscious that every act of annexation inflicts a fresh wound upon the Constitution. Jefferson, notwithstanding the limitations he put upon this "general welfare" clause, did not urge upon Congress, in any of his messages, such an amendment of the Constitution as would have ratified the purchase of Louisiana, or authorized the subsequent annexation of foreign territory. He seemed content to occupy the ceded territory as a part of the Union and to leave his example for future imitation. And the consequence has been that while the "general welfare" can not be promoted by acts of domestic legislation, it is sufficiently broad and comprehensive to warrant the annexation of foreign territory! Laws can not be enacted by the assembled representatives of the people for the "general welfare," but treaties can be made for that purpose alone! The President and Senate—less than a hundred men—may do in secret what the assembled wisdom of the nation can not do! If a treaty could not be executed until approved by the House of Representatives, this anoma-

lous condition of things could not exist. And a careful study of the life and character of Jefferson has brought my mind to the conclusion that if he were now alive he would recommend this remedy to be applied, so as to atone, in some sense, for his assent to the violation of the Constitution by the acquisition of Louisiana.

My reason for this belief is founded upon the conviction that, among all our public men, not one has entertained and cherished a higher regard than Jefferson did for the rights of the people. He believed them to be competent for self-government, and labored to terminate their allegiance to royal authority that they might enter upon that experiment. He looked with jealousy upon all accumulations of power in other hands than theirs, and this jealousy was increased in proportion to its removal from them. I have stated frankly that, in my opinion, he committed errors, but it is worthy of repetition, that he believed them to be upon the side of the country. But when it is remembered that he was the author of the Declaration of Independence, without which we should have had neither the Constitution nor the Union, it ought to be the pleasure of us all to cover these errors with the mantle of charity, and keep alive in our minds the sentiment of gratitude for the services he rendered in the cause of human liberty and the inalienable rights of mankind.

JAMES MADISON



James Madison

CHAPTER IV

JAMES MADISON

THE sentiment of veneration for Madison, entertained by all in the vicinity of my birthplace, was deeply imbedded in their minds. His praises were so frequently sounded in my hearing that among my earliest recollections of public men and events are those with which his name is associated. The purity of his life was such and the prominence of his virtues so conspicuous, that this sentiment was imparted to my own mind, and became so indelibly fixed that, in my early estimate of the founders of the republic, I was accustomed to place him next to Washington,—esteeming him as the Father of the Constitution and Washington as the Father of the Nation.

His country residence was known as Montpelier. It was situated in Orange county, Virginia, within less than thirty miles from the place of my nativity. As all travel at that time was upon horseback, and I was too young to visit him alone, my opportunities for seeing him were "like angels' visits, few and far between." There having been, however, several occasions when I could do so, I was enabled, much to my gratification, to realize for myself that his personal appearance indicated the possession of the high qualities universally assigned to him. After I had seen Jefferson, I could not avoid observing the

contrast between them,—Madison being below the average height while Jefferson was tall. I was more attracted by the expression of his countenance than by that of Jefferson. It seemed to me, each time I observed him, that I had rarely seen a face in which more benignity and quiet composure was expressed. It was a complete personification of gentleness and benevolence. This, however, was altogether consistent with the prominent characteristics assigned to him by the whole community—characteristics which made him as influential in the limited circle around his home as he had been in the broader field of national affairs.

A gentleman whom I knew intimately until his death —not very many years ago—and the son of a Revolutionary officer, married a niece of Madison. Other marriages brought me in close relations to this family and to others who had followed the counsels of Madison and learned to appreciate his virtues. I can not forget these early associations and the grand old mansion—nestled away among the spurs of a beautiful mountain range—where they occurred; or the lessons of wisdom which were taught by the Revolutionary patriot who presided over them. When he spoke of Madison—as he often did—it was in terms of affectionate regard; and it should excite no surprise that my youthful enthusiasm was enkindled by his words; nor that it partially comes back in my old age. That little circle has been, for many years, broken up, and not a single member of it, besides myself, survives. But memory brings them all back again—reminding me afresh of the joys we once shared

and of the instruction imparted by the venerable father and sage.

Madison was peculiarly well qualified for such positions as required industry, learning, and accuracy of judgment. When he retired from the Presidency in 1817, he had been continuously in the public service for more than forty years. His severe labors as a student at Princeton College, New Jersey, somewhat impaired his health, and when he graduated, in his twenty-first year, it was feared that his decline would be rapid. But his prudent and temperate habits brought back his natural vigor, so that he lived until his eighty-sixth year, and when he died, in 1837, was the only survivor of the National Convention which framed the Constitution of the United States. The year of the Declaration of Independence he was elected to the General Assembly of Virginia, from his native county of Orange,—a distinction which at that critical period was not often conferred upon one so young. His ability was at once recognized and he was made a member of the Executive Council of the State in 1778, which alone prevented him from taking part in the Congressional proceedings which resulted in the Articles of Confederation. The next year he was elected to Congress, where he served until 1787, when he was elected a delegate to the Constitutional Convention. In that illustrious body his services were of inestimable value. No member of it did more than he towards framing and maturing the Constitution, and his carefully prepared report of the proceedings constitutes an indispensable guide to all who desire to become familiar with that important epoch in our history. His discussions in that body displayed the

highest wisdom, and the twenty-seven letters contributed by him to the *Federalist*, in support of the Constitution, are among the most valuable contributions to our political literature. While it can not be justly claimed that they surpass the fifty-one written by Hamilton, and the five by Jay, it may well be said that these letters, taken as a whole, contributed, in an eminent degree, to the ratification of the Constitution. He was elected to the first Congress after the new government was formed, and served in that capacity during the entire period of Washington's administration. His influence was felt in all the departments of the government, and Washington had entire confidence in his integrity and fidelity.

When the bill for the charter of the Bank of the United States was pending in Congress he opposed it upon the ground that it was unconstitutional. In this he agreed with Jefferson, maintaining, as the latter did, the doctrine that if the powers expressly granted to Congress by the Constitution were enlarged by construction and implication, they might easily be carried to the extent of interfering with and impairing the reserved rights of the States. He voted against the bill, but there is nothing to show that, after it was approved by Washington, he lost confidence in the administration or participated in Jefferson's hostility to Hamilton. He was incapable, from mental organization as well as inclination, of entertaining violent feelings towards an adversary, and as the questions then pending were all new, he refrained from participating in any movements calculated to embarrass the government. And this was the position he occupied during the whole eight years of Washington's adminis-

tration. He had contributed as much as any man in the nation towards the formation of the new government, and was so devoted to the Union that the conservative tendency of his mind forbade his doing anything to embarrass the one or create disaffection towards the other.

His warm friendship for Jefferson caused him to take the side of the latter in the controversies which grew out of the administration of John Adams. While the severe conflict with reference to the Alien and Sedition laws was in progress, he drew up a set of resolutions in opposition to them, which were passed by the Legislature of Virginia in 1798. Believing these laws—especially the Sedition law—to be unconstitutional, these resolutions so declared in emphatic terms, basing this declaration upon the doctrine that the rights of the States would be endangered if Congress were allowed "to enlarge its powers by forced constructions of the constitutional charter which defines them." To this extent they agreed with the resolutions Jefferson drew and had passed by the Legislature of Kentucky. With reference to the *remedy*, however, they differed from the latter in this: that instead of asserting the right of the States to *nullify* the laws of the United States—as the Kentucky resolutions did—they declared that it was their duty "to *interpose*, for arresting the progress of the evil" and for "maintaining" their own rights. The manner of interposing was not explained. Nor was it in the report, explanatory of the resolutions, which Madison made to the Legislature, he then being a member of the Virginia House of Delegates. In this report he was emphatic in the declaration that the States could interpose only where there was a "*deliberate*,

palpable, and *dangerous*" violation of the Constitution, such as amounted to usurpation,—in other words, threatened the Union itself. The distinction is plain. The Kentucky resolutions of Jefferson declared in favor of pronouncing an unconstitutional law null and void, so that the citizens of the State, making this declaration, should be released from the obligation of obedience to the obnoxious laws. Whereas, the Virginia resolutions of Madison went only to the extent of declaring that, in such cases, the States should *interpose*, in some expedient but undefined way, to get rid of such laws. There was also this further difference; the Kentucky resolutions provided *nullification* as the remedy against all such laws as the nullifying State should declare unconstitutional. But the Virginia resolutions applied only to such laws as *deliberately* and *palpably* violated the Constitution and, for that reason, were *dangerous* to the Union. And this was the real ground of difference between Jefferson and Madison, as came to be known only when Jackson boldly and courageously planted his feet upon the nullifying laws of South Carolina. Before that time it was not known that Jefferson was the author of the Kentucky resolutions, but investigation led to the exposure and acknowledgment of the fact, and Madison, being then alive, availed himself of the occasion to point out the true meaning of those of Virginia.

Madison became Secretary of State under Jefferson, and served in that capacity during the whole period of the latter's administration. The questions with which he had to deal from the beginning were most difficult,—involving the relations of the United States with the pow-

ers of Europe. Up to that time these powers had been, for many years, engaged in strife and wars which grew out of their protracted contests for superiority. These had produced complications embarrassing to the administrations of both Washington and Adams; but the treaty of Amiens in France—the preliminaries of which had been agreed upon during the first year of Jefferson's administration—had restored Europe to comparative quiet, inasmuch as France had regained her colonies and Great Britain had acquired almost exclusive dominion over the seas. The troubles which had kept France in continual turmoil for several years so far disappeared that, while there were indications that the people would be held in subjection by monarchical and military power, the questions still agitating them were mainly domestic, and such as did not involve the interests of the United States. Madison, therefore, as Secretary of State, was relieved from much of the responsibility which had weighed heavily upon Timothy Pickering, who had served in that capacity under Adams. It is true, however, that the royal decrees of the European continental powers, paper blockades and the impressment of our seamen by Great Britain, presented questions of the greatest magnitude and difficulty,—such as enabled Madison to display the great breadth of his intellectual powers, as well as his intense devotion to the honor and international rights of the United States. The history of that period can not be thoroughly understood without a careful study of his state papers, every one of which bears the stamp of his superior and commanding intellect.

When Great Britain declared war against France in

1803,—to check the ambitious schemes of Napoleon—new international problems had to be solved. These demanded, upon the part of Madison, not only great prudence and discretion, but a display of the highest intellectual capacity and wisdom. All the nations of Europe were engaged in war, and each asserted the rights and powers of a belligerent. Among them there was not a single neutral power. The navies of France and Spain united against that of Great Britain, and when, after Trafalgar, the supremacy of the latter was established, the impressment of our seamen became more frequent and flagrant. This outrage was such that it could not be submitted to, and when to it were added questions about the rights of neutrals (paper blockades), and other kindred matters, the responsibility resting upon Madison became so increased as to push his ability to a severe and crucial test. But he was equal to it, and succeeded so well that the principles he asserted and maintained by clear and cogent reasoning have become an essential part of international law.

The policy of Jefferson was essentially peaceful; and during his first administration no preparations were made for war. The commercial interests of the seaboard States were supposed to be seriously imperiled, and, consequently, the excitement became very great,—so much so that the war spirit was aroused, and the demand for retaliatory measures became urgent. Jefferson regarded gunboats as furnishing protection to the seaport cities and towns, and a large number were accordingly constructed. Great Britain, with her immense naval equipment, treated this with somewhat of levity, and steadily pursued her

antagonistic policy. The United States found it necessary to counteract this by the passage of an embargo law, whereby the exportation of our commerce was entirely prohibited. This law was passed in 1807, and instead of diminishing tended materially to intensify the excitement among the commercial classes, who, finding their trade with foreign countries entirely destroyed, became clamorous for some more effective retaliatory measures, or for war with Great Britain or France,—especially with the former, on account of her continued impressment of our seamen. Among English statesmen it seemed to be understood that the United States could not be kicked into a war, and therefore the practice of impressment continued, and was in progress at the close of Jefferson's administration.

Madison was chosen President at the election in 1808. There were then 17 States with 175 electoral votes. He received the votes of 12 States, casting 122 electoral votes, against Pinckney, who received the votes of 5 States casting 47 electoral votes, and 6 electoral votes thrown away upon Clinton. From what has been said it will be apparent that the condition of public affairs was, at that time, exceedingly embarrassing. Madison was, of course, perfectly familiar with it, but having been transferred from the state department under Jefferson, to the Presidency in his own right, he realized both the necessity and obligation of adopting such a line of policy for his administration as would put the country in a condition to protect its own interests, and, if it should become necessary, to avenge any insult to its flag. The embargo law had been repealed and a non-intercourse

law substituted for it, which had just taken effect at the beginning of his administration. The object of this latter law was to abate the interdiction of commerce in so far as neutral and friendly powers were concerned; but to leave the law so effective that both Great Britain and France should feel the loss of the commerce of the United States. This discrimination against these two powers was especially offensive to Great Britain and but little less so to France. The minister of the former power then in the United States became so offensive in his interviews with the Secretary of State that Madison became incensed and demanded his recall—which occurred, and another was sent in his place. France issued a royal decree to the effect that vessels of the United States entering her ports should be seized and confiscated; and Great Britain left her obnoxious orders in council still in force and refused to relinquish her practice of impressment. Madison was unwilling that the United States should recede. Although by nature and habit the tendencies of his mind were all towards peace, and he had an intense desire to see such a system of domestic measures established as should develop the material resources of the country, yet he was resolved from the beginning of his administration that the honor of the nation and its flag should be preserved at every hazard. Accordingly another non-intercourse law was passed in 1810; which provided that commercial intercourse should be renewed only with such nations as should repeal their obnoxious decrees, but that those which declined to do so should still be treated by the United States as belligerents and enemies. France, realizing the importance of our commerce, then revoked

the Berlin and Milan decrees of Napoleon; but Great Britain, fearing the rivalry of the United States, continued her orders in council in force. It became, therefore, perfectly apparent that this latter power intended to defy our system of non-intercourse, and drive the United States either to submission or to the adoption of some more effectual method of retaliation.

Nothing occurred for several years to change these relations between the United States and Great Britain, otherwise than as they became more and more strained. Madison was cautious to pursue no course not warranted by the law of national self-defense, but was alike cautious to protect the rights of the United States. He did not desire war—not merely because of the consequences which inevitably follow all wars, but because he desired the people of the United States to cultivate the arts of peace, so that, by developing their material resources, they should reach, among the nations, the distinguished position to which he considered them entitled. He did not consider the government constructed, as the governments of Europe were, for warlike purposes or acts of aggression, but as designed to advance the domestic welfare. To that purpose he was anxious to devote all the energies of his administration. Yet he was not so tenacious for peace as to submit uncomplainingly to the repeated indignities of the British government. When, therefore, he realized that British aggressions upon our commerce were continued, he commenced preparations for war. One important step in that direction was the appointment of James Monroe Secretary of State in the place of Robert Smith resigned. This appointment

was deemed necessary on account of Monroe's distinguished military services under Washington during the Revolutionary war, and was hailed by all who advocated war as a favorable omen. It did not take long to demonstrate the wisdom of these preparations, for, instead of relenting, the British government became bolder and more offensive towards the United States. Accordingly, after recommending the enactment of an embargo law, he sent to Congress a confidential message, June 1, 1812, in which he explained why, in his opinion, the United States and Great Britain were already at actual war with each other, and recommended that the "just cause" of the country should be committed "into the hands of the Almighty Disposer of events." In response to this message war was declared against Great Britain June 18, 1812, and the two countries entered upon a conflict upon both land and water, the result of which is taught in all our common schools. It is sufficient to say of it now that it demonstrated to Great Britain and the world that the government of the United States was abundantly able to protect all the interests confided to its care, and that the people of the United States would not submit to the dishonor of their national flag. It vindicated our national rights against the strongest and most warlike power in Europe, and terminated, after this was accomplished, when the treaty of Ghent was executed, December 24, 1814, upon the part of the United States, by John Quincy Adams, James A. Bayard, Henry Clay, Jonathan Russell, and Albert Gallatin—a splendid galaxy of talent and ability.

It is proper to state here, parenthetically, that this

treaty of Ghent did not settle definitively the questions in dispute between the two countries, but left them to be disposed of as future exigencies should demand. Madison had the satisfaction of knowing, even before the close of his administration, that the rights of the United States were recognized by the leading nations of the world. And he lived long enough to realize, as the legitimate fruits of the war, that the commerce of this country was no longer shackled by oppressive royal orders and decrees, and that our seamen were no longer impressed into the service of foreign and rival powers. The successful development of our commerce from that time up till the present has vindicated, not alone the necessity of the war, but the wisdom of his administrative policy.

Madison's first term in the Presidential office terminated during the war. It became necessary, therefore, that he should be renominated preparatory to the political contest of 1812, which directly involved the approval or disapproval of the war. This was done by a Republican Congressional Caucus, as that was then the customary method. There were 18 States—Louisiana having been admitted into the Union—and 218 electoral votes. He was supported by 11 States, casting 128 electoral votes; and 7 States, casting 89 electoral votes, supported George Clinton. Madison, consequently, was the war candidate, and his election was a complete vindication of his war policy.

The war was not universally popular, and the opposition to it became intensely violent in the Northern section of the Union. It did not take the form of friendliness for the British cause, although it was interpreted by

the war party as meaning that. It led, however, to a sectional conflict which, for a time, seriously threatened the Union with disruption. It assumed the most dangerous form in the threatened resistance to the national authority. In some portions of the Northern States this authority was repudiated upon the ground that the States had the right to release themselves from the obligation of obedience to it;—in other words, while it did not go so far as the Kentucky resolutions of 1799 and assert the right of the States to *nullify* a national law, it derived support from those of Virginia in 1798—which Madison had drawn—by insisting upon the right of the States to interpose and protect themselves against what they considered oppressive national legislation. The anti-war party regarded the war measures as of this character, and while they professed a desire to see the United States triumph over Great Britain, were unwilling that troops furnished as their quota by the States should be commanded by national officers. They insisted that the call for troops was upon the States as distinct sovereignties, and that each State should be permitted to raise its quota in its own way, place its own officers in command, and defend its own territory at its own expense. This was an insidious plan of resistance to the war, and if it had been successful would, undoubtedly, have reduced the United States into a colonial dependency of Great Britain. It, however, was not responded to by a large or influential number of people in the section where it was most vociferously advocated. The Legislatures of the New England States convoked a convention to consider it, and this body met in December, 1814, in Hartford,

Connecticut, for that purpose. It passed a series of resolutions which, although they did not go quite so far as to assert the right of nullification, did not stop far short of it. Practically it did no mischief in so far as the national cause was concerned, for the treaty of Ghent, made the same month of its session, put an end to the war, as it also did to the political life of nearly every man who participated in the Hartford Convention. Even at a very early period after its adjournment the verdict of condemnation was pronounced against it in New England, as well as elsewhere.

Madison was compelled to pass through a severe trial —one which he could not have endured but for his patience, equanimity and patriotism. He dealt kindly with friends and adversaries alike. His appeals to the sentiment of nationality were so eloquently made as to touch the hearts of all, except the few who had given themselves over to the madness of desperation. But even with these he did not deal harshly, for the tenderness of his sympathetic nature forbade every form of severity. He had an abiding confidence in the virtue, intelligence and patriotism of the great body of the people, in every section of the country, and upon this he relied with unshaken faith. And he who shall carefully study the history of that period can not escape the conclusion that it was most fortunate that he then occupied the Presidential chair. His defeat in 1812 might have imperiled the Union, but his success enabled him to set an example of fidelity to it, which teaches that it is too precious to be destroyed by either foreign or domestic foes.

The war paralyzed the business of the whole country.

There was comparatively little foreign commerce, and that at home consisted, in a large measure, of the exchange of commodities. The financial condition was deplorable, the banks having been forced to suspend specie payments. There was not money enough in the country to answer the demand, and the government itself was in a straitened financial condition. To counteract these evils Congress passed an act creating a bank of the United States with a capital of $35,000,000, composed of $5,000,000 in specie, $10,000,000 six-per-cent. stock funded after the war broke out, $15,000,000 treasury notes, and $5,000,000 to be held by the United States, and paid for in four-per-cent. stock, to be created for that purpose. This bill was *vetoed* by Madison solely for the reason that its provisions were insufficient for the purposes designed. He thought the amount of the government stock insufficient to raise and sustain the public credit;—that no adequate public advantage would arise from the subscription of treasury notes;—that the government was not secured, during the war, in either permanent or temporary loans;—and that the bank could not be relied upon to provide a circulating medium during the war.

