

*Th. Jefferson*



LIFE OF  
THOMAS JEFFERSON

*THIRD PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES*

BY

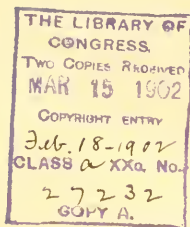
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## PREFACE.

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THIS volume originated in the desire that there should be one work upon Jefferson and his times within the reach of the mass of readers. It was intended to be smaller than it is ; but, in spite of a constant effort to be brief, it has grown to the proportions which the reader sees. For years I have wished, in some way, to recall attention to the points of difference between Jefferson and his opponents, because I think that the best chance of republican America is an adherence to the general line of politics of which he was the embodiment. If Jefferson was wrong, America is wrong. If America is right, Jefferson was right.

Nor ought we to be impatient with those who assert that both America and Jefferson were wrong, since we cannot yet claim for either a final and indubitable triumph. In France the politics with which he was in the warmest sympathy resulted in organized massacre and fell Bonaparte ; and the party which he led in the United States issued, at the South, in armed rebellion, and, in some portions of the North, in the Rule of the Thief. We must face these facts, and understand their meaning. They no more prove that Jefferson and Madison, Lafayette and Paine, were wrong, than the Inquisition and the religious wars prove that the maxims of Jesus are false. They are only illustrations of the familiar fact, that the progress of truth and justice is slow and very difficult. They show that no country is ripe for equal rights



until a majority of its inhabitants are so far sharers in its better civilization, that their votes can be obtained by arguments addressed to the understanding.

We must now accept it as an axiom, that universal suffrage, where one-third of the voters cannot read the language of the country they inhabit, tends to place the scoundrel class at the summit of affairs. We see that it has done so in France, in the Southern States, in New York, and in Philadelphia.

But such virtue is there in the Jeffersonian methods, that, even in those places, we find them our best resource. In New York, a mass meeting and its Committee of Seventy, in two years, suppressed the worst of the public stealing. In the South, the freedman rages for the spelling-book. In Pennsylvania, the reign of the scoundrel draws to an end; and it is everywhere evident, that nothing is farther from the intention of the American people than to submit to lawless or lawful spoliation.

It is even possible that the party which Jefferson founded — such vitality did he breathe into it — may again, instructed by defeat and purified in the furnace of affliction, deliver the country from the evils which perplex and threaten it, employing the only expedient that will ever long succeed in a free country, the expedient of being RIGHT. Jefferson's principles will do this, if his party does not. A government simple, inexpensive, and strong, that shall protect all rights, including those of posterity, and let all interests protect themselves, assuming no functions except those which the Constitution distinctly assigns it, — these are the principles which Jefferson restored in 1801, and to which the future of the country can be safely trusted.

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# LIFE OF THOMAS JEFFERSON.

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## CHAPTER I.

### COLONEL PETER JEFFERSON.

JEFFERSON was a stripling of seventeen, tall, raw-boned, freckled, and sandy-haired, when, in 1760, he came to Williamsburg, from the Far West of Virginia, to enter the College of William and Mary. With his large feet and hands, his thick wrists, and prominent cheek-bones and chin, he could not have been accounted handsome or graceful. He is described, however, as a fresh, bright, healthy-looking youth, as straight as a gun-barrel, sinewy and strong, with that alertness of movement which comes of early familiarity with saddle, gun, canoe, minuet, and contradance, — that sure, elastic tread, and ease of bearing, which we still observe in country-bred lads who have been exempt from the ruder toils of agriculture, while enjoying in full measure the freedom and the sports of the country. His teeth, too, were perfect, which alone redeems a countenance destitute of other charm. His eyes, which were of hazel-gray, were beaming and expressive; and his demeanor gave assurance of a gentle heart, and a sympathetic, inquisitive mind.

Such lads, eager and unformed, still come to college from honest country homes, in regions where agriculture is carried on upon a scale that allows some leisure to the farmer's family, some liberality of expenditure, books, music, a tincture of art, and hospitable habits. How welcome, how dear, to instructors worthy of them, are such unhackneyed minds in bodies unimpaired!

The abode of this youth was a hundred and fifty miles to the north-west of Williamsburg, among the mountains of Central Virginia, near where the River Rivanna, an important tributary, enters the James. His home was a plain, spacious farm-house, a story and a half high, with four large rooms and a wide entry on the ground-floor, and many garret chambers above. The farm was nineteen hundred acres of land, part of it densely wooded, and some of it so steep and rocky as to be unfit for cultivation. The fields near the river were strong land, not yet (though soon to be) worn past the profitable culture of tobacco; but the upper portions were well suited to the grains and roots familiar to the farmers of the Middle States. For sixty years the staple product of all that fine mountain region, with its elevated fields, its far-reaching valleys, and rapid streams, was wheat; which the swift tributaries ground into flour, and the yellow James bore down its tranquil tide to Richmond, distant from the Jefferson home two days' ride. The rustle of wheat-cars was familiar music to Thomas Jefferson from infancy to hoary age.

The farm was tilled at this period by thirty slaves, — equivalent to about fifteen farm-hands. The circumstances of the family were easy, not affluent. Almost every common thing they consumed was grown or made at home, — all the common fabrics and ordinary clothing; and of home-made commodities they had an abundance: but the thirty pounds sterling per annum in cash, which the student was to expend at Williamsburg for his board and tuition, was not so light a charge upon the estate as it sounds to us. The entire expense of his maintenance away from home may have been fifty pounds a year; which was, probably, not less than half the sum that could be taken properly from the annual product of the farm and shops, after all the home charges had been paid. The yeomen of Virginia, though they enjoyed a profusion of the necessaries of life, were sometimes sorely put to it when a sum of money was to be raised.

This student of seventeen, through the death of his father three years before, was already the head of the family, and, under a guardian, the owner of the Shadwell Farm, the best portion of his father's estate.

The happy results that spring from the intermingling, by marriage, of families long cultured with families more vigorous and less

refined, has been often remarked. Such conjunctions gave us Shakspeare and Goethe. A novelist of the day tells us of a ducal house, which, on system, married a plebeian estate every other generation, which renewed at once its blood and its fortunes. The material point was the renewal of the blood, which brings with it the brain, the stamina, and the self-control by which great houses are founded, and all great things are done. If at the present time there is an aristocracy in Europe, which, in any respectable degree, earns its wages, it is that aristocracy which has oftenest renewed itself by the strenuous blood of men who have won commanding places by sheer strength of mind and purpose. The world would never have heard of the Palmerstons, if the second lord had not won the admirable daughter of a Dublin tradesman; nor of Brougham, if the father of the late lord had married, as he intended, in his native country and class. Nature so delights in uniting opposites, that she seals with the unmistakable signet of her approbation the coming-together of opposites artificially produced, — ancient culture and unlettered force.

Peter Jefferson, the father of the student, was a superb specimen of a class, nearly extinct in Great Britain, which used to be called yeomen, — farmers who owned the soil they tilled, but had no pretensions to aristocratic rank, — a class intermediate in a parish between the squire and his tenants. In old Virginia, yeomen were farmers, who, beginning life with little capital besides a strong arm and an energetic will, had taken up a tract of land to the westward of the great tobacco-region of Virginia, and gradually worked their way to the possession of a cleared farm, and a few families of slaves. In this manner Peter Jefferson, and his father before him, had achieved an independent position: stanch both, of strong self-tutored sense, and of signal ability in the conduct of business; enterprising and methodical; liberal, but exact; good at figures, with a clear, careful handwriting, and an aptitude for mechanics. The family was of Welsh extraction. The first of the name in Virginia, it is well worth noting, was a member of that Virginia Assembly of 1619, the first legislative body ever convened on the western continent, the summoning of which ended the twelve years' anarchy that followed the planting of the colony, and notified the colonists, that, in crossing the sea, they had lost none of the rights of Englishmen. All that is important, characteristic, and hopeful, in the history of America,

dates from the meeting of that Assembly; and an ancestor of Thomas Jefferson was a member of it. Virginia then contained six hundred white inhabitants. The church nearest his farm was called the "Jefferson Church" for a hundred years after his death, and the ruins of it were visible as late as 1856.

Peter Jefferson, a younger son, and therefore having little to expect from his father, made his entrance into responsible life by the door which, many years later, admitted the son of another Virginia yeoman, George Washington. He learned the art of surveying land, — a kind of liberal profession in a new country. He practised this profession in his native county of Chesterfield, and in all the region trodden by Confederate armies and torn by Federal cannon during the long siege of Richmond and Petersburg, — cities which then existed only in the prophetic minds of men like Colonel Byrd, who marked both as the sites of towns when as yet not a tree of the primeval forest had been felled. Like George Washington, too, this young surveyor owed his rise in the social scale to a marriage; though it was Peter Jefferson's happier fortune to win a maiden heart, and to create for her the home over which he asked her to **preside**.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE MOTHER OF JEFFERSON.

WHAT a pretty romance it was! The athletic youth, master of his surveyor's chain and knowledge, a natural prince of the frontier, becomes knit in an ardent, young man's friendship with William Randolph, son of one of those flourishing Randolphs who lived in a lordly state, in the good old barbaric days, when the soil of Virginia was still unworn, when negroes were twenty-five guineas "a head," and tobacco brought four pence a pound in London sales. Together they visit an uncle of William Randolph, seated on a vast plantation on the James, some miles below the mouth of the Rivanna, — one of the few grand houses of Virginia wherein knowledge and taste were more conspicuous than pride and profligacy. Isham Randolph was the name of this tobacco lord, and his eldest daughter was Jane. She was born while the family were living in London, where her father knew Peter Collinson, wool-merchant, botanist, and friend of Pennsylvania; also Hans Sloane, founder of the British Museum, and all that circle of the Royal Society's more active members.

She was not too lightly won, this daughter of a stately house. Peter Jefferson was twenty-eight, and she seventeen, when he mounted and rode a hundred miles to the northwest of his home, some fifty miles beyond hers, and bought his first thousand acres on the Rivanna, and began to hew out a farm and home. Within half a day's ride, the smoke of only three or four settlers' cabins floated up through small clearings to the sky, and the trail of Indians was to be seen in the woods. For two years he wrought there in the forest, and doubtless, by a slave family or two; and when he had cleared a field and built something a little better than a cabin, he went to London, and brought home his bride, Jane Randolph. To do

her honor, he named their abode Shadwell, because it was in a London parish of that name that she first saw the light. He was married in 1738. Five years after, — April 13, 1743, — his third child was born, whom he named Thomas, that student who stands at the threshold of William and Mary College, waiting our convenience to be admitted.

Of this adventurous lady, who gave her hand to Peter Jefferson and rode by his side to their home in the woods, we only know that she was the child of an intelligent and hospitable father; and this one fact comes to us by a strange and pleasant chance. There was a Quaker farmer near Philadelphia, at the beginning of the last century, named John Bartram, who, while he was resting from the plough one day, under a tree, pulling a daisy to pieces, and observing some of the more obvious marvels of its construction, suddenly awoke to his pitiful ignorance of the vegetable wonders in the midst of which he had lived and labored from childhood. He resumed his toil, but not with that stolid content with his ignorance that he had enjoyed so long. On the fourth day after, raging for knowledge, he hired a man to hold his plough, while he rode to Philadelphia, and brought home a work upon botany in Latin, and a Latin grammar. In three months, by a teacher's aid, he could grope his way in the Latin book; in a year he had botanized all over the region round about, and cast longing eyes over the border into Maryland and Virginia. By good management of his farm and servants, — emancipated slaves, — he was able to spend the rest of his life in the study of Nature, making wide excursions into neighboring colonies, until he knew every plant that grew between the Alleghany range and the Atlantic Ocean; becoming at length botanist to the king, at fifty guineas a year, and founding on the banks of the Schuylkill the first botanical garden of America. He and his garden flourished together to a green old age; and he died, at the approach of the British army during the Revolutionary War, of terror lest the pride of his life should be trampled into ruin by the troops. Among his European correspondents was that assiduous friend of Pennsylvania and of Franklin, Peter Collinson, with whom for fifty years he exchanged letters, seeds, roots, trees, slips, nuts, grafts, birds, turtles, squirrels, and other animals; and it is to their correspondence that Europe owes the profusion of American trees and shrubs that adorn so many parks, gardens, and highways



To the same interchange America was indebted, among other benefits, for those rare kinds of plums, cherries, apricots, gooseberries, and other fruits, that flourished for a time, though the climate has since proved too harsh and exacting for them. In a singularly quiet, homely way, those two excellent men, at the cost of a few guineas per annum, conferred solid and lasting benefits upon countless generations of the inhabitants of two continents.

It is in the letters of Peter Collinson to his American friend, that we find allusions to the father of our Jefferson's mother. William Bartram may have seen Peter Jefferson and Jane Randolph married; for a few months before that event, when the botanist was about to make a botanical tour in Virginia, Collinson sends him the names of three or four gentlemen of that province who were interested in "our science," one of whom was Isham Randolph. "No one," he remarks, "will make thee more welcome;" and he adds, "I take his house to be a very suitable place to make a settlement at, for to take several days' excursions all round, and to return to his house at night." The worthy Quaker favors his somewhat too plain American friend, who was also of Quaker family, with a piece of advice, that gives us some information. "One thing," he says, "I must desire of thee, and do insist that thee oblige me therein: that thou make up that druggert clothes" (a present from Collinson to Bartram), "to go to Virginia in, and not appear to disgrace thyself or me; for, though I should not esteem thee less to come to me in what dress thou will, yet these Virginians" (having in his mind's eye his old acquaintances, Isham Randolph and his young family) "are a very gentle, well-dressed people, and look, perhaps, more at a man's outside than his inside. For these and other reasons, pray go very clean, neat, and handsomely dressed, in Virginia. Never mind thy clothes: I will send more another time." The benevolent Peter was a dealer in woollens, and sent the rustic Bartram many a good yard of cloth to wear at the great houses in the country.

The botanist visited Isham Randolph's mansion on the James, in regard about which, it is said, a hundred servants attended. There he must have seen the eldest daughter of the house at the time when she was busy with preparations for her marriage; and he may have attended to the wedding-feast, and cheered the bride and bridegroom as they rode away on horseback to their new home. He had generous entertainment, of which he sent grateful accounts to his pa-

tron in London. Collinson replies, that it was no more than he expected of his friend Isham: "I did not doubt his civility to thee. I only wish to have been there, and shared it with thee." In another letter, the worthy merchant mentions that "our friend, Isham Randolph (a generous, good-natured gentleman, and well respected by most who are acquainted with him)" had agreed to correspond with him on their beloved science. When the news came of Isham Randolph's death, Collinson wrote of him as "the good man" who had gone to his long home, and, he doubted not, was happy.

These glimpses of the father of Jefferson's mother are slight, but they are the more interesting because they confirm the tradition that it was from his mother he derived his temper, his disposition, and his sympathy with living nature.

## CHAPTER III.

### OUR JEFFERSON'S CHILDHOOD.

THOUGH his mother had been the tenderest of women, his father had strength to match her tenderness. Tradition, current in the county where he lived, and gathered by Mr. Randall, whose extensive and sympathetic work \* must remain the great reservoir of information respecting the Jeffersons, reports Peter Jefferson a wonder of physical force and stature. He had the strength of three strong men. Two hogsheads of tobacco, each weighing a thousand pounds, he could raise at once from their sides, and stand them upright. When surveying in the wilderness, he could tire out his assistants, and tire out his mules; then eat his mules, and still press on, sleeping alone by night in a hollow tree, to the howling of the wolves, till his task was done. He loved mathematics. He managed his affairs so well, that, in twenty years, he was master of a competent estate, and could assign a good plantation to his younger son, after leaving the bulk of his estate to his eldest. But with this strength of character there was genuine intelligence. He relished Shakspeare; and Shakspeare alone can be a liberal education. His fine edition of Shakspeare, still preserved among his relics, attests, by its appearance, that the man whose property it was loved it, and repaired often to it during many years for solace and delight. The Spectator, a new work in his day, and some volumes of Swift, are among the books, once his, that his descendants possess.

County honors, which at that time and place could mean nothing but public duties, always difficult, often perilous, never compensated, made him at length the unquestioned chief of the frontier region.

\* The Life of Thomas Jefferson, by Henry S. Randall, LL.D. Three vols. New York, 1851.

When the county was set off and named Albemarle, Peter Jefferson was appointed one of its three justices of the peace; afterwards county surveyor; then colonel of the county, chief of provincial honors in old Virginia, in which capacity he was the defender of the frontier against the Indians; finally he was sent to represent his county in the House of Burgesses, which sat at Williamsburg, the capital of the Province. In politics he was a British Whig, like most of the Western yeomen of the early day; the great planters of the lower country generally affecting Tory politics. For many years he was vestryman of his parish church.

His qualifications were recognized by the royal government. He was out, when his boy was six years old, for several weeks, on the line between Virginia and North Carolina, as joint commissioner with Joshua Fry, professor of mathematics in William and Mary College, completing the boundary between these two Provinces. Two years after, he was associated with Professor Fry in the construction of the first map of Virginia ever attempted since Captain John Smith's conjectural sketch of 1609. The boy of eight must have seen the surveys and broad sheets spread upon the great table in the family room. Perhaps this honorable connection with one of the college professors may have strengthened, may have originated, the fondest purpose of Peter Jefferson's heart, which was to give his son the best chance for education the colony afforded.

From this natural chief of men, Thomas Jefferson derived his stature, his erectness, his bodily strength, — in which only his father excelled him of all the men known or remembered in that county, — his self-reliance, his habit of waiting upon himself, his aversion to parade and ceremony, his tendency to humane politics, his curious exactness in matters of business, his strong bias toward mathematics, mechanics, and architecture. He may have derived from him too, some traits that limited his ability as an executive chief. (One of his father's maxims was, "Never ask another to do for you what you can do for yourself." A man who has to direct extensive affairs and control many men, must reverse this maxim, and never do anything himself which he can properly get another to do.

We can hardly imagine a boy better placed for the equal development of mind, body, and character, than Thomas Jefferson during his father's lifetime. That region combines both the charms and the advantages of mountain and plain; for the heights are

too difficult for access, and the lowlands are not insalubrious. He could shoot wild turkeys, deer, and all flying game, without going off his father's estate; and past his native fields flowed a river, over which he was early taught to swim his horse. The primeval wilderness covered the mountains, and waved luxuriant in many a valley, the most conspicuous fact of nature around him till he was long past boyhood. But by the time he was a well-grown lad, there were neighbors near and numerous enough for society. His father's official position made him the arbiter between contentious men, and the minister of justice. The lad must have seen his father try many a petty case, and settle many a difference, as well between white men as between whites and Indians.

That liking for Indians, which we observe in the writings of Jefferson, resulted from his early acquaintance with some of the best of the uncorrupted chiefs, who used to visit and stay with his father on their journeys to and from the capital of Virginia. The Indians held his father in that entire respect which they were apt to feel for men who never feared and never deceived them. One of the most vivid recollections of his boyhood was of a famous chief of the Cherokees, named Ontassetè, who went to England on behalf of his people. The boy was in the camp of this chief the evening before his departure for England, and heard him deliver his farewell oration to his tribe, — a scene that he used to describe with animation seventy years after its occurrence. The moon was in full splendor that evening; and it seemed as if it was to that lustrous orb the impassioned orator addressed prayers for his own safety, and the protection of his people during his absence. The powerful voice of the speaker, his distinct articulation, his animated gesture, and the silence of the listening Indians sitting motionless in groups by their several fires, filled him with awe and veneration, although he did not understand a word that was spoken.

All the important circumstances of his home come to mind as we brood over scattered indications in old and new Virginia books. We see that giant of a father, steadfast, reserved, even austere, but not ungentle, busy with official labors and the details of farm and barn during the day, and in the evening giving his boy (his only son for many years) lessons in book-keeping and arithmetic; two elder sisters, perhaps, taking their turn at slate and pencil, or sitting with their mothers spinning the needle. The father not unfrequently, treat-

ing the group to a favorite paper from the Spectator. The morning scene, too, with the mother and her servants, we can infer with much probability from descriptions of similar interiors preserved from that period.

Deeply as Jefferson came to hate slavery, clearly as he foretold the ruin enclosed in the system, he saw it only in its better aspects at his own home. He saw his father patiently drilling negroes, not long from their native Africa, into carpenters, millers, wheelrights, shoemakers, and farmers. He saw his mother of a morning in her sitting-room, which was well furnished with contrivances for facilitating labor, seated with her daughters and her servants, like Andromache surrounded by her maidens, all busy with household tasks. We possess authority for the picture. Have we not been favored with a glimpse of Mrs. Washington's morning-room at Mount Vernon, — that room which was so "nicely fixed for all sorts of work"? "On one side sits the chambermaid with her knitting; on the other, a little colored pet, learning to sew. An old, decent woman was there with her table and shears, cutting out the negroes' winter clothes, while the good old lady directs them all, incessantly knitting herself. She points out to me several pairs of nice colored stockings and gloves she had just finished, and presents me with a pair half done, which she begs I will finish and wear for her sake." Bishop Meade, who quotes this interesting passage from an old Virginia manuscript, adds that, in other houses (like the home of the Jeffersons) less opulent and containing many children, the mother would have her daughters with her in the same apartment, one spinning, another basting, another winding yarn, another churning, — all vigorously at work: for at that day a plantation was obliged to be nearly self-supplying; and the family at the great house had to do the thinking, contriving, cutting, and doctoring for a family of as many helpless, improvident children as there were slaves.

In such a busy, healthy home as this, with father, mother, two elder sisters, four younger sisters, and a little brother, Thomas Jefferson lived in his boyhood. He was happy in his eldest sister, Jane, whose mind was akin to his own. She was his confidant and companion, and shared his taste for the arts, particularly his early love of music. The family were all reared and baptized in the Church of England; and this sister greatly excelled in singing the few fine old psalm-tunes which then constituted the whole psalmody



of the Protestant world. For a century, it is said, there were but five tunes sung in the colonial churches. By the fireside in the winter evenings, and on the banks of their river in the soft, summer twilight, there were family singings, Jane Jefferson's melodious voice leading the choir; to which was added, as the years went on, the accompaniment of her brother's violin. There must have been much musical feeling in the family to have generated in this boy so profound a passion for music as he exhibited. He speaks of three early tastes as "the passion of his soul," — music, mathematics, and architecture; and of these the one first developed was music.

The massive instruments with which we are familiar — the piano and the organ — would have been unattainable in a Virginia farmhouse at that period, even if they had been sufficiently perfected to warrant transportation so far. The violin, called by its old-fashioned name of the fiddle, king of instruments, was almost the only one generally known in the back countries of the colonies. In Virginia, when Jefferson and Patrick Henry were merry lads together, both of whom played the fiddle, it appears that almost every farmhouse which had a boy in it could boast a fiddle also. Mr. Rives, in his "Life of Madison," among many other precious things, preserves the programme of the rustic festivities arranged for St. Andrew's Day in 1737, in the next county but one to Jefferson's, Albemarle. It throws light on his early violin, besides showing how English the tone of Virginia was at that period.

First, twenty horses were to run round a three-mile course for a prize of five pounds, no one "to put up a horse unless he had subscribed for the entertainment and paid half a pistole." Next, a hat of the value of twenty shillings was to be cudgelled for. Then, a violin was to be played for by twenty fiddlers, — "no person to have the liberty of playing, *unless he bring a fiddle with him.*" When the prize had been awarded, all the performers were to play together, each a different tune, and to be treated by the company. Next twelve boys, twelve years of age, were to run a hundred and twelve yards for a hat worth twelve shillings. A "quire of ballads were to be sung for by a number of songsters, all of them to have liquor sufficient to clear their windpipes." A pair of silver buckles was to be wrestled for by "a number of brisk young men." "A pair of handsome shoes" was to be "danced for." A pair of handsome silk stockings of one pistole value was to be given to "the handsomest

young country maid that appears in the field." A "handsome entertainment" was also to be provided for the subscribers and their wives; "and such of them as are not so happy as to have wives may treat any other lady." Drums, trumpets, and hautboys were to play; and, at the feast, the healths of the king and of the governor were to be drunk. The programme concluded by notifying the public, that, "as this mirth is designed to be purely innocent and void of offence, all persons resorting to these are desired to behave themselves with decency and sobriety; the subscribers being resolved to discountenance all immorality with the utmost rigor."

The prominence assigned to the violin contest in these festivities explains the frequent allusions to it in the early memorials of Virginia, and lessens our surprise at Jefferson's statement, that, during twelve years of his early life, he practised on the violin three hours a day. The innocent instrument, it appears, had an ill name among the stricter religious people of the mountain counties, where "evangelical" principles prevailed. Our zealous young amateur may have heard a sermon once preached in a parish church near his home by Rev. Charles Clay, — cousin of the eloquent Kentuckian, — in which the preacher warned his hearers against the "profanation" of Christmas Day by "fiddling, dancing, drinking, and such like;" practices, he said, which were only too common in Albemarle. Then, as now, it was the drink that did the mischief, though the fiddle and the dance had to share the blame.



## CHAPTER IV.

### JEFFERSON'S SCHOOL-LIFE.

PETER JEFFERSON began early to execute his heartfelt intention of educating his son. This was not so difficult as has been represented. Twenty years before the child was born, the Bishop of London, in whose diocese Virginia was, addressed certain questions to the Virginian clergy. One of the questions was, "Are there any schools in your parish?" All the clergymen, except two or three, answered, "None;" and the two or three who did not make this answer could only claim that their parishes had "a charity school." Another question was, "Is there any parish library?" To this, all the clergy, except one man, answered, "None;" and that one man made this reply, "We have the Book of Homilies, the Whole Duty of Man, and the Singing Psalms." But, by the time Jefferson was old enough to go to school, there were a few schools in the more densely peopled counties of Virginia; and several of the more learned and decent of the clergy received pupils into their houses for instruction in Latin and Greek.

He was fortunate in his teachers, as in all things else. At five he went to a school where only the English language was employed; at nine his education seriously began, when he entered a Scottish clergyman's family as a boarding scholar, where he learned Latin, Greek, and French. Entries in Peter Jefferson's account-book, still existing, show that he paid the Rev. William Douglass sixteen pounds sterling a year for his son's board and tuition. This first instructor of Thomas Jefferson came over from Scotland as tutor in the family of Colonel Monroe, father of President Monroe, and settling on the James, near Peter Jefferson's tobacco plantation, spent a long life in teaching young and old. He was of what we now call the "evangelical" school, and regarded Dr. Doddridge's works as

more precious than gold, — “the best legacy” he could leave his children. Peter Jefferson was a vestryman of his church. The boy was evidently much at home during the five years he spent at this school, — always, probably, on Saturdays and Sundays; and his father took care that the boy did not neglect a child’s first and chief duty, which is to grow. He also instructed him in arithmetic and the rudiments of mathematics, then generally neglected in classical schools.

But this excellent father was not destined to experience the noblest triumph parents know, — that of seeing his child a full-formed man, and better equipped for life’s journey than himself had been at starting. His great strength did not avail to bring him to old age. In 1757, when he was but fifty years old, he died of a disease not recorded.

After Braddock’s defeat, in 1755, there could have been little rest for such a colonel of a frontier county as he was; and, indeed, there are indications — pay-rolls and other military documents and entries — among his existing papers, showing that he was active against the exulting foe. Nothing was heard of for a time on the borders but massacre and fire, and the flight of whole counties of settlers to the lower country. It is of this period, in the midst of which Colonel Jefferson died, that the youthful commander of the Virginian forces, Colonel Washington, wrote that despatch from the frontier which startles every reader of his letters by its burst of vehement pathos. “The supplicating tears of the women and moving petitions of the men,” he wrote, “melt me with such deadly sorrow, that I solemnly declare, if I know my own mind, I could offer myself a willing sacrifice to the butchering enemy, provided that would contribute to the people’s ease.” The county colonels were all in arms during that time of terror. Colonel John Madison, in Orange, the next county to Albemarle, and nearer the scene, saw some of the horrors of the war from his own front door. His son James, four years old at the time of Braddock’s defeat, always remembered the terror and desolation of the two next years. Exposure and fatigue may have rendered the colonel of Albemarle County liable to the attack of one of the summer diseases, for it was on the 17th of August that he died.

His death is spoken of as sudden; but this good father, it seems, had time and strength, sudden as his death may have been, to render his eldest son one last service. Dying, he left an injunction that his son’s education should be completed, and enjoined those in

whose charge he was to be, not to permit him to neglect the exercises requisite for his body's development. This strong man valued strength. He used to say that the weakly in body could not be independent in mind; and, therefore, among his dying thoughts was solicitude for his son's healthy, unchecked growth. He died leaving his wife still young, not quite forty; one daughter seventeen; another sixteen; his son Thomas fourteen; another daughter thirteen; another eleven; another five; and a boy and girl, twins, aged twenty-two months. To the end of his days, Jefferson spoke of his father, thus early lost, with pride and veneration; and he especially loved to think that his dying command was that his son's mind should not be wronged of its due culture and nourishment. He used to say, that, if he had to choose between the education or the estate his father gave him, he would choose the education.

His father's death left him his own master; for he says in one of his later letters, that, "at fourteen years of age the whole care and direction of myself was thrown on myself entirely, without a relation or friend qualified to advise or guide me." The first use he made of his liberty was to change his school.

Fourteen miles away was the parsonage of Rev. James Maury, a man of great note in his time, and noted for many things; from whose twelve children have descended a great number of estimable persons of the name still living. Of Huguenot descent and genuine scholarship, he was free both from the vices and the bigotry which the refuse of the young English clergy often brought with them to Virginia in the early time. Pamphlets of his remain, maintaining the right and liberal side of questions bitterly contested in his day. He was one of the clergymen of the Established Church in Virginia who opposed, with voice and pen, that senseless persecution of Dissenters, which at last brought the Church itself to ruin. He went so far as to say, in a printed address, that he should feel it an "honor and happiness" to promote the spiritual good of "any one honest and well-disposed person of whatever persuasion;" and, though he preferred his own church, he thought he saw errors in it, as well as in the other sects, and should be glad to assist in the correction and improvement of *both!*

The coming of this clergyman into the mountain region, about the time of Jefferson's birth, was evidently a welcome event; for a glebe of four hundred acres was at once set off for him, and so spa-

cious a parsonage was built, that he was able to add to his own large family some pupils from the adjacent counties. By the time Jefferson was fourteen, an important school had grown up about him, — the best, it is thought, then existing in the Province; and it continued to flourish, under one of Mr. Maury's sons, as late as the year 1808, when one of its pupils was President of a nation which the founder of the school did not live to see established.

We do not know what Jefferson read in Latin and Greek during the two years that he remained at Mr. Maury's school; but we know that he learned nothing but Latin and Greek. A classmate and an associate of his at this school was the second son of the master, also named James; to whom Mr. Jefferson, when Secretary of State under President Washington, gave the Liverpool consulship, which he held for forty-five years. The consul, on his return to Virginia in old age, used to say that Jefferson was noted at his father's school for scholarship, industry, and shyness. If a holiday was desired, it was not he who could be induced to ask it, though he urged others to ask; and, if the request was granted, he would, first of all, withdraw from the noisy crowd of his schoolfellows, learn next day's lesson, and then, rejoining them, begin the day's pleasure. Their favorite diversion was hunting on a mountain near by, which then and long after abounded in deer, turkeys, foxes, and other game. He was a keen hunter, as eager after a fox as Washington himself, swift of foot and sound of wind, coming in fresh and alert after a long day's clambering hunt.

After two years' stay at this school, he began, like other students, to be impatient to enter college. He had never yet seen a town, nor even a village of twenty houses, for there was none such within his range; and he doubtless had the curiosity of youth to behold the glories of the capital. He found plenty of reasons for gratifying his wish, some of which he laid before his guardian. He lost a fourth of his time, he said, by company coming to Shadwell and detaining him from school, which added very much to the expenses of the estate in housekeeping. At the college, too, he could learn "something of mathematics," as well as the languages, and "could get a more universal acquaintance, which may hereafter be serviceable to me." His guardian consenting, he bade farewell to his mother and sisters, and set off, early in the spring of 1760, for Williamsburgh, five days' long ride from his home.

## CHAPTER V.

### HE GOES TO COLLEGE.

It was not the custom of this young gentleman, nor of Virginians generally then, to perform their journeys with straightforward rapidity. They took friends' houses on the way, were easily persuaded to remain over Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, and made the most of the opportunity. Such was eminently the habit of young Jefferson, related as he was to half the families of the Province, and seldom going far from home without his fiddle, and perhaps a roll of "new minuets" from London, so welcome to young ladies in the remoter counties. It was always impressed on his memory, that he began this interesting journey before Christmas, and staid over for the holidays at a merry house in Hanover County, where he met, for the first time, a jovial blade named Patrick Henry, only noted then for fiddling, dancing, mimicry, and practical jokes. He was mistaken, however. An existing letter of the time shows that he had not thought of going to college till after Christmas, and did not consult his guardian on the subject till January was half gone. He probably spent the holidays with Patrick Henry, returned home, and *then* entered upon the project of going to college. But it was always his custom, in his journeys to and from Williamsburg, to make long visits to friends on and near the road; and it was this, perhaps, that led to the error. He remembered the future orator merely as the prime mover of all the fun of the younger circle, and had not a suspicion of the wonderful talent that lay undeveloped within him. As little, doubtless, did Patrick Henry see in this slender, sandy-haired lad a political leader and associate, — the pen of a Revolution of which himself was to be the tongue.

On reaching Williamsburg, we may be sure he did not see that metropolis with our disparaging eyes. In the old letters and me-



moirs we read delusive accounts of its splendors and gayeties, — of the “viceregal court,” “vying in elegance with that of St. James;” of the grand equipages of “the gentry;” and of all the pomp and circumstance of old Virginia, gathered there in the winter. It was “the centre of taste, fashion, and refinement,” we are told; and the entertainments given at “the palace” were a blending of refinement and sumptuousness “worthy of the representative of royalty.” Such statements do not prepare the cold investigator to discover that the capital of Virginia was an unpaved village of a thousand inhabitants, surrounded by an expanse of dark-green tobacco-fields as far as the eye could reach. Andrew Burnaby, an English clergyman who visited it eight months before the arrival of our student, estimates the number of its houses at “about two hundred,” and its population at “one thousand souls, whites and negroes.” He mentions, also, that “there are *ten or twelve* gentlemen’s families constantly residing in it, besides merchants and tradesmen.” But he adds that in the winter, when the legislature and the great court of the colony were in session, the place was “crowded with the gentry of the country,” and then there were balls and gayeties; but, as soon as business is over, the gentry return to their plantations, and “the town is in a manner deserted.”

Williamsburg, insignificant as it may seem to us, furnished the pattern for the city of Washington. It consisted chiefly of one street, a hundred feet broad and three-quarters of a mile long, with the Capitol at one end, the college at the other, and a ten-acre square with public buildings in the middle. It was well arranged to display whatever of equipage or costume the town could boast. As the great planters’ families travelled in their own huge coaches, which at least had *been* gorgeous in the fashion of the age, — coaches drawn of necessity by six horses, — and as the dress of the period was bright with color and picturesque in style, we may well believe that this broad avenue presented, during the season, a striking and animated scene.

The public buildings, as they appeared to Jefferson’s mature judgment, were of a mongrel description, generally unpleasing and inharmonious. The Capitol, in which he was to witness such thrilling scenes, and take part in such important events, he thought “a light and airy structure,” — heavy and dull as it looks in the old pictures; and the governor’s palace, though not handsome without,

was large and commodious, and surrounded by agreeable grounds; but the college and the hospital he condemns utterly. They were "rude, misshapen piles, which, but that they have roofs, would be taken for brick-kilns." This, however, was the remark of a connoisseur in architecture. The main edifice of the college resembled those brick barracks of Yale and Harvard, built in the same period: two stories high, with a steep roof and a row of windows in it, and a small belfry on its summit; quite good enough for young gentlemen who kept dogs and guns in their rooms, and considered it the chief end of students to frustrate the object for which they were sent to the institution. This building, with two solid-looking professors' houses near it, all standing in a square of four acres, marked with well-worn paths, and not wanting in large trees, presented upon the whole a respectable appearance. The arriving student probably did not think it so despicable as the author of the "Notes on Virginia." The private houses of Williamsburg, according to Mr. Burnaby, were "of wood, covered with shingles, and but indifferently built." The site of the town, however, was agreeable, — an elevated plateau, midway between the York and the James, six miles from both. Those breezes which swept across the peninsula, and raised the clouds of dust in Williamsburg streets that annoyed the English traveller, tempered the burning heat of the summer, and, as he records, kept the town free from mosquitoes.

Such was Williamsburg in 1760, the chief residence of Jefferson for the next seven years, the most important period of his life; for it was then that he acquired his knowledge and his opinions. Whatever Williamsburg may have been to others, it was to him a true university; because, coming into familiar contact there with a few universal minds, he was capable of being instructed by them. He brought with him to college the three prime requisites of the successful student, — perfect health, good habits, and an inquisitive intellect. He had come from a pure and honest home, where he had learned nothing but what was good and honorable; and he had come in good faith, to fulfil his father's fond intention of making him a scholar.

It was an ill-starred institution, this College of William and Mary. It had existed sixty-eight years, having been founded in 1692 by the sovereigns whose names it bore. They gave it an endowment, as an old historian records, of "nineteen hundred and eighty-five

pounds fourteen shillings and ten pence," besides twenty thousand acres of land, and certain taxes that yielded three hundred pounds a year. Other benefactors had bequeathed and given it property, until it enjoyed an annual income of three thousand pounds; which was enough, with the tuition fees, to maintain an efficient college. But, like Harvard and Yale, the institution was hampered by the incongruous conditions imposed by the donors of its capital. One important estate was given for the express purpose of maintaining Indians at the college; and Indians were maintained accordingly. But Indians cannot receive our civilization. If the college had any success with an Indian youth, he was no sooner tamed than he sickened and died. The rest may have assumed the white man's habits while they remained at Williamsburg; but the very day that they rejoined their tribe they threw off their college clothes, resumed their old costumes and weapons, and ran whooping into the forest, irreclaimable savages. And so this fondly-cherished project of the benefactors ended in utter failure. But the estate remained; its income could only be spent in one way; and hence the Indian nuisance still clung to the college, wasting its resources and lessening its attractiveness.

A leading object of the founders was to provide learned ministers of the Established Church; and consequently there was a professor of "divinity," another of moral philosophy; and the only special duty assigned to the president, in return for his two hundred pounds a year and his handsome house, was the delivery of four theological lectures per annum. As if to give still greater prominence to the department of theology, the reverend president usually held the office of commissary, or bishop's representative, at a hundred pounds a year, and had charge of the parish church of Williamsburg, which swelled his income to about six hundred a year, — an official revenue only exceeded by that of the governor. Those who know for what kind of reasons the fat things in church and state were usually given in the good old times will not be surprised to learn that one of the commissary-presidents of the college, in Jefferson's youth, could not proceed against the clergy for drunkenness, because he was himself a drunkard; nor will he be at a loss how to explain the indications of college riot that lurk in the letters of the time.

Moreover, the chief object of the founders was not accomplished. As the parishes were usually assigned to English clergymen, whom



the Bishop of London sent to Virginia because there was nothing for them in England, few young Virginians entered the college with a view to compete for a church-living of sixteen thousand pounds of tobacco per annum. Yet the costly professorships of divinity had to be kept up, and the college was obliged to continue a theological seminary without theologians.

Dead branches are not only merely inert and useless: they injure and disfigure the tree. This college, which ought to have attracted the *élite* of Virginia youth, and sent them home strong and enlightened to save beautiful Virginia from the blight of tobacco, repelled many of them, and seldom regenerated those who came. Young men whose fathers could afford the expense went to English Eton, Oxford, and Cambridge, often returning as ignorant as they went out, and dissolute beyond hope of reform. Of late years the college had been filling up, more and more, with boys who came to learn the rudiments of Latin; and it was some time before a clear distinction was made between these and the students proper of the college. Jefferson found the institution a medley of college, Indian mission, and grammar-school, ill-governed, and distracted by dissensions among its ruling powers. The Bishop of London, who, as chancellor of the institution, had the nomination of its professors, sometimes sent out men so manifestly incompetent or unfit, that the trustees would not admit them; and others, being admitted, led scandalous lives, and filled the college, as the trustees said, with riot, contention, and dissipation. Jefferson in old age wrote of "the regular annual riots and battles between the students and the town-boys, before the Revolution, part of which I was, and the many and more serious affrays of later times." On Sundays, we are told, when the divinity professors and reverend president were away performing parochial duties, the more orderly students went off shooting, with their dogs behind them, and the others made the village resound with their noise. It was not until several years after Jefferson's time, that the rights of the several authorities of the college were so defined that the suppression of these disorders became possible.

But out of this chaos Thomas Jefferson contrived to pick a genuine university education; because, among the crowd of its schoolmasters, mission teachers, divinity professors, and bishop's *protégés*, there was, by some strange chance, one man of knowledge and ability, one man who did *not* "survey the universe from his parish bel-

fry," one skilful and sympathetic teacher. "It was my great good fortune," he says, in his too brief autobiography, "and what probably fixed the destinies of my life, that Dr. William Small of Scotland was then professor of mathematics. A man profound in most of the useful branches of science, with a happy talent of communication, correct and gentlemanly manners, and an enlarged, liberal mind. He, most happily for me, soon became attached to me, and made me his daily companion when not engaged in the school; and from his conversation I got my first views of the expansion of science, and of the system of things in which we are placed. Fortunately the philosophical chair became vacant soon after my arrival in college, and he was appointed to fill it *per interim*; and he was the first who ever gave, in that college, regular lectures in ethics, rhetoric, and belles-lettres." It is a pleasure to copy a passage like this, — one more testimonial to add to the long list of similar ones, from Marcus Aurelius to Lord Brougham, which attest the immeasurable value of an enlightened teacher of youth.

I wish we had something more particular of this gentleman. Jefferson's college intimate, John Page, governor of Virginia in later years, speaks of him as "my beloved professor," who was "afterward the great Dr. Small of Birmingham, the darling friend of Darwin." And he confesses that he did not derive all the benefit from his instruction that he might; for he was "too sociable to study as Mr. Jefferson did, who could tear himself away from his dearest friends to fly to his studies."

Another friend of Jefferson, John Burk, author of a "History of Virginia," insinuates that Dr. Small was not too orthodox in his opinions. The professors, he remarks, were usually chosen from "the licensed champions of orthodoxy;" by which he appears to mean the clergy: but, "now and then, in spite of the jealous scrutiny of the metropolitan, some unbeliever would steal into the fold." This, he adds, was particularly the case with the mathematical department, for which divines were generally incompetent; and he illustrates this observation by mentioning "the friend and companion of the poetic and philosophic Darwin," Professor Small, who had formed the minds of so many of the youth of the Province. It is certain the college was beginning to have an ill name among the religious people, not on account of the bad lives and inefficient teaching of some of "the divines" connected with it, but of the heretical opinions supposeæ

to prevail among the students. The true reason, it is said, why James Madison went to Princeton College, was the dread his parents had lest he should imbibe those opinions if he attended the college nearer home. Edmund Randolph, who succeeded Mr. Jefferson in the office of Secretary of State, was a student of William and Mary about this time. He used to say that such heresies were much in vogue at the college, and he had a vivid recollection of a scene that followed his utterance of something in unison with the prevailing tone. One of the leaders of the new opinions patted him on the head, and called him a promising youth for daring to express so bold a thought. The fact remains, however, that all the professors were required by law to subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles, and all their pupils to **say the Church-of-England Catechism.**

## CHAPTER VI.

### AT COLLEGE.

THE student settled to his work. Without neglecting Latin and Greek, his chief employment since his ninth year, he now became, under Professor Small's tuition, enamoured of mathematics. That science, as he wrote in later years, became "the passion of his life;" and he could read off in his youth, "with the facility of common discourse," processes which at seventy cost him "labor and time and slow investigation." It is evident, from many trifling indications, that he subdued mathematics to his will, and employed it all his days as a familiar, obedient servant. Part of his travelling apparatus, even on short journeys, was a box of instruments and a book of logarithms, and he always had a rule in his pocket. Professor Small, who left Scotland about the time (1756) that Professor Black was appointed to the chair of chemistry which he covered with immortal lustre, — James Watt and the improved steam-engine being among its incidental results, — shared in the new enthusiasm for applied science; and he imparted it to his young companion. There was some apparatus, it appears, at William and Mary. Doubtless Professor Small possessed the electrical tubes, one of which Benjamin Franklin, printer, had rubbed with so much effect fifteen years before. Details of the student's scientific course we do not possess; but we know that he derived from his walks and talks with Professor Small the habit of surveying objects with the eyes of science, and subjecting them to scientific tests, — one of the chief points of difference between the educated and the ignorant mind.

He worked hard in college, and ever harder, as his circle widened, — too hard at last, — fifteen hours a day, as he said himself when talking of college days. He kept a horse or two at Williamsburg, it appears (and riding on horseback should be part of every college

course); but, as his love of knowledge grew, his rides became shorter and less frequent, until the only exercise he allowed himself on a regular working-day was a rapid run out of town of a mile while it was getting dark enough for candles. The beloved violin was never quite laid aside: he snatched a kiss now and then, instead of his three hours' wooing. Though related, through his mother, to most of the society of the place, and fond of society, he withdrew from it more and more. Few students could have indulged in such excess of mental exertion with impunity; nor could he for a long period, although "blessed," as he once wrote, "with organs of digestion which accepted and concocted, without ever murmuring, whatever the palate chose to consign to them." His habits, too, were excellent. The simple, old-fashioned cookery, that gave the human race so many ages of good digestion, had not yet become one of the lost arts in Virginia; and, like most of the well-nurtured young Virginians of that period, he was so happy as to escape the servitude of tobacco. Many planters of the olden time, who had grown rich by the culture of tobacco, held the use of it in contempt. One reason assigned, in a letter of the period, why the young men of Virginia should not be sent to England for education, was, that they were so likely to acquire there the horrid practice of smoking.

The number of persons much interested in intellectual affairs has never been great in any community, not even in college-towns. In the Williamsburg of that day we hear of but two individuals who could be associates of Dr. Small. One was Francis Fauquier, the lieutenant-governor of the Province, who inhabited "the palace," and presided over the the grand entertainments given therein. Jefferson speaks of him as the ablest governor colonial Virginia ever had. Perhaps, in saying so, he meant to damn him with faint praise. He appears to have been a gentleman of the school of Louis XIV., translated into England by Charles II., and into English by Lord Chesterfield. We find him spoken of as the most elegant gentleman Virginia had ever seen, a great patron of learning and literature, himself an admirable scholar, master of an excellent style, both spoken and written. It was he who set the fashion of importing French literature, which filled so many Virginia libraries, a few years later, with Voltaire, Rousseau, D'Alembert, and Diderot. He it was also who introduced high play into the polite society of the Province, or at least made high play reputable; which hastened the collapse of

some showy Virginia fortunes, already eaten hollow by London creditors. Whatever his faults, he was a man of high personal and official honor. He was one of the few royal officers in the colonies who disdained to increase their revenues by conniving at illicit commerce. Archdeacon Burnaby reports, that, at a time when other governors were not so scrupulous, Governor Fauquier refused an offer of two hundred pounds for a permit to trade with the enemy. He was a gentleman, too, of eminent courtesy, of agreeable conversation, interested in knowledge and literature, acquainted with the polite world of cities, — a man of the metropolis residing for a while in a province.

Prof. Small being the governor's most familiar associate, our student, young as he was, became intimate with him also, and was thus brought into communication with the great world. The governor, among his other accomplishments, was a musical amateur. Once a week he had a musical party at the palace, to which the guests brought their instruments. Jefferson was regularly present with his violin; and at these parties, for the first time in his life perhaps, he heard music performed in concert.

But it was the governor's conversation that did most to form his mind. It was during these years that Great Britain, by the conquest of India, Canada, and many islands of the sea, became imperial; and when the news of victory came, Fauquier could tell the student something of the mighty Chatham, who found his country an island, and left it an empire. In Jefferson's first year at college, "The Williamsburg Gazette," Virginia's only newspaper, published the account of the accession to the throne of George III., who found his country an empire, and left it an island. Of that young prince, welcomed to the throne by acclamations in every quarter of the globe, the governor could doubtless relate hopeful things, much to the content of his young Whig friend from Albemarle. The Jeffersons, as a Whig family, could not but hail with joy the accession of the first king of the Hanover line who was a native of England. They were loyal subjects ever, and none of them more so than this youth, the present head of the family. From Governor Fauquier, too, he heard, doubtless, something of the literary gossip of London, fresh traditions of Addison, Swift, Thomson, Pope, and Bolingbroke. All this was education to the young student. He was getting knowledge of the world in a very agreeable way. Sitting, as



He says, at "the familiar table" of the governor, with Professor Small opposite him, he was learning to estimate things by other than Virginian standards, and saw more of the universe than could be discerned from the parish belfry. Most happily, too, he was one of those, who, as they go their way through life, get the good that chance companions have to offer them, without imbibing the evil that qualifies it. He caught the graces and escaped the vices of the Chesterfield period. In avoiding the governor's habit of gambling, he went even to an extreme; for, it is said, he never had a card in his house.

But the daily familiar party at the governor's table consisted of four persons. The fourth remains to be mentioned. It was George Wytke, a rising member of the bar of Virginia, who was destined to a distinguished and long career as lawyer, statesman, professor, and judge. He is the more interesting to us as the benevolent and wise preceptor by whom three persons of eminent note in the politics of the country were introduced to the law, and, through the law, to public life, — Thomas Jefferson, John Marshall, and Henry Clay.

Virginia, during the hundred and twenty years of seeming prosperity given it by tobacco grown in virgin soil, cultivated by low-priced slaves, was an illustration of Mr. Buckle's remark concerning the connection between leisure and knowledge. "Without leisure," he observes, "science is impossible; and, when leisure has been won, most of the class possessing it will waste it in the pursuit of pleasure, but *a few* will employ it in the pursuit of knowledge." How perfectly this describes the Virginia of 1760! The great majority of the ruling class lived lives of thoughtless profusion and self-indulgence, with Governor Fauquier as the accomplished master of the revels. John Burk, historian of Virginia, very friendly to the memory of that brilliant personage, tells us that Fauquier found the Virginian gentlemen quite to his mind, — as profuse and fond of pleasure as himself; and, after spending a winter of elegant dissipation at the capital, he would enter upon a round of visits to the great proprietors; among whom, adds Burk, "the rage for playing deep, reckless of time, health, or money, spread like a contagion."

In the midst of such scenes grew up a few men — a very few, but always a few — who sought knowledge with disinterested love, and with such success as almost to redeem the character of their Pro-

vince and period. Three of the best educated gentlemen America has produced were young men during Fauquier's term of service, — Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and George Wythe, — all of them men of singular moral purity and elevation of tone, and all eminently capable of public spirit. It seems as if the very prevalence of the self-indulgent vices made these golden hearts recoil from them with the greater decision and firmness. Jefferson wrote once from the White House in Washington to a grandson at school: "When I recollect the various sorts of bad company with which I associated from time to time, I am astonished I did not turn off with some of them, and become as worthless to society as they were." "But," he adds, "I had the good fortune to become acquainted very early with some characters of very high standing, and to feel the incessant wish that I could ever become what they were. Under temptations and difficulties, I would ask myself, What would Dr. Small, Mr. Wythe, Peyton Randolph, do in this situation? What course in it will insure me their approbation? I am certain that this mode of deciding on my conduct tended more to correctness than any reasoning powers I possessed. Knowing the even and dignified line they pursued, I never could doubt for a moment which of two courses would be in character for them. Whereas, seeking the same object through a process of much reasoning, and with the jaundiced eye of youth, I should often have erred." He tells his grandson that he was of necessity brought into contact with the extremes of character, — jockeys and moralists, racing men and philosophers, gamblers and statesmen; and often, "in the enthusiastic moment of the death of a fox, the victory of a favorite horse," and during a contest of mind in court or legislature, he has asked himself which of these triumphs he should prefer.

George Wythe was thirty-three years of age at the beginning of Jefferson's college life. Though heir of a competent estate, he was wholly self-educated, except that his mother, as tradition reports, assisted him by keeping an eye upon an English Testament while he translated from the Greek. He became, as contemporaries agree, the best Greek scholar Virginia had ever seen; to which Mr. Jefferson adds, the best Latin scholar also. Young Henry Clay, his *manuensis* long after, not knowing a Greek letter, had trouble enough in copying his decisions, interspersed as they were with passages from Greek authors. The chancellor was an old mar-



then, and this habit of quoting Greek was an old man's foible; but when Jefferson was a student at Williamsburg, he knew him as an able, vigilant lawyer, an enthusiast for all classical knowledge, and fond to an extreme of Greek literature and Grecian history. Jefferson's preference would naturally have been for Greek if he had never seen George Wythe; but doubtless their similarity of taste was a bond of union between them, and nerved him for the supreme achievement of old-fashioned scholarship, — a conquest of the Greek language. Wythe was a man of nice conscience. He was among the first to perceive the incongruous iniquity of slavery in our modern world, and he early washed his hands of it by emancipating his slaves. Henry Clay went straight from his office and inspiration to Kentucky, where his first political act was an attempt to induce that young Commonwealth to start fair by abolishing slavery.

Such was the party oftenest gathered about the governor's "familiar table:" Professor Small, the mathematician and man of science; George Wythe, the moralist, learned in law and Greek; Francis Fauquier, the man of the world of the period; Thomas Jefferson, a shy, inquisitive young man, quick to take in all which these accomplished men had to give, and contributing his share of the entertainment by the intelligent sympathy with which he listened. These men were his teachers; this table was his university.

Four persons so formed to entertain and improve one another need never expect to remain long together. The party was broken in 1762 by Professor Small's removal to Birmingham, where he had a bright career. The young man whom he aided to form corresponded with him till the Revolutionary War. They did not agree, it seems, on the topics of the Revolutionary period; but Jefferson not the less revered him as the person who met him at the threshold of life, and directed his steps aright, — who kept him out of the slough of mean Provincial pleasures and excesses by awakening his intelligence, and guiding him to the sources whence its proper nourishment is drawn. An awakened mind, a hearty interest in intellectual things, is virtue's strongest ally; and Jefferson felt that he owed this unspeakable boon to Professor Small.

A profession was necessary to the student. His father's tobacco-farm on the James was the portion of his brother Randolph, still a child. The Shadwell estate was charged with the support of his mother and six sisters; and Virginia estates were not apt to be very

productive when the eye of the master was wanting. He can scarcely be said to have had a choice of vocations. He was the last person in the world to think of the army or navy as a career; and, if he had, it would not have been possible, perhaps, for him to get a commission. It was not as a "midshipman" that Washington's mother thought of sending her son to sea, but as a sailor before the mast: such was the narrow choice a parent had then in Virginia for younger sons. The very letter which discloses this unexpected piece of information shows how few employments were exercised in the Province. Mrs. Washington mentioned the scheme of sending George to sea, to her brother, Joseph Ball, in London. That gentleman replied, that she had better put him an apprentice to a tinker; "for," said he, "a common sailor before the mast has by no means the common liberty of the subject; for they will press him from a ship where he has fifty shillings a month, and make him take twenty-three, and cut and slash him, and use him like a negro, or rather like a dog." And even (he proceeds to say) if the lad should work his way to the top of the ladder, and become the master of a Virginia ship, a "very difficult thing to do," a planter that has three or four hundred acres of land and three or four slaves, if he be industrious, may live more comfortably, and leave his family in better bread, than such a captain can.\* And so the mother thought better of her project, and George Washington did not attempt the difficult achievement of rising to be master of a tobacco-ship.

There were no manufactures in the Province, except the very rudest and crudest. People sent to London for every thing that slaves could not make, even window-sashes and the commoner implements. The commerce was in British hands. There was, of course, no art, no literature, no journalism, and nothing that could tempt intelligence or ambition in the medical profession. If Thomas Jefferson had been reared in a European capital, the first wish of his heart would have been to be an artist of some kind. After toying with music for a while, he would perhaps have fixed upon architecture as his profession. In Virginia, at Williamsburg, with George Wythe for a daily associate, he must needs become a lawyer; and accordingly, in 1763, after two years' residence at the college, he began, under Mr. Wythe's direction, the study of the law.

\* Meade's *Old Churches, Ministers, and Families of Virginia*, vol. ii. p. 128.

Perhaps the example of his jovial young acquaintance, Patrick Henry, first turned his thoughts to the legal profession. In 1760, a few days after his arrival in Williamsburg, who should present himself at his room in the college but the merry Patrick! But he had come on a serious errand. He was bent on a change in his mode of life, that had important consequences for his country as well as himself. He told the student, that since they had parted, after the Christmas holidays, two or three months before, he had studied law! He had studied it, in fact, six weeks; and he had now come to Williamsburg to get a license to practise. And he got it! Of the four examiners, only one, George Wythe, persisted in refusing his signature; and the three names sufficing, he went off triumphant, to tend his father-in-law's tavern for four years longer, until his opportunity came. Our student made no such haste. It was not in his nature to slight his work, and he prepared himself for a four years' course of **reading**.

## CHAPTER VII.

### JEFFERSON IN LOVE.

HIS college days were over when he had been two years a student at William and Mary; and he went home in December, 1762, with Coke upon Lyttleton in his trunk, to spend the winter in reading law. He made the journey in his usual leisurely way, visiting friends near the road, and found himself, about Christmas time, at a friend's house half a day's ride from his own Shadwell. There he staid for two or three days, taking part in the festivities of the season, to which he could always contribute his violin. On this occasion he had brought with him a roll of new minuets for the young ladies; and doubtless he did his part toward the entertainment of the company.

But he had left his heart behind him at Williamsburg. He had danced too many minuets in the Apollo — the great room of the old Raleigh tavern — with Miss Rebecca Burwell, one of the orphan daughters of a great house near the capital; and she had given him a watch-paper, cut and painted with her own lovely hands; and he found his mind dwelling night and day upon her sweet image. He had packed his Coke at Williamsburg, with the most virtuous resolutions of reading him, even amid the gayeties of the holiday time; but the work lay in his trunk untouched. He even wrote to his college friend, John Page, that he wished the Devil had old Coke, for he was sure he never was so tired of an old dull scoundrel in his life. "What!" he says, "are there so few inquietudes tacked to this momentary life of ours, that we must needs be loading ourselves with a thousand more?" How different this from the tone of fond regard with which he speaks, in the grave letters of his maturer years, of Coke and his works. But he was in love; and he was writing on a Christmas Day, a hundred miles from the object of his affection.

He had risen on that joyful morning to face what must have been, to a young fellow in love for the first time, a dreadful catastrophe. He told his friend Page that he was in a house surrounded by enemies, who took counsel together against his soul; who, when he lay down to rest, said, Come, let us destroy him! In the night the "cursed rats," at the instigation of the Devil, if there was a Devil, had eaten his pocket-book within a foot of his head, carried off his "jemmy-worked silk garters," and all those new minuets. But these were trifles. It had rained in the night; and in the morning he found his watch all afloat in a pool of water, and as silent as the rats that had eaten his pocket-book. But this was not the catastrophe. "The subtle particles of the water with which the case was filled, had, by their penetration, so overcome the cohesion of the particles of the paper of which my dear picture and watch-paper were composed, that, in attempting to take them out to dry them — good God! *Mens horret referre!* — my fingers gave them such a rent, as I fear I never shall get over." He is so overcome by the recollection, that he cannot keep up the jocular strain, but breaks into a serious invocation. Whatever misfortunes may attend the picture or the lover, his hearty prayers shall be, that all the health and happiness which Heaven can send may be the portion of the original, and that so much goodness may ever meet with what is most agreeable in this world, as he is *sure* it must in the next. "And now," he adds, "although the picture may be defaced, there is so lively an image of her imprinted in my mind, that I shall think of her too often, I fear, for my peace of mind, and too often, I am sure to get through old Coke this winter."