We have seen that when the bill to charter a United States bank was pending in Congress in 1791—when Washington was President and Hamilton Secretary of the Treasury—Madison opposed it upon the ground that it would violate the Constitution. This renders it necessary that we should know exactly what he said upon this occasion, so as to understand the precise views he then took of the constitutional question. This is the language he employed in his *veto* message, January 30, 1815:

"Waiving the question of the constitutional authority of the Legislature to establish an incorporated bank, *as being precluded in my judgment by repeated recognitions, under varied circumstances, of the validity of such an institution in acts of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the government, accompanied by indications, in different modes, of a concurrence of the general will of the nation*, the proposed bank does not appear to be calculated to answer the purposes of reviving the public credit, of providing a national medium of circulation, and of aiding the treasury by facilitating the indispensable anticipations of the revenue, and by affording to the public more durable loans."

Does this import that he had changed his opinion upon the constitutional question? If he had, there is nothing in such a fact to lessen his claim, in the least degree, upon the public confidence at that time, or in the public respect for his memory now. He who is entrusted with the management of public affairs and persists in such a course as his own conscience condemns as erroneous, ought not to be trusted. When Jefferson, in advocacy of religious liberty in Virginia, said: "Error ceases to be dangerous when reason is left free to combat it," he conveyed, not only the idea that public enlightenment would successfully resist it, but that he who would not retract it when made conscious of its misleading influence, was an unsafe counselor. Whatever mere *politicians* may do upon this subject, *statesmen* do not hesitate, for the reason that, while the former are apt to confine their sphere of action within the narrow circle of self-interest, the latter extend theirs far enough to em-

brace the welfare of the public and provide for a progressive increase in the sum of human happiness. Politicians are devoted to party, because it furnishes them the machinery whereby they may accomplish their own success. Statesmen repudiate parties when they find them tending to inflict injury upon the interests confided to their care, and unflinchingly pursue the course of duty, accordingly as their consciences dictate. Madison was a statesman and not a politician in the common sense. His training in the school of the Revolution had enlarged his views of the rights of mankind. His early political impressions were such as were of natural growth under the Confederation. The articles which associated the thirteen original States were intended to form a "perpetual union" for the "common defense" and the "general welfare" of all. But as each State retained its absolute "sovereignty, freedom, and independence," the guarantees were considered as extending no further than protection against foreign aggression. As to all else, each State was the exclusive guardian of its own local interests, which left no sentiment of nationality existing other than that thus created. When these same terms were inserted in the Constitution it was understood that they should have a broader and more comprehensive meaning than under the Confederation, but how far they should be extended was left to be decided by the future exigencies of the new Union. On all hands it was admitted, however, that the sentiment of nationality would necessarily grow out of this new Union, and that its extent and development would be increased in proportion to the success of the experiment. Therefore, it was en-

tirely natural that these limited views of the "general welfare" should be carried over by our early statesmen from the Confederation to the Constitutional Government, and that, for a time, they should be hampered and restrained by them. This was undoubtedly the case with Madison, as is sufficiently shown by his argument, in 1791, against the constitutionality of the bank charter. Adhering to his early impressions regarding the sovereignty of the States, he endeavored to demonstrate that the "general welfare" did not embrace anything that interfered with the reserved powers of the States, and, consequently, that the bank would be unconstitutional because it did so interfere in the manner indicated by him, that is, it would defeat the State banks, and put it out of the power of the States to prohibit as well as to establish them. He did not suppose that the power to impair and lessen these and other sovereign rights which the States had reserved could exist unless expressly granted by the Constitution, and as he did not think the express powers could be enlarged by construction and implication, he held the bank to be unconstitutional. Virginia had been so long accustomed to the exercise of sovereign powers, and to view her own interests as distinct from those of other States, that her statesmen were slow to realize the existence of that admirable cycle of powers, wherein both the National Union and the States could move forward in mutual harmony, to the development of national greatness. And hence, as this greatness was only in the perspective in 1791, Madison was disinclined to see the powers of the National Government so enlarged by im-

plication as to interfere with the rights the States had been long accustomed to exercise.

Washington was the first among the Virginia statesmen to realize that the States had surrendered some portion of their original sovereignty under the Confederation, in order thereby to form a union for the protection and advancement of such interests as were national in their character. He realized also that the States had no juster right to place limitations upon the powers of the Union under the Constitution, than the Union had to restrict the powers of the States over their domestic affairs. He could easily foresee that the Union would fail to accomplish the objects of its creation, unless its powers became comprehensive enough to embrace jurisdiction over the "general welfare," as distinct from the special welfare of the separate States. It is probable, but not certain, that Jefferson was led into antagonism to these views mainly by his hostility to Hamilton, to whose influence over Washington he attributed them. And the mind of Madison, made impressible by his friendship for Jefferson, was easily brought to the belief that the Union could not endure beyond the time when the States should submit to the impairment of the sovereignty they had so long enjoyed under the Confederation. In fact, the new government under the Constitution was an untried experiment, and it should not be regarded as an impeachment of the patriotism of any of these illustrious framers of the government that they differed in opinion.

When Madison, however, became President of the Union, he saw that the sphere of his duties was exclusively national, limited only by the Constitution so inter-

preted as to promote the "general welfare;"—not the particular and special interests of individual States, but the general interests of the people of the United States. And when he looked to the Constitution as his guide, he could not fail to see that if the "general welfare" had been such as to excuse Jefferson for the purchase and acquisition of Louisiana, without a word in the Constitution to sanction it, he could not avoid the conclusion that if the express grants of power to Congress were so limited as not to include whatsoever was necessary to their execution, the Union would fall short of accomplishing what he and other framers of the Constitution had designed it should accomplish. This did not require any actual change of opinion upon his part, but the simple application of such rules of interpretation as experience had proved to be necessary for preserving the Union. Judges take the law from the superior courts and announce it accordingly from the bench, whatsoever their individual opinions may be. When, therefore, Madison was required as President to review the past history of the government, and to observe the rules established by experience for interpreting the Constitution, his line of duty appeared plain, and he patriotically announced to Congress and the country, that as all the departments of the government and the people had sanctioned the rules of interpretation which Washington had approved, it was his duty, as one of the successors of Washington, charged with the promotion of the "general welfare," to interpose no further objection to a bank of the United States on the score of its unconstitutionality. The consequence was that as the necessities of the country increased, and the government

as well as the increasing commercial interests demanded an improved system of finance, Congress, in 1816, passed another act granting a charter to a bank of the United States, and Madison, without the least hesitation, approved it, and it became a law. And thus, looking out upon the "general welfare" of the whole Union, he indicated the desire so to administer the government as to make the national compact indissoluble, by filling other minds with as fervid patriotism as occupied his own.

Madison's administration ended March 3, 1817. One of our greatest statesmen, referring to that event, says: "It was his fortune to conduct the affairs of state in a most trying period of our country's history; but she passed in safety through the perils that beset her; and when he retired to the peaceful shades of Montpelier, he left his countrymen in the enjoyment of an unusual degree of tranquillity, prosperity and happiness." If it were proper to add another word by way of eulogy, it might well be said that, as he was guided through all his public life by intense and ardent patriotism, he left such an example of devotion to the Union he aided in creating, that the wisest statesmen of the nation may now and hereafter profit by its imitation.

JAMES MONROE

James Monroe

CHAPTER V

JAMES MONROE

THERE was nothing peculiarly striking or impressive in the personal appearance of Monroe. He was not so tall as Jefferson, but taller than Madison. His face was not so shrunken as the former's, nor so full as that of the latter. His countenance indicated the possession of the highest reflective faculties and perfect candor and sincerity—wholly without dissimulation. For these qualities he was universally esteemed, and it was impossible to observe him closely and hear him converse, without concluding that, in this respect, his reputation was well deserved. I had been always taught thus to regard him, and this estimate of him became fixed in my mind by personal observation. He was a fine specimen of what, in my boyhood, was called an "old Virginia gentleman," —sincere in manner, simple in tastes, courteous in deportment, and manly in intercourse with all.

I saw him frequently. He resided near the village of Aldie, in Loudoun county, Virginia, and it was his custom to make frequent visits to Jefferson and Madison, in Albemarle and Orange counties, which required that he should pass through the town of my nativity, both going and returning. He traveled in a two-horse carriage, driven by a negro servant, and always stopped at the same hotel and remained all night, in order to hold social

intercourse with friends residing there, who had been his companions in the war of the Revolution. Whenever he arrived it was soon known to all, and there were very few among the small population who did not pay their respects to him. These crowds were not sufficient to constitute a modern levee, but they were composed of sincere admirers who were never slow in discharging all the courtesies and amenities of social intercourse. Upon several of these occasions, boy as I was, I succeeded in crowding so near to him as to obtain distinct views of his person and hear him converse. Several of the Revolutionary officers who visited him served with him under Washington, and while, upon these occasions, they had no opportunity to recount the scenes through which they had passed together, I have not forgotten with what admiration I looked upon him and them, as the representatives of the most glorious period in our history. More than six decades of time have passed since then, but these veterans are not infrequently brought back before me among the visions of the night-time, as well as amid the scenes of active life.

Besides the questions which had previously divided the country into the Republican and the Federal parties, others which grew out of the war with Great Britain, under Madison's administration, were of such exciting character as not only to influence, but to control the Presidential election of 1816. Monroe was nominated by a Republican Congressional Caucus as the war candidate, and the Federalists made no nomination, but were content to unite upon Rufus King, who had opposed the war at the beginning, but afterwards favored its vigorous

prosecution. The popular vote was largely in favor of Monroe, and he accordingly received the support of 16 States, casting 221 electoral votes, and King received those of 3 States, casting 34 electoral votes—19 being then the whole number of States. This tended somewhat to fan the flames of sectional strife, inasmuch as four of the five Presidents up to that time elected had been from the same State in the South, while the North had elected only one,—in other words, it was argued that, at the close of Madison's administration, the South had controlled the government for twenty-four years, and the North only four years, and that if Monroe should serve eight years, these twenty-four would be increased to thirty-two. Still, however, the questions growing out of the war were so national in character that the spirit of sectionalism was almost entirely subdued, and Monroe's election introduced an era of peace between the sections as well as, in a large measure, between the former parties. And this result was entirely consistent with his pacific temper and the whole course of his public life,—for among our public men not one had been more zealous in the national cause, or had contributed in a more important degree to the change of the Confederation into a Constitutional Government. Nor had any served with greater gallantry during the Revolution. In that perilous period he was distinguished for his bravery. After having been wounded in the battle of Trenton, he was compelled to quit active service for a time, but upon his recovery returned immediately to the army, under Washington, and became aid-de-camp to Lord Sterling, and distinguished himself in the battles of Brandywine,

Germantown, and Monmouth. He was greatly esteemed for his military talents, and it is worthy of remembrance as a historic fact that he and Washington were the only Revolutionary officers ever elevated to the Presidency, and, moreover, have been the only Presidents ever unanimously elected, as was the case twice with Washington and once with him.

When the question of abandoning the Confederation was agitating the country the services of Monroe were essentially important. It is hard to imagine a more delicate and important crisis in the affairs of any people than that which then engaged public attention. It required great discretion and the utmost wisdom to avoid the pitfalls in the pathway of the country. There was nothing in the past history and experience of the world which could be taken as a guide,—no landmarks to steer by could be discovered. By the Declaration of Independence it had been resolved to create a nation, but the experiment up to that point had proved to absolute demonstration a failure, inasmuch as there was entirely lacking the spirit of unity in which alone the sentiment of nationality could exist. The thirteen States which had entered into the League of Confederation occupied territorial possessions upon the Atlantic, stretched out upon a coast line greater in length than fifteen degrees of latitude. Each desired a commerce of its own upon the ocean, and such methods of developing its internal resources as were dictated by the varieties of soil and climate, and by the habits and customs of the inhabitants. There were also differences of sentiment which tended to prevent the populations from becoming sufficiently homo-

geneous to form a nation. In fact, there was very little that did not contribute to produce divergence rather than union; and one can scarcely conceive of a task more difficult than to bring so many antagonizing elements into harmony.

The part performed by Monroe at this important period was so marked by disinterested patriotism, and his conspicuous services in the Revolution were so well understood by the whole country, that when he became President the conviction was universal that the affairs of the government would be well and faithfully administered. He had not favored the acceptance of the Constitution, because of the absence of what he considered necessary guarantees; but the general conviction was that in this his chief desire had been to preserve, against the possibility of infraction, the main fundamental principles upon which alone popular government can be made secure. The Constitution having been adopted, however, and the Union formed, his fidelity to both was unquestioned; and he therefore came to the Presidency, after the close of the war with Great Britain, under circumstances favorable to the peaceful development of the country. He had a broad field for the cultivation of amicable relations between the sections, for the rebuke of party excesses, and for making more secure than ever the foundations of the Union. And for all this he was materially aided by his equanimity of temper and conceded honesty of purpose.

Before Monroe came to the Presidency many things had combined to anger the political parties towards each other. The violent abuse of Washington had incensed his Revolutionary compatriots in the highest degree, and

they were not accustomed to suppress or conceal their indignation or to employ dubious terms when expressing it. The Alien and Sedition laws of Adams's administration had been the cause of an angry conflict between the States and the National Government, which had engendered the most intense passion. The war with Great Britain had produced sectional animosities calculated to excite alarm for the safety of the Union. The approval of the Bank of the United States by Madison, in 1816, was considered by the followers of Jefferson as in opposition to his method of interpreting the Constitution, and as favorable to that of Hamilton, which Washington had approved. And there were innumerable other incidental matters which inflamed the parties and convulsed the country from one end to the other. Having been confronted by this condition of affairs Monroe commenced his administration under most trying circumstances, both to the country and himself.

General Jackson was then preparing for the prosecution of the war against the Seminole Indians, to avenge the depredations upon the property of our citizens, to which they had been incited by the Spanish authorities of Florida. He had never been a politician in the commonly accepted sense, but the brilliant generalship he displayed at New Orleans in 1815 placed him in such a position as to give him commanding influence throughout the country, and especially among the communities where he had been long and favorably known. His patriotism was broad enough to embrace the whole country, and as he could not fail to realize the dangers threatened by the excesses of party spirit, he resolved to throw his influence

upon the side of the country, by urging upon Monroe the necessity of placing some wholesome restraint upon these excesses. Accordingly, as soon as it was understood that Monroe was elected, Jackson wrote him a letter, dated November 12, 1816, which deserves to be printed upon some imperishable material and hung up in every dwelling-house and public edifice in the country. In it he said:

"Your happiness and the nation's welfare materially depend upon the selections which are to be made to fill the heads of departments. Everything depends on the selection of your ministry. In every selection, party and party feelings should be avoided. Now is the time to exterminate that *monster* called party spirit. By selecting characters most conspicuous for their probity, virtue, capacity and firmness, without any regard to party, you will go far to, if not entirely, eradicate those feelings which, on former occasions, threw so many obstacles in the way of government; and perhaps have the *pleasure* and *honor* of uniting a people heretofore politically divided. The chief magistrate of a great and powerful nation should never indulge in party feelings. His conduct should be liberal and disinterested, always bearing in mind that he acts for the *whole* and not a *part* of the community."

Monroe did not accept this advice. His reasoning to the contrary of it has been preserved, but it fails entirely to weaken Jackson's main position—that the President is, from necessity, the representative of the whole nation and not a part of it. He attempted to evade the force of this by assuming the false hypothesis that the Federalists

were the enemies of the country, and their appointment to office, if they remained faithful to their professed convictions, would, in some sense, imperil the public welfare. This assumption doubtless arose out of the fact that during the recent war with Great Britain that party had pursued such a course as to excite the suspicion of disloyalty to the Union. To that extent, if his assumption had been true, he would have been sustained by the country, and by Jackson as well. But it was not true;—for he expressed the opinion, in his assignment of reasons, that there were large numbers of Federalists who were dissatisfied with the attitude in which their party had placed them, and were desirous of the success of the Republican policy. It is fair to presume that Jackson knew this, also, and that his own patriotism prompted him to suggest the course he did, with the belief that it would contribute essentially to the restoration of internal harmony, and, by strengthening the bonds of union, promote the "general welfare." When he spoke of the community as a whole, he undoubtedly meant the nation, and intended to convey the idea that, as each citizen was interested in its preservation, he should not be forbidden to participate in the management of public affairs merely because of his party alliance. With him, fidelity to the nation, as such, was one thing; but mere difference of opinion with regard to measures of domestic policy was another. The first was of such a character as to exclude all the adversaries of the nation from participating in the management of public affairs, but the latter was not. In this Jackson was right and Monroe wrong; and if the advice of the former had been followed by the

latter, it is not probable that there would ever have existed such a condition of things as to give rise to the demoralizing doctrine of the "spoils of office" as the reward of the "victors" in the contests of party

Monroe formed his first cabinet entirely of anti-Federalists—that is, of Republicans. It consisted of John Quincy Adams, Secretary of State; William H. Crawford, Secretary of the Treasury; Isaac Shelby, Secretary of War; B. W. Crowningshield, Secretary of the Navy; and Richard Rush, Attorney-General. These men were all distinguished for ability and commanded the general respect and confidence, not merely because of their own fitness, but because of the estimation in which the President was universally held. The administration commenced, therefore, under favorable conditions,—especially in so far as it had the opportunity of allaying the party excitement which had previously kept the country in a state of ferment. That it employed the opportunity wisely is sufficiently indicated by the fact that party feeling soon became moderated. While the advice of Jackson was not followed with regard to the members of the cabinet there was no wholesale proscription of Federalists in the selection of those charged only with administrative duties. These were chosen mainly because of their qualifications, and the result gave general satisfaction. It may be assumed with entire confidence, that it was owing to this that, when Monroe's first term was about to expire, he was unanimously re-elected to the second—a popular compliment paid only to Washington and him.

While the internal condition of the country was satisfactory, much difficulty arose out of our relations with

one of the formidable European powers. Spain owned Florida and was not a little incensed at the United States because we had obtained Louisiana from France, in the face of a treaty stipulation upon the part of the latter power that this should not be done. As a consequence of this ill-feeling the Spanish authorities in Florida encouraged the Seminole Indians to make forays across our southern border and commit every form of devastation, including the murder of the inhabitants. Jackson was sent to punish these savages, and there are very few readers of our history who are not familiar with the manner in which he did it—reflecting honor upon the country and credit upon himself and the gallant army which followed him. His invasion of Florida was a bold and daring act, for which there was an attempt made in Congress to censure him, but which signally failed. He was thoroughly vindicated and justified by Monroe, and measures were soon begun by the administration, looking to the ultimate acquisition of Florida by the United States, as absolutely necessary to the peace and quiet of our southern border. This was consummated by a treaty made February 22, 1819, at Washington City, and signed by John Quincy Adams, Secretary of State, and the Spanish minister.

In making this treaty the error of Jefferson was repeated,—that is, an act was perpetrated wholly without any warrant in the Constitution. Jefferson had failed to accomplish what he desired—an amendment of the Constitution authorizing the acquisition of foreign territory—and Monroe considered the single precedent in the case of Louisiana as full justification for him. In so far as the ne-

cessity for the acquisition of Florida is concerned, it stands precisely upon the same grounds as that of Louisiana—both having been not only necessary but advantageous, in the highest sense—but it left the people of the United States still confronted by the question whether or no any necessity whatsoever can justify or even excuse a deliberate violation of the Constitution. We needed Florida—that is undoubted—and it has become a part of the Union, entitled to as much protection as any of the thirteen original States. But the obligation to administer the government within the limitations of the Constitution has been increased rather than weakened by the extraordinary growth of our population and the infusion into it of heterogeneous and warring elements. Its violation—no matter with what intent—is threatening to the life of the nation;—for if we allow the necessity of to-day to become that of to-morrow, or a new exigency to be created whenever the projects of ambition may suggest it, then some bold usurper may trample the whole instrument under his feet and find examples enough in history to plead in palliation of his treason.

It does not become us, at this day, to speak censoriously of Jefferson and Monroe, on account of their acquisition of Louisiana and Florida. Their offenses against the Constitution have been long since condoned by the whole country and by all parties. Nevertheless, it would be unwise to conceal them entirely from the present generation, in whose hands the interests and future destiny of the country will soon be placed. Scarcely a day passes without the occurrence of something to remind us of our rapidly increasing population, the wonderful devel-

opment of our material resources, the increasing diversity of our occupations, the multiplying tendencies to the increase of corporate wealth and power, and, more than all these combined, the vast increase of immigrants from almost every nation in the world, who import with them principles and sentiments unlike our own, and often in conflict with them. From some of these sources there may possibly,—perhaps probably—arise influences prejudicial to the general welfare and threatening to some of the fundamental principles of the government. If there should, it will undoubtedly be more easy to counteract these influences by guarding and preserving the Constitution in its integrity, than by permitting its continued violation upon the plea of necessity,—a plea which may be made available by them to create new necessities for themselves. If, therefore, the borders of the nation are to be still further extended, under any of the possible contingencies of the future, the Constitution should be so amended, as Jefferson desired, that it may be done, if at all, in consistence with its provisions. Who is wise enough to foresee the effect likely to be produced upon a heterogeneous population, by the continued and persistent violation of our fundamental law?

The most disturbing question which arose during Monroe's administration grew out of the proposition to admit the Territory of Missouri into the Union as a State. The section of country included within the proposed boundaries was a part of the Louisiana purchase, and as the treaty with France obliged the United States to protect all the inhabitants of the ceded territory in their rights of person and property, the question whether slav-

ery should or should not exist there was directly involved. Upon the part of the South it was contended that as the right to hold slaves existed at the time of the purchase, it was among the rights guaranteed by the treaty, and could not be constitutionally violated. Upon the part of the North it was insisted that as slavery was in violation of the moral law, the United States could not give either direct or implied sanction to it without being guilty of an immoral act. Stripped, however, of all generalities, it was neither more nor less than a struggle for sectional ascendency—a controversy between the free States of the North and the slave States of the South for political power. Everybody now is familiar with the consequences which have since followed this controversy, but even then, when it was comparatively new, it so aroused sectional passions as to place the Union in fearful peril. Monroe was a slaveholder and all his property interests were in a slave State, but he bore himself with conspicuous propriety, if not impartiality, during this exciting sectional contest, and when it was at last settled by excluding slavery north of thirty-six degrees thirty minutes of latitude, there were few men in the country more rejoiced than he. His moderation, upon this as well as other subjects, was well understood by all, and hence, when the controversy was at its height, he escaped censure even from the most excited opponents of slavery. He was not disposed to employ executive power to defeat the will of the nation, where no constitutional difficulties were involved.

With regard to the rules for interpreting the Constitution he had agreed with Jefferson, between whom and

himself the most intimate relations existed. Being unable, therefore, to find, consistently with these rules, any grant of power to Congress to appropriate the public money for carrying on a *general* system of internal improvements, he vetoed a bill for continuing the Cumberland road. Upon this question his argument was elaborate and able,—manifestly the result of much thought and unquestionable honesty of purpose. But it subjected him to severe criticism, especially in the West, where the sentiment in favor of the Cumberland road was almost universal, because, as was alleged, he had stretched the powers of the government entirely beyond the Constitution in order to acquire Florida, as Jefferson had also done in the case of Louisiana—both thereby far exceeding the most latitudinarian construction of Hamilton,—and yet insisted upon so limiting and restricting those powers, with regard to the internal improvement of the country, that its future development should be left dependent upon the States alone, without any aid whatsoever from the National Government. The new States interested in the Cumberland road were occupied by an industrious population, engaged in clearing away the timber from their lands in order to make them productive and profitable, and were consequently not in a condition to be taxed by the States, even for improvements absolutely necessary for local purposes. To them the rules of constitutional interpretation laid down by Monroe—although supported by the authority of Jefferson—seemed incomprehensible, in view of the purchase of Louisiana and Florida. They considered both these acquisitions of inestimable value, especially that which secured the navigation of the Mis-

sissippi river; but were unable to understand why, after they were made, the National Government should retain the ownership of the public domain within the new States and throw the burden of taxation necessary to the general development and welfare, as well as to increase the value of that domain, entirely upon these struggling populations. They reasoned thus: that if the National Government possessed the power to acquire foreign territory, or to exercise ownership over the public domain within the States,—it must necessarily and logically possess also the incidental power to make interstate improvements, in order thereby to induce emigration from the old to the new States, to increase the value and sales of the public lands, and to add to the general prosperity.

Opinions of this character became so general throughout the West and Northwest that Monroe lost popularity in these sections, and the votes of the new States would undoubtedly have been cast against him at another election. But as his *veto* of the Cumberland Road bill was during his second term, May 4, 1822, the opposition to him did not become violent, because the general estimation in which he was held protected him against any suspicion of the integrity and sincerity of his motives. The consequence was, however, that the question of the constitutional power of Congress to make appropriations for interstate improvements became a more direct issue than it had been previously, and the Presidential election of 1824 was, in a very large measure, influenced by it.

It is well understood that Monroe approved the method of interpreting the Constitution insisted upon by Jefferson, when in Washington's cabinet—which limited Con-

gress to the exercise of such powers only as were expressly granted—denying to it any incidental or constructive powers. It is equally well understood that Washington declined to govern his administration by the advice of Jefferson, but did govern it by that of Hamilton, whereby the rule he established was this: That congressional power was not limited by the express grants of the Constitution, but that it included such implied powers as were necessary to execute the express powers,—as, for example, Congress is expressly granted the power to establish post-offices and post-roads, but unless it had the implied power to appoint postmasters and pay them salaries, and make appropriations for the transportation of the mail, this expressly enumerated power would become inoperative and valueless. During Jefferson's administration there had prevailed what was known as his "strict construction" theory, in opposition to this, and the consequence was that our commerce upon the ocean was left without naval protection, and so at the mercy of foreign powers that war with great Britain, under Madison's administration, was unavoidable, as the only means of vindicating the nation's honor. So that by the time of Monroe's administration it had been well demonstrated that while this doctrine of strict construction and the denial of implied powers to Congress might serve the ends of local politicians, it would, if persistently practiced, prevent the United States from becoming one of the leading nations in the world—the end which the founders of the government hoped for at the beginning. Therefore, we find Monroe in his labored *veto* message—the longest and most labored ever communicated to Congress—compelled to ad-

mit that his mind had undergone some change upon this very question of implied powers. His message contains this paragraph:

"It is contended, on the one side, that, as the National Government is a government of limited powers, it has no right to expend money, except in the performance of acts authorized by the other specific grants, according to a strict construction of their powers; that this grant, in neither of its branches, gives to Congress discretionary power of any kind, but is a mere instrument in its hands to carry into effect the powers contained in the other grants. *To this construction I was inclined in the more early stage of our government;* but, on further reflection and observation, *my mind has undergone a change*, for reasons which I will frankly unfold."

He meant by this, simply and clearly, that as the strict construction theory of Jefferson would cramp and confine the powers of Congress so as to impede the growth and progress of the nation, he had, upon becoming sensible of that fact, so far changed his mind as to recognize its constitutional power to appropriate money for *national* improvements; leaving, as he proceeded to show, all that were merely *local* to the States. And this he so distinctly stated to be the conclusion he had reached, that even the friends of the Cumberland road were somewhat sparing in their censures of him,—even those who were the most latitudinarian interpreters of the Constitution. The result was that the rule of interpretation generally accepted since then has been—in the words of one of the foremost men of his cabinet—that "whatever is absolutely necessary to the accomplishment of the object of

the grant, though not specified, may fairly be considered as included in it. Beyond this, the doctrine of incidental power can not be carried." And such has been the ruling of the Supreme Court of the United States, which has been followed by all the leading judicial tribunals of the country.

It was fortunate for Monroe that he lived at a time when a change of opinion upon a great public question could be avowed without detraction. It is not probable, however, that he hesitated from any fear of consequences to himself, for he belonged to that class of men who courageously discharge their duty to the country regardless of consequences to themselves. Such men are entitled to honorable remembrance and to conspicuous places in history—far more than those more pretentious to merit, who, in order to preserve a reputation for consistency, persist in error when made conscious of it.

Monroe had to decide a delicate international question which arose during his administration, out of the relations between the government of Spain and the Spanish-American States. These latter, imitating the example of the United States, rebelled against European tyranny and oppression and resolved to enter upon the experiment of self-government. When they had sufficiently demonstrated their ability to maintain their independence, he recognized them as independent nations, capable of entering into relations, by treaty or otherwise, with other nations. At this the monarchical powers of Europe became incensed and entered into an alliance, not only to prevent future revolts, but to put a stop entirely to all revolutionary attempts to establish governments of the people.

Monroe's equanimity was not disturbed by this, but he met the question in a manner eminently becoming a President of the United States, by announcing to the world that this country would not submit to any effort on the part of the allied monarchical powers of Europe to overthrow and plant monarchy in the place of independent popular governments, where they existed upon this continent. This is what is known as the "Monroe Doctrine," but which it would be more proper to call the American doctrine announced by Monroe; for it but expresses the sentiment of the entire nation.

There was an entire absence of anything like vanity in the life of Monroe. This was indicated by his manner and whole appearance; and conspicuously by the fact that, after he retired from the Presidency, he served in the capacity of justice of the peace in the county of his residence. He did this from a sense of duty to the public—from the desire to employ his learning and experience for the benefit of his neighbors, in the humble capacity of justice of the peace, as he had employed them for the nation at large as President. In this inconspicuous position he served with his accustomed fidelity, as he also did for the people of Virginia in the State Convention of 1829, assembled to amend the Constitution,—in which body he and Madison, and Chief Justice Marshall, were able, by their combined conciliatory spirit, to subdue the intemperate zeal of those who threatened a division of the State. When his health began to fail his decline was rapid, and he died in the city of New York, July 4, 1831, aged seventy-two years—having outlived Adams and Jefferson exactly five years, and being prov-

identially permitted, like them, to lie down to his last rest upon the birthday of the nation to whose honor and glory the three had devoted the best years of their lives.

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

J. Q. Adams

CHAPTER VI

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

As Monroe's administration drew to its close, political parties were re-formed. This did not follow immediately, but rather as consequent upon the condition of the country, which, after the strain occasioned by the Missouri contest, had settled down into comparative quiet. There was no immediate cause of popular agitation, and the lines which had separated the old parties were gradually becoming less distinct. Monroe having modified his original views with reference to the Jeffersonian theory of strict construction and the denial of any implied powers to Congress, there was but little left for party conflict, apart from our relations to foreign powers and the mere management of domestic affairs. And as the Presidency was a position of the highest honor, which many desired to attain, the politicians began to cast about for the control of the election of 1824. The Republican party was greatly in the ascendant, both in Congress and in the departments of government, and the Federal party was nearly extinct,—not existing, in fact, as an organization in any part of the country. The re-formation of parties, therefore, was considered a necessity.

It had been the custom of the Republican party since 1800—when Jefferson was nominated—to entrust the se-

lection of a candidate for the Presidency to a Congressional caucus. In 1824 there was violent opposition to this method; but it is not certain whether this grew out of dislike of the system or the rivalry between candidates. Whatever the cause, it was well understood that the party throughout the country would not abide by a caucus nomination. Notwithstanding this, however, a caucus was held by a minority of the Republican members of Congress, which nominated William H. Crawford, who was Monroe's Secretary of the Treasury. This had the effect of disorganizing the party, and three other Republican candidates were, during the canvass, brought into the contest, namely, John Quincy Adams, Monroe's Secretary of State; Andrew Jackson, and Henry Clay, Speaker of the Congressional House of Representatives. This is the first Presidential contest of which I have any remembrance, and although it was not attended with any special excitement, the fact that all the candidates were of the same party,—there having been no Federal candidate—created jealousies between them which afterwards ripened into positive rivalry. The result was disappointing to all the candidates and their friends. The total popular vote was only 352,062, but six States—Delaware, Georgia, Louisiana, New York, South Carolina, and Vermont—then chose electors by their Legislatures. Of the vote cast Jackson received 155,872; Adams 105,321; Clay 46,587; and Crawford 44,282. The aggregate vote against Jackson was 196,190, so that he had only a plurality of 50,551 over Adams, but fell 40,318 short of a majority of the popular vote cast. There were then 24 States with 261 electoral votes. When these were can-

vassed they were found to be divided as follows: Jackson, 10 States and 99 electoral votes; Adams, 8 States and 84 electoral votes; Crawford, 3 States and 41 electoral votes, and Clay, 3 States and 37 electoral votes. The effect of this vote by States produced the same comparative result as the popular vote—that is, neither had a majority. Jackson had the greatest number of States and electoral votes, but there were 14 States and 162 electoral votes against him—a majority of each—leaving him only a plurality of 15 electoral votes over Adams. No candidate having received a majority of the electoral votes, there was consequently no election, and the duty of choosing the President, under the Constitution, devolved upon the House of Representatives,—each State casting one vote. The final result was that, on February 9, 1825, Adams received 13 votes, Jackson 7, and Crawford 4; and the former, having received a majority, was declared elected.

Adams was somewhat embarrassed by this result. When it was announced to him by a committee of the House he informed them of his inclination to decline, for the reason that one of his competitors had received a larger popular vote than himself, but felt constrained by a sense of duty to accept, because no provision had been made for such a vacancy in the Presidential office as would exist if he did not, and for the further reason that he had been elected in pursuance to the provisions of the Constitution. He is entitled to credit for this frank avowal, as he is also for the commendation he bestowed upon his predecessors, and especially Monroe, under

whom he had so conspicuously filled the office of Secretary of State.

Having been elected as a Republican—although he was called the "coalition" candidate because the Federalists supported him—he followed the example of Monroe in selecting only Republicans for cabinet officers. They were as follows: Henry Clay, Secretary of State; Richard Rush, Secretary of the Treasury; James Barbour, Secretary of War; Samuel L. Southard, Secretary of the Navy; and William Wirt, Attorney-General. When the nomination of Clay came before the Senate it was opposed by fourteen Senators who voted against his confirmation, while twenty-seven voted for it. These negative votes were cast by Republican Senators who adopted that mode of expressing their opposition to both Adams and Clay because of the accusation of "bargain and sale" between them—as it was alleged—whereby Adams had agreed to appoint Clay Secretary of State if the latter, as a member of the House of Representatives, would vote for him. There had been, before the election, a rumor to that effect, and Clay's acceptance of the office was subsequently regarded by them as confirmation of the suspicions excited by it. It was intended at the time to be—and, in fact, afterwards became—an important factor in favor of Jackson, because of the pretext that this corrupt combination alone had cheated him out of the Presidency. So skillfully was the foundation for this suspicion laid, that it became, in the end, most influential in securing the subsequent election of Jackson and the defeat of Adams. It had much also to do with the defeat of Clay when he afterwards ran for the Presidency.

It is quite certain that there has never been any matter, not involving political principles and policy, which has more materially influenced the fortunes of political parties than this,—a fact which demonstrates, more than any other in American politics, how easy it is for malignant partisans to play upon the prejudices of credulous voters and thereby change the whole course of the nation's domestic policy. A brief review of the precise facts is due to the memory of both Adams and Clay, and will enable the present generation to see how easily mere groundless suspicion may be converted into reality, in the imagination of those who do not hesitate to obliterate the distinction between right and wrong—to obscure the truth and give prominence to falsehood—when the ends of partisan ambition are thereby accomplished.

After it had become known that no candidate had received a majority of the electoral votes, and when the anxiety with reference to the final result was universal, there appeared in the *National Intelligencer*, published in Washington City, of February 3, 1825, an article wherein it was stated, upon the authority of George Kremer—a member of the House of Representatives from Pennsylvania—that "one of the most disgraceful transactions that ever covered with infamy the Republican ranks," had been discovered and "ascertained to a certainty;" which was, that the friends of Adams had made overtures to Clay that for his aid to elect Adams he should be made Secretary of State;—that, before this proposition was accepted, Clay had proposed to the friends of Jackson that he would support the latter if that position were assured to him, but this was indignantly re-

jected; and that thereupon the "bargain" was actually made between Adams and Clay, which required the latter to transfer his influence to the former and secure his election, for which he was to be rewarded by being made Secretary of State. The direct manner in which these charges were made, and the express declaration by a member of the House that the truth of them had been "ascertained to a certainty," caused intense excitement in the political circles of Washington City, as they did elsewhere throughout the country. Clay was a man of strong impulses, and being keenly sensitive with reference to what concerned his own personal honor, must have felt intensely indignant at this accusation. Notwithstanding this, however, he would have treated it with silent contempt—as prompted only by partisan motives—but for the fact that the charge was directly indorsed by a member of the House of Representatives. Accordingly, on the same day the charge appeared in the *National Intelligencer*—six days before the House voted for President—he addressed the House from the Speaker's chair, and asked that a committee should be selected by ballot, who should be charged with the duty of investigating into its truth. He insisted that this was due not only to himself, but to the House also, inasmuch as the author, a member of the House, "avowed his readiness to substantiate by proof" the charge he had made. To this Kremer, who was present, responded that "he was willing to meet the inquiry, and abide the result;" and thereupon the House, after a very able discussion, appointed by ballot a committee of seven to make the investigation. Manifestly, this committee was chosen with impartiality,

and without any effort upon Clay's part to have any special friend of his placed upon it—for there was none such among its members. Nor was there one from among the eleven colleagues of Clay to vindicate his honor, their own, or that of the State of Kentucky, all of which were involved. The chairman was P. P. Barbour, of Virginia, who was afterwards made one of the Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States by Jackson, and the other members were: Daniel Webster, of Massachusetts; Louis McLane, of Delaware; John W. Taylor, of New York; John Forsyth, of Georgia; Romulus M. Saunders, of North Carolina; and Christopher Rankin, of Mississippi. It requires but a single glance to see that this committee contained some of the foremost men in Congress and in the country

The committee, through the chairman, made its report to the House February 9, 1825, wherein it was said: "That, upon their first meeting, with a view to execute the duty imposed upon them by the House, they directed their chairman to address a letter to the Hon. George Kremer, informing him that they would be ready at a particular time, therein stated, to receive any evidence or explanation he might have to offer touching the charges referred to in the communication of the Speaker, of the 3d inst.; their chairman, in conformity with this instruction, did address such a letter to Mr. Kremer, who replied that he would make a communication to the committee; accordingly he did send to them, through their chairman, a communication which accompanies this report, marked A, in which *he declines to appear before them for either of the purposes mentioned in their letter*,

alleging that he could not do so, without appearing either as an accuser or a witness, both of which he protests against." Therefore, as the committee said, they could take no further steps, and the attempt at investigation having thus failed, the House, after counting the electoral votes and finding that no candidate had received a majority, proceeded the same day to vote for President, when Adams was elected.

The House must have felt indignant. The author of the charge against Adams and Clay, when the latter asked the appointment of the committee, had declared that "he was willing to meet the inquiry, and abide the result." He then voluntarily put himself in the attitude of "an accuser." But when asked for the evidence upon which he based his accusation, he refused to open his mouth, or to furnish a single scintilla of proof! Instead, he wrote a long communication to the committee, insisting that it had no constitutional power to compel him to testify, and avowing the purpose to submit to his constituents what he had to say upon the subject, as they constituted the only tribunal to which he acknowledged responsibility!

It has not often happened that party managers have had so favorable an opportunity to play the game of political tricksters. Knowing the falsity of the charge of "bargain and sale," and how utterly abortive would be the attempt to prove it, notwithstanding the avowed readiness of the author to do it, they concerted the plan of providing for him an argument to prove that the House had no authority to require him to testify, so that thereafter the partisan press could be employed to give

circulation to the calumny for partisan purposes. The ingenuity of this scheme was attested by the ultimate result, for it constituted the principal charge of party artillery for many years and influenced many thousands of voters, who had not the means, or did not take the trouble, to ascertain the precise truth. It is easy to see now, when all the parties are in their graves, that this story was willfully false and that all the probabilities of the time refuted it. Adams, Clay and Jackson were all men of mark and distinction, each, in his sphere, having served the country with unquestionable fidelity. But Jackson's reputation was that of a great military commander and not that of a statesman. As a member of the United States Senate, he had not exhibited ability beyond the average. But Adams and Clay were both statesmen in the best sense of that term, and had been long associated together in the public service. Why, then, should not Clay vote for Adams for President, and Adams make Clay Secretary of State, without the suspicion of "bargain and sale?" Now, after the story has answered the ends designed by its contrivers, there can be but one answer to this question in all intelligent minds —that is, that each was the proper thing to do.