Message upon message he sends to the young ladies at Williamsburg, with whom, he says, the better part of him, his soul, ever is, though that heavy, earthly part, his body, may be absent. With one he has a bet pending of a pair of silk garters; which the rats knew he was destined to win, else they never could have been so cruel as to carry off the pair he had. And oh, *would* Miss Burwell give him another watch-paper of her own cutting? What does dear Page think? Would he ask her? A watch-paper cut by *her* fingers, though it were only "a plain round one," he should esteem much more than the nicest one in the world cut by other hands. Another young lady, he had heard, was offended with him. What could it be for? Neither in word nor deed had he ever, in all his

life, been guilty of the least disrespect to her; and, no matter what she might say or do, he was determined ever to look upon her as "the same honest-hearted, good-humored, agreeable lady" he had always thought her. So full was he of Williamsburg and its lovely girls, — "Sukey Potter," "Betsy Moore," "Judy Burwell," "Nancy," and, above all, "Becca Burwell," otherwise "Belinda," the adored one, — that, on this Christmas Day, 1762, he wrote a letter about them that would have filled a dozen of our trivial modern sheets of paper. It well became him to write such an epistle on his nineteenth Christmas. Young men of nineteen still write such who have preserved their innocence.

He was at home soon after Christmas. Absence only made his heart grow fonder. He missed the gayety and variety, the friends and stir of life and business at the capital. He found the old farmhouse dull. There must have been *something* uncongenial there, else so affectionate a youth, the head of the family, would not have spent his Christmases away from home. Perhaps his mother was oppressed by the care of a family of eight children and thirty slaves; or she may have agreed with that small portion of the clergy who regarded the fiddle and the minuet as a "profanation" of Christmas. However that may be, this sudden change from the Apollo and the palace, from college friends and employments, to a farm-house on the frontier and Coke's digest of law, was almost too much for his philosophy. He could hardly muster spirits to write to his friend Page. When he had been at home three weeks, he wrote a short letter, which shows him reduced to a sorry plight indeed. He was torn with the contest raging in his soul between his passion and his judgment; and he plunges into a letter, as it were head-foremost, seeking relief in converse with his friend, with whom he had been accustomed to exchange such confidences: "Dear Page, to tell you the plain truth, I have not a syllable to write to you about;" which was a lover's way of stating that his heart was full to bursting. "I do not conceive," he continues, "that any thing can happen in my world which you would give a curse to know." The *worlds* of these two friends were indeed unlike; for John Page, heir to one of the largest estates, lived in the largest mansion of all Virginia, — Roswell, — which stands to this day near the banks of the York River, a vast square barrack, treeless, fenceless, dismantled, a pile without inhabitant, a picture of desolation. "All things here," the dis



tracted lover went on, "appear to me to trudge on in one and the same round: we rise in the morning that we may eat breakfast, dinner, and supper, and go to bed again that we may get up the next morning and do the same; so that you never saw two peas more alike than our yesterday and to-day."

If he had nothing to tell, he had plenty to ask. A jury of lovers would have pronounced his situation serious in the extreme. He was enamoured of a beauty and an heiress: she in the full lustre of her charms; he a youth not twenty, of small estate heavily burdened, reading the elementary book of a profession requiring years of preparation. Moreover, he had the usual dream of foreign travel. Before settling to the business of life, he meant to visit England, Holland, France, Spain, Italy, — where he would buy "a good fiddle," — and then cross to Egypt, returning home by the way of the St. Lawrence and Canada. Such a tour would require two or three years. Would she wait? Could he ask her to wait? She must love him very much to do that, and he did not know that she loved him at all; for the watch-paper meant nothing particular, — indicating friendly feeling, nothing more. What would dear Page advise? Should he go at once to town, receive his sentence, and end this awful suspense? Inclination prompted this course; but, if she rejected him, he would be "ten times more wretched than ever." In this dilemma, he had some thoughts of going to Petersburg, "if the actors go there in May," and keeping on to Williamsburg for the birth-night ball at the Apollo, which of course *she* would attend. But, after all, had not he and Page better go abroad at once for a two or three years' tour? "If we should not both be cured of love in *that* time, I think the devil would be in it."

He remained at home, however, all that winter and all the ensuing summer, wrestling with love and Coke, writing long letters to Page on the one, and long notes on the other in his blank-books. Page, though he was as far gone in love as Jefferson, tried to act as his friend's attorney in love; and Jefferson, on his part, reflected much on Page's "case," and favored him with sage advice. And so the affair went on nearly all that year.

"The test of a woman is gold," says poor Richard, "and the test of a man is woman." This young man bore the test well. He was not carried away, even by this first yearning passion, but held firmly to his purposes, making his love subordinate to them



After viewing the subject in every light, he could only come to this wise conclusion: If she said Yes, he should be happy; but, "if she does not, I must *endeavor* to be as much so as possible." He then bestows upon his fellow-sufferer a discourse upon the necessity of fortifying the mind against inevitable strokes of ill-fortune. "The only method of doing this," he remarks, "is to assume a perfect resignation to the Divine Will; to consider that whatever does happen must happen, and that by our uneasiness we cannot prevent the blow before it does fall, but we may add to its force after it has fallen." This attitude of mind, which he recommends to his friend in several rotund and solemn sentences, will enable a man to tread the thorny path of life with "a pious and unshaken resignation." He ends this discourse with a sentence which reminds us that Dr. Johnson was then a power in the world: "Few things will disturb him at all; nothing will disturb him much."

The lover had occasion for all his philosophy. In October, when the General Court convened, he must needs be in Williamsburg, to watch its proceedings, and submit knotty questions to his friend Wythe. He flew thither on the wings of love. There was a ball at the Apollo. He met her there. Who so happy as he when he led her out to the dance? He had made up his mind to speak, if opportunity favored; and he had meditated some moving passages, which he hoped would touch her heart, and call forth the response he desired. But, alas! when at length, after so many months of longing, the moment arrived, and he had her *tête-à-tête*, he could only stammer a few broken sentences, with dreadful pauses between them; which elicited no explicit reply, and had no result except to plunge him into the depths of shame and despair. "For God's sake, COME," he writes to Page, who had not yet arrived. He met her again. The fearful subject was again approached. This time he got on a little better; explained his projects; did not put the question, but gave her to understand that he *should* do so in due time. Girls of spirit are not won in that manner, and we may presume she did not flatter his hopes; for when next he wrote to his friend, he calls the capital of Virginia, the scene of his disaster, by the name of "Devilsburg." The probability is, that the young lady was engaged at the time, since, a few months after the *tête-à-tête* in the Apollo, she was married to that dread being—another! Page, too, seems to have been crossed in love but he

immediately consoled himself by courting—another. Poor Jefferson declared he would not believe the tale till he had heard from Page himself. For his own part, he had been perfectly sure, during the whole course of his love, that, if Belinda rejected him, his heart was dead to love forever; and he wanted to know his fate as soon as possible, that, if doomed to disappointment, he might have “more of life to wear it off.”

How captivating to lovers is the poetry of love! It was during these two or three years of longing that London ships were bringing to Virginia, among the other new publications, volumes of the poems of Ossian, invested with the halo of a London celebrity, soon to become European. Burly Johnson, tyrant of Great Britain, had not yet denounced them as forgeries; and all the reading world accepted them as genuine relics of antiquity. In these poems there is much which could not but have impressed a youth who had listened spell-bound to the melodious oratory of an Indian chief, of which he understood not a word, and gazed with such interest upon the scene of the various groups of listeners, each group by its own fire, and the full-orbed moon shining over all. It was an Ossian scene. But he was now a lovelorn young man; and Ossian contains on almost every page some picture of beauty in distress, some utterance of passion or tenderness, which lovers can easily make their own. “Daura, my daughter, thou wert fair, — fair as the moon on Fara, white as the driven snow, sweet as the breathing gale.” So was Belinda. “Her fair bosom is seen from her robe, as the moon from the clouds of night, when its edge heaves white on the view from the darkness which covers its orb.” He had often observed this fine effect when dancing at the Apollo with Belinda, arrayed in the bodice of the period. “Fair was she, the daughter of the mighty Conlock. She appeared like a sunbeam among women.” Precisely the observation he had frequently made to Page, when glorious Belinda appeared, surrounded by her excellent but commonplace friends. “Often met their eyes of love.” It is curious thought! Would it ever be any thing more than a thought? Tradition has not recorded the color of Belinda’s hair; but whether it were of the hue of the “raven’s wing,” or “dark brown,” or of some lighter shade; whether she wore her hair “flowing,” or “wandering,” or in some other touching style, he had not far to go in Ossian without meeting a damsel similarly adorned, with the additional resemblance of white hands and snowy arms.

It belongs to youth to abandon itself to these literary raptures ; but there has seldom been a case of such lasting fascination as this. He could not get over it. His passion for Ossian long outlived his love for Belinda. The fulminations of Dr. Johnson, if they were heard on this side of the Atlantic, could not shake *his* faith. It chanced that Charles MacPherson, a relative of the translator, visited Virginia a few years after, when Jefferson made his acquaintance, and, we may be sure, gave utterance to his enthusiasm. The longer he read the ancient poet, the more interested he became ; and for ten years of his life, at least, he thought "this rude bard of the North the greatest poet that ever existed." His friends had but to start that topic to call from him the most animated discourse, interspersed with many a favorite passage, delivered with his best elocution.

Ossian had other American admirers. Some enthusiast, perhaps, it was who took the name of Selma from Ossian, and gave it to a town in Alabama, since become important, as another reader of poetry fancied the pretty name of Goldsmith's "Deserted Village," and called a village in New York, Auburn. With regard to other familiar authors, the student's preferences were such as we should expect, — Shakspeare, Homer, Molière, Cervantes, and the old English songs and ballads. Copies of songs in his youthful hand are still preserved, — simple old love-ditties that pleased the simple old generations. Fiction had not then become one of the fine arts, and he had little relish for any but the few immortal tales. Don Quixote, his descendants think, was the only fiction he ever read twice.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### COMING OF AGE.

FORTUNATELY for love-sick swains, the affairs of this vulgar world go on, little as they may regard them; and, indeed, there is reason to surmise that our lover recovered his serenity very soon after he knew his fate. In his long letters to Page on their affairs of the heart, there is generally a saving clause like this, "The court is at hand, which I must attend constantly;" or this, "As I suppose you do not use your 'Statutes of Britain,' if you can lend them to me till I can provide myself with a copy, it will infinitely oblige me." During the period of his preparation for the bar, he usually spent the winter at the capital and the summer at home; working at both places, as he did everywhere and always, with a constancy, system, and cheerfulness, of which there have been few examples among the toiling sons of men. It was this that soon enabled him to play groomsman for happier friends with so much gayety, and contemplate John Page's fortunate suit without a sigh. If we possessed nothing of this part of his life but these familiar letters to John Page, wherein love and the Apollo are every thing to him, and Coke appears as an "old dull scoundrel," lying snugly packed in a trunk, we should be utterly deceived.

Letters, indeed, though of eminent value as biographical material, are most misleading, unless we employ other means of information. In this respect they are like newspapers, which are a kind of digest of the letters of the time, and valuable as showing, not what occurred at a given period, but what was then thought to have occurred. The very exhaustion which results from long mental toil may cause a student to write in a strain of reckless audacity or rollicking merriment very unlike his habitual tone, — as people who find themselves in extremely dismal circumstances sometimes aban-

don themselves to hilarity. As to the letters of public or famous persons, are they not generally written under the expectation or dread of ultimate publication? Happily we have other means than these few epistles about Belinda and the girls, of knowing how this student of law passed his time, both at the capital and at home.

He came of age in April, 1764. According to an old British custom, he signalized the year by causing an avenue of trees to be planted near his house. Time has dealt harshly with it; for, after a hundred and ten years, there are only a few battered, decaying trees left, locusts and sycamores. He did not spend this birthday at home, but at Williamsburg, where he and all the other mathematical heads of the place were intent upon a grand operation of measurement. "Every thing," he writes to Page, "is now ready for taking the height of this place above the water of the creeks," — two streams, one a tributary of the James, and the other of the York, both navigable to within a mile of Williamsburg; and he hopes Page will come to take part in the interesting affair, "if his mistress can spare him."

He did not delay in accepting the responsibilities of his position as a leading gentleman of his county. We find him soon in two of his father's offices, — justice of the peace and vestryman of the parish. Not long after coming of age he set on foot a public improvement of importance to his neighborhood. The river Rivanna, that flowed by his land, although a considerable stream, was so obstructed as to be useless for purposes of navigation. Scarcely an empty canoe had ever floated on it to the James. Upon reaching home he examined its channel; and, perceiving that it could be cleared for twenty-two miles without too great expense, he set on foot a subscription for the purpose, which was successful; and, after procuring an act of the legislature authorizing the work, he caused it to be done. The result was, that he and his neighbors used the river thenceforth for carrying down all the produce of their farms. Thus did this colonial squire announce and celebrate his coming of age.

The young man took hold of his business as a farmer in a manner which showed that the genuine culture of the mind is the best preparation for the common as well as for the higher duties of life. In every thing he did he was the educated being. Was there ever a mortal so exact, so punctual, so indefatigable as he, in recording and



tabularizing details? He may be said to have lived pen in hand. He kept a garden-book, a farm-book, a weather-book, a receipt-book, a pocket-expenditure book, and, later, a fee-book; and there was nothing too trivial to be entered in one of them, provided it really had any relation to matters of importance. In the small, neat hand then common in Virginia, he would record in his pocket-book such items as these: "Put into the church-box, 1*d.*;" "Paid a barber, 11*d.*;" "Paid for pins, 4/2;" "Paid for whetting penknife, 4*d.*;" "Paid my part for an express to Williamsburg, 10*s.*;" "Paid Bell for books, 35*s.*;" "Paid postage, 8/3." In his garden-book, for some pages of which we are indebted to Mr. Randall, may be read countless entries like the following: "March 30, sowed a patch of later peas;" "July 15, planted out celery;" "July 22, had the last dish of our spring peas;" "March 31, grafted five French chestnuts into two stocks of common chestnut." His garden-books show that he was a bold and constant experimenter, always eager to try foreign seeds and roots, of which he introduced a great number in the course of his life. They show, also, that he was a close observer and calculator. His weather-book, of which I possess a few pages, given to me by Mr. Randall, is a wonder of neatness and minuteness, — fifty-nine days' weather history on one small page. This is one day's record: "March 24, at 6.30, A.M., ther., 27°; barom. 25°, wind N. W. (force of wind not stated); weather, clear after rain, Blue Ridge and higher parts of S. W., mountain covered with snow. No snow here, but much ice; black frost." Multiply this by fifty-nine, and you have the contents of one page of his weather-book, every word of which, after the lapse of a century, is as clear and legible as diamond type. It is ruled in ten columns, one for each class of entries. This practice of minute record, which remained with him to the end of his days, he began while he was still a student. Nor did he ever content himself with the mere records of items. These were regularly reviewed, added, compared, and utilized in every possible way. It was the most remarkable of all his habits.

Interesting events were occurring in the family at the Shadwell farm-house. During his first year in college one of his sisters was married; and now, soon after his coming of age, another marriage in the family, and one that proved of far more importance to the head of the house, became probable.



Among the most beloved of his schoolfellows was Dabney Carr, a youth destined like himself to the bar. It was that Dabney Carr who fills the place in the annals and the hearts of Virginia which young Josiah Quincy occupies in those of Massachusetts; both having died in the prime of early manhood, at the beginning of the Revolution, after figuring honorably in its opening scenes. At this time, when Jefferson was coming into his duties as head of his family, clearing out his river, and watching his early peas, Dabney Carr was getting into practice as a country lawyer; and when Jefferson was at home, during the long summers, the two friends and fellow-students were inseparable. Two miles from Jefferson's home was an isolated mountain, five hundred and eighty feet high, which he afterwards named Monticello, or The Little Mount, covered then to the summit with the primeval forest. High up on this mountain, in the deepest shade of the luxuriant woods, under an ancient oak of vast size, the young friends constructed a rustic seat; and thither, in the summer mornings, they would ride with their law-books, and pass peaceful days there in study and conversation. Both of them became strongly attached to the spot. They made a compact, that whichever of them died first should be buried by the other under that grand old tree. The compact was fulfilled; and the place was, long after, enclosed and made the burial-place of the Jeffersons; so that both the friends now repose on the spot where they studied together in their youth. It was these happy visits to the mountain that led to its selection, by and by, as the site of Jefferson's abode.

When the young men returned to Shadwell at the close of the day, they returned to a house full of sisters, three of whom were young ladies, twenty-five, twenty-one, nineteen years of age; the work of the day done, the costume of the evening assumed, the evening meal ready, the violin and music in the next room. It was the beautiful and gifted Martha, in her nineteenth year, upon whom Dabney Carr fixed his affections; and in the summer vacation of 1765 Jefferson had the pleasure of seeing them married. The bridegroom had still his fortune to make; and they went away to live, a few miles off, in the next county of Louisa, in a house amusing to them all for its smallness and simplicity. It was one of the triumphant marriages. "This friend of ours, Page," wrote Jefferson, when they had been five years married, "in a very small house, with a table, half a dozen chairs, and one or two servants, is the happiest man in the universe.

Every incident in life he so takes as to render it a source of pleasure. With as much benevolence as the heart of man will hold, but with an utter neglect of the costly apparatus of life, he exhibits to the world a new phenomenon in philosophy, — the Samian sage in the tub of the cynic." To this pleasing picture, Mr. Wirt adds, from tradition current in Virginia, that Dabney Carr was the most formidable rival in oratory that Patrick Henry had among the lawyers of his own age; and that his person was of engaging elegance, and his voice finely toned. In old age Mr. Jefferson wrote of him as the man who united inflexible firmness of principle to the most perfect amiability.

But on this happy wedding-day in July the shadow of death already rested upon the young student's home. His eldest sister, Jane, the best of all his friends hitherto, was approaching her end. She died in October, leaving a void in the home and the heart of her brother that was never quite filled. From the funeral of this beloved sister he was summoned soon, by the opening of the **General Court**, to resume his law-studies at **Williamsburg**.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE LAW-STUDENT.

NOT that he discontinued those studies at home. He used, in after years, to tell his grandchildren, that, when he was a law-student, he kept a clock in his bedroom at Shadwell, on a shelf opposite his bed; and his rule was to get up in the summer mornings as soon as he could see what o'clock it was, and begin his day's work at once. In the winter he rose at five, and went to bed at nine. He did a fair day's work at his law-books every day, even at home, besides attending to company, besides his vigorous gallop on horseback, besides walking to the top of Monticello, besides looking closely to his garden and farm, besides caressing his violin, besides keeping up his Latin, Greek, French, and an extensive system of other reading. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to conclude that at the capital he gave himself to study more completely than at home; and it is there that we can best observe him as a student.

The law is not an easy nut to crack, even in these days, after so much of its husk has been cut away by the Broughams and the Dudley Fields of the legal profession. It will never be easy to apply the eternal principles of right to the "cases" that arise in our complicated human life. But, when Jefferson studied law, generations of ingenious men had spent their lives in investing the science of justice with difficulties, artificial and needless. They had wrought with such success, that if our young justice of the peace had been required to record that John Jones had hanged himself at Williamsburg, he would have been obliged to say, — and I now copy from a Virginia justice's own book, in which his name appears as a subscriber, — that "John Jones, not having the fear of God before his eyes, but being moved and seduced by the instigation of the Devil, at Williamsburg, in a certain wood as aforesaid, standing and being, the said John

Jones, being then and there alone, with a certain hempen cord, of the value of three pence, which he then and there had and held in his hands, and one end thereof then and there put about his neck, and the other end thereof tied about a bough of a certain oak-tree, himself then and there, with the cord aforesaid, voluntarily and feloniously, and of his malice aforethought, hanged and suffocated." This is a specimen of the law jargon of that day, for the retention of which lawyers strove so long. It was the confused, bewildering element in which lawyers worked for centuries.

When the love-sick student opened that "old dull scoundrel, Coke," he opened a work printed in black-letter, and offering as little promise of entertainment or instruction as the outside of a gold-mine does of the wealth within it. The author himself, in his Preface, does not flatter his readers with any hope of pleasure in the perusal.

"I shall desire," he says, "that the learned reader will not conceive any opinion against any part of *this painful and large volume* until he shall have advisedly read over the whole, and diligently searched out and well considered of the several authorities, proofs, and reasons, which we have cited and set down for warrant and confirmation of our opinions throughout this whole work."

To add to a student's perplexity, the passages from Lyttleton, the ancient lawyer whom Coke is "upon," are written in the law-French of Edward III.'s time, plentifully interspersed with Latin equivalents and illustrations. But, fortunately, these passages are short, being mere texts for old Coke's long discourses. In the edition of 1789 Lyttleton's observations on "Fee Simple" occupy a third of a page; but Coke's quaint and subtle treatment of the topic fills thirty-three pages, with a thick-set hedge of references down each page. It would be an excellent month's work for a student to master that one chapter. Tedious and repulsive as all this must have been to a youth the morning after dancing with Belinda at the Apollo, Jefferson learned in due time to value old Coke aright. When, in the midst of his law-studies, the passage of the Stamp Act called attention to the rights of Englishmen, he turned with responsive mind to Coke's learned and cordial comments upon Magna Charta, and recognized a master. He probably did not know that one Roger Williams served Lord Coke as clerk and amanuensis in his youth, and went from his inspiring influence to convey to New England the first notion it ever had of the rights of conscience. What Coke did

in person for Roger Williams and Rhode Island, Jefferson thought he did by his book for himself, for Madison, for Henry, for Dabney Carr, for Virginia, for the United States.

"Coke Lyttleton," he once wrote, "was the universal elementary book of law-students; and a sounder Whig never wrote, nor of profounder learning in the orthodox doctrines of the British Constitution, or in what were called British liberties. Our lawyers were then all Whigs. But when his black-letter text, and uncouth but cunning learning, got out of fashion, and the honeyed Mansfieldism of Blackstone became the student's horn-book, from that moment that profession (the nursery of our Congress) began to slide into Toryism, and nearly all the young brood of lawyers are now of that line. They suppose themselves indeed to be Whigs, because they no longer know what Whiggism or Republicanism means."

When he had made a conquest of Coke, he was desirous of ascending to the sources of English law in the ages preceding the Norman invasion; for, as one of his old friends remarked, he "*hated* superficial knowledge." He perceived that law, like the other sciences, is progressive; and that Coke merely marked a stage of its progress. He used to compare the laws of England, in their course down the ages, with the journey of a traveller, who, when he has accomplished a certain distance, stops, looks back over the route he has pursued, recalls the business he has done, and, before going farther, makes a record of the whole. The most ancient digest of this nature is not Coke, but Bracton, an ecclesiastic of Richard I.'s reign, who wrote in law-Latin, more puzzling than Lyttleton's law-French, to read whom the most learned lawyers of Jefferson's time required a glossary. This work, too, he read and loved, because it was able and luminous, and because it interpreted Magna Charta in the spirit and lifetime of the men who wrote and extorted it. He went even farther back, and conned with keenest scrutiny the book of Alfred's laws, the abrogation of which, by the Conqueror, the English so bitterly lamented. He did not fail to note the "pious fraud" of the ancient clergy in prefixing to Alfred's laws five chapters of the Book of Exodus, the twentieth to the twenty-fourth inclusive, though they contained laws at direct variance with those of the king. For a young vestryman, he seems to have had a sharp scent for pious frauds.

Already we observe, in the few relics of his student life which

have come down to us, indications of the coming Jefferson, the Thomas Jefferson of American history. The most interesting of all those relics is an extract, which he made for a friend in 1814, from a book in which, when he was plodding through Bracton and the older law-books, he was accustomed to enter abstracts. "When I was a student of the law," he wrote to this friend, "not half a century ago, after getting through Coke Lyttleton, whose matter cannot be abridged, I was in the habit of abridging and commonplacing what I read meriting it, and of sometimes mixing my own reflections on the subject." The abstract which is thus introduced is a complete exhibition of Jefferson's mind and mental habits as a student of law. We notice, first of all, that it is numbered "873," which shows us that he studied, as well as lived, pen in hand. Compact as it is with abbreviations ("pl." for plaintiff, "def." for defendant, "v." for versus, "Blackst." for Blackstone), it fills seven and a half octave pages, bristling all over with references, old French and law-Latin, which attest his industry and knowledge. There is a maturity of tone and completeness of execution in the work which would surprise us if it had been done by a lawyer of many years' standing at the bar. But the most remarkable and rare quality which it exhibits is an absolute fearlessness of mind, a loyalty to truth, no matter to what conclusion the evidence may lead, and no matter what array of authorities may have maintained the contrary. In a mind that is immature or unformed, a disregard for authorities may be mere vanity and presumption; but when the intelligence is superior, trained to investigation, and patient of labor, it is the quality to which the whole of the progress of our race is due. An independent, superior mind is the most precious thing that human nature possesses.

This young man found it an axiom of the courts, that the Bible was a part of the common law of the realm; and it was in accordance with this principle that witches were hanged, tithes exacted, and labor forbidden on Sunday. In the long document before us he denied the fact, and traced the error up to its source in one of the ancient law-books, the author of which had converted the words *ancien scripture* (employed in a work still older) into "Holy Scripture." The student proved that the words *ancien scripture*, as employed in the original, meant precisely what they seem to mean, that is, ancient writings, the old records of the Church. Having



thus detected the source of the error, he follows it down through the law-books, until he finds it stated with bluntest simplicity by Sir Matthew Hale, thus: "Christianity is parcel of the laws of England." "Sir Matthew Hale," observes this relentless pursuer of error, "quotes no authority, but rests the statement on his own; which was good in all cases in which his mind received no bias from his bigotry, his superstitions, his visions about sorceries, demons, &c. The power of these over him," continues the student, "is exemplified in his hanging of the witches." From this dictum of Sir Matthew Hale he proceeded to the time when it bore fruit in laws making it criminal to write against Christianity, or to utter words implying disbelief in it. Blackstone incorporated the doctrine into his commentaries, and Mansfield into his decisions. "The essential principles of *revealed* religion," Lord Mansfield had just said on the bench, "are part of the common law;" which carried the doctrine still farther, while leaving the public, as Jefferson indignantly remarked, "to find out, at our peril, what, in the opinion of the judge, and according to the measure of his foot or his faith, *are* those essential principles of revealed religion obligatory on us as part of the common law." And all this without authority to support it; for "this string of authorities," resumes the wrathful student, "all hang on the same hook, a perverted expression of Prisot's."

But this was not enough. He goes back into antiquity, as far as the seventh century, when Christianity was introduced into England, and examines every source of information, from Alfred to Bracton, and can find no trace of formal or informal adoption of Christianity as part of the common law; dwelling particularly upon the obvious fact, that the insertion of the chapters of Exodus among the laws of Alfred was "an awkward monkish fabrication;" and showing that the adoption by Alfred of the Ten Commandments was an express exclusion of the laws in Exodus, which were suited only to the Jews. "The adoption of a part proves the rejection of the rest, as municipal law."

We observe further, in this curious paper, a certain aversion to the clergy as an order, joined to a veneration for the Christian religion. The fact that Christianity is truth, he remarks, does not make it part of the law of England. The Newtonian philosophy is truth, but it is not common law. "Christianity and Newtonianism

*being reason and verity itself*, in the opinion of all but infidels and Cartesians, they are protected under the wings of the common law from the dominion of other sects, but not erected into dominion over them." He illustrates the point further by an allusion to the controversy concerning the use of the lancet in medical practice. He was among the first to reject bleeding as a common remedy, and early forbade his overseers to bleed a negro. An eminent Spanish doctor, he says, affirms that the lancet had slain more than the sword; but Dr. Sangredo maintains, that, with plentiful bleedings and draughts of warm water, every disease can be cured. Both these opinions the common law protected; but neither of them was common law. How palpable all this, he remarks; but "the English judges have piously avoided lifting the veil under which it was shrouded," since "the alliance between Church and State in England has ever made their judges accomplices in the frauds of the clergy, and even bolder than they are." The precepts of the gospel, he adds, were designed, by "their benevolent Author," to bear sway in the realm of conscience, and only there.

Old Virginia had had a world of trouble with matters ecclesiastical and religious; and this is among the reasons why so large a number of young men of Jefferson's day were on ill terms with the Church. Of New-England intolerance the world has heard enough; but few persons of the present day seem to be aware, that, for every outrage committed on the human intellect in New England, a case equally atrocious can be found in the annals of Virginia. The Blue Laws of Connecticut were a forgery; but Virginia once had a code of Blue Laws that were all too real.

When Virginia was settled in 1607, let us remember, nothing was known of the art of colonization. Shiploads of worthless adventurers were poured out upon the banks of the James, and deprived of the usual motives to exertion by being fed from the common stock. During the first five years, there was no such thing as private property in Virginia. Many of the settlers were men of loose character, unused to labor, unacquainted with any useful occupation, — discharged soldiers, and men released from prison, and sent to Virginia to get rid of them. Hence the colony often presented a scene of idleness, waste, and disorder. No returns of value were made to the company at home; and the enterprise, from being highly popular, sunk into disrepute, and became the theme of ridicule and burlesque

It was long before the company in London attributed the ill-success of the colony to its true causes. The soil was fertile, the climate was healthy, the rivers abounded in fish, and the forests in game: why could not a few hundred Englishmen, in the prime and vigor of their days, without women and children to support, maintain themselves in a country for which Nature had done so much? They cast the whole blame upon the colonists themselves, whom they had so unwisely selected, and then deprived of the great natural motive to exertion. Accordingly, in the year 1611, the fourth year of the colony's existence, they sent over a code of laws for the government of the people, as severe, bloody, and inquisitorial, as any on record.

By this code it was death to speak disrespectfully of the king, of the Trinity, "or against the known articles of the Christian faith." Stealing was punished with death. If any man uttered an oath, "taking the name of God in vain," the punishment for the first offence was to be "severe;" for the second, he was to have a "bodkin" (stiletto) thrust through his tongue; and, for the third, he was to be tried by court-martial, and, if found guilty, sentenced to death. If any man treated a clergyman with disrespect, he was to be publicly whipped three times, and ask pardon in church before the whole congregation on three successive Sundays. Every one was obliged to go to church both Sunday morning and afternoon, and attend the Sunday exercise in the Catechism; the penalty for neglect being, for the first offence, the loss of a week's provisions; for the second, whipping, and the loss of provision as well; and, for the third, *death!* A washerwoman who should purposely keep back or change the linen intrusted to her was to be publicly whipped; and a baker who should cheat in the weight of his bread, for the first offence, had his ears cut off; and, for the second, was sent to the galleys for a year. To give a better idea of this astounding code, I will copy the thirty-third law entire, as a fair specimen of its form and spirit:—

"33. There is not one man nor woman in this colony, now present, or hereafter to arrive, but shall give up an account of his and their faith and religion, and repair unto the minister, that, by his conference with them, he may understand and gather whether heretofore they have been sufficiently instructed and catechised in the prin

ciples and grounds of religion ; whose weakness and ignorance herein the minister finding, and advising them, in all love and charity, to repair often unto him, to receive therein a greater measure of knowledge ; if they shall refuse so to repair unto him, and he, the minister, give notice thereof unto the governor, the governor shall cause the offender, for his first time of refusal, to be whipped ; for the second time, to be whipped twice, and to acknowledge his fault upon the sabbath day, in the assembly of the congregation ; and, for the third time, to be whipped every day until he hath made this same acknowledgment, and asked forgiveness for the same ; and shall repair unto the minister to be further instructed as aforesaid ; and upon the sabbath, when the minister shall catechise, and of him demand any question concerning his faith and knowledge, he shall not refuse to make answer, upon the same peril."

The punishments for military offences were extremely cruel ; such as cutting off the right hand, and having neck and heels bound together for thirty successive nights. Not only were the laws severe, but there was ordained a complete and effective system for their enforcement, and for the detection of offences. Take this rule, for example : —

"It shall be the duty of the captain of the watch, half an hour before the divine service morning and evening, to shut the ports and place sentinels : and the bells having tolled the last time, he shall search all the houses of the town, to command every one, of what quality soever, — the sick and hurt excepted, — to repair to church ; after which, he shall accompany all the guards with their arms — himself being last — into the church, and lay the keys before the governor."

And, as if all this were not enough, a prayer of surprising length — it fills more than five octavo pages, closely printed — was sent over from England, and required to be said, morning and evening, by the captain of the guard, or one of his principal officers. This prayer is unique, as I think the reader will allow when he reads the following sentence from it : —

"And whereas we have, by undertaking this plantation, under-

gone the reproofs of the base world, inasmuch as many of our own brethren laugh us to scorn, O Lord! we pray thee, fortify us against this temptation: let Sanballat and Tobias, Papists and players, and such other Amonits and Horonits" — so in the original — "the scum and dregs of the earth, let *them* mock such as help to build up the walls of Jerusalem, and they that be filthy let them be filthy still, and let such swine still wallow in the mire; but let not the rod of the wicked fall upon the lot of the righteous; let not them put forth their hands to such vanity; but let them that fear thee rejoice and be glad in thee, and let them know that it is thou, O Lord! that reignest in England, and unto the ends of the world."

In this strange way the prayer rambles on, page after page, until at length it ends with an outburst of mingled patriotic and sectarian feeling: —

"Lord, bless England, our sweet, native country; save it from Popery, this land from heathenism, and both from Atheism."

This cruel code, which combined the harshest features of the Spartan and Mosaic laws, was translated from the martial law of Holland, with the addition of some rules which originated in Puritan England. It does not appear that it made the colonists more provident, or the colony more profitable; for we still read in the old records of the neglect to plant corn, and of the propensity of many settlers to pass their time in sport. One of the best men in the colony, an old soldier and a good citizen, entered into a conspiracy with some of the earliest comers to overthrow the government, and abrogate these cruel laws. The plot was detected, and the ringleader executed. On another occasion, five men, unable to endure the system, formed a plan for running away to the Spanish colony in Florida, which they supposed they could reach in five days. This, also, was a capital offence by the new code, and I presume it was capitally punished.

Nor did Virginia escape the witchcraft mania of a later day. In fact, the history of the Province contains abundant explanation of the peculiar, the intense, the unappeasable hatred of ecclesiastical domination which raged in the souls of her more thoughtful sons of Jefferson's generation. Young as he was, it could not have been



difficult for him to discover the unsuitableness of a union of Church and State to the circumstances of modern communities; for the evil results of the union in Virginia were never so apparent as just then, when he was studying law, from 1762 to 1767. The clergy, indeed, had fallen into contempt; or, as Bishop Meade expresses it, had become "the laughing-stock" of the colony. Nor does the bishop fall into the usual error of attributing this to the "Twopenny Quarrel" between the clergy and the vestrymen, of which Mr. Wirt gives us so interesting an account in his *Life of Patrick Henry*. In that dispute, the clergy had both law and justice on their side, as Mr. Wirt avows, while exulting in his orator's victory over both. As Patrick Henry was always Jefferson's guest when he came to Williamsburg, doubtless our student heard his merry friend's own version of that affair; and, being himself a vestryman and a young man, may have shared the general joy at the defeat of the clergy.

The clergymen of Virginia were in a position so false and demoralizing, that, as a body, they could not but become indolent and dissolute. The law gave them sixteen thousand pounds of tobacco per annum; which might be worth two hundred pounds a year, if the quality were high, and the incumbent lucky and skilful in selling it; or it might be worth sixty pounds a year, if the quality were low and the crop superabundant. They were further allowed by law four hundred pounds of tobacco, or forty shillings, for preaching a funeral sermon; two hundred pounds of tobacco for a marriage by license; fifty for a marriage by banns; and a fee for baptism, which custom appears to have fixed at a guinea for the rich, and five shillings for others. To these revenues was added a glebe sufficient for a good farm, which a liberal vestry, we are told, were sometimes kind enough to "stock" with one or two families of slaves. The clergy, appointed without much regard to their fitness, were subjected to little supervision. The parishes were of great extent, stretching sometimes as much as thirty miles along a river, and yet so thinly inhabited that they could scarcely furnish a congregation; and such was the scarcity of candidates, that a commissary hesitated to suspend a clergyman, even for notorious vice, because the parish might remain vacant for two or three years.

Thus circumstanced, each clergyman behaved according to his disposition. A few of them, men of learning and virtue, did their duty, and eked out their slender and changing incomes by taking pupils;



and it was these few who saved civilization in the colony. Others, men of rude energy and executive force, pushed the cultivation of their glebes, bought more slaves, raised more tobacco, speculated sometimes in *both*, grew rich, reduced their parish duty to the minimum, and performed that minimum with haste and formality. But the greater number lived as idle hangers-on of the wealthier houses, assisting their fellow-idlers, the planters, to kill time and run through their estates, not always dissolute, but easy-going, self-indulgent, good-natured men of the world. It was not very uncommon for the clergyman of a parish to be president of its jockey-club, and personally assist in the details of the race-course, such as weighing the men and timing the horses. It was common for clergymen to ride after the hounds in fox-hunting; and they were as apt to nail the trophy of the day's chase to their stable-door as any other men. The names of clergymen figured among the patrons of balls, and they were rather noted for their skill at cards. All of which was just as proper for clergymen as for planters, and more necessary. But in those days the bottle was the vitiating accompaniment of every innocent delight. The race must end in a dinner, and the dinner must end under the table. The day's hunt must be followed by a night's debauch. The christening of a child must be the pretext for a day's revel. This single element of mischief converted all festal days, all honest mirth, all joyous recreation, into injury, shame, and ruin. Nothing can make any headway against the potency of wine; for it suspends the operation of that within us which enables us to resist, and finally destroys it. It vitiates the texture of the brain itself, the seat of life, and the citadel of all the superior forces. And the wine which flowed so freely at the planters' tables was Madeira, strongest of wines, so enriched by time and two long voyages, that the uncorking of one bottle filled a large house with fragrance.

The tales we read of the clergy of Old Virginia stagger belief, though it is clergymen who report them. The reverend rector of Wicomico, we read, not approving the bread placed upon the communion-table, cried out from the altar, in the midst of the service, to one of his church-wardens, "George, this bread is not fit for a dog." We read of another who was invited after church to dinner at a planter's house, where he drank so much that he had to be tied in his gig, and a servant sent to lead his horse home. One jolly parson comes down to us reeling up and down the porch of a tavern, bawling

to the passers-by to come and drink with him. Another lives in the memory of his county because he fought a duel within sight of the church in which he had formerly officiated. Another is remembered as the jovial hunter who died cheering on the hounds to the chase. One is spoken of as pocketing annually a hundred dollars, the revenue of a legacy, for preaching four sermons a year against atheism, gambling, racing, and swearing, though himself a notorious swearer, racer, and gambler. Another is the hero of a story, that, one day, parson and vestry differed in opinion, quarrelled, and came to blows. The parson, a giant in strength, put them to flight. Not content with his victory, he renewed the battle on Sunday morning in church, when, from the vantage-ground of the pulpit, he hurled at them this text from Nehemiah: "And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair;" which had the keen sting of literal truth.

One old clergyman is remembered as staggering towards the altar at the time of communion, when the rector, who was officiating, ordered him back to his seat. The monthly dinners of the clergy have not yet passed out of mind, to which men would ride for thirty or forty miles, and revel far into the night. The court records of Hampton show that a clergyman of that parish was presented by the grand jury for drunkenness, and on another occasion for slander; and that, when before the court, he behaved with such insolence as to be committed to prison for contempt. Bishop Meade of Virginia, to whom the reader is indebted for several of these incidents, relates that a lady once came to one of his clergymen, asking re-baptism, as she had doubts whether the christening of her infancy was valid. The clergyman who performed the ceremony, she said, dined with her father that day; and, after dinner, her father won back from the priest at cards the very guinea he had paid him before dinner as his baptismal fee.

The Bishop of London, hearing of these scandals, would sometimes urge his commissary, the president of William and Mary College, to proceed against the clergy known to be drunkards. The difficulty of proof was submitted to the bishop as an excuse for not complying with his commands. At what point of intoxication does it become a scandal? How shall we decide when a clergyman has been drunk enough for ecclesiastical censure? The Bishop of London sent over directions on this point. He thought that if a clergyman sat an

hour or more with a company that were drinking strong drink, — not wine, — and took the cup as it went the rounds of the table, and drank the healths proposed, like the rest of the company. there was ground of proceedings. He was also of opinion that “striking and challenging, or threatening to fight, or laying aside any of his garments for that purpose, staggering, reeling, vomiting, incoherent, impertinent, obscene, or rude talking,” was sufficient to justify judges in deciding that “the minister’s behavior at such a time was scandalous, indecent, unbecoming the gravity of a minister.” For many years, too, as before observed, the commissary-president was himself too fond of the bottle to prosecute a drunken clergyman without calling attention to his own habits.

Old Virginia was a kind of caricature of Old England in every thing. As in England this state of things in the Church called forth Wesley and Whitefield; so in Virginia, says John Burk, “swarms of Methodists, Moravians, and New-Light Presbyterians” came over the border from Pennsylvania, and pervaded the colony, “propagating their doctrines with all the ardor and vehemency of gesture and boldness of denunciation which mark the first movements of a new sect in religion.” It was during the boyhood of Jefferson that these “swarms” are represented to have darkened the air; and he was old enough to observe the beginnings of the bitter conflict between the New Lights (Henry Clay’s father was one of them) and the royal government. Burk, who was a new light of another description, and in full accord with Jefferson in his “disestablishment” measures of a later day, informs posterity, that when these swarms descended upon Virginia, “government had not yet learned the secret of subduing the frenzy of religious bigotry by suffering it to waste its powers, and perish by convulsions of its own exciting.” Nor was the government alone in fault. Many of Jefferson’s staunchest supporters in the measures by which the domination of one sect was terminated gave the governor at this period moral and official support in silencing the dissenting ministers.

His own mind, we may be sure, did not arrive at the simple solution of this problem all at once. Possibly the young vestryman may have himself regarded the swarms as furnishing occasion for the interference of a young justice of the peace. The vestryman’s oath, then used in Virginia, was stringent enough: —

“I, Thomas Jefferson, as I do acknowledge myself a true son of the Church of England, so I do believe the articles of faith therein professed, and do oblige myself to be conformable to the doctrine and discipline therein taught and established; and that, as a vestryman of this church, I will well and truly perform my duty therein, being directed by the laws and customs of this country and the canons of the Church of England, so far as they will suit our present capacity; and this I shall sincerely do, according to the best of my knowledge, skill, and cunning, without fear, favor, or partiality; and so help me God.”

The time came, as most readers know, when he could not have taken this oath, though he never ceased to perform the duties which it indicates. As his mind matured, his religion reduced itself to two articles, — belief in God, and veneration for the character and precepts of Jesus Christ; which has been, during the last century and a half, a kind of established religion with minds of the cast and grade of his. But he ever lived in the most perfect accord with neighbors who believed more than he could, giving freely of his time, money, and skill to promote their religious objects. It was long before Charlottesville became village enough to have a church; and every preacher that came along occupied the court-house, a small, rude edifice, without seats for auditors. Old men of the neighborhood used to remember young Jefferson riding over to the service on Sunday morning, with a small folding-chair of his own contriving hung to his saddle, upon which he sat in the court-room. By and by, when the Episcopalians were ready to build their church, he drew the plan; and the edifice which resulted, Bishop Meade testifies, was better adapted to the purposes of a church than many modern buildings much more costly. This church still stands.

We may say, therefore, that if the church of his youth and early manhood did not materially assist in the formation of his character, it did not place obstacles in the way of his mental growth. He was unrestricted in his reading. It would not have been so if he had come to college twenty years sooner. Bishop Meade mentions that when, about 1740, “the first infidel book was imported into Virginia,” it created such excitement that the governor and president of the college wrote to the authorities in England about

it. Governor Fauquier would not have taken so much trouble. They had such works in Boston as early as 1720, as Franklin records, who read and was convinced by them. Jefferson, when a law-student, could not have had many books at Williamsburg; but we know that among his books was an edition of Hume's Essays, because he speaks of having lent two of the volumes to Patrick Henry. Few young men of Jefferson's cast of mind have ever read Hume's "Essay on Miracles" without being much influenced by it, at least for a time.

Meanwhile he continued his study of the law with excessive ardor, including in his preparation for the bar a vast range of subjects. Indeed, he went to a rash and perilous excess in study. *He* bore it with impunity, because he inherited a constitution exceptionally strong, because he had horses at command, because, during his long vacations at home, he was obliged to attend to his farms and improvements. But his friend Madison, led astray by his example and precepts, and pursuing his education at Princeton, far from horse and home, nearly killed himself with study, and could not recover his health for many years. Indeed, though among the very best of American citizens, and of infinite value to his country when his country most needed its best citizens, James Madison was never quite the *man* he might have been if he had studied less and played more at college. The only fault Jefferson could ever see in this most-honored and most-trusted of all the friends of his life, was a certain lack of power to stand firm against vehement opposition, — a certain lack of stanch, indomitable manhood, — caused, perhaps, by the waste of the capital stock of his vitality at Princeton. Thus Peel was made sensitive to the shallow sarcasm of Disraeli. Thus valedictory men pass from the Commencement platform into oblivion. Thus to-day, throughout Christendom, Ignorance is master, and Knowledge is its hireling; Ignorance controls capital, and Knowledge lives on wages; Ignorance rides in a carriage, and Knowledge trudges on foot; Ignorance edits, and Knowledge writes; the Counting-room orders, and the Sanctum obeys.

Before Jefferson had finished his law-studies, his devotion to study drew admiring eyes upon him. Young men asked his advice as to what they should read, and parents consulted him concerning the education of their sons. He was asked to suggest a course for



Madison, when Madison was seventeen and himself twenty-three. He had already written an outline for a young man about to enter upon the study of the law; and we may learn from that both what he practised himself, and what he laid down for Madison, Monroe, and other friends.

The student, duly prepared for the study of the law by mastering Latin and French, and by a course of those "peculiarly engaging and delightful" branches, natural philosophy and mathematics, must divide each day into portions, and assign to each portion the studies most proper for it. *Until* eight in the morning he should confine himself to natural philosophy, morals, and religion; reading treatises on astronomy, chemistry, anatomy, agriculture, botany, international law, moral philosophy, and metaphysics. Religion, during these early morning hours, was to be considered under two heads,—“natural religion” and “religion sectarian.” For information concerning sectarian religion, the student was advised to apply to the following sources: “Bible; New Testament; commentaries on them by Middleton in his works, and by Priestley in his ‘Corruption of Christianity,’ and ‘Early Opinions of Christ;’ the sermons of Sterne, Massillon, and Bourdaloue.” From eight to twelve he was to read law, and condense cases, “never using two words where one will do.” From twelve to one, he was advised to “read politics,” in Montesquieu, Locke, Priestley, Malthus, and the Parliamentary Debates. In the afternoon he was to relieve his mind with history; and, when evening closed in, he might regale himself with literature, criticism, rhetoric, and oratory. No, not regale himself, but sit down to a hard and long evening’s work, as Jefferson did himself, keeping it up sometimes till two in the morning. The student was recommended in the evening to write criticisms of the books he read, to analyze the orations of Demosthenes and Cicero, to read good English orations and pleadings with closest attention to the secrets of their excellence, to compose original essays, and to plead imaginary causes with a friend. —

This was cram, not education. It might make a perfect chief clerk, but not a great minister. It would have diminished Jefferson, but for his fiddle, his horses, his farms, his journeys, and his minuets at the Apollo. Perhaps, however, as he knew his young friends better than we do, he was aware that most of them required no urging to take rest and recreation. Madison read this paper too liter-



ally, without putting in the saving clauses; and Monroe was saved by the summons to arms, which, in 1775, drew him and most of his fellow-students from William and Mary to the sterner discipline of Cambridge, where man could not, just then, be regarded as a creature composed of intellect alone.

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## CHAPTER X.

### STAMP-ACT SCENES.

PASSING events are an important educating force to attentive minds. Perhaps they educate us more than all things else, for we cannot easily get off our lesson for a single day; and, once in a generation, occur electric events which rouse and inform the minds of whole nations at once. What person in the United States so unteachably dull as to have been no more of a human being in 1865 than he was in 1861! But, in all recent history, I know of no example so striking of the greater good that results from great evil, than the stamp-act agitation of 1764 to 1766, which began the de-colonization — the independent public life — of North America. It so befell that our student was in the thick of events at the time. It was the Stamp Act which changed old Coke's comments on Magna Charta from dead law into living gospel; and, what the Stamp Act did for Jefferson's mind, it did for the mind of his country. It converted the fundamental principles of right into the familiar things of daily speech, and infused the essence of old Coke into a million minds that never heard his name. He had watched with interest, as he himself records, the series of events by which imperial Chatham had given Great Britain her opportunity of empire by making her supreme in North America; and he was now to follow, with interest more intense and more intelligent, the events by which an ignorant king and a corrupt ruling class threw England's magnificent chance away, and caused her to lapse into an island again.

His friend, Patrick Henry, had been coming and going during these student years; dropping in when the General Court met in the autumn, and riding homeward, with a book or two of Jefferson's in his saddle-bags, when the court adjourned over till the spring;

then returning with the books unread. The wondrous eloquence which he had displayed in the Parsons Case in December, 1763, does not seem to have been generally known in Williamsburg in 1764; for he moved about the streets and public places unrecognized, though not unmarked. It would not have been extraordinary if our young student had been a little ashamed of his oddity of a guest as they walked together towards the Capitol, at the time when the young ladies were abroad, — Sukey Potter, Betsy Moore, Judy Burwell, and the rest; for Henry's dress was coarse, worn, and countrified, and he walked with such an air of thoughtless unconcern, that he was taken by some for an idiot. But he had a cause to plead that winter; and when he sat down he had become "Mr. Henry" to all Williamsburg. You will observe in the memorials of Old Virginia, from 1765 to 1800, that, whoever else may be named without a prefix of honor, this "forest-born Demosthenes," as Byron styled him, is generally styled *Mr. Henry*. To Washington, to Jefferson, to Madison, to all that circle of eminent men, he ever remained "Mr. Henry." On that day in 1764 he gave such an exhibition of his power, that, during the next session of the House of Burgesses, a vacancy was made for him, and he was elected to a seat. The up-country yeomen, whose idol he had become, gladly gave their votes to such a man, when the Stamp Act was expected to be a topic of debate.

And so, in May, 1765, the new member was in Williamsburg to take his seat, a guest again of his young friend Jefferson. He sat, day after day, waiting for some of the older members to open the subject. But no one seemed to know just what to do. A year before the House had gently denied the right of Parliament to tax the colonies, and softly remonstrated against the threatened measure; but as the act had been passed, in spite of their objections, what more could a loyal colony do? No one thought of formal resistance, and remonstrance had failed. What else? What next? However frequently the two friends may have conversed upon this perplexity, it was Patrick Henry, who, to use his own words, "alone, unadvised, and unassisted," hit upon the proper expedient.

Only three days of the session remained. On the blank leaf of an old Coke upon Lyttleton — perhaps Jefferson's own copy — the new member wrote his celebrated five resolutions, of this purport: We, Englishmen, living in America, have all the rights of Englishmen living in England; the chief of which is, that we can only be

taxed by our own representatives; and any attempt to tax us otherwise menaces British liberty on both continents. In all probability, Jefferson knew that something of the kind was intended on that memorable day, for he was present in the House. There was no gallery then, nor any other provision for spectators; but there could be no objection to the friend and relative of so many members standing in the doorway between the lobby and the chamber; and there he took his stand. He saw his tall, gaunt, coarsely-attired guest rise in his awkward way, and break with stammering tongue the SILENCE which had brooded over the loudest debates, as week after week of the session had passed. He observed, and felt too, the thrill which ran through the House at the mere introduction of a subject with which every mind was surcharged, and marked the rising tide of feeling as the reading of the resolutions went on, until the climax of audacity was reached in the last clause of the last. How moderate, how tame, the words seem to us! "Every attempt to invest such power (of taxation) in any person or persons whatever, other than the General Assembly aforesaid, has a manifest tendency to destroy British and American freedom." Ravishing words to the Whig members from Albemarle and the other western counties. Sound as old Coke himself, in the judgment of our spell-bound listener in the doorway. Words of fearful import to the Tory lords of the eastern counties. Not approved, as yet, by George Wythe, nor by Peyton Randolph, whom the student held in so much honor.

When the reading was finished, he heard his friend utter the opening sentences of his speech, with faltering tongue as usual, and giving little promise of the strains that were to follow. But it was the nature of this great genius, as of all genius, to rise to the occasion. Soon Jefferson saw him stand erect, and, swinging free of all impediments, launch into the tide of his oration; every eye captivated by the large and sweeping grace of his gesticulation; every ear charmed with the swelling music of his voice; every mind thrilled or stung by the vivid epigrams into which he condensed his opinions. He never had a listener so formed to be held captive by him as the student at the lobby door, who, as a boy, had found the oratory of the Indian chief so impressive, and could not now resist a slurring translation of Ossian's majestic phrases. After the lapse of fifty-nine years, he still spoke of this great day with enthusiasm, and described anew the closing moment of Henry's speech, when the

orator, interrupted by cries of treason, uttered the well-known words of defiance, "If this be treason, make the most of it!"

The debate which followed Mr. Henry's opening speech, was, as Jefferson has recorded, "most bloody." It is impossible for a reader of this generation to conceive the mixture of fondness, pride, and veneration with which these colonists regarded the mother country, its parliament and king, its church and its literature, and all the glorious names and events of its history. Whig as Jefferson was by nature and conviction, he could not give up England as long as there was any hope of a just union with her. What, then, must have been the feelings of the Tories of the House, — Tories by nature and by party, — upon hearing this yeoman from the west speak of the natural rights of man in the spirit of a Sidney, and use language in reference to the king which sounded to them like the prelude to an assassin's stab? They had to make a stand, too, for their position as leaders of the House, unquestioned for a century. To the matter of the resolutions no one objected. All that Wythe, Pendleton, Bland, and Peyton Randolph could urge against them was, that they were unbecoming and unnecessary. The House had already remonstrated without effect, and it became a loyal people to submit. "Torrents of sublime eloquence" from Patrick Henry, as Jefferson observes, swept away their arguments; and the resolutions were carried; the last one, however, by only a single voice. Standing in the door-way, the student watched the taking of the vote on the last resolution, upon which the contest had been hottest. When the result had been declared, Peyton Randolph, the king's attorney-general, brushed past him, saying, as he entered the lobby, "By God! I would have given five hundred guineas for a single vote."

Doubtless the young gentlemen went home exulting. Patrick Henry, unused to the artifices of legislation, and always impatient of detail, supposing now that the work for which he had come to Williamsburg was done, mounted that very evening and rode away. Jefferson, perhaps, was not too sure of this; for the next morning some time before the hour of meeting, he was again at the Capitol, and in the Burgesses' Chamber. His uncle, Colonel Peter Randolph, one of the Tory members, came in, and, sitting down at the clerical table, began to turn over the journals of the House. He had a recollection, he said, of a resolution of the House, many years ago, having been *expunged*! He was trying to find the record of the

transaction. He wanted a precedent. The student of law looked over his shoulder, as he turned the leaves; a group of members standing near, in trepidation at the thought of yesterday's doings. The House-bell rang; the House convened; the student resumed his stand in the doorway. A motion was made to expunge the last resolution of yesterday's series; and, in the absence of the mighty orator whose eloquence had yesterday made the dull intelligent and the timid brave, the motion was carried, and the resolution was expunged.

We hear no more from Jefferson of his making the tour of Europe, after the Stamp Act. Perhaps, although the odious measure was repealed a year after its passage, to the boundless joy of the people, these events lessened his desire to visit the land of his forefathers. He begins now to speak with some asperity of the Tory leaders in England. In abstracting cases, he detects the political bias of the judge in his rulings. As Braddock's defeat revealed to the colonists that red-coats were not invincible, so did the Stamp Act break the enchantment of distance, and show some of them that British judges and law-makers could be subservient to power. Nor was he rich enough for such a luxury as foreign travel, and by this time he must have discovered the fact. His farms did not yield an income of more than four hundred pounds sterling per annum.

But a young gentleman may take a little recreation in travel, without going to the ends of the earth. The system of inoculation for the small-pox was still a topic with physicians and persons interested in medical science. Jefferson was, all his life, a curious inquirer in such subjects; and he became, by and by, a not unskilful surgeon, — one who could, upon an emergency, sew up an ugly wound, or set a negro's broken leg. The delicacy of touch, and dexterity of hand, that he possessed, joined to his patience in investigation and fearlessness of precedent, could have made him a master in surgery. Convinced of the utility of inoculation, then performed by Dr. Shippen of Philadelphia, he availed himself of this pretext, in the spring of 1766, to take a journey northward, and see something of the world that lay beyond the boundaries of Virginia. At twenty-three he had never been out of his native Province.

This journey he made, not on horseback, but in a one-horse chaise. Readers familiar with the road will not be at a loss to imagine the time he must have had in crossing so many wide and brimming



rivers over which we now thunder with so much ease, — the York, Pamunkey, Rappahannock, Potomac, Pawtuxent, Patapsco, Susquehanna, Delaware, Passaic, Hackensack, and Hudson, without counting fifty smaller streams, and those wide shallows that indent the shores of Chesapeake Bay, — all to be forded, or crossed in a ferry-boat propelled by poles or oars. It argues ill for his habits that his horse ran away with him twice the first day, for the animal evidently wanted exercise. The second he rode in a drenching rain from morning till night, without coming to a habitation in which he could take shelter. The third day, in fording the swollen Pamunkey, he was nearly drowned. After getting beyond this river, he came to a more inhabited region, where he visited old college friends at their homes, to his great content. At Annapolis, the capital of Maryland, then a town of a thousand inhabitants, and of somewhat more importance than Williamsburg, he found the people in the midst of public rejoicings over the repeal of the Stamp Act. The Maryland Assembly was in session. It was no such courteous and dignified body, he told his friend Page, as the House of Burgesses of Virginia. Business was conducted in a more informal manner; so loosely, in fact, as to move the young Virginian to laughter. He was struck, however, with the beauty and convenience of the situation, — “the largest vessels, those of four hundred hogsheads, being able to brush against the sides of the dock.”

At Philadelphia the inoculation was performed. When he recovered, he continued his journey to the clean, crooked, little, cobblestoned, half-Dutch city, so green and shady, that covered the last mile of beautiful Manhattan Island, — a place then of nearly twenty thousand inhabitants. Of his stay in New York we know only one trifling fact. He chanced to take lodgings in a house where a young gentleman of his own age from Massachusetts, named Elbridge Gerry, was staying. They became acquainted with one another well enough to remember the chance meeting, when, nine years after, they met in “the Congress” at Philadelphia. They remained friends and political allies for fifty years. It was perhaps on his return from this journey that an incident occurred, which, in his old age, he used to relate with so much glee. On his way through Virginia he stopped at a tavern, the landlady of which had just returned from the funeral of a young man of that neighborhood, whom she extolled and lamented with much feeling. “But, Mr. Jefferson,” said she

“we have the consolation of knowing that every thing was done for him that could be done. He was bled no less than six and twenty times.”

And so sped these happy, laborious years of preparation for the bar. Early in the year 1767, about the time of his twenty-fourth birthday, he was admitted; and he began at once the practice of his profession. He had not to wait for business. One of his existing account-books shows, that, in this **first year** of his practice, he was employed in sixty-eight cases before the **General Court of the Province**, besides county and office business.

## CHAPTER XI.

### LAWYERS IN OLD VIRGINIA.

HE was admitted to the bar at a fortunate time for a profession that thrives most when the community has ceased to thrive.

During the flush period, when Virginia seemed to be so flourishing because she was living on her capital, — the virgin soil of the river valleys, — the people indulged to the full that antipathy to lawyers which appears natural to the rustic mind. Far back in Charles I.'s reign, in 1642, the Assembly had passed a law, that "all mercenary attorneys be wholly expelled" from the courts of Virginia; meaning by "mercenary attorneys," *paid* attorneys. The reason assigned for this act was, that "many troublesome suits are multiplied by the unskilfulness and covetousness of attorneys, who have more intended their own profit and their inordinate lucre than the good and benefit of their clients." The very tautologies of this law seem to betray the trembling eagerness of the honest burghers who drew it.

For nearly eleven years not a lawyer in Virginia could lawfully take a fee for serving a client in court. But, of course, the rogues evaded the act; and this the Assembly tried to prevent by enacting a supplement, to the effect that no attorney should "take *any* recompense, directly or indirectly," for *any* legal service; but, in case a judge should perceive that a man was likely to lose his cause merely by his inability to plead it, he was "to appoint some fitt man out of the people" to plead it for him, who was to be paid such a fee as the court should deem just. The plan was plausible, but it did not answer. The act was repealed; and such attorneys as were nencensed were bound by a stringent oath not to oppress clients nor foment suits. But no sooner were the lawyers in the courts again, than they behaved in such a way as to become more odious than

ever. Then the House of Burgesses — in 1657, his Highness, Oliver Cromwell, being Lord Protector — took up the subject anew, and debated this question: "Shall we attempt a regulation or totall ejection of lawyers?" The House decided for "totall ejection," and framed a law which they thought would be too much even for a lawyer's cunning to evade: "Noe person or persons within this colony, either lawyers or any other," shall plead for pay in a court, nor give counsel in any cause or controversy, for any kind of compensation, under a penalty of five thousand pounds of tobacco for every offence; "and because the breakers thereof, through their subtilly cannot easily be discerned," every man pleading for another must take an oath that he is not "a breaker of the act."

But the governor and council had a veto on the acts of the Assembly. It reveals to us the intensity of the odium in which lawyers were held, that the governor and council did not directly veto so preposterous a law, but attempted to parry it by sending this message: "The governor and council will consent to this proposition so farr as it shall be agreeable to Magna Charta." The Assembly made "humble reply," that they had considered Magna Charta, but found nothing therein applicable to the case; and as lawyers had been kept out of the courts for more than ten years, by the act of a former House, "wee humbly conceive that wee have no less power" to eject them again. The humble reply seems to have convinced the governor and council; for the law appears in the statutes, and remained in force for twenty-three years!

But our complicated modern world cannot do without lawyers, not even simple, rustic Old Virginia. And accordingly in 1680, thirty-second of Charles II., we find a House of Burgesses — farmers to a man — enacting the lawyers back again, and giving good reasons therefore: "Whereas all courts in this country are many tymes hindered and troubled in their judicial proceedings by the impertinent discourses of many busy and ignorant men, who will pretend to assist their friend in the business, and to clear the matter more plainly to the court, although never desired or requested thereunto by the person whome they pretended to assist, and many tymes to the destruction of his cause, and the great trouble and hindrance of the court; for prevention whereof to the future, Bee it enacted," that no one shall in future presume to plead in any court of this colony without license "first obtained and had," under penalties of six

hundred or of two thousand pounds of tobacco, according to the dignity of the court in which the offence shall have been committed.

This act terminated a controversy which had lasted thirty-eight years; and the Assembly, having admitted lawyers, fixed their compensation at rates which were meant to be liberal. For conducting a cause in the chief court of the colony an attorney was allowed to charge five hundred pounds of tobacco, and in the county courts, one hundred and fifty pounds, — splendid compensation, if tobacco could only have been kept up to a shilling a pound.

When John Rolfe, not yet husband of Pocahontas, planted the first tobacco seed in Jamestown, in 1612, good tobacco sold in London docks at five shillings a pound, or two hundred and fifty pounds sterling for a hogshead of a thousand pounds' weight. Fatal facility of money-making! It was this that diverted all labor, capital, and enterprise into one channel, and caused that first shipload of negroes in the James River to be so welcome. The planter could have but one object, — to get more slaves in order to raise more tobacco. Hence, the price was ever on the decline, drooping first from shillings to pence, and then going down the scale of pence, until it remained for some years at an average of about two pence a pound in Virginia, and three pence in London. In Virginia, it often fell below two pence; as, during brief periods of scarcity, it would rise to six pence and seven pence. A fee of five hundred pounds of tobacco, from 1680 to 1750, might average about three guineas; and a fee of one hundred and fifty pounds of tobacco, something less than one guinea. These sums, small as they seem to us, sufficed to create the profession of the law in Virginia, and to draw into it a few of the younger sons of great planters, and the eldest sons of western yeomen.

But these fees were the highest that could be charged. It is evident from Jefferson's own books, that his usual compensation was somewhat less; for he records that, during his first year at the bar, 1767, he was employed in sixty-eight cases before the General Court, — business that must have brought with it many cases in county courts; but his entire emolument for the year was a little more than two hundred pounds sterling; or in the currency of Virginia, as set down by himself with Jeffersonian exactness, £293. 4s. 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. From the accounts of later years, I should conclude that his cases, one with another, yielded him about one pound ster-

ling profit; for the number of his cases and the number of pounds of his law income are never far from equal, in the busier years of his practice. Translating the pounds of that period into the dollars of this, it was as though a lawyer of the present day should receive fifty dollars for arguing a cause before the Supreme Court of the United States, ten dollars for a cause before a local court, two dollars for a verbal opinion, and five for a written one. As late as 1792, when lawyers' fees were again fixed by law in Virginia, the most eminent lawyer in the State could not legally charge, for the most elaborate written opinion on the most abstruse question relating to real estate, more than sixteen dollars and sixty-six cents; and when lawyers attended at a distance from their homes, they could charge for their time not more than three dollars and fifty-eight cents per day. Well might Mr. Webster say, that, in that age, lawye "worked hard, lived well, and died poor."

Nevertheless, it was a good time for a lawyer when Jefferson began to practise; for he could make up for the smallness of his fees by the number of his cases. Everybody almost was in law. After a hundred years of profusion, pay-day, postponed by mortgage and other devices, was at hand; and the shadow of coming ruin darkened many a stately house.

Old Virginia is a pathetic chapter in Political Economy. *Old Virginia*, indeed! She reached decrepitude while contemporary communities were enjoying the first vigor of youth; while New York was executing the task which Virginia's George Washington had suggested and foretold, that of connecting the waters of the great West with the ocean; while New England was careering gayly over the sea, following the whale to his most distant retreat, and feeding belligerent nations with her superabundance. One little century of seeming prosperity; three generations of spend-thrifts; then the lawyer and the sheriff! Nothing was invested, nothing was saved for the future. There were no manufactures, no commerce, no towns, no internal trade, no great middle class. As fast as that virgin richness of soil could be converted into tobacco, and sold in London docks, the proceeds were expended in vast, ugly mansions, heavy furniture, costly apparel, Madeira wine, fine horses, huge coaches, and more slaves. The planters lived as though virgin soil were revenue, not capital. They tried to maintain in Virginia the lordly style of English grandees, *without* any Birming-



ham, Staffordshire, Sheffield, or London docks, to pay for it. Their short-lived prosperity consisted of three elements, — virgin soil, low-priced slaves, high-priced tobacco. The virgin soil was rapidly exhausted; the price of negroes was always on the increase; and the price of tobacco was always tending downward. Their sole chance of founding a stable commonwealth was to invest the proceeds of their tobacco in something that would absorb their labor and yield them profit when the soil would no longer produce tobacco.

But their laborers were ignorant slaves, the possession of whom destroyed their energy, swelled their pride, and dulled their understandings. Virginia's case was hopeless from the day on which that Dutch ship landed the first twenty slaves; and, when the time of reckoning came, the people had nothing to show for their long occupation of one of the finest estates in the world, except great hordes of negroes, breeding with the rapidity of rabbits; upon whose annual increase Virginia subsisted, until the most glorious and beneficial of all wars set the white race free, and gave Virginia her second opportunity.

All this was nobody's fault. It was a combination of circumstances against which the unenlightened human nature of that period could not possibly have made head. Few men saw any thing wrong in slavery. No man knew much about the laws that control the prosperity of States. No man understood the science of agriculture. Every one with whom those proud and thoughtless planters dealt plundered them; and the mother country discouraged every attempt of the colonists to manufacture their own supplies. There were so many charges upon tobacco, in its course from the planter's packing-house to the consumer's pipe, that it was no very uncommon thing, in dull years, for the planter to receive from his agent in London, in return for his hogsheads of tobacco, not a pleasant sum of money, nor even a box of clothes, but a bill of charges which the price of the tobacco had not covered. One of the hardships of which the clergy complained was, that they did not "dare" to send their tobacco to London, for fear of being brought in debt by it, but had to sell it on the spot to speculators much below the London price. The old Virginia laws and records so abound in tobacco information, that we can follow a hogshead of tobacco from its native plantation on the James to the shop of the tobacconist in London.

In the absence of farm vehicles, — many planters who kept a coach

had no wagons, — each hogshead was attached to a pair of shafts with a horse between them, and “lled” to a shed on the bank of the stream. When a ship arrived in the river from London, it anchored opposite each plantation which it served, and set ashore the portion of the cargo belonging to it; continuing its upward course until the hold was empty. Then, descending the river, it stopped at the different plantations, taking in from each its hogsheads of tobacco; and the captain receiving long lists of articles to be bought in London with the proceeds of the tobacco. The rivers of Virginia, particularly the Potomac and the James, are wide and shallow, with a deep channel far from either shore; so that the transfer of the tobacco from the shore to the ship, in the general absence of landings, was troublesome and costly. To this day, as readers remember, the piers on the James present to the wondering passenger from the North a stretch of pine planks, from an eighth to half a mile long. The ship is full at length, drops down past Newport News, salutes the fort upon Old Point Comfort, and glides out between the capes into the ocean.

Suppose her now safe in London docks, say about the year 1735, the middle of the prosperous period, when the great houses were building in Virginia, with stabling for “a hundred horses,” and pretext of work for “a hundred servants.” By the time she is fast at her berth, the vultures have alighted upon her deck. Two “land-waiters” represent the authorities of the custom-house, and are sworn to see that the king gets his own. A personage called the “ship’s husband” is not long behind them. He, representing the merchant to whom the tobacco is consigned, would naturally be the antagonist of the land-waiters; but he is only too glad to establish an understanding with them. And behind each of these two powers there is a train of hangers-on, hungry for a morsel of the prey. There is already a charge of two pounds for freight upon each hogshead. As soon as the ship is reported at the custom-house, the king demands his “old subsidy” of three farthings upon every pound of tobacco on board, — more than three pounds sterling on a hogshead of a thousand pounds weight. The “duty” of five and one-third pence per pound has next to be calculated, and a bond given for its payment when the tobacco is sold for home consumption. The purchaser, it is true, pays these duties; but the planter is responsible and bound for the payment.

Then there is a continuous fire of petty charges at each unfortunate hogshead, some of which it is difficult now to explain. I copy the following items from an agent's bill of 1733: "primage, 6*d.*;" "wharfage and lighterage, 6*d.*;" "Mr. Perry, 3*d.*;" "husbanding the ship, 4*d.*;" "watching and drink, 3*d.*;" "entry inwards and bonds, 6*d.*;" "land-waiters' fees, 3*d.*;" "dinners, breakfasts to the husband and officers while landing the ship, with other incident expenses, 9*d.*;" "entry outwards and searchers, 8*d.*;" "cocket\* money, etc., 3*d.*;" "debentures one with another, 13*d.*;" "cooperage on board, 2*d.*;" "ditto, landing, 1*s.*;" "ditto outwards, 9*d.*;" "refusing and hoops, 1*d.*;" "porterage, rehousing, and extraordinary rummaging, 6*d.*;" "weighing and shipping, 6*d.*;" "wharfage and lighterage outwards, 6*d.*;" "cartage, 1*s.*;" "warehouse rent for three months, 1*s.* 6*d.*;" "brokerage, 2*s.*;" "postage, as charged by the post-office;" "agent's commission, 2½ per cent." In other bills I observe such words as "suttle," † and the old familiar "tare" and "tret."

Besides these vexatious charges, each of which could be a pretext for fraud, the London agent had other modes of despoiling the planter who was quaffing his Madeira, or chasing the fox, three thousand miles away. Two pounds of tobacco were allowed to be taken from each hogshead for a sample; but a cooper who knew what was due to a British merchant and to himself could draw eight pounds as well as two; and a weigher who had been previously "seen" could mark down the weight of a hogshead two hundred pounds or ten pounds, according to the size of the hogshead; leaving the planter to decide whether *his* scales, or those of the London custom-house, were untrustworthy. In a word, all those fraudulent devices complained of by honest merchants in the bad days of the New York custom-house were familiar in the custom-house of London in 1733; and the frauds were concealed by precisely the same means. Upon the arrival of a ship, the merchant to whom the tobacco was consigned would apply for the services of certain land-waiters, "*whose friendship he could rely upon,*" to superintend the landing of his tobacco. Perhaps they were engaged at the time

\* COCKET. — A scroll of parchment, sealed and delivered by the officers of the custom-house to merchants, as a warrant that their merchandise is entered. — WEBSTER.

† SUTTLE. — Suttle-weight, in commerce, is the weight when the tare has been deducted and tret has yet to be allowed. — WEBSTER.

Then he delayed landing his tobacco till they were at leisure. The rest can be imagined. The weighers, the coopers, and the "ship's husband" understand one another; and "if," as an old remonstrance has it, "any two of them agree in their account, the third alters his book to make it agree with theirs."\* We read, besides, of British merchants sweeping the refuse of their warehouses into casks, putting a little good tobacco at the top and bottom; and, after getting a drawback of duty from their own government, sending this mass of dust and stalks to defraud a foreign country. In 1750, when tobacco yielded the British government one hundred and fifty thousand pounds sterling per annum, it gave the planter an average profit of one pound sterling per hogshead.

The same factors who sold the Virginia tobacco were usually charged to purchase the merchandise which the planters required. Doubtless many of them performed both duties with sufficient correctness; but, down to the Revolution, it was a standing complaint with the planters, that their tobacco brought them less, and their merchandise cost them more, than they had expected. Readers remember the emphatic expostulations of General Washington on both these points. The very ships that carried the tobacco, and brought back the merchandise, were nearly all owned in London. When a Yankee merchant had a prosperous year, or made a lucky voyage, he built another schooner; so that, when Jefferson made his first bow to a jury, in 1767, New England owned seven-eighths of the shipping that frequented New-England ports. But of all the great fleet trading with Virginia, — about three hundred vessels in 1767, — seven-eighths belonged to British merchants. The Yankee's new schooner proved a better investment than the Virginian's "likely negro wenches," whom the Yankee's schooner brought for him from the coast of Guinea; and the Virginian's pipes of Madeira consumed his acres, while the Yankee, with his New-England rum, added acres to his estate.

How little the planters foresaw the desolation of their Province is affectingly attested by many of the relics of their brief affluence. They built their parish churches to last centuries, like the churches to which they were accustomed "at home." In neighborhoods

\* Case of the Tobacco-Planters of Virginia, as represented by themselves: signed by the President of the Council and Speaker of the House of Burgesses. London. 1733.

where now a congregation of fifty persons could not be collected, there are the ruins of churches that were evidently built for the accommodation of numerous and wealthy communities; a forest, in some instances, has grown up all around them, making it difficult to get near the imperishable walls. Sometimes the wooden roof has fallen in, and one huge tree, rooted among the monumental slabs of the middle aisle, has filled all the interior. Other old churches long stood solitary in old fields, the roof sound, but the door standing open, in which the beasts found nightly shelter, and into which the passing horseman rode and sat on his horse before the altar till the storm passed. Others have been used by the farmers as wagon-houses, by fishermen to hang their seines in, by gatherers of turpentine as storehouses. One was a distillery, and another was a barn. A poor drunken wretch reeled for shelter into an abandoned church of Chesterfield County, — the county of the first Jeffersons; and he died in a drunken sleep at the foot of the reading-desk, where he lay undiscovered until his face was devoured by rats. An ancient font was found doing duty as a tavern punch-bowl; and a tombstone, which served as the floor of an oven, used to print memorial words upon loaves of bread. Fragments of richly-colored altar-pieces, fine pulpit-cloths, and pieces of old carving, used to be preserved in farm-houses, and shown to visitors. When the late Bishop Meade began his rounds, forty years ago, elderly people would bring to him sets of communion plate and single vessels, which had once belonged to the parish church, long deserted, and beg him to take charge of them.

Those pretty girls of the Apollo, who turned young Jefferson's head in 1762, and most of the other bright spirits of that generation, — where does their dust repose? In cemeteries so densely covered with trees and tangled shrubbery, that no traces of their tombstones can be discovered; in cemeteries over which the plough and the harrow pass; in cemeteries through the walls of which some stream has broken, and where the bones and skulls of the dead may be seen afloat upon the slime.

The suddenness of the collapse was most remarkable. Westmoreland County, the birthplace of Washington, Madison, Monroe, and Marshall, called absurdly enough "the Athens of Virginia," was still the most polite and wealthy region of Virginia when Thomas Jefferson was a young lawyer. In thirty years it became waste and



desolate. A picket-guard in 1813, posted on the Potomac to watch for the expected British fleet, were seeking one day a place to encamp, when they came upon an old church, the condition of which revealed at once the completeness and the recentness of the ruin. It stood in a lonely dell, where the silence was broken only by the breeze whispering through the pines and cedars and dense shrubbery that closed the entrance. Huge oaks, standing near the walls, enveloped the roof with their long, interlacing branches. The doors all stood wide open; the windows were broken; the roof was rotten, and had partly fallen in; and a giant pine, uprooted by a tempest, was lying against the front, choking up the principal door. The churchyard, which was extensive, and enclosed by a high brick wall of costly structure, was densely covered all over with tombstones and monuments; many of which, though they bore names once held in honor throughout Virginia, were broken to pieces, or prostrate, with brambles and weeds growing thick and tangled between them everywhere. The parish had been important enough to have a separate building for a vestry just outside the churchyard wall. This had rotted away from its chimney, which stood erect in a mass of ruin.

With some difficulty the soldiers forced their way through the fine old porch, between massive doors, into the church. What a picture of desolation was disclosed! The roof, rotted away at the corners, had let in for years the snow and rain, staining and spoiling the interior. The galleries, where in the olden time the grandees of the parish sat, in their square, high pews, were sloping and leaning down upon the pews on the floor, and on one side had quite fallen out. The remains of the great Bible still lay open on the desk, and the tattered canvas which hung from the walls showed traces of the Creed and Commandments which had once been written upon it. The marble font was gone: it was a punch-bowl, the commander of the picket was told. The communion-table, which had been a superb piece of work, of antique pattern, with a heavy walnut top, was in its place, but roughened and stained by exposure. It was afterwards used as a chopping-block. The brick aisles showed that the church was the resort of animals, and the wooden ceiling was alive with squirrels and snakes. The few inhabitants of the vicinity — white trash — held the old church and its wilderness of graves in dread, and scarcely dared enter the tangled dell



in which they were. It was only the runaway slave, overcome by a greater terror, flying from a being more awful than any ghost, — savage man, — that ventured to go into the church itself, and crouch among the broken pews.

Such is the ruin that befalls a community which subsists upon its capital. We have seen the end of it. Mr. Jefferson, admitted to the bar in 1767, saw the beginning of it, and doubled his estate by it in seven years' practice. He was present as a spectator in the House of Burgesses in 1765, when an attempt was made to bolster the falling fortunes of leading members by loans of public money. Patrick Henry exploded the scheme by an epigram. The speaker of the House, who was also the treasurer of the Province, had been in the habit for years of lending sums of the public money to distressed members and others, becoming himself responsible to the government for the repayment. But those planters were doomed never to be again in a paying condition. Many of them borrowed, few repaid, until his deficit was a hundred and thirty thousand pounds. A ring was formed in the Assembly, for the double purpose of relieving the speaker's estate from this menacing obligation, and of enabling him to accommodate others of the ring with further loans of public money. A public loan-office was proposed, a sort of Bank of Virginia, authorized to lend the public money on good security. It was the intention of this ring to make the scheme work backward, and include the loans already effected. Mr. Speaker Robinson, in fact, intended to slip his shoulders out from under his burden, and leave it saddled upon Virginia. The bill being introduced, the borrowing gentlemen supported it by the usual argument: Many men in the colony, of large property, had been obliged to contract debts, the immediate exaction of which would cause their ruin; but with a little time, and a little seasonable assistance, they could pay every thing they owed, with ease. Patrick Henry was not the most solvent of men, but he saw the fallacy of this argument as applied to the lavish aristocrats of Eastern Virginia.

"What, sir," he cried, condensing his speech into a sentence, "is it proposed, then, to reclaim the spendthrift from his dissipation and extravagance by filling his pocket with money?"

There was an end of the scheme of a loan-office. That rending sentence penetrated the understandings of Western yeomen, the solvent class of Virginia; and they were too numerous for the insol-

vent aristocrats to carry a measure against them. The speaker died next year: the deficit could no longer be concealed; the real object of the scheme became apparent; and the speaker's estate had to make good the loss.

All this sank deeply into the mind of the young man who stood listening to the debate at the door of the chamber. That epigram of his guest stuck in his memory, and remained fixed there while Memory held her seat. In scenes widely different from these, at a time many years distant, this debate, and the impressive commentary upon it disclosed by the speaker's death, may have influenced him too much, may have made him too distrustful of institutions which enable men of business to apply the superabundance of next month to the insufficiency of this.

For the present behold him a busy, thriving young lawyer, in the midst of the general embarrassment of the great planters. Sixty-eight cases before the chief court of the Province the first year of his practice; the second year, one hundred and fifteen; the third, one hundred and ninety-eight; the fourth, one hundred and twenty-one; the fifth, one hundred and thirty-seven; the sixth, one hundred and fifty-four; the seventh, one hundred and twenty-seven; the eighth, — which was 1774, — only twenty-nine, for by that time Virginia had other work for him. This account, which Mr. Randall copied from Jefferson's own books, shows a falling off from the year 1769. But it was a falling off only from his practice in that one court. As the new party lines were formed, and party feeling waxed hot, he lost some practice in the General Court, but more than made up for the loss by an increase of office business and county-court cases. In 1771 he was engaged in a hundred and thirty-seven causes before the General Court; but the whole number of his cases that year was four hundred and thirty, since the politics that may have repelled the tobacco lords of Lower Virginia attracted clients in the mountain counties. To the income of four hundred pounds a year, derived from his farm, a professional revenue was now added that averaged more than five hundred pounds a year; which made him, with his excellent habits, a prosperous young gentleman indeed, able to add a few hundred acres to his estate from time to time, until his home farm of nineteen hundred acres had become, in 1774, a number of farms and tracts, five thousand acres in all, and "all paid for." There was nothing in which a thriving Virginian of that day could

invest his surplus income except land and slaves. Every one had the mania for possessing vast tracts of land, hoping one day to have negroes enough to clear and work them. Jefferson, however, appears never to have bought slaves as an investment. The thirty slaves inherited from his father in 1757 had become but fifty-four in 1774; and his further increase in this kind of property came to him by other ways than purchase.

It is not clear to us what he could have done with his stores of legal knowledge, practising before such courts as they had then in Virginia. The General Court, of which we read so much, what was it? It was not a bench of learned judges, raised from the bar by their superior ability and judicial cast of mind. It was composed of the governor and a quorum (five) of the Council; the Council being a dozen or so of the great planters, appointed by the king, and selected, as we are told, for their "wealth, station, and loyalty." This council was a little House of Lords to the Province; and, like the British House of Lords, it was the Supreme Court as well, without a learned chancellor on the woolsack. Governor Fauquier, one would think, was better fitted to decide a card-table dispute, a point of drawing-room etiquette, or the scanning of a line in Horace, than knotty questions of law; but he was the legal head of this court as long as he filled the place of governor. Nor is it to be supposed that the wealthy planters of the Council had either inclination or ability to make up judgments from the reasoning of the Wythes and the Jeffersons that conducted causes in their hearing. But the English have had ways of neutralizing the errors of their system. They know how, among a crowd of pleasure-loving, unlearned peers, to get a few "law lords;" and how, into a committee or a commission of five or seven illustrious incapables, to insert *one* real person, who is appointed for the purpose of doing the work! So, in Virginia, there appears to have usually been in the body of councillors one learned and able man, who performed the duty of listening, weighing, and deciding.

Jefferson had most of the requisites of a great lawyer: industry, so quiet, methodical, and sustained, that it amounted to a gift; learning, multifarious and exact; skill and rapidity in handling books; the instinct of research, that leads him who has it to the fact he wants, as surely as the hound scents the game; a serenity of temper, which neither the inaptitude of witnesses nor the badgering of

counsel could ever disturb; a habit of getting every thing upon paper in such a way that all his stores of knowledge could be marshalled and brought into action; a ready sympathy with a client's mind; an intuitive sense of what is due to the opinions, prejudices, and errors of others; a knowledge of the few avenues by which alone unwelcome truth can find access to a human mind; and the power to state a case with the clearness and brevity that often make argument superfluous. And surely it ought to be reckoned among the qualifications of a lawyer — a trained servant of justice — that he is himself just, and a lover of whatever is right, fair, and equal between a man and his brother. A grandson of Mr. Jefferson once asked an old man, who, in his youth, had often heard him plead causes, how he ranked as a speaker. "Well," said the old man, "it is hard to tell, because he always took the right side."\*

He was no orator. He knew too much, and *was* too much, to be eloquent. He once defined a lawyer as a person whose trade it is to contest every thing, concede nothing, and talk by the hour. He could not talk by the hour. Besides the mental impediment, there was a physical impediment to his addressing a large company. If he spoke in a tone much above that of conversation, his voice soon became husky and inarticulate. But Madison, to whom we owe the preservation of this fact, used also to say, that, when he was a student, he heard his friend Jefferson plead a cause before a court, and he acquitted himself well, speaking with fluency as well as force. He could not have been wanting in such speech as was oftenest required before a jury, because we find his practice always increasing in the county courts. If he had lived in these times, Patrick Henry and himself would have formed a law partnership perhaps; Jefferson getting up the cases, and Henry pleading such as gave scope and opportunity to his magnificent talent. It takes two men to make a man. What a power would have been wielded by a firm, one member of which was possessed of an unequalled gift of uttering the truth which the other was singularly gifted to investigate! The two talents have never been possessed in an eminent degree by one individual.

This young lawyer loved his work, and took an interest in it, apart from the exigencies of the moment. He was one of the first of his

\* Domestic Life of Thomas Jefferson, p. 40.

countrymen to form historical collections, — a taste since developed into mania. As Virginia was late in becoming familiar with the printing-press, the early laws had been supplied to the counties in manuscript at public expense, and without any adequate provision for their preservation. He found extreme difficulty in procuring copies of some of them; some appeared to have perished; others existed in one copy so rotten with age that a leaf would fall into powder on being touched. "I set myself, therefore, to work," he says, "to collect all which were then existing, in order that when the day should come in which the public should advert to the magnitude of their loss in these precious monuments of our property and our history, a part of their regret might be spared by information that a portion had been saved from the wreck, which is worthy of their attention and preservation. In searching after these remains, I spared neither time, trouble, nor expense." The more ancient manuscripts he preserved in oiled silk, some of them being so far gone, that, having been laid open for copying, they could never be gathered up again, but perished of the operation. Others he had bound into volumes. If the reader will turn over the volumes of Hening's "Statutes at Large," a publication suggested by Jefferson, and the most important work relating to the early history of Virginia which now exists, he will discover that a very large number of the most curious documents and earliest laws are credited by the editor to Mr. Jefferson's collection.

## CHAPTER XII.

### A MEMBER OF THE VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE.

It belonged to his position in Albemarle to represent that county in the House of Burgesses; but, in imitation of the British Parliament, the little parliament of Virginia usually lasted seven years, and consequently there had been no general election since he came of age. In 1767 Governor Fauquier died, aged sixty-five, and there was an interregnum of a year, during which the duties of governor devolved on the President of the Council, John Blair; but there was no pause in the course of political events. The king held the same purpose of raising a revenue in the colonies; and an obliging ministry having, as they supposed, learned wisdom from the failure of their predecessors to enforce the Stamp Act, endeavored next "to raise a revenue from the colonies *without giving them any offence.*" These words of Charles Townsend give us the key to the policy of the ministry. The colonies were to be flattered and conciliated. They had objected to an internal tax; very well, they should be accommodated with external duties collected at the custom-houses, trifling duties on glass, tea, paper, and painters' materials. Any thing to oblige colonies so loyal, so willing to assist a gracious young king. In the spring of 1768 an express came riding into Williamsburg, bearing a despatch from Massachusetts to the House of Burgesses, announcing the firm resolve of Massachusetts to resist these duties by all constitutional means, and asking the concurrence and co-operation of Virginia. The messenger, having delivered his despatch, rode southward to deliver copies of the same to the Carolinas and Georgia.

The Virginians, in the absence of a royal governor, could give full play to their opposition; for John Blair was in accord with the popular feeling. Another remonstrance was addressed to



Britain, asserting strongly, but with dignity and moderation, the old principle, "No power on earth has a right to impose taxes on the people, or take the smallest portion of their property, without their consent given by their representatives." It is remarkable with what clearness this truth was perceived by every creature in America who had capacity to perceive any truth. Nearly everybody seems, at first, to have understood that this principle was, as our loyal Virginians said on this occasion, "the chief pillar of the Constitution," without which "no man could be said to have the least shadow of liberty;" since no man could be truly said to possess any thing, if other men could lawfully take any portion of it.

A royal governor of amplest dignity was coming over the sea. In accordance with the new imbecility of flattering the colonies, it was determined, that, in future, the governor-in-chief should reside in Virginia, instead of governing his Province by a lieutenant. Virginia was thrilled by the announcement that a personage of no less note than the Right Honorable Norborne Baron de Botetourt was coming in person to govern them. In October, 1768, he arrived with a prodigious train of servants and baggage, and a gorgeous state-coach, the gift of the king, and milk-white steeds to draw it, which some historians say were eight in number, others six. Virginia, no less loyal to the king than to Magna Charta, rose to the occasion, and gave the Right Honorable Norborne Baron de Botetourt a reception worthy of his name. One relic of this ceremonial is an "Ode," published in the "Virginia Gazette," which swells with the importance of the occasion. If this "Ode" was actually sung in the presence of Lord Botetourt, he must have been hard put to it to preserve the gravity of his countenance.

RECITATIVE.

VIRGINIA, see, thy GOVERNOR appears !  
 The peaceful olive on his brow he wears !  
 Sound the shrill trumpets, beat the rattling drums ;  
 From GREAT BRITANNIA'S isle his LORDSHIP comes.  
 Bid Echo from the waving woods arise,  
 And joyful acclamations reach the skies ;  
 Let the loud organs join their tuneful roar,  
 And bellowing *cannons* rend the pebbled shore ;  
 Bid smooth James River catch the cheerful sound,  
 And roll it to Virginia's utmost bound ;  
 While Rappahannock and York's gliding stream  
 Swift shall convey the sweetly pleasing theme

To distant plains, where pond'rous mountains rise,  
 Whose cloud-capped verges meet the bending skies;  
 The **LORDLY PRIZE** the Atlantic waves resign,  
 And now, Virginia, now the **BLESSING'S** thine:  
 His listening ears will to your burst attend,  
 And be your guardian, governor, and friend.

## AIR.

He comes: His Excellency comes,  
 To cheer Virginian plains!  
 Fill your brisk bowls, ye loyal sons,  
 And sing your loftiest strains.  
 Be this your glory, this your boast,  
**LORD BOTETOURT'S** the favorite toast:  
 Triumphant wreaths intwine;  
 Fill full your bumpers swiftly round,  
 And make your spacious rooms resound  
 With music, joy, and wine.

## RECITATIVE.

Search every garden, strip the shrubby bowers,  
 And strew his path with sweet autumnal flowers!  
**Ye virgins**, haste, prepare the fragrant rose,  
 And with triumphant laurels crown his brows.

## DUET.

*(Enter virgins with flowers, laurels, etc.)*

See, we've stript each flowery bed;  
 Here's laurels for his **LORDLY HEAD**;  
 And while Virginia is his care,  
 May he protect the virtuous fair!

## AIR.

Long may he live in health and peace,  
 And every hour his joys increase!  
 To this let every swain and lass  
 Take the sparkling, flowing glass;  
 Then join the sprightly dance, and sing,  
**Health to our GOVERNOR, and GOD save the King!**

## VIRGINS.

Health to our **GOVERNOR**.

## BASS SOLO.

Health to our **GOVERNOR**.

## CHORUS.

**Health to our GOVERNOR, and GOD SAVE THE KING!**

It is difficult to conceive of such an outburst as this coming from the community that sent forth a series of such manly and able papers on the rights of men and citizens; but they were all still under the illusion of royalty. Jefferson himself, perhaps, in 1768, could have accompanied this performance on his violin without violent grimaces.

To business. As when a new king comes to the throne, Parliament is dissolved, so, on the arrival of a new governor, the House of Burgesses was dismissed, and a general election ordered. Thomas Jefferson announced himself a candidate for the county of Albemarle; and, during the winter of 1768-69, he canvassed his county for votes, — visiting each voter, asking him for his vote and influence, getting his promise if possible, keeping open house and full punch-bowl as long as the canvass lasted. Every voter was rightly *compelled* to vote at every election, under penalty of a hundred pounds of tobacco. During the three election days the candidates supplied unlimited punch and lunch, attended personally at the polls, and made a low bow as often as they heard themselves voted for. No candidate was so strong that he could omit the treating or the canvassing. James Madison was the first who tried it in Virginia, in 1777; and he lost his election by it. The withdrawal of the punch-bowl was ascribed to parsimony, and the omission of the canvassing to pride.

Jefferson's election was a matter of course. Nevertheless, he accepted the honorable trust with seriousness, and formed a resolution, the wisdom of which every year of the existence of free government has only the more clearly shown. We owe the record of this resolution to his own pen. At a later stage of his public life, a friend having invited him to share in some enterprise that promised profit, he made this reply: —

“When I first entered on the stage of public life (now twenty-four years ago), I came to a resolution never to engage, while in public office, in any kind of enterprise for the improvement of my fortune, nor to wear any other character than that of a farmer. I have never departed from it in a single instance; and I have, in multiplied instances, found myself happy in being able to decide and to act as a public servant, clear of all interest, in the multiform questions that have arisen, wherein I have seen others embarrassed and

biased by having got themselves in a more interested situation. Thus I have thought myself richer in contentment than I should have been with any increase of fortune. Certainly I should have been much wealthier had I remained in that private condition which renders it lawful and even laudable to use proper efforts to better it."

It was in this spirit that he began his public life of forty years. At the same time he was very desirous of distinguishing himself. He desired most ardently the approval of his countrymen. He avowed to Madison, long after, that, in the earlier years of his public service, "the esteem of the world was, perhaps, of higher value in his eyes than every thing in it."

The assembly convened on the 11th of May, 1769, nearly a hundred members in attendance, Colonel George Washington among them. It must have been a great day for the children and negroes of Williamsburg; for Lord Botetourt was to ride, for the first time, in his splendid state-coach, a king's gift, from the palace to the Capitol, to open the Provincial Parliament in person. Posterity will perhaps never know with certainty whether his lordship was drawn on this occasion by six milk-white steeds, or by eight, because historians differ on the point; and Mr. Burk says eight on one page of his history, and six on another. The yeoman of the western counties, and indeed the members generally, though much conciliated by the frank and friendly manner of the governor, eyed his grand coach with disfavor, regarding it as a college youth might the present of a large humming-top sent by a relative on the other side of the globe. He is past humming-tops. "Poor old uncle," says the lad, as he feels his nascent mustache, "he still thinks of me as the boy I *was*." We can well believe, however, that as the milk-white steeds, covered with the showy trappings of the time, slowly drew the gandy coach between lines of faces, black and white, the spectacle was greeted with acclamations. Upon reaching the Capitol, at the other end of the avenue, the governor alighted, and ascended, with stately steps and slow, to the Council Chamber, the Council being the Senate, or House of Lords of Virginia.

How amusing'y formal the opening of the little parliament! Young Jefferson might well be surprised at the free-and-easy ways of the Maryland Legislature; for at Williamsburg all the etiquette

of legislation was observed with rigor. Imagine the members, new and old, strolling into the chamber towards ten in the morning; Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry, perhaps, going up together from their lodging-house. When the bell rings, Jefferson need not now withdraw to the lobby door. Two members of the Council are in attendance, at the governor's command, to administer the oath to the burgesses, standing and uncovered: —

“You and every one of you shall swear upon the Holy Evangelists, and in the sight of God, to deliver your opinion faithfully, justly, and honestly, according to your best understanding and conscience, for the general good and prosperity of this country, and every particular member thereof; and to do your utmost endeavor to prosecute that, without mingling with it any particular interest of any person or persons whatever. So help you God and the contents of this book.”

The members having taken their seats, and resumed their hats, the clerk of the General Assembly appears, and pronounces these words: “Gentlemen, the governor commands this House to attend His Excellency immediately in the Council Chamber.” The burgesses obey this command; and being gathered about His Excellency, seated on his viceregal throne, are thus addressed by him: “Gentlemen of the House of Burgesses, you must return to your House, and immediately proceed to the choice of a speaker.” This command also the House obeys; and when they are once more in their seats, and silent, the clerk being at his desk, a member rises and says, “Mr. Clerk.” The clerk then stands up, points to the member without speaking, and sits down again. The member speaks: “I move that Peyton Randolph, Esq., take the chair of this House as speaker, which office he has before filled with such distinguished abilities, steadiness, and impartiality, as have given entire satisfaction to the public.” Mr. Randolph is unanimously elected. Two members attend him, one on each side, from his seat to the uppermost step of the platform, which having ascended, and being left there alone, he turns and addresses the House, thanking them for their unanimous vote, and asking their indulgence for the future. As soon as he has taken his seat in the speaker's chair, the mace, which until that moment has lain under the table, is placed upon it.

Is the House now ready to transact business? By no means. It is next ordered that two members bear a message to the governor, informing him, that, in obedience to his commands, they have elected a speaker, and desire to know His Excellency's pleasure when they shall wait upon him to present their speaker to him. To this message the governor replies that he will send an answer by a messenger of his own. Accordingly the clerk of the General Assembly soon re-appears in the House, and delivers the governor's answer: "The governor commands this House to attend His Excellency immediately in the Council Chamber." Once more the burgesses march to the apartment, but this time with a speaker at their head; and, when the speaker has been presented to the governor, His Excellency is pleased to say that he approves their choice. Then the speaker, on behalf of the House, lays claim to all its ancient rights and privileges, — freedom of speech, untrammelled debate, exemption from arrest, and protection of their estates from attachment. Finally he asks the governor not to impute to the House any errors their speaker may commit. The governor answers that he shall take care to defend them in all their rights and privileges. Then the governor reads his speech, conceived on the plan of a king's speech, addressing first the Council and the Burgesses, then the Burgesses alone, and finally both Houses once more.

The speech being finished, the speaker asks a copy for the guidance of the House of Burgesses; which is furnished him, and the burgesses return to their own chamber. The speaker ascends to his chair, whence he makes a formal *report* of what they had just witnessed. He informs them that the governor had made a speech to the Council and Burgesses, of which, "to prevent mistakes," he had obtained a copy; which he proceeds to read to the House. Not till this formality is over is the House ready to perform an act of its own.

To such a point of decorum had the House been brought since the time, 1664, when it was necessary to impose a fine of twenty pounds of tobacco upon "every member that shall pipe it" after the roll had begun to be called, unless, in an interval of business, he obtained "public license from the major part of the house." The same code was stringent with regard to all breaches of decorum. Any member adjudged by the majority to be "dis-



guised with drink" was fined, for the first offence, one hundred pounds of tobacco; for the second, three hundred pounds; and, for the third, a thousand. To interrupt a member cost the offender a thousand pounds of tobacco; and, to speak of a member with disrespect, five hundred. As the pay of members was a hundred and fifty pounds of tobacco per day, with a further allowance for travelling expenses and servants, these fines were severe; and doubtless they had their share in making this Virginian parliament the dignified and decorous body we know it to have been. Its influence lives to-day in every legislative hall in the country, transmitted by Jefferson's Manual.

One of its kindly and courteous customs brought to the new member from Albemarle a cutting mortification on the first day of the session. It was usual to assign some formal duty to young members by way of introducing them to public business, and giving them an opportunity to air their talents. As soon as the speaker had finished reading the governor's speech, it was in order to appoint a committee to make the draught of a reply; and, to assist this committee, the House was accustomed to pass resolutions, the substance of which was to be incorporated in the draught. Jefferson, in compliance with the request of Mr. Pendleton, a leading member, wrote these resolutions, which the House accepted; and he was named one of the committee to prepare the address. His elders, Mr. Pendleton and Mr. Nicholas, assigned him this duty also. He wrote the draught on the too obvious plan of sticking close to the resolutions, employing much of their very language. Upon reading his draught to the committee, — pluming himself, as he confesses, upon the neatness and finish of his performance, — the elder members were totally dissatisfied with it. It would not do at all. The resolutions, they said, should be regarded only as hints, to be amplified into a flowing and original discourse. Jefferson's draught was set aside; and Mr. Nicholas, his chief critic, the head of the bar of Virginia, was appointed to produce a more suitable composition. The old hand could not be at a loss in expanding and rewording the compact resolutions of the tyro; and his draught was accepted both by the committee and the House. "Being a young man," wrote Jefferson long after, "as well as a young member, it made on me an impression proportioned to the sensibility of that time of life." Thus the man who was destined to gain by his pen the parliamentary distinc-

tion usually won only by the tongue, began his career, as so many illustrious orators have done, by a failure.

These lofty civilities between the governor and the Legislature consumed, as it seems, two days. What next? Lord Botetourt in his speech had made no particular suggestions; and, in the minds of members, there was but one thought, — to resist the lawless taxation of the colonies by Parliament, and the reckless outrage of sending persons accused of treason to be tried on the other side of the ocean. The spirited behavior of Massachusetts in inviting the concurrence of the other colonies in constitutional opposition to these measures had been severely commented upon in England; and this was a new cause of irritation. The milk-white steeds, too, and the gaudy coach, had increased suspicion in some minds. Indeed, at just this stage of the controversy, there was a near approach to unanimity of feeling along the whole line of the Thirteen Colonies, and in none of them a nearer than in loyal Virginia. And they were all equally mistaken in attributing the false policy of the mother country to Parliament and ministers, instead of the king and his Scotch tutors.

On the third day were introduced the Four Resolutions, which a precipitate governor was to stamp with the seal of his reprobation, and so send them ringing round the world: 1. No taxation without representation; 2. The colonies *may* concur and co-operate in seeking redress of grievances; 3. Sending accused persons away from their country for trial is an inexpressible complexity of wrong; 4. We will send an address on these topics to the "father of all his people," beseeching his "royal interposition." The resolutions being passed almost unanimously, the speaker was ordered to send a copy of the same to every legislative Assembly "on this continent." After such a day's work the House adjourned. *That* for your milk-white steeds! The next day the address to the king was reported, revised, agreed to, and ordered to be forwarded to the king's most excellent Majesty, through the colony's London agent, and afterwards published in the English newspapers. On the day following, at noon, Lord Botetourt's secretary entered the chamber. He pronounced the formula: "The governor commands this House to attend His Excellency in the Council Chamber." The members tramped to the other end of the building, and ranged themselves expectant about the throne. No one, I think (though tradition has

it otherwise), anticipated the governor's extreme course; and all appear to have been astounded to hear the "ominous and alarming words," as Burk styles them, which fell from his lips:—

"Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the House of Burgesses: I have heard of your resolves, and augur ill of their effects. You have made it my duty to dissolve you, and you are dissolved accordingly."

Thomas Jefferson and his colleagues were by these words changed, in an instant, from a legislative assembly into a hundred and eight private gentlemen. Such was the law of the British Empire. The new member from Albemarle, after all his canvassing and treating, enjoyed the honor of representing his native county five days, during one of which he had received a snub. But now the whole House, Virginia, Magna Charta, the rights and dignity of man, had been mocked and made of no account.

What an afternoon and evening Williamsburg must have experienced after that abrupt dismissal of the House! It is strange, that, among so many writers, no one should have left a more minute record than has yet come to light. How did Colonel Washington take it? By birth and feeling he was a yeoman; and he had narrowly escaped going to sea before the mast, to work his way, if he could, up to the command of a merchant-ship. But his brilliant gallantry in the field, and a rich widow's hand and fortune, had placed him among the aristocrats. No man can quite avoid the reigning foible of his class and time. Washington's sense of justice, however, was sure and keen; and he had been, from the first rumor of the Stamp Act, on the right side of this great controversy. He was no milk-sop. There was a fund—a whole volcano—of suppressed fire in him; and being still a young man, all unschooled to the prudential reticence of the statesman, he doubtless favored the company with his sentiments. I suppose he dined that afternoon at the old Raleigh tavern, with many other members; and, amid the roar of talk, his voice was occasionally heard, uttering those hearty exclamations with which the Virginians of that day used to relieve their minds. We can fancy Patrick Henry, too, surrounded as he must have been at such a time, holding high discourse in the evening on the piazza; and all Williamsburg standing in groups, discussing the great event of the day, and the greater events expected to-morrow. Jefferson

probably, and other writing members, were closeted somewhere in the town, preparing for the next day's work. A hundred gentlemen may not be a House of Burgesses, but they can hold a meeting; and a meeting they mean to hold to-morrow in the Apollo, the great room of the Raleigh tavern, where so many of them have danced the minuet.

They met accordingly. We only know what they did on the occasion, not how they did it. Following the example set by Massachusetts the year before, they agreed to recommend their constituents to try and *starve* a little good sense into the minds of British manufacturers and merchants. It was America that gave Great Britain the deadly wealth — ill-distributed wealth is always deadly — with which she is now struggling for life. These Virginians, acting upon Franklin's hint and Massachusetts' example, agreed: 1. To be a great deal more saving and industrious than they ever were before; 2. Never again, as long as time should endure, to buy an article taxed by Parliament for the sake of raising a revenue in America, excepting alone low qualities of paper, without which the business of life could not go on; 3. Never, until the repeal of the recent act, to import any article from Britain, or in British ships, which it was possible to do without; 4. They would save all their lambs for wool. And, lest any weak brother should choose to misunderstand the terms of the compact, they enumerated the forbidden articles, — an interesting catalogue, because it shows how dependent Virginia then was upon Europe for every thing except some of the coarser staples of food and raiment. The list was: —

Spirits, wine, cider, perry, beer, ale, malt, barley, pease, beef, pork, fish, butter, cheese, tallow, candles, oil, fruit, sugar, pickles, confectionery, pewter, hoes, axes, watches, clocks, tables, chairs, looking-glasses, carriages, joiners' and cabinet work, upholstery, trinkets, jewelry, plate and gold, silver-ware, ribbons, millinery, lace, India goods except spices, silks except sewing-silk, cambric, lawn, muslin, gauze except bolting-cloths, calico, cotton or linen stuffs above 2s. per yard, woollens above 1s. 6d., broadcloths above 8s., narrow cloths above 3s., hats, stockings, shoes, boots, saddles, and all leather-work.

Eighty-eight members of the House of Burgesses signed this agreement. As it was seldom that more than ninety-five members were in attendance on the same day, this was a near approach to

unanimity. Virginia accepted the compact made by her representatives. Every man who signed the agreement was re-elected. Every man who refused lost his election.

The respectful tone of the document, the perfect decency of the proceedings in the Apollo, the dignified character of the men who led the movement, made the deepest impression upon the mind of Lord Botecourt. He had been told in London — I need not say what. We all know how England has misinterpreted America always. America has generally loved that step-mother too much; England has never loved America at all. What Lord Botetourt found in Virginia, we know; and he had understanding enough to discern the truth. He wrote home to the ministry that these Virginians were *not* rebellious, not factious, not indifferent to the needs of the empire, but loyal subjects, contending for the birth-right of Englishmen, with intelligence and dignity. There was vacillation in the counsels of the king, and the party opposed to the taxation of the colonies gained a brief ascendancy.

Lord Botecourt, therefore, before many months had gone by, had the pleasure of summoning the Assembly; and again there passed between them those elaborate formalities described above. When, at length, he had reached the point of delivering his speech, what a joyful announcement it was his privilege to make!

“I have been assured by the Earl of Hillsborough, that His Majesty’s present administration have at no time entertained a design to propose to Parliament to lay any further taxes upon America for the purpose of raising a revenue, and that it is their intention to propose to the next session of Parliament, to take off the duties upon glass, paper, and colors, upon consideration of such duties having been laid contrary to the true principles of commerce.”

These words thrilled every heart. Joy glistened in every eye. No one seems to have noticed the omission of the word *tea* from the list. The governor, now in the fullest sympathy with the people of his Province, could not be content without adding some assurances for the remoter future; and he proceeded to utter words, that, in all probability, cost him his life. He was a gentleman of the nicest sense of honor, in whose mind a promise of his own unfulfilled might rankle mortally. A ministry, he observed, is not immortal



what then of their successors? Upon this point, he said, he could give only a personal assurance.

“It is my firm opinion, that the plan I have stated to you will certainly take place, and that it will never be departed from; and so determined am I ever to abide by it, that I will be content to be declared infamous, if I do not, to the last hour of my life, at all times, in all places, and upon all occasions, exert every power with which I am or shall be legally invested, in order to obtain and maintain for the continent of America that satisfaction which I have been *authorized to promise* this day, by the confidential servants of our gracious sovereign, who, to my certain knowledge, rates his honor so high, that he would rather part with his crown than preserve it by deceit.”

Almost while he uttered these words, which seemed to pledge the king, the ministry, and himself, Lord North came into power, and renewed the strife. Lord Botetourt with indignation demanded his recall; but, before he obtained it, he died, as is supposed, of mortification at his inability to make good his emphatic assurances. Virginia did justice to his character, and placed his statue in the public square of Williamsburg.

For the present, however, all minds were content, and the parliament of Virginia proceeded with alacrity to business. The member from Albemarle received, during his second session, a rebuff more decided and more public than when his draught was so summarily set aside in his first.

What an absurd creature is man! This sanguine young burgess, now that all danger seemed past of his white countrymen being, as they termed it, “reduced to slavery,” thought it a good time to endeavor to mitigate the oppression of his black countrymen, who were reduced to slavery already. He soon had the hornets about his ears. At that time, no man could free his slaves without sending them out of Virginia. Jefferson desired the repeal of this law. He wished to throw around the slaves what he calls “certain moderate extensions of the protection of the laws.” With the proper modesty of a young member, he called the attention of Colonel Bland to this subject, secured his co-operation, and induced him to introduce the bill. “I seconded his motion,” records Jefferson, “and, as



a younger member, was more spared in the debate; but he was denounced as an enemy to his country, and was treated with the greatest indecorum"! And this, too, although Colonel Bland was "one of the oldest, ablest, and most-respected members"! Jefferson attributes this conduct to the habitual subservience of members to the mother country. "During the regal government," he says, "nothing liberal could expect success." Under *no* government has an assembly of slaveholders ever been otherwise than restive under attempts to limit their power over their slaves.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### HIS MARRIAGE.

THIS year, 1769, so fruitful of public events, was a busy and interesting one to the member from Albemarle in his private capacity. He was now in the fullest tide of practice at the bar, — one hundred and ninety-eight cases before the General Court, the greatest number he ever reached in a year. Already he had chosen Monticello as the site of his future home. He had had men chopping and clearing on the summit for some time; and, in the spring of this year, he had an orchard planted on one of its slopes. Between the two sessions he superintended the construction of a brick wing of the coming mansion, one pretty large room with a chamber or two over it, under the roof. The General Court sat in April. During December and January he was preparing for the court, making briefs, taking notes, collecting precedents; getting every thing, according to his custom, upon paper, and then dismissing it from his mind. On the 1st of February, 1770, his mother and himself went from home to visit a neighbor. While they were at the neighbor's house, a slave came to them, breathless, to say that their house and all its contents were burned. After the man had finished his account of the catastrophe, the master asked, "But were none of my books saved?" A grin of exultation overspread the sable countenance. "No, not one," said the negro, "but we saved the fiddle!"

Two hundred pounds' worth of books gone, besides all his law-papers, and notes of cases coming on in April for trial! Nothing saved but a few old volumes of his father's library, and some unimportant manuscript books of his own. His mother and the children found temporary shelter in the house of an overseer; and he repaired to his unfinished nest on the mountain-top, where he vainly

strove to reconstruct his cases for the coming term. It was an iron rule of that primitive court, never to grant an adjournment of a case to another term. How he made it up with his clients and the court, no one has told us.

That house which he was constructing on Monticello was strangely in his thoughts during the next year or two. When he was far away from home he brooded over it; and he used to solace the tedium of country inns by elaborately recording dreams of its coming fitness and beauty. It was his resolve that there should be *one* mansion in Virginia, for the design of which the genius of architecture should at least be invoked. He meant that there should be one home in Virginia worthy the occupation of perfectly civilized beings; in which art, taste, and utility should unite to produce an admirable result. What a piece of work it was to place such an abode on the summit of his little mountain, with no architect but himself, few workmen but slaves, no landscape-gardener within three thousand miles, no models to copy, no grounds to imitate, no tincture of high gardening in the Province. The bricks had to be made, the trees felled, the timber hewn, the nails wrought, the vehicles constructed, the laborers trained, on the scene of operations. No fine commodities could be bought nearer than Williamsburg, a hundred and fifty miles distant, nor many nearer than Europe. He had to send for even his sashes to London, where one lot was detained a month to let the putty harden! Nothing but the coarsest, roughest work could go on in his absence; and often the business stood still for weeks, for months, for years, while he was in public service. But he kept on with an indomitable pertinacity for a quarter of a century, at the expiration of which he had the most agreeable and refined abode in Virginia, filled with objects of taste and the means of instruction, and surrounded by beautiful lawns, groves, and gardens.

At present all this existed only in his thoughts. He used to write, in one of his numerous blank-books, minute plans for various parts of the grounds, still rough with the primeval stumps. A most unlawyer-like tone breathes through these written musings. What spell was upon him, when, in treating of a future cemetery he could begin his entry with a sentence like this? "Choose out for a burial place some unfrequented vale in the park, where is 'no sound to break the stillness but a brook, that, bubbling, winds among

the weeds; no mark of any human shape that had been there, unless the skeleton of some poor wretch who sought that place out to despair and die in.'” The rest of the description is in a similar taste. The park, in general, was to be a grassy expanse, adorned with every fragrant shrub, with trees and groves, and it was to be the haunt of every animal and bird pleasing to man. “Court them to it by laying food for them in proper places. Procure a buck-elk to be, as it were, monarch of the wood; but keep him shy, that his appearance may not lose its effect by too much familiarity. A buffalo might be confined also. Inscriptions in various places, on the bark of trees or metal plates, suited to the character and expression of the particular spot.” Whence these broodings over the mountain nest that was forming under his eye? Could it be love? Seven years before, he had solemnly assured John Page, that, if Belinda would not accept his service, it should never be offered to another.

But the mightiest capacity which this man possessed was the capacity to love. In every other quality and grace of human nature he has been often equalled, sometimes excelled; but where has there ever been a *lover* so tender, so warm, so constant, as he? Love was his life. Few men have had so many sources of pleasure, so many agreeable tastes and pursuits; but he knew no satisfying joy, at any period of his life, except through his affections. And there *is* none other for any of us. There is only one thing that makes it worth while to live: it is love. Not the wild passion that plagues us in our youth, but the tranquil happiness, the solid peace, to which that is but the tumultuous prelude, — the joy of living with people whose mere presence rests, cheers, improves, and satisfies us. He who achieves that needs no catechism to tell him what is the chief end of man. *That* is the chief end of man. Nothing else is of any account, except so far as it ministers to that. Jefferson was making this beautiful mountain nest for a mate whom he meant to ask to come and share it with him.

Among his associates at the Williamsburg bar was John Wayles, a lawyer in great practice, who had an estate near by, upon which he had a forest, called The Forest. He, too, had thriven upon the decline of Virginia; and he had invested his fees in lands and slaves, until, in 1771, he had a dozen farms and tracts in various parts of the Province, and four hundred slaves. At his home (which was not so

far from Williamsburg that a young barrister could not ride to it occasionally with a violin under his arm) there lived with him his widowed daughter, Martha Skelton, childless, a beauty, fond of music, and twenty-two. We all know how delightfully the piano and the violin go together when both are nicely touched. It was the same with the spinet and the violin. Jefferson had improved in person and in position since he had danced with Belinda in the Apollo, seven years before. It was observed of him that he constantly grew better looking as he advanced in life, — plain in youth, good-looking in his prime, handsome as an old man. And he had now advanced from the bashful student to the condition of a remarkably successful lawyer and member of the Assembly. The wooing appears to have been long. She was a widow in 1768, and there are slight indications of a new love in one of his letters of 1770; but they were not married till New-Year's Day, 1772.

How fixed his habit was of recording every item of expense is shown by the page of his pocket-diary for his wedding-day. The fees of the two clergymen in attendance, the sums given to musicians and servants, all are set down in order, quite as usual. On one of the early days of January, 1772, the newly married pair started from The Forest, where the ceremony had been performed, for Monticello, their future abode, more than a hundred miles distant, in a two-horse chaise.

As the day lengthens, the cold strengthens. In Virginia there is often no serious winter till after New Year's, when all at once it comes rushing down from the north in a tempest of wind and snow. There was some snow on the ground when they left the bride's home; and it grew deeper as they went towards the mountains, until it was too deep for their vehicle. They were obliged, at last, to leave the carriage, and mount the horses. At sunset on the last day of their journey, when they were still eight miles from Monticello, the snow was nearly two feet deep. A friend's house gave them rest for a while, but they would plod on, and get home that night. They reached the foot of the mountain, ploughed up the long ascent, and stood at length, late at night, cold and tired, before their door.