During Monroe's administration Adams, as Secretary of State, had not only become familiar with the relations between the United States and the European powers, but had adjusted them upon a satisfactory basis,—so thoroughly that his bitterest enemies could not assail him upon that score. His own administration, therefore, was mainly devoted to measures of domestic policy, with a

view to promote the internal prosperity of the country. In his messages to Congress this object was distinctly and expressly avowed. He was successful in this in some important respects, such as the continuance of the Cumberland road, and the undertaking of several other works of internal improvement of a national character. But he had to contend, from the beginning, with the most deadly party enmity. Whether this enmity was directed mostly at him or at Clay has always been a question; but it is fair to say that it was sufficiently so at both of them to have intimidated less courageous and patriotic men. Neither of them, however, was intimidated—there was not a drop of cowardly blood in the veins of either—and any searcher after the truth of our national history will find, upon thorough examination, that Adams's administration, from beginning to ending, was characterized by the strictest fidelity to the honor and integrity of the nation and the prosperity of the whole country. No sectional sentiment was harbored for an instant, but everything was done, in the power of the administration, to hold the States in perpetual union and advance the "general welfare" of all the people.

This was all accomplished in the face of violent and formidable opposition,—such as would have disheartened a weak and feeble administration. For about the first half of Adams's term he was supported by majorities in both Houses of Congress. But at this time his opponents were actively at work forming combinations against him and preparing to defeat him in 1828. The first thing considered necessary was to form an alliance between the friends of Jackson and those of Crawford, in order to turn

the majority in Congress against the administration, and so to embarrass the government as to render Adams's re-election impossible. There were some difficulties in the way of an immediate consummation of this plan, but when it was discovered that Crawford's health was so broken down that he could not be a candidate again, these were so far removed that an alliance was formed between his friends and Jackson's, with the distinct understanding that they should occupy common ground of opposition to Adams. It was what, in military phrase, is called an offensive and defensive alliance, formed by these two fractions of the Republican party to overthrow a Republican administration. For a time the character of its opposition was not sufficiently determined on to be announced to the public, and consisted mainly of captious objections to every administrative measure. While matters were in this condition the Legislature of Tennessee—in October, 1825—nominated Jackson for the Presidency, and as this was the first step taken in the contest of 1828, it became necessary for the congressional opponents of the administration either to support Jackson or unite upon some other Republican. Then, for the first time, the friends of Crawford, who had entered into the alliance against Adams, began to realize the danger of their being required to play a part they had not anticipated—for they had been opposed to Jackson always,—but when they found Jackson actually a candidate, they decided to support him rather than Adams. Their hostility to Clay had a good deal to do with this decision. He had voted for Adams in preference to Crawford, in the House of

Representatives, and this furnished them with what they considered a proper occasion for punishing him.

A party alliance formed in this way could not, at that time, have any other central point of unity than opposition to Adams and Clay, both of whom belonged to the same party as these allied factions. This was proved by the result, for both before and after the alliance was formed the business of the country was delayed by long and vituperative debates concerning the "bargain" between Adams and Clay, and in opposition to the measures recommended, from time to time, by the administration. The principal charge against it was extravagance —when, in point of fact, we never had a more economical administration, as is now well known—and this resulted in raising, for the first time, the party banner of *reform*. It soon came to be understood, however, that the reform sought after was the congressional control of official patronage, which it was found impossible to obtain under Adams. He had peremptorily refused to remove officers who faithfully performed their duties, merely on account of their political opinions; or to appoint officers who were unqualified upon party grounds alone. And, hence, the conflict waxed warmer and warmer, until it became more animating and exciting than the country had ever before witnessed.

Adams did not permit the course of his administration to be disturbed by this clamorous opposition, although it constantly increased in violence. He understood perfectly his own responsibility and that of Congress, and when the measures he recommended were rejected, he was quite content to let the country decide between him

and his opponents. Of course, he desired re-election, but it has never been charged against him—and if it had it would not have been believed by those who knew him well—that he endeavored to contribute to that result by the improper exercise of his executive functions. In this respect he set an example which, if all his successors had imitated, would greatly have advanced the public welfare.

In adjusting the relations between the United States and the Spanish American States, after the latter had established their independence of Spain, his administration had a delicate duty to discharge. Inasmuch, however, as he, while Secretary of State under Monroe, had conducted the diplomatic correspondence which contains the first recorded mention of the "Monroe Doctrine," and which led to its announcement in the message of the President, he must have felt that it was his plain duty to follow in Monroe's footsteps. This he undoubtedly endeavored to do, because he had every reason to believe that the people of the United States would be unwilling to remain passive and see the monarchical powers of Europe subvert existing republics upon the American continent, under circumstances likely to imperil their own. Therefore, when the Republics of Colombia, of Mexico, and of Central America appointed a Congress to be held at Panama, in 1826, and invited the United States to participate, "for consultation upon American interests," he did not hesitate to accept the invitation in so far as his official authority enabled him—that is, he appointed two ministers to attend this Congress on behalf of the United States. This fact he communicated to Congress

in his first annual message, December 6, 1825. This gave rise to lengthy debates in both Houses, which may still be read with profit, if for no other reason than because they show what instrumentalities were employed to form a party alliance against Adams's administration, by defeating its favorite measures—of which the mission to Panama was supposed to be one, if not the chief. Calhoun, as Vice-President, so constructed the committees of the Senate as to make them adverse to the administration, and the Committee on Foreign Relations reported and recommended the adoption of a resolution declaring the Panama mission inexpedient. The opposition were unable to pass this resolution, but it was made their rallying point, because it was supposed to furnish the most formidable weapons of attack upon Adams and Clay, against both of whom they made common cause. The fact that the administration occupied precisely the same ground as that of Monroe seems to have made no difference, because—as a study of the events will show,—the purpose to defeat Adams in 1828 was stronger and more controlling than the desire to teach the monarchists of Europe that the United States would not permit them to destroy any of the American republics. How strange it must now seem to intelligent minds that this constituted the first rallying-point of opposition to Adams's administration,—the common muster-ground upon which the friends of Jackson and Crawford were to be drilled and disciplined for the contest of 1828! The character of the alliance may be easily seen by any who will critically examine the debates,—more particularly what was said in the Senate, because in that body the discussion

was in secret, and only became public afterwards by the removal of secrecy.

The attack upon the Panama mission was led by R. Y. Hayne of South Carolina, who, among other reasons, saw in it an assault upon slavery in the Southern States, because the South American States had specified the abolition of the slave-trade as one of the subjects of deliberation at the Panama Congress. He took occasion to admonish the opponents of slavery that the South not only did not intend to do anything that would contribute to the abolition of slavery in Cuba and Hayti, but that "the very day on which the unhallowed attempt shall be made by the authorities of the Federal Government" to "interfere" with the "domestic concerns" of the Southern States, they will consider themselves "as driven from the Union." He charged that the "Monroe Doctrine" was in violation of the teachings of Washington, who advised us not to engage in "entangling alliances" with foreign powers. He was sustained by Levi Woodbury of New Hampshire, who opposed the "Monroe Doctrine" because it was a repetition of the "Holy Alliance" of the European powers;—by Martin Van Buren of New York, who aimed his shaft at Clay by insisting that if his advice were followed, "the fair fame of our republic would be tarnished—shame would precede our approach—and disgrace follow in our path;"—by John Randolph of Virginia, whose speech is not reported, but was understood to have been violently denunciatory of both Adams and Clay;—by John M. Berrien of Georgia, who considered that if the principle of universal emancipation announced by the South American States were en-

couraged by sending ministers to Panama, it would soon be imparted to Cuba and other islands of the Antilles, and would incite rebellion among the slaves there, and endanger slavery in the Southern States;—by Mahlon Dickerson of New Jersey; and by Thomas H. Benton of Missouri.

It is most significant—full of suggestive thought—that of these Senators, two—Van Buren and Berrien—became members of Jackson's first cabinet; that two others of them—Woodbury and Dickerson—afterwards served in the same capacity, the former in two departments; and that one of them—Van Buren—became Jackson's successor! The combination was well and dexterously formed. It was the work of skillful hands. But it took three decades and a half for its fruit to become thoroughly ripened, —it having been just that length of time between these speeches—made in secret session of the Senate—and the affair at Fort Sumter! During all the intervening years, the conflict between nationalism and sectionalism raged with continually increasing virulence, and the popular passions boiled and bubbled like a heated cauldron.

The country was scarcely informed of this conspiracy—for such it was—before it was startled by the triumphant victory of sectionalism over nationalism, achieved by means of it. Then, for the first time in our history, a Presidential contest was prosecuted *in the slave States* upon sectional grounds, and resulted in a sectional victory. Of the electoral vote of the twelve slave States Jackson received 105, while Adams received only 6, cast for him in Maryland—north of the Potomac river. The South, therefore, became solid—as the phrase is—before

the country was aware of it; while the North was so divided that five Northern States gave Jackson 72 electoral votes, which secured his election by 125 electoral votes over Adams. And as an essential condition of this formidable conspiracy—without which it would have resulted in failure—John C. Calhoun, of South Carolina, was elected Vice-President on the ticket with Jackson.

There is nothing to show that Jackson was himself a party to this conspiracy, or to justify such an inference. When nominated for the Presidency by the Legislature of Tennessee, he had resigned his seat in the Senate and retired to private life at the Hermitage. Therefore, although it produced a result beneficial to him in the contest of 1828, he is no further chargeable with it than may be implied from his acceptance of the Presidency under the existing circumstances—with full knowledge of the fact that every electoral vote south of the Potomac river had been cast for him, upon the false pretense that Adams's administration, by adhering to the policy of Monroe with regard to the South American States, was preparing the North for an attack upon slavery in the South. Notwithstanding this, however, it may be implied from what afterwards *occurred* under his own administration, that he had no sympathy with the purposes and designs of these conspirators;—for when they supposed that their power had become strong enough to defy the nation and nullify its laws, he struck them such a blow with his executive saber, as shivered their alliance into atoms and made its northern auxiliaries reel and totter like drunken men.

Upon the close of Adams's administration, March 4,

1829, he retired to his home in Massachusetts, where he was not permitted to remain long. In 1831 he was elected to the House of Representatives in Congress, in which capacity he served until his death. In this respect he imitated Monroe, being ready to serve the public in whatsoever capacity it was supposed his experience and ability could be beneficially employed. It was there that I knew him—having served with him during the whole of the Twenty-seventh Congress, and again in the Thirtieth, until he died. I was looking at him when he fell at his desk—the post of duty—February 23, 1848. He died like a true knight, with his armor on, and ready, up to the last moment, to measure lances with any adversary. I had many opportunities of observing him closely, and while I may not have judged him as accurately as others who held more intimate intercourse with him, the impressions I had previously entertained of his character and intellectual power were entirely confirmed. Especially was this the case when he was arraigned before the House for treasonable intent, because he presented a petition from a few citizens of Haverhill, Massachusetts, praying that the Union be dissolved! All that happened during that extraordinary proceeding came under my personal observation, and very few incidents have so impressed my mind as this attempt to fasten the stigma of disgrace upon him, for what he considered a simple and harmless performance of official duty. It was characterized by unusual eloquence and great vehemence upon the part of his assailants, and by wonderful intellectual power and astonishing physical endurance upon his part. Although more than half a century has passed, the whole scene is so well remem-

bered that the principal actors seem now to re-appear in my presence, although not one of them survives.

The petition was presented January 24, 1842, and was accompanied by a motion that it should be referred to a committee instructed to report against the prayer of the petitioners. This, under ordinary circumstances, would have excited neither observation nor comment; for his express disavowal of sympathy with the object sought after—to say nothing of his personal history—ought to have been held as convincing proof that he could have no other purpose than to maintain inviolate the constitutional right of petition. He had, but a few days before, exhibited his sincerity upon this subject by presenting a petition from citizens of Georgia, asking his own removal from the Chairmanship of the Committee on Foreign Relations upon the grounds that he was a *monomaniac* upon the subject of slavery. And after having been told that this was a *hoax*, he still insisted that the petitioners had the right to be heard, and that he also had the right to defend himself if he deemed it expedient against the charge of insanity.

Yet for doing only this, and in the face of his motion condemning the object of the petitioners, the attempt was made to induce the House to fix its censure upon him, and the prosecution with that view was conducted by three gentlemen admirably qualified and equipped for the purpose—Gilmer and Wise of Virginia, and Marshall of Kentucky. They were all men of acknowledged ability—each in the prime of life—and had in the background a reserve force ready to participate actively if required, or to aid in torturing the victim when his limbs were

bound. It does not often occur that one man is set upon by such a combination—so thoroughly organized and admirably equipped. And when it is considered that he was then past three-score and ten years, with tremulous and palsied limbs, and that each of his assailants was in full possession of his intellectual and physical vigor, it is easy to understand that the spectacle was such as not to be easily forgotten. Of all those who witnessed it I know of but two beside myself still surviving, and not one between the Alleghanies and the Pacific. The rest are sleeping—I trust sweetly—while we three are spared for a few more flickering pulse-beats.

Before the vote was taken upon the motion with which Adams accompanied the introduction of the petition, a resolution was introduced by Gilmer to censure him, so worded as to include the imputation of a treasonable intent. This, being privileged under the rules, took precedence of all other questions, and had, consequently, to be considered immediately. The reading was listened to in perfect silence, and as the clear voice of the Clerk rang through the corridors of the old hall, the members gazed in the faces of each other in almost breathless amazement. Adams seemed to be the most indifferent spectator,—the occasion producing no other agitation of the nerves than that which physical infirmity had occasioned. It seemed to me at the time—for being near, I observed him closely—that his face would furnish an instructive study for a skillful delineator. It was as imperturbable as polished marble. In so far as he exhibited the least emotion it seemed to indicate satisfaction, because he could see at a glance that he would be afforded

a fit opportunity—sheltered, as he was, behind the right of petition—to leave such a history of his life as would thoroughly vindicate his loyalty to the Union. Besides this, he must have felt rejoiced that an opportunity would be afforded him to strike back such blows as would make his assailants regret their indiscretion—for he, manifestly, did not belong to the class of men who fulfill literally the Scripture injunction which admonishes that when we are stricken upon one cheek we shall quietly and unresistingly turn the other to our adversary. Accordingly, at his request, the resolution was recognized as privileged—taking precedence over all other business.

Marshall had all that night for deliberation, but I do not think he gave much serious thought to the matter,—for that was not his habit. Whether he did or did not, however, he moved the next day to amend Gilmer's resolution so as to make it declare that Adams deserved *expulsion*, but the House would be content with passing *censure* upon him. The difference was not material to Adams, but Marshall considered it so to himself. He was not jealous of Gilmer, but was of Wise, whom he knew to be behind Gilmer, ready to draw his "Damascus blade" when the fight grew hot, as his knowledge of Adams enabled him to know it soon would. Thus prompted, he supported his motion in a speech of very great ability—exhibiting occasional touches of magnificent eloquence. I do not think I ever heard him surpass, or even equal, it upon any other occasion. Yet it was not difficult to see, before he closed, that he exhibited some signs of apprehension that the work he had undertaken would be likely to increase in magnitude at every step in its prog-

ress,—some fear that the ground might slip away from under his feet. This often happens with those who yield to impulse rather than use deliberate reflection, especially when they encounter adversaries whose strength they have not tested:—such men are sometimes awakened to the reality of their position by harder blows than they expected, and at other times, by the recoil of their own upon themselves. Adams replied immediately, in a style that would have been considered severe had he not been the object of a studied personal attack; but he was fully justified by the circumstances. He declared his unwavering devotion to the Constitution and the Union,—appealed to his whole life spent in their service,—and disavowed without equivocation or mental reservation, any sympathy whatsoever with the object of the petitioners. But he demanded for them the right to be heard by petition, upon any cause of grievance of which they, as citizens, chose to complain. This right, he insisted, was derived from the Declaration of Independence and guaranteed by the Constitution, and could neither be denied nor impaired without a flagrant violation of both. These were favorite topics of his, and he dwelt upon them eloquently and with great effect,—every word touching a chord of sympathy in the minds of a vast majority of his hearers. He demanded that if he was to be tried for the treasonable utterances of others, or for any criminal intent against the Constitution, he should have a constitutional trial by a jury of his peers; which was secured no less to him than to an accused felon arraigned at the bar of justice. He asserted, with great vehemence, that the House had no authority to try him, and boldly defied its powers.

This defiance was expressed in words of burning eloquence. His eyes, his face, his manner, emphasized by the vigorous striking of his hands together—his customary manner of gesticulation—all indicated that intense fires of indignation were burning within. His voice was tremulous with emotion, yet sharp, fierce and piercing; —and if it was not strong enough to fill the entire hall, it was clear enough to make his opponents feel that they had aroused "the lion in his lair," and that they must put forth all their combined powers of intellect and eloquence to maintain themselves in the encounter they had unwisely invited.

In this first speech Adams, evidently, did not consider that he was entering fully upon his defense. He understood well the combination formed against him; and it was apparent that he intended to deal so skillfully with it that its defeat should become crushing and overwhelming. He intended to draw his enemies, each at his pleasure, into the net he was weaving for them, so that he could deal with them all together or in detail, as the exigency should require,—displaying in this the skill of an adroit military commander. He knew the points at which each was most vulnerable—all the openings in their armor where the point of his spear could enter—and the most certain methods of subjecting their judgments to the dominion of their passions. Therefore when, in measured words, he declared that if the resolution were pressed, he would expose a coalition to re-open the slave trade, he seemed to know beforehand that it would fall among them like a bombshell. And he did not miscalculate. Wise took fire at this defiant threat, and sprang to his

feet in an instant, as if impelled by the force of a galvanic battery. His eyes were like balls of flame. His thin nostrils were distended to the utmost, resembling those of a blooded courser when pressed by whip and spur, and his whole frame was tremulous with intense emotion. His words were impassioned, eloquent, and intensely severe. Although seemingly spoken from momentary impulse, they bore the marks of preparation, and were far more effective than the speech of Marshall. Their force, however, was somewhat impaired by the exceeding violence of his denunciation of Adams,—which proved that the arrows of the latter had not missed the mark they were aimed at. He was not entirely clear in his reference to what he called the French and British parties of 1800, —to the former of which he charged that Adams had united himself by desertion from the party which supported his father. Adams smiled significantly at this, and appeared to exhibit signs of satisfaction that the door was opening wide enough to enable him to make his defense as full and complete as he desired. Intense excitement pervaded the entire hall. The members gathered in little groups, here and there, all conversing with unusual earnestness and interest. When Wise, alluding to the anti-slavery sentiment of which he considered Adams the embodiment, said, in his emphatic tones—"the magazine is under the walls, and the torch of the incendiary may level the beautiful edifice with the dust," the scene became such as no language at my command can describe—so thrilling was the effect produced by the convulsed orator. Even the coolest men in the House became aroused; and Wise, from physical exhaustion,

being unable to close his speech that day, the House adjourned under the influence of his inflammatory denunciations.

The next day he spoke two hours, with unabated violence and severity, and at the expiration of that time was entirely prostrated, no less by the severity of his labor than by the intensity of his passions. He changed the issue to a personal one between Adams and himself, and thus, unwittingly, threw himself into the lion's mouth. Adams saw this in a moment and pressed the advantage it gave him with extraordinary skill and power. In replying immediately to a portion of Wise's remarks that were severely personal and offensive, he said: "There was, some four or five years ago, a man put upon his trial before this House for murder, who came into it with his hands and face stained with the blood of a fellow member, the blotches of which are yet upon his countenance;"—alluding to the connection of Wise with the Graves and Cilley duel, in which the latter was killed. The deliberate manner in which this was spoken, and the scorn and contempt he exhibited, produced the most intense feeling, which swept over the House with the velocity of an electric current. The retort was tremendously severe, but there was method in the madness which dictated it. His object was not only to return harder blows than he had received, but to contrast his own conduct upon that occasion with the course of Wise towards him, as he had then insisted that the House had no constitutional power to expel and ought not to censure, even for the murder of a member, in the absence of a trial in a court of justice. Wise felt the wound keenly and winced

under it,—for he did not possess the faculty of concealing his emotions. An attempt at explanation made his discomfiture more apparent. A stroke by Adams at Marshall drove him also to an explanation, and he too gave signs that he was hurt—that the shaft of Adams had almost reached a vital point. Both of them were wrought up almost to a state of frenzy,—while Adams, resuming his seat under an apparent consciousness of his power, appeared perfectly composed and unconcerned;—for more than any man I ever saw he had the faculty of seeming so, when, but a few moments before, he had been lashed into a terrible rage. His coolness on this occasion was attributable to the fact that he had measured his antagonists and manifestly had no fears of the result.