In old Virginia servants seldom lodged in their master's house but in cabins of their own, to which they returned after their work



was done. No light saluted the arriving pair. No voice welcomed them. No door opened to receive them. The servants had given them up long before, and gone home to bed. Worst of all, the fires were out, and the house was cold, dark, and dismal. What a welcome to a bride on a cold night in January! They burst into the house, and flooded it with the warmth and light of their own unquenchable good-humor! Who could wish a better place for a honeymoon than a snug brick cottage, lifted five hundred and eighty feet above the world, with half a dozen counties in sight, and three feet of snow blocking out all intruders? What readings of Ossian there must have been! I hope she enjoyed them as well as he. For his part, the poems of that ancient bard—if he was ancient—were curiously associated in his mind with the tender feelings; and now, shut in with his love in his mountain home, he grew so enamoured of the poet, that nothing would content him but studying him in the original Gaelic.

He wrote to his acquaintance, Charles Macpherson, cousin of the translator, that “merely for the pleasure of reading Ossian’s works, he was desirous to learn the language in which he sung.” He begs Macpherson to send him from Scotland, not only a grammar, a dictionary, a catalogue of Gaelic works, and whatever other apparatus might be necessary, but copies of all the Ossianic poems in the original Gaelic. If they had been printed, he would have them in print. If not, “my petition is, that you would be so good as to use your interest with Mr. Macpherson to obtain leave to take a manuscript copy of them, and to procure it to be done. I would choose it in a fair, round hand, with a good margin, bound in parchments as elegantly as possible, lettered on the back, and marbled or gilt on the edges of the leaves. I would not regard expense in doing this.” He tells him, that if there are any other Gaelic manuscript poems accessible, it would at any time give him “the greatest happiness” to receive them; for “the glow of one warm thought is to me worth more than money.”

•Public events prevented the execution of this scheme. It is remarkable, that, here in the woods of America, a young man, inspired by love, should have hit upon the *method*, very simple and obvious, it is true, which, a hundred years after, has apparently cleared up the Ossianic mystery, by showing that Macpherson’s Ossian is a poor, slurring translation of poems really existing in the Gaelic lan-



guage.\* Among a thousand babblers, it is the man who goes out of his way, and looks at the thing with his own eyes, who is likely to understand it first.

Next year the death of his wife's father brought them forty thousand acres of land and one hundred and thirty-five slaves. When their share of the debts upon Mr. Wayles's estate had been paid, the fortunes of the wife and of the husband were about equal. The Natural Bridge, eighty miles from Monticello, was upon one of the tracts now added to their property.

The year 1772, which was the first of Jefferson's married life, I think he would have ever after pronounced the happiest of all his years. To most of us, perhaps, that first year, or at least some small part of it, is the most consciously happy time we ever know. It may well be so. The moment when two stand at the altar, a wedded pair, is the moment for which all their past moments were made, from which all their future moments date. The first months are a blissful pause in life's toilsome journey; for the old cares have ended in fruition, and the new cares are as yet nothing but delight. The chilly winter of desire is past; the tempest of the passions passes soon with well-tempered minds; it is May-time then, the bright and sunny seed-time, when no one thinks that the harvest can be other than glorious. Nature begins every thing with a smile. The most bountiful harvest is not joyous and serene, like the May morning when the wheat is only a greener grass, and the trees have nothing for us but blossoms. We see many couples who have been harshly dealt with in the struggle for life, — they are sadly battered and worn; and we meet others who have dealt harshly with one another, whose case is more deplorable. It is an affecting thought, that they, too, must once have looked hopefully upon life, must once have been pleasing in one another's eyes, must once have had their Monticello to go home to, and to make lovely by their touch, — if it were only two tenement-rooms, adorned with pictures cut from the illustrated papers.

A lull in the political storm gave Jefferson a long interval of peace, the last he was to know for many a year. The General Court called him to Williamsburg, April 15 and October 15, and detained

\* The Poems of Ossian in the original Gaelic, with a literal Translation into English, and a Dissertation on the Authenticity of the Poems. By the Rev. Archibald Clerk, Minister of Kilmallie. Two vols. Edinburgh. 1871.

him "eighteen days exclusive of Sundays" each time; but during most of the year he was on his mountain, laying out his grounds, planning parts of his house, watching his garden in that vigilant manner of his, superintending his widening farms, and keeping brief, exact record of whatever he did, observed, and learned. Snow three feet deep, as he records soon after reaching home with his bride, "the deepest snow we have ever seen," covered the county of Albemarle during the last days of January. It was not an inviting prospect for the Italians whom Philip Mazzei was about to start in the culture of the vine near by, and who were to furnish Jefferson with Italian gardeners. Virginia has a month of polar winter every third or fourth year, when the James and the Potomac are ice-bound, and the mountain counties are buried in snow. This happy winter chanced to be one such. But an early spring atones; and we are relieved, on looking over the published leaves of the young husband's garden-book, to discover, that, on March 20, he "sowed a patch of *later pease*."

The broad summit of his mountain presented a busy scene as the season advanced. Men were levelling the summit down to that expanse of six acres which was to become so bright with lawn, garden, grove, and flowers. Others were cutting roads and paths through the woods, or making the drive around the great lawn. Jefferson, with his rule in his pocket, and his case of instruments at hand, watched every operation with the eye of a curious philosopher, pausing often to make a calculation or record a hint. Like a true mathematician, he would take nothing for granted. Having wheelbarrows with one wheel and others with two wheels, he was bound to ascertain, with the certainty of arithmetic, which was the more advantageous. So he takes his position, watch in hand, pencil in pocket. He discovered that Julius Shard fills a two-wheeled barrow in three minutes, and wheels it thirty yards in a minute and a half. He observes further, that the two-wheeled barrow holds four times as much as the one-wheeled. With these facts before him, he puts the case in a form which Professor Small himself would have approved: Suppose the 4 loads put in in the same time, viz., 3 minutes; 4 trips will take  $4 \times 1\frac{1}{2} = 6'$ , which added to 3' filling is  $= 9'$ , to fill and carry the same earth which was filled and carried in the two-wheeled barrow in  $4\frac{1}{2}'$ ." This seems conclusive against the one-wheeled vehicle; but, as that form of barrow has held its own against all rivals for

another century, we must conclude that Mr. Jefferson's one-wheeled barrow was not a fair representative of its order. He was evidently much attached to the two-wheeled specimen.

Every operation was scanned and tested. He observed that a four-horse wagon made ten trips a day up the mountain, and brought nearly five cords of wood. He counted the number of rails that could be drawn up the steepest part of the mountain, and found it was twenty-eight. "A coach and six," he records, "will turn in eighty feet." He meant to allow room enough for the grandes of Virginia who might visit him to turn homeward. For his own part, he had not yet set up a vehicle more imposing than the two-wheeled chaise in which he had attempted to bring home his bride. We learn, from the same source, that the grounds were to be enclosed by a picket-fence, every other picket long, and that the short pickets were to have four nails each, and the long ones five. No scrap of knowledge came amiss to the young housekeeper. "Mrs. Wythe," he records, "puts one-tenth very rich superfine Malmsey to a dry Madeira, and makes a fine wine." This item, doubtless, he brought home from Williamsburg for his wife, with Mrs. Wythe's compliments; for the lady of the mountain kept her housekeeping-book, and was noted for her skill in household arts. Her books of accounts, written in a neat lady-like hand, still exist.

What an experimenter he was with his garden! He tried almost every valuable nut, vegetable, grain, bulb, shrub, tree, and grass the world knows, — almonds, bitter almonds, soft-shelled almonds, olives (fifteen hundred olive-stones at once), Alpine strawberries, French chestnuts, and all the rare kinds of more familiar fruits and vegetables. His new neighbor, Mazzei, filled his garden with the fine melons, vines, and nuts of Italy, which it was one of Jefferson's dearest delights to spread over Virginia, Maryland, the Carolinas, and Georgia. He watched the operations of the Italian vineyard planters with the closest attention, and put down in his garden-book a curiously minute account of their method of laying out a vineyard and planting vines. The coming of this little Italian colony, with the intelligent Mazzei at their head, and the prospect which it opened of Albemarle, already called the "garden of Virginia," becoming its vineyard also, was an immense addition to the interest and attractiveness of Monticello. If Jefferson loved his home more than most men, it must be owned that few men have ever had such a home to love.

It is the wife who is the soul of a house. It is she who makes, who constitutes, who *is*, the home. The wife of Jefferson comes down to us as she was in this brightest year of her existence, a beautiful woman, her countenance brilliant with color and expression, with luxuriant auburn hair, somewhat tall, and of a very graceful figure, though too slight for the wear and tear of this troublesome world. Nothing but good has been recorded of her, and her carefully-kept household books still speak her praise. Tradition reports that she possessed an attraction for her husband, most rare in that age among ladies, — an educated mind and a taste for the higher literature. Her love of music, her skill in playing the harpsichord, and her voice in singing, all harmonized with his tastes and habits, recalling that sister so early lost. A Virginian lady of that period could scarcely escape acquiring the homely, invaluable wisdom that comes of dealing with the common duties of a household. She might not be so accomplished as the mother of Washington, who was one of the best judges of a horse in her county, and perfectly capable of conducting a plantation; but a woman could not be quite a fool who had to think and contrive for a great family of grown-up children.

I see this elegant figure moving about with her husband among the improvements of the mountain-top, visiting with him the spot where negroes were grubbing up roots and trees for the family burying-ground, or standing by his side as he counted the wheelbarrow-loads and watched the wall-building. During the winter, perhaps, she may have been alive to the inconveniences of living five hundred and eighty feet in the air; but in the summer she must have warmly approved her husband's choice, if it were only that it lifted them above the mosquitoes and all disagreeable insects. If she cast her eyes in one direction, she saw their mount sloping down a mile and a half to the River Rivanna; and she could see, half a mile beyond the river, the blackened ruins of the house in which her husband was born. On another side, the mountain fell off into the valley in an almost precipitous descent. From one face of the summit there is nothing between the spectator and the ocean, two hundred miles distant, and yet not so far that it is not felt in the afternoon breeze of the hot summer days. From another, there is a vast expanse billowy with mountains, one peak clearly visible forty miles off, and the line of the Blue Ridge marked against the horizon

a hundred miles away. Three miles yonder lies the village of Charlottesville; and here is a region of waving wheat fields and farms, with the river winding among them. From one point, nothing breaks the view for forty-seven miles, and then it ends in a solitary peak precisely resembling the great Pyramid of Egypt. A lady less susceptible than she could have forgiven the height of the little mount for the wide world of loveliness which it disclosed.

As the summer advanced, she leaned more heavily upon her husband's strong arm than before, and less frequently rode down into the valley. Their first child was born in the autumn, — that Martha Jefferson who contributed most and longest to the solace of her father's life. Here was a new tie binding him to his home; and it was wound about his heart at the very period when the events occurred that were to summon him away, and detain him **many times and long.**

## CHAPTER XIV.

### AN AFFAIR IN NARRAGANSETT BAY.

FROM the breezy height of Monticello we must repair to a spot not less enchanting, — Newport, the Emerald Isle of North America. Readers are familiar with the ocean drive, that winds about among the rocks and by the beaches, and past Lily Pond, until it turns the Point at the ocean end of the island, and winds round past Fort Adams, where the band plays; then by the pretty harbor, alive with yachts and skimming sail-boats; and “so home.” Brenton’s Point is the ancient and proper name of that turning-place, where the carriages stop for their occupants to look out for Point Judith and Block Island, and admire the tumbling waves that foam over the reefs near the shore, and where children get out to explore the aquarium disclosed to view at low tide, and gather star-fish, wet and squirming, inadmissible to a well-regulated vehicle. In March, 1772, it was a bleak and desolate place, without sign of human habitation. But even at that early period there was much life upon the waters; for Newport had an important commerce with the African coast, and Providence, thirty miles off, at the head of Narragansett Bay, though inferior to Newport in wealth and population, was a thriving town. Those were the days when the best Christians saw nothing wrong in buying negroes and gold-dust on the coast of Africa with New-England rum, and selling the negroes to the West Indies for molasses, and taking the molasses home to be converted into more rum for another voyage. Newport had the cream of this sweet commerce for many a year, as well as a legitimate trade with the mother-country.

But this was not all the business that enriched Newport and Providence. It was not to protect lawful commerce that British men-of-war cruised continually in Narragansett Bay, and lay at



anchor off Brenton's Point. England was at peace with all the world; the pirates had been driven from these waters; but in March, 1772, when Jefferson was sowing his later pease at Monticello, two British men-of-war approached the Point, one of some magnitude, called the Beaver, and the other, a schooner of eight guns, named the Gaspee. The larger of these vessels kept on her course, and vanishes from this history. The Gaspee dropped her anchor, furled her sails, and remained about where the Light Ship now rides uneasily on the waves.

Need I remind the reader with what rigor England applied the protective system at that time? A colonist could catch a beaver, and take off its skin; but a British law forbade his making that skin into a hat. English hatters were protected. A Pennsylvanian might dig a piece of iron out of his native hills, and even smelt away its impurities; but he was obliged to send it to England to be made into steel and a scythe. British cutlers must be protected. A Virginian could raise as much tobacco as he chose; but, though England were glutted with tobacco, he could not export a hogshead of it to another country. He must send it all to England, whence British merchants would distribute it over the world. A Newport merchant might discover excellent fabrics and commodities in Holland or France; but he must buy his return cargo in English ports of English dealers. A Carolinian could not sell a pound of his indigo to France, where so much of it was used. The commerce of the colonies, and their internal trade as well, were restricted and hampered in every way, with the single object, and that object avowed, of compelling the colonists to pour the net product of their toil and enterprise into British coffers. The colonists complied not unwillingly, because they loved their country, that is, the British Empire, and because they felt, that, in return for all this, England was bound to defend them against the world.

But the protective system includes, as an invariable accompaniment, the illicit trader and the smuggler; and it will not be one of the least advantages of the universal freedom of trade, which we have been approaching for a century past, and may reach a century hence, that those bad vocations will cease to be exercised. Seldom have they been so flourishing as in the waters about Newport, from the peace of 1763 to the war of 1775. The French War had given a wonderful development to the business. A colonial governor had the

power to grant a flag of truce, and an enterprising Newporter could apply for one under pretext of going to the French West Indies to effect an exchange of prisoners. It is mentioned as a proof of the incorruptible honor of Governor Fauquier of Virginia, gambler as he was, that he refused an offer of two thousand pounds sterling for a flag. Other governors were not so scrupulous; and the governor of Rhode Island, who alone was elected by the people of his Province, had, it is said, no scruples at all, but granted flags to all applicants at a certain price. Give a Yankee captain, in time of war, a schooner full of "fish and notions," a flag of truce to the enemy, and a free range of the seas; what does he want more? He is trading with peace advantages, and gets war prices.

Considering the circumstances, we cannot be surprised at the bad account given of the Rhode-Islanders by Archdeacon Burnaby, who visited them towards the close of the French War. A cunning, deceitful people, he calls them, who, "*live almost entirely by unfair and illicit trading,*" and their "magistrates are partial and corrupt." The English traveller adds this remark: "Were the governor to interpose his authority, were he to refuse to grant flags of truce, or not to wink at abuses, he would, at the expiration of the year, be excluded from his office, the only thing, perhaps, which he has to subsist upon." But then, according to this Tory archdeacon, the people themselves had little to subsist upon except the illicit trade; for the enemy, in the course of the war, had captured one hundred and thirty of their vessels; and their own privateers, of which they kept a great number at sea, had had ill luck. Nevertheless, he says, they *would*, out of their population of thirty-five thousand souls, maintain a regiment of provincial troops, which made the taxation burdensome. Besides, their paper money was in a woful condition, as it required twenty-five hundred pounds in Rhode-Island paper to buy one golden guinea.

The war being at an end in 1763, nothing more could be done in the flag-of-truce way; and a part of this demoralized energy and capital was employed in evading the revenue laws. One glance at the map will remind the reader that the waters about Rhode Island furnish every facility for any kind of illicit trade that can be carried on in small, swift vessels.

For eight years — 1764 to 1772 — there had been war in Narragansett Bay, between Rhode Island and the king of Great Britain

The king began it. An offensive armed schooner, the *St. John* was stationed in the bay in 1764, for the sole purpose of interfering with the maritime pursuits of the Rhode Islanders. This *St. John* had the insolence to make a prize of a brig which had brought in an unlawful cargo. Retaliation: the people seized a shore battery, and fired into the *St. John*. Royal ships impressed unwary seamen. On one occasion the *Maidstone*, man-of-war, boarded a brig just from the African coast, and impressed her whole crew, who had expected that very night to be at home. Retaliation: a crowd of Newporters seized one of the *Maidstone's* boats at the Long Wharf, dragged her up Broad Street to the Parade, and burnt her in front of that handsome State House which still stands. Again, in 1769, the sloop-of-war *Liberty*, besides making herself generally odious through the sleepless vigilance of her commander, Lieutenant Reid, once stopped and brought in an innocent vessel, and then fired at the captain's boat when he came seeking redress. Retaliation: a resolute company of Newporters boarded her, cut her cables, let her drift ashore, hard and fast; and then, when night fell, a party set her on fire, and she was burned to the water's edge! This was war.

In 1772 it fell to the little *Gaspee*, of eight guns, Lieutenant Dudingston commanding, to continue the strife. This lieutenant was not long in making himself an object of passionate disgust to a seafaring people. Lying there, off Brenton's Point, right at the entrance of the bay, in the very highway leading both to Newport and Providence, he adopted the system of boarding every thing that floated, — packets, market-boats, ferry-boats, coasting schooners, Indiamen, Londoners, homeward-bound, outward-bound, — every thing! The expedient was simple and obvious, but it was all too effectual. And, to make his conduct the more offensive, he sent any contraband property that he seized to Boston for adjudication.

At that time the deputy-governor of Rhode-Island Plantation, Darius Sessions by name, lived at Providence; and the governor, Joseph Wanton, lived at Newport. Darius Sessions wrote to Joseph Wanton a letter of ludicrous gravity, relating the aggressions of "a schooner" upon "our navigation;" affecting not to know "who *he* is, and by what authority *he* assumes such a conduct;" and requesting his honor to inquire into the matter. The

Deputy contrived to make a pointed allusion to the sloop "Liberty," burnt at Newport some time before. "It is suspected," said Mr. Sessions, "that he has no legal authority to justify his conduct; and his commission, if he has any, is some antiquated paper, more of a fiction than any thing else, . . . no other than the commission the famous Reid had, *who lost his sloop at Newport*, or something else of no validity." The governor, in the same strain of affected ignorance, addressed a note of inquiry to the odious lieutenant, who replied, not in the most conciliatory tone, that he "had done nothing but what was his duty." Much correspondence followed. The governor wrote to the admiral at Boston, and the admiral replied with the *hauteur* that might be expected: both referred the matter to the Earl of Hillsborough; and the affair drew to great length and complexity. But, in the mean time, Lieutenant Dudingston continued to "disturb the navigation" of Narragansett Bay, and seized whatever rum or other commodity had not contributed its quota to the king's strong box.

June 10, 1772, at noon, the regular packet plying between Newport and Providence, left Newport for Providence without notifying Lieutenant Dudingston. The Gaspee gave chase; chased the packet up the bay twenty-three miles, and then ran hard aground on Narragansett Point, seven miles below Providence. The packet reached her berth about sunset. Her captain related his adventure, and described the situation of the hated Gaspee to Mr. John Brown, the most substantial merchant of the place. In common with the whole colony, Mr. Brown believed the proceedings of Lieutenant Dudingston to be illegal. Deputy-Governor Darius Sessions had consulted Chief-justice Hopkins upon the subject, and the chief justice had officially pronounced them lawless. No commander of a vessel, the chief justice maintained, had any right to exert authority in the colony without previously applying to the governor, showing his warrant for so doing, and being regularly sworn in.

Mr. Brown, like most men who live near the sea, carried the tide in his mind, as farmers at work in a distant field observe, without thinking of it, their taskmaster, the sun. The Gaspee cannot get off Narragansett Point before three in the morning, thought the merchant. The case of the Liberty, perhaps, flashed across his mind. The Gaspee had run *herself* ashore! What an

opportunity to free the waters of Rhode Island from this worse than a pirate!

He spoke to one of the captains in his service, who hurried away as if on a joyful errand. A few minutes later the beating of a drum in the main street of Providence summoned the people to doors and windows; and the drummer, in the manner of a town-crier, lifted up his voice and proclaimed the situation of the *Gaspee*, and invited all men disposed to lend a hand to her destruction to repair to Sabin's tavern as soon as it was dark. At half-past nine, eight of the largest boats belonging to the town, with muffled oars and filled with armed men, each boat commanded by a sea-captain, dropped away from Fenner's Wharf. It was no mob that manned the boats. The best men of the town took part in this expedition, and all men's hearts went with it; unless it might be some lone representative of the collector of the customs, — the only officer in Rhode Island not elected by the people. John Brown, the prime mover, who was in one of the boats, besides being the chief merchant of the colony, was of the family that afterwards founded, and gave its name to, Brown University.

All on board the *Gaspee* slept, except one sailor who kept the watch. At midnight the watch was changed, when Bartholomew Cheever came on deck in his turn. At a quarter to one he descried, in the darkness, — the night was very dark, — a line of boats silently approaching the vessel. He reported the ominous circumstance to the lieutenant, who hurried on deck in his night-shirt, and soon saw the boats himself. "Hail them," said the officer, "and tell them to stand off at their peril." The sailor obeyed. No answer. Again he shouted, "Who comes there?" No answer. The lieutenant himself then took his station at the side of the vessel, a pistol in one hand and a cutlass in the other. He hailed the boats twice. From one of them came at length an angry reply, which may be softened into, "I am the sheriff of the county of Kent, damn you! I have got a warrant to apprehend you, damn you! So surrender, damn you!" Which was a fiction, uttered by one of the captains commanding. "Call all hands," said the lieutenant to Cheever, who obeyed; and the men, in the course of a few seconds, began to tumble up. But those few seconds were fatal to the *Gaspee*.

For, at the instant of Lieutenant Dudingston's appearance at the side of his vessel, one of the men in the boats said to a comrade



“Reach me your gun, and I can kill that fellow.” Just as the lieutenant had given the order to call all hands, he fell to the deck, dangerously wounded in the arm and groin, bleeding profusely. He had not yet been helped to the cabin before the assailants boarded, drove the men below, and were masters of the vessel. The Providence men followed the crew into the hold, tied every man’s hands behind him, and prepared to set them ashore.

A young medical student, while busy below tying the hands of the unresisting crew, was called to the deck by a voice familiar to all the party. “What is the matter, Mr. Brown?” asked the student. “Don’t call names,” was the reply, “but go immediately into the cabin. There is one wounded, and will bleed to death.” Upon examining the wound the student feared the great artery was cut, and began to pull and tug at the collar of his own shirt to tear a bandage. The wounded man showed that he was worthy of better work than chasing packet-boats, and groping after hidden rum, by saying, “Pray, sir, don’t tear your clothes: there is linen in that trunk.” And, after his wound was dressed, he begged the young surgeon to accept a gold stock-buckle as a mark of his gratitude; and, this being refused, he pressed upon him a silver one, which the student accepted, and wore to old age. The crew were landed in two parties, two miles apart, and the lieutenant was carried to a house near the shore. The schooner was then set on fire.

When the sun rose, nothing remained of her but a black and smoking hulk. The assailants rowed home at leisure in broad daylight, reaching Providence in time for breakfast. So little concealment was there, that, in the course of the morning, a young man appeared in the most public place in Providence with Lieutenant Dudingston’s gold-laced hat upon his head, and related to a great circle of admiring bystanders how and where he had got it in the schooner’s cabin. He was induced to retire with his trophy; but every American in Providence knew who had done the deed, who suggested it, and what part in it each of the leading persons had borne.

Darius Sessions’s parents must have been devoid of a sense of the ludicrous, else he had not been blessed with such a name; but Darius himself was a humorist. In the morning he received the “news” of this transaction. Whereupon he rode down to the scene, attended by some gentlemen of the town, to inquire into it. He found the



thing had really happened. Here was the smoking hulk. In yonder house lay the wounded officer. The crew were roaming at large, subsisting on the country. He visited the lieutenant, and begged to know how he could be of service to him. That truly gallant officer replied, that, for his own part, he wanted nothing; he hardly expected to survive; but he asked to have his men attended to, and sent to the admiral in Boston. The deputy took sundry depositions, provided for the crew, and returned home to exercise his talent for grave burlesque in a letter to the governor. "A very disagreeable affair," said he, "has lately happened within this part of the colony." He related the disagreeable affair. Then he remarked, "The dangerous tendency of this transaction is too obvious to pass it over with the least *appearance* of neglect." He did not underline the word "*appearance*:" it was not necessary. He concluded his epistle thus: "It is the prevailing opinion of the gentlemen in this quarter, that a proclamation, with a large reward, be issued for apprehending the persons who have thus offended. You will please consult the gentlemen your way; and, in the mean time, I will endeavor to collect the sentiments of the members of the Assembly, and other principal gentlemen by name, and send the same to your honor as soon as may be."

Governor Wanton acted upon this hint. A proclamation was very promptly issued, offering a reward of a hundred pounds to any one who should discover the perpetrators. Strange to say, the proclamation was of no effect. Not a person in Rhode Island disclosed what many hundreds of men, women, and children must have personally known. Lieutenant Dudingston recovered his health, was recommended for promotion, and, it is to be hoped, obtained it. Other cruisers replaced the burnt Gaspee. Narragansett Bay was as blue and bright as before, its islands as richly verdured, and all things went their usual train.

No one can understand the importance of this affair unless he bears in mind that the great controversy of which it was one trifling outbreak was a controversy between the colonists and ONE MAN. That one man was the king, — poor, dull, proud, ignorant, moody George III., — the costliest king a country was ever cursed with. He cost, in fact, £800,000,000, besides his board and the loss of thirteen colonies; for it was *he*, that one blind, unteachable dunce who severed the empire.

Of course there are always men enough to flatter the foibles of a

king. The American Tories exulted in the destruction of the Gaspee. If *this* does not wake the British lion, wrote Governor Hutchinson of Massachusetts, no one will ever tremble at his roar again! "So daring an insult!" By men, too, who are perfectly well known, and yet not one arrested! The royal animal has been asleep these four or five years past; as if these turbulent colonists could be ruled by soft words, and milk-white steeds drawing great lords in gorgeous coaches! A gracious king sees with what result. A *king's* lieutenant wounded, and turned out of his vessel! Governor Hutchinson had the honor of conversing with Admiral Montagu on the subject; and he rejoiced to hear the admiral state, that, in his opinion, Lord Sandwich would "never leave pursuing the colony until it was disfranchised." Governor Hutchinson's own opinion, as recorded for the perusal of the home government, was this: "If the late affair at Rhode Island is passed over without a full inquiry and due resentment, our liberty people will think they may with impunity commit any acts of violence, be they ever so atrocious; and the friends to government will despond, and give up all hopes of being able to withstand the faction."

The home government needed no prompting. The lion was awake. The "law-servants of the crown" pronounced the act of the Rhode Islanders high treason, levying war against the king. Five royal commissioners — the governor of Rhode Island, the chief justices of New York, New Jersey, and Massachusetts, and a judge of the Boston Vice-admiralty Court — were appointed to go to Rhode Island, and investigate the fell business. General Gage, commanding the troops at Boston, was ordered to hold himself in readiness to assist the commissioners, if they should need assistance. Governor Wanton received this information from England about the 1st of October in a long despatch from Lord Dartmouth; and the material parts of this document found their way into the newspapers. Secrecy would have been desirable, if the governor had meant to execute the king's commands; but important matters will get into the papers in times of public commotion, if the pigeon-hole is not well looked to. There was one paragraph in Lord Dartmouth's despatch which arrested every intelligent mind in the colonies, and kindled every patriotic heart. Jefferson read it at Monticello with feelings inexpressible. Dabney Carr read it in his cabin full of children, and, I doubt not, rode swiftly to his brother-in-law, Jefferson, to talk it over: —

“It is his majesty’s intention, in consequence of the advice of his Privy Council, that the persons concerned in the burning of the Gaspee schooner, and in the other violences which attended that daring insult, SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO ENGLAND TO BE TRIED; and I am therefore to signify to you his majesty’s pleasure,” that the prisoners, together with the witnesses on both sides, shall be delivered to the custody of Admiral Montagu, and sent in a king’s ship to England!

The commissioners arrived at Newport. They offered a reward of a thousand pounds sterling to any one who would reveal or betray the ringleaders, and five hundred pounds for the detection of any other person concerned. Before entering upon their duties they all swore and subscribed the three great oaths, so pertinent to the occasion. First, they swore they did not believe the doctrine of transubstantiation, and that they regarded the invocation of the Virgin Mary and the sacrifice of the mass as superstitious and idolatrous. Secondly, they swore that they considered George III. the true king of Great Britain, and rejected the Pretender, who called himself James III. Thirdly, they swore, that, from their hearts, they abhorred, detested, and abjured, as impious and heretical, the damnable doctrine and position, that the Pope could depose a king by pronouncing him excommunicate. These three tremendous oaths, drawn out to great length, having been duly sworn, recorded, and signed, the commissioners proceeded to business. It was in the Newport State House, in that large room into which summer visitors peep, and admire the quaint carpentry of other days, that these solemn things were done.

The commissioners summoned witnesses, took depositions, adjourned, met again, sat long and often, made up a voluminous report, and discovered nothing! Not one man was so much as arrested! Every witness that knew any thing about the matter staid at home, and sent an excuse. Some had causes coming on at court. One had “a swelling in the hand.” Another was seventy-four years of age. Sabin, at whose house the assailants had met, and where they had spent an hour and a half in casting bullets and sharpening cutlasses, sent the following, which may serve as a sample:—

“Gentlemen, I now address you on account of a summons I received from you, requiring my attendance at the Council Chamber in Newport on Wednesday, 20th instant.

“Now, gentlemen, I beg to acquaint you what renders me incapable of attending. I am an insolvent debtor; and, therefore, my person would be subject to an arrest by some one or other of my creditors; and my health has been on a decline for these two months past, and it would be dangerous should I leave my house.

“And, further, were I to attend, I could give no information relative to the assembling, arming, training, and leading on the people concerned in the destroying the schooner *Gaspee*.

“On the 9th day of June last, at night, I was employed at my house, attending company; who were John Andrew, Esq., Judge of the Court of Vice-admiralty, John Cole, Esq., Mr. Hitchcock, and George Brown, who supped at my house, and staid there until two of the clock in the morning following; and I have not any knowledge relative to the matter on which I am summoned.”\*

And so said they all, namely, George Brown, Mr. Hitchcock, Judge Andrews, and John Cole, Esq., none of whom could attend the honorable commissioners, though they found time to write excuses protesting the densest ignorance of the whole affair. In a word, the investigation was an absolute nullity and farce. Those five commissioners, with all the aid the king could give them, with his fleet, his army, and his thousand pounds, could not, after five months' trying, discover what every boy in the streets knew, and what they themselves knew, as mere men. The publicity given to Lord Dartmouth's despatch would alone have defeated its object, even if the commissioners had been in earnest.

The affair might have ended here; but the king's friends were now in the ascendancy in Parliament, and they must needs invest this folly with the importance and permanence of law. An act was passed for the better protection of the navy and its appurtenances, which made it a capital offence to destroy any object belonging to a king's vessel. The act was so worded, that a man who should cut a button from a drunken marine's coat, or knock in the head of a royal beef-barrel, was to be presumed a traitor to the king, and could be sent for trial to any county in England.

\* A History of the Destruction of His Britannic Majesty's Schooner *Gaspee* in Narragansett Bay. By John Russell Bartlett, Secretary of State of Rhode Island. P. 102. Providence. 1871.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE EFFECT IN VIRGINIA AND ELSEWHERE.

It were difficult to exaggerate the interest which this affair excited throughout the colonies. The audacious gallantry of the Providence men was the first theme of admiration; and, before that had become an exhausted topic, rumors of coming vengeance from England renewed the public interest in it. Lord Dartmouth's despatch, the arrival of the commissioners, and their solemn sessions at Newport, still kept all minds attentive. The absurd failure of the royal commission does not seem to have allayed the popular resentment. Finally, the act of Parliament fixing the Rhode Island precedent into imperial law convinced all but the most reluctant that the king was resolved upon forcing the controversy to an armed issue. Students familiar with the period receive the impression that it was the burning of the Gaspee, more than the throwing overboard of the tea, that led to the Boston Port Bill, and so precipitated the Revolution.

One evening in the early part of March, 1772, six or seven gentlemen sat about a table in a private room of the Raleigh Tavern at Williamsburg, Va. They were all members of the House of Burgesses, — Patrick Henry, Richard Henry Lee, his brother Francis Lightfoot Lee, Thomas Jefferson, his brother-in-law Dabney Carr, and one or two others. Rhode Island had been for weeks upon every tongue. It was not yet known that the scenes enacting in the Newport State House were comedy instead of tragedy. Paragraphs of fearful import circulated in the newspapers from colony to colony. It looked, for a time, as though poor little Rhode Island was about to be extirpated; for Admiral Montagu was going there with a fleet, General Gage with an army; the inquisition had already been set up; and every man whom it chose to arrest was to



be sent three thousand miles away for trial. Rhode Island was the least of the colonies; and it seemed as if, for that reason, she had been *first* marked for vengeance. But the lawless court then sitting at Newport an infuriate ministry could transfer to Williamsburg, and order fleets and armies to Virginia to execute its decrees! At such a crisis, what does it become the most powerful of the colonies to do on behalf of the weakest?

This was the question which those gentlemen were discussing at the Raleigh Tavern that night. They were of the younger members of the House; and they had met by themselves, because they feared their elders would hesitate to act with the requisite promptness and spirit. Their object was to hit upon a course which should be moderate enough for the Tories, while being decided enough for the Whigs. Virginia, they all felt, must stand by Rhode Island. The colonies must make common cause. But it was requisite to proceed with moderation.

We shall never appreciate what it cost some of the Virginians to fall into line with the Northern colonies on these occasions. The ideal of New England, as we plainly see in all the memorials of the first century, was Israel; but Virginia's beloved and honored model was England: and both were equally cramped by the inadequacy of their pattern. When the coast of British North America was divided, it was the northern half that should have been called Virginia, and the southern half New England; for it was in the southern half that another England was to be attempted. There the Church of England was to be established; there primogeniture and entail were to perpetuate county families; there the laborer was to be ignorant, poor, and hopeless; there the government was to be an imitation of king, lords, and commons; there the king was to be the source of honor; there that inexplicable, complex, omnipotent influence, the social tone, was to be English, only English, and that exceedingly. For a century or more it was Virginia's favorite vanity to differ from New England in just that very particular which the present crisis called upon her to disregard.

In 1674, when the agents of Virginia were in London trying to get their rights secured by a charter, they were opposed on the ground of New England's recent adherence to Cromwell. The agents replied, No disobedience of New England ought to cause apprehension of the same on the part of Virginia; for the people of



New England "steer a quite contrary course" from us Virginians. *They* endeavor, as much as they can, to "sever themselves from the crown;" whereas *our* "chief desire is to be assured of our perpetual, immediate dependence thereon." They discover antimonarchical principles; they *love* a republican form of government, which is something distinct and independent from the policy of England. But we "are and ever have been heartily affectionate and loyal to the monarchy of England;" and the government of Virginia is "constituted, as we humbly conceive, in imitation of it." They have obtained power of choosing their own governor. We, on the contrary, "*would not have that power*, but desire our governor may be from time to time appointed by the king." "The New Englanders imagine great felicity in their form of government, civil and ecclesiastical, under which they were trained up to disobedience to the crown and church of England; but the Virginians would think themselves very unhappy to be obliged to accept of and live under a government so constituted."

Every Virginian heart would have responded to these sentiments. But, with all this loyalty to the king, there was a deeper attachment to what they called the rights of Englishmen, and especially to that fundamental right, without which no other has validity, — the right of self-taxation. The Province, for a century and a half, was never suffered long to forget that great right and the means of preserving it. The people had a special drill and training in Magna Charta. Old men long remembered, and told their descendants, that all was chaos in Virginia for the first fourteen years; until the first House of Burgesses convened at Jamestown, — their "darling assembly," as one of the old historians styles it. During fifty-three years more it was the first object of Virginians to secure this right of self-government by a royal charter. Curiously enough, the first king who recognized their parliament was the monarch who lost his head by trying to govern England without one. Young Charles I wrote them a letter, scolding them for founding their colony upon tobacco-smoke, and advising them to turn their attention to potash, staves, iron, and salt; but he offered them three shillings a pound for their whole crop of tobacco, and told them to convene an *Assembly* to consider and decide upon the proposition. To the moment of that king's decapitation, Virginia sided with the Commonwealth men as England herself did. Once, in 1654, the tobacco lords in the Bur

gesses disfranchised all their constituents, except these who possessed a certain quantity of land. The act was repealed two years after, and for reasons which Jefferson himself might have dictated, and which, doubtless, his ancestors approved. It was unreasonable and unnatural, said the preamble to the repealing act, that men who contributed to the support of government and the defence of the country should be deprived of their chartered and natural rights by the very servants whom they had chosen to watch over their interests.

A long series of events could be adduced to show that the fundamental rights of citizens were familiar and dear to Virginians from 1621 onward to the time of the Stamp Act. Every doctrine of the Revolutionary period can be found, expressed with force and intelligence, in the public papers of the Province a century before the meeting of the first Congress. Despite that sentimental loyalty of theirs, the yeomen of Virginia were distinctly aware that their colony had been "deduced" not at the king's expense, and defended not by the king's troops, and supported not by the king's treasure; and that, in founding a colony which cost the king nothing, and yielded him a revenue of a hundred and fifty pounds a year, they had certainly not lost any of the rights of Englishmen.

Sentiment, however, is a potent influence, particularly when it is allied with vanity. It is hard for men to profess opinions to which the stigma of vulgarity has been affixed; and, in Virginia, loyalty to church and king was regarded as the trait of a gentleman. And, ridiculous as it seems, those twelve councillors whom the governor recommended and the king appointed, — the only Virginians who could, with any show of legality, claim precedence of the rest — were held in extravagant respect. There was a large circle of families with whom the object of ambition was to see one of their members appointed to a seat in the Council Chamber. Sentiment, vanity, interest, tradition, habit, united to bind the heads of great families in close array around the viceregal throne. The excellent Botetourt, too, had now been replaced by the rash, ignorant, and reckless Lord Dunmore, with his cormorant factotum extorting illegal fees, and a numerous family of sons and daughters, who were striving to introduce into society at Williamsburg rules of precedence similar to those which prevailed in European courts. Fool as he was, he had his courtiers and his votaries. "The palace" was still a social force, as well as a political one.

Our young burgesses, therefore, who were closeted at the Raleigh Tavern, could recommend nothing very bold or decisive. Besides, they came of a race whose words are apt to be moderate and few when their intent is most serious and unchangeable; not inclined to threaten until they are ready with the stroke.

Two years and a half before, the Massachusetts Assembly had appointed a committee of correspondence, of five members, to communicate with their agent and others in England, and with the speakers of the several colonial legislatures, upon subjects of common concern; and, once or twice, circular letters had been sent by the House to the speakers of the various assemblies. Acting upon this hint (though without thinking of it at the time), the young gentlemen determined to propose to their House to establish a Standing Committee of eleven members, for the sole purpose of getting and transmitting to sister colonies the earliest intelligence of such acts of the administration and of Parliament as related to America; to instruct this committee to inquire at once into the affair at Rhode Island; and to invite each of the other colonial legislatures to appoint a similar committee. This measure was to be urged as a means of "*quieting the minds of his majesty's faithful subjects in this colony,*" which had been "much disturbed by various rumors and reports of proceedings tending to deprive them of their ancient legal and constitutional rights."

The resolutions having been drawn, Jefferson was asked to offer them to the House the next morning. He preferred to assign this task to his brother-in-law, Dabney Carr, a new member, as yet unheard in the House, but endowed, as Jefferson believed, with eminent talents for debate. Mr. Carr consenting, the company broke up, Carr and Jefferson going to their lodgings together. As they walked homeward, they conversed upon the utility and probable effects of such committees of correspondence; and they agreed in thinking that the measure must lead, and that speedily, to a CONGRESS OF DEPUTIES from all the colonies, for the purpose of presenting a united front to these strange aggressions, and of concerting the best methods of opposition. If either of them had ever heard of the Massachusetts committee of 1770, they had forgotten it. That committee's chief object had been correspondence with agents in London. No *system* of interchanging news and ideas had resulted from its appointment. They felt then, and always felt, that *their* was an original measure.

The next morning Dabney Carr rose to address the House for the first time. A general favorite, every one wished him success; and he spoke to men alarmed at the events transpiring in Rhode Island. The resolutions were read. He supported them in a speech which tradition reports to have been a happy blending of boldness, prudence, and courtesy. How harmless the measure suggested! What more proper than for legislative bodies to procure prompt, exact information! He reconciled nearly every mind to the wisdom and propriety of the scheme; and, when he sat down, the faces of the little parliament beamed with generous joy as in the triumph of a friend. Forty-three years after, Jefferson told a son of the young speaker how well he remembered the pleasure which shone in the countenances of the Assembly at the conclusion of the speech, and the buzz of applauding remark that followed it. The resolutions were carried with a near approach to unanimity. The members of the committee were Peyton Randolph, R. C. Nicholas, Richard Bland, R. H. Lee, Benjamin Harrison, Edmund Pendleton, Patrick Henry, Dudley Digges, Dabney Carr, Archibald Cary, and Thomas Jefferson.

The session ended on the day following; but the committee remained long enough to prepare and despatch a circular letter to the colonial assemblies, explaining the object of their appointment, and requesting each of them to designate a similar committee with whom they could regularly communicate. What a part these committees played in the times that followed need not be told! Every county, every village, came to have its committee, the power of which increased as the public alarm increased. No power is so terrible as the organ of a public terror. Some of the innumerable committees, American and French, that sprang into being through that meeting in the Raleigh Tavern, abused their power; but the Committees of Correspondence — forerunner and cause of the Continental Congress — secured the independence of the colonies. The author of the scheme lived to see its success in one Revolution, and its fearful abuse in another.

The sympathy of the most powerful — or, at least, the most imposing and famous — of the colonies with the smallest and weakest touched every generous heart in America, and led the way to that predominance of Virginia which made her by and by the “mother of Presidents.” The Assembly of Massachusetts hailed

with warm applause the wise and firm conduct of Virginia at all times, and especially in thus making the cause of Rhode Island her own. The Rhode-Island Legislature, in one of its resolves, spoke of "the glorious Assembly of Virginia." The young burgesses had every reason to be satisfied with the results of their measure.

The session being ended, Jefferson and Carr resumed their professional duties. If they rode homeward together, as is probable, Jefferson was obliged to return soon to the April term of the General Court at Williamsburg; and his brother-in-law had causes to plead in the county court held at Charlottesville, the village that lay within sight of Monticello. Dabney Carr, then eight years married, had, as I have said, his little house full of little children. The sixth was born about the time of his coming from his first session, flushed with the triumph of his maiden speech. He was compelled to leave home again before his wife was strong enough to sit up. Her spirits sank at the thought of his leaving her, and she was oppressed with forebodings of evil. He took his leave of her, and mounted his horse for his journey to Charlottesville. When she heard his horse's steps upon the road under her window, she raised herself feebly in bed to catch one last look at him; but she only could get high enough to see his hat, as it swayed to the motion of the horse. Soon after reaching Charlottesville he was seized with a malignant type of typhoid fever, the course of which was so rapid that he could not be moved even so far as Monticello, and he died before Jefferson heard that he was in danger.

The news of this desolating stroke came near depriving his children of a mother. She lost her reason for a time; during which she could see only the moving phantom of a HAT, as she had seen her husband's when he passed her window. When reason returned, and for many weeks after, still that maddening hat would not vanish from her sight.\* It was long before she could bend her mind to the new duties which the event devolved upon her.

In this sudden desolation of her young life, her brother was literally a tower of refuge to her; for he took her, and all her helpless brood, home to Monticello, which thenceforth became their home, as he their father. He reared and educated all those six children — three sons and three daughters — with the same care

\* Randall's Jefferson, i. 84.



tenderness, and liberality as his own. He nurtured their infancy; he directed their studies; he guided their entrance into active life; two of the sons pursuing with distinguished success his own profession. Nor did he ever, during the long series of years when he had offices to give away, quarter one of them, or one of their children, upon the public. When he reached home, he found that his friend had been buried at Shadwell. Mindful of the romantic agreement of their youth, that, whichever died last, should bury the other under the giant oak on Monticello, beneath which they had read and talked during long summer days, he caused the remains to be removed, and mused over an inscription proper for the tombstone. He wrote one, which recorded the usual brief outline of a human life, and ended it with these words: "To his virtue, good sense, learning, and friendship, this stone is dedicated by Thomas Jefferson, who, of all men living, loved him most." He thought of these lines to accompany the inscription, from the Excursion of Mallet:—

"Lamented Shade, whom every gift of Heaven  
 Profusely blest; a temper winning, mild;  
 Nor pity softer, nor was truth more bright.  
 Constant in doing well, he neither sought  
 Nor shunned applause. No bashful merit sighed  
 Near him neglected. Sympathizing, he  
 Wiped off the tear from Sorrow's clouded eye  
 With kindly hand, and taught her heart to smile."

These melancholy duties done, there remained for Jefferson a vast increase to the joy of his home; the play and prattle of six affectionate children, their opening intelligence, their abundant love, their six countenances speaking welcome when he returned, and luring him while away. He had the instinct of the parent and of the tutor, and both unusually strong; so strong that his own family could not have sufficed for their gratification. Science will one day tell us *why* the children of such a pair should have had so slight, so precarious, a hold upon life. At present we have to be content with the miserable fact. Their first child, Martha, inherited a constitution sufficiently robust; their second lived but five months; their third only seventeen days; their fourth child was Mary, who grew to womanhood; their fifth lived five months; and their sixth two years. All of them were girls, except the one that lived seven-



teen days. The youngest, who survived two years, seemed of spirit. She listened to music with rapture, and had an organization so finely attuned, that a false note brought tears to her eyes. But Jefferson was blest in this, that his mountain-top at every period of his long life was alive and merry with a swarm of children besides his own.

We know so little of Mrs. Jefferson, that the least thing which concerns her has interest. Three glimpses of their home life are afforded in the memorials of these happy years. In one record we see her teaching "the little Carrs" the beginnings of knowledge, along with her own child. In another the dense veil of a hundred years is lifted for a moment, and we hear her blaming her husband for some generous deed of his which had met with an ungrateful return. "But," she immediately added, in a gush of admiring affection, "it was always so with him: he is so good himself, that he cannot understand how bad other people may be." In another we witness a short domestic scene, in which appear three characters, — father, mother, and child. For some trifling fault the child had undergone a trifling punishment. Some time after, being again in disgrace, her mother reminded her of the painful circumstance. The too sensitive Martha, deeply wounded at what seemed a taunt, turned away with a swelling heart, and eyes filled with tears; but, before she had gone beyond hearing, she heard her father say to her mother, in the low tone of affectionate remonstrance, "My dear, a fault in so young a child, once punished, should be forgotten." The child never forgot the passion of grateful love that filled her heart as these words caught her ear.\*

The year 1773 wore away. The next year was the one decisive of the controversy between the colonies and the king. When the year 1774 opened, Thomas Jefferson was a thriving young lawyer, not known even by name beyond his native Province; when it closed, he was a person of note among the patriots of America, and had won the honor of being proscribed by name in England.

The spring found him as usual in his seat in the House of Burgesses. As, in 1773, the eyes of the continent were fixed upon Narragansett Bay, so now, in 1774, every mind was intent upon Boston Harbor. The wrath of a misguided king was kindled against the

\* Domestic Life of Thomas Jefferson, p. 344.

Bostonians. They had not equalled the Rhode Islanders in audacity; they had not burnt a king's vessel, nor wounded a king's lieutenant; but a few of them had taken the liberty of throwing some chests of tea into the harbor. The ministry, instructed by their failure in Rhode Island, made no attempt to discover the doers of this deed. They offered no reward, and appointed no commissioners. They held the whole population guilty, and closed the port; which, in an instant, suspended the business of the town, and deprived it of the means of subsistence. So do some unskilful schoolmasters, when they cannot detect a culprit, "keep in" the whole school, and put every boy upon bread and water.

Once more Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry, the two Lees, and a few other choice spirits, met to consider what part it became Virginia to take in this new crisis. Expedients appeared to be exhausted: at least, all appeals to the powers on the other side of the ocean had proved fruitless. The young Whigs in conference concluded that the next thing in order was to rouse the people of Virginia to a more vivid sense of the deadly peril to their liberty. The Boston Port Bill was to go into operation on the 1st of June. They determined to get the House, if they could, to appoint that day as one of public fasting and humiliation, to be observed by services in all the parish churches. Between the end of the session and the day designated, there would be time for members to go to their counties, and inspire the clergy with the feeling proper to the occasion. "We cooked up a resolution," Jefferson records, "somewhat modernizing the Puritan phrases, appointing the first day of June for a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer, to implore Heaven *to avert from us the evils of civil war*, to inspire us with firmness in support of our rights, and to turn the hearts of the king and parliament to moderation and justice."

Jefferson never invited failure by neglecting obvious precautions, or disregarding the small proprieties. He was aware, that, if this resolution and its pious preamble were offered by himself, or by his merry friend Patrick Henry, or by any of the younger Whigs, the incongruity would not escape remark. The head of the bar, Mr. Nicholas, a grave, religious gentleman, was asked to offer it to the Burgesses. He complied with the request, and the resolution passed without opposition.

Lord Dunmore dissolved the House. The members, as in Lord Botecourt's time, assembled the next morning in the Apollo.

Momentous meeting! They did a few quiet things, in their usual quiet, courteous way; but two of them were things that proved decisive, irreversible, revolutionary. They agreed to buy no more tea. They instructed the committee of correspondence to propose an ANNUAL CONGRESS of deputies from all the colonies. They agreed to meet on the 1st of August, at Williamsburg, to elect the Virginia members of that congress. They declared that an attack on the rights of one colony was an attack on all. Then they broke up, and hurried home to rouse the clergy to make the very utmost of the opportunity about to be afforded them on the Fast Day.

The Fast was universally observed; and its effect, as Jefferson thought, was most salutary. The people, he says, met at their parish churches with anxiety and alarm in their faces; for no solemnity of the kind had been held in nineteen years, not since the days of terror after Braddock's defeat. The minister of his own parish was Charles Clay (cousin of Henry Clay), a man fully alive to the occasion, whose fervid oratory was heard all through the Revolutionary period, nerving the people to dare and endure. "The cause of liberty is the cause of God!" he once exclaimed in the course of a sermon on a fast day. "Cursed be he," was another of his sentences, "who keepeth back his sword from blood in this war!" "The effect of the day," wrote Jefferson many years after, thinking, doubtless, of what he had heard and seen in Albemarle, "was like a shock of electricity, arousing every man, and placing him erect and solidly on his centre."

All that summer Boston, suffering, impoverished Boston, lay upon every heart. Each Province, county, city, town, neighborhood, sent its contribution to supply the needs of the people, suddenly deprived of their occupation. The port being closed on the 1st of June, the day of the year when the stock of food in a country reaches its lowest point, the farmers could not at first be as liberal as they wished; but they did what they could. Windham (Conn. began the work of relief. Before the month of June ended, Windham sent in, with a cordial letter of applause and sympathy, "a small flock of sheep, which, at this season, are not so good as we could wish, but are the best we had." Two hundred and fifty-eight was Windham's notion of the number of sheep that go to "a small flock." Groton (Mass.) sent forty bushels of grain; Wrentham, one load of grain; Pepperill forty bushels; Charlemont, two barrels of flour; Farmington, between

three and four hundred bushels of rye and corn; and fertile Wethersfield, nearly eight hundred bushels of grain, with promise of more after harvest.

New Jersey soon wrote to say that she, too, was making contributions, and would be glad to know which would be most acceptable to a suffering sister, cash or produce. Cash, replied Boston, if perfectly convenient. North Carolina promptly sent two sloop-loads of provisions. The Marblehead fishermen were so liberal as to forward "two hundred and twenty-four quintals of good eating-fish, one barrel and three-quarters of good olive-oil, and thirty-nine pounds, five shillings, and three pence in cash." South Carolina's first gift was one hundred casks of rice. "Baltimore town" contributed three thousand bushels of corn, twenty barrels of rye-flour, two barrels of pork, and twenty barrels of bread. Virginia, — there seemed to be no end to Virginia's gifts! A cargo of corn was her first offering; Alexandria followed soon with a present of three hundred and fifty pounds in money; and the several counties kept forwarding cargoes and large consignments of corn, all through the autumn and winter. In all, Virginia contributed about ten thousand bushels of what one forwarder styled, in his letter, "donation grain," besides several sums of money from villages and individuals. "Hold out long enough," wrote a gentleman in the South, "and Boston will become the granary of America."

As the cool season approached, the agricultural towns became more liberal. Lebanon drove in "three hundred and seventy-six fat sheep;" Norwich, two hundred and ninety-one; Groton, one hundred and twenty; Brooklyn, one hundred and twenty-five; East Haddam, "a drove of sheep and cattle." The Maryland counties were extremely liberal: each sent its thousand or two thousand bushels of corn. From cold and remote Quebec came "a small quantity of wheat;" from Montreal, a hundred pounds sterling. What droves of sheep kept streaming into Boston, when the temperature favored driving! From every little mountain town in New Hampshire and Vermont came sheep, — fifty, sixty-five, one hundred, in a flock. Hartford sent off, after harvest, seven hundred and thirty-eight bushels of rye and one hundred and eleven bushels of corn, its "small but free gratuity." Berwick, with apologies for the smallness of its gift, sent six oxen and twenty-six sheep. Many towns and some Provinces, which out of the summer's scarcity had

contributed liberally, contributed a second time from the autumn's fat abundance. Groton did so and Marblehead, New Jersey and Baltimore.

Individual donations swelled the tide of benefaction. Samuel Moody treated himself to a gift of five guineas. Philadelphia raised two thousand pounds, and forwarded it, part in provisions, part in iron, part in money. Providence voted one hundred and twenty-five pounds. Newport contributed a thousand dollars. New York sent a New-Year's gift of one thousand and sixty-two pounds, with notice of more to come. Clubs, fire-companies, and other organizations, forwarded sums of money during the winter. Charleston, in South Carolina, alleviated the winter's cold with three hundred and seventy-eight tierces of rice. The church in Salem, just after their meeting-house was burnt, and a powerful member had drawn off a number of their body, contrived to send twenty-four pounds, sixteen shillings, and eight pence, "wishing it had been ten times more." Little Rutland could only spare "four quarters of beef," weight five hundred and ninety-three pounds. Springfield gave twenty-five pigs, worth "three pounds, eighteen shillings, one penny, lawful money." Wells, in Maine, contributed twenty-five cords of wood; Falmouth, fifty-seven cords; Cape Elizabeth, forty-eight cords. Portsmouth, in New Hampshire, voted two hundred pounds. From Delaware came nine hundred dollars. In the spring arrived another thousand pounds from New York. Farmers who had nothing else to give carted firewood, some twelve miles, some sixteen. Dominica gave three bags of cocoa. Even from London — from the "Constitutional Society" there — came a hundred pounds; from another society, called "The Supporters of Civil Rights," came five hundred pounds; and four smaller sums were received from individuals in England, — fifteen pounds, twenty pounds, ten pounds, four guineas. Augustine Washington, in Virginia, was asked whether he could sell a quantity of hoes and axes which Boston mechanics, thrown out of employment by the Port Bill, had turned to and made. The committee of relief set large numbers of the mechanics at work making bricks, nails, fabrics, implements, and invited contributions of materials. And so the work went on, even after the siege of the town was begun by the Continental troops, Georgia sending sixty-three casks of rice as late as June, 1776.

The letters which accompanied the gift, and the answers of the



Boston Committee, — for every gift was specially acknowledged in an epistle of high courtesy and considerable length, — would fill a volume of some magnitude. They have been printed by the Massachusetts Historical Society, to which the public is indebted for the preservation and accessibility of a great number of most precious memorials of the past. No relic of that period contains so much of its spirit as this mass of correspondence.

Jefferson, on his mountain-top that summer, was busy both with hands and brain. He was striving to get a more commodious house over the heads of his double brood; making bricks, cutting timber, sending to England for sixteen pairs of sashes, and a small box of glass to mend with. His new Italian gardeners gave him as much work as he gave them; such an enthusiast in their lovely art was he. Nor was he yet, nor was he ever, weaned from his violin.

Alberti, a great performer on the instrument, who had come to Virginia with a troupe of actors, and settled there as a teacher of music, he had lured to Monticello. Under him he practised three hours a day, until the absorbing events of these times drew him off.

This summer, especially, his head was busier than his hands. June and July would soon pass; and then the burgesses were to meet at Williamsburg, in convention, to elect deputies to the Congress which was to assemble at Philadelphia in September. Those deputies, when elected, would require formal, exact instructions. What did Virginia desire her deputies to do or attempt in Philadelphia? It was a grave question. It was a difficult question. The situation being unique, there were no precedents to guide; and how necessary to the limited mind of man are precedents! Jefferson brooded over this problem; and before starting for Williamsburg, at the end of July, he prepared a draft of such instructions as he desired should be given to the representatives of Virginia in the General Congress. It was but a rough draft, with gaps in it for names and dates, which he could not procure at home. Such as it was, however, it made him famous on one side of the ocean, and proscribed on the other.



## CHAPTER XVI.

### JEFFERSON GIVES ADVICE TO GEORGE III.

THE slow pace at which the two great revolutions of the last century marched surprises anew every new inquirer. In our own day a Louis Philippe slips across the Channel at the imminent risk of catching a cold, or a Louis Napoleon eagerly surrenders a sword he never used, and finds safety in an enchanting chateau; and, behold, the revolution is accomplished! No one misses them. No one regrets them. They vanish from the scene like player kings, — as they are; and, if a movement is made for their return, it is by men who take their wages for doing it. So completely have we outgrown that mighty illusion of the past, the divinity that hedged a king.

Mr. Carlyle opens his series of pictures of the French Revolution with the death of Louis XV. To have made the series complete, he might have begun with the execution of poor crazy Damiens, who pierced the skin of that monarch with a penknife in 1757, and was put to death with tortures inconceivable. Nothing could recall to the modern reader more forcibly the spell that once surrounded the kingly office. Nothing could better show what the French people had to overcome before they could *think* of a king as the mere chief magistrate of a nation, existing only for the nation's convenience. The apology and explanation of the frenzies of the French Revolution was the awful majesty with which policy and religion had conspired to invest the name and person of the monarch.

It was not merely that the king had the power to inflict upon an irresponsible fanatic all the anguish which the frame of a powerful young man could endure; it was not merely that the wretch was burned with red-hot tongs by the parasites who arrested him; that his eighty-two days of detention and trial were all days of keenest suffering; that the art of torture was exhausted to wring from his

the names of imaginary confederates; that his right hand was slowly burnt off; that he was torn with red-hot pincers, and melted lead and boiling pitch poured into his wounds; that he was pulled to pieces by four horses; that his body was burned to ashes, his bones covered with the dust, his innocent family banished, and his relations forbidden to bear his name. The cowardice of kings has done or permitted such cruelty many times. The instructive fact in this case is, that France, Europe, the civilized world, looked on, and saw all that done without disapproval! The king was hailed with unaccustomed acclamations when next he appeared in public. When he pensioned, or otherwise rewarded, every man concerned in the trial and execution, from the judges to the torturers, he evidently did what France thought was becoming. A dozen diarists of the time have left minute narratives of the whole fell business; but who intimates disapproval? The woman of rank who expressed pity for the *horses*, as she watched their struggles to accomplish their part of the programme, was supposed to have uttered a gay, sprightly thing, suited to the occasion. Even Voltaire, the chief opponent of the system of torture, made a jest of this victim's agony; for he held that torture, though absurd and monstrous in ordinary cases, might properly be employed when the life of a king had been aimed at.

In England and in English colonies, king-worship was as much more profound and solemn as the character of the Saxon is deeper than that of the Celt. How else can we account for the submission of such an empire as that of Great Britain to such kings as the Four Georges, from whom it derived immense evils, and no good? Whoever or whatever, during the last two centuries, has been right in England, the king has always been wrong. Whoever has been wise in England, the king has always been foolish. Whoever has assisted progress in England, the king has always obstructed it. During the reign of the first two of these royal Georges, the interests of a great empire were made subordinate to those of a petty Continental state. The third spent his long life in warring upon that in the government of his country which constitutes a great part of Britain's claim to the gratitude of our race. The fourth, so far as the finite mind of man can discern, lived but to show how nearly a man can resemble a brute, without undergoing an Ovid's metamorphosis, and falling upon four legs.

But, being called by the name of KING, it was enough. From imperial Chatham, through all gradations of intelligence and power, down, past Dr. Johnson, to the lowest flunky that ever aired his "quivering calves" behind a carriage, Englishmen were proud to be called their subjects, and could not hold their souls upright in their presence. This is one of the mysteries of human nature for some future Darwin to investigate; for it is something which we appear to have in common with the bees, the ants, some migratory birds, and some gregarious beasts.

Jefferson had one of the most radical of minds, superior to the illusions in which most men pass their lives; but when, in the summer of 1774, he sat down to prepare a draft of Instructions for Virginia's delegates to the Congress, which was to meet at Philadelphia in September, he thought of nothing more revolutionary than this: The Congress should unite in a most solemn and elaborate address to the king! The case had been argued, one would think, often enough. For nine years the separate colonies had been petitioning and resolving. The press of both countries had teemed with the subject. Franklin had been elucidating it, and flashing wit upon it. If a gracious king did not understand the matter yet, there was small reason to hope that any further expenditure of mere ink would avail. Nevertheless, this young radical of Monticello deemed it the chief duty of the Continental Congress to argue the matter once more, and make another appeal to the justice of the king. The delegates from Virginia, he thought, should be instructed to propose to the Congress to present "a humble and dutiful address to His Majesty," as the chief magistrate of the empire, — an empire governed by many legislatures, — informing him that one of those legislatures, namely, the British Parliament, had encroached upon the rights of others, namely, those of the Thirteen American Colonies, and calling upon the king to interfere.

A humble and dutiful address! One who is familiar with the character of George III. can scarcely read Jefferson's draft of Instructions with a serious countenance, so ludicrously remote was it from the king's conception of the humble and the dutiful.

It was a frightfully radical way of opening the case to speak of the mighty British Parliament as the legislature of *one* portion of the king's dominions. That was the point in dispute. It is not probable, that, in 1774, Thomas Jefferson, a provincial lawyer, knew

the secrets of the Court of St. James; nor could it have been his intention to inflame the wrath of the British lion; but if he had known George III. from his childhood, and heard every Tory sentiment which his Scotch tutors had instilled into his unformed mind, he could not have produced a piece of writing better calculated to exasperate the king. In almost every sentence there was a sting,—the bitter sting of truth and good sense. Jefferson learned, by and by, to be a politician; and he acquired the art of uttering offensive truths with the minimum of offence. Just as some noblemen, bigoted tories in theory, are most courteous democrats in practice, giving to every human creature they know or meet his due of consideration, so he, a democrat in theory, became conciliatory and conservative in giving utterance to his opinions, anxious to narrow the breach between himself and his opponents. But in this paper he accumulated offence, careless of every thing but to get roughly upon paper the substantial truth of the matter, leaving it to the convention to invest that truth with becoming words.

The Congress, he thought, should address the king in a frank and manly manner, devoid of those servile expressions “which would persuade His Majesty that we are asking favors and not rights.” The king was to be invited to reflect “that he is no more than the chief officer of the people, appointed by the laws, and circumscribed with definite powers, to assist in working the great machine of government, erected for their use, and, consequently, subject to their superintendence.” This sentence bluntly asked George III. to unlearn his whole education. The king was to be reminded, also, that the colonies had been planted, and defended for a hundred and fifty years, without costing the king’s treasury a shilling. Recently, since the commerce of America had become important to Great Britain, the home government had assisted to expel the French. For the same reason England had given aid to Portugal, and other allies, commercially important to her; but the British Parliament did not claim, in consequence, a right to tax the Portuguese.

But this was inoffensive compared with his next point. In alluding to the oppressions suffered by the colonies in the time of the Stuarts, the uncompromising radical held language that no king has ever been able to hear with patience: “A family of princes was then upon the British throne, whose treasonable crimes against their people brought on them afterwards the exertion of those sacred and

sovereign rights of punishment, reserved in the hands of the people for cases of extreme necessity, and judged by the constitution unsafe to be delegated to any other judicature"! He spoke familiarly, too, of "the late deposition of His Majesty King Charles, by the Commonwealth of England," as a thing too obviously right to be defended. Equally right was it for some of the colonies to choose to remain under Charles II. It was wholly *their* business: they could have any king they liked, or no king. The people were sovereign; the king was their head servant.

With regard to the various legislatures in the empire, all of them were equally independent and equally sovereign. The parliament of Virginia had no right to pass laws for the government of the people of England, and the British legislature had no right to pass laws for the government of the people of Virginia. Hence, the whole series of absurd and iniquitous acts of the British legislature regulating the commerce and restricting the industry of the colonies were VOID! "Can any one reason be assigned, why a hundred and sixty thousand electors in the island of Great Britain should give law to four millions in the States of America, every individual of whom is equal to every individual of *them*, in virtue, in understanding, and in bodily strength?" He enumerated the long catalogue of monstrous acts, from the amazing laws which forbade an American to make a hat or a nail, to the malignant tyranny which would drag an accused American three thousand miles to his trial. "The cowards who would suffer a countryman to be torn from the bowels of their society, in order to be thus offered a sacrifice to parliamentary tyranny, would merit that everlasting infamy now fixed on the authors of the act."

The burden of these instructions is decentralization. Already Jefferson saw the necessity of local government, the impossibility of a power on the banks of the Thames acting wisely for a Province on the shores of the James, the certainty that the momentary interests of a class near the law-making power would outweigh the permanent interests of the distant Province. The abolition of slavery, as remarked, was "*the great object of desire in the colonies;*" and, as a step towards that, Virginia had tried again and again to stop all further importations of slaves; but every such law had been vetoed by the king himself, who thus preferred the advantage of "a few British corsairs, to the lasting interests of the American States,



and to the rights of human nature deeply wounded by this infamous practice.”

In asserting that the *great* object of desire in the colonies was the abolition of slavery, he expressed rather the feeling of his own set,—the educated and high-bred young Whigs of the Southern colonies, than the sentiments of the great body of slaveholders. He could boast that the first act of his own public life had been an attempt in that direction; and he knew that his friend and ally, Richard Henry Lee, had opened his brilliant career by a motion to put an end to “the iniquitous and disgraceful traffic” in slaves. Virginia, this orator observed, was falling behind younger colonies, because, “with their whites, they import arts and agriculture, whilst we, with our blacks, exclude both.” Every man with whom Jefferson associated felt and spoke in this spirit. Wythe, R. H. Lee, Madison, Jefferson, and the flower of the young men of South Carolina, were all abolitionists; and all of them used in 1774 the arguments which were so familiar to us in 1860.

Jefferson made a clean breast of it in these Instructions. He went to the root of the matter on every topic that he touched. He paid the king the extravagant homage of assuming, that, if a thing could be shown to be wrong or unlawful, his majesty would refrain from doing it, as a matter of course. Hence, in descanting upon the odious presence of British troops in Massachusetts, he desired the king to be informed that he had “no right to land a single armed man upon these shores;” and that those regiments in Boston were subject to the laws of Massachusetts, *like all other emigrants!* The king’s grandfather, George II., in the Seven Years’ War, found it convenient to bring over a body of his own Hanoverian troops to assist in the defence of England; but he could not land a man of them till Parliament had given its consent, and specified the precise number that might be brought in. The States of America had the same right. “Every State must judge for itself the number of armed men which they may safely trust among them, of whom they are to consist, and under what restrictions they are to be laid.”

Every State! The word “colonies” seldom occurs in this document. The word “States” supplies its place.

The wrongs of Boston, when he came to speak upon them, kindled his usually tranquil mind. He wanted it put to the king with



all the force of which language was capable, that, while only a few men had been concerned in throwing the tea into the harbor, the closing of the port had reduced "an ancient and wealthy town, in a moment, from opulence to beggary." Men who had spent their lives in extending the commerce of the empire, men who were absent in distant countries, men who sided with the king, all, all, were involved in one indiscriminate ruin. This might be revenge: it could not be justice.

Towards the close of his draft the author dropped the tone of a burgess instructing his representative, and talked directly to the king himself: "Open your breast, sire, to liberal and expanded thought. Let not the name of George III. be a blot on the page of history. . . . The whole art of government consists in the art of being honest. Only aim to do your duty, and mankind will give you credit when you fail. No longer persevere in sacrificing the rights of one part of the empire to the inordinate desires of another." With several other brotherly observations equally suited to soothe the mind of a proud, ignorant, obstinate, and misguided king.

These radical doctrines found free acceptance among the planters of Jefferson's own county of Albemarle. At least, Jefferson's ascendancy was such, that he was able to procure for them the support of the freeholders of the county.

It is interesting to notice that the details of politics were managed a hundred years ago very much as they are now. May we not say, as they were twenty centuries ago? Who has forgotten the shock of surprise which he experienced upon opening for the first time a volume of Demosthenes' speeches, to discover that *WHEREAS* and *RESOLVED* were forms as familiar to an Athenian audience as they are to us; and that when, on a memorable occasion, Daniel Webster called for the reading of the resolution, he practised a device which Demosthenes used almost every time he spoke? Thomas Jefferson wrote this draft of instructions before he had been chosen a member of the convention which was to elect delegates to the Congress. But politics had already the character which we sometimes describe as "cut and dried." He knew he was to be elected. The freeholders of Albemarle were to meet on the 26th of July, in order to choose two gentlemen to serve them in the double capacity of burgesses and members of the Williamsburg Convention. Those two gentlemen would *also* require instructions which should accord with the

ponderous document that one of them intended to carry in his pocket to the convention. How could that conformity be better secured than by employing the same mind to execute both? In the resolutions passed by the freeholders of Albemarle, Jefferson caused himself and his colleague to be notified that no foreign legislature could rightfully exercise authority in an American colony. This was the leading idea of his draught, which Franklin had promulgated seven years before.

Being duly elected and instructed, he left his home for Williamsburg some days before the time appointed for the meeting of the Convention. How cold are words to express the tumult of desire with which this ardent young radical looked forward to meeting his friends on this occasion! Every thing we have of him belonging to this period shows a degree of excitement to which he was little accustomed. He knew well that Virginia was not yet prepared for such extreme good sense as he had inserted in the roll of manuscript which he carried with him. He had himself held the Franklinian theory for several years; but, as yet, he knew but one other member of the House of Burgesses who fully accepted it; and that was his old friend and mentor, George Wythe. There was something revolting to the patriotic pride of Virginians in the doctrine that the political tie between Virginia and England was the same as that which connected England and Hanover, — only a king in common! He wished to be promptly on the ground to talk the matter over with members, and, above all, with Patrick Henry, the idol of the people, whose irresistible eloquence alone could reconcile the public mind to novel or unwelcome ideas. It would not be the first time that Henry's morning speech had conveyed to Virginia the results of a conference with Jefferson the evening before. An orator is never so potent as when he gives wings to truth which minds more patient than his own have evolved.

But Jefferson was not destined to sit in the Williamsburg Convention. On the road he was taken sick; he could not continue his journey; and, for the only time in his life, he was unable to perform a public duty from mere bodily inability. The intense mental excitement under which he had labored, the toil of composing in haste so extensive a piece, and the sudden change from the airy height of Monticello to the August heats of the lower country, proved too much even for his excellent constitution. But an author is strongly

attached to the offspring of his brain. He sent forward to Williamsburg two copies of his work, one addressed to Peyton Randolph, who was to preside over the convention, and the other to Patrick Henry. Mr. Henry was an idle, disorderly man of genius, — “the laziest man in reading,” says Jefferson, “I ever knew.” Whether he ever read this mass of manuscript (sixty or seventy pages of ordinary writing) will never be known; for nothing was ever heard of the copy sent to him. But the chairman, Mr. Randolph, took public notice of his copy. He announced to the Convention that he had received such a document from a member who was prevented from attending by sickness, and he laid it on the table for members to read if they chose. Most of them read it, and many approved it, though aware of its unsuitableness to the existing state of things. Probably not one member would have given it the stamp of his official approbation. It occurred to some, however, that it would make a timely pamphlet; and in that form it was published and extensively circulated, with this title, “A Summary View of the Rights of America.” Copies were sent to England. Mr. Burke, who saw in it a weapon of offence against the ministry, changed it here and there, added sentences, and caused it to be published in England, where it ran through edition after edition. It procured for the author, to use his own language, “the honor of having his name inserted in a long list of proscriptions enrolled in a bill of attainder commenced in one of the Houses of Parliament, but suppressed in embryo by the hasty step of events.” The list included about twenty names, among which were John Hancock, Samuel Adams, John Adams, Peyton Randolph, and Patrick Henry.

In this pamphlet, the truth concerning both the nature and the history of the connection between the colonies and Great Britain — the truth, without any reserves whatever — was stated for the first time; and it was so fully stated, that no one was ever able to add any thing to it. The Declaration of Independence was only the substance of this pamphlet given in a moderate, brief, official form.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE CONGRESS.

WHAT anguish, what humiliation, to be laid aside at such a time by a ridiculous summer disease, such as children get from eating green apples! Such is man, high and mighty as he fancies himself to be! It must be owned, however, that the Convention accomplished its work exceedingly well without Jefferson. Let us mark well the prodigious fact, that Virginia, in 1774, knew how to choose from her people, or, as Colonel Washington expressed it, her "ten thousand taxables," the seven men who best represented her, who could best serve her, and reflect most honor upon her. All the colonies could do as much. We cannot. It is one of the Lost Arts. These seven were all members of the House of Burgesses, and hence were familiarly known to the members of the Convention. Mr. Jefferson used to say that every individual of them was chosen for a particular reason. "Ben Harrison," as he styled him, was a jolly, self-indulgent, wealthy planter, without much knowledge of principles, or capacity for business; but he perfectly represented his class, long the ruling class of the colony, and therefore he was chosen one of the deputies. He had at home a son, eighteen months old, who was destined to preside over the nation, which the meeting of the Congress was to create. Richard Bland was chosen because he was considered the best writer in Virginia. Edmund Pendleton was regarded in the light of ballast; since, besides possessing a vast fund of legal knowledge, he was prudence personified. Peyton Randolph had a genius for presiding over an assembly, — a man of weighty presence and imperturbable courtesy. Richard Henry Lee, the fluent and ornate orator, was sent to add argument, fact, and persuasion to Patrick Henry's awakening peals. Henry himself was not selected for his eloquence alone, but also because he was

the man of the people. He was the first eminent American instance of a certain combination of qualities that renders a man resistless before an unlettered people, — a common mind, uncommon talents, and the instinct of being popular. To these six the convention added the shining figure of Colonel Washington, now forty-two years of age, who united in himself the three possessions that captivate the greatest number of persons, — military glory, great wealth, and a fine person.

Virginia, I repeat, could choose her seven best and fittest in 1774; but she could no more have done it then than New York can do it now, if her grossly ignorant laborers of foreign lineage had been admitted to the suffrage.

Seldom has an assembly so sedulously veiled a radical purpose under conservative forms, as this Williamsburg Convention of 1774. Still protesting "inviolable and unshaken fidelity and attachment to our most gracious sovereign," still professing regard and affection for their friends and fellow-subjects in other parts of the empire, still declaring that they opposed every thing which might have "the most distant tendency to interrupt or in any wise disturb his majesty's peace," they nevertheless instructed their delegates, that, if that "despotic viceroy," General Gage, should presume to attempt to execute his threats against Massachusetts, such conduct would "justify resistance and reprisal." This might be termed a conditional declaration of war, and went far beyond any thing in Jefferson's draft of Instructions. The Convention also pledged Virginia to a suspension of her business as a tobacco-producing State, if the home government persisted in its system of oppression. No more exportation of produce, no more importation of merchandise! The convention only restrained their deputies in one particular. As it was then the first week of August, the tobacco crop was, to use the planters' term, "nearly made;" and, what was of more weight in their honest minds, it was eaten up, spent, pledged to London merchants for goods had and consumed. *That* crop, therefore, must go forward. Honor and necessity demanded it. But no more: Unless American grievances were redressed by Aug. 10, 1775, not a pound of Virginia tobacco should go to England; and Virginia would find some other way of earning her subsistence. As for tea, "we view it with horror!" From this day, this very 6th of August, 1774, we will neither import it nor buy it, — no, nor even use the little we have on hand!



It is interesting to view the action of this convention in connection with Jefferson's paper. He, the philosopher, the man of books and thoughts, was chiefly concerned to get on paper the correct theory of the situation; but the practical, English-minded men of the convention, who shrank from the theory, had the clearest view of what was to be *done*. If General Gage stirs to carry out his proclamations, give him Lexington! Meanwhile, we will retort the starvation of Boston upon British merchants and manufacturers! Nothing could be better than Jefferson's theory, except this exquisite practice; and it was part of that practice to give the theory wings, and so communicate to it the intelligence of both countries.

Colonel Washington, a very practical head, conceived the idea that the Congress might desire to know something exact respecting the population, commerce, and resources of each colony. If it should come to a fight, it would certainly be desirable to know what means the central power would have at command. He took care to ascertain from George Wythe, Secretary of the House of Burgesses, how many men Virginia contained who were subject to taxation. Before leaving Williamsburg for Mount Vernon, he sent off a despatch to Richard Henry Lee, who had gone home, to ask him to lend his aid toward getting from the four custom-houses (one at the mouth of each river, York, James, Rappahannock, and Potomac) a statement of Virginia's annual exports and imports.

"P.S. If you should travel to Philadelphia by land, I should be glad of your company. Mr. Henry is to be at my house on his way, Tuesday, the 30th instant."

In those electric days people were too full of the great business in hand to make any record of their feelings; and hence it is only trifles recorded by chance that betray how vivid and universal was the interest in the subjects the Congress were to discuss. One Sunday morning, in this very August, 1774, an obnoxious tool of the ministry went to church in Plymouth, Massachusetts. As soon as he entered, a large number of the congregation rose, left the building, and went home! An act of this nature, which might not mean much in some communities, indicated in New England a deep and unchangeable resolve. Journalism was then an infant art. Interviewing—its latest acquisition, and one of its best,



though liable to abuse — had not yet been borrowed from that great, first interviewer, James Boswell. Often, in those primitive days, the press could only reveal an intense and general excitement by silence. We know, from many sources, that Philadelphia was profoundly moved at the gathering of this Congress; that the whole population was astir; that two continents had followed with attentive minds those little groups of horsemen making their way through the woods from the various colonies to this central city; that kings, courts, ministries, politicians, philosophers, and peoples, in London, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, St. Petersburg, and Ferney (capital of Voltaire's empire), were speculating upon what might come of this unique proceeding. But, when we look into the Philadelphia newspapers of the week, we find that they mentioned, in a quiet paragraph of three lines, that "the gentlemen appointed to meet in the General Congress are arrived." Nothing more! Now and then, during the session of fifty-two days, some paper presented to the Congress was published without comment; but no indication appears in the press, either of the unusual nature of the assembly, or of the peculiar interest felt in its proceedings, or of the measures it discussed.

The king employed a similar device, it seems; for, when he received at length the eloquent and pathetic petition which the Congress addressed to him in the name of the colonies, he sent it down to Parliament, as Franklin records, among a great heap of letters, handbills, newspapers, and pamphlets from America, and it was laid upon the table undistinguished by any recommendation, and unnoticed in the royal speech.

The sick Jefferson, while the deputies to the Congress were making their way to Philadelphia, resumed his journey, as it seems, and reached Williamsburg a few days after the Convention adjourned. There he performed an important act. The courts had been closed throughout Virginia for several months, which left the lawyers little to do. The law fixing the fees of the various officers attached to the courts having expired by its own limitation, an act renewing the fees was pending in the House of Burgesses when Lord Dunmore abruptly dismissed the House in May, 1774; and hence no courts had since been held. The people, not unwilling to bring home to their governor a sense of the absurd precipitancy of his conduct, appear to have submitted with pleasure to the deprivation. Jeffer

son never resumed practice. At thirty-one, after seven years' successful exercise of his profession, he gave up his unfinished business into the hands of his friend and kinsman, Edmund Randolph, and so withdrew from the law, as it proved forever.

His marriage, as we have seen, had doubled his estate, increasing the number of his slaves to more than eighty; and the profits of his profession had added three thousand acres to his paternal farm. There had gathered about him, too, on his mountain-top, including his own family, his sister's brood, his mother and brother, his Italian gardeners, the mechanics employed on his house, and his overseers, a patriarchal household of thirty-four persons. His presence at home was peculiarly needed at all times; for his wife was not one of those robust ladies of the Old Dominion who could conduct a plantation as well as their husbands, and she was generally absorbed in nourishing a life more feeble than her own. It was for such reasons, as we may presume, that he now withdrew from a profession that compelled him to be long absent from Albemarle. He felt himself strong enough to trust his future to glorious agriculture and the manly, homely arts that facilitate agriculture. He might build a mill for his own and his neighbor's grain; he might keep a few boys at work, making nails for his county; he might convert some of his wood into timber, and a little of his clay into bricks; but henceforth, to the end of his days, he derived the greatest part of his revenue from the culture of the soil. He was a farmer, as his fathers had been before him.

At a time when busy and capable men shrink from public office with a feeling resembling horror, it may be well to note that few persons have ever performed public duty at such a sacrifice of personal feeling and private interest as Thomas Jefferson. Even in old and highly-organized communities, the head of such a household can be ill spared; but in Virginia, in a remote county, in a region where trained labor did not exist, and where men of much capacity could seldom be hired at all, and never for long, where rudest men tilled a new soil with rudest implements, and those men were slaves, nothing but the master's eye could prevent the most reckless waste and ruinous mismanagement. Every frontier plantation was, of necessity, a little kingdom, in which the master had to furnish the whole daily requirement of authority and guidance. If a wood-hopper broke a leg or a blood-vessel, it was Jefferson who was sum-

moned ; and, if the baby had the measles, it was Jefferson who must prescribe. When the dam gave way, or a wheel-barrow broke down ; if a shop caught fire, or the lettuce was nipped by the frost ; if the cattle got into the wheat, or the small-pox into the negro quarter, — it was still the master who had to furnish brain and nerve for the emergency. There was never a period, during his public life, when he had not reasons for remaining at home which most men would have felt to be sufficient.

An incident of this period shows the temper of the times and of the man. A copy of the non-importation agreement having reached him in August, 1774, he wrote to London to countermand the order which he had despatched in June for fourteen pairs of sashes ready glazed, and a little glass to mend with. Despatched, do I say ? Jefferson's way of getting a letter across the ocean at this time had nothing in it that could be called despatch. When he had written his letter, the next thing was to find some one going into the lower country, who would take the trouble to get it on board a ship lying in one of the rivers, bound for London. A letter could be many a long day reaching salt water by this method. Before his letter had been long gone, word came that his sashes were finished, but the putty was not hard enough yet to brave the perils of the deep. It must harden "about a month." Hence the sashes, which were ordered on the 1st of June, before the non-importation agreement had been contemplated, threatened to arrive about Christmas, when that agreement had become the main hope of a roused and patriotic continent. In these circumstances, he explained the matter to the committee in charge of the county where the sashes would be landed, and placed them at their disposal. "As I mean," said he, "to be a conscientious observer of the measures generally thought requisite for the preservation of our independent rights, so I think myself bound to account to my country for any act of mine which might wear an appearance of contravening them."

His own county was to have its committee of safety, elected, as in all the counties, by the freeholders, with due form and solemnity ; for, if the worst came to the worst, the committees of safety would wield, during an interregnum, the sovereign power. On New-Year's Day, 1775, this great business was done in Albemarle. A committee of fifteen was elected, with Thomas Jefferson at its head. For him two-hundred and eleven votes were cast, which was eleven more than any one else received ; one member getting but sixty-four.

A public duty of eminent importance called him away from home in the early days of the spring of 1775. The Williamsburg Convention of August, 1774, which had elected deputies to the first Congress, had adjourned to meet March 20, 1775. But not at Williamsburg! Not at the capital of the Old Dominion! Not under the eye of Dunmore, nor within easy reach of the marines of the men-of-war that lay in York River. During these years of agitation, a village had been slowly gathering upon the site of Virginia's future capital, — its natural capital, — where the navigation of the James is interrupted, about midway between the ocean and the mountains, by islands and impassable rapids. Sea-going vessels of a hundred and fifty tons can ascend the winding river a hundred and fifty miles, as far as those rapids; and, above them for two hundred miles farther, barges could be poled and towed. Here then, at this "carrying-place," was the spot, of all others in Virginia, for Virginia's mart, store-house, and counting-room. The banks of the river rise here into commanding heights, which afford a site as peculiar and picturesque as that of Edinburgh. Richmond was still but a straggling village, when the Convention met there in March, 1775; and there was only one building in it fit for such an assembly, — the parish church of St. John, — which is still standing, little changed, surrounded by its spacious, ill-kept churchyard. It shows to what a point of excitement the Province had been wrought, that a parish church should have been used for such a purpose.

The Convention sat eight days, — long enough to give an impulse to the course of events, and to decide the future career of Thomas Jefferson.

When we read of Patrick Henry's wonderful displays of eloquence, we naturally figure to ourselves a spacious interior and a great crowd of rapt listeners. But, in truth, those of his orations which quickened or changed the march of events, and the thrill of which has been felt in the nerves of four generations, were all delivered in small rooms and to few hearers, never more than one hundred and fifty. The first thought of the visitor to St. John's church in Richmond is: Could it have been *here*, in this oaken chapel of fifty or sixty pews, that Patrick Henry delivered the greatest and best known of all his speeches? Was it here that he uttered those words of doom, so unexpected, so unwelcome, "We must fight"? Even here. And the words were spoken in a tone

and manner worthy of the men to whom they were addressed, — with quiet and profound solemnity. The mere outline of the speech which we possess (with here and there a sentence or a phrase of such concentrated power that their every syllable is stamped indelibly upon the mind) shows that this untaught orator practised all the *art* of Demosthenes, while exhibiting all his genius. How strangely prophetic the sentence, “The next gale that sweeps from the North will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms”! These words were spoken on the 23d of March, 1775, while the people were joyously repeating the news that the king had been so good as to *receive* the petition of the Congress. Nothing at the moment foretold the coming conflict, except the intuitive sense of this inspired yeoman.

He carried the Convention with him. It was agreed that Virginia should arm; and a committee of thirteen — a magical number henceforth — was named to concert a plan. Along with Patrick Henry, George Washington, R. H. Lee, Harrison, Pendleton, and others, the young member from Albemarle was appointed to serve on this committee. They agreed upon this: The more densely peopled counties should enroll, equip, supply, and drill companies of infantry; the other counties should raise troops of horsemen; all should wear the hunting-shirt, which, Colonel Washington told them, was the best possible uniform; and all should set about the **work** of preparation at once.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### HOSTILITIES PRECIPITATED BY THE ROYAL GOVERNORS.

ON the last day of the session the Convention performed the act which proved momentous to Mr. Jefferson. Lord Dunmore was governing Virginia without the assistance of its legislature; but the necessities of the Province were such, that it was thought he might be induced or compelled to summon it. Peyton Randolph, the speaker of the House of Burgesses, had presided over the deliberations of the Congress; and it accorded with the spirit and custom of that age (as with justice and good sense) never to change public servants except for a good reason. Hence it was certain he would be elected chairman of the next Congress, to meet on the 10th of May. The Convention, not disposed to give a royal governor any fair occasion to complain, provided for his return to Virginia, by voting, that, in case Peyton Randolph should be obliged to leave the Congress before its adjournment, Thomas Jefferson should supply his place.

How graciously the king had received the Congress petition, the members of this Convention may have learned before they left Richmond. Perhaps in the very hour when Patrick Henry was warning them not to indulge in the illusions of hope, nor suffer themselves to be betrayed by a kiss, Lord Dunmore was penning a ridiculous proclamation, which showed the king's antipathy to the Congress, and to every thing that emanated from it: "Whereas certain persons have presumed, without his majesty's authority or consent, to assemble together at Philadelphia," and have called another and similar meeting for May next, "I am commanded by the king to require all magistrates and other officers to use their utmost endeavors to prevent any such appointment of deputies, and to exhort all persons whatever within this government to desist



from such an unjustifiable proceeding as highly displeasing to his majesty."

This document provoked derision only. But the governor's next act was an act of war, which every man in Virginia felt like a blow. In one of the public squares in Williamsburg, in the very middle of the town, was the powder-magazine, containing twenty barrels of gunpowder, the property of the colony, and part of its usual means of defence against the Indians. This store, always precious, had now become an object of intense and even morbid interest. It was not merely that the Province was arming, and that every thing relating to arms had acquired new value; but, in times of public commotion, a community maintained by the labor of slaves is haunted by a dread of insurrection. Conscience makes cowards of us all. This fear, always latent, had recently become omnipresent in Virginia; and every man shuddered to think of the deluge of mischief and horror a rash coward like Dunmore could bring upon the Province, by luring the negroes to his aid with the promise of freedom. To Dunmore, too, that powder had become interesting; for he was almost alone in a community that looked upon him as the enemy of all which they most prized. True, it was a community in which regard for law had become an instinct; and he was, if possible, the more safe in their midst *because* he was their enemy. But conscience made a coward of him also. He, too, feared the people he had wronged, as they feared the people whom they were always wronging.

In the dead of night, April 20, a small party of marines filed from "the palace" grounds, followed by a small wagon belonging to Dunmore himself, and marched towards the magazine. For some time past a patrol of patriotic citizens had guarded the magazine at night; but, as no alarm occurred, they had gone home a little earlier every night, until, on this occasion, the streets of Williamsburg were silent an hour after midnight. The noble governor had apparently been watching for such a chance to steal the public property; for, like General Gage, he wished to disarm his Province in a quiet way. That very night, Gage in Boston was reckoning up the cost of *his* attempt, in British dead and wounded. Dunmore had the key of the Williamsburg magazine. About three in the morning of the day after the battle of Lexington, Dunmore's wagon, loaded with fifteen half-barrels of Virginia's powder, was driven out of town.

guarded by marines, and, soon after daylight, was conveyed on board of an English man-of-war, that lay in the James River, seven miles distant. The rest of the powder, which the noble lord's noble "little wagon" would not hold, was buried, as it seems, in the magazine itself.

In the morning, as soon as this puerile act was known, there arose a contest, not between the robbed and the robber, but between the cool heads and the hot heads of the town. The people filled the streets, excited and angry; the patrol resumed their arms, and gathered in the public square; and every thing was ripe for tumult. But the elders and chief men of the place, above all others Peyton Randolph, chairman of the Congress, and Mr. Nicholas, the head of the bar, moved about among the people, advising moderation and order; and, early in the day, a safety-valve was found. Williamsburg, small as it was, was a city blessed with a mayor, recorder, aldermen, and councilmen, who, on great emergencies, met in "common hall," and acted as one body. They met on this wild day, and agreed to present an humble address to His Excellency, the Right Honorable John, Earl of Dunmore, asking him why the colony's powder was taken away from its proper repository, and asking him to have it brought back. In his reply, this right honorable personage lied. He said he had heard of an insurrection in a neighboring county, and had thought it best to remove the powder to a place of greater safety. Having uttered this falsehood, he proceeded to show that it *was* a falsehood by promising, upon his word and honor, that, if the powder should be wanted for an insurrection, it should be brought back in half an hour. But the cool heads succeeded in dispersing the people, and leaving the town for the night in charge of the patrol.

Dreadful rumors were in the air. The news of the plunder of the magazine sped from county to county, inflaming minds which no considerations of abstract tea could reach. He has taken our powder, our own powder, bought with our money, and stored for our common defence! The dullest mind could feel all the wrong, and much of the complex indignity, of the act. In the night, too, while honest men were asleep!

And what tidings were on their way from the North! Gage, also in the dead of night, had sent an armed force to disarm Massachusetts! Her yeomen had risen upon them, and driven them back

again, a chase of thirty miles ; and they had left a dead or wounded soldier on every furlong of the road ! This intelligence, following so quick upon the news of Dunmore's exploit, startled every one into the conviction that the plunder of the magazine and the march of Gage's troops were parts of a general scheme to deprive the colonies of the means of defence. The newly-formed companies seized such arms as they had, and rushed to their several rendezvous without waiting for orders, demanding to be led to the Capitol, and recover their stolen powder. Never was a widely-scattered community so instantly kindled ; for, before the news of Lexington had been in Virginia four days, there were assembled at Fredericksburg fourteen companies of horsemen ready to march to Williamsburg, seventy miles distant. And yet the cool heads triumphed once more. A letter from Peyton Randolph arrived in the nick of time, informing them that the governor had engaged to arrange the affair of the powder in a manner satisfactory to the colony, and entreating the troops to return to their homes. By one majority, in a meeting of one hundred and two officers, this advice was accepted, and the troopers rode homeward. The Congress was to meet again in eleven days. It seemed best not to precipitate the colony into war.

There was a man in Virginia, the King of Virginia we may call him, Patrick Henry, who saw in this affair of the powder the best opportunity that had yet occurred of bringing home the controversy to the minds of the unthinking. " You may talk in vain to them," said he to his friends, " about the duties upon tea ; but tell them of the robbery of the magazine, and that the next step will be to disarm *them*, and you bring the subject home to their bosoms." He called together the horsemen of his county of Hanover, harangued them, and began his march toward Williamsburg, joined, as he advanced, by squads of other companies, until his band amounted to a hundred and fifty men. By the time the news of this movement reached the capital, rumor had swelled his force to five thousand infuriate patriots, armed to the teeth. Consternation filled the palace of the governor. He sent his wife and daughters on board the *Fowey*, man-of-war. The captain of that famous vessel garrisoned the palace with marines, and threatened, in case of an outbreak, to fire upon the town. Several of Patrick Henry's friends rode in hot haste to induce him to turn back ; but he held to his pur

pose, until, at the close of the second day's march, he halted sixteen miles from Williamsburg.

Lord Dunmore, in this extremity, called his Council together, — that select body whom the governor himself nominated, and the king appointed. Being summoned, they repaired to the Council Chamber in the Capitol, their invariable place of meeting; but the governor, panic-stricken, would not venture out, and commanded the Council to attend him in the palace. When they were seated in his presence, he stated the case, and said he was afraid the excited troopers who were approaching might, in their frenzy, seize upon a public magazine, which would infallibly bring down upon the Province the direst vengeance of an insulted king. To ward off this fearful peril from Virginia, he suggested that panacea of falling governments, a proclamation. The youngest member of this Council of seven, and the only Whig among them, was John Page, the college friend of Jefferson, and the confident of his youthful love for Belinda. It was he who broke the long and awkward pause that followed the governor's address by asking whether, in case the Council should agree to advise a proclamation, his Lordship would consent to restore the powder. The removal of the powder, continued Mr. Page, having caused the present tumult, tranquillity would be instantly restored by its restoration. "Mr. Page," exclaimed the governor, with the fury natural to such a brain at the reception of advice so simple and so wise, — "Mr. Page, I am astonished at you!" And he brought down his lordly fist upon the table with a prodigious thump. To which the young councillor quietly replied, that, in giving his opinion, he had done his duty, and he had no other advice to give.

The curtain falls upon this scene. The next morning at sunrise, a messenger from the capital sought an interview with Patrick Henry in the tavern where he had passed the night. When the messenger left the tavern, he bore with him a written paper, of which the following is a copy: —

"Doncastle's Ordinary, New Kent, May 4, 1775. Received from the Honorable Richard Corbin, Esq., His Majesty's Receiver-General, 330 pounds, as a compensation for the gunpowder lately taken out of the public magazine by the governor's order; which money I promise to convey to the Virginia delegates at the General Congress,

to be, under their direction, laid out in gunpowder for the colony's use, and to be stored as they shall direct, until the next Colony Convention or General Assembly, unless it shall be necessary, in the mean time, to use the same in defence of the colony. It is agreed, that, in case the next Convention shall determine that any part of the said money ought to be returned to the said Receiver-General, that the same shall be done accordingly. Patrick Henry, jun.\*

Such was Virginia's bloodless Lexington. The volunteers returned to their homes at once; and their leader, a few days after, set out for the Congress, escorted by a great retinue of horsemen, as far as the Potomac River. There was a neatness and finish to this triumph that captivated the continent, and made Patrick Henry inexpressibly dear to Virginia. The Province would have at once resumed its tranquillity, but for the incredible folly of the governor, who, totally bereft of sense and judgment, and emboldened by the presence of a royal squadron, still kept the peninsula in a broil.

From the distant summit of Monticello, Jefferson watched the course of events with the interest natural to such a person, ever longing for a restoration of the ancient harmony and good-will between the two countries. Lord Chatham's bill of January, 1775, inspired by Franklin, which conceded every thing the colonies deemed essential, had given him hope, until the next ship brought the tidings of its summary and contemptuous rejection. The news of Lexington was fourteen days in reaching Albemarle; and then it arrived loaded with exaggeration, — "five hundred of the king's troops slain." In writing, a few days after, to the honored instructor of his youth, Professor Small, then physician and man of science in Birmingham, he spoke of Lexington as an "accident" that had "cut off our last hope of reconciliation;" since "a frenzy of revenge

\* The sum received for the powder proved to be too much. The following is an extract from the Journal of the Convention held at Richmond in August, 1775.

"It appearing to this Convention, by a receipt of Patrick Henry, Esq., and other testimony, that it was referred to them at this meeting to determine how much of the three hundred and thirty pounds which had been received by the Receiver-General, on the 4th of May, last, to compensate for the powder taken out of the magazine by the governor's orders, should be restored to the said Receiver-General, RESOLVED, as the opinion of this Convention, that sufficient proof being had of their being only fifteen half-barrels of powder so taken by Lord Dunmore's order, that no more money should be retained than one hundred and twelve pounds ten shillings, which we judge fully adequate to the payment of the said powder, and that the residue of the said three hundred and thirty pounds ought to be returned to the said Receiver-General; and it is hereby directed to be paid to him by the treasurer of this Colony."



seemed to have seized all ranks of people." We may judge of the strength of the tie between the mother-country and the colonies, by the fact that so un-English a mind as Jefferson's clung with sentimental fondness to the union long after there was any reasonable hope of their preserving it. "My first wish," he still wrote, late in 1775, "is a restoration of our just rights." His second wish was to be able, consistently with honor and duty, to withdraw totally from the public stage, and pass the rest of his days in domestic ease and tranquillity. He did not claim to possess a disinterested patriotism, but avowed that the warmth of his wish for reconciliation with England was increased by his intense desire to stay at home. His pride as a citizen, too, was involved. He saw, as clearly as the imperial-minded Chatham, that Britain's chance of remaining imperial lay in America. This truth was hidden from the world during England's contest with Bonaparte, because she was able to waste in twenty years the revenue of three centuries, keeping a thousand ships in commission, and subsidizing a continent. That *looked* imperial, but it *was* mere reckless waste. The whole world now perceives, that, when Great Britain threw her American colonies away, she lapsed into insularity; or, to use Jefferson's words of 1775, she "returned to her original station in the political scale of Europe." With the fond pride natural to the citizen, he desired his country to be vast, imposing, and powerful.

Brooding over Lexington and its consequences, he was startled by the intelligence that the contingency which would oblige him to become a member of Congress was actually to occur: Lord Dunmore, in his panic and distraction, had been induced to summon the House of Burgesses. This would recall Peyton Randolph from Philadelphia, and send Thomas Jefferson thither to supply his place. The rash insolence of the captains of the king's ships lying in the York River having roused the people of the peninsula nearly to the point of investing the capital with an armed force, Lord Dunmore called together the Council, and asked their advice. Summon the burgesses, suggested a member. His Lordship, as usual with him when he was well advised, broke into a furious and senseless harangue; and when he had finished, John Page calmly replied to him, point by point, his best argument being this: If you deprive the people of their usual, legal, constitutional representation, they will resort to conventions, which itself is revolution. The whole Council joined



in this sentiment; and, at length, the governor accepted their advice, the writs were issued, and the first of June named as the day of meeting.

The air was highly electric. These rural Virginians had been slow to kindle; for, until the foolish Dunmore and his naval captains had joined hands to threaten and insult them, Virginia's part had been to sympathize with the victims of distant oppression, and resent wrongs done to a sister colony. But these vessels of war in their own rivers were now as maddening to them as Gage's regiments were to Massachusetts. How welcome English men-of-war had been in other days, when, under an awning, Virginian beauty had delighted to tread a spotless quarter-deck, and when at the balls in the Apollo no partners could be so agreeable as naval officers, splendid in the cumbrous uniform of the time! All that was over forever. Williamsburg had ever been most lavish of politeness and hospitality to the king's navy; but, at the mere rumor of Patrick Henry's approach, Captain Montagu had threatened to fire, not upon *him*, but upon the *town*. In making this threat, the captain, in the language of a Williamsburg Committee, "had discovered the most hellish principles that can actuate a human mind;" and they advised the people to show him no "other mark of civility besides what common decency and absolute necessity require." Captain Montagu was cut in Williamsburg by every Whig.

The 1st of June arrived. It had been a question with distant constituencies whether it would be safe for patriotic burgesses to venture down into that narrow peninsula, with men-of-war in both rivers, and bodies of marines at the beck of a savage governor; particularly as some members — Peyton Randolph, Patrick Henry, and Thomas Jefferson — had been menaced with a prosecution for treason. A paragraph advised every member to come "prepared as an American;" and, accordingly, many members arrived at the capital clad in the hunting-shirt, and carrying the rifle, to which they had become accustomed in the training-field. Jefferson, now a member both of the Legislature of Virginia and of the General Congress, took Williamsburg on his way to Philadelphia, and there he met Peyton Randolph, fresh from the Congress. The speaker asked him to delay his journey, and remain for a short time in his seat in the House of Burgesses. Lord North's conciliatory proposition, as it was called, had been Dunmore's pretext for summoning

the House; and the speaker desired the aid of Jefferson's pen in drawing up Virginia's answer to the same.

On Thursday, the 1st of June, for the last time, a royal governor and a loyal House of Virginia Burgesses exchanged the elaborate civilities usual on the first day of a session. The usual committee was appointed to reply to the governor's courteous, conciliatory speech. Jefferson was a member of this committee, but he was charged to make a separate reply to the part of it which related to Lord North's proposition; and to this important duty he addressed himself. The duty, indeed, was doubly important, since the document he was to prepare would not only be the reply of Virginia to the ministerial scheme, but it would be America's first response to it, as no other colonial legislature had been in session since its arrival.

Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Monday, the first days of the session, passed harmoniously enough. If the House was less humble than usual in the tone of its communications with the governor, it still protested its unshaken attachment to the king; and there seemed a fair prospect of the session proceeding agreeably to its close. But, as I have observed, the air was electric. There was a revolution in the clouds. On Monday evening several young men went to the magazine in Williamsburg, intending to supply themselves with arms from the few weapons still remaining in the public store. Arms, at the moment, were in extreme request, and only he was happy who had a good weapon. On opening the door of the magazine, a spring-gun was discharged, loaded deep with swan-shot, and two of the young men were badly wounded. One of them received two balls in his shoulder and another in his wrist; the other had one finger cut off and another shattered. Upon examining the magazine, the party discovered that other spring-guns were set in it, and that no notice had been written up, warning intruders of the danger. The setting of these guns, it was immediately ascertained, was Dunmore's work, done by his orders soon after Patrick Henry had disbanded his troop.

The cloud burst. The revolution had come. The Williamsburg companies seized their arms, and rushed to the public squares. The indignation of the people at this dastardly act of their governor was not lessened by the consideration that the young men had been wounded while they were breaking the law. They might have

fallen dead under the coward fire of those guns; and the insult of fighting a patriotic and loyal people with weapons usually employed against poachers and trespassers was felt by every person. Curses both loud and deep were hurled at the palace and its inmates; and though the cool heads again contrived to prevent any thing like a breach of the peace, yet, at such a time, no potentate can so wall himself in, that the hatred and contempt of the people cannot reach him. The next morning, two hours before the early June dawn, the governor, his family, his abhorred secretary, and his chief servants, all fled in silence from the palace, and were driven ten miles down the peninsula to Yorktown, whence they were rowed off to the flagship of the armed squadron anchored there. He was governor of Virginia never again. He had still some savage mischief to do in the Province, as a mere marauder; but when, at daybreak on the 8th of June, Lord Dunmore stepped on the quarter-deck of the king's ship, George III. ceased to reign over Virginia. His governor had run away.

The House of Burgesses, with inexhaustible patience and courtesy, attempted to woo him back by assuring him that he would be, as he ever had been, safe in his palace, and that his residence on board a distant ship was in the highest degree inconvenient to them and irritating to the people. His reply amounted to this: Let the House frankly accept Lord North's proposition, dismiss the militia companies, and rescind the non-importation agreement, and he would not only return to Williamsburg, but do all in his power to soothe the just anger of a gracious king against a rebellious Province.

Mr. Jefferson, meanwhile, had completed his paper upon Lord North's scheme. That scheme merely proposed to let the colonies tax themselves for the general expenses of the empire, instead of being taxed by Parliament; Parliament to fix the amount to be raised, and to have the spending of the money. Mr. Jefferson's answer was courteous, clear, and decided. It was incomparably the best paper he had yet drawn, and it was adopted by the House with only a few verbal changes; or, as the author expresses it, with "a dash of cold water on it here and there, enfeebling it somewhat." His paper may be summed up in two sentences: 1. The ministerial scheme "changes the form of oppression, without lightening its burden;" 2. It leaves our other wrongs unredressed. Having fully elaborated these points, he closed with a paragraph, which, we

presume, he meant to be tender and conciliatory, but which, we know, was the quintessence of exasperation to the king and his party, since it referred the subject for "final determination to the General Congress now sitting, before whom we shall lay the papers your lordship has communicated to us."

"For ourselves," he continued, "we have exhausted every mode of application which our invention could suggest as proper and promising. We have decently remonstrated with Parliament: they have added new injuries to the old. We have wearied our king with our supplications: he has not deigned to answer us. We have appealed to the native honor and justice of the British nation: their efforts in our favor have hitherto been ineffectual. What, then, remains to be done? That we commit our injuries to the even-handed justice of that Being who doeth no wrong, earnestly beseeching him to illuminate the councils and prosper the endeavors of those to whom America hath confided her hopes, that, through their wise directions, we may again see re-united the blessings of liberty, prosperity, and harmony with Great Britain."

The governor's reply to this eloquent and most reasonable address was in these words: "Gentlemen of the House of Burgesses, it is with real concern that I can discover nothing in your address that I think manifests the smallest inclination to, or will be productive of, a reconciliation with the mother-country."

Jefferson did not wait to learn the governor's opinion. The document which he had composed was accepted by the House, on the 10th of June, as Virginia's reply to Lord North's proposition; and the next morning, in a one-horse chaise, with a copy of his address duly signed and certified in his pocket, he left Williamsburg for Philadelphia. With the assistance of two led horses to change with, he could not average more than twenty-two miles a day; and so imperfectly marked were some parts of the road, that twice he employed a guide. He reached Philadelphia on that memorable 20th of June when George Washington received his commission from the Congress; and we may be sure, that, before the general slept that night, Jefferson had communicated to him the substance of Virginia's response to the Parliamentary scheme. He could not have let the general depart for Massachusetts without informing him that his own native Province was at his back. The next morning, before taking his seat with the Congress, he could not but have seen Wash-

ington review the military companies of Philadelphia, and then ride away on his long journey, accompanied by General Schuyler and Charles Lee, and escorted by a Philadelphia troop of horsemen.

Twenty miles from Philadelphia General Washington met a messenger from the North, spurring forward to bear to Congress the news of Bunker Hill. Jefferson heard it before night. He was himself the bearer of tidings for which Congress had waited with solicitude; but *this* was news to cast into the shade all bloodless events. How he gloried in the Yankees! What a warmth of affection there was *then* — and will be again — between Massachusetts and Virginia! “The adventurous genius and intrepidity of those people is amazing,” Jefferson wrote to his brother-in-law, when the details of the action were known. They were fitting out, he said, light vessels, armed, with which they expected to clear the coast of “every thing below the size of a ship-of-war.” So magnanimous too! “They are now intent on burning Boston as a hive which gives cover to regulars; and none are more bent on it than the very people who come out of it, and whose whole prosperity lies there.”

America did not feel it necessary or becoming, in those days, to scrimp her public men in the matter of salary. It was not, indeed, supposed possible to *compensate* an eminent public servant by any amount of money whatever; but it was considered proper to *facilitate his labors* so far as money could do it. Virginia allowed her representatives in the Continental Congress forty-five shillings a day each, and a shilling a mile for their travelling expenses, besides “all ferriages,” then no small item; and the treasurer was authorized to advance a member two hundred pounds, if it would be convenient to him, before he left Virginia, the member to refund on his return home, if the sum advanced “shall happen to exceed his allowance.”

## CHAPTER XIX.

### JEFFERSON IN THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS.

SIXTY gentlemen, in silk stockings and pigtails, sitting in a room of no great size in a plain brick building up a narrow alley, — such was the Continental Congress; “the Honorable Congress,” as its constituents made a point of calling it; “the General Congress at Philadelphia,” as Lord Chatham styled it, when he told an incredulous House of Lords that no body of men had ever surpassed it “in solidity of reasoning, force of sagacity, and wisdom of conclusion.” The present generation of Philadelphians has seen the hall wherein Peyton Randolph presided and Patrick Henry spoke, a second-hand furniture sales-room, and none too large for the purpose; while the committee-rooms up stairs, to which Franklin and Samuel Adams repaired for consultation, were used for a school. The principal apartment must have been well filled when all the members were present; and we may be sure that the Society of House Carpenters, to whom the building belonged, did not violate the proprieties of the Quaker City so far as to furnish it sumptuously.

The Congress was not an assemblage of aged sires with snowy locks and aspect venerable, such as art has represented the Roman Senate. Old men could neither have done the work nor borne the journeys. Franklin, the oldest member, was seventy-one, though still ruddy and vigorous; and there were two or three others past sixty; but the members generally were in the prime of their years and powers, with a good sprinkling of young men among them, as there must be in representative bodies which truly represent. John Jay was thirty, not too old to be a little vain of the papers he drew. Maryland had sent two young men, — Thomas Stone, thirty-two, and William Paca, thirty-five. From South Carolina



came eloquent John Rutledge, thirty-six, and his brother, Edward Rutledge, twenty-six. Patrick Henry was not quite forty; John Adams, only forty; John Langdon, thirty-five; and Jefferson, thirty-two. Nor could the Congress be called a learned body, though about one-half of the members had had college and professional training. By various paths these men had made their way to the confidence of their fellow-citizens; and the four powers that conjointly govern the world — knowledge, character, talents, and wealth — were happily combined, as well in the whole body as in some individuals. Franklin had them all. Patrick Henry wielded one most brilliant and commanding gift; and there were two or three members, now dropped even from biographical dictionaries, who fulfilled the definition of “good company” reported by Crabb Robinson, — persons who “lived upon their own estates and other people’s ideas.” Some sturdy characters were there, who had fought their way from the ranks, like Roger Sherman of Connecticut, farmer’s son, shoemaker’s apprentice, store-keeper, surveyor, lawyer, judge, member of the Congress; or like John Langdon of New Hampshire, another farmer’s son, mariner and merchant till the British cruisers drove him ashore and to the Congress. It was, indeed, a wonderful body of sixty men, that could send forth to command its armies one of its own members, and retain orators like Lee, Henry, John Adams, and John Rutledge; writers of the grade of Dickinson, Jefferson, William Livingston, and Jay; lawyers like Sherman, Wilson, and Chase; men of business such as Hopkins, Langdon, and Lewis; a philosopher like Franklin; and such an embodiment of energetic and untiring will as Samuel Adams.

The new member from Virginia was most welcome in the Congress. Besides being the bearer of encouraging news from home, he brought with him a kind of reputation which then gave perhaps even more prestige than it does at present, — “a reputation,” as John Adams records, “for literature, science, and a happy talent for composition.” Even now a new member of good presence and liberal fortune would be regarded as an acquisition to Congress and to the capital, concerning whom it should be whispered about, that, besides the usual Latin and Greek, he had acquired French, Italian, and Spanish, and was going on to learn German, and ever Gaelic if he could only get the books from Scotland; a gentleman

of thirty-two who could calculate an eclipse, survey an estate, tie an artery, plan an edifice, try a cause, break a horse, dance a minuet, and play the violin. The papers which he had written for the Virginia Legislature, one of which he brought with him, and another of which had been widely scattered in both countries, were known to members. Moreover he was an accession to the radical side. His mind was keeping pace with the march of events. There were orators enough already, and no lack of writers; but Jefferson came, not only surcharged with that spirit which was to carry the country through the crisis, but full of the learning of the case, up in his Magna Charta, versed in the lore of the lawyers of the Commonwealth, and conversant with Virginia precedents. He could only take part in conversational debates; there was neither fluency nor fire in his public utterances; but, to quote again the language of John Adams, "he was so prompt, frank, explicit, and decisive upon committees and in conversation, — not even Samuel Adams was more so, — that he soon seized upon my heart." He was a Virginian too; and that was a proud title then, and most dear to the people of New England. Massachusetts and Virginia, — Massachusetts oppressed, and Virginia sympathizing, — that was the most obvious fact of the situation. And Virginia had espoused the cause of persecuted Boston with so eloquent a tongue, and poured supplies into her lap with a hand so bountiful and untiring, and brought to her support so respectable a name and such imposing wealth and numbers, and sent men to the Congress of such splendid gifts and various worth, that to be a Virginian was itself an honorable distinction. Jefferson, too, united in himself the method and plod of a Yankee lawyer with the ease and grace which man began to acquire when he first bestrode the horse.

The greatness of this Congress is shown in its consideration for its weakest members. An ordinary parliament is controlled by its strongest; but this Congress deliberately allowed itself to be dominated by John Dickinson of Pennsylvania, timidest of gentlemen, though a man of ability and worth. He dared not face the crisis. "Johnny," his mother used to say to him (so reports John Adams), "you will be hanged; your estate will be forfeited and confiscated; you will leave your excellent wife a widow, and your charming children orphans, beggars, and infamous." And this, too, while the excellent wife stood by with confirmatory anguish visible in her

countenance. Mr. Adams confesses, that, if *his* wife and mother had held such language, it would have made him the most miserable of men, even if it did not render him an apostate. The Congress, if it could not regard Mr. Dickinson's scruples as purely disinterested and patriotic, knew that they were representative, and felt the necessity of opposing to the king's insensate obstinacy a united front. Hence it was, that, when these lions and lambs sat down together, it was a little child that led them; and, for his sake, they committed the sublime imbecility of a second petition to the king. It was a wonderful condescension. Ben Harrison expressed the feeling of nearly every member when he said, in reply to Dickinson's exulting remark, that there was but one word in the petition which he disapproved, and that was the word *Congress*, "There is but one word in the paper, Mr. President, of which I approve, and that is the word *Congress*." It is only the great who can thus bend and accommodate themselves to the scruples of the little.

Nor was it timidity alone that influenced the excellent ladies of Mr. Dickinson's family. It was sentiment as well. In looking over the newspapers of that year, 1775, we gather the impression that the ministry endeavored to turn to account the personal popularity of the king and queen, which was very great, particularly with mothers; for were they not the parents of ten children, — the oldest thirteen, the youngest a baby in arms? It is not possible for the scoffing readers of this generation to conceive of the tender emotions awakened in the maternal bosom of 1775 upon reading paragraphs in the newspapers describing the family life led at Kew by the royal parents and their numerous brood: how their Majesties rose at six in the morning, and devoted the next two hours, which they called *their own*, to Arcadian enjoyment; how, at eight, the five elder children were brought from their several abodes to breakfast with their illustrious parents. "At nine," as one reporter of the period has it, "the younger children attend to lisp or smile their good-morrows; and while the five eldest are closely applying to their tasks, the little ones and their nurses pass the whole morning in Richmond Gardens. The king and queen frequently amuse themselves with sitting in the room while the children dine, and once a week, *attended by the whole offspring in pairs*, make the little delightful tour of Richmond Gardens"! Who but a republican savage could resist such a picture? The same faithful reporter bade a loyal

empire take note that the Prince of Wales, aged thirteen, and the Bishop of Osnaburgh, aged twelve, promised to excel the generality of mankind as much in learning as in rank, for they were kept at their books eight hours a day, and were *so* fond of their lessons! "All the ten are indeed fine children."

We observe, also, that there was much petitioning this year, both for and against the Americans; which gave the king opportunities to indicate his own sentiments: for, when a petition was presented adverse to the royal policy, no notice was taken of it; but when a delegation came to the palace, charged to say that a malignant spirit of resistance had gone forth in America, fomented by selfish men resolved to rise upon the ruins of their country; or when a committee of aldermen gave utterance to the opinion that clemency was thrown away upon colonists who raised parricidal hands against a parent State to which they owed existence and every blessing; or when nine tailors from Tooley Street laid "their lives and fortunes at the foot of the throne," for a gracious king to employ in maintaining the authority of Parliament in every part of the empire, — then the Majesty of Britain unknit its troubled brow, and the newspapers were enabled to state that "His Majesty received the address very graciously, and the gentlemen of the deputation had the honor to kiss His Majesty's hand." The king's deliberate opinion of the troubles in America was that Washington, Patrick Henry, the Adamses, Jefferson, Peyton Randolph, John Dickinson, and the Congress generally, had entered into "a desperate conspiracy," to use the language of the royal speech of 1775, for the purpose of wresting from him a valuable part of his dominions. All this petitioning, and all these tender or timid scruples of the Dickinson party, he thought, were, "meant to amuse" a too confiding British people; while the leaders, Dickinson himself being one of them, were "preparing for a general revolt." Thus do the stupid usually interpret the wise.

Mr. Jefferson's talent for composition was called into requisition on the fifth day of his attendance. The Congress was extremely solicitous concerning the wording of the documents which they issued, not because they felt the eyes of the universe to be upon them, though every thing they published *was* printed in all the newspapers of Christendom that dared insert it, but because they had, in all their formal utterances, to avoid many possible errors,

and try for many desirable objects. They were resolved to remain in the right, to be the party sinned against; and they meant to make this clearly appear. They had to satisfy English Whigs without giving a handle to English Tories, and express the feeling of Samuel Adams without repelling John Dickinson. They had to resist General Gage, without appearing as rebels in the eyes of kings whose countenance and succor might become important to them. Hence, nothing was so much valued at the moment, next to the art of making saltpetre, as skill in the use of written words.