There were many in the House who, by this time, became anxious to allay the rising storm, so that public business should proceed, inasmuch as the pendency of the resolution as a privileged question suspended all legislation until it was disposed of. But all efforts with that view were ineffectual, inasmuch as Rhett of South Carolina and Botts of Virginia had succeeded in injecting into the main controversy one of their own, of which Botts availed himself to attack Upshur of his own State, who was then a member of Tyler's cabinet. This devolved a double duty on Wise—both to defend himself against Adams and Upshur against the charge of Botts that he was a disunionist. Wise and Botts were rivals and not upon friendly terms, and therefore the former took occasion to flatly and indignantly deny this serious accusation of the latter. The fires of excitement were freshly kindled by this new and unexpected controversy, and "con-

fusion worse confounded'' so reigned that another day was consumed without any result.

The next day Marshall spoke again with great power and captivating eloquence—satisfying himself, as I personally know, for we occupied adjoining seats and he made no effort to conceal his satisfaction from me. But with his usual want of discretion he said some things that stung Adams to the quick and brought from him an immediate reply, which proved that every arrow that struck him gave fresh impulse to his energies. So thoroughly did he become aroused that he did not close that day. In the midst, however, of the general tumult, and with the most intensified passions, his discretion did not desert him, which gave him great advantage over both Wise and Marshall. The more their passions were inflamed the greater seemed to be his delight, and more than once I thought I saw a smile of gratification upon his face when their terrible denunciations of him had carried the excitement to its highest, because he saw in them justification for whatever severity his own passions might suggest. But, notwithstanding the depth of his feelings, he moved forward with admirable caution,—seemingly as if he were advancing upon his enemies with a stealthy and steady tread. In order to prepare the way, he introduced several resolutions calling for information upon matters he considered essential to his defense;—for it was not the least remarkable of the facts that occurred that he appeared as if just preparing for battle after he had drawn the loads from the guns of his assailants, and exhausted their strength,—especially that of Wise, physically the feeblest but intellectually the most formidable

of them all. He accompanied these calls with a brief explanation, not, however, abating his energy and fervor in the least; and it was not difficult to see that he was just getting ready to bring his heavy artillery into action.

Gilmer now felt himself constrained, as the mover of the original resolution, to come to the assistance of Wise and Marshall,—which he did in a speech of two days. He displayed more ability than I had ever known him to do before. But he fell short of accomplishing what he designed—for not being a man of strong and violent passions like his coadjutors, he was ill fitted for such a contest. The fires were hotter than he was accustomed to, and consequently he fell below the demands of the occasion. This, however, was what Adams desired and probably expected,—having forced the controversy to a point he had all along intended it should reach. He then knew his opponents thoroughly,—had discovered what kind of weapons to hurl at each, and where to strike at their weakest points—the spots where their armor could be most easily pierced. The time was nearing when he could allow his passions to break forth more fiercely than ever, and could enjoy the delight of emptying the well charged vials of his wrath upon their heads. And they did soon break forth with terrible vengeance—as charred embers are set ablaze by stirring—and produced an effect surpassing the anticipations even of those who had known him best and longest. He followed Gilmer in what seemed an impromptu speech of two hours—surpassing all he had previously said, in logic, eloquence, and satire. It soon became apparent that he then intended to bring the conflict to an end—that he

had reached a point where he could not only fling his thunderbolts with deadly effect, but thoroughly and triumphantly vindicate his whole life. And he did this so effectively, and with such a surprising exhibition of power, that his prosecutors with all their acknowledged ability and eloquence, were dwarfed into pigmies before him. They appeared like children in the iron grasp of a strong man.

Adams's review of his life was both interesting and instructive. He spoke of his appointment by Washington as envoy to European courts,—his connection with the administration of Jefferson and the reason why he supported it,—his appointment as embassador to England and to Russia by Madison,—and the devotion he had exhibited to the Constitution and the Union—in such an earnest and impressive manner as to rivet the attention of the entire House and galleries. So anxious were all to hear every word that the stillness was broken only by his peculiar and somewhat shrieking voice. Every eye was fixed upon the extraordinary old man as tremblingly he uttered his words of fiery eloquence and scathing sarcasm. The members gathered around him so closely that they could observe every expression of his face. Lord Morpath, of the British Parliament, had a seat upon the floor near by, and gave marked exhibition of both wonder and admiration. Even Marshall—whose generous impulses could not be entirely extinguished by the fierceness and anger of the combat, expressed admiration of his intellectual power. When he referred to his services at the Russian court, it was impossible to restrain the outburst of applause which followed. He

showed that while at St. Petersburg a number of American merchant vessels were seized for confiscation under royal decrees, and that the confiscation was nearly completed through French influence, under the dictation of the great Napoleon. All Europe was then trembling before this wonderful man, and neither kings nor ministers dared to challenge his imperial will. Adams was the only minister at St. Petersburg who had the courage to remonstrate against the outrage, although merchant vessels of European nations had been seized. To his own mind his line of official duty was plain and clear, and he made no inquiry beyond that. Accordingly he protested, singly and alone, in the name of the United States, and did it with such promptitude and boldness, as greatly to surprise the European diplomats, who had been accustomed to quail before emperors and kings. The consequence was that the sequestration was raised and the confiscation arrested, notwithstanding the threat of war by Napoleon. And there was also this additional consequence, that the action of Russia, occasioned by the policy which followed the American protest, led to the invasion of that country by the French army, the unparalleled calamities that followed its retreat from Moscow, and, at last, to the downfall of Napoleon. Adams's relation of these events was wonderfully interesting and instructive, as they had been hitherto unknown to the members of the House, or, if known at all, had not been given the attention they deserved. He did not close that day.

On the next he continued in the same strain, apparently as fresh, vigorous and intrepid as ever. Neither

the labor he had performed, nor the convulsing excitement through which he had passed, were sufficient to wear him down. The agitated frame, it is true, gave some evidence of weakness and fatigue, but his unconquerable spirit braced him up. There could not have been a grander or more admirable exhibition of courage. Passing from his historic review, he came more directly to the object designed by the resolution of censure, and declared that he considered the liberty of the people and the perpetuity of the Union, as dependent, in a large degree, upon the action of the House;—inasmuch as the denial of the right of petition would imperil both. He spoke all that day,—and again the next,—each blow falling with overpowering effect upon those he denounced as his persecutors. On the succeeding day—the *eleventh* of the great trial—he realized that his work was over and his triumph accomplished. When the proper hour had arrived he rose from his seat with the composure of a conscious victor, and calmly surveyed the scene for a few moments, without uttering a word. What a picture that would have made if the photographer's art had then been sufficiently advanced to catch the scene! He was not exactly like the conqueror who sees all his enemies lying dead at his feet,—but his were completely paralyzed, and exhibited in every gesture and expression a consciousness of his triumph and their defeat. Seeing and realizing this,—with a piercing glance, first at Marshall, then at Gilmer, and last at Wise,—he calmly and slowly said: "I am ready to go on if necessary, but for myself I am satisfied!" The effect was electric. Not a word was spoken in response. A few moments of unbroken silence

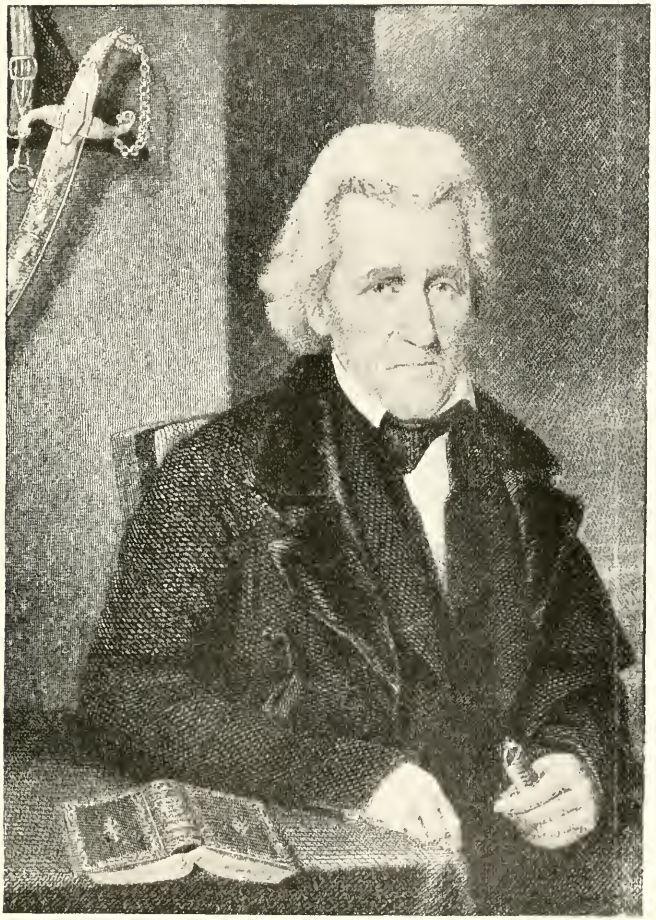
suggested to those present that the time had then arrived for the cessation of the strife. Whereupon a motion to lay the resolution of censure upon the table was immediately carried, and the great trial was ended.

Marshall left the hall openly expressing his disgust, but plainly exhibiting his mortification. His pride was deeply wounded. Gilmer looked the personification of melancholy,—though his face was not of the kind to exhibit fully the working of his mind. Wise, stung deeper than either—because more sensitive—made a hard struggle to assume an indifference he could not feel. And Adams, among them all, was the only one apparently unmoved, although he undoubtedly felt, with the keenest satisfaction, the grandeur and completeness of his victory. He sat for a little while like a statue; and then rising and again glancing over the House with marvelous composure, said: "I have two other petitions like that I introduced the other day—one from New York and the other from Pennsylvania—but owing to the condition in which things now stand I prefer to reserve them for a future occasion!" Not a word was spoken except by himself; and there he stood,—that wonderful man, weak from age and physical infirmity, but strong as a giant in the invincibility of his courage—as completely master of the battle-field as the iron-duke of England was at Waterloo.

The whole bearing of Adams, from the beginning to ending of this extraordinary proceeding, was admirable, and could not have been surpassed. Never did any man appear more like a chafed lion, keeping inferior animals at bay. All the combined energies of his eloquent, talented and adroit adversaries were too feeble for suc-

cessful encounter with such a man. He repelled their assaults as easily as if they had been children, and rose grandly above them. Conscious, all the time, of having no purpose to assail the Constitution or to endanger the stability of the Union, he planted himself, with legitimate pride, upon the record of his long and eventful life, and this enabled him to defy every shaft aimed at him. If any of them reached him they were thrown back with increased force against his enemies—wounding them, not him. His conduct throughout was an admirable exhibition of moral courage—a higher degree of heroism than takes the soldier up to the cannon's mouth.

ANDREW JACKSON



Andrew Jackson

CHAPTER VII

ANDREW JACKSON

THE alliance formed by the friends of Jackson, Calhoun, and Crawford, to defeat Adams in the Presidential contest of 1828, especially desired to procure a new name—believing that much depended upon it—but had much difficulty in doing so. Hitherto there were only Republicans and Federalists, but Adams had given better proof than any of those combined against him that he belonged to the former. He had supported the administrations of Jefferson, Madison and Monroe,—embracing a period of twenty-four years—and his own administration was made conspicuous by the fact that he was endeavoring to follow in Monroe's footsteps—which the parties to the alliance were endeavoring to prevent, because of the persistent efforts of Monroe and Adams to send diplomatic representatives to the Congress at Panama. His was, therefore, a Republican administration, as Monroe's had been, and for that reason they desired to overthrow it. Consequently, as they could not fight under the banner of Federalism—which they supposed would assure their defeat—they were compelled to christen their organization by some other name than Republican. When it was first proposed to adopt the name Democratic, those from the extreme South—the followers

of Calhoun and Crawford—objected, for the reason that it embodied the ideas of equality of citizenship and universal suffrage, which they considered threatening to slavery; because if the non-slaveholders in the South were all permitted to vote, they would dictate the policy of the slave States and ultimately emancipate the negroes, as the most effective method of solving the labor problem.

Calhoun was at the head of this alliance. He had a strong and influential following, although not sufficiently so to prevent the adoption of the proposed name. In consequence of his opposition, it required a good deal of cozening in the South to make it acceptable; and it only became so because it had a broad and general and not, in any accepted sense, a specific significance. In order to give it weight and influence, it was found necessary to add prefixes to it by way of explanation; as, for example, it was called "Jefferson Democracy" in the South—notwithstanding Jefferson was always a Republican—and "Jackson Democracy" in the North. The leaders of the alliance considered these qualifications sufficient to answer their ends, inasmuch as, on account of their indefinite meaning, each section could employ its own interpretation. Consequently, among the followers of Calhoun and Crawford in the South, "Jefferson Democracy" was held to mean ultimate nullification, as Jefferson was the author of the Kentucky resolutions of 1799, which asserted the right of a State to nullify an unconstitutional act of Congress. Whereas, in the North, "Jackson Democracy" was understood to mean whatever was expedient in each locality, but, everywhere and under all circumstances, uncompromising hostility to Adams and

Clay. And this method of conducting the canvass was made easy by the fact that there had never been, up till that time, a Presidential National Convention and no "platform" of principles announced. It was the first introduction of the confidence-game into our party politics.

There is nothing to show—or to found a fair suspicion upon—that Jackson was a party to this combination, although it resulted in his election to the Presidency. After he resigned his seat in the Senate he retired to the Hermitage, where he remained in comparative quiet, and left the politicians to form their plot under the guidance of those who expected to benefit themselves more than him. In fact, his election was, with them, a secondary consideration,—a mere incident to that of Calhoun as Vice-President, upon the same ticket with him. If that had not been reasonably assured beforehand, the contrivers would have left Jackson in his retirement and varied the plan of their alliance accordingly.

Nor is it probable that Jackson had been informed of this conspiracy when he constructed his first cabinet,—for it did not take long to demonstrate that the materials composing it were so incongruous that even his strong will could not bring them into harmony. The schemers were too shrewd to expose their plans thus early. That cabinet was composed of Martin Van Buren, Secretary of State; Samuel D. Ingham, Secretary of the Treasury; John Branch, Secretary of the Navy; John H. Eaton, Secretary of War; John M. Berrien, Attorney-General; and William T. Barry, Postmaster-General;—the last having been made a member of the cabinet for the first time. Of these it has always been well understood that

only Eaton and Barry could be relied on as distinctively the friends of Jackson. Van Buren, Branch and Berrien had been supporters of Crawford in 1824, and Ingham was the selection of Calhoun. Such a cabinet could not have been formed in any other way than as the result of the combination to defeat Adams, for with regard to affirmative measures of government policy it was absolutely discordant,—so thoroughly so that Jackson, with all his indomitable will and courage, soon found it impossible to hold it in unity. If he had known the plot which antedated his election in all probability he would not have made this attempt, for when he did discover it, he promptly displayed the heroic spirit of one who feels himself "born to command," as he was in fact.

I first saw Jackson at Nashville, Tennessee, January 8, 1827,—over sixty-six years ago. As he was then a candidate for President, the occasion was the celebration of his memorable victory at New Orleans, by which he had fairly won the distinction of a great general. His appearance on horseback, as he rode through the streets of the city, gave rise to immense applause. I had never before seen so excited a multitude, except upon a single occasion, about three years before, when General La Fayette reviewed a line of Revolutionary officers and soldiers at the place of my nativity, and when every voice, old and young, was made hoarse by shouts of welcome. New, however, as the scene was to me, I saw and heard enough to assure me of the firm grasp he had upon the confidence and affections of his friends, and was impressed at once with the idea that he belonged to the class of men upon whom nature impresses the stamp of greatness.

He was an admirable and graceful rider, seeming to take pride—as all good riders do—in the noble animal that bore him. His natural gracefulness of manner was peculiarly striking.

I saw him again at his inauguration in Washington City, March 4, 1829. The assemblage upon that occasion would not have compared in number with similar gatherings of the present day, yet it was considered large. The population of the capital was then so small as to justify the remark of John Randolph that it was a "city of magnificent distances." There was then no railroad, and but a single line of stage-coaches between it and Baltimore. I went there, consequently,—as hundreds of others did—upon horseback, prompted not alone by curiosity, but by the desire to witness an important and interesting ceremony. I had seen Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe, after their retirement and in their quiet ways of life, without the insignia of office about them, and had learned to look upon them with feelings somewhat akin to reverence, and this excited in my mind the desire to see an actual President and to witness his induction into the elevated office which Washington was the first to fill.

The oath of office was administered by the venerable Chief Justice Marshall, whose general appearance was not calculated to impress one with a just idea of his greatness, but who was, however, by general consent, recognized as the first of American jurists. He repeated the constitutional oath in a low and feeble voice, so that it could not be heard many feet beyond the steps of the eastern portico of the capitol. His words were spoken slowly,

and with such deliberation as to give to the occasion a suitable degree of solemnity. Jackson's manner of touching the sacred volume with his lips sufficiently indicated that he considered the ceremony something more than mere form. Having taken the oath, he delivered his brief inaugural address in an impressive manner—both graceful and dignified. His voice was not loud enough to be heard by all present, but as I was fortunate enough to obtain a favorable position, I was within its reach. It was clear and distinct, every word having been expressed with proper emphasis. His manner was faultless—not strained, but natural. There was no exhibition of pride or ostentation—no straining after effect or false show. In his whole bearing there was an exhibition of that self-reliance which the possessor derives from the inward consciousness of strength, but which, at the same time, is neither presumptuous nor distasteful.

It has been often charged that Jackson's inaugural address was not his own, but was prepared for him by others. That there were others who desired this privilege is sufficiently shown by the character of the combination they had made before the election, but that they were not indulged I am well assured, satisfactorily to my own mind. There came into my hands, some years ago, in consequence of the death of the gentleman to whom they were addressed, a number of private letters, some of which were written by Jackson himself, and others by those especially prominent among his friends. The full contents of these can never be known to the public, because they were written in the unreserve of confidential correspondence, but I feel justified in asserting that they

entirely refute this insinuation. He prepared the address before leaving the Hermitage for Washington City. When he reached there he submitted it to several of his friends, which it was entirely proper to do. Among these there was one for whom he entertained the highest respect, and who expressed himself as not altogether satisfied with it—at the same time suggesting that it might be improved. It was accordingly placed in his hands for that purpose, and he, after due consideration, proposed the alteration of some of its important parts and returned it. Jackson gave to these suggestions the consideration they deserved—for the gentleman who made them was, besides being a man of eminent ability, a disinterested friend—but, after full deliberation, gave the preference to the address as he had originally written it. It was, consequently, delivered in that form, with the exception of a few lines he deemed it expedient to add after he reached the capitol.

The Virginia supporters of Jackson were dissatisfied with his first cabinet—as I well remember—and made loud complaints, but, probably, not to him. The habit of looking to Virginia for Presidents and cabinet officers had prevailed so long that they were troubled to discover some cause for the slight, for such they regarded it, especially in view of the fact that Adams had at one time two Virginians in his cabinet, and one during his whole administration. When, however, they came to consider that, at the election of 1824, Jackson had received in that State less than 3,000 out of nearly 12,000 votes—that Crawford carried it by more than 5,000 over him, and that he even ran behind Adams, they were inclined to suspect that, notwithstanding the large majority he obtained the pre-

vious year, he intended to exact from them some additional evidence of their fidelity to his administration. But there were other reasons for this apparent neglect of the Virginians which they did not, at that time, suspect, and which, if they had known all the facts, they could have traced to the combination for the defeat of Adams. They were recognized as parties to that combination only in so far as they were expected to contribute to that defeat; but the real motives and purposes which dictated it were unknown to them. These are now easy of explanation, and being explained will show very clearly two important facts, first, that the object designed was unknown to Jackson himself, and, second, that when he discovered it he turned upon the plotters with terrible vengeance.