On the very day when Jefferson took his seat came the first tidings of Bunker Hill. How powerless is language to recall the thrill, the alarm, the rapture, the apprehension, the triumph, the tumult, of those days when the tremendous and incredible details were arriving! One thousand and fifty-four of the king's own red-coated soldiers dead and wounded! Thirteen officers, bearing the king's commission, killed, and seventy wounded! The king's general and army shut up in Boston, impotent! The Honorable Congress felt it necessary to get upon paper, at once, the correct theory of these events, with which the world would soon be ringing; for there had never before been such a slaughter as this in British America, — not in the bloodiest of the Indian fights, nor when Wolfe completed the conquest of Canada on the Plains of Abraham. A committee was appointed to draw up a statement of the causes of taking up arms. This committee, on June 24, Jefferson's third day in the Congress, presented a draft, written by a great orator, John Rutledge. Great orators have not the desk-patience to be great writers. The paper not being approved, the committee, two days after, was ordered to try again; and two gentlemen noted for their writing talent, John Dickinson and Thomas Jefferson, were added to the committee.

The members of this famous Congress, nobly as they acquitted themselves of their task, were not exempt from the foibles of human nature. They had their little vanities, antipathies, and resentments, like the rest of our limited race.

When the Congress adjourned that day, the members of the committee remained; and Jefferson found himself next to William Livingston of New Jersey, a lawyer of about his own age, much admired for the sweeping vigor of his written style. Jefferson regarded him with particular interest. Among the papers issued by the first Congress, the one he had liked best was the Address to the



People of Great Britain, the most extensive and complete version of the case yet given to the world. Without being particularly well written, it was a plain, straightforward piece of work, free from those reserves and softenings supposed to be requisite in petitions to the king. When the Virginia delegates returned, he had inquired concerning the authorship of a paper so much to his mind; and Ben Harrison had told him that William Livingston was the author. Hence he now turned to Livingston, and urged him to undertake the important and difficult draught committed to them. The member from New Jersey excused himself, and proposed the work to Jefferson. Upon this he renewed his request with such urgency, that Livingston was puzzled. "We are as yet but new acquaintances, sir," said the Jerseyman: "why are you so urgent for my doing it?" He replied, "Because I have been informed that you drew the Address to the People of Great Britain, — a production, certainly, of the finest pen in America." Livingston had, indeed, presented the paper to the house; but, as it was the composition of John Jay of New York, he was compelled to waive the compliment. "On that, perhaps, sir," said he, "you may not have been correctly informed."

The next morning, as Jefferson himself reports, he discovered that Mr. Jay was not disposed to lose the honor of his performance. As he was walking about in the hall, before the House had been called to order, he observed Mr. Jay leading towards him, "by the button of his coat," Mr. R. H. Lee of Virginia. These gentlemen were not the best friends. "I understand, sir," said Jay to Jefferson, when he had brought up the Virginia orator, "that this gentleman informed you that Mr. Livingston drew the Address to the People of Great Britain." Mr. Jefferson set him right on the point; but Jay and Lee remained "ever very hostile to one another."

It is a relief to catch Mr. John Jay, who comes down to us with a reputation for austerest virtue, behaving so much like a sophomore. The truth is, however, that at thirty he was a merry gentleman enough, who smoked his pipe, loved his jest, could be vain of his "composition," and was actually — if the reader can believe it — called by his intimate friends Jack!

The committee asked the new member from Virginia to try his hand at the draught, and put Lexington and Bunker Hill into documentary form for general circulation. He did his best, but his



usual ill luck pursued him. Mr. Dickinson thought the paper "too strong." No one, as yet, expected or desired any other ending of the controversy than reconciliation with Great Britain on the old terms. Why, then, asked Dickinson, make reconciliation more difficult by offensive words? "He was so honest a man," says Mr. Jefferson, "and so able a one, that he was greatly indulged, even by those who could not feel his scruples." The committee asked him to take Mr. Jefferson's draught, which all seem to have approved but Dickinson, and put it into a form he could adopt. The result was a much better document for the purpose than either of them alone could have prepared; for in nothing that men does is the saying truer, than in the preparation of official documents, that two heads are better than one. Mr. Dickinson restated the course of events, but appended to his mild version of the facts four and a half paragraphs of Jefferson's flowing eloquence, which came in well when the document was read in town meetings and at the head of departing regiments. But Dickinson's part was not less effective. The very awkwardnesses of a piece of writing have convincing power when they arise from the struggle of an honest mind to get upon paper the exact truth. How effective and affecting some of Mr. Lincoln's messages for this very reason! It was not eloquent to describe the affair of Lexington as "an unprovoked assault upon the inhabitants of the said Province, as appears by the affidavits of a great number of persons;" nor was it a fine stroke of rhetoric to speak of the battle of Bunker Hill as a butchery of *our* countrymen (saying nothing of the 1,054 *British* dead and wounded); but Homer could not have stated it in a better way to reach the minds of the plain, scrupulous people of Pennsylvania. The committee and the Congress adopted Mr. Dickinson's draught. If the reader will turn to the document, he will easily discover the precise point where Dickinson's labored statement ends, and Jefferson's glowing utterance begins.

There is one word of three letters in Mr. Jefferson's portion, which I wonder the cautious Pennsylvanian did not erase. It is the word of threat italicized in this passage: "We mean not to dissolve that union which has so long and so happily subsisted between us, and which we sincerely wish to see restored. Necessity has not *yet* driven us into that desperate measure, nor induced us to excite any other nation to war against them. We have not raised armies with

ambitious designs of separating from Great Britain, and establishing independent States." These words render the date of the document interesting. The attested copy bears date July 6, 1775. If John Hancock had found it convenient to sign two days before, he would have furnished the orators and historians of future ages with a "point"! A year later he put his name to a document of different tenor.

Towards the close of the session, it fell to Jefferson to do for the Congress what he had already done for Virginia, — draught an answer to Lord North's Conciliatory Proposition. As there was no Dickinson upon the committee, his draught was approved; and the adoption of this paper was among the last acts of the session. August 1, seventy-one days after Jefferson had taken his seat, the Congress adjourned.

Besides participating in the daily unreported debates, he had penned two important papers, one of which had been rejected, and the other accepted. His presence in the House was his best service to the cause. His clear conception of the situation, his knowledge of the laws and precedents bearing on the controversy, the native fearlessness of his intellect, his curious freedom from some of the troublesome foibles of our nature, particularly his indifference as to who should have the *credit* of doing the best thing, provided the best thing was done, and a certain conciliatory habit of mind and manner, — made him a valuable member of such a body as this; and he was happy, too, in being in a situation where his special gift was the one in request. With the good-will of all his colleagues, he set out for Virginia, Ben Harrison riding with him in his carriage, and the other Virginia delegates not far behind. These Virginians were wanted at home. They were waited for, and anxiously desired.

For in the Church of St. John, on the loftiest height of Richmond, the Virginia convention had been for several days in session, electing colonels to the regiments, examining specimens of saltpetre, preparing to frustrate the fell designs of Dunmore, and yet reluctant to go on until the arrival of the honorable delegates from Philadelphia. Patrick Henry, in grateful remembrance of his powder explicit, was elected colonel of the First Regiment.

## CHAPTER XX.

### IN VIRGINIA AGAIN.

It took the delegates eight days to perform the journey from Philadelphia to Richmond. August 9, in the midst of the morning session, four of them, as the Journal records, "Patrick Henry, Edmund Pendleton, Benjamin Harrison, and Thomas Jefferson, Esquires, appeared in convention, and took their seats; and the gentlemen appointed to represent their counties, in their necessary absence, retired." At once the four gentlemen were added to the important committee of the moment, and resumed legislative duty. On the 11th arrived another delegate, R. H. Lee, who took his seat. And this was the last of the arrivals; for George Washington was on other duty, and was not expected home that summer.

It was a great day in the Convention, this 11th of August, meagre as the record is. Again the Convention was to elect seven members to represent the colony in the next Congress, which was to meet in September. First, three of the last delegation, no longer eligible, — General Washington, Colonel Patrick Henry, and Edmund Pendleton, the last named being in infirm health, — were solemnly thanked by the chairman, on behalf of the Convention, for their services in the Congress. The new soldier and the old lawyer becomingly responded; and then the chairman was "desired to transmit the thanks of this convention, by letter, to His Excellency General Washington." These high courtesies performed, the balloting began. The result showed that Virginia was well pleased with the youngest of her representatives: Peyton Randolph, eighty-nine; R. H. Lee, eighty-eight; Thomas Jefferson, eighty-five; Benjamin Harrison, eighty-three; Thomas Nelson, sixty-six; Richard Bland, sixty one; George Wythe, fifty-eight. Thus the delegate, who, a few months before, had been sent to the Congress to fill a brief vacancy

stood now third in the list ; above Nelson, one of the richest men in Virginia ; above Harrison, the favorite representative of the planting interest ; above Wythe, his instructor in the law ; above Bland, long regarded as the ablest political writer in Virginia, now venerable in years.

Virginia, we observe, stood by her faithful servants. The fatal notion of rotation in office had not yet been evolved. The delegates who could no longer serve were publicly applauded ; those who could were re-elected with a near approach to unanimity, except in the case of Mr. Bland, whose age and infirmities rendered him incapable of efficient service. His re-election was probably only another form of honorable dismissal. Calumnious reports had been circulated of late, casting doubt upon the sincerity of his attachment to the great cause. The Convention, promptly yielding to his demand for an investigation, had "considered it their duty to bear to the world their testimony, that the said Richard Bland had manifested himself the friend of his country, and uniformly stood forth an able asserter of her rights and liberties." Copies of this vindication were ordered to be sent to the Congress, and to Arthur Lee, the London agent of the Province, in whose suspicious mind the slanders had probably originated. The re-election was an additional testimony which touched the old man's heart. The next morning he rose in the Convention to decline the honor conferred upon him. This fresh instance of the approval of the Convention, he said, was enough for an old man, almost deprived of sight, whose highest ambition had ever been to receive, when he should retire from public life, "the plaudit of his country ;" and he begged the Convention to appoint "some more fit and able person to supply his place." The Convention declared that their thanks were due to Richard Bland for his able and faithful service, and that they were induced to accept his resignation only by consideration for his advanced age. The old man then rose, and remained standing, while the chairman pronounced the thanks of the Convention in fit, impressive words. A community is not apt to be ill served that treats its servants in this spirit.

Impatient for his home, Jefferson obtained leave of absence on the fifth day of his attendance in the Convention ; but, before he left Richmond, he gave his voice and vote for a measure which proved to be the beginning of a revolution in Virginia, of which he

was to be the soul and director. Dissenters from the Established Church had, as yet, neither rights nor recognition, and in ordinary times both would have been denied them; but at such a time as this, when the fundamental rights of man become living truths in all but the dullest minds, enthusiasm lifts men above the trivialities of sectarian difference, and enables them to lay aside sectarian arrogance. August 16, 1775, an address from the Baptists was presented to the Convention. Of this, the most numerous body of dissenters in the colony, Rev. John Clay, father of the renowned Kentuckian, was then an active member; and doubtless his name was appended to the document. Differ as we may, said the Baptists of Virginia in this petition, we are nevertheless members of the same community, — a community now menaced with oppression and devastation; and “we have considered what part it will be proper for us to take in the unhappy contest.” The result of their deliberations was: 1, That, “in some cases, it is lawful to go to war;” and, 2, This was one of the cases. Consequently many of their numbers had enlisted, and many more desired to enlist, who “had an earnest desire their ministers should preach to them during the campaign.” Their petition was, that four Baptist ministers should be allowed to preach to Baptist soldiers, “without molestation or abuse.” The Convention passed a resolution which both granted the request and conceded the principle: —

“*Resolved*, That it be an instruction to the commanding officers of regiments or troops to be raised, that they permit dissenting clergymen to celebrate divine worship, and to preach to the soldiers, or exhort, from time to time, as the various operations of the military service may permit, for the ease of such scrupulous consciences as may not choose to attend divine service as celebrated by the chaplain.”

Thus began religious equality in Virginia.

Jefferson lingered another day in the Convention; perhaps to witness the election of a new chairman, R. C. Nicholas, in the place of Peyton Randolph, whom ill-health had compelled to withdraw; perhaps to cast his vote in favor of his brother-in-law, Francis Eppes, for the office of major of the First Regiment, of which Patrick Henry was colonel; perhaps to assist in the election of the great



committee of safety, a body of eleven men, the ruling power in Virginia from the adjournment of the Convention till Dunmore was expelled, and a new order of things instituted. The four personages of the Convention, who are designated in the brief record as "Mr. Richard Henry Lee, Mr. Henry, Mr. Harrison, and Mr. Jefferson," were appointed to count the ballots on this high occasion. Jefferson's old friend, John Page, — styled still "the Honorable," from his having been one of Dunmore's Council, — was elected a member of the controlling committee. I wonder if, at that stirring time, Jefferson and "dear Page" ever found time to recall the happy, miserable days, when, both being crossed in love, Jefferson sought solace in Ossian and old Coke, and dear Page went home to his baronial hall, and paid successful court to another; which Jefferson would not believe till he heard it from Page's own lips, well knowing, that, for his own part, he had done with love forever!

Jefferson, at least, still played the violin. A violinist now of fifteen years' standing, extremely fond of music, an indefatigable practiser, and inheriting a touch of singular delicacy, he had become a superior performer. For journeys he had one of those minute violins formerly called kits, with a tiny case, which could be packed in a portmanteau, or even carried in a large pocket. Wealthy Virginians were late risers in those easy-going, luxurious times: but he was always an early riser; and he found his kit a precious resource in the long mornings while he was waiting, at country-houses, for the family to come down to breakfast. At night, too, he and his kit could whisper together without disturbing the occupants of adjacent rooms. If the absorbing political events of the period had much interrupted his playing, he now owed to them the acquisition of the finest violin, perhaps, in the colonies, upon which he had fixed covetous eyes years before.

To say that this instrument belonged to John Randolph conveys no information; because there are so many John Randolphs of note in Virginia history, that the name has lost its designating power. We are obliged to say John Randolph, the king's attorney-general, son of Sir John, and brother of Peyton Randolph, speaker. This precious violin, brought from a foreign land by its proprietor, could not in ordinary times have become the object of vulgar sale; but the attorney-general, feeling doubtless that the best fiddle should properly belong to the best fiddler, had entered into a compact, four years



before, by which the instrument should fall to Jefferson's possession after his own death. An agreement was drawn up in legal form, signed and sealed by the parties, attested by seven of their friends, most of whom were young members of the bar, George Wythe and Patrick Henry among them, and duly recorded in the minutes of the General Court, to this effect: —

“It is AGREED between John Randolph and Thomas Jefferson, that, in case the said John shall survive the said Thomas, the executors of the said Thomas shall deliver to the said John 80 pounds sterling of the books of the said Thomas, to be chosen by the said John; and, in case the said Thomas should survive the said John, that the executors of the said John shall deliver to the said Thomas the violin which the said John brought with him into Virginia, together with all his music composed for the violin.” \*

To the merry attestors of this unique document the transaction may have seemed a joke; but to Jefferson himself it was so serious, that he provided for the fulfilment of the compact in his will, and bequeathed a hundred pounds to “the said John” besides.

This paper was drawn in the piping times of peace, when, as yet, Jefferson was “Tom” to his familiars, and Patrick Henry was master of the Christmas revels; the whole party unknown beyond their native Province. But now the times were out of joint. John Randolph, like most men who held places under the crown, sided with the king so far as to think it his duty to leave the country, and, before leaving, sold his exquisite violin to Jefferson for thirteen pounds. This important bargain was concluded on this last day of his attendance in the Convention, and he carried the instrument home with him to Monticello, where it remained a precious possession for fifty-one years.

Short, indeed, was the vacation he now enjoyed, though it was longer than he meant it to be. August 19, he reached Monticello; Congress was to meet at Philadelphia September 5; leaving him ten days to stay on his mountain-top, where he had a house enlarging, a family of thirty-four whites and eighty-three blacks to think for, half a dozen farms to superintend, and a highly

\* Abbreviated from 1 Randall, 131.

complicated and extensive garden to overlook. Probably he did not, on this occasion, much enjoy his new violin. A few days after reaching home, however, he played upon its late proprietor by writing him a letter upon public affairs, which seems to have been designed to be shown in England, to aid in the correction of errors prevalent there. Like many other Americans, Jefferson was puzzled to account for the wonderfully absurd conduct of the home government. What could *possess* rational beings, that they should go on, year after year, repelling, alienating, the most valuable and loyal colonies a nation had ever had, — colonies that cost nothing, never had cost any thing, and poured into the mother-country a clear revenue estimated at two millions sterling a year; which enriched seaport towns, nourished manufactures, and covered the land with new wealth? It must be ignorance, he thought: the ministry had been deceived by their servants on this side of the Atlantic. But why the American governors and other official persons should *want* to deceive their employers, he declared, was a mystery to him. Why should they keep writing home that the American opposition was a mere faction, when they knew it was the whole brain and heart of the country? Without attempting to solve this enigma, he seized the occasion of the attorney-general's departure to write a letter which might assist individuals in England to arrive at the truth respecting America.

When he had finished his statement, he told his Tory friend, that though he still preferred a just union with Britain to independence, yet, rather than submit to the claims of Parliament, he would lend his hand to sink the island of Great Britain in the ocean. He added a prophecy which has been fulfilled: "Whether Britain shall continue the head of the greatest empire on earth, or shall return to her original station in the political scale of Europe, depends, perhaps, on the resolutions of the succeeding winter." Happily for us, for the world, and for herself, Britain *has* returned to her original station in the political scale of Europe, and assists the progress of the human race in a nobler way by her Farradays, Spencers, Huxleys, Buckles, Mills, Darwins, and George Eliots.

The day named for the meeting of the Congress found the family at Monticello anxious for the preservation of a flickering life, precious to them all. Jefferson's eldest child, Martha, was now three years old. His second, Jane, aged seventeen months, died in this

month of September, 1775. Detained from his seat by this event, he made such haste, when at last he did set out, that he performed the journey from Monticello to Philadelphia in six days, arriving September 25. This was a feat that must have tasked both horses and rider severely; for the distance in a straight line appears to exceed two hundred and fifty miles, and much of the road was little more than a "blazed" path through the wilderness.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

HE might as well have travelled leisurely ; for, when he reached Philadelphia, the great news from England, for which Congress and the country were waiting with extreme anxiety, had not arrived ; and nothing decisive could be intelligently considered until it did. The midsummer ships had carried to England the news of Bunker Hill, with that incongruous accompaniment, Mr. Dickinson's Second Petition to the king. How could Congress have doubted what the response would be ? At the beginning of a war, it is bloodshed that takes the controversy out of the domain of reason, and consigns it to that of mania. Before he had been many days in his seat, he had to send news to his brother-in-law, Major Eppes, that the ministry were going to push the war with all the might of the British Empire. The Tower of London was despoiled of its cannon for use against the rebellious colonies ; two thousand troops were just embarking in Ireland ; ten thousand more were to come in the spring ; most of the garrison of Gibraltar, to be replaced by Hessians, were to swell the army of General Gage. And there was a piece of news still more alarming to Virginians : a fleet of frigates and small vessels, which Dunmore had expressly and most earnestly asked for, was coming to lay waste the plantations on the Virginia rivers. Soon arrived intelligence of Lord Dartmouth's reply to the agent who had delivered into his hands the absurd Second Petition : " No answer will be given." The curiously perverse king's speech to Parliament was not long behind ; in which His Majesty afforded Colonel Barré a text for an oration which the boys of three generations have been well pleased to declaim. The king was so unfortunate as to speak of the colonies as having been " planted with great industry " by the mother country, " nursed with great tender-

ness, encouraged with many commercial advantages, and protected and defended at much expense of blood and treasure." Colonel Barré's reply is remarkable for this: it is one of the most eloquent passages ever spoken, and it is, at the same time, a perfectly unexaggerated statement of facts. The king added to the many other politic and conciliatory passages of his speech a delightful offer of "tenderness and mercy" to the "unhappy and deluded multitude" as soon as they should become "sensible of their error." The worst of the news from England was, that the people, wounded in their pride by the slaughter at Bunker Hill, were supporting the government with enthusiasm and seeming unanimity.

Jefferson was no longer so much puzzled to account for the conduct of the ministry. He began to get that insight into the nature of personal government — "the folly of heaping importance upon idiots" — which became, in later years, so clear and vivid. And yet with what strange pertinacity his radical nature clung to the connection with Great Britain! As late as November 29, 1775, he could write to his kinsman, John Randolph, that there was not a man in the British Empire who more cordially loved a union with Great Britain than he did! Love it as he might, he had probably ceased to think it possible. "It is an immense misfortune to the whole empire," he wrote, "to have such a king at such a time. We are told, and every thing proves it true, that he is the bitterest enemy we have. His minister is able, and that satisfies me that ignorance or wickedness somewhere controls him." The last remark is interesting, as showing that Jefferson, at a time when the fact was not generally known, felt that a man of the calibre of Lord North was out of place in the Cabinet of George III., and did not in his heart approve the king's policy. "To undo his empire," Jefferson continued, "the king has but one more truth to learn, — that, after colonies have drawn the sword, there is but one more step they can take!"

This autumn of 1775 was a period of intense excitement. All America was drilling, the Philadelphia companies twice a day. Everybody with a tincture of science in his composition was brooding over the ingredients of gunpowder, and discussing with kindred spirits the great saltpetre problem. No day passed without something of deep interest coming up in the Congress. When there was no news from England to consider, the army around Boston, its

destitution, its dwindling numbers, its defective organization, was an ever-present topic. Once more it was proved that militia are incapable of prolonged service in the field, and are useless except to hold important points while a proper army is forming. Bull Run was inexcusable; for we ought not to have been so ignorant or unmindful of General Washington's reiterated and most emphatic warnings on this point as to have hurled a miscellaneous multitude of citizens in soldier-clothes against a fortified position.

How curiously ignorant were those peaceful colonists of the art of war! Philadelphia seems to have confided implicitly in Dr. Franklin's row-galleys and marine *chevaux-de-frise* as a defence against the British fleet. Jefferson, doubtless, was one of the congressional party who went down the-river to inspect them, when seven of the galleys were paraded, and performed their evolutions. The names of the galleys, as John Adams records, were the Washington, the Effingham, the Dickinson, the Franklin, the Otter, the Bull-dog, and "one more which I have forgot." Mr. Jefferson, it is to be hoped, went in the Bull-dog with Mr. Adams; for in that vessel were two gentlemen whom he would have found interesting. One was Mr. Hillegas, treasurer to Congress, "a great musician," says Adams, "talks perpetually of the forte and piano, of Handel and songs and tunes." And besides, "he plays upon the fiddle." The other was the famous Rittenhouse, who, Mr. Adams informs us, was a mechanic, a mathematician, a philosopher, an astronomer, "a tall, slender man, plain, soft, modest, no remarkable depth or thoughtfulness in his face, yet cool, attentive, and clear." Then there was Mr. Owen Biddle, another member of the Philosophical Society. A delightful day Mr. Jefferson would have had upon the broad and placid Delaware with such companions; to say nothing of the galleys, and the *vaisseaux-de-frise*, and Dr. Franklin's explanations of the same. If some gentleman questioned the efficacy of the galleys, all seemed convinced that the *chevaux-de-frise* (three rows of heavy timber, barbed with iron, anchored to the bottom of the river) would puzzle a British admiral extremely. Perhaps they did. Nevertheless, before two years were past, a British fleet lay at anchor off Philadelphia, in a line nearly two miles long.

In the midst of all this bustle, excitement, and alarm, Congress sat with closed doors, no reporter present; and Jefferson sat with them, serving laboriously on committees, and doing his part. Merely



to be present in the Congress, when he had at his distant home an infirm mother, a sickly and most tenderly-beloved wife, a little child, and a great brood of dependent relatives, cost him the most painful self-sacrifice. It was only by chance that he could get a letter from or to his mountain-top. When he had been seven weeks away from home, he had still to write, "I have never received the scrip of a pen from any mortal in Virginia since I left it, nor been able by any inquiries I could make to hear of my family." The suspense in which he lived was "too terrible to be endured." "If any thing has happened," he added, "for God's sake let me know it."

It fell to his lot, this November, 1775, to witness the beginning of the long connection between France and America, which was destined to control, not the destinies of his country only, but his own career as a public man. That "French influence," according to the report of Mr. John Jay, to whom we owe our knowledge of it, had an almost ludicrous beginning. The scene, indeed, would be effective in a comedy. No sooner had the tidings arrived of the rejection of the Second Petition, than Congress began to receive mysterious notifications that there was a FOREIGNER in Philadelphia who desired to make to them an important and confidential communication. When this intimation had been several times repeated, Congress condescended to name a committee, Mr. Jay, Dr. Franklin, and Mr. Jefferson, to receive the message. At the appointed hour, in a committee room of Carpenters' Hall, this distinguished committee met the stranger, "an elderly lame man," as Mr. Jay describes him, "having the appearance of an old, wounded French officer." After preliminary civilities, the lame unknown delivered his communication. The king of France, he said, had heard with pleasure of the exertions made by the colonies in defence of their rights, wished them success, and would manifest his friendship for them openly whenever it should become necessary. The committee, of course, asked him what authority he had for making these assurances; but the old gentleman only answered by drawing his hand across his throat, and saying, "Gentlemen, I shall take care of my head." The committee inquired what proofs of friendship the Congress might expect from the king. "Gentlemen," was the reply, "if you want arms, you shall have them; if you want ammunition, you shall have it; if you want money, you shall have it."

This would have been comforting if the stranger would only have

exhibited something in the way of credentials. The committee said as much; but no response could be obtained except, "Gentlemen, I shall take care of my head." The interview terminated; and, to use the romantic language of Mr. Jay, "he was seen in Philadelphia no more." His bearing and appearance, however, gained for him some credit; for Congress speedily appointed that ever-memorable secret committee to correspond with the friends of America in foreign lands, which had such momentous consequences. The mysterious stranger was indeed an emissary from the French government, — his name De Bonvouloir, — an old courtier of noble lineage, who had been in America last year at the outbreak of the Revolution. He could, indeed, show no credentials, for his instructions were verbal. His duty in America was three-fold: 1, To get exact information; 2, To convey warm assurances of sympathy; 3, To assure the Congress that they were quite welcome to get Canada if they could, for the French had ceased to think of it. On his return to France, he told the minister that the Americans were practically unanimous, and his report produced as important effects there as his presence had here.

As the winter drew on, it became distressing beyond measure for a Virginian with a large household to be absent from home. The Province was filled with alarm. A struggle was in progress between Dunmore and the Convention for the possession of the slaves; the governor proclaiming freedom to all of them who would join him; and the Convention threatening all who did join him with severest punishment. The Convention triumphed in this contest; but the mere attempt to seduce the slaves carried terror to hundreds of those isolated Virginia homes, the guardians of which were absent in camp, in Convention, and in Congress. The plantations then were almost all open to the ravages of a naval force, as every considerable plantation was of necessity within reach of a navigable stream, by which also the negroes could easily escape to Dunmore's head-quarters. It seems, from the Journal of the Convention, that only twenty-nine slaves joined Dunmore; namely, Ishmael, Africa, Europe, Romeo, Tawley, Cato, Derry, Cuff, Jasper, Luke, and several Toms, Dicks, and Harrys, who were ordered to be sold into exile in the West Indies or at Honduras.

Dunmore was successful in nothing except alarming the timid, and exasperating the brave. Even his blockade of Hampton Roads did

not prevent the Virginia "cruisers" in December from making the timely and precious capture of fifty-six hundred bushels of salt. Salt was getting very scarce in the Province; owing, as the Journal of the Convention assures us, "to the many illegal seizures of vessels laden with that article by his majesty's ships of war, and sundry piratical vessels fitted out by Lord Dunmore." Having obtained this salt, the Convention disposed of it in a singularly wise and just manner. It was divided among all the counties of the Province, according to their population, and consigned to the several committees of safety, to be *sold* to the families most in need of salt at five shillings a bushel; and, if it should be found that the captured salt belonged to persons "not inimical to this colony," it was to be paid for at the rate of four shillings a bushel. It was a scant supply, divided among thirty-one counties. Warwick County's share was only fourteen bushels, and populous Botetourt's but two hundred and ninety-seven. Mrs. Jefferson, perhaps, got a little; for Albemarle was assigned a hundred and forty-four bushels.

In all the proceedings of Virginia's little parliament, we find a most happy blending of courtesy, good sense, and rectitude. In the midst of Dunmore's savage and stupid war against the Province (only a few days before it culminated in the infernal bombardment and burning of Norfolk), a British frigate arrived in the Roads with a crew of four hundred men. The captain of this vessel, with an effrontery seldom paralleled, sent a flag on shore to ask leave to take in a supply of fresh provisions; averring that he had no wish "to shed the blood of the innocent and helpless," but, if his men "should break loose in the uncontrollable pursuit of fresh and wholesome nourishment, the result must be obvious to every one." The reply of the Convention was politeness itself. They desired the captain to be informed that they were sensible of the hardship which many innocent people on board the frigate were suffering from the want of fresh provisions, and that nothing could prevent their permitting a supply but patriotic duty. The captain, they continued, was probably a stranger in Virginia; and hence they wished him to be further informed that "this country hath ever, till of late, considered the officers and men of his majesty's navy as their friends, and have always had great pleasure in showing them every hospitality and civility; but many very recent and unwarrantable instances of the hostile behavior of some of the navy towards our inhabitants justify

us in suspicions which we would not otherwise entertain. Who are the 'innocent and helpless' whose blood Captain Bellew would not wish to shed, we cannot from his expressions determine; but they carry with them the strongest implication, that the effusion of the blood of *some* of our countrymen is the object of his voyage to this country." If, however, Captain Bellew would condescend to satisfy them that he had come to Virginia on a friendly errand, the Convention would take every opportunity to pay proper respect to a gentleman in his station, and use every means in their power to render his stay as agreeable as possible. But if, on the contrary, Captain Bellew's design was to further the views of our enemies, "he must excuse the inhabitants of Virginia, if they totally decline contributing towards their own destruction."

Three days after — January 1, 1776 — Norfolk, the richest and most populous city in Virginia, was bombarded, set on fire, and nine-tenths of it consumed, — a loss of three hundred thousands sterling. Five thousand people were made homeless and houseless in the middle of winter, and those people as innocent of offence as are to-day the inhabitants of the most peaceful seaport town on the coast of Norway. The Convention, when this intelligence reached them, ordered the troops to evacuate the site, and, before doing so, to destroy the few houses which had escaped the fire. Norfolk accordingly was obliterated from the face of the earth. This event, and the burning of Falmouth on the coast of Maine, weaned all hearts from an unnatural mother-country. It was not merely the unlettered portion of the people that were so deeply moved. Franklin's old heart was fired. He never forgot Falmouth and Norfolk; and, before he was many months older, he and Paul Jones were concerned in those "reprisals," that, for three or four years, kept the coasts of Great Britain in alarm, from John O'Groat's House to Land's End. Independence never could have been carried in 1776, but for these two conflagrations.

Jefferson heard this maddening news while he was on his way home from Philadelphia. Virginia did not require the constant attendance of all her seven delegates in Congress, but only of any four of them; and hence they took turns in going home. Nor was it desirable, in that critical time, for so many as seven of the most influential persons on the popular side to be absent from the Province at once. After three months' attendance, therefore, Jeffer-

son bade farewell to his colleagues, and passed the rest of the winter in Virginia, raising further supplies for the people of Boston, collecting money for the purchase of powder, concerting measures for the relief of the inhabitants of Norfolk, entertaining relations and friends compelled to abandon their homes in the lower country, and preparing the public mind for that "one more step" which colonies can take "after they have drawn the sword." What a houseful he must have had, with his brother-in-law's family, besides his own multitude! His mother died in March, 1776, aged fifty-five, after a widowhood of eighteen years,—an occurrence which may have prolonged his absence from Philadelphia.

The march of events was swift that spring. General Washington took Boston, the country read Thomas Paine's "Common Sense," and Virginia instructed her delegates to propose independence to Congress.

May 13, 1776, Jefferson, after an absence of four months and a half, resumed his seat in Congress. It was the week when a committee of three gentlemen went from house to house in Philadelphia, buying old lead for bullets, at sixpence a pound, but excusing families from giving up their clock-weights, because "the iron weights to replace them are not yet made." No one was *compelled* to give up his lead; oh, by no means! but the public were notified, that, "if any persons should be so lost to all sense of the public good as to refuse, a list of their names is directed to be returned to the committee of safety!"

Before Mr. Jefferson had been many days in his place, came the intelligence so long waited for, that the Virginia Convention were unanimous for independence. A kind of premature Fourth of July broke out everywhere, as the news spread from town to town. First at Williamsburg, where the Convention sat, there were "military parades, discharges of artillery, civic dinners, toasts, illuminations;" and when "the Union flag of America proudly waved upon the Capitol, every bosom swelled with generous sentiments and heroic confidence." At Philadelphia some gentlemen, as we read in the newspapers of the week, made "a handsome collection for the purpose of treating the soldiery;" and there was a grand parade on the ground since called Independence Square; and a glorious hoisting of the "Union Flag of the American States" upon the Capitol; after which the troops enjoyed the repast provided for



them, and the day ended with illuminations. Great Virginia had spoken: it was enough. "Every one," said the "Pernsylvania Journal" of May 29, "seems pleased that the domination of Great Britain *is now at an end!*" The newspaper poets kindled into song:—

"Virginia, hail! Thou venerable State!  
 In arms and council still acknowledged great.  
 When lost Britannia in an evil hour  
 First tried the steps of arbitrary power,  
 Thy foresight then the continent alarmed,  
 Thy gallant temper ev'ry bosom warmed."

Independence was the only topic now. Members of Congress still held back, but the feeling out of doors was pressing them to take the inevitable step. Mr. Jefferson has recorded a long list of the reasons brought forward in debate by the Dickinsonians against a final severance of the tie that bound the colonies to Great Britain; but to us these reasons seem mere pretexts for delay. Perhaps the true arguments against independence were those given as a burlesque in one of the radical newspapers: "1, I shall lose my office; 2, I shall lose the honor of being related to men in office; 3, I shall lose the rent of houses for a year or two; 4, We shall have no more rum, sugar, tea, or coffee, except at a most exorbitant price; 5, No more gauze or fine muslins; 6, The New-England men will turn Goths and Vandals, and overrun all the Southern colonies; 7, The Church will have no king for a head; 8, The Presbyterians will have a share of power in this country; 9, I shall lose my chance of a large tract of land in a new purchase; 10, I shall want the support of the first officers of government in my insolence, injustice, and villany; 11, The common people will have too much power in their hands." To this last reason the writer added a note of explanation: "N.B. The common people are composed of tradesmen and farmers, and include nine-tenths of the people of America."

It was on the 7th of June that Mr. R. H. Lee obeyed the instructions of the Virginia legislature by moving that Congress should declare independence. Two days' debate revealed that the measure, though still a little premature, was destined to pass; and therefore the further discussion of the subject was postponed for twenty days, and a committee of five was appointed to draught a declaration, — Thomas Jefferson, Dr. Franklin, John Adams, Roger



Sherman, and R. R. Livingston. Mr. Jefferson was naturally urged to prepare the draught. He was chairman of the committee, having received the highest number of votes; he was also its youngest member, and therefore bound to do an ample share of the work; he was noted for his skill with the pen; he was particularly conversant with the points of the controversy; he was a Virginian. The task, indeed, was not very arduous or difficult. Nothing was wanted but a careful and brief recapitulation of wrongs familiar to every patriotic mind, and a clear statement of principles hackneyed from eleven years' iteration. Jefferson made no difficulty about undertaking it, and probably had no anticipation of the vast celebrity that was to follow so slight an exercise of his faculties.

The public seem to have had some intimation of what was transpiring in Congress. On June 11, the day after the committee was appointed, and perhaps the very day on which Jefferson began to write the draught, he doubtless read in the newspaper of the morning that "the grand question of independency" was proposed to two thousand Philadelphia volunteers on parade; when the whole body voted for independence, except four officers and twenty-five privates. One lieutenant, however, was so much opposed to the proceeding, that he refused to put the question; which "gave great umbrage to the men, one of whom replied to him in a genteel and spirited manner." Jefferson may have witnessed this scene from his window. He lived then in a new brick house out in the fields, near what is now the corner of Market and Seventh Streets, a quarter of a mile from Independence Square. "I rented the second floor," he tells us, "consisting of a parlor and bedroom, ready furnished," rent, thirty-five shillings a week; and he wrote this paper in the parlor, upon a little writing-desk three inches high, which still exists.

He was ready with his draught in time. His colleagues upon the committee suggested a few verbal changes, none of which were important; but, during the three days' discussion of it in the house, it was subjected to a review so critical and severe, that the author sat in his place silently writhing under it, and Dr. Franklin felt called upon to console him with the comic relation of the process by which the sign-board of *John Thompson, hatter, makes and sells hats for ready money*, was reduced to the name of the hatter and the figure of a hat. Young writers know what he suffered, who

come fresh from the commencement platform to a newspaper office, and have their eloquent editorials (equal to Burke) remorselessly *edited*, their best passages curtailed, their glowing conclusions and artful openings cut off, their happy epithets and striking similes omitted. Congress made eighteen suppressions, six additions, and ten alterations; and nearly every one of these changes was an improvement. The author, for example, said that men are endowed with "inherent and inalienable rights." Congress struck out *inherent*, — an obvious improvement. He introduced his catalogue of wrongs by these words: "To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world, *for the truth of which we pledge a faith yet un-sullied by falsehood.*" It was good taste in Congress to strike out the italicized clause; for it was beneath such a body to use language of that nature. If gentlemen of the press, who are in secret revolt against chiefs insensible to the charms of eloquence, will turn to the first volume of Mr. Jefferson's works, and go carefully over the passages suppressed or changed in his draught of the Declaration of Independence, they may become more reconciled to a process by which writers suffer and the public gain.

That the passage concerning slavery should have been stricken out by Congress has often been regretted; but would it have been decent in this body to denounce the king for a crime in the guilt of which the colonies had shared? Mr. Jefferson wrote in his draught, —

"He has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating and carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither. This piratical warfare, the opprobrium of INFIDEL powers, is the warfare of the CHRISTIAN king of Great Britain. Determined to keep open a market where MEN should be bought and sold, he has prostituted his negative for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or restrain this execrable commerce. And that this assemblage of horrors might want no fact of distinguished dye, he is now exciting those very people to rise in arms among us, and to purchase that liberty of which he has deprived them, by murdering the people on whom he also obtruded them; thus paying off former crimes committed against the LIBER-

RIES of one people, with crimes which he urges them to commit against the LIVES of another."

Surely the omission of this passage was not less right than wise. New-England towns had been enriched by the commerce in slaves, and the Southern colonies had subsisted on the labor of slaves for a hundred years. The foolish king had committed errors enough; but it was not fair to hold so limited a person responsible for not being a century in advance of his age; nor was it ever in the power of any king to compel his subjects to be slave-owners. It was young Virginia that spoke in this paragraph, — Wythe, Jefferson, Madison, and their young friends, — not the public mind of America, which was destined to reach it, ninety years after, by the usual way of agony and blood.

One omitted passage, perhaps, might have been retained, in which Jefferson gave expression to the mighty throb of wounded love which American Englishmen suffered when they heard that foreign mercenaries had been hired to wage war upon them: —

"Our British brethren are permitting their chief magistrate to send over, not only soldiers of our common blood, but Scottish and foreign mercenaries to invade and destroy us. These facts have given the last stab to agonizing affection, and manly spirit bids us to renounce forever these unfeeling brethren. We must endeavor to forget our former love for them, and hold them as we hold the rest of mankind, enemies in war, in peace friends. We might have been a free and a great people together; but a communication of grandeur and of freedom, it seems, is below their dignity. Be it so, since they will have it. The road to happiness and to glory is open to us too. We will tread it apart from them, and acquiesce in the necessity which denounces our eternal separation."

Even this passage, so creditable to the author's feelings, was perhaps better suppressed; for, after all, the mother country of America, as Paine remarked, was not Great Britain, but Europe; and, since the burning of Falmouth and the bombardment of Norfolk, such words were not expressive of the feelings of the people.

The "glittering generality" of the document, "all men are created equal," appears to have been accepted, without objection or

remark, as a short and simple reprobation of caste and privilege. Readers are aware that it has not escaped contemptuous comment in recent times. It would have been easy for the author of the Declaration — and I wish he had done so — to put the statement in words which partisan prejudice itself could not have plausibly pretended to misunderstand; for, as the passage stands, its most obvious meaning is not true.

The noblest utterance of the whole composition is the reason given for making the Declaration, — “A DECENT RESPECT FOR THE OPINIONS OF MANKIND.” This touches the heart. Among the best emotions that human nature knows is the veneration of man for man. This recognition of the public opinion of the world, — the sum of human sense, — as the final arbiter in all such controversies, is the single phrase of the document which Jefferson alone, perhaps, of all the Congress, would have originated; and, in point of merit, it was worth all the rest.

During the 2d, 3d, and 4th of July, Congress were engaged in reviewing the Declaration. Thursday, the fourth, was a hot day; the session lasted many hours; members were tired and impatient. Every one who has watched the sessions of a deliberative body knows how the most important measures are retarded, accelerated, even defeated, by physical causes of the most trifling nature. Mr. Kinglake intimates that Lord Raglan's invasion of the Crimea was due rather to the after-dinner slumbers of the British Cabinet, than to any well-considered purpose. Mr. Jefferson used to relate, with much merriment, that the final signing of the Declaration of Independence was hastened by an absurdly trivial cause. Near the hall in which the debates were then held was a livery-stable, from which swarms of flies came into the open windows, and assailed the silk-stocked legs of honorable members. Handkerchief in hand, they lashed the flies with such vigor as they could command on a July afternoon; but the annoyance became at length so extreme as to render them impatient of delay, and they made haste to bring the momentous business to a conclusion.

After such a long and severe strain upon their minds, members seem to have indulged in many a jocular observation as they stood around the table. Tradition has it, that when John Hancock had affixed his magnificent signature to the paper, he said, “*There*, John Bull may read *my* name without spectacles!” Tradition, also,

will never relinquish the pleasure of repeating, that, when Mr. Hancock reminded members of the necessity of hanging together, Dr. Franklin was ready with his, "Yes, we must indeed all hang together, or else, most assuredly, we shall all hang separately." And this may have suggested to the portly Harrison — a "luxurious, heavy gentleman," as John Adams describes him — his remark to slender Elbridge Gerry, that, when the hanging came, he should have the advantage; for poor Gerry would be kicking in the air long after it was all over with himself.

French critics censure Shakspeare for mingling buffoonery with scenes of the deepest tragic interest. But here we find one of the most important assemblies ever convened, at the supreme moment of its existence, while performing the act that gives it its rank among deliberative bodies, cracking jokes, and hurrying up to the table to sign, in order to get away from the flies. It is precisely so that Shakspeare would have imagined the scene.

No composition of man was ever received with more rapture than this. It came at a happy time. Boston was delivered, and New York, as yet, but menaced; and in all New England there was not a British soldier who was not a prisoner, nor a king's ship that was not a prize. Between the expulsion of the British troops from Boston, and their capture of New York, was the period of the Revolutionary War when the people were most confident and most united. From the newspapers and letters of the times, we should infer that the contest was ending rather than beginning, so exultant is their tone; and the Declaration of Independence, therefore, was received more like a song of triumph than a call to battle.

The paper was signed late on Thursday afternoon, July 4. On the Monday following, at noon, it was publicly read for the first time, in Independence Square, from a platform erected by Rittenhouse for the purpose of observing the transit of Venus. Captain John Hopkins, a young man commanding an armed brig of the navy of the new nation, was the reader; and it required his stentorian voice to carry the words to the distant verge of the multitude who had come to hear it. In the evening, as a journal of the day has it, "our late king's coat-of-arms were brought from the hall of the State House, where the said king's courts were formerly held, and burned amid the acclamations of a crowd of spectators." Similar scenes transpired in every centre of population, and at every camp and post.



Usually the militia companies, the committee of safety, and other revolutionary bodies, marched in procession to some public place, where they listened decorously to the reading of the Declaration, at the conclusion of which cheers were given and salutes fired; and, in the evening, there were illuminations and bonfires. In New York, after the reading, the leaden statue of the *late* king in Bowling Green was "laid prostrate in the dirt," and ordered to be run into bullets. The debtors in prison were also set at liberty. Virginia, before the news of the Declaration had reached her (July 5, 1776), had stricken the king's name out of the prayer-book; and now (July 30), Rhode Island made it a misdemeanor to pray for the king *as* king, under penalty of a fine of one hundred thousand pounds!

The news of the Declaration was received with sorrow by all that was best in England. Samuel Rogers used to give American guests at his breakfasts an interesting reminiscence of this period. On the morning after the intelligence reached London, his father, at family prayers, added a prayer for the *success* of the colonies, which he repeated every day until the peace.

The deed was done. A people not formed for empire ceased to be imperial; and a people destined to empire began the political education that will one day give them far more and better than imperial sway.

Thirteen governments were now to be created, thirteen constitutions formed, thirteen codes established, even thirteen seals engraved. Heavens! what a perplexity some of the new governors were in about a seal! No seal, no commission! Could an ensign or lieutenant's commission have the least validity without a dab of sealing-wax, with some letters and figures stamped upon it? Obviously not. George Wythe and John Page had devised a proper seal for Virginia; but not in all the Province, nor anywhere in America south of the Delaware, was there a person who had the least idea how to engrave it. "Can you get the work done in Philadelphia?" writes Page to his old comrade, Jefferson, in this month of July. "If you can, we must get the favor of you to have it done immediately. . . . The engraver may want to know the size. This *you* may determine, unless Mr. Wythe should direct the dimensions. He may also be at a loss for a *Virtus* and *Libertas*, but you may refer him to Spence's Polymetis, which must be in some library in Philadelphia." The work, however, could not be done there; and



the legislature was obliged to pass an act empowering the governor to issue commissions without a seal, until one could be engraved in Europe. The words to be engraved upon this mystic piece of metal, words suggested by the gentlest and most benevolent of men, George Wythe, acquired a mournful and horrible celebrity in 1865, *Sic semper Tyrannis*.

While Jefferson was going about Philadelphia in these burning summer days looking for an engraver, he was himself brooding over a design for a seal; Dr. Franklin, John Adams, and himself having been appointed a committee to devise a seal for the central power. But Congress, too, had to do without a seal for some years. The committee, by combining their ideas, achieved a most elaborate design, with the Red Sea in it, and Pharaoh, and a sword, and a pillar, and a cloud brilliant with the hidden presence of God. All of their suggestions were finally rejected, except the very best legend ever appropriated, *E Pluribus Unum*.

Jefferson could not remain in Congress at such a time. Besides that the condition of his wife and household now made his presence in Virginia, as he said, "indispensably necessary," he had been elected to his old seat in the legislature, where duties of the most interesting nature invited him. Twice he asked to be released, before his request was granted and a successor appointed. In September, 1776, he left Congress, and went home to assist in adjusting old Virginia to the new order of things.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### JEFFERSON NAMED ENVOY TO FRANCE.

A TEMPTATION crossed Jefferson's path while the Declaration of Independence was still a fresh topic in Christendom. It was a temptation which was, and is, of all others, the most alluring to an American who is young, educated, and fond of art; and it came to him in such a guise of public duty, that, if he had yielded to it, only one person in the world would have blamed him. But the censure of that one would have properly outweighed a world's applause; for it was himself.

This temptation presented itself on the 8th of October, 1776. He had resigned his seat in Congress, and, after spending a few days at home, had proceeded to Williamsburg, where he had taken his seat in the legislature, and was about to engage in the hard and long task of bringing up old Virginia to the level of the age. His heart was set on this work. He wanted to help deliver her from the bondage of outgrown laws, and introduce some of the institutions and usages which had given to New England so conspicuous a superiority over the Southern Colonies. A Virginian, dining one day with John Adams, lamented the inferiority of his State to New England. "I can give you," said Mr. Adams, "a receipt for making a New England in Virginia. *Town-meetings, training-days, town-schools, and ministers*; the meeting-house, schoolhouse, and training-field are the scenes where New-England men were formed." Probably Mr. Jefferson had heard his friend Adams say something of the kind. He was now intent upon purging the Virginia statute-books of unsuitable laws, and founding institutions in accord with the recent events.

Young as he was, he had had some training now in practical statesmanship. That sharp experience in Congress, while his draught of the

Declaration of Independence was edited of its crudities, redundancies, and imprudences, was salutary to him. It completed the preliminary part of his education as a public man, — a public man being one who has to do, not with what is ideally best, but with the best attainable; not to give eloquent expression to his own ideas, but effective expression to the will of his constituents. He wrote little that needed severe pruning after July 4, 1776, though he was still to propose many things that were unattainable. A truly wise, bold, safe, competent public man is one of the slowest formations in human nature; but when formed, there is only one man more precious, — the philosopher, who is the common teacher of legislators and constituents. If there had been such a philosopher in Virginia just then, he would have smiled, perhaps, at the noble enthusiasm of these young Virginians, who were about to try to make a New England out of a State in which the laboring majority were only too likely to remain slaves.

But it belongs to the generous audacity of youth to attempt the impossible. Here at Williamsburg, in this October, 1776, were gathered once more the circle of Virginia liberals who had been working together against the exactions of the king. Patrick Henry was governor now, living in "the palace," and enjoying the old viceregal salary of a thousand pounds a year. George Wythe, from service in Congress, had acquired experience and distinction. It was he who began the constitution-making in which Virginia had been engaged during much of this year. In January, while spending an evening with Mr. John Adams at Philadelphia, and hearing him discourse, in his robust and ancient-Briton manner, of the constitution proper for a free State, George Wythe asked him to put the substance of his ideas upon paper. Mr. Adams gave him, in consequence, his "Thoughts upon Government;" which were the best thoughts on that subject of Locke, Milton, Algernon Sidney, James Otis, and John Adams. How congenial to Mr. Adams such a piece of work! "The best lawgivers of antiquity," said he, "would rejoice to live at a period like this, when, for the first time in the history of the world, three millions of people were deliberately *choosing* their government and institutions." Patrick Henry was well pleased with the "Thoughts." "It shall be my incessant study," he wrote to Mr. Adams, "so to form our portrait of government, that a kindred with New England may be

discerned in it." So thought all the band of radically-liberal men in Virginia, who were beginning to regard Thomas Jefferson as their chief.

And now, on the second day of the session, came a fair excuse for him to leave the "laboring oar," and throw the difficult task of re-creating Virginia upon his colleagues. A messenger from the Honorable Congress reached Williamsburg, October 8, bearing a despatch for Mr. Jefferson, informing him that he had been elected joint commissioner with Dr. Franklin and Silas Deane to represent the United States at Paris. The temptation was all but irresistible. He relished extremely the delicious society of Dr. Franklin, and was getting into the Franklinian way of dealing with cantankerous man. Paris, too, to which good Americans were already looking as the abode of the blest, where Jefferson could see at last, after living in the world thirty-three years, harmoniously porportioned edifices, and listen to music such as the Williamsburg "Apollo" had only heard in dreams. The public duty, also, was supposed to be of the first importance. Perhaps it was; but, also, perhaps it was not. Considering the whole case, the young giant might have done better if he had, from the first, made up his mind to fight unassisted. It was a costly business, that French alliance; the heaviest item being the habit of leaning upon France, and looking for help, at every pinch, to the *French* treasury. But this could not have been foreseen in 1776; and happy, indeed, would it have been for Franklin, for the country, for the future, if he could have been seconded by a person so formed to co-operate with him as Jefferson. Franklin would have got Canada at the peace of 1782, if he had had a Jefferson to help, instead of a Jay and an Adams to hinder.

Torn with contending desires, Jefferson kept the messenger waiting day after day; so hard was it to say No to Congress, and to give up an appointment promising so much honor and delight. But his duty was plain. There was a lady upon Monticello who had a claim upon his service with which no other claim could compete. To leave her in the condition in which she was, had been infidelity; and to take her with him might have been fatal to her. Virginia had many sons, but Mrs. Jefferson had but one husband. So, on the 11th of October, the messenger mounted and rode away, bearing the proper answer to the President of Congress:—

“It would argue great insensibility in me, could I receive with indifference so confidential an appointment from your body. My thanks are a poor return for the partiality they have been pleased to entertain for me. No cares for my own person, nor yet for my private affairs, would have induced one moment’s hesitation to accept the charge. But circumstances very peculiar in the situation of my family, such as neither permit me to leave nor to carry it, compel me to ask leave to decline a service so honorable, and, at the same time, so important to the American cause. The necessity under which I labor, and the conflict I have undergone for three days, during which I could not determine to dismiss your messenger, will, I hope, plead my pardon with Congress; and I am sure there are too many of that body to whom they may with better hopes confide this charge, to leave them under a moment’s difficulty in making a new choice.”

As soon as he had reached a decision on this important matter, his colleagues in the Assembly, who had been waiting for it, placed him on a great number of committees; and he began forthwith, on the very day of the messenger’s departure, to introduce the measures of reform which he had meditated. Mr. Adams might well regard Virginia as a reformer’s paradise; for owing to the colonial necessity of submitting every desired change to the king, which involved time, trouble, expense, and probable rejection, the Province was far behind even Great Britain in that adaptation of laws and institutions to altered times, which ought to be always in progress in every community. There was such an accumulation, in Virginia, of the outgrown and the unsuitable, that Jefferson and his friends hoped to accomplish in a few months an amount of radical change that would have been a fair allowance for a century and a half.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### NEED OF REFORM IN OLD VIRGINIA.

THE law-books were full of old absurdity and old cruelty.\* Of the four hundred thousand people who were supposed to inhabit Virginia, one-half were African slaves; and it was a fixed idea in the Jefferson circle, that whites and blacks could not live in equal freedom in the same community. Besides the intense prejudice entertained by the master race against the servile, and the hatred which had been gathering (as Jefferson thought) in the minds of the slaves from four generations of outrage, he believed that Nature herself had made it impossible for the two races to live happily together on equal terms. He evidently had a low opinion of the mental capacity of his colored brethren. The Indian, with no opportunities of mental culture beyond those of the negro, had acquired the art of oratory, could carve the bowl of his pipe into a head not devoid of truth and spirit, and draw upon a piece of bark a figure resembling an animal, a plant, a tract of country. But never had he observed in a negro, or a negro's work, one gleam of superior intelligence, aptitude, or taste. No negro standing behind his master's chair had caught from the conversation of educated persons an elevated mode of thinking. "Never," says Mr. Jefferson, "could I find that a black had uttered a thought above the level of plain narration; never saw even an elementary trait of painting or sculpture." In music they were more gifted; but no negro had yet imagined any thing beyond "a small

\* Like this, for example: "Whereas, oftentimes many brabbling women often slander and scandalize their neighbors for which their poore husbands are often brought into chargeable and vexatous suites, and caste in greate damages: Bee it therefore enacted by the authority aforesaid, that in actions of slander, occasioned by the wife as aforesaid, after judgment passed for the damages, the woman shall be punished by ducking; and if the slander be soe enormous as to be adjudged at a greater damage than five hundred pounds of tobacco, then the woman to suffer a ducking for every five hundred pounds of tobacco adjudged against the husband, if he refuse to pay the tobacco."



catch." Love, which inspires the melodious madness of poets, kindles only the senses of a black man, not his mind, and has never, in all the tide of time, wrung from him a word which other lovers love to repeat. Mere misery, to other races, has been inspiration. The blacks are wretched enough, but they have never uttered their woes in poetry.

For these and other reasons, Mr. Jefferson was disposed to regard the negro race as naturally inferior; though he expresses himself on the point with the hesitation natural to a scientific mind provided with a scant supply of facts. On the political question, he was clear: the two races could not live together in peace as equals. The attempt to do so, he thought, would "divide Virginians into parties, and produce convulsions which would probably never end but in the extermination of the one or the other race." Here was a problem for a knot of young legislators, without a precedent to guide them in all the known history of man!

The gross ignorance of the white inhabitants, except one small class, was another too obvious fact. They were almost as ignorant as Europeans, with fewer restraints than Europeans. Almost every glimpse we get of the poorer Virginians of that day is a revelation of rude and reckless ignorance. We have in the Memoirs of Elkannah Watson, who rode through Virginia in 1778, an election-scene at Hanover Court House, which must have been a startling contrast to the elections he had witnessed in his native Massachusetts, where an election was a solemnity opened with prayer. The "whole country," he records, was assembled. "The moment I alighted, a wretched, pug-nosed fellow assailed me to swap watches. I had hardly shaken him off when I was attacked by a wild Irishman, who insisted on my swapping horses with him, and, in a twinkling, ran up the pedigree of his horse to the grand dam. Treating his importunity with little respect, I became near being involved in a boxing-match, the Irishman swearing I did not 'trate him like a jintleman.' I had hardly escaped this dilemma, when my attention was attracted by a fight between two very unwieldy fat men, foaming and puffing like two furies, until one succeeded in twisting a forefinger in a side-lock of the other's hair, and in the act of thrusting by this purchase his thumb into the latter's eye, he bawled out, *King's Cruse*, equivalent, in technical language, to Enough."

There was in Virginia an unusually large proportion of this

savage ignorance, easily convertible into fanatical ignorance. The handling of tobacco, it appears, gave employment to a great number of rough fellows, — tobacco-rollers, among others, who drove a pin into each end of a hogshead of tobacco, and thus attaching to it a pair of shafts, harnessed a horse to it, and rolled it to the landing. Professor Tucker of Virginia speaks of this class as “hardy, reckless, proverbially rude, and often indulging in coarse humor at the expense of the traveller who chanced to be well dressed, or riding in a carriage.” But ignorance was almost universal in Virginia, as it must be in every community, unless there is a universal system of education. And this was another problem for the young gentlemen at Williamsburg who desired to Yankeeify Virginia. Mr. Jefferson, for one, felt the absolute necessity of the voting class being able to *vote*.

He saw, too, wherever he looked in Virginia, the evils arising from ill-distributed wealth. It is the nature of wealth to get into heaps; because it is the nature of the weak to squander their money, and of the strong to husband it; and this being its nature, laws need not aggravate the tendency. But in Virginia, as in all the old-fashioned countries, there was a whole system of laws and usages expressly designed to keep property from being distributed. Fathers could prevent a profligate son from sinking to his natural level in the community, by entailing upon him and upon the first-born of his male descendants, not his landed estates only, but the negroes who gave them value; and this entail could only be broken by a special act of the legislature. The law of primogeniture prevented the natural division of estates among all the family of a deceased proprietor, excluding all the daughters, and all the sons but one. The consequence was, that the best portions of Virginia were held by a few families, who suffered the ills and inconveniences of aristocratic rank, without attaining that moral elevation which is possible to aristocrats who accept the public duties of their position. They monopolized the honors of the colony; but, as a class, they appear to have been as destitute of public spirit as the grandees of Spain or Poland. There is only one test of a genuine superiority, and that test was as familiar to their ears as it was foreign to their hearts: “Let him that will be chief among you, be your servant,” a perfect definition of a proper aristocracy. Jefferson, Henry, Madison, and their circle, who had been contending with the aristocracy of Virginia during the whole of their public life, had to consider a remedy for this evil also.

The Established Church, during the ten years preceding the Revolution, had been pressing heavily upon the people of Virginia. Virginians used sometimes to ridicule New Englanders whom they chanced to meet, for the persecution of the Quakers in Massachusetts, and the witchcraft delusion of Salem and Boston. It is the privilege of an American citizen to be profoundly ignorant of his country's history; and Virginians, availing themselves of this privilege, are not generally aware, that, at the time when Yankee magistrates were hanging witches and whipping Quakers, Virginia justices of the peace were putting Quakers in the pillory for keeping their hats on in church, and appointing juries of matrons to fumble over the bodies of old women for "witch-marks," which, of course, they found. John Burk, historian of Virginia, intimates that a woman was burned to death in Princess Anne County for witchcraft, and adds, that, "in all probability, the case was not solitary." And as Massachusetts expelled Roger Williams and others for opinions' sake, so did Virginia, in the same generation, refuse a residence to some Puritan clergymen who went from Massachusetts to Virginia upon the urgent invitation of persons of their own faith. But there is this to be said in favor of the Yankees: They recovered from the mania of uniformity sooner than the Virginians. If, in 1650, they regarded the celebration of the Mass as a capital offence, and would not permit the Church of England service to be performed, nor the rite of baptism to be administered by immersion, nor a company of men to pray with their hats on, yet, in 1750, all these things were permitted, except, perhaps, the celebration of the Mass. But, in Virginia, the Established Church had become more intolerant as the colony increased in population. It seemed so hostile to liberty, that James Madison, after coming home from Princeton College in New Jersey, where he was educated, expressed the opinion, that, if the Church of England had been established and endowed in all the colonies as it was in Virginia, the king would have had his way, and gradually reduced all America to subjection.

It was not merely that obsolete (though unrepealed) law still made Jefferson and several of his most virtuous friends liable to be burned to death for heresy; nor that a denial of the doctrine of the Trinity was legally punishable by three years' imprisonment; nor that Unitarians could be legally deprived of the custody of their own children, and those children assigned to drunken and dissolute Trin

itarians; nor even that Baptists, Presbyterians, and Quakers had to pay for supporting a church they did not attend, — these were not the grievances which made Virginians restive under the Establishment.

In 1774, when Madison was twenty-three, we find him writing to a Northern friend, "I want again to breathe your free air. . . . That diabolical, hell-conceived principle of persecution rages among some; and, to their eternal infamy, the clergy can furnish their quota of imps for such purposes. There are at this time, in the adjacent county, not less than five or six well-meaning men in close jail for publishing their religious sentiments, which, in the main, are very orthodox." These prisoners were Baptists, the most numerous and enterprising of the dissenting sects. The historian of the Virginia Baptists, Semple, throws light on Mr. Madison's brief, indignant record. The Baptist ministers, from 1768 to 1775, were frequently arrested, he tells us; and, as it was awkward to define their exact offence, they were usually arraigned as "disturbers of the peace." He gives a ludicrous account of the first arrest, which occurred in 1768, near the seat of the Madisons. Young Madison, then a lad of seventeen, may have witnessed the ridiculous scene. Three Baptist preachers were seized by the sheriff on the same Sunday morning, and brought to the yard of the parish church, where three magistrates, who were in waiting for them, bound them in a thousand pounds to appear in court two days after. When they were arraigned, the prosecutor assailed them with the utmost vehemence. "May it please Your Honors," he cried, "these men are great disturbers of the peace. They cannot meet a man upon the road but they must ram a text of Scripture down his throat." It so chanced that one of the prisoners was a very good lawyer in an unprofessional way, and made a defence that was embarrassing to magistrates who were resolved to find them in the wrong. The Court offered, at length, to release them, if they would give their word not to preach for a year. Refusing this, they were ordered into close confinement, and went to Spottsylvania Jail, singing, "Broad is the road that leads to death." amid the jeers of the mob. After remaining in jail (a straw-strewn pen, with grated holes for windows) for forty-three days, preaching daily through the grated apertures to a hooting crowd, they were released.

Worthy John Blair, governor *pro tem.*, to whom accusers and

accused hastened to refer the matter, being a man of liberal opinions, sided, as a matter of course, with the Baptists. He told the bigoted squires that the persecution of dissenters only increased their numbers, and that the Baptists had really brought some reprobrates to repentance. Nay, said he, if a man of theirs is idle, and neglects to provide for his family, he incurs the censure of his brethren, which has had good effects; and he only wished Church people would try the same system. But there was an ignorant multitude in Virginia, as bigoted as the county magnates. Hence this persecution continued; and the case of these very men was tried again at Spottsylvania Court House, and Patrick Henry rode fifty miles to defend them.

But for the account (missed by Wirt) which has been preserved of Patrick Henry's performance on this occasion, we should not have understood the secret of his power over an assembly. The resistless magic of his oratory was greatly due to artifice, management, extreme and sudden changes in tone, adroit repetition of telling phrases. He entered the court-house while the prosecuting attorney was reading the indictment. He was a stranger to most of the spectators; and, being dressed in the country manner, his entrance excited no remark. When the prosecutor had finished his brief opening, the new-comer took the indictment, and, glancing at it with an expression of puzzled incredulity, began to speak in the tone of a man who has just heard something too astounding for belief:—

“May it please Your Worships, I think I heard read by the prosecutor, as I entered the house, the paper I now hold in my hand. If I have rightly understood, the king's attorney has framed an indictment for the purpose of arraigning and punishing by imprisonment these three inoffensive persons before the bar of this court for a crime of great magnitude,—as disturbers of the peace. May it please the court, what did I hear read? Did I hear it distinctly, or was it a mistake of my own? Did I hear an expression as of crime, that these men, whom Your Worships are about to try for misdemeanor, are charged with — with — with WHAT?”

Having delivered these words in a halting, broken manner, as if his mind was staggering under the weight of a monstrous idea, he lowered his voice to its deepest bass; and assuming the profoundest solemnity of manner, answered his own question: “*Preaching the gospel of the Son of God!*”



Then he paused. Every eye was now riveted upon him, and every mind intent; for all this was executed as a Kean or a Siddons would have performed it on the stage, — eye, voice, attitude, gesture, all in accord to produce the utmost possibility of effect. Amid a silence that could be felt, he waved the indictment three times round his head, as though still amazed, still unable to comprehend the charge. Then he raised his hands and eyes to heaven, and, in a tone of pathetic energy wholly indescribable, exclaimed, “Great God!”

At this point, such was his power of delivery, the audience relieved their feelings by a burst of sighs and tears. The orator continued, —

“May it please Your Worships, in a day like this, when Truth is about to burst her fetters; when mankind are about to be aroused to claim their natural and inalienable rights; when the yoke of oppression that has reached the wilderness of America, and the unnatural alliance of ecclesiastical and civil power are about to be dissevered, — at *such* a period, when Liberty, Liberty of Conscience, is about to wake from her slumberings, and inquire into the reason of such charges as I find exhibited here to-day in this indictment” — Here occurred another of his appalling pauses, during which he cast piercing looks at the judges and at the three clergymen arraigned. Then resuming, he thrilled every hearer by his favorite device of repetition, “If I am not deceived, — according to the contents of the paper I now hold in my hand, — these men are accused of *preaching the gospel of the Son of God!*” He waved the document three times round his head, as though still *lost* in wonder; and then, with the same electric attitude of appeal to heaven, he gasped, “Great God!”

This was followed by another burst of feeling from the spectators; and again this master of effect plunged into the tide of his discourse: —

“May it please Your Worships, there are periods in the history of man when corruption and depravity have so long debased the human character, that man sinks under the weight of the oppressor’s hand, — becomes his servile, his abject slave. He licks the hand that smites him. He bows in passive obedience to the mandates of the



despot; and, in this state of servility, he receives his fetters of perpetual bondage. But, may it please Your Worships, such a day has passed. From that period when our fathers left the land of their nativity for these American wilds, — from the moment they placed their feet upon the American continent, — from that moment despotism was crushed, the fetters of darkness were broken, and Heaven decreed that man should be free, — free to worship God according to the Bible. In vain were all their sufferings and bloodshed to subjugate this New World, if we, their offspring, must still be oppressed and persecuted. But, may it please Your Worships, permit me to inquire once more, for what are these men about to be tried? This paper says, *for preaching the gospel of the Saviour to Adam's fallen race!*”

Again he paused. For the third time, he slowly waved the indictment round his head; and then turning to the judges, looking them full in the face, exclaimed with the most impressive effect, “What laws have they violated?” The whole assembly were now painfully moved and excited. The presiding judge ended the scene by saying, “Sheriff, discharge these men.”

It was a triumph of the dramatic art. The men were discharged; but not the less, in other counties, did zealous bigots pursue and persecute the ministers of other denominations than their own. It was not till the Revolutionary War absorbed all minds, that Baptists ceased to be imprisoned; nor then were they released from paying tithes to support a church which they neither attended nor approved.

Such was this old Virginia which Thomas Jefferson and his friends were about to try to reform. A slovenly, slatternly old England in the woods, where the abuses and absurdities of the old country were exaggerated, the flower of her young gentlemen now desired to change into an orderly, industrious, thoughtful, and instructed *New* England. And what a time to begin, in this gloomy autumn of 1776, after New York was lost, and while Washington was on the retreat, fighting as he went, not for victory, but for escape! Perhaps the time was not so unpropitious. The minds of men, at periods of public danger, are sometimes in a state of exaltation that renders it possible for them to receive new truth, and gives to persons of understanding an ascendancy that is generally awarded only to rank, talent, or executive force.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### JEFFERSON, WYTHE, AND MADISON BEGIN THE WORK OF REFORMATION.

THERE were two parties in the Assembly, of course. But posterity cares only for the party that triumphs, — the radical party, the party in the right. In his own day, the conservative usually is, and usually ought to be, uppermost: he represents the human family, which is too large a body to move forward rapidly. The radical usually is one of a small minority, — half a dozen pioneers with broad-axes and leathern aprons, who march some paces in advance of the regiment, and get little besides scratches and hard knocks. But the radical has his revenge. He alone can have any enduring success. If the politics of the United States, from 1787 to 1861, are remembered at all in the general history of the world, the only names likely to be preserved will be those of a few troublesome Abolitionists, Democrats, Law-reformers, and Free-traders. The triumphant and respectable multitude with whom and for whom these contended, sweet Oblivion will claim them, and have its claim allowed.

To Thomas Jefferson, it is evident, the radicals of Virginia looked as their chief in the work of reform. First among those upon whom he depended for co-operation was that noble-hearted abolitionist, that humane and high-principled radical, that gentleman without pride and without reproach, George Mason of Gunston Hall on the Potomac, — he who wrote to a neighbor, just before the patriotic Fast Day of 1774, "Please to tell my dear little family that I charge them to pay a strict attention to it, and that I desire my three eldest sons and my two eldest daughters may attend church in mourning, if they have it, as I believe they have." It was he who, in the Constitutional Convention of 1787, set his face

against all compromise with slavery, and avowed the opinion, that the Southern States ought not to be admitted to the Union unless they would give it up. It was he who drew that Virginia Bill of Rights with which Mr. Bancroft enriches and ennobles the eighth volume (p. 381) of his History of the United States, — a statement of principles so advanced that mankind can never outgrow them. Broken-hearted by the death of his wife, he would not, he could not, leave his family to serve Virginia in Congress, though the appointment was pressed upon him with tears. But he was in his place in the State legislature in this critical year, 1776, ready to lend the aid of his humane mind and gifted tongue to every enlightened measure. Nature had done every thing for him. A superb man he was, of noblest presence and most engaging dignity: the ablest man in some kinds of debate whom Virginia possessed; healthy-minded, too, as fond of out-of-door sport almost as Washington himself.

George Wythe, the abolitionist who emancipated his own slaves when he found he could not emancipate Virginia, was sure to be on the right side of leading questions, though he was not efficient in carrying measures, — a man of the closet rather than the forum. Governor Patrick Henry's influence, at that period, was given without reserve to liberal measures. These were the great names on the liberal side.

But there was a new member in the house this year, a young man of twenty-five, small of stature, wasted by too much study, not in the least imposing in appearance, and too modest as yet to utter one word in debate, who was destined to be Jefferson's most efficient ally during all his career. This was James Madison, to whom we all owe so much more than we know, whose services are so little remarked because they were so great. He never shone resplendent in debate, he never wrote or spoke any thing that was striking or brilliant; but few countries have ever possessed so useful a citizen as he. From 1776 to 1817, look where you will in the public affairs of the United States, you find this little man doing, or helping to do, or trying to get a chance to do, the thing that most wanted doing. He was the willing horse who is allowed to draw the load. His heart was in the business of serving his country. He was simply intent on having the right thing done, not to shine in doing it. Among his virtues was his joyous love of a jest, which made

him one of the most agreeable of comrades, and preserved his health and spirits to his eighty-fifth year, and lighted up his dying face with smiles. It is a pleasure to me to walk in Madison Square because it bears his name. Of all Jefferson's triumphs, none seems so exceptional as his being able to give to a man so little brilliant and so very useful the conspicuous place he held in the public life of the United States. They met for the first time at this session of the legislature, and remained friends and political allies for fifty years.

A leader on the conservative side was R. C. Nicholas, for many years the head of the bar in Virginia, a staunch Churchman and gentleman of the old school. But Jefferson feared most the singular, tireless persistence of Edmund Pendleton, a cool, wary, accomplished speaker, he says, "full of resource, never vanquished; for, if he lost the main battle, he returned upon you, and regained so much of it as to make it a drawn one, by dexterous manœuvres, skirmishes in detail, and the recovery of small advantages, which, little singly, were important all together. You never knew when you were clear of him." Differ as they might, the leaders of the two parties in this House remained excellent friends; the reason being, that they were most scrupulously observant of all the forms of courtesy. It was often remarked of Patrick Henry, that never, in his most impetuous oratory, was he guilty of personal disrespect to a member of the House. On the contrary, he was profuse in those expressions of regret for being obliged to differ, and of respect for the character of an opponent, which assist so much to make public debate a genuine interchange of thought, and keep it above the contemptible pettiness of personal contention. All the men trained in that old House of Burgesses appear to have caught this spirit. What Jefferson said of Madison's manners in debate describes all of them who are remembered: "Soothing always the feelings of his adversaries by civilities and softness of expression." As to Jefferson himself, not once in his whole public career did he lose or weaken a point by needlessly wounding an opponent's self-love.

In the work of re-organizing Virginia, Jefferson struck first at the system of entail. After a three weeks' struggle, that incubus was lifted. Every acre and every negro in Virginia, by the 1st of November, 1776, was held in fee simple, could be sold for debt,

was free to fall into hands that were able to use them. It was the easiest and quickest of his triumphs, though he did not live long enough to outlive the enmity his victory engendered. Some of the old Tories found it in their hearts to exult that he who had disappointed so many fathers lost his only son before it was a month old; and John Randolph, fifty-five years after, could still attribute all the evils of Virginia to this triumph of "Jefferson and his leveling system."

He found it easier to set free the estates of his countrymen than their minds. Petitions for the repeal of statutes oppressive of the conscience of dissenters came pouring in upon the Assembly from the first day of the session. These, being referred to the committee of the whole, led to the severest and longest struggle of the session. "Desperate contests," as Jefferson records, "continued almost daily from the 11th of October to the 5th of December." He desired to sweep away the whole system of restraint and monopoly, and establish perfect liberty of conscience and opinion, by a simple enactment of half a dozen lines: —

"No man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, ministry, or place whatsoever; nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burdened in his body or goods; nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief: but all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion; and the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge, or affect their civil capacities."

It required more than nine years of effort on the part of Jefferson, Madison, and their liberal friends, to bring Virginia to accept this solution of the religious problem, in its simplicity and completeness. All that they could accomplish at this session, after their twenty-five days' debate, was the repeal of the statutes imposing penalties for going to the wrong church, and compelling dissenters to pay tithes. At every subsequent session, for many years, the subject was called up, and usually some concession was made to the demands of the liberal party. In 1779, for example, all forced contributions for the support of religion were surrendered. The principle, however, was retained, and, indeed, re-asserted, that it was part of the duty of the government to regulate religious belief; and the laws remained in force which made it penal to deny the Trinity, and which deprived a parent of the custody of his children if he could not subscribe to the leading articles of the Episcopal creed.

We have come now to regard liberty of belief very much as we do liberty of breathing, — as a right too natural, too obvious, to be called in question, — forgetting all the ages of effort and of anguish which it cost to rescue the human mind from the domination of its natural foes. These nine years of Virginia debates have perished; but something of their heat and strenuous vigor survive in a passage which Jefferson inserted in his Notes on Virginia, written towards the end of the Revolutionary War, and circulated in Virginia a year before the final triumph of religious freedom. The passage is out of place in the work; and it was probably left in, or lugged in, to give aid to Madison in his last contest with the opponents of Jefferson's act. Doubtless it had its influence, coming as it did from a distant land, and a name bright with the undimmed lustre of Revolutionary successes. Indeed, this vigorous utterance of Thomas Jefferson was the arsenal from which the opponents of the forced support of religion drew their weapons, during the whole period of about fifty years that elapsed between its publication and the repeal of the last State law which taxed a community for the support of the clergy; nor will it cease to have a certain value as long as any man, in any land, is distrusted, or undervalued, or abridged of his natural rights, on account of any opinion whatever.

It is a curiously intense and compact passage, all alive with short, sharp sentences, as if he had struggled to get the whole of the controversy into a few pages. Opinion, he says, is something with which government has nothing to do. "It does me no injury for my neighbor to say there are twenty gods, or no God. It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg." Constraint makes hypocrites, not converts. A government is no more competent to prescribe beliefs, than diet or medicine. "It is error alone which needs the support of government. Truth can stand by itself. Subject opinion to coercion, and whom will you make your inquisitors? Fallible men, governed by bad passions, by private as well as public reasons. And why subject it to coercion? Difference of opinion is advantageous to religion. The several sects perform the office of *censor morum* over each other. Is uniformity attainable? Millions of innocent men, women, and children, since the introduction of Christianity, have been burnt, tortured, fined, imprisoned; yet we have not advanced one inch towards uniformity. What has been the effect of coercion? To make one half the world fools, and the



other half hypocrites; to support roguery and error all over the earth. Let us reflect that it is inhabited by a thousand millions of people; that these profess probably a thousand different systems of religion; that ours is but one of that thousand; that if there be but one right, and ours that one, we should wish to see the nine hundred and ninety-nine wandering sects gathered into the fold of truth. But against such a majority we cannot effect this by force. Reason and persuasion are the only practicable instruments. To make way for these, free inquiry must be indulged; and *how can we wish others to indulge it, while we refuse it ourselves?*"

Fortunately, he was able to allay the fears of those who believed that virtue would cease to prevail if tithes could not be collected by the sheriff, by pointing to Pennsylvania and New York, where there was no established church, and yet no indications of a decay of morals could be discerned. Religion was well supported, and no more malefactors were hanged than in Virginia. Religious dissension was unknown; for the people had made the happy discovery, that the way to silence religious disputes was to take no notice of them, and to extinguish religious absurdity, to laugh at it. He urged his countrymen to have the rights of conscience fixed in law before the war ended, while rulers were honest and people united; for, when peace recalled the people to their usual pursuits, he feared it would be difficult to concentrate attention upon a matter of abstract right. "The shackles which shall not be knocked off at the conclusion of this war will remain on us long, will be made heavier and heavier, till our rights shall revive, or expire in a convulsion."

In 1786 the act drawn by Jefferson, entitled by him "An Act for establishing Religious Freedom," became the law of Virginia. The preamble of the act is a forcible statement of the whole argument for freedom of opinion; and, not content with thus fortifying the law, he adds to the act itself a paragraph, which, I believe, is unique: "And though we well know that this Assembly, elected by the people for the ordinary purposes of legislation only, have no power to restrain the acts of succeeding Assemblies, constituted with power equal to our own, and that, therefore, to declare this act irrevocable would be of no effect in law, yet we are free to declare, and do declare, that the rights hereby asserted are of the natural rights of mankind; and that if any act shall be hereafter passed to

repeal the present, or to narrow its operation, such act will be an infringement of natural right."

Never, perhaps, since the earliest historic times, has one mind so incorporated itself with a country's laws and institutions as Jefferson's with those of new-born Virginia. In this first month of October, 1776, besides actually accomplishing much, he cut out work enough to keep the best heads of Virginia busy for ten years. It was he who drew the bill for establishing courts of law in the State, and for defining the powers, jurisdiction, and methods of each of them. It was he who caused the removal of the capital from Williamsburg to Richmond, thus originating the plan, since followed by nearly every State, of fixing the capital near the geographical centre, but remote from the centre of trade, capital, and fashion. It may have been best for Virginia, it *was* best for Virginia; but it is not yet certain that a policy is sound which caused the city of Washington to come into being, and which has given a fictitious importance to twenty Harrisburgs and Albanys, besides affording to official misconduct the convenient cloak of distance. Little, however, could Jefferson have foreseen the influence of his action, when, in the teeth of the old Tory families planted in the ancient capital, he carried the day for the village of Richmond, and served on the committee that laid out its public square and placed its unfortunate public buildings.

Another bill introduced by him in this most fruitful month has produced consequences far-reaching and momentous. It was a bill fixing the terms upon which foreigners should be admitted to citizenship in Virginia: Two years' residence; a declaration of intention to live in the State, and a promise of fidelity to it; minor children of naturalized parents, and minors without parents in the State, to become citizens on coming of age, without any legal formality. The principle of this bill and most of its details have been adopted by the national government. In the light of the experience of eighty-five years, and writing on Manhattan Island, we can still say, that the principle of admitting foreigners to citizenship on easy terms, and after a short residence, has been the vital principle of the country's growth; and that Jefferson's bill lacked but one brief clause to make it as safe as it has been powerful: *Provided*, That the foreigner aforesaid proves, to the satisfaction of the court, that he can read English well enough to be independent of all other men

in acquiring the political information requisite for intelligent voting. Alas! he did not foresee the Manhattan Island of 1871, nor had a mind yet been created capable of conceiving the idea of admitting to the suffrage hordes of ignorant negroes without the least preliminary preparation.

The laws of Virginia were a chaos of obsolete and antiquated enactments, good for lawyers, bad for clients. Jefferson brought in a bill, in October, 1776, proposing that the House name a committee of five, who should get together the whole mass, revise them, and present, for the consideration of the House, a body of law suited to the altered times and circumstances of the State. The bill being passed, the five revisers were elected by ballot, and Jefferson received the highest number of votes; his colleagues being Edmund Pendleton, George Wythe, George Mason, and F. L. Lee. The two last named, not being lawyers, soon withdrew from the commission, leaving the three others to do the work, Jefferson's portion of which occupied the leisure of two years. It was, indeed, one of the most arduous and difficult labors of his life; for to him was assigned the revision of ancient British law, from the remotest period to the meeting of the first House of Burgesses of Virginia, of which his great-grandfather had been a member, in 1619. Many a long journey it cost these three public-souled gentlemen to get together, in order to discuss principles and compare work; until, in 1779, the revisers were able to present their labors to the legislature in the convenient form of one hundred and twenty-six bills, to be separately acted upon. These bills were taken up, one at a time, as occasion favored or demanded, during the next six or seven years; every enlightened and humane principle or detail having a most persistent and persuasive advocate in James Madison.

Jefferson's part in this revision was most important. The bill for religious freedom, already described, was now completed in the form in which it was finally acted upon in 1786. Against the opposition of Pendleton, he carried the extirpation of the principle of primogeniture from the legal system of Virginia. True to his character, Pendleton strove, when the main battle was lost, to save something from the wreck; proposing that the eldest son should, at least, have a double portion. No, said Jefferson: "if the eldest son could eat twice as much, or do double work, it might be a natural evidence of his right to a double portion; but, being on a par in his powers and

wants with his brothers and sisters, he should be on a par also in the partition of his patrimony." Against Pendleton, too, Mr. Jefferson prevailed to preserve as much of the letter of ancient law as possible, because the meaning of each word and phrase had been established by judicial decisions. A new code, Mr. Jefferson thought, owing to the imperfection of human language, would "involve us in ages of litigation," until the precise meaning of every word had been settled by decisions and commentaries. But this did not apply to modern Virginia statutes, which, he thought, should be reduced to the utmost simplicity and directness.

It is pleasing to notice how cordially the revisers labored together, and how entirely they confided in one another, though differing in opinion. Observe this evidence of it in one of Jefferson's later letters: "We found" (on the final revision) "that Mr. Pendleton had not exactly seized the intentions of the committee, which were to reform the language of the Virginia laws, and reduce the matter to a simple style and form. He had copied the acts *verbatim*, only omitting what was disapproved; and some family occurrence calling him indispensably home, he desired Mr. Wythe and myself to make it what we thought it ought to be, and authorized us to report him as concurring in the work."

The bill assigning pains and penalties cost Jefferson much research and thought. The committee swept away at once most of the obsolete cruelties of the ancient code; but some of the revisers were disposed to retain portions of the old system of retaliation, — an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a poisoner to die by poison, and a maimer to be maimed. Jefferson objected. The infliction of such penalties, he thought, would "exhibit spectacles" the moral effect of which would not be salutary; particularly (he might have added) in a State where every free fight was expected to end in gouging. This part of the scheme was, at his suggestion, reconsidered; so that no sheriff in Virginia has ever been called upon to pry out an eye or bite off a nose.

One of Jefferson's substitutions of new sense for ancient folly in the penalties bill was admirable. Instead of the old laws concerning witchcraft, he suggested this: "All attempts to delude the people, or to abuse their understanding, by exercise of the pretended arts of witchcraft, conjuration, enchantment, or sorcery, or by pretended prophecies, shall be punished by ducking and whipping, at

the discretion of a jury, not exceeding fifteen stripes." He dropped also the barbarous Jewish penalties for unnatural crimes, on this ground: "Bestiality will ever be properly and severely punished by universal derision." In his preamble to the bill assigning penalties, he asserted doctrines many years in advance of the least monstrous code then existing. At a time when France condemned to death a female servant who stole a spoon, and London saw cart-loads of lads drawn to Tyburn for theft, Jefferson began this act by declaring that "cruel and sanguinary laws defeat their own purpose, by engaging the benevolence of mankind to withhold prosecution;" and that "capital punishments, which exterminate instead of reforming, should be the last melancholy resource against those whose existence has become inconsistent with the safety of their fellow-citizens." In this code no crimes were capital but murder and treason; and only an overt act was to be accounted treason.

Of the bills drawn by Jefferson, those upon which he most set his heart failed utterly. Only a commonwealth of Jeffersons, Madisons, Madisons, and Wythes could have carried into successful operation that magnificent scheme of universal education embodied in three of the acts drawn by him. He loved knowledge. He loved literature. Writing to Dr. Priestly, in the midst of one of the political frenzies of a later day, he said, "I thank, on my knees, him who directed my early education, for having put into my possession this rich source of delight," — the ability to read Homer in the original; and, during a similar paroxysm of political fury, he wrote to a neighbor, that if any thing *could* induce him to sleep another night away from home, it would be his solicitude for the education of youth. He felt that a community needs the whole of the superior intelligence produced in it, and that such intelligence is only made available for good purposes by right culture. His plan, therefore, embraced the whole intellect of the State. He proposed to place a common school within reach of every child; to make a high school accessible to every superior youth; to convert William and Mary College into a university; and to found at Richmond a State library to be maintained at a cost of two thousand pounds a year. The whole scheme, which was worked out in great detail, was received, he says, with enthusiasm; but when after the war the expense had to be faced, there was not public spirit enough in the counties to set even the common schools in operation. The scheme



failed because there was no middle class in Virginia. In his bill for establishing common schools, a clause was slyly inserted, leaving each county free to tax itself for the purpose or not, as the tax-payers should decide. But the tax-payers were planters, served by slaves, not accustomed to regard white trash as fellow-citizens whose welfare was identified with their own. They would not tax themselves for the education of the children of tobacco-rollers, and the plan remained inoperative during Jefferson's whole life.

A remarkable feature of the laws drawn by him during this revision are the preambles — compact, loaded with meaning — with which he prefaced many of them. I think he must have derived the idea from Plato. In preparing himself for work so important, he could not have overlooked the fact, that Plato's longest work is entitled LAWS; nor would he have failed to seek light from so promising a source.

“And is our legislator,” asks a person of this dialogue, “to have no preface to his laws, but to say at once, Do this, avoid that; and then, holding the penalty *in terrorem*, to go on to another law, offering never a word of advice or exhortation to those for whom he is legislating, after the manner of some doctors?” Not so, he thinks. Music has overtures, and discourse its introduction; “but of the tones and higher strain of law, no one has ever yet uttered any prelude.” And Plato recurs to the topic, as though it were a favorite idea.\* I please myself with thinking that it was such passages of the kindred Greek that induced Jefferson to compose those noble preambles — noble, even when preluding laws too difficult for the time and scene — which illuminate Virginia law-books here and there. The preamble to the act for establishing religious freedom is the weightiest and finest. It touches every point: it all but exhausts the subject.

The slave-laws remained to be considered. The revisers, first of all, made a digest of existing laws concerning slaves and slavery, silently dropping such as they deemed inadmissible, and arranging the rest, as was their custom, in the form of a bill. This bill, since it contained nothing novel, nor excluded any thing vital, could be expected to pass without opposition. The whole difficulty of the subject they resolved to keep by itself, and concentrate it in an

\* Jowett's Plato, vol. i. pp. 24, 243, 288, 427, &c. (London edition).



amendment to the bill, designing to present this when the times should admit of the discussion of fundamental changes.

The shade of noble, unpractical Plato must have hovered over the place where this amendment was penned. The community has never existed capable of executing such a scheme. These three benevolent revisers demanded of Virginia a degree of self-control, far-seeing wisdom, and executive genius, which a community composed of the elect of the whole human race could not have furnished. All slaves born after the passage of the act were to be free; but they were to remain with their parents during childhood, then educated at the public expense, "in tillage, arts, or sciences, according to their geniuses," until maturity, when they were to be colonized in some convenient place, furnished with arms, implements, and seeds, declared independent, and protected till they were strong enough to protect themselves. While Virginia was employed in this most complicated and not inexpensive business, other ships of hers were to repair to other parts of the earth, and bring home "an equal number of white inhabitants, to induce whom to migrate hither proper encouragements were to be proposed." Such ludicrous impossibilities may the wisest of mortals conceive who legislate in the snug retreat of a library for out-of-door, every-day men, face to face with the universal task!

No enthusiast ever ventured to introduce this amendment into the legislature. "It was found," wrote Mr. Jefferson in 1821, "that the public mind would not bear the proposition, nor will it bear it even at this day." One thing Jefferson did accomplish. In 1778 he brought in a bill forbidding the further importation of slaves, which was passed without opposition. This was the only important change which was made in the slave-system of Virginia during the Revolutionary period.

During the two years employed in the work of revising the laws, there were four or five sessions of the legislature, all of them attended by Jefferson. His industry was immense. We find him on numberless committees, and reporting every kind of bill; even such as related to the discipline of the militia, the rank of marine officers, and the subsistence of members of Congress. There was no great merit then in punctuality of attendance, for punctuality was compelled. At the calling of the roll on the opening of one session, fifty members were absent. Every man of them was ordered under

arrest; nor was one excused until he had risen in his place, and stated the reason of his absence. If the reason was accounted sufficient, he was excused, without paying the costs of his arrest; if not, he had to pay them. Many and swift journeys fell to Jefferson's lot during this absorbing time,—to Fredericksburg to meet his brother revisers, a rough ride of a hundred and twenty miles; to Williamsburg, for the semi-annual session; back suddenly to Monticello, more than once, to attend his sick wife. His only son was born in May, 1777, and lived but seventeen days, though causing his parents many a month of anguish and solicitude. But at home, while the lives of mother and child seemed to hang upon the father's care, in the intervals of watching he worked at his part of the revision. He told Dr. Franklin, in August, 1777, that the people of Virginia had laid aside the monarchical, and taken up the republican government "with as much ease as would have attended their throwing off an old and putting on a new suit of clothes." It was easy to the people of Virginia, because at this critical time they were so happy as to possess a few able, experienced, learned, liberal-minded citizens, who thought no labor severe, no self-denial excessive, if exercised in the service of their country.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### FIRST THREE YEARS OF THE WAR.

So passed the first years of the war. It was an anxious time, of course, to all patriotic hearts, but, to the people of Virginia, not so unhappy a period as we should suppose. *Their* trial was to come. Early rid of the nuisance of Dunmore's hateful presence, they had not, since the burning of Norfolk, witnessed much of the desolations of the war; and, if their spirits were depressed sometimes by the mishaps of the armies in the North, good news came occasionally, and came magnified by the distance it had travelled. The rapturous tidings of Burgoyne's surrender was enough of itself to light up half a year; and it was followed by news supposed to be even more important, that of the alliance with France. Virginia was to have her turn, but the time had not yet come.

Jefferson, too, was to experience a most ample share of the bitterness of the war. But during these three years of it, absorbed in congenial and elevated labors, happy in the confiding love of the people he served, blest at home in wife and children, he lived very much in his accustomed way; still finding time to record the weather, watch the barometer, observe eclipses, measure the rain, compute the force of the wind, study the growth of plants, and caress the violin. He began now to look forward fondly, as so many fond parents have, to the time when his eldest daughter would play the harpsichord to his accompaniment. His old teacher of the violin, Alberti, was in Paris in 1778. Jefferson wrote him a gay letter after Burgoyne's surrender; telling him that Americans had lost all apprehensions touching the issue of the war, and he expected to trouble him, within the next two and three years, to send him over a professor competent to teach singing and the harpsichord. Nay, more: he had indulged dreams of a domestic band of music!

He told Alberti, that, in his retinue of domestic servants, he kept a weaver, a gardener, a cabinet-maker, and a stone-cutter, to whom he meant to add a vine-dresser. Why could not Alberti send him Europeans of these trades, who could also play on instruments? If he could, — behold a band of music upon Monticello, without going “beyond the bounds of an American fortune!” Music, he said, was “the favorite passion of his soul;” and yet fortune had cast his lot in a country where it was in a state of “deplorable barbarism.” In the same joyous and triumphant summer of 1778, failing to get much good from the eagerly-expected and closely-observed eclipse of the sun, from want of an accurate clock, he ordered from Rittenhouse the most perfect clock his art could produce, so as to be ready for the next. As to that theodolite of which he had spoken to him in Philadelphia, Mr. Rittenhouse need not trouble himself about it further; for he had since bought one which was just the thing. A British army captured, and the French alliance avowed, who could expect a much longer continuance of the war? Not Jefferson, most sanguine of men.

The surrender of Burgoyne brought unexpected animation to the neighborhood of Monticello, and filled the house upon its summit with agreeable company. The region round about being the wheat-field of America, but too remote from the Northern army to contribute to its supply, Congress deemed it best, in the winter of 1778–79, to march thither the prisoners of war, English and German, four thousand in number, and establish them near Charlottesville. It was a dreary and weary march, in an inclement season, from Boston to Albemarle, a distance of seven hundred miles; and when the troops reached the plateau selected for them, within sight of Monticello, the barracks were unfinished, no store of food had been gathered, the roads were almost impassable, and “the spell of weather,” as Jefferson records, “was the worst ever known within the memory of man.” The gentlemen of the county did their utmost to mitigate the situation, and who so prompt with needful aid as the inhabitants of Monticello? Mrs. Jefferson lent her help to the wife of the Hessian General Riedesel, in getting her started in housekeeping, at the house of Mazzei, their Italian neighbor, who was just going home to Tuscany on a public errand.

Jefferson himself was lavish of attention to officers and men of both nationalities; and, when they were all settled in quarters,

threw open his house, his library, his grounds, his garden, to such of them as could enjoy refined pleasures. There could be no lack of officers, among so many, who could play and sing. Many a delightful concert was improvised at Monticello, when some amateur would play violin duets with Jefferson, and the whole company surround Mrs. Jefferson's harpsichord, and join her in singing. A tradition of these pleasant musical evenings lives to this day. General Dix of New York, as Mr. Randall reports, heard them described by a Captain Bibby, who settled in New York after the war. This captain, himself a good violinist, played many a duet with Jefferson, and considered him the best amateur he had ever heard. A German officer of scientific tastes was much in the library of Monticello, a congenial companion to its proprietor. Even General Phillips, commander of the English troops, whom Jefferson describes as the proudest man of the proudest nation on earth, was not proof against his resolute civilities. "The great cause that divides our countries," Jefferson wrote to the general, "is not to be decided by individual animosities. The harmony of private societies cannot weaken national efforts. To contribute by neighborly intercourse and attention to make others happy is the shortest and surest way of being happy ourselves." General Phillips, proud as he may have been, seems to have assented to this opinion; for we find him writing to Mr. Jefferson in August, 1779: "The British officers intend to perform a play next Saturday at the barracks. I shall be extremely happy to have the honor to attend you and Mrs. Jefferson in my box at the theatre, should you or that lady be inclined to go." \* In winding up this polite epistle, the haughty son of Albion was careful to say that he was, "with great *personal* respect," Mr. Jefferson's humble servant. He was the gentleman, who, at a later day, addressed Mr. Jefferson as "Thomas Jefferson, Esquire, American Governor of Virginia;" and the governor retorted by addressing him as, "William Phillips, Esquire, commanding the British troops in Virginia."

As the spring advanced, the barracks began to exhibit a truly inviting scene, particularly the quarter occupied by the Germans. The officers, who had hired every available house in the neighborhood, bought cows, sheep, and chickens, cultivated fields, and laid

\* Lossing's American Historical Record, vol. i, p. 33.

out gardens. If some of the decorous Virginia ladies were a little scandalized at the Amazonian habits of Madame Riedesel, who rode astride with the boldness of a fox-hunter, every one commended the liberality of the general toward his men. He distributed among them two hundred pounds' worth of seeds; and soon the whole region round the barracks was smiling with pretty gardens, and alive with cheerful laborers, conveying to the spectator, as Jefferson said, "the idea of a company of farmers, rather than a camp of soldiers." Some of the officers went to great expense in refitting their houses, even to several thousands of dollars. The health of these troops, thus agreeably situated and pleasantly employed, improved in the most remarkable manner. According to the ordinary rate of mortality, there should have been one death a day; but in three months there were but four deaths among them, and two of those were of infants.

Jefferson wrote in reference to this enchanting scene, "It is for the benefit of mankind to mitigate the horrors of war as much as possible. The practice, therefore, of modern nations, of treating captive enemies with politeness and generosity, is not only delightful in contemplation, but really interesting to all the world, — friends, foes, and neutrals."

It is pleasing to reflect that the United States, from the first hour of its existence to the present time, in every instance, and in spite of the bitterest provocation to the contrary in three wars, has treated captives with "politeness and generosity."

The prisoners might well be grateful to Jefferson, for he rendered them a greater service than neighborly attention. A panic fear arose, that these four thousand foreign mouths would eat Virginia out of house and home. A famine was dreaded, and Governor Henry was inundated with remonstrances against their longer stay. By the time the barracks were in order, the gardens laid out, and General Riedesel's two hundred pounds' worth of garden-seeds all nicely "come up," a terrible rumor ran through the camp, that the governor had yielded to pressure, and was about to order them away. It was Jefferson who interposed in their behalf. He wrote a most vigorous and elaborate statement of the case to Governor Henry, showing the utter groundlessness of the panic, describing the happy situation of the troops after their winter march of seven hundred miles, and exhibiting the cruel breach of faith it would be to compel them so



soon to resume their wanderings. The prisoners' camp was not disturbed; and the Virginians discovered, that, if the prisoners ate a good deal of wheat and beef, they circulated a great many gold and silver coins.

What strikes me as peculiar in Jefferson's letter is its extreme politeness. Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry had been friends, comrades, fellow-lodgers, partisans, every thing that was intimate and confidential, for nineteen years; but in this letter he keeps in mind that he is a member for Albemarle writing to His Excellency the Governor of Virginia, and he both begins and ends his epistle with expressions of deference and apology. He "takes the liberty of troubling" the governor with some observations on the subject. The reputation and interest of the country being involved, "it could hardly be deemed an indecent liberty in the most private citizen to offer his thoughts to the consideration of the Executive;" and there were particular reasons which justified *him* in so doing; such as his residence near the barracks, his public relation to the people of that county, and his being sure, from his personal acquaintance with the governor and council, that they would be "glad of information from *any* quarter, on a subject interesting to the public." Then, at the end of his letter, after an argument apparently complete and unanswerable, he was "sensible that the same subject might appear to different persons in very different lights." But he hoped that the reasons he had urged, even though to sounder minds they should seem fallacious, would, at least, be plausible enough to excuse his interposition.

There was a reason for this extreme delicacy. The letter was written in March, 1779. The third year of Patrick Henry's governorship would expire in June; and, by the new constitution, a governor was ineligible after the third term. Jefferson was to succeed him; and it is always a delicate thing for an heir to say or do any thing that savors of interference with the management of the estate.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### JEFFERSON GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA.

COLLEGE friends find themselves strangely confronted, sometimes, in after life, — rivals, perhaps, for prizes more important than a high place in a commencement programme. In January, 1779, the Virginia Legislature had to choose a governor to succeed Patrick Henry, whose third term would expire on the 1st of June. The favorite candidates were no other than John Page and Thomas Jefferson, fellow-students at William and Mary, who had exchanged love-confidences, and gone with thumping hearts together to meet their sweethearts at the balls in the Raleigh Tavern at Williamsburg; and not so very long before, either. In 1779 they were still young men, thirty-six both; Page being fifteen days the elder. The gilding was still bright on some parts of the state-coach which Lord Botetourt had brought over from England about the time of their entering public life; and "the palace" had not yet been defaced by vandal hands. Timothy Pickering of Massachusetts saw that tremendous vehicle, as late as 1781, in an outhouse near the palace; "a clumsy machine," he thought it; "as heavy as two common wagons;" "gilded in every part, even the edges of the tires of the wheels, and the arms of Virginia painted on every side." On the day, ten years before, when these two young friends had smiled derision at this historic coach, as it bore the new governor to the Capitol, who were less likely than they to be candidates for the right to ride in it? Things had changed, indeed, in Virginia, since young Jefferson had put his fiddle under his arm, and gone to "the palace" to take his part in one of Governor Fauquier's weekly concerts.

Page's strong point was, that, though born a member of the plantation aristocracy, possessing a great estate, inhabiting the largest

house ever built in Virginia, and enjoying the honor most coveted by his class, a seat at the viceregal council-board, he had, from the beginning of the controversy with the king, sided with his country. The contest was a warm one between the friends of the candidates; but between the candidates themselves there was no contest. It was part of the recognized etiquette of politics then, which both of these gentlemen observed, that the candidates for a responsible executive post should take no part, either by word or deed, in the canvass. Jefferson was elected by a majority of a very few votes. His old friend wrote him a letter of apology and congratulation, and Jefferson replied with the tact which good-nature inspires. "It had given me much pain," he said, "that the zeal of our respective friends should ever have placed us in the situation of competitors. I was comforted, however, with the reflection, that it was their competition, not ours, and that the difference of the numbers which decided between us was too insignificant to give you a pain or me a pleasure, had our dispositions towards each other been such as to admit those sensations." Twenty-three years later, when Jefferson was president, he had the pleasure of congratulating his friend Page on his election to the governorship of their native State.

The governor elect took the lead in one important administrative act before he was sworn in. The war was gasping for money; for the legal-tender notes were rushing down the sharp decline that led from par to zero; and, as yet, the French troops had not begun to scatter coin about the country, nor Dr. Franklin to coax more millions from the French treasury than were needed to freight a few ships with military stores. One of Jefferson's friends in the House, who had rented four thousand acres of good land before the war to tenants at six pounds a year per hundred acres, and received his rents in 1778 in the legal-tender currency, had not money enough from that estate to buy twenty barrels of corn. Governor Jefferson's magnificent salary of four thousand five hundred pounds a year was not enough, when he began to receive it, to supply the inmates of "the palace" with food; and, when he went out of office, it would only buy the governor a new saddle. This was the period when members of Congress — the ruling power of the United States — had to borrow little sums from their landladies in order not to be quite penniless. Elbridge Gerry, member from Massachusetts, a man of good estate in Marblehead, was behind with his board, in 1779, a hundred

and forty-seven dollars, besides being obliged to borrow twenty-seven from his landlady, and going in debt sixteen to his tailor and shoemaker. At the head of the finance committee, which had to deal with millions, he had not sixpence in his personal pocket with which to buy a pair of shoestrings.

Hard money alone, as it was thought, could restore the currency. Jefferson's Italian neighbor, Philip Mazzei, who had once been in office under the Duke of Tuscany, told him that the duke, like His Highness of Hesse-Cassel, was a great hoarder of money, and, only three years before, had had "ten million crowns lying dead in his treasury;" part of which, Mazzei thought, *he* could borrow for the United States, if he could be sent over properly authorized. Jefferson wrote to John Adams on the subject, stating the facts, and commending Mazzei as "a native of that duchy, well connected there, conversant in courts, of great understanding, and equal zeal in our cause." Nothing came of this suggestion, so far as is known; and those ten million crowns remained in the duke's strong-box, though the struggling States needed them so much, — needed them more and more. Doubtless the two neighbors talked over those precious crowns often enough as they sat by Jefferson's fireside on Monticello, or strolled about in Mazzei's young vineyards. Indeed, whenever, in this impecunious world, there is known to be a large lump of money "lying dead" anywhere, there are sure to be individuals scheming for its resurrection. Besides, was not the Duke of Tuscany, though an Austrian prince, a brother of Marie Antoinette, queen of France, known to be enthusiastic for Franklin and the noble insurgents? And had not Philip Mazzei sent his duke an Italian translation of the Declaration of Independence? How plausible, on the breezy heights of Albemarle, seemed the scheme of getting some of those dead crowns from Tuscany, and giving them life in Virginia?

Philip Mazzei, who had all an Italian's ardor for the American cause, offered to go himself without compensation to his native land, and negotiate the loan; and soon after the election of Jefferson to the governorship, he sailed, commissioned by Governor Henry and his Council, to borrow from his prince a sum not to exceed nine hundred thousand pounds sterling, and to buy with part of it a quantity of supplies for Virginia's quota of troops. Not to exceed! It is always prudent to limit strictly the powers of an agent. Mazzei *might*, in his excessive zeal, carry off the whole ten million crowns!

It was a costly mission to poor Mazzei. His misfortunes began before he left home. He rented his house to the Hessian general, Baron Riedesel, who moved in, with his Amazon of a wife and his large military family, before the Italians could move out. It was a tight squeeze, as the baroness recorded; and Mazzei, it seems, had no notion of the amount of sustenance required by so many Hessian warriors, and a baroness who rode astride. "We looked impatiently forward," wrote the lady, "to the time of his departure, and that of his wife and daughter, on account of the smallness of the house and the scarcity of provisions." She took the liberty of remarking one day, that a calf's head and tripe was not enough for twenty persons' dinner; but the frugal Italian replied that "we could make a very good soup of it." He did, however, add to the repast "two cabbages and some stale ham;" and this, says the baroness, "was all we could obtain from him." The Italians left the house at last; and, long before they had made their way across the sea, the Hessians' horses had trampled their vineyards, planted with so much care, and watched by Jefferson and by all intelligent Virginia with so much interest, into irremediable ruin.

In Paris, face to face with practical Dr. Franklin, the project of extracting nine hundred thousand pounds sterling from the coffers of an Austrian duke addicted to hoarding, at an interest of five per cent, for a province four thousand miles off, whose independence the duke had not acknowledged and *would* not acknowledge, did not wear so feasible an aspect as it had on Jefferson's piazza, overlooking the rich garden of Virginia. If the Duke of Tuscany was brother to a romantic queen of France, he was also brother to an emperor of Austria, who reminded Paris patriots that he was a king by trade. Tuscany! The very name was enough to put even the placid Franklin out of temper; for he had had an eye himself upon those Tuscan crowns, *knew* they could not be got, and was in full quarrel with Ralph Izzard of South Carolina for drawing twenty-five hundred pounds sterling per annum, in his character of Tuscan minister, though unable to do so much as to get permission to enter Tuscany. Franklin was barely civil to the sanguine and generous Italian. At their first interview, the moment he learned Mazzei's errand, he dashed cold water upon the scheme. "So many people," he said, "have come to Europe on that kind of business, that they have ruined our credit, and made the money-men shy of

18."\* Mazzei argued in vain. As often as he went out to Passy, and broached the subject, Franklin "never failed," as Mazzei reported to Governor Jefferson, "giving some mark of disapprobation and displeasure." And well he might, since he had already offered six per cent for the very crowns which Virginia hoped to get for five. The Duke of Tuscany kept his money; Mazzei returned to Virginia to find his estate in ruins, and to seek in vain compensation for his losses; and the governor passed his two terms in torture, with hostile fleets ravaging the shores, and hostile armies menacing the interior, while every effort to defend the State was "cramped for want of money."

In sending Mazzei upon this mission to a reigning prince, Virginia performed the act of a sovereign State. In the same spirit, and evidently without a thought of impropriety, the legislature, on the second day of Jefferson's governorship, June 2, 1779, formally ratified the treaty with France. Such acts as these throw a valuable light upon the subsequent State-Rights controversy. This ratification seems to me so remarkable, that I will copy the resolutions by which it was authorized:—

*Resolved*, NEMINE CONTRADICENTE, That it is the opinion of this Assembly, that the treaties of alliance and commerce between his Most Christian Majesty of France on the one part, and the Congress of the United States of America, on behalf of the said States, on the other part, ought to be ratified, confirmed, and declared binding on this Commonwealth.

*Resolved*, That the governor be desired to notify to the minister of His Most Christian Majesty, resident at Philadelphia, the above ratification, under the seal of the Commonwealth."

On the 1st of June, then, 1779, Mr. Jefferson became His Excellency, the second republican governor of Virginia. In his public life hitherto, all had been plain sailing; for the wind and tide had been strongly in his favor, and the services which he had been called upon to render were such as his character and habits had fitted him to perform. How different the task which confronted him now! Not more difficult nor nobler, but far more difficult to him. And

\* Lansing's American Historical Record, vol. 1. p. 33.



from the time of his election in January, to the day when he was sworn in, the situation had been growing, every week, more complicated and menacing. If, in January, he had been gratified by the honor done him, probably on the 1st of June he shrank dismayed from the responsibility which that honor brought with it.

The French alliance, he now knew, was working ill in two ways, — in relaxing the vigor of the States, and rendering the foe more unanimous and more savage. The three British commissioners had announced to all the world that the nature of the contest was changed by the alliance with France. Britain was, thenceforth, going to use all the means for subduing rebellious colonies which “God and Nature had placed in her hands.” Since America *might* ere long become an accession to France, the common law of self-preservation (said the commissioners) “will direct Great Britain to render that accession of as little avail to her as possible.” The colonies were to be subdued by being destroyed. America was to be laid waste. This declaration, published in October, 1778, was acted upon at once by Henry Hamilton, commandant of Detroit, by marching into the western wilderness to rouse the Indians to war against Virginia. The State over which Jefferson ruled extended to the Mississippi, and embraced all the territory which we now call Virginia, West Virginia, and Kentucky, besides a great part of what is now Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. I need not remind the reader that that rich and well-watered region swarmed with Indians, among the best and bravest of their race. Taking post at Vincennes on the Wabash, a hundred miles from its junction with the Ohio, Colonel Hamilton spent the winter in “talking” with chiefs, gathering supplies, and preparing for a desolating swoop over Kentucky into the settlements of Virginia. An Indian war, therefore, was among the difficulties preparing for the governor elect while he was receiving the congratulations of his friends. He knew it not, however. It was a good “express” who could keep either his despatches or his scalp while making his way from the Wabash to the James in 1779.

British commanders at the South executed the threats of the commissioners not less. They, too, were to ravage and devastate a country which they had tried in vain to conquer. The war was now to be transferred to the South, too thinly settled to resist, it was thought, yet offering an inviting field for spoliation. Americans, as

they wander about the dusty interior of St. Paul's Cathedral in London, remark with surprise that the most showy monument there commemorates a soldier associated in their minds with defeat, — the great defeated, Cornwallis. He certainly behaved at the South more in the style of a bandit than a soldier; not disdaining petty larceny, it appears, when he saw a precious object that could be conveniently pocketed and carried off. His system being to wreak the king's vengeance, rather than promote his country's interest, his orders were to imprison and despoil every man who would not take arms in his service, and to hang every man, who, after being thus impressed, made his escape, and joined his brethren in arms on the other side.

Governor Jefferson, therefore, from the watch-tower of his high office, had sometimes to look half a dozen ways at once. The flower of the men of Virginia were, of course, in the army under Washington. *They* must be looked to, and their numbers kept up. But that new enemy in the Carolinas, able, enterprising, relentless, must be opposed with all the force which Virginia could spare; since to defeat Cornwallis in North Carolina was the only way to keep him out of Virginia: it was self-defence. The Indians were a third object of attention. The thousands of British and German prisoners in Albemarle occasioned constant solicitude; and the more as the war drew nearer the borders of the State, and as the men of the State were drawn away to serve in distant camps. On the side of the ocean there was always a wide and an open door to danger. Nothing but a fleet will ever be able to shut out a fleet from Chesapeake Bay; and what was Virginia's navy then? Four little cruisers, carrying in all sixty-two guns. And as to Hampton Roads and the mouth of the James River, military men think that even now, in this year 1874, after fifty-nine years' work upon Fortress Monroe and the Ripraps, there is nothing there which could stop a good iron-clad. Certainly there was nothing in 1779 that could stop a wooden frigate. Three weeks before Jefferson's inauguration, a fleet of a dozen vessels, with two thousand troops on board, had run in without firing or receiving a shot, and landed troops without the least molestation. These troops carried out their part of the new programme. They spent several days in ravaging, burning, plundering, murdering, while the militia fled helpless; for in Virginia, in 1779, there was only one musket left to every four or five men; and the unarmed militia of the region could not even limit the

area of spoliation. When at last Governor Henry had got together an armed force of some magnitude, the bold marauders ceased destroying turpentine, tobacco, and pork, ceased despoiling farm-houses and burning villages, and went at their leisure on board their ships, and sailed away. The smoke of their burning had not ceased to ascend to heaven when Jefferson took the oath. What had been done once, he well knew, could be done again.

That was the situation: front door open to hostile fleets; back door, to hostile Indians; General Washington wanting all that Virginia had of men, money, arms, and food; a powerful foe at the South anxious to get over the border; one gun to four or five men, and a most plentiful lack of all other warlike material which can only be got with money. This was the task which had fallen to the lot of a lawyer of thirty-six, with a talent for music, a taste for art, a love of science, literature, and gardening. But mind is mind, intelligence is intelligence. I would not choose Mr. Emerson or Mr. Darwin to command an expedition, or govern a country; but if, in the course of events, it fairly fell to their part to undertake either of those tasks, I should confidently look to their acquitting themselves respectably. Moreover, the individual at the head of a free republic does really have at command, and may utilize, its whole intelligence, as we saw Mr. Lincoln do during the late war. Jefferson had near him a Council and Assembly which contained the best sense that Virginia could spare from the field.

The gloom which hung over the State in consequence of the late unchecked and unpunished ravages of the enemy near the sea was dispelled, before the new governor had been many days in office, by most cheering news from the opposite quarter.

Virginia had in the field, at that time, two eminent heroes: one so known to all mankind, that he need not be named; the other now almost fallen out of memory: one at the head of the armies of America; the other in the Far West, twelve hundred miles from the capital of Virginia, with a band of a hundred and fifty kindred spirits, holding back, by the force of his single will, the Indians from the frontiers of his native State. George Rogers Clarke was the name of this other hero. He was a native of Jefferson's own county of Albemarle; "our Colonel Clarke," he calls him; a neighbor of the governor; not twenty-six years old when Governor Henry sent him into the wilderness, in the spring of 1778, to protect the

border. This hero is not as famous as Leonidas or Hannibal, only because he has not had such historians as they. But he defended the western homes of Virginia precisely as Hannibal would have done. By way of giving the Indians something to do in their own country, he floated and marched to the post of Kaskaskias on the Mississippi, took it, held it as a base; struck for other posts near by, terrified some tribes, seduced others, broke the spell of British influence, became lord paramount in the land of the Illinois; showing himself a most swift, alert, tough, untiring, closely-calculating commander. No order from home helped or hindered him. "Not a scrape of your pen," he wrote to the governor in April, 1779, "have I received from you for near twelve months."

In the midst of his success, when he had held the Indians quiet for nine months, Colonel Hamilton interposed, marching from Detroit, and taking post at Vincennes on the Wabash, right between Clarke and Virginia. Instantly the whole aspect of things was changed; for Hamilton was a man of energy and skill, long familiar with Indians, unscrupulous, willing to let his Indians wage war in the Indian manner. Whole tribes fell off from Clarke, and joined Hamilton, who had guineas, wampum, weapons, red cloth, and all that an Indian prizes. War parties streaked the prairies, and glided through the woods. The Indians of the whole western wilderness, from the Alleghanies to the Great River, were agitated or astir. Clarke prepared to sell his post as dearly as he could; for, as he said, he had not men enough to stand a siege, and was too remote to send for aid. But while he was in the rush of preparation, calling in his outposts, burning superfluous and obstructive houses, making all tight and snug for a desperate fight, came news that Hamilton had sent out so many parties from Vincennes, that he had but eighty men left to defend the post. His resolution was taken; for, really, he had but one chance. Let him wait at Kaskaskias till the spring opened, and he would have Hamilton, British troops, and thousands of Indians, upon him, against whom his little band could fight only to be at last tortured and burnt alive.

The distance from Kaskaskias to Vincennes was a hundred and fifty miles; Clarke's force, about one hundred and fifty men. Sending a barge round by river with the artillery and stores, he struck across the country with a hundred and thirty soldiers, joined on the way by a few young men of the country. It was in the midst of

the great February thaw, the rivers all overflowing, the swamps under water, the prairies soft, the woods soaked and dripping. On the eleventh day they were within nine miles of Vincennes; but those nine miles were covered with the waters of the overflowing Wabash. It took the band five days to accomplish the distance, "having to wade often," says the heroic leader; and, the last six miles, "up to our breasts in water." They must have perished, he added, if the weather had not been warm. Reaching dry land, an hour after dark, they saw the place before them; when, all chilled and wet as they were, they began the attack; and, after an eighteen hours' fight, took the post and all its garrison without the loss of a man. It was Clarke's audacity, fortitude, and skill that won this victory, which, in its consequences, was one of the most important of the war; for, besides relieving the whole frontier of apprehension from the Indians, it confirmed Virginia's claim to the possession of the country, and had its due weight in the final negotiations.

The victors were bountifully rewarded. A few days after, they made an easy capture of forty men and ten thousand pounds' worth of goods, floating down the river to re-enforce Colonel Hamilton. In short, George Rogers Clarke was lord of the West, *vice* Henry Hamilton, deposed, and sent as a prisoner of war, with his chief officers, to the governor of Virginia. "But what crowned the general joy," wrote Clarke to the governor, "was the arrival of William Morris, my express to you, with your letters, which gave general satisfaction. The soldiery, being made sensible of the gratitude of their country for their services, were so much elated that they would have attempted the reduction of Detroit, had I ordered them." William Morris was despatched with tidings of this new triumph; but, as he was killed on the way, it was not until the beginning of June, a hundred days after the event, that Jefferson received the intelligence.