Monroe, with Adams as his Secretary of State, had endeavored to signalize his administration by teaching the European powers that the United States would not submit passively to any interference by them with republican institutions upon the American continent, and in order to accomplish this had insisted upon sending ministers to the Congress of Panama. For attempting this his administration was violently assailed, for the reason, among others, that an alliance with the South American republics would tend to the suppression of the slave trade, the abolition of slavery in the West Indies, and ultimately in the United States. The pretended belief that these results were contemplated by Monroe and Adams, during the former's administration, and by the latter alone after Monroe's retirement, constituted the most controlling reason for the combination to unite the South,

first under the leadership of Hayne, in the secret discussion in the Senate, and afterwards under that of Calhoun. And having been so far successful as to elect Calhoun—the head and front of the conspirators—Vice-President; and so to mislead Jackson as to get two others of the original conspirators—Van Buren and Berrien—in his cabinet, along with another—Ingham—as a special friend of Calhoun, it is not to be wondered at that they felt strong enough to get along without the Virginians, who they feared would, if they fully exposed their hands, go to the support of Monroe, if not of Adams, inasmuch as they had never been friendly to Jackson but had supported Crawford in preference to him. Besides, Virginia had always opposed the slave trade. Washington and Madison had voted for suppressing it in the Constitutional Convention, and both of them had continued their opposition to it during their respective administrations. Jefferson had done the same thing. So that the combination which had produced Jackson's election was not simply opposition to Monroe and his policy, but also to the doctrines taught by the leading Virginia statesmen from the foundation of the government. Still more,—there was a controversy then in progress in Virginia which, that same year, resulted in extending the right of suffrage to tax-payers instead of confining it to the owners of real estate, as had been done before that time; and as it was supposed by the conspirators that this would be threatening to the institution of slavery, they did not consider a close alliance with the Virginians as necessary to their ends—which they considered themselves fully able to accomplish without their assistance. Having ground-

ed this belief upon their success in getting so many of their allies into Jackson's cabinet, and upon the supposition that they would continue to control the policy of his administration, they were cheered and enlivened by confidence of complete future success. And under these circumstances Jackson's administration began.

In addition, however, to the dissatisfaction among the Virginia politicians, there were also real or imaginary grievances elsewhere, especially in the North;—for they were unpracticed politicians who did not see that the richest fruits of the Presidential victory were gathered by the friends of Crawford, while only a small portion was left, here and there, for the original friends of Jackson. These disaffections, slight at first, grew in magnitude, until the administration was driven to the necessity of appeasing the several factions of the party by so employing the patronage of the government as to give to each faction what it considered its due reward. This must have embarrassed Jackson, inasmuch as he could not have forgotten his letter to Monroe, wherein he advised him "to extinguish that *monster* called party spirit." Nevertheless, his surroundings were peculiar—arising mainly out of the fact that the politicians had so increased the greediness for office that greater multitudes flocked to Washington than had ever been known before. These friends of Jackson—real or professed—insisted upon an equal distribution of the government patronage, as necessary to maintain the administration, and he finally yielded to the pressure,—which few men similarly situated, could have resisted,—although, in doing so, he had to depart from the example of all his predecessors

and disregard his own advice to Monroe. It is hardly to be supposed that he anticipated the consequences which have followed. On the contrary, it is simple justice to him to concede that he felt himself constrained to yield to the importunities of his friends, because there were many reasons why he should regard those who urged him to this course as not only faithful to him and his administration, but to the government as well. Whatever the motives which influenced him, however, it can not be denied that his example led almost immediately to evil and injurious consequences. Washington made nine removals from office; John Adams two; Jefferson thirty-nine; Madison five; Monroe nine, and John Quincy Adams two; making a total of sixty-six in the whole forty years of the government. Whereas, the desire of the politicians for the use and control of official patronage under Jackson incited so strongly a corresponding desire for office among their followers, that between the inauguration and the next meeting of Congress—about nine months—the number of removals and appointments, including postmasters, more than quintupled the whole number between the beginning of the government and that time.

While it is true that the responsibility for this condition of things rested, in a large degree, upon Jackson,—as it has, under like circumstances, upon other Presidents since—yet it is equally true also that the larger share of the blame, in all such cases, should fall upon the politicians and those who, with their eyes open, confer power upon them. They desire the government to reward *their* friends, and measure fidelity to it by the extent of serv-

ices rendered to themselves. The advancement of their own political fortunes is the inciting and primary cause of their appeals to a President, and when he declines to act so as to accomplish this, his administration is left to be buffeted by the storms its adversaries create, without their assistance. Jackson did not suspect, when he constructed his first cabinet, that his administration could be induced to discriminate against his original friends and in favor of those of Crawford, or, in all probability, he would have pursued a different course. Therefore, when he was brought to realize that a state of things existed entirely unlike what he desired, he must have felt constrained so to employ his official patronage as to bring these two conflicting party elements into harmony. If it had merely required courage to do this, he had a sufficiency of that for the purpose; but besides any considerations personal to himself, he was manifestly controlled by the desire to unite his friends in a compact organization, not only to maintain his own administration but to promote what he believed to be the welfare of the country. If he had refused this many of his original friends would have withheld their support from his administration, not because they desired office for themselves, but because they would have suspected his fidelity. So that, viewing the matter as it must have then appeared to him—and not merely as it now appears to us—the grounds of objection to his course are considerably narrowed. It only becomes otherwise when we judge of the effect which has reached our own time, when we see steadily increasing in number those who ungraciously receive a letter from a post-office carrier who does not vote their party ticket! To say of

Jackson that he began this, does not remove censure from those of all parties who have accepted his example as the law of their own action, any more than one man can justify himself for his own errors by pleading in self-defense the errors of others. The politicians were to blame under Jackson, and will be in the future under other Presidents, unless the great body of the people shall apply the corrective. They alone can do this. Whether they will or not—*nous verrons*.

A discussion of the measures of Jackson's administration, and the principles involved in them, would afford but little profit now, except to those who wish to ascertain the true rules of constitutional interpretation. In so far as I was myself concerned they were disapproved by me—almost *toto cælo*,—yet, at the same time, I did not allow myself to question the integrity of his motives or his purpose to do what he believed to be best for the public welfare. I was encouraged in this by himself under circumstances never forgotten by me. My father was the friend of Jackson—though not a politician. Upon one occasion I accompanied him to the White House when he called to pay his respects to the President, feeling some little trepidation at the idea of appearing before one whose *sobriquet* of "Old Hickory" was suggestive of something I was too young to explain. I was a mere "looker on" at the interview, which could scarcely be called political in any proper sense, and soon congratulated myself that what I had previously dreaded was in fact pleasant and profitable to me, because it enabled me to form an estimate of Jackson which ever since

has been retained. Just as I felt that I had become sufficiently composed to store away for future use some of the thoughts expressed by the "old hero," my equanimity was almost entirely upset by the attempt of my father to explain to the President that I was inclined to disagree with him in politics, and as he had not fully succeeded in impressing his opinions upon my mind, he feared mine would continue to be in conflict with his. I was somewhat embarrassed at this, because of the apprehension that I should be lectured for disobedience to parental instruction. Instead of this, however, he approached and placing his hand upon my head said, in a kind and gentle tone of voice: "My son, I have no advice to give you about your politics, except this,—always think for yourself and let your conscience be your guide." I could not be otherwise than strongly and deeply impressed by this advice; and from that moment until now I have held him in such estimation that during sixteen Presidential campaigns in which I have taken an active part, in opposition to the political principles he professed, I have never allowed myself to be betrayed into an expression of unkindness toward him, but have invariably, upon all suitable occasions, defended the honesty, integrity and patriotism of his motives. This incident deserves to be related, because it shows that a man who could be imperious when the occasion required possessed, at the same time, such underlying sentiments of kindness and sympathy as dignify human nature. The advice he gave me was good then and is good now. He who follows it may sometimes err, but it will always constitute for him

the safest guide in such matters as involve his own and the general welfare.

The disruption—for such it was—of Jackson's first cabinet was of more significance than is commonly supposed. It was understood at the time that it was brought about by those who were chiefly instrumental in producing his election, and had succeeded in getting into his cabinet several who sympathized with them, and one of whom—Berrien—had opposed the mission to Panama under Adams's administration, expressly upon the ground that an alliance between the United States and the South American republics would tend to the suppression of the slave trade. By that time they had discovered that Jackson had a will of his own, and could not be used by others for their own selfish ends; and, therefore, they conceived the purpose of withholding their support from his administration, with the hope of being able to elect a President at the next election, in 1832, over whom they could obtain complete dominion. Jackson had said in his first message that a President ought not to serve longer than one term, and had recommended an amendment to the Constitution prohibiting a re-election; and this induced them to begin the formation of a new combination designed to control the next nomination or to defeat Jackson if he should become a candidate again. The principal step in that direction was to produce a breach between Jackson and Calhoun, in order, as was then supposed, to make the latter the successor of the former, and leave the slave trade as it was then carried on, entirely undisturbed, under the pretext that if it were interfered with slavery in the South would be imperiled. In some

way—never fully explained—a correspondence between Jackson and Calhoun was contrived with reference to the course of the latter pending the proposition in Congress to censure Jackson for his invasion of Florida, and his conduct generally during the war against the Seminole Indians. In this step—by whomsoever contrived—much sagacity was displayed, for it had the effect designed by so completely estranging Jackson and Calhoun from each other that they were never thereafter reconciled.

The next step necessary to the contemplated end was the disruption of the cabinet. This required greater caution, inasmuch as if it had been accomplished by the mere withdrawal of those members who were parties to the original combination, or influenced by it, not only would they have been condemned by public sentiment, but the main plot would have been discovered and exposed. Therefore, as there was no question of politics of which they could avail themselves with safety, one involving social etiquette alone was invented. The wife of Eaton—Secretary of War—was objectionable to the wives of the secretaries who were parties to the conspiracy, and they refused either to visit her or receive visits from her. Of course, the public took no interest in so trivial a matter, but the conspirators were none the less active on that account. They carried it so far that Jackson took sides with Eaton and his wife, and the controversy, consequently, waxed so warm that the former, in order to lighten the pressure upon the administration, resigned. The resignation of Van Buren—Secretary of State—soon followed, for reasons which nobody understood but himself. The spirit of Jackson had by this time become aroused,

and there was a short period when he declined to convene the remainder of his cabinet for consultation, which gave rise to the charge that government affairs were conducted by a "kitchen cabinet." He did not, however, allow this condition of things to continue long, but boldly put an end to it by intimating to Ingham, Branch and Berrien that their resignations would be accepted—whereupon they, too, retired, leaving Jackson, for a time, without a cabinet. But he was not the kind of man to quail under such a combination of circumstances. On the contrary, he met the issue with his indomitable will and courage, and soon had so many evidences of popular approval that he decided, notwithstanding his recommendation with regard to a single term, to be re-elected in 1832, if possible, as his own successor. He accordingly reconstructed his cabinet late in 1831, out of entirely new men—thus making the issue between him and the conspirators so conspicuously prominent that it could not be misunderstood. This cabinet was as follows: Edward Livingston of Louisiana, Secretary of State; Louis McLane of Delaware, Secretary of the Treasury; Lewis Cass of Ohio—afterwards of Michigan—Secretary of War; Levi Woodbury of New Hampshire, Secretary of the Navy, and Roger B. Taney of Maryland, Attorney-General. In the selection of this cabinet he displayed great wisdom, for, in point of ability, it has not often been equaled.

The politicians were mainly interested in the events which followed, in so far as they bore upon the positions and fortunes of individuals. Van Buren had committed himself in opposition to the mission to Panama, because, as was believed, he sympathized with those who objected

to an alliance with the South American republics, upon the ground that they favored the suppression of the slave trade; and his resignation of the office of Secretary of State was regarded, for a time, as favorable to those who were rapidly becoming the enemies of Jackson and the friends of Calhoun. His cunning, however, did not desert him; and in order to avoid the responsibility of directly committing himself upon either side of the controversy, he prevailed upon Jackson to send him as minister to Great Britain. When his nomination for this office, however, came before the Senate, he was rejected—the first instance of such a rejection where the minister was serving at the court to which he was appointed by the President. Upon his return to the United States he found the issue between Jackson and his enemies so distinctly formed that he was compelled to take one or the other side. He did not hesitate long, but adhered to Jackson—leaving his old associates, with whom he had conspired against the South American republics, to shift for themselves. His object undoubtedly was to obtain the nomination for the Vice-Presidency upon the same ticket with Jackson, so as to acquire a reasonable assurance of the successorship to Jackson at the end of his second term, provided he should be successful in the contest of 1832. In both these objects he succeeded—having been nominated for the Vice-Presidency, at Baltimore, in May, 1832, by the first Democratic or Jackson National Convention ever assembled in the United States. As there was no declaration of principles both candidates ran upon the same "platform"—that is, the merits of

Jackson and the demerits of Calhoun, who could no longer be tolerated as Vice-President.

The result of the election was a great triumph to Jackson,—he having received 219 electoral votes to 49 given to Clay, while South Carolina, refusing to vote for Jackson, cast her 11 votes for Floyd of Virginia, and Vermont her 7 votes for Wirt, who was the candidate of the anti-Masons. The position assumed by South Carolina, under the lead of Calhoun, was intended to widen the breach with Jackson by the creation of a sectional party in the South, under the same pretext that led to the original conspiracy that elected Jackson in 1828, that is, that, by means of Northern aggression, slavery in the South was threatened. In order to effect this South Carolina passed several laws and ordinances, whereby the authority of the National Government was defied, and finally went to the extent of preparing, by military organization, to resist that authority. With that view her nullification ordinance was passed, declaring certain laws of the United States absolutely null and void within her borders. This was done manifestly with the expectation that the slave States would all unite, and that Jackson would be left either in a helpless minority or be compelled to look only to the North for the support of his administration, in which event the Southern or slave States would declare the Union dissolved and create a Southern Confederacy composed of slave States alone. There was a faint effort at the time to deny this, but subsequent events have verified it.

Jackson was not deceived by the pretext that South Carolina proposed to act within the Union, for, by this

time, his eyes were opening to the actual condition of affairs. He could see that the conspirators who had contributed to his election claimed the prerogative right to dictate the policy of his administration, so as to make it correspond with their own sectional views and objects, regardless of the national welfare; and resolved, without any delay, to exercise all the executive power the Constitution had placed in his hands to disentangle himself from any alliance with them, and teach them that the Union must and should be preserved at every hazard. Accordingly, on December 11, 1832—less than six weeks after his re-election—he issued his celebrated Proclamation, wherein he condemned as disloyal all the nullification proceedings of South Carolina, and declared them to be "incompatible with the existence of the Union, contradicted expressly by the letter of the Constitution, unauthorized by its spirit, inconsistent with every principle upon which it was founded, and destructive of the great object for which it was formed." He had previously made brief reference to the condition of things in South Carolina, in his annual message, December 4, 1832, and his proclamation was followed, January 16, 1833, by what is known as his nullification message, wherein, after avowing "that the supremacy of the laws shall be maintained," he declared that if the acts and ordinances of South Carolina "can not be defeated and overcome by the powers conferred by the Constitution on the federal government, the Constitution must be considered as incompetent to its own defense, the supremacy of the laws is at an end, and the rights and liberties of the citizens can no longer receive protection from the government of

the Union. And, referring to the asserted right of a State to nullify a law of the United States—as was claimed by the Kentucky resolutions of 1799, of which Jefferson was the author—he emphatically said: "The right of the people of a single State to absolve themselves at will, and without the consent of the other States, from their most solemn obligations, and hazard the liberties and happiness of the millions composing this Union, can not be acknowledged. Such authority is believed to be utterly repugnant both to the principle upon which the general government is constituted, and to the objects which it was expressly formed to attain."

For the expression of these patriotic sentiments Jackson was denounced by the nullifiers, as directly opposed to the "Jefferson Democracy," to which it was claimed he had committed himself by the combination which elected him in 1828. But he was in no sense intimidated by their threats, nor did he in the least shrink from the responsibilities of his position. On the contrary, he pursued the course marked out in his proclamation and message, with such unfaltering courage as commanded the admiration of the world. And now, as the present generation look back to that period and observe the steadiness of his devotion to the Union, there are none willing to withhold an expression of admiration for his patriotic conduct, except those who, to accomplish the ends of their ambition, would pull down the government and revel among the fragments of the wreck.

The manner in which Jackson bore himself during those troubled and stormy times developed qualities he had not previously been supposed to possess, and which as-

sured the country that he did not intend his administration to be impressed by any other will than his own. Even in private life occasions sometimes occur when individuals exhibit qualities unobserved before, and which bring about new developments of character. Whether this was the case with him, at the crisis of his administration referred to, is immaterial, inasmuch as the country was brought at once to a realization of the fact that *he* was President, and none else beside him. If any of the politicians had entertained the expectation, or even the hope, that they could use him for purposes not approved by his own conscience, that idea was dispelled, first, by the dissolution of his cabinet and again by his proclamation and nullification message. By these means he made himself the representative of a power throughout the country which centered in him as in no other man; and from that time he became the chief figure in national politics, and stamped his name indelibly upon our political history.

It has been said that he did not write either his proclamation or nullification message. Whether he did or not, is of no consequence whatever, because he made them his own by signing his name to them, and to him belongs the credit of every sentiment they contain. The farewell address of Washington was said not to have been all his own; and Jefferson has been charged with plagiarizing part of the Declaration of Independence. Members of Congress and State Legislatures have made speeches and reports prepared for them by others. I have myself known the Governor of one State to send a message to the Legislature several pages of which were written

by another; and the Governor of another State, not only to accept, but to boast of a public document of which he did not write a single line. But whether these important documents were written by Jackson or not does not concern us half so much as to know their great merit as state papers. Thus considered, it is not believed there are many in our day who will risk their reputation by assailing the principles these announced. That he possessed a mind of great strength and vigor—capable of producing them—is beyond any question. His early education was necessarily defective, owing to causes well understood, but he wrote with perfect accuracy, in a bold hand characteristic of himself, and scarcely ever made an interlineation or erasure,—which can be truthfully said of but few of the most distinguished literary men. His private letters which came into my possession bear the impress of much thought, clear and accurate judgment, and conclusions sagaciously drawn from his premises. There is nothing in either the proclamation or nullification message that might not have been expressed by him in his own clear and emphatic style, and if their accuracy of composition was owing to the polished pen of Livingston, his credit should be none the less on that account.

I must not here discuss the political doctrines associated in history with the administration of Jackson, or attempt to explain why, with all my admiration for him, I have invariably opposed them. They belong to the past, and are to be found only in the pages of our common history. The few who were once actively engaged in affirming and denying them will soon cease entirely to engage in party or

other strife, and it is becoming in us to bury with the illustrious dead all the animosities engendered by excitement, and to do full justice to their memories. Jackson was a great man—stamped as such by nature, as all could see who looked upon his stately figure and manly bearing, and his frank and expressive countenance. Endowed with a courage which no adverse circumstances, and not even the most imminent peril, could shake, he avoided no just responsibility and evaded the performance of no act which seemed to him to lie in the line of duty. With a kind heart—filled to overflowing with generous emotions—he was true to his friends and firm in his friendship. His heart was "open as day" to acts of benevolence and charity, and the unfortunate were never turned away from his door. Honest himself, he was unsuspicious of wrong or faults in others, and was, on that account, liable to be imposed upon. He bore patiently the remonstrances of those who shared his confidence, but never submitted unresistingly to the censure of enemies. He loved the country with true and fervid devotion, and if he committed errors—which the best are unable to avoid—they sprang from no want of the resolute purpose to do what he believed to be right, as his own conscience taught him the right. Others, far more than he, were chargeable with much that during political excitement was laid at his door. He has left the example of a life ended with Christian confidence and resignation, and a most beautiful and touching lesson in the unceasing devotion with which he proudly cherished, to the last moment of life, the memory of his wife. And after his race has been so well and successfully ended, and

only a few of those who held personal intercourse with him are remaining, it is becoming in us all—and is a source of satisfaction to me—to cherish a kindly remembrance of his virtues, and to impress upon the minds of those subject to our influence a just admiration for his patriotism and uncalculating devotion to the Union.

MARTIN VAN BUREN

M Van Buren

CHAPTER VIII

MARTIN VAN BUREN

If the attempt were made to classify the Presidents, it would be properly done by regarding the first seven as belonging to the Revolutionary period, because five of them were actual participants in its events, and the other two—John Quincy Adams and Jackson—imbibed its sentiments by actual association with the men of the Revolution, both having been born the same year, 1767, before the Declaration of Independence. This would warrant the designation of all the successors of Jackson as Post-Revolutionary Presidents. And this classification would seem otherwise justified by the fact that when Van Buren became President other and counteracting influences had arisen, calculated to impair the value of the Revolutionary example, and which did so in fact by the introduction of new methods of organizing and consolidating political parties.

The events which led to the disruption of Jackson's cabinet produced consequences which conspicuously influenced the political fortunes of individuals. Calhoun had been elected Vice-President upon the same ticket with him in 1828—having fallen short of his vote only 7, which he lost in Georgia. But the administration was scarcely under way before there were signs of disaffection

among its supporters—manifestly the result of personal plottings for the control of the executive patronage. The generous and kindly nature of Jackson was imposed upon by these schemers, who concealed their intrigues from him because of the fear that if they were known he would turn upon them in his wrath. Their first fruits were gathered in the dissolution of the cabinet, which had to be reconstructed before the end of the second year. A question of social etiquette and official ceremony was made the pretext for this, but that was of inferior import compared with the actual moving and controlling causes, which were well understood by the initiated but studiously concealed from the public. They subsequently became well known and are now easily explained. Jackson, in his first message, had recommended an amendment to the Constitution limiting the Presidential service to a single term, and inasmuch as it was inferred from this that he would not be a candidate for re-election, the question of successorship to him became all-absorbing. It dwarfed every other consideration. And while at the beginning it was cautiously concealed from Jackson, his ultimate discovery of it aroused his indignation and caused him to put the matter at rest, as far as possible, by having himself announced as a candidate for a second term, without the intervention of a national nominating convention. This bold movement was characteristic of him, and led, in the end, to such crimination and recrimination among the conspirators as to effect their complete exposure.

Soon after Jackson's first election, Calhoun and Van Buren came to be considered rival aspirants for the succession. How far each contributed to the advancement

of his own interests must, of course, remain a matter of mere speculation;—but there is this to be confidently said of them, that there was nothing in the life and character of Calhoun to show that he was a schemer, while there is everything in the life and character of Van Buren to show him to have been so. Howsoever this may have been, it is undoubtedly true that there were rival combinations among the friends of the administration, each doing its utmost to secure the successorship to one or the other of these gentlemen. At that time the *United States Telegraph*—a journal published at Washington City and edited with great ability by General Duff Green—claimed to be the organ of the administration, and as having, in consequence, the right to enjoy the patronage of the public printing. But this journal was devoted to the interests of Calhoun in preference to those of Van Buren. It was supposed that efforts were made to induce it to occupy an attitude of impartiality at least, but they were unavailing, inasmuch as General Green was so zealously the friend of Calhoun that his preference for him could not be shaken. It became necessary, therefore,—in order to counteract his influence—that steps should be taken at once to supplant the *Telegraph* by the substitution of another journalistic organ of the administration which should give to Van Buren preference over Calhoun. What steps were taken by the negotiators of this arrangement were, of course, not exposed to the public; but they soon resulted in the establishment of a new journal called the *Globe*, at Washington City, under the management of Blair and Rives, very much to the discomfiture of the friends of Calhoun and to the joy of

those of Van Buren. And it did not take long thereafter to put an end to the *Telegraph*,—make the *Globe* the organ and beneficiary of the administration by the patronage of the public printing,—force Calhoun into an attitude of open hostility to the administration,—and leave Van Buren without a rival among the friends of the administration for the successorship to Jackson. The plan was adroitly contrived by master-workmen and soon produced an irreconcilable breach between Jackson and Calhoun; but failed only in this, that when Jackson was announced as a candidate for re-election the claims of Van Buren had to be postponed and he had to be reconciled by being made Vice-President in the place of Calhoun—thus supplanting and superseding the latter entirely.

It required a good deal of what may well be called political legerdemain to carry this arrangement into execution. National nominating conventions were then unknown, and Van Buren was not so favorably known as to entitle him to be placed upon the ticket with Jackson without formal indorsement by one. A delegate convention—the first of the kind—was accordingly assembled in Baltimore for the sole purpose of nominating a candidate for the Vice-Presidency. Although Van Buren had no actual competitor—as Calhoun had been disposed of—and was easily nominated, yet the votes of eight States were cast against him. This, ordinarily, would have amounted to but little, but when it was considered that South Carolina did not vote for him, and that seven out of these eight States had voted for Jackson in 1828, it became necessary to invent some expedient by which they could be induced to vote for Van Buren for the Vice-

Presidency. Nothing of this kind was necessary so far as Jackson was himself concerned,—for he had merit enough of his own,—but as the politicians had loaded down the ticket with a heavy weight, it became necessary to lighten it as much as possible. This required the manipulation of experts,—made the more delicate by the fact that of the eight States voting against Van Buren but two of them—Indiana and Illinois—were free, while the other six—Kentucky, North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, South Carolina and Alabama—were slave States. Although the question of slavery had not then become a dominant factor in national elections, it was deemed necessary to placate these six States, so as to prevent them from supposing that the nomination of Van Buren from a free State could, by any possibility, lead to an attack upon slavery in the States. The reason for this lay in the fact that the politicians of the South were already contriving to consolidate that section with reference to slavery, so as to provide, if possible, for the enlargement of its area over territory thereafter to be acquired, or so to employ it, as then existing, as to make it the controlling power over the national patronage. In order to effect these ends—or, at all events, to assure Van Buren's election as Vice-President—it was deemed prudent to permit him to occupy his accustomed non-committal attitude —so entirely congenial to him—so that the politicians of all the sections could represent him as favoring this, that, or the other thing, as local expediency might suggest; and thus enable him to run almost entirely upon Jackson's popularity. Hence, the convention which nominated

him, instead of a platform of principles, adopted a single resolution in these words:

"*Resolved*, That it be recommended to the several delegations in this Convention, in place of a General Address from this body to the people of the United States, to make such explanations by address, report, or otherwise, to their respective constituents, of the object, proceedings and result of the meeting, *as they may deem expedient*."

Nothing of this kind ever occurred before in American politics, and he must be very obtuse who, in view of what has since occurred, does not see that it was the inauguration of a new era of trickery and deception in political elections, which—while it neither strengthened nor weakened Jackson who was not a party to it—carried Van Buren into the Vice-Presidency, not on account of his own popularity but because he was associated on the same ticket with Jackson. Nevertheless, however, the electoral vote of Pennsylvania was withheld from him, and he fell thirty votes behind Jackson.

The popularity of Jackson was greatly increased during his second term, mainly on account of the firm and patriotic course he pursued with reference to nullification in South Carolina. This so identified him with the national cause as against any form or measures of sectional opposition, that many who had voted against him in 1828 readily acquiesced in his re-election. Van Buren kept in a condition to avail himself of this, and being merely the presiding officer of the United States Senate, so "trimmed his sails" as to avoid any new complications and keep himself within the shadow of Jackson, in order to become

his successor. He succeeded so well in this that at another national nominating convention in 1835, he was nominated for the Presidency, with Col. R. M. Johnson for Vice-President. But this convention pursued the same expedient as that which had nominated him for the Vice-Presidency in 1831, by putting forth no platform of principles,—thus leaving the contest to be conducted, as it had been in his candidacy for Vice-President, upon national grounds in the free, and sectional grounds in the slave, States. The politicians of the South displayed great sagacity and wisdom in this, while those of the North were misled. The former knew that Van Buren had joined the combination to defeat the policy of Monroe and John Quincy Adams with reference to the mission to the Congress at Panama, upon the ground that the confederated Spanish-American States had become pledged to abolish the slave trade; and this knowledge was silently held in reserve so that it could be made available to answer any possible political exigency in the slave States, while the voters in the free States were engaged in the consideration of national questions, without any suspicion of a consolidated South.

The cards were well stacked, but did not play out so well as had been anticipated, for, by this time, the intelligence of the voters of the South had become sufficiently aroused to enable them to see that the scheming politicians who had prophesied national interference with slavery in the States, were false prophets, and designed to mislead them for the accomplishment of their own selfish ends. The consequence was that General William H. Harrison—the Presidential competitor of Van Buren—

received 1,842 more popular votes than Van Buren in eleven slave States—South Carolina having cast her electoral vote by the Legislature. Van Buren, however, was elected by a popular majority of less than 25,000 out of nearly 1,500,000 votes cast, which majority was less than he received in New York alone—his own State—by over 3,000 votes. Moreover, he received but 61 of the electoral votes of the slave States, while 61 were cast against him, and his majority of the whole popular vote was more than 100,000 less than that of Jackson in his contest of 1832, with Clay. These facts tend to show, with reasonable certainty, that but for his association with Jackson and the popularity of his administration, Van Buren could not have been elected—that the first attempt to control a Presidential election by a consolidated sectional vote was made by his supporters, and with his consent—that this was rebuked by the Southern people themselves because of its tendency to invite sectional antagonism, and that whatsoever efforts were afterwards made to consolidate the North were responsive to those first made by his partisans in the South. And if the intelligent searcher of our history shall carefully keep these considerations in mind, he will find it difficult to escape the conviction that if Van Buren had not been elected President in 1836, we should have escaped our late civil war. History is something of a labyrinth, yet it is not impossible, in tracing the courses of events, to discover the points where they link together and establish, as well as illustrate, its philosophy.

There is nothing within the whole range of my memory of which I can speak more confidently than when I assert

that the institution of slavery, as it existed in the South, was not in the least danger at the time of Van Buren's election. Multitudes of Northern people could not be reconciled to the principle upon which it was based, but in this respect they were influenced by the example of the colony of Virginia, in its numerous protests against the slave trade and the English importation of slaves. At the same time, however, they recognized the constitutional protection of slave property in the States, and were disinclined to agitate the question. There were a few agitators here and there in the North, but these were unable to influence public opinion, and could accomplish nothing whatever in Congress, where they were made powerless by the almost entire unanimity of both Houses. Jackson considered them entirely harmless, and therefore, in his last message, December 6, 1836, said: "With no causes at home or abroad to lessen the confidence with which we look to the future for continuing proofs of the capacity of our free institutions to produce all the fruits of good government, the general condition of our affairs may well excite our national pride." In the diversity of sentiment respecting slavery he saw nothing to excite the least apprehension or alarm—nothing threatening to the harmony of the Union, or which he supposed could lead, either in the immediate or remote future, to any improper or unconstitutional interference with slavery in the States. Those who assumed that there was then danger of this and that he did not understand it, or, understanding it, did not admonish the country of its existence, insinuate against him not merely the charge of almost criminal negligence, but of imbecility and want of patriotism.

His whole life is a sufficient defense against both of these imputations, and his farewell address—dated March 3, 1837, the day preceding Van Buren's inauguration—conclusively shows that he did not consider the rights of the slave States in the least degree imperiled by any existing anti-slavery agitation in the North. If there had been anything of that kind then threatening the country, or promising to do so in the future, he would undoubtedly have expressed his fears for the Union—to which no man was more patriotically devoted—in such terms of admonition and warning as would have rung throughout the land. Instead of this, however, he said nothing about slavery, or slavery agitation, or any threatened interference with the rights of the slave States; but, in pointing out the dangers to our peace and harmony, declared that, in his opinion, they sprang "from cupidity, from corruption, from disappointed ambition and inordinate thirst for power"—meaning, of course, among the politicians and not the people—and that from these sources "factions will be formed and liberty endangered." He did not say one word about the threatened aggressions of the North upon the rights of Southern slaveholders,—nothing from which it could be inferred that he either knew or suspected that any such purpose existed. And he who will now take the trouble to read this memorable document, and carefully observe its contents, will see, as plainly as he can distinguish daylight from darkness, that when Jackson retired from the Presidency he did not apprehend the least danger of any interference with slave property in the Southern States; but, upon the other hand, that all his fears for the future of the

country were centered in his belief that the "cupidity," and "corruption," and "ambition," and "inordinate thirst for power" which prevailed among the politicians would breed such "factions" as would ultimately endanger the Union. In this he was not only wise, but right; and it is only necessary to employ ordinary caution in examining the events which followed his retirement to learn that he had scarcely reached the Hermitage before these factions began to form and were strengthened by federal patronage as plants are invigorated and grow by watering.

After Van Buren was nominated for the Presidency, his hands were tied—tightly tied by those who understood well how to tether their dependents. Therefore, when it was deemed necessary to employ him in aid of the conspiracy to consolidate the South upon the subject of slavery, he had not the courage to rebuke the conspirators or to defend the Northern people against the false imputation of the purpose of interfering with slavery in the States. If he had possessed this courage, a few words of kindly and patriotic remonstrance would have rebuked the malcontents and made them blush, as they also would have destroyed all the germs of sectional passion, which, as we have seen, had not then grown sufficiently to emit their poison. But instead of that, and, manifestly, with the view of kindling the fires of sectional excitement in the slave States so as to assure his election by their votes, he caused a letter to be published during the canvass, wherein he declared his inflexible and uncompromising opposition to "every attempt on the part of Congress to abolish slavery in the District of Colum-

bia," and also to "the slighest interference with it in the States where it existed."

This was the exhibition of the kind of courage displayed by Don Quixote when he made war upon the wind-mills—an assault upon an adversary that did not exist. We shall see presently that those of the North who desired the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia were too few to produce a ripple upon the ocean of public sentiment, and that even these few had not expressed any desire to interfere by congressional action, either directly or indirectly, with slavery in the States where it existed. This having been so during the Presidential canvass of 1836, it was well understood by Van Buren and his supporters that, while the bulk of the voters of the North were not concerning themselves about slavery, and would cast their ballots without the least regard to it, and with reference to questions of government policy, his political fortunes would be bettered if they could excite the fears of the Southern voters by the false pretense that slavery in the States was seriously threatened. And, with no other or higher motive than this, the letter of Van Buren was circulated all over the South as a temporary expedient to secure his election;—an artifice covered by disguise so thin that a majority of the Southern people saw through it and cast their votes against him;—for it is characteristic of the American people that they instinctively dislike political trickery.

Nothwithstanding this, Van Buren's mind was so elated at his election and the stratagem which had produced it, that he pretended to see—what Jackson had failed to observe—that the South had reason to believe

that the North was about to bring about such legislation in Congress as would result in abolishing slavery in the Southern States. Accordingly in his inaugural, delivered March 4, 1837—the day after Jackson's farewell address—he introduced the subject of slavery by referring to the States having "domestic institutions which, unwisely disturbed, might endanger the harmony of the whole;" and characterizing it as one "of the prominent sources of discord and disaster," he declared that it had "never, *until the present period*, disturbed the tranquility of our common country." This arraignment of the North—for it was nothing else—created intense indignation throughout the free States, where among the populations at large there was only now and then to be found a voter who cast his ballot with reference to slavery;—and it may be parenthetically remarked here, that this indignation became so widely extended and controlling in his own State of New York, that while it gave him a majority of over 28,000 votes in 1836, the majority against him in 1840 was 10,500,—making a difference of over 38,000 votes in less than four years. But in the South it had such effect upon the conspirators against the peace of the Union that they thought they saw in it signs of the triumph they expected to ultimately win by such a dispensation of the federal patronage as they expected to dictate. It is necessary, however, to observe at this point the precise relation which the North bore to the slavery question, in so far as the constitutional rights of the slaveholding States were involved. This is shown by the Congressional records.

On November 11, 1835, a quarterly meeting of Qua-

kers was held in Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, which prepared a memorial to Congress, praying that slavery be abolished *in the District of Columbia*, because it was "within the constitutional jurisdiction of Congress;" but not intimating the least desire to have it interfered with *in any of the States*. On January 11, 1836, this memorial was presented to the Senate. At the same session several other memorials of the same import from citizens of Ohio, Vermont and Massachusetts were also presented. These gave rise to considerable debate, in which the Southern Senators—under the lead of Calhoun—insisted that they should *not be received*—which was equivalent to a denial of the right of petition,—and that Congress, although it had the exclusive right of legislation over the affairs of the District of Columbia, had no more power to abolish slavery there than it had to do so in the States. This last proposition was denied by several Northern Senators who, at the same time, expressed their unqualified assent to the proposition that Congress had no constitutional power to abolish or interfere with slavery in the States, but that the States alone possessed that power. The Quaker memorial was made the one upon which all the test questions were determined, and after it had been decided to receive it—that is, not to deny the right of the people to petition—the Senate, on March 11, 1836, came to a direct vote upon the motion "that the prayer of the petition be *rejected;*" which, as all understood, was a distinct and explicit avowal that Congress ought *not* to interfere with slavery even in the District of Columbia. This motion was agreed to by a vote nearly unanimous, that is, by *yeas* 34, *nays* 6;—the mi-

nority consisting of the two Senators from Massachusetts, the two from Vermont, one from Indiana, and one from Rhode Island. But nearly all these six Senators addressed the Senate upon the subject, and expressly declared that, in their opinion, Congress had no control over and no right to interfere with slavery as it existed in the States. So that upon the latter question—that is, the constitutional power and right of Congress to interfere with slavery in the States—the decision of the Senate was absolutely unanimous. To say—as Southern agitators did—that there was behind this unanimity a public sentiment among the Northern people different from this, and demanding interference with slavery in the States, was trifling with a matter of most serious import. The only parallel it has in history is the fiddling of Nero when Rome was in flames.

Other petitions were introduced into the House of Representatives at the same session, but, like those in the Senate, they had reference only to slavery in the District of Columbia. Many of these doubtless were attributable to the fact that the Southern members of Congress denied the right of the people to petition upon that subject. It was understood at the time that many signed such petitions merely to condemn this unpopular doctrine —very much as prohibitory laws are generally odious. These petitioners were intelligent enough to know that, within less than one year from the date of the Constitution, numerous petitions had been presented from New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia, and especially from the Quakers, praying for the suppression of the slave trade and the melioration of slavery in the

States, and that James Madison—then in Congress from Virginia—while he denied the power of Congress to interfere with slavery in the States, justified the reception and respectful consideration of such petitions. And, in fact, these petitioners were not mistaken in considering that they occupied the same ground as Madison in asserting their claim to the highest privilege of citizenship—the right of petition. No matter now, however, about their motives, it serves every practical purpose to know that, after much fiery and vindictive denunciation by Southern orators, the House of Representatives disposed of all the questions involved by direct votes, and in such way as to leave no doubt whatever about its meaning upon any fair and dispassionate mind. Three distinct propositions were presented to the House and voted upon: 1. That all the petitions be referred to a select committee. 2. That this committee be instructed to report "that Congress possesses no constitutional authority to interfere in any way with the institution of slavery in any of the States of the confederacy." 3. That "Congress ought not to interfere in any way with slavery in the District of Columbia, because it would be a violation of the public faith, unwise, impolitic and dangerous to the Union." Each one of these propositions was adopted by a separate vote—the first by *yeas*, 174; *nays*, 48; the second by *yeas*, 201; *nays*, 7; and the third was divided into two clauses, the first of which was adopted by *yeas*, 127; *nays*, 75; and the second by *yeas*, 167; *nays*, 6. In order, however, to comprehend fully the import and meaning of this last vote, it is necessary to observe that it was in the nature of instruction to the select committee that

it should examine and report upon the best method "to sustain and preserve the just rights of the slave-holding States and of the people of" the District of Columbia. These votes were all taken February 8, 1836, after Van Buren had been nominated for the Presidency, and whether considered singly or together, they show that, upon the question of interfering with slavery in the States, the House of Representatives was emphatic in declaring that Congress had no constitutional power to do so.

The select committee provided for by these proceedings was composed of nine, as follows: Pinckney, of South Carolina, Chairman; Harmer, of Ohio; Pierce, of New Hampshire; Hardin, of Kentucky; Jarvis, of Maine; Owens, of Georgia; Muhlenberg, of Pennsylvania; Dromgoole, of Virginia; and Turrill, of New York —representing five free and four slave States. It reported May 18, 1836, recommending three propositions: 1. That Congress possesses no constitutional authority to interfere in any way with the institution of slavery in any of the States of this confederacy: 2. "That Congress ought not to interfere in any way with slavery in the District of Columbia:" 3. In order to put a stop to slavery agitation, "that all petitions, memorials, resolutions, etc.," relating to slavery, "shall, without being either printed or referred, be laid upon the table, and that no further action whatever shall be had thereon." The vote upon the first of these propositions was taken May 25, 1836, when it was adopted by *yeas* 182, *nays* 9. On the next day the other two were voted on, when they were also adopted,—the second by *yeas* 132, *nays* 45; and the third by *yeas* 117, *nays* 68. And thus the whole

subject was disposed of and a rule of procedure established which would put a stop to all congressional agitation. This was not what the Southern leaders desired, and Pinckney was denounced upon the floor of the House as a traitor to the South for having produced this result. They desired to figure in the role of agitators, and were indignant that a Southern representative should do anything to pacify the country and bring their occupation to an end. They entered upon the task of showing that the abolitionists of the North were so numerous as to threaten the existence of the Union, and their indignation against Pinckney was greatly increased when he told them that he had looked into that matter and found that "the whole number of abolition petitioners scarcely exceeded thirty thousand, one-half of whom were females, and it was confidently believed that a considerable number of the remainder were children." And when we now look back upon those times and see that none of these sought to interfere with slavery in the States, but only in the District of Columbia where the national authority was complete, we not only see that no possible danger to the former existed, but that all this agitation so far back as the first session of the Twenty-fourth Congress was designed for the single purpose of consolidating the South and electing a successor to Jackson more obedient to Southern dictation than he had been. None doubted the capacity of these Southern leaders, and when they looked around among the Presidential aspirants they had not far to go before becoming convinced that Van Buren was the man they wanted, because, as a politician, far more than

a statesman, he would employ the federal patronage so as to secure to the South ultimate victory over the North.

Notwithstanding the absolute unanimity in the Senate and the practical unanimity in the House, upon the proposition denying the constitutional right of Congress to interfere with slavery in the States, and the additional fact that not a single petition had been presented asking such interference, Van Buren considered it necessary to placate the Southern voters by announcing, during the canvass, his uncompromising opposition not only to abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia, but to "the slightest interference with it in the States where it existed." The object and purpose of this has been already explained, but it may be said in addition that if he had been content to leave the slavery question where the Senate and House of Representatives left it, the tribulation into which the nation has been plunged since would, in all probability, have been escaped. Such a belief has good foundation in the fact that the intelligent voters of the slaveholding States were beginning to open their eyes to their real condition, and to see that the pretense of danger to their slave property was not only false and misleading, but made by scheming politicians who had only their selfish ends to attain. And they came to realize this so plainly, notwithstanding Van Buren's attempt to alarm them in his inaugural, that Harrison received 69,440 popular majority of votes in nine slaveholding States against Van Buren's majority of 14,589 in four, giving Harrison a clear majority of 54,851 popular and twenty-nine electoral votes in eleven slave States. It is evident, therefore, that the repudiation of Van Buren by the slave-

holding States would have driven into retirement the conspirators who manipulated him and his administration, had not other and later events occurred which enabled them to regain the ground they had lost by means of new stratagems more sagaciously conducted.

The administration of Van Buren was in every sense a failure. This is not the place to discuss the causes of the financial embarrassment which then deranged the commercial and manufacturing interests of the whole country. It was so great as to alarm him, and although he convened Congress in special session September 4, 1837, he was unable to recommend any satisfactory measure of relief. In a message of inordinate length he discussed the relations which the banks of the country bore to the volume of business, but was utterly unable to solve the financial problem, although that alone made it necessary to convene Congress. Apart from his subtreasury scheme—which was the total separation of the public money from banks—no practical measures of legislation were recommended. On the contrary, he impliedly admitted the failure of his administration at the very beginning by declaring that "all communities are apt to look to government for too much," and consequently that he refrained "from suggesting to Congress any specific plan for regulating the exchanges of the country, relieving mercantile embarrassments or interfering with the ordinary operations of foreign or domestic commerce," because, in his opinion, these things, which preceding Presidents had carefully looked after in regulating our domestic policy, were "not within the constitutional province of the general government" His idea was, in the

popular phrase of that day, that "the government should take care of itself and the people take care of themselves."

Van Buren was courteous to all and was said to be kind-hearted. It is quite certain that, in his private or official intercourse, he was not apt to make enemies. It has always been puzzling to those who knew both Jackson and him, to understand how the relations between them could ever have been created, in view of the fact that they were wholly unlike in almost every particular. Jackson was bold and courageous, while Van Buren was timid and cowardly. Jackson shrunk from no responsibility pertaining to his position, Van Buren always did. It is not surprising, therefore, that the former is gratefully remembered by the American people, and held in the highest esteem for his patriotic devotion to the Union, while the present generation either know nothing of the latter, or remember him only as a politician and not as a statesman. What Tom Marshall of Kentucky said of Tyler's administration may be much more appropriately said of Van Buren's—that it may be included in a parenthesis, and left out in reading our history without the least break in the sense.

WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON.

W. H. Harrison

CHAPTER IX

WILLIAM H. HARRISON

EITHER from indisposition or inability, the administration of Van Buren failed to adopt any such measures as were demanded by the necessities of the country. On the contrary, matters were allowed to drift along without the effective interference of the government, until it came to be understood that his policy was calculated to weaken the national authority and to strengthen that of the States throughout our whole political system. This gave encouragement to the "State Rights," or Strict Construction party, who pretended to have discovered that all the early Presidents had violated the Constitution by beginning and prosecuting affirmative measures of policy, designed to promote the "general welfare" by developing the vast natural resources of the country. The Southern allies of Van Buren could easily see that this was their work, and as they had used him so effectively to begin the consolidation of the South on the subject of slavery, and could not well turn back without letting go the federal patronage they then controlled, they found it necessary to renominate him for the Presidency as his own successor. This they did by a convention held in Baltimore in May, 1840, but having been unable to agree upon a candidate for Vice-President, made no nomination for that office.

Inasmuch, however, as the combination which had carried Van Buren this far along had been unable to identify itself with any legislation beneficial to the country, it was deemed advisable, for the first time in American politics, to put forth a platform of principles—every sentence and word of which was in favor of the sectional South, and not one sentence or word of which recognized the national government as possessing any power whatever to promote the general welfare of the whole country. It denied the constitutionality of internal improvements, of the assumption of the State debts and of a national bank in express terms, and denounced the fostering of one branch of industry to the detriment of another. It condemned the deposits of the public money in banks, recommended economy in public expenditures, and made special proclamation of the great merits of the Declaration of Independence, and invited foreign emigration to this "land of liberty and the asylum of the oppressed of every nation." But its main and central feature was set forth in a resolution which declared "that Congress has no power, under the Constitution, to interfere with or control the domestic institutions of the several States"—that is, with slavery as it existed in them. This is comparable only with the case of the blustering school-boy who places a chip upon his head and dares any other boy to knock it off, well understanding that none either intend or desire to do so.

It required very little sagacity to see that the government could not be well conducted in accordance with the policy foreshadowed by this platform;—that, in point of fact, it did not announce any system of policy what-

ever, but was simply a string of negations—denying everything and affirming nothing. Its chief, if not its only object, was to excite the fears of the South with regard to slavery, by pretending that the North was rapidly organizing to abolish it; when, in fact, nothing of that kind was being done, except that here and there, in distinct localities, a mere handful of abolitionists would pass resolutions in favor of abolition in the District of Columbia, which the great bulk of the Northern people of all other parties condemned and repudiated. Yet, in the face of this well attested fact, these conspirators from the South, who had obtained the mastery over Van Buren, were persistent in the attempt to alarm the South, so as to consolidate that section and thus secure Van Buren's re-election;—which meant to them the retention of their own offices and the control of the federal patronage.

The popular dread of a sectional contest for the Presidency had caused the nomination of General Harrison by a convention which met at Harrisburg in December, 1839. The controlling purpose of that convention was to rebuke the spirit of sectionalism and to bring back the government to those affirmative measures of policy which had originated with the early Presidents and had brought the country to an unexampled condition of prosperous development. It made no proclamation of principles; because not having been customary the country did not expect it, and, besides, Harrison was, in himself, the representative of nationalism against sectionalism, which the most thoughtful people of both the North and the South then considered the real issue. In order to give some degree of plausibility to the latter, the government had

been conducted into other paths than those marked out by the Revolutionary fathers, and there was no man in the nation more fitted than Harrison by education, habits of thought, and true courage, to bring it back. His mind was early impressed by Revolutionary teachings—his father having been one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence—and his whole life had been spent not only in the service of the National Union, but in fidelity to these teachings. Hence, his nomination was considered to be, and was, responsive to the popular desire to rebuke those who were endeavoring to kindle the fires of sectional strife, and restore the country to the condition of peace, prosperity, and happiness it had enjoyed before it had been carried, unconsciously and by intrigue, to the point of disregarding the admonitions and example of the founders of the government.

The Harrisburg Convention made a mistake in nominating John Tyler for Vice-President. The most that can be said now by way of excuse for it is that it was the result of patriotic motives,—having been intended to counteract the sectional influences encouraged and patronized by Van Buren's administration. Those who looked to the permanency of the Union and the prosperity of all the sections, and were intelligent enough to see that a consolidated South would inevitably lead to a consolidated North and thereby put the Union in peril, labored hard to make such a ticket as would, in the most emphatic manner, represent nationalism as against sectionalism. That General Harrison did this nobody doubted, but as he was a resident of a free State it was deemed essential that the candidate for Vice-President

should be a resident of a slave State. The sentiment of nationality was so strong in this convention that it absorbed all other considerations, and as Tyler was a resident of Virginia and had given no evidences of a desire to see the South consolidated as a sectional party, his selection as a candidate for Vice-President gave general satisfaction, both in the North and in the South. While, of course, consideration was given to measures of domestic policy other than such as related to slavery, there were controlling reasons why, for the time being, they were not made specially prominent. In the first place, it had never been customary to put forth a platform of principles, but instead, to nominate a candidate for the Presidency—as was done by presenting Harrison—whose life and character gave assurance that he could assent to nothing that would tend, in any degree, to endanger the general welfare. In the second place, it was not deemed prudent to set the example of departing from the course of the early Presidents by converting a Presidential campaign into a theater for the discussion of mere measures of legislative policy, which, by the theory of the government, must be decided by the people through their representatives in Congress. And in the third and last place, it was more necessary than all else to rebuke the spirit of sectionalism, so that the deliberate judgment of the whole people, throughout the Union, could be invoked in selecting the best affirmative measures of polity to undo the mischiefs with which the country had been afflicted by Van Buren's studied system of negations.

The result of the election was decidedly favorable to the national cause,—so much so as greatly to exhilarate

its friends, while it depressed, in a corresponding degree, the sectional agitators. The total popular vote was 2,410,778, of which Harrison's majority was 139,256, and he received 234 electoral votes and Van Buren only 60, which gave him a majority of 174 in the electoral college. Compared with the election of 1836 it taught an instructive lesson, which ought never to have been forgotten. In that election Van Buren carried seven slaveholding States, which gave him popular majorities of 17,893, and Harrison four, with popular majorities amounting to 19,851 —giving the latter 1,862 majority in the South; whereas, at the election of 1840 Harrison carried seven slaveholding States and Van Buren four, which gave the former popular majorities amounting to 69,440, and the latter popular majorities amounting to 14,589,—thus giving Harrison a clear majority of 54,851, which was a gain of 52,989 in the eleven slaveholding States—South Carolina continuing to vote by the Legislature—in the four years from 1836 to 1840. These important facts indicate beyond any reasonable doubt, these two things: First, that the sentiment of nationality was growing stronger and that of sectionalism weaker, in the South; and second, that those who desired sectional strife became convinced by these adverse conditions of the necessity of some new method of alarming the South and assuring the accomplishment of their ends by its consolidation. What this new method was will appear hereafter.

The election of Harrison was not only directly favorable to the national cause, but it excited both the hope and the belief in multitudes of the most intelligent minds, in the South as well as in the North, that the government

would be returned to the lines and measures of policy the Revolutionary fathers had established, and from which it had been carried away by crude and hazardous experiments, originating in the causes which Jackson, in his farewell address, had pointed out as the sources of the greatest danger to the country,—that is, in the "cupidity," "corruption," "disappointed ambition," and "inordinate thirst for power," of scheming politicians. The abolitionists of the North had shown their strength by voting, at the same election, for James G. Birney, and were able to cast only 7,059 votes, scattered throughout twelve States of the North. These twelve States gave an aggregate popular vote of 845,495 for Harrison, so that the abolition vote was one in every twelve hundred, while there was not a single vote cast for Birney in either of two Northern States—Delaware and Indiana. Inasmuch, therefore, as this fact disproved entirely the allegation of the sectional friends of Van Buren, that the North was consolidating to interfere with slavery in the States, they were brought to realize that unless their mode of procedure should be varied by new inventions, the Union, as it then was, would be maintained in its complete national integrity and the federal patronage lost to them, probably forever.

The inaugural of Harrison gave no comfort whatever to those who desired to stir up strife between the sections. On the contrary, it was so crowded with national sentiments and so eloquent in patriotic appeals to arouse them, that it stirred up throughout the nation the most fervid enthusiasm. They were dull who could not see his familiarity with the philosophy of history, and that he

had studied it so deeply and well as to become convinced that the form of government most conducive to human prosperity and happiness was that whereby the sovereign and controlling authority is irrevocably vested in the people. It was manifest to all that his fixed purpose was to revive the principles and policy of the Revolutionary era, so that the government should continue to be the reflex of them, in order to preserve it as it came from the hands of its founders, without danger of sectional disturbance. His leading and controlling object was to perpetuate the Union for the benefit of future generations. The first thing he realized, at the beginning of his administration, was the condition into which the country had been brought by the negative and neglectful policy of Van Buren, which had deranged the finances, crippled both domestic and foreign commerce, and caused an almost entire suspension in every department of business. Surveying this entire field and considering well the obligation of the government to protect the interests of the whole people, by such means as the Constitution had given it, he acted with his accustomed promptitude, and on March 17, 1841—less than two weeks after his inauguration—issued a proclamation convening Congress in extra session, "to devise and adopt such measures as the good of the country" required. He made no search after executive powers to accomplish the desired results, for by education and habits of thought he had learned that so far as a President encroaches upon the legislative authority, precisely to the same extent he endangers the plan of government of, for, and by the people. His dependence upon the popular intelligence and patriotism

was not hedged in by either doubts or fears,—for all his associations had led him to believe that the impulses of the people centered in the desire to encourage whatever should legitimately tend to make the United States not only the greatest but the most prosperous and influential country in the world.

He had already given evidence of his wisdom and discretion in the selection of his cabinet, which was composed of six of the ablest and most distinguished of American statesmen, who, besides representing all the varied material interests of the entire country, were the impersonation of the principle of nationality in its highest and best sense. They were Daniel Webster, Secretary of State; Thomas Ewing, Secretary of the Treasury; John Bell, Secretary of War; George E. Badger, Secretary of the Navy; Francis Granger, Postmaster General, and John J. Crittenden, Attorney-General. They fairly represented every section of the country and all its diversified interests. Webster was the profoundest constitutional lawyer in America, and was so recognized by common consent. Ewing illustrated in his wonderful success the beauty of our popular institutions in that he had marched steadily forward from an humble and obscure beginning to an eminent position in the front rank of jurists and statesmen. And if the others occupied an intermediate position each one of them was recognized as possessing the highest fitness for the position in which he was placed. The satisfaction at the selection of such advisers was general among all classes, but especially among those who desired to see the government administered consistently with the principles which had

prevailed before it had been made a political machine for promoting the personal ambition of individuals by stirring up discord between the sections. But by the mysterious dispensation of Providence, who has wisely withheld from us a key to unlock the secrets of the future, the hopes and expectations of the country were suddenly blasted by the untimely death of Harrison, which occurred after a brief illness, April 4, 1841, at the city of Washington. The disease which carried him off ran its fatal course quickly, but he retained his intellectual faculties to the end. His last thoughts were of the country. The cabinet, in notifying the public of this fact, said, "the last utterance of his lips expressed a fervent desire for the perpetuity of the Constitution and the preservation of its true principles," a legacy of advice which only patriots leave behind them.

The death of any man in conspicuous public station, who is known to be fitted for its duties, excites a momentary sadness even in flinty hearts. But that of Harrison, just when he was about to enter upon his Presidential duties with the resolute purpose of devoting his best energies to the advancement of the public good, was a public calamity. There was then no telegraph to send out the notice of it upon wings of lightning, but not many days elapsed before evidences of the deepest sorrow were exhibited in every section. Multitudes felt as if they had lost a friend; but this was more notably the case among those whose business and industrial interests were involved in the measures and policy of the government, and who felt they ought not to be abandoned to

the mere accident and hazard of fortune in such pursuits as were identified with the general welfare. But, more than this, the grief was universal among those who loved the Union and desired to see the spirit of sectionalism dissipated, as they were assured it would be, by his executive rebuke and by the employment of all the power and authority which the Constitution and laws placed in his hands.

The esteem in which Harrison was held by those who knew him best was well deserved, for, during his whole life, he was never known to betray a trust. From the time he received from the hands of George Washington a commission of Lieutenant in the army—when only eighteen years of age—he never faltered in the discharge of duty or shrank from the responsibilities of his position. Whatever he had to do was done with conspicuous fidelity. He was trusted to the fullest extent by Generals St. Clair and "Mad Anthony" Wayne upon expeditions against the Indians upon the frontier, and with absolute confidence in his ability, discretion and skill. After having been made a captain, he resigned his position in the army and was made Secretary of the Northwest Territory, and soon after was elected a delegate from that Territory to Congress. He served as Governor of Indiana Territory until 1813, and gained an important victory over the Indians in 1811, at the memorable battle of Tippecanoe. He became commander of the Northwestern army, and bore a gallant and conspicuous part in the defense of Fort Meigs and in the battle of the Thames. He served in Congress from Ohio one term, beginning in 1816, and in 1828 was appointed Minister to the govern-

ment of Colombia, by President John Quincy Adams. In all these positions his conduct was marked by unbending integrity, and among all who were familiar with his life and services, he was universally esteemed to be "without fear and without reproach." To such of these as may now be living, it will not appear too much to say that if his death had not so soon terminated his administration, he might have reconciled the sections, rendered civil war impossible, and so built upon the foundations of the Constitution as to make the Union impregnable.

My personal relations with General Harrison did not extend beyond a few casual interviews; except that upon one occasion I had an opportunity of observing him sufficiently to satisfy my own mind that I had not misconceived his prominent characteristics. During the Presidential contest of 1840, I came down the Ohio river from Cincinnati, upon a steamboat, which stopped long enough at North Bend—Harrison's residence—to enable the passengers to go on shore and pay their respects to him. Among them was General Van Rensselaer of New York, between whom and Harrison there had been many years of the most intimate relations. My recollection is that when they were both young they had served together in the army upon the frontier, and had formed a strong attachment for each other, but had not met for many years. I was greatly impressed by their mutual greeting, which exhibited upon the part of Harrison that kindliness of manner which is characteristic of a generous heart, always ready to respond to the demands of friendship. Their conversation was necessarily brief, but it was such as to assure all who witnessed the interview that

Harrison was possessed of those manly and noble qualities which indicate that the heart is in the right place. This very expression was used by one of the passengers after the boat renewed its voyage, and I remember to have been quite well assured that this interview between these two old army companions had softened the party asperities of some who witnessed it, and had stimulated the hopes of others for his triumph at the election. During a few moments of private conversation before we separated he expressed a desire to know how the contest was progressing in Indiana, and when I assured him that, in my opinion, he would carry the State, he exhibited the greatest satisfaction and delight, declaring that the former relations between him and the people of Indiana had been such that he had rather be defeated for the Presidency with their votes in his favor, than elected with them against him. That he thus felt in all sincerity I had no doubt, and when I afterwards repeated his words to large audiences of Indiana people, the flushed and animated faces of some of his old companions gave satisfactory evidence of the hold he had upon their affections. Their votes were cast in his favor by a majority of nearly 14,000—more than double the majority given to Van Buren in any State—and was to him, as I was afterwards assured, the cause of self-congratulation, because, as he said, "the confidence of those we have served, and who know us best, is worth more than the wealth of the Indies."

Not many men have lived in this country whose conduct is more worthy of imitation than that of Harrison. Firm and courageous in the discharge of public trusts, he

never sought to shun responsibility, but was as true in the performance of duty as the plummet is to the line. Generous-hearted and kind in private intercourse, his numerous friends clung to him as if linked by "hooks of steel." Honorable in all his intercourse with the world, his private life was irreproachable. His sincerity was vouched for by his frankness and candor. For the country to have been deprived of the counsel and services of such a man, at a time when they were so much needed, was a sad bereavement. If that affliction had not befallen us we should, in all probability, have escaped others which have caused thousands of patriotic hearts to bleed. Be this as it may, his cabinet, when announcing his melancholy end, furnished an epitaph suitable for carving upon his tomb when they said: "His death was calm and resigned, as his life had been patriotic, useful, and distinguished." Or if it should be necessary to add other words to these to express his unabated love for the Union up till the last moment of his life, he has himself furnished them in this eloquent and golden extract from his inaugural: "It is union that we want—not of a party for the sake of that party, but a union of the whole country for the sake of the whole country, for the defense of its interests and its honor against foreign aggression, for the defense of those principles for which our ancestors so gloriously contended."