The success of Colonel Clarke, though it relieved the governor's mind from an ever-present dread, devolved upon him a painful duty. Hamilton and two of his officers reached Williamsburg, prisoners, charged with having incited the Indians to scalp, massacre, torture, and burn; Hamilton himself having confined in a dungeon without fire, and loaded with chains, and cruelly tormented, an American citizen. For four years Congress and the people had seen, with a sorrowing and indignant amazement, the cruelty with which English commanders had uniformly treated American prisoners of war; and



they had sought to avenge the wrong by heaping coals of fire upon their heads, treating English and Hessian prisoners with an extravagance of generosity. In their unique manifesto of October 30, 1778, the Congress of the United States had declared to the world, that, "considering themselves bound to love their enemies," they had "*studied* to spare those who were in arms against them, and to lighten the chains of captivity." This was the simple truth. The British prisoners had been courted and petted, rather than abused. Jefferson and his neighbors had personally striven to render the stay of the Burgoyne prisoners in Albemarle, not endurable merely, but delightful.

I can perfectly understand the feelings of the Virginians on this occasion; because, during the late war, while Union prisoners were dying in anguish at Andersonville, unsheltered, and not permitted to shelter *themselves* from the blasting Georgia sun and rain, I saw, near Fortress Monroe, Confederate prisoners in an exquisite seaside hospital, nourished, while their wounds were healing, upon a diet of alternate broiled chicken and lamb-chop, with a glass of delicate hock (whenever ordered by the physicians) at eleven and four; and as well treated, in all essential particulars, as Queen Victoria could be if she lay sick in Windsor Castle. Having seen this sight in September, 1864, I can understand how it was that the governor of Virginia and his council, in June, 1799, came to the conclusion to discontinue the refined coals-of-fire system, and try the vulgar method of retaliation. The council, in fact, "resolved to advise the governor," that the three prisoners from Vincennes "be put in irons, confined in the dungeons of the public jail, debarred the use of pen, ink, and paper, and excluded all converse, except with their keeper."

Each variety of human being has its own besetting foible. As a man of great executive force is apt to be cruelly reckless of others' woe, so a person of scholarly habits and philanthropic character is generally too reluctant to be the instrument of inflicting pain, even when justice, necessity, and mercy, all unite to demand it at his hands. I observe, therefore, with pleasure, in the voluminous correspondence relating to this affair, that Governor Jefferson rose superior to the natural and usual infirmity of men of his temperament, and went heart and hand with his legal advisers. He put those men in irons, and immured them in a dungeon. In those days, too (Howard was only just beginning his jail-tours then), a dun



geon *was* a dungeon. It was rotten straw, foul air, darkness, underground chill, and every thing that was most dismal and repulsive. A hundred years ago the Christian religion was just struggling into existence. It had not yet acquired force enough to purify the public jails of remote Virginia. But Jefferson, philanthropist as he was, and, indeed, because he was a philanthropist, adhered firmly to the system of retaliation; perceiving, as he told General Washington, that retaliation in this instance was only a more far-reaching kind of mercy.

General Phillips, that "proudest man of the proudest nation on earth," prisoner of war in a pleasant mansion near Monticello, sent a vigorous, though moderate and respectful, remonstrance to Governor Jefferson. His chief point was, that Hamilton having capitulated, it was a breach of faith on the part of Virginia to treat him otherwise than as a prisoner of war. The governor ransacked authorities, but found nothing to justify this view. It occurred to him, however, that military usage, not yet embodied in law, might have established the principle; and he therefore, with the consent of his council, referred the matter to the decision of General Washington. "I have the highest idea," he wrote to the general, "of those contracts which take place between nation and nation at war, and would be the last on earth to do any thing in violation of them;" and "my own anxiety under a charge of violation of national faith by the executive of this Commonwealth will, I hope, apologize for my adding this to the many troubles with which I know you to be burdened." The commander-in-chief, after much reflection, and consultation with military men, thought it best, upon the whole, that Hamilton and his companions should have the benefit of the doubt. Their shackles were, therefore, taken off, and they were finally admitted to parole.

Not the less were the governor and council resolved to adhere to the system of retaliation. A prison-ship, on the fell pattern of those used by the English in New York, was actually got ready, and the exchange of prisoners was stopped between Virginia and New York. "Humane conduct on our part," wrote the governor, "was found to produce no effect: the contrary was therefore to be tried. If it produces a proper lenity to our citizens in captivity, it will have the effect we meant: if it does not, we shall return a severity as terrible as universal. . . . Iron," he added, "will be retaliated by iron.

but a great multiplication on distinguished objects ; prison-ships by prison-ships, and like for like in general." But happily Governor Jefferson, in November, 1779, received notification from headquarters that the British generals, under the new commander, Sir Henry Clinton, had changed their system, and were treating prisoners of war with an approach to humanity. Virginians might be pardoned for thinking that the just, spirited, and firm conduct of their governor and council had had something to do with this change.

Meanwhile the governor had trouble enough with the thousands of Burgoyne prisoners near his own home. Their thriving gardens, attractive as they might be to a visitor, could not retain them when there was a chance to escape ; and whenever there was a British force operating in or near Virginia, no one could say, of a squad of soldiers on the tramp, whether they were deserters from that force, or prisoners escaped from Albemarle. "Four hundred desertions in the last fortnight," wrote Colonel Bland in July, 1779 ; and he had reason to believe, "with the connivance of some of the officers." This news was not calculated to soothe the mind of the new governor.

But the grand object of Mr. Jefferson's solicitude, during the first summer of his administration, was to enable the gallant Colonel Clarke to make the most of his commanding position in the Far West. The burning desire of that hero's heart was to capture Detroit, the seat of the enemy's power in the Indian country, and, as Governor Jefferson described it, "an uneasy thorn in our side." A great host of friendly Indians were assembled at Vincennes ; and all was ready for the expedition, except the more costly supplies, and the regiment or two of white troops needful for the onset. It lay heavy on the governor's mind, during the whole period of his service, that he could never quite spare them. Several times he thought he had both men and money enough. But, just as the troops were ready to march, an exigency would occur so dire, so pressing, that he was compelled to order them elsewhere. Thus Detroit remained in the hands of the enemy ; remained a very uneasy thorn in the side of Washington, the United States, the Federal party, until John Jay extracted it by treaty in 1794. Governor Jefferson, unable to get Detroit, resolved to secure what Colonel Clarke had already conquered. A wild delusion prevailed just then, that peace was at hand through the mediation of Spain ; and, supposing that each

belligerent would retain what he actually held at the moment of treating, the governor ordered Colonel Clarke to build certain forts in the western country, particularly one on the Mississippi, at the southern boundary of Virginia, which would make good Virginia's ancient claim to extend westward as far as the Great River. Colonel Clarke, who was a surveyor by profession, — resembling in this as in other respects Jefferson's own father, — built the fort, and named it Fort Jefferson.

This year, 1779, the last of Williamsburg's serving as the capital of Virginia, was the last of Jefferson's residence near William and Mary College, in which he had been educated. Being now elected a college visitor, he endeavored, amid the bustle and anxieties of war, to lop off some of the dead branches that hindered, as he thought, its useful operation. He caused the grammar-school to be abolished, and the two professorships of divinity and Hebrew to be suppressed. In place of these he made provision for the instruction of the students in chemistry, natural history, anatomy, medicine, law, modern languages, the fine arts, natural justice, and the laws of nations. In the spring of 1780, Richmond, a village then of nine hundred white inhabitants, peculiarly defenceless and unprovided, became the capital of Virginia; the government finding shelter — and little more than shelter — in extemporized wooden structures.

The dream of peace was rudely dispelled. About the date of this removal to Richmond, April 1, 1780, the stern and bitter trial of Virginia and her governor began. By the time he had arranged his new pigeon-holes at Richmond, came a private letter from Madison, then in Congress, which must have appalled timid minds. The army under Washington, Mr. Madison said, was on the verge of dissolution, being short of bread and nearly out of meat; the treasury empty, and the public credit gone; the currency nearly worthless; and no visible means of restoring it; the States pulling one way, and Congress another; and every thing in extremity. This was, indeed, the period of profoundest gloom, — the black hour before the dawn. It was the time when Thomas Paine, whose pen, during the Revolution, was equal to a thousand men in the field, drew the year's salary due him as clerk of the Pennsylvania Assembly, and began with it a private subscription in aid of the gasping cause, which had an effect rivalling in importance a new number of

"The Crisis." The sum was but five hundred paper dollars, it is true; but it was all he had, and it kindled the patriotism of men who had more.

By the time Governor Jefferson had docketed Mr. Madison's letter, in the first week of April, 1780, arrived news that a British fleet and army were investing Charleston. News followed, six weeks after, that the city was taken, South Carolina helpless, and a British army free to move **northward over North Carolina into Virginia, unless a half-armed militia could stop it.**

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### VIRGINIA RAVAGED.

To the governor of Virginia, this whole year, 1780, and half the next, was a period of the most rending anxiety, and of exertion the most intense and constant. With four thousand five hundred Virginians already in the army, we see him stimulating the recruiting system in each county, writing letters, public and private, to county members and magnates, urging them to utilize the dying currency, and get out the last man with the last dollar, while it still had a semblance of value. He arranged, early in the campaign, three lines of express-riders, — one to General Washington, one to Hampton Roads, one to the head-quarters of the army of the South, — so that, at a crisis, he hoped to be able to get and send news at the rate of one hundred and twenty miles in a day and night. Still further to guard against surprise, he despatched General Nelson on a tour of the eastern counties, requesting him to get the county lieutenants together, and concert a plan of action in case of another descent of the enemy from the oceans. At first it was an agonizing question, to which quarter Virginia should send her levies. Three letters from the Committee of Congress at head-quarters lay upon his desk at once, all asking for men and means; but early in July, General Gates arrived at Richmond, on his way to take the command in the South; and, for the next six weeks, every man, horse, wagon, gun, bayonet, axe, cartridge-box, shoe, belt, saddle, blanket, tent, and coin, which Governor Jefferson could beg, buy, borrow, or get made, was hurried away to General Gates's head-quarters in North Carolina. Some Virginians saw with dismay the governor pouring into General Gates's camp the whole of Virginia's means of defence. His answer then and ever after was, that Virginia's single chance of escaping devastation by Cornwallis's army lay in strengthening

Gates. If Gates and his army did not stop and hurl back upon Charleston the British forces, nothing could keep them out of Virginia.

For the first time in her history, Virginia became a manufacturing State. "Our smiths," wrote the governor, August 4, "are making five hundred axes and some tomahawks for General Gates," — turning out twenty a day; "and we are endeavoring to get bayonet-belts made," — though leather was so scarce that people stole the flaps of cartouch-boxes from the wagons to mend their shoes with. The governor sent messengers all over the State to pick up little lots of material, such as duck and leather. And, when he had accumulated supplies, he was at his wit's end for wagons in which to transport them. Nearly a quarter of a century had elapsed since Braddock had found wagons so scarce in Virginia and Maryland; and Governor Jefferson, since he had no money in his treasury to hire or buy them, found them scarcer still. In this extremity he was obliged to impress wagons, not sparing his own. His principle was, to leave on every farm the horses and vehicles absolutely necessary to secure the ripening crops, and take all the rest for the public service. This he did upon his own farms in Albemarle. It is interesting to note, that, in the crisis of the campaign, the governor was sending about to try and find, for the use of General Gates, a copy of the old map of Virginia, made when he was a child, by Professor Fry and his own father. The ladies, this summer, were contributing the costly trifles of their jewel-drawers to the cause, besides huge packets of the paper-money of the period. Mrs. Jefferson, the gentle wife of the governor, was active in the work. Among the Gates papers in the priceless collection of the New-York Historical Society, is a letter in the neatest, firmest hand, which she wrote to a friend at this time, — the only scrap of her writing, perhaps, that has escaped the privacy in which her life was passed:—

RICHMOND, Aug. 8, 1780.

Mrs. Washington has done me the honor of communicating the enclosed proposition of our sisters of Pennsylvania, and of informing me that the same grateful sentiments are displaying themselves in Maryland. Justified by the sanction of her letter in handing forward the scheme, I undertake with cheerfulness the duty of furnishing to my country-women an opportunity of proving that they also



participate of those virtuous feelings which gave birth to it. I cannot do more for its promotion than by enclosing to you a number of the papers, to be distributed to such counties as are convenient to you, and to such persons in them as you think proper.

I have the honor to be, with sentiments of the most perfect esteem and respect, madam,

Your most obedient and most humble servant,

MARTHA JEFFERSON.

The results of this appeal, I fear, were not brilliant; and yet it had results. Doubtless a hard-pressed treasurer valued Mrs. Sarah Cary's gold watch-chain, which "cost £7 sterling," or Mrs. Ambler's "five gold rings," or Mrs. Griffin's "ten half-joes," or Mrs. Ramsay's collection of "one half-joe, three guineas, three pistareens, one bit," more highly than the same lady's sounding collection of four bundles of paper money, containing in all seventy-five thousand five hundred and eighteen dollars and one-third. This delusive sum was not altogether to be despised. It would buy one or two blankets, or half a dozen pairs of tolerable marching-shoes.

These efforts were in vain. In the midst of the governor's endeavors, while he was in the very act of hurrying away re-enforcements and stores to the scene of action, occurred (August 16, 1780) the disastrous defeat of Gates at Camden. It was a woful stroke. In an hour—such a destroyer is war—all that Virginia and the whole Confederacy could accumulate of men, horses, and material, in two months of intensest exertion, was scattered and gone. Those wagons so painfully got together, to the number of one hundred and thirty, were all lost,—one of Jefferson's among the rest. In this sad extremity, the governor's first thought was to gather precise and full information of the cause and extent of the disaster, and transmit the same to General Washington; his second, to raise and equip new levies (though "without any money in the treasury, or hope of any till October"), and do whatever else was possible to enable General Gates to make a new stand. For the lost wagons, he tried to substitute barges, in which to float provisions down the streams towards General Gates's camp; but he was obliged to become personally responsible for the cost of their construction. It marks the confusion of the time, that, when a month had elapsed after the Camden defeat, he was still ignorant of the fate of his own wagoner and

horses. A wagon-master from the fatal field told him that a brigade quartermaster, at the moment of panic, cut one of his best horses from the harness, and rode away on him; and that his negro wagoner, Phil, lame in one arm and leg, was seen loosening another horse for the same laudable purpose of saving himself for further service. As the public money was carried in the governor's wagon, it is also to be presumed he never saw it again.

Camden is about one hundred and fifty miles from the Virginia line; and yet several months passed before a soldier of the victorious army trod Virginia soil. The enterprising and resolute yeomanry of North Carolina held them in check, and even compelled a retreat into South Carolina. It was from another quarter that Virginia was menaced next.

It was the 22d of October, 1780. Amid the universal horror and consternation caused by Arnold's defection, the governor of Virginia was still sending forward from every county all the men it could spare to General Gates, except a force which he still hoped to reserve for Colonel Clarke's project against Detroit. Drovers of cattle were on the southern road; the smiths were still working on the axes, producing twenty a day; agents were out buying the newly-harvested corn on the credit of the State; men were ranging the western counties for a hundred more wagons, all for the new army forming under Gates in North Carolina, — when news came that a British fleet of sixty vessels had entered Hampton Roads, and were landing troops near Portsmouth! Jefferson's three lines of express-riders stood him in good stead now; for against such a force — a dozen armed vessels and three thousand regular troops of all arms — there was nothing in Virginia that could stand an hour; and he could do little more than send the information to Washington and Gates. Such militia as were left and had arms were instantly diverted to this new danger; but they could do nothing but make a show of resistance. To General Gates the governor could now only forward an idea: "Would it not be worth while to send out a swift boat from some of the inlets of North Carolina to notify the French admiral that his enemies are in a net, if he has leisure to close the mouth of it?"

"His enemies!" Mr. Jefferson soon learned whose enemies these new-comers were, and what they had come to Virginia for. When they had been a week at Portsmouth, doing nothing particu-

lar, a suspicious character was arrested on the road leading south ward. While protesting his willingness to be searched, he was seen to put something into his mouth. Tobacco, perhaps? But the Virginia militia-men, experienced tobacco-chewers, did not recognize the correct swing of the arm in the motion made by this unknown; and, taking the liberty to examine his mouth, they extracted therefrom a remarkable quid, — a neat little roll of the size of a goose-quill, covered with goldbeater's-skin, and nicely tied at each end. It proved to be a letter from General Leslie, the commander of the expedition, to Lord Cornwallis: "My Lord, I have been here near a week, establishing a post. I wrote to you to Charleston and by another messenger by land. I cannot hear for a certainty where you are. I wait your orders. The bearer is to be handsomely rewarded, if he brings me any note or mark from your lordship. A. L."

This great armament, then, had come to co-operate with Cornwallis in the subjection of Virginia. The design was frustrated by the activity and valor of the North-Carolina militia in annoying and detaining Cornwallis. Leslie waited a month; at the expiration of which he put to sea again with all his ships and all his men. During his stay, the British prisoners in Albemarle escaped in such numbers, that the governor deemed it best to march them into Maryland. And none too soon! If they had remained in Albemarle through the winter, every man of them would have gone to swell the British army when it made its last stand at Yorktown; for Cornwallis, in the spring, could have struck the camp which they had made so inviting with gardens and shrubbery. To the last week of their stay, the agreeable relations between some of the officers and Governor Jefferson continued. To a young German lieutenant of scientific tastes, who had poured forth fervent thanksgivings for Mr. Jefferson's kindness, the governor sent an amiable reply, making light of the services he had been able to render, and suggesting to his young friend to resume philosophy when the war should be over, and, settling in America, acquire a fame "founded on the happiness, and not on the calamities, of human nature." Really, these were fortunate prisoners. The officers had bought for their pleasure such a large number of the superior Virginia horses, that, upon their going away, it became a serious question whether they ought to be allowed to take the animals out of a State so

terribly in want of them ; and Governor Jefferson referred this point also to General Washington's decision.

The month of December, 1780, was a breathing-time to the Virginians. The governor employed it chiefly in pushing measures in aid of Colonel Clarke's design against Detroit. The British were again powerful in the Far West. Certain news came, that, in the spring, two thousand Indians and English would ravage the frontiers, unless employment could be found for them nearer home ; and it was only too probable that the scene of the next regular campaign would be Virginia. Clarke was himself in Richmond for the purpose of urging and organizing the expedition, and was waiting, as the year 1780 drew to a close, the final answer of General Washington to the governor's strong recommendation of the scheme. The general's consent and warm approval were given in due time ; but, before his letter reached Richmond, events again interposed their irresistible fiat.

On Sunday, the last day of the year 1780, at eight in the morning, Jefferson received intelligence that a fleet of twenty-seven sail had entered Chesapeake Bay the day before. The messenger must have ridden hard, the distance in a straight line between Richmond and Old Point Comfort being not less than a hundred and twenty miles ; and he had not waited long enough to learn what flag the vessels bore, nor whether they were bound up the bay or into the James. All the rulers of Virginia were in Richmond at the moment ; for the legislature was in session, within two days of its adjournment. General Nelson of the State militia and the heroic Clarke were there ; and Baron Steuben, who had recently come to assist in the defence of the State, was not far off. But neither soldier nor civilian could assist an anxious governor in determining the character of the new arrival. Could it be Leslie back again ? Might it not be the long-wished-for French fleet ? Was it that mysterious expedition fitting out lately in New York, destined, as it was given out, for some Southern port, of which General Washington, three weeks before, had sent his usual circular of notification to the governors of States ? No one could tell. And if the fleet should prove to be hostile, would the commanding general be content with merely ravaging the shores of the lower country, like his two predecessors, or push for regions which no enemy had yet despoiled ? Which river would he ascend,—the York, the James, the Potomac, the

Patapsco? What town would he first plunder, — Alexandria, Baltimore, Williamsburg, Petersburg, or Richmond?

Amid all this doubt, the governor could only despatch General Nelson, with full powers, to the mouth of the James, that he might be near the scene of his duties in case it were necessary to call out the militia. Richmond has known some anxious Sundays since, but perhaps few more distressing than this; for the whole day passed without bringing further intelligence. Monday came and went; but not a messenger from the lower country arrived. On Tuesday morning, at ten, the suspense was at an end. Word came that the fleet was British, not French, and that it had entered the James, not gone up Chesapeake Bay. Instantly the governor signed orders, calling out half the militia of the region menaced, and a third of the militia of the counties adjacent to it, — four thousand seven hundred men in all, — and intrusted the orders to the county members just departing for their homes. That done, he directed the removal of public property to Westham, a village just above the rapids which close the navigation of the James at Richmond.

The next evening, Wednesday, January 3, the governor learned that the enemy's fleet of light vessels had come to anchor near Jamestown, the point where the river is only seven miles from Williamsburg. Then all thought the enemy's first object must be the ancient capital. But it was not. On Thursday morning, two hours before the dawn, came intelligence that the fleet, favored by wind and tide, had swept on up the broad James to a landing below where the Appomattox enters it. There was still, therefore, some doubt whether Richmond or Petersburg was to be visited; but the governor, who had now learned that "the parricide Arnold" was the commander of the expedition, called out all the militia of that part of the State. At five that afternoon all doubt was dispelled by a despatch which informed the governor that the foe had landed troops at Westover, twenty-five miles distant.

In this emergency Governor Jefferson found himself alone. Not a member of the Council or of the Assembly remained in Richmond to aid him, for all had gone to place their families in safety, or were absent on public duty. He sent his own family — wife and three children, the youngest two months old — to the house of a relative at Luckahoe, thirteen miles above the town. There were two hundred militia of the neighborhood near at hand; and stronger parties were



gathering at various points under Steuben, Clarke, Nelson, and others; but nowhere in Virginia was there yet an armed body capable of holding in check a regiment of regular troops led by an Arnold.

The governor mounted his horse, and took command of the situation. His first orders were to stop transporting stores to Westham, and simply get every thing across the river, or *into* the river, anywhere so that Arnold could not easily reach it. Some hours he spent in superintending and urging on this work, first at Richmond, later at Westham, reaching Tuckahoe, where his family were, at one in the morning. There he remained long enough to assist them across the river, and see them safely on their way to a securer refuge, eight miles above; and then he galloped back along the James to a point opposite Westham, where, at daylight, he resumed his superintendence of the transfer of the public property. At full speed, on the same tired, unfed horse, he continued his ride towards Manchester, then a small village, opposite Richmond. Before he reached it, his horse sank under him exhausted, and he was obliged to leave the animal dying in the road. With saddle and bridle on his own back, he hurried on to the next farm-house for another horse. He could only borrow there a colt not yet broken, upon which he continued his journey; until, coming in sight of Richmond, he discovered the foe already in possession. After doing the little that was possible for the security of the public stores at Manchester, he rode away to the head-quarters of Baron Steuben, a few miles off, for consultation with the only educated soldier within his reach.

In war every thing, even the elements, seem sometimes to favor audacity. Arnold only remained in Richmond twenty-three hours; but so promptly had the governor acted, and so well was he seconded by the county militia and their officers, that Arnold only escaped with his nine hundred men through a timely change in the wind, which bore him down the river with the extraordinary swiftness of his ascent. In five days from the first summons, twenty-five hundred militia were on the traitor's path, and hundreds more coming in every hour; but the breeze wafted him away from them down the James, with the loss of thirty of his men, laid low by a whiff of musketry from a party of militia under Colonel Clarke. During the brief stay of the enemy near Richmond, they burned a cannon four



dery, several of the public shanties, a few private houses, and a prodigious quantity of tobacco, besides throwing into the canal five tons of powder, and spoiling three hundred muskets.

After three days' absence from the capital, the governor returned, and affairs began to resume their usual train. For eighty-four hours his home had been the saddle. Arnold went plundering on to the mouth of the James, where he intrenched himself in the camp abandoned a few weeks before by Leslie.

A passionate desire pervaded the continent to have this traitor brought to justice; or, as Jefferson expressed it, "to drag him from those under whose wing he is now sheltered." When the governor learned the details of Arnold's retreat, he felt that a small band of cool, resolute men could have seized and carried him off; and he now proposed the scheme to an officer of militia. The men to aid him were drawn from the regiments of western Virginia, in whom the governor had "peculiar confidence." The band, he recommended, should be few in number, the smaller the better; and he left it to the discretion of the chief whether they should enter Arnold's camp as friends, or lie in wait for him without. "I will undertake," he wrote, "if they are successful in bringing him off alive, that they shall receive five thousand guineas' reward among them; and, to men formed for such an enterprise, it must be a great incitement to know that their names will be recorded with glory in history with those of Van Wart, Paulding, and Williams." Arnold grew wary, however, and could not be caught.

From this time the civil government in Virginia was, in effect, almost suspended. The war was to be fought out upon Virginia soil and in Virginia waters; and it is an old saying, that, in the presence of contending armies, laws are silent. Arnold, Phillips, Cornwallis, Tarlton, Rochambeau, Greene, Steuben, Lafayette, Nelson, Washington, are the names that figure in the history of Virginia during the next nine months. Arnold, re-enforced and superseded by Phillips, ravaged one portion of the State, except when checked by Steuben and Lafayette. Cornwallis and Tarlton, long retarded and eluded by Greene, swept over the border at last. Indians threatened the western counties; and fleets arrived, departed, contended, on the eastern shores. All that Virginia had of manhood, resources, credit, ability, was enlisted in the cause; and so many men were in service during the planting season, that the governor

feared there would not be food enough raised for the year's necessities.

Jefferson, in the midst of this agonizing chaos, did whatever was possible to supply and re-enforce Greene, Steuben, Lafayette: the burden of his cry to Washington, to Congress, being always "the fatal want of arms." The need of arms became at length so pressing, that, after "knocking at the door of Congress" by letter for many months, he requested Harrison, Speaker of the Assembly, to go to Philadelphia, and beg Congress in person, if they could not assign to Virginia a proper supply of arms, to at least repay Virginia the arms she had lent for the protection of the Carolinas. Power little short of absolute was conferred upon the governor by the legislature at one of its hurried spring sessions. He was authorized to call out the whole of the militia; to impress all wagons, horses, food, clothing, accoutrements, negroes; to arrest the disaffected and banish the disloyal. He was empowered, also, to emit the magnificent sum of fifteen millions of dollars, in addition to the hundred and twenty millions previously issued in the same month, — the whole amount being worth then about twenty-seven thousand golden guineas. But all this availed little. Virginia wanted muskets, — wanted them, not merely for the great operations of the war, but for daily and nightly and hourly defence against predatory bands. **Governor Jefferson could not furnish them.**

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### THE ENEMY AT MONTICELLO.

FOUR times in the spring of 1781 the legislature of Virginia were obliged to adjourn in haste, and fly before the coming or the menace of an enemy. First in January, when Arnold plundered the capital. Next in March, when every act was hurried through from fear of another interruption. Then in May, when an attack seemed so imminent, that the few members who had come together gave up trying to legislate at Richmond, and separated to meet at Charlottesville, under the shadow of Monticello, little thinking that the storm of war was about to sweep over Albemarle also.

The day appointed for the assembling of the legislature at Charlottesville was May 24. The governor's second term of service would expire on the 1st of June; but, amid the hurry and alarm of the time, the Assembly had as yet found no opportunity to attend to an election. There was no quorum till the 28th, when a speaker was chosen; but even then, such was the emergency, the House could not enter into the election of a governor. Cornwallis, with all his army, was five days' march distant, and the State seemed to lie at his mercy. Not a boat could cross the bay nor descend the James without risk of capture by the enemy's smaller craft. The civil government seemed a nullity at such a moment; and the governor, as the last hours of his term were gliding away, could only serve his State by explaining its situation to Congress and the commander-in-chief. He felt that what Virginia needed then was a *general*, able, strong in the confidence of the people, acquainted with the State, one who would place himself in the centre of the crisis, rally around him every element of force Virginia possessed, and direct it upon the foe. He thought, moreover, that the seven thousand men of Cornwallis must be the enemy's principal force; and, under this impres-

sion, he wrote to General Washington on the 28th of May, while a small quorum of the legislature were choosing their speaker within sight of his house: "Were it possible for this circumstance to justify in Your Excellency a determination to lend us your personal aid, it is evident from the universal voice that the presence of their beloved countryman, whose talents have so long been successfully employed in establishing the freedom of kindred States, to whose person they have still flattered themselves they retained some right, and have ever looked upon as their *dernier resort* in distress, that your appearance among them, I say, would restore full confidence of salvation, and would render them equal to whatever is not impossible."

The time had not yet come for Washington's appearance on this scene, though that time was not distant. The month of May expired. Jefferson was out of office, and Virginia had no governor.

The Speaker of the House, the President of the Council, and several members of both bodies, were his guests at Monticello, riding over from Charlottesville every afternoon after the business of the day was at an end.

Just before sunrise, June 4, 1781, while as yet the inhabitants of Monticello slept, except, perhaps, the early-waking master of the mansion, a horseman rode at full speed up the mountain, and sprang from his foaming steed at the door of the house. He was a gentleman of the neighborhood, named Jouitte, well known to Jefferson. He had been spending the evening before at a tavern in Louisa, twenty miles away, the county town of the next county eastward from Albemarle. An hour before midnight a body of British cavalry, two hundred and fifty in number, had galloped into the town, had come to a halt, dismounted, and proceeded to refresh man and beast with food and rest. Jouitte guessed that the object of such a band, so far from the actual seat of war, commanded, too, by the famous Tarlton, could be no other than the surprise of the governor and legislature of Virginia. He had his horse saddled; and, while Tarlton and his men were enjoying their three hours' halt at Louisa, he had struck into an old, disused road, a short cut, and ridden with all speed towards Charlottesville to give the alarm; making a slight detour on his way, to warn Mr. Jefferson and his friends at Monticello. He delivered his message there, and rode on to notify the rest of the members in the village.

The family, we are told, breakfasted as usual; after which, †

papers rolled away to Charlottesville, and the inmates of the house prepared for a journey. A carriage was made ready, and brought round to the door, in which Jefferson placed his most valued papers.

He sent his best horse to be shod at a shop on the river's bank, a mile off. The two most trusted of the household servants gathered the plate and other things of value, and hid them under the floor of the front portico. All these things were done with a certain deliberation, because the family naturally concluded that Tarlton would first strike Charlottesville, which lay in plain sight from Monticello, and thus give them ample notice of his approach. But Tarlton, as he went thundering on towards the village, detached a troop to seize the governor, and hold Monticello as a lookout during his stay in the vicinity; and hence, when Jefferson had been employed something less than two hours in sorting and packing his papers, an officer of militia came in, breathless, to say that British cavalry were coming up the mountain. Jefferson had two law-pupils at the time, James Monroe, and another, whose name is not recorded. Monroe was in the field, of course, during these weeks of stress and ravage. To the other, Jefferson confided his family, directing him to take them to a friend's house some miles distant. He sent to the blacksmith's for his horse, ordering the servant to bring the animal to a spot between his own mountain and the next, which he could quickly reach by a by-road through the woods. Still he lingered a few minutes among his papers, wishing to give his servant time to get the horse to the designated place. He left his house at length, telescope in hand, light sword of the period at his side, and walked down through the forest to the valley between the two mountains, where he found his horse. Before mounting, he paused to listen. No sound was audible, except the musical din of a peaceful June morning in the primeval woods. No clang of accoutrements, nor tramp of armed men, nor distant thunder of a troop of horse. He went a little way up the next mountain to a rock, whence, with the aid of his telescope, he could clearly see Charlottesville; but there was no unusual stir in the streets. A false alarm perhaps; and, so surmising, he resolved to go back to his house, and finish the sorting of his papers, the accumulated treasure of the years that had past since the burning of the house in which he was born. He had gone some distance towards his home, when he discovered that his sword had slipped from its scabbard, as he guessed, when he had stopped

to get a rest for his spyglass. He went back for it. Before leaving the rock, he took another peep through his glass at the village; when, behold, it was all alive and swarming with troopers!

Then, for the first time, he mounted his horse, and took the road to follow his family, whom he rejoined before night. The dropping of his sword was a lucky event. If he had gone back to the house, he might have fallen into the hands of the enemy; for they entered just five minutes after he left it. The two friendly slaves who were hiding the family treasures, one in the cavity receiving, and the other on the portico handing down, were almost caught in the act of stowing away the last article. They heard the sound of hoofs just in time for the one above to slam down the plank, shutting up the other in a dark, hot, and narrow hole, during the whole eighteen hours' stay of the troop. It proved to be a superfluous exertion of fortitude. Tarlton had given orders that nothing in the house should be injured or removed, and these orders were obeyed; except that some of the thirsty soldiers, after their thirty hours' gallop, helped themselves on the sly to some wine in the cellar.

The fidelity of these two slaves, Martin and Cæsar, during this time of trial, was always remembered by the family with gratitude and pride. Martin, after shutting down the faithful Cæsar with the treasures, remained standing upon the plank of the portico, where he received the captain of the troopers with dignified politeness. He conducted the officer over the house. When they reached the library, where Jefferson had, five minutes before, been at work among his papers, this captain — McCleod by name, gentleman by nature — locked the door; and then, handing the key to Martin, said, in substance, "If any of the soldiers ask you for the key of this room, tell them *I* have it." One of the soldiers, to test Martin's mettle, put a pistol to his breast, and threatened to fire unless he told which way his master had gone. "Fire away, then," replied the slave. Cæsar, on his part, cramped and tortured as he was in his black hole, made no movement, uttered no sound, during the whole eighteen hours, — all the rest of that day and all the night following.

Down the James, a hundred miles or more, Jefferson possessed a plantation named Elk Hill, with mansion-house, negro quarter, extensive stables, herds of cattle, and growing crops. For ten days Cornwallis lived in this house, which had an elevated site, command-



ing a view of the whole estate. Jefferson himself has put upon record what his lordship did or permitted during his brief residence there. He destroyed all the growing crops of corn and tobacco; he burned all the barns, filled with last year's product; he took all the cattle, hogs, and sheep, for his army; he appropriated all the serviceable horses; he cut the throats of the colts; he burned all the fences; he carried off twenty-seven slaves. With his usual exactness, Jefferson enumerates the items of his loss: nine horses, fifty-nine cattle, thirty sheep, sixty hogs, seven hundred and eighty barrels of corn, nineteen hogsheads of tobacco, and two hundred and seventy-five acres of growing wheat and barley. Respecting the lost slaves he remarks, "Had this been to give them freedom, he would have done right; but it was to consign them to inevitable death from the small-pox and putrid fever, then raging in his camp." A few of these slaves crawled home to recover or to die, and to give the fever to five who had not left the plantation. Cornwallis, he adds, "treated the rest of the neighborhood in much the same style, but not with that spirit of total extermination with which he seemed to rage over my possessions."

For twelve days Virginia had no governor. If Tarlton had ridden on that morning, without stopping for breakfast, he might have caught a quorum of the legislature in or near Charlottesville, and kept the State without a government for the rest of the campaign. It would have been no great harm; for during the next five months, while the allied fleets and armies, and all the militia of Virginia that Jefferson had been able to arm, were cornering the marauder of the Southern States, there was little for civilians to do. Tarlton halted at the house of one of Jefferson's friends, who ordered breakfast for the colonel and his officers. But the privates were as hungry as their leaders, and devoured the food in the kitchen as fast as the cook could get it ready. Tarlton got no breakfast until he had placed a guard to protect the cook; and this delay gave members time to come together at Charlottesville, and adjourn to meet, three days after, at Staunton, forty miles to the westward, on the safe side of the Blue Ridge.

They met, accordingly, on the 7th of June. Discouraged at the aspect of affairs, soured and irritated by this fourth flight from the tramp of armed men, several of them were disposed to cast the blame of these invasions upon Governor Jefferson. One young

member even said as much in the House, intimating that the governor should have foreseen Arnold's coming, and called out the militia in time. We all know, from recent experience, that in war-time, when affairs go ill in the field, the civil administration sinks in the esteem of the public; and, indeed, we cannot wonder, that, amid the musket-famine of this terrible year, Virginians should bitterly regret the arms and accoutrements which the governor had sent down all the highways to Carolina, only to have them thrown away or captured at Camden and Guilford. Jefferson's friends courted, demanded, inquiry into his conduct, and insisted on having it set down as part of the business of the next session.

Still the House refrained from the election of a governor. Some of the weaker members revived the stale device of naming Patrick Henry dictator, but again laid the project aside from fear of the dangers of imaginary patriot-assassins. "The very thought," as Jefferson wrote, "was treason against the people, was treason against mankind in general, as riveting forever the chains which bow down their necks, by giving to their oppressors a proof, which they would have trumpeted through the universe, of the imbecility of republican government, in times of pressing danger, to shield them from harm." Jefferson had a far better device, one which gave the State a legitimate, a constitutional dictator. Several months before, he had resolved to decline serving a third term. In the belief, that, at such a crisis, the civil and military power should be wielded by the same hands, he induced his friends, who were a majority of the House, to give their votes to Thomas Nelson, commander-in-chief of the militia of the State, who was accordingly elected.

General Nelson had been a main stay of Jefferson's administration, giving to it the support of his honored name, his military talents, and the credit of his vast estates. On his own personal security he had raised the greater part of a most timely loan of two millions of dollars, and advanced money to pay two Virginia regiments who would not march for the Southern army before their arrears were discharged. Governor Nelson took the field. He used without reserve the despotic powers with which he was intrusted; forcing men into the field, and impressing wagons, horses, negroes, supplies. He was in at the death of that foul, mean, and monstrous war. At Yorktown, his own mansion being within the enemy's lines, and occupied by British officers, he had the pleasure of sending cannon-balls

crashing through his own dining-room, and breaking up festive parties making merry over his own wine. It was a happy stroke of good sense and good management in Jefferson to leave his office to such a successor; because he appeased the dictator party by giving them a dictator, while assigning the sole duty of the time to one fitted to perform it.

But General Nelson did not succeed in satisfying his countrymen, for whom he had sacrificed health and fortune. He was an unpopular governor; for the Virginians did not enjoy a dictator when they had got one, and he could not long endure the opprobrium which the exercise of dictatorial power evoked. He threw up his office after holding it about six months; and he, too, sought opportunity to defend his administration before the legislature.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### AT HOME AFTER THE WAR.

PUBLIC men were apparently more sensitive to criticism in the last century than in this. Junius has had many imitators: he founded a school; he invented an industry; and the efforts of so many keen, reckless, ill-informed makers of antithesis and epigram have, perhaps, toughened the skins of public men, so that they now scarcely feel what would have made the statesmen of other days writhe in torment. It is an easy mode of producing an effect, this assailing the anxious and heavy-laden servants of the state. It was not difficult for a perfumed dandy in the amphitheatre, yawning at his ease, to find fault with the scarred and sweating gladiator fighting for life in the arena. It is not difficult to prepare in the secrecy of a garret a barbed and stinging bolt, and hurl it from the safe ambush of a pseudonyme at a distinguished combatant while he is absorbed in a contest with open foes. Poor Chatterton did it almost as well as Junius. At sixteen, an attorney's apprentice in far-off Bristol, singularly ignorant of the world, knowing nothing of politics, he wrote fulminations against ministers, which Wilkes thought good enough to print in "The North Briton." So easy a trade is it to one who is ignorant enough and reckless enough. It were easy now to prove that Junius himself, who showed such skill in the art of hiding, knew little more of the real character, aims, and difficulties of the men whom he assailed, than the boy Chatterton. Happily the industry of so many anonymous and irresponsible cowards has lessened the power of the most evenommed criticism to injure or torture a good minister. Unhappily it has rendered the most just exposure of a bad one all but ineffectual. Truth and calumny we are apt alike to reject when they concern a public man.

Jefferson was destined to suffer a very large share of ignorant

and reckless criticism, which he learned to endure with the imperturbability of trained good sense. However, in 1781, he was not only a young man, but the world was younger than it is now, not having outgrown the veneration once supposed to be due to all governors as such. It was a fearful thing still to censure the head of a state. One young man in the legislature of Virginia had publicly cast the blame of Virginia's desolation, during the first months of 1781, upon Governor Jefferson; and in this censure some other members were known to acquiesce. It fills the reader of to-day with astonishment to observe, in Jefferson's correspondence, how deeply he took this to heart, and how long he brooded over it. Every man in a situation to judge his conduct had commended it. Washington, Gates, Greene, Lafayette, Steuben, with whom he had co-operated in the defence of the State, had applauded his wisdom and promptitude; and many of his fellow-citizens complained only that he had done too much. But the single word of censure outweighed all applause. For many months he could not get over it. And, indeed, we must own that the censure was ill-timed, when his estate was overrun, his old servants destroyed, his family driven from their home, and himself pursued; all *because* he had been his country's conspicuously faithful servant in a perilous time.

Such was his indignation, that he forswore public service forever. He would go back once to the legislature to meet his accusers face to face; but, after that was done, nothing, no, *nothing*, should ever draw him from his books, his studies, his family, his gardens, his farms, again. He had had enough of public life. No slave, he wrote, was so wretched as "the minister of a commonwealth." He declared that the only reward he had ever desired for his thirteen years of public service was the good-will of his fellow-citizens, and he had not even obtained that; nay, he had lost the little share of their esteem he had once enjoyed. Thus he exaggerated the injustice done him, and nursed, Achilles-like, his mortification.

In August, Lafayette forwarded to him through the lines a letter from the President of Congress, telling him, that, six weeks before, Congress had again elected him to a foreign mission. But he would not be consoled. For once the health of his wife and the condition of his family (their infant child had died a few weeks before) were such as to permit their attempting the voyage together. He might have gone to Europe in 1781; he would have gone, but

for this slight show of legislative censure. "I lose an opportunity," he wrote to Lafayette, "the only one I ever had, and perhaps ever shall have, of combining public service with private gratification; of seeing countries whose improvements in science, in arts, in civilization, it has been my fortune to admire at a distance, but never to see, and at the same time of lending some aid to a cause which has been handed on from its first organization to its present stage by every effort of which my poor faculties were capable. These, however, have not been such as to give satisfaction to some of my countrymen; and it has become necessary for me to remain in the State till a later period in the present year than is consistent with an acceptance of what has been offered me."

Before the legislature met again, the winter of Virginia's discontent was made glorious summer by the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown. All thought of censure was swallowed up in that stupendous joy. December 19, 1781, exactly a month after the surrender, Jefferson, occupying his ancestral seat as member for Albemarle, — to which he had been re-elected without one dissentient vote, — rose in his place, reminded the House of the intimated censure of the last session, and said he was ready to meet and answer any charges that might be brought against him. No one responded. His accuser was absent. There was silence in the chamber. After a pause, a member rose, and offered a resolution thanking him for his "impartial, upright, and attentive administration," which passed both Council and Assembly unanimously.

Even this did not heal the wound. As he refrained from attending the spring session of the legislature, James Monroe wrote to him a letter of remonstrance, telling him that the public remarked his absence, and were disposed to blame him for withholding his help at so difficult a time. He answered, that, before announcing his determination to retire from public life, he had examined well his heart, to learn whether any lurking particle of political ambition remained in it to make him uneasy in a private station. "I became satisfied," he continued, "that every fibre of that passion was thoroughly eradicated." He thought, too, that thirteen years of public service had given him a right now to withdraw, and devote his energies to the care and education of the two families dependent upon him, and the restoration of estates impaired by neglect or laid waste by war. Nor could he forget the wrong done him in the As



sembly. "I felt," he wrote, "that these injuries, for such they have since been acknowledged, had inflicted a wound on my spirit *which will only be cured by the all-healing grave.*" For these and other reasons, he held to his purpose to withdraw from all participation in public affairs, and dedicate the whole residue of his life to the education of his children, the culture of his lands, and the sweet toils of the library. He concluded by inviting his young friend to visit him at Monticello. "You will find me busy," he said, "but in lighter occupations."

Yes, he was busy; but few persons who look over the work he was then doing regard it as a very light occupation. The French government had instructed its minister at Philadelphia to gather and transmit to Paris information respecting the States of the American Confederacy; and the secretary of legation had sent Mr. Jefferson a list of questions to answer concerning Virginia. From childhood he had observed nature in his native land with the curiosity of an intelligent and sympathetic mind; and in his maturer age, even in the busiest and most anxious times, he had been ever a student, an inquirer, a collector. All the stores of knowledge accumulated in so many years he now poured upon paper, and interspersed subtle and curious essays upon points of natural history, geography, morals, politics, and literature. M. de Marbois must have been astonished to receive from him, not a series of short, dry answers to official questions, but a volume, teeming with suggestive fact and thought, warm with humane sentiment, and couched in the fluent language natural to a sanguine and glowing mind. It is in this work that the chapter occurs which gave so many powerful texts to our noble Abolitionists during their eighty years' war with slavery:—

"The whole commerce between master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions, the most unremitting despotism, on the one part, and degrading submissions on the other. Our children see this, and learn to imitate it; for man is an imitative animal. This quality is the germ of all education in him. From his cradle to his grave he is learning to do what he sees others do. The parent storms, the child looks on, catches the lineaments of wrath, puts on the same airs in the circle of smaller slaves, gives a loose to the worst of passions, and, thus nursed, educated, and daily exercised in tyranny, cannot but be stamped by it with

odious peculiarities. That man must be a prodigy who can retain his manners and morals undepraved by such circumstances. . . . I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just; that his justice cannot sleep forever; that, considering numbers, nature, and natural means only, a revolution of the wheel of fortune, an exchange of situations, is among possible events; that it may become probable by supernatural interference! The Almighty has no attribute which can take side with us in such a contest."

At the close of the war, then, Jefferson supposed his public life ended. He was sure of it. He had publicly said so. Monroe had remonstrated with him; Madison had remonstrated; his old constituents and Congress both solicited his services; but he could not be lured again from his pleasant mountain home and its delicious duties into the arena of public strife, whence he had but lately issued, wounded and sore. I suppose he was wrong in this; for if he, with his ample fortune, his fine endowments, his health, his knowledge, and his culture, was not bound to render some service to Virginia in 1782, of whom could public service be reasonably demanded?

It was a delightful dream while it lasted, that of spending a long life in the Garden of Virginia, with an adored wife, troops of affectionate children, and an ever-growing library. We have a glimpse of him there in the spring of 1782, when he was visited by one of the officers of the French army, Major-General the Marquis de Chastellux. During this year, while the negotiations for peace were lingering, the French officers were much in American society, making an impress upon manners and character that is not yet obliterated. Americans were peculiarly susceptible then to the influence of men whose demeanor and tone were in such agreeable contrast to those of the English. The French were exceedingly beloved at the time; not the officers only, but the men as well; for had they not marched through the country without burning a rail, without touching an apple in an orchard, without ogling a girl by the roadside?

The influence of the French officers upon the young gentlemen of the United States was not an unmixed good. It was from them that the American of eighty years ago caught the ridiculous affectation of fighting duels, which raged like a mania from 1790 to 1804. The French nobleman of the old school had also acquired an art, which men of our race never attain, the art of making sensual vice

seem elegant and becoming. Anglo-Saxons are only respectable when they are strictly virtuous. It has not been given to us to lie with grace, and sin with dignity. We are nothing if not moral. And, doubtless, if a man permits himself to conduct his life on an animal basis, it is honester in him, it is better for others, for him to appear the beast he is. The dissoluteness of the English officers at Philadelphia and New York, being open and offensive, was not calculated to make American youth cast aside the lessons of purity which they had learned in their clean and honorable homes. Dashing down Chestnut Street in a curricie, with a brazen hussy by your side, is not as pretty a feat as carrying on what was styled "an intrigue," in an elegant house. It was these French officers who infected many American youths, besides Hamilton and Burr and their young friends, with the most erroneous and pernicious idea that ever deluded youth, — that it is but a trifling, if not a becoming, lapse to be unchaste.

Jefferson, who had the happy art of getting the good, and letting alone the evil, of whatever he encountered on his way through life, was strongly drawn to this Marquis de Chastellux, a man of mature age, of some note in literature, a member of the Academy, and full of the peculiar spirit of his class and time. Jefferson had invited him to visit Monticello. On an afternoon in the first week of May, 1782, behold the marquis and his three friends — a cavalcade of four gentlemen, six mounted servants, and a led horse — winding up the Little Mount, and coming in sight of the "rather elegant," unfinished Italian villa on its summit. I am afraid Mrs. Jefferson saw this brave company dismount with some dismay, for she was not in a condition to entertain strangers. They, however, were well pleased to see a bit of Europe in those western wilds. "Mr. Jefferson," wrote the marquis, "is the first American who has consulted the fine arts to know how he should shelter himself from the weather;" which was a sweeping statement, though not far from the truth. Upon entering, he met the master of the house, — "a man not yet forty, tall, and with a mild and pleasing countenance;" "an American, who, without ever having quitted his own country, is at once a musician, skilled in drawing, a geometrician, an astronomer, a natural philosopher, legislator, and statesman;" "a philosopher in voluntary retirement from the world and public business," because "the minds of his countrymen are not yet in a condition either to

bear the light or to suffer contradiction ;” blessed with “a mild and amiable wife, and charming children of whose education he himself takes charge.” Mr. Jefferson, he adds, received his invited guest without any show of cordiality, even with something like coldness ; but, before they had conversed two hours, they were as intimate as if they had passed their whole lives together. During four days the joy of their intercourse never lessened ; for their conversation, “always varied and interesting, was supported by that sweet satisfaction experienced by two persons, who, in communicating their sentiments and opinions, are invariably in unison, and who understand one another at the first hint.”

It so chanced that the Frenchman was a lover of Ossian. “I recollect with pleasure,” he tells us, “that, as we were conversing one evening over a bowl of punch, after Mrs. Jefferson had retired, our conversation turned on the poems of Ossian. It was a spark of electricity which passed rapidly from one to the other. We recollected the passages in those sublime poems which had particularly struck us, and entertained with them my fellow-travellers, who fortunately knew English well. In our enthusiasm the book was sent for, and placed near the bowl, where, by their mutual aid, the night advanced imperceptibly upon us. Sometimes natural philosophy, at others politics or the arts, were the topics of our conversation ; for no object had escaped Mr. Jefferson, and it seemed as if from his youth he had placed his mind, as he had done his house, on an elevated situation, from which he might contemplate the universe.”

Sometimes he rambled with his guests about the grounds, showing them his little herd of deer, a score in number. “He amuses himself by feeding them with Indian corn, of which they are very fond, and which they eat out of his hand. I followed him one evening into a deep valley, where they are accustomed to assemble towards the close of the day, and saw them walk, run, and bound ;” but neither guest nor host could decide upon the family to which they belonged. In other branches of natural science the marquis found Mr. Jefferson more proficient, particularly in meteorology. He had made, in conjunction with Professor Madison of William and Mary, a series of observations of the ruling winds at Williamsburg and at Monticello, and discovered, that, while the north-east wind had blown one hundred and twenty-seven times at Williamsburg, it had blown but thirty-two times at Monticello. The four

days passed like four minutes, says the marquis. The party of Frenchmen continued their journey towards the Natural Bridge, on land belonging to their host, eighty miles distant. Mr. Jefferson would have gone with them: "but his wife being expected every moment to lie in, as he is as good a husband as he is an excellent philosopher and virtuous citizen, he only acted as my guide for about sixteen miles, to the passage of the little River Mechinn, where we parted, and, I presume to flatter myself, with mutual regret."

He *might* flatter himself so far. Mr. Jefferson was extremely pleased with him; and this was the beginning of that fondness for the French people which he carried with him through the rest of **his life.**

## CHAPTER XXX.

### DEATH OF MRS. JEFFERSON.

**BEFORE** the Marquis de Chastellux had been gone from Monticello many hours, the sixth child of Thomas and Martha Jefferson was born, making the number of their living children three. It was death to the mother. She lingered four months, keeping her husband and all the household in what he termed "dreadful suspense." He took his turn with his sister and with her sister in sitting up at night. With his own hands he administered her medicines and her drinks. For four months he was either at her bedside, or at work in a little room near the head of her bed, never beyond call. His eldest daughter, a little girl of ten, but maturer than her years denoted, never lost the vivid recollection of her father's tender assiduity during those months. When the morning of September 6 dawned, it was evident that she had not many hours to live; and all the family gathered round her bed. Thirty years after, six of the female servants of the house enjoyed a kind of honorable distinction at Monticello, as "the servants who were in the room when Mrs. Jefferson died,"—such an impression did the scene leave upon the minds of the little secluded community. It was a tradition among the slaves, often related by these six eye-witnesses, that the dying lady gave her husband "many directions about many things that she wanted done;" but that when she came to speak of the children, she could not command herself for some time. At last she said that she could not die content if she thought her children would ever have a step-mother; and her husband, holding her hand, solemnly promised that he would never marry again.\* Towards noon, as she was about to breathe her last, his feelings became

\* Jefferson at Monticello, p. 106.



uncontrollable. He almost lost his senses. His sister, Mrs. Carr, led him staggering from the room into his library, where he fainted, and remained so long insensible that the family began to fear that he, too, had passed away. They brought in a pallet, and lifted him upon it. He revived only to a sense of immeasurable woe. His daughter Martha, who was to be the solace of all his future years, ventured into the room at night, and even then, such was the violence of his grief, that she was amazed and confounded. For three weeks he remained in that apartment, attended day and night by this little child. He walked, as she related, almost incessantly, all day and all night, only lying down now and then, when he was utterly exhausted, upon the pallet that had been hurriedly brought while he lay in his fainting fit. When at last he left the house, he would ride on horseback hours and hours, roaming about in the mountain roads, in the dense woods, along the paths least frequented, accompanied only by his daughter, — “a solitary witness,” she says, “to many a violent burst of grief, the remembrance of which has consecrated particular scenes beyond the power of time to obliterate.”

So passed some weeks. He fell into what he called “a stupor of mind,” from which the daily round of domestic duties could not rouse him. Meanwhile the intelligence of his loss reached Congress, then in session at Philadelphia, waiting with extreme solicitude the issue of the negotiations for peace at Paris. Six months had already passed since the negotiations had been begun, during the last three of which Dr. Franklin had been laid aside by an attack of his disease, leaving the chief burden to be borne by Mr. Jay alone. It now occurred to the Virginia members, that, as the causes of Mr. Jefferson's previous declining to cross the sea were removed, he might be willing to join the commission to treat for peace. He was at once elected a plenipotentiary by a unanimous vote, and, as Madison reports, “without a single adverse remark.” The news of his election reached him November 25, 1782, eleven weeks after the death of his wife, when he had gone with his troop of children, — daughters, nephews, and nieces, nine in all, — to a secluded estate in Chesterfield County to have them inoculated.

It was like a trumpet-call to a war-horse standing listless under a tree in the pasture, after a rest from the exhaustion and wounds of a campaign. He accepted instantly. He flew to his long-neglected

desk to write the necessary letters, and to bring up the arrears in his correspondence; for the French minister had offered him a passage in a man-of-war which was to sail from Baltimore in three weeks, and in that vessel his beloved Marquis de Chastellux was also to cross the ocean! Enchanting prospect! But there is many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip. When he reached the port, after many delays, it was only to discover that the enemy's fleet blocked the pathway to the sea; and before the admiral saw a chance to elude them came the ecstatic news that the preliminaries had been signed, and there was no need of his going. So he wrote to Mr. Jay to give up the lodgings in Paris which he had requested him to engage; and in May, 1783, he was at home once more.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### IN CONGRESS AT ANNAPOLIS.

**BUT** the spell was broken. He had shown himself willing to serve the public. Next month the legislature elected him a member of Congress; and in November, 1783, we find him at Annapolis ready to take his seat, after having left his eldest daughter at school in Philadelphia.

In the universal languor which followed the mighty effort of 1781, it was hard to get twenty-five members together; but Jefferson found them brimful of the spirit of disputation; for Arthur Lee was a member, the most disputatious man of whom history condescends to make mention. Caught in a shower in London, he sought the shelter of a shed, when a gentleman ventured the civil remark that it rained very hard. "It rains hard, sir," said Lee, "but I doubt whether you can say it rains *very* hard." One such person would suffice to set any twenty men by the ears. Days were wasted in the most trivial and needless debates, during which the good-tempered Jefferson sat silent and tranquil. A member asked him one day, how he could listen to so much false reasoning, which a word would refute, and not utter that word. "To refute," said he, "is easy; to silence, impossible." He added, that, in measures brought forward by himself, he took, as was proper, the laboring oar; but, in general, he was willing to play the part of a listener, content to follow the example of Washington and Franklin, who were seldom on their feet more than ten minutes, and yet rarely spoke but to convince. Despite the copious flow of words, many memorable things were done by this Congress; and though Jefferson sat in it but five months, his name is imperishably linked with some of its most interesting measures. It is evident that he often took "the laboring oar." Twice during the sickness of the president, he was elected

chairman of the body; and his name stands at the head of every committee of much importance.

He it was, who, as chairman of the committee of arrangements, wrote the much-embracing address with which the President of Congress received General Washington's resignation of his commission. He assisted in arranging the details of that affecting and immortal scene. The spectacle presented in the chamber at Annapolis impressed mankind; and the two addresses winged their way round the world, affording "a lesson useful to those who inflict and to those who feel oppression." As a member of this Congress, Thomas Jefferson, with four other signers of the Declaration of Independence, namely, Roger Sherman, Elbridge Gerry, Robert Morris, and William Ellery, signed the treaty of peace which acknowledged the independence of the United States.

A currency for the new nation, to take the place of the chaos of coins and values which had plagued the colonies from an early day, was among the subjects considered at this session. Jefferson, chairman of the committee to which the matter was referred, assisted to give us the best currency ever contrived by man, — a currency so convenient, that, one after another, every nation on earth will adopt it. Two years before Gouverneur Morris, a clerk in the office of his uncle, Robert Morris, had conceived the most happy idea of applying the decimal system to the notation of money. But it always requires several men to complete one great thing. The details of the system devised by Gouverneur Morris were so cumbrous and awkward as almost to neutralize the simplicity of the leading idea. Jefferson rescued the fine original conception by proposing our present system of dollars and cents; the dollar to be the unit and the largest silver coin. He recommended also a great gold coin of ten dollars value, a silver coin of the value of one-tenth of a dollar, and a copper coin of the value of one-hundredth of a dollar. He suggested three other coins for the convenience of making change, — a silver half-dollar, a silver double-tenth, and a copper twentieth. It remained only to invent easy names for these coins, which was done in due time.

This perfect currency was not adopted without much labor and vigorous persistence on the part of Jefferson, both in and out of Congress. His views prevailed over those of Robert Morris, the first name in America at that time in matters of finance. Jefferson

desired to apply the decimal system to all measures; and this, doubtless, will one day be done. "I use," he tells us, "when I travel, an odometer, which divides the miles into cents, and I find every one comprehends a distance readily when stated to him in miles and cents; so he would in feet and cents, pounds and cents."

Jefferson struck another blow at slavery this winter, which again his Southern colleagues warded off. The cession by Virginia of her vast domain in the north-west, out of which several States have been formed, was accepted by this Congress; and it was Mr. Jefferson who drew the plan for its temporary government. He inserted a clause abolishing slavery "after the year 1800 of the Christian era." In a Congress of twenty-three members, only seven voted no; but, as a measure could only be adopted by a majority of *States*, these sufficed to defeat it. Every member from a Northern State voted for it, and every Southern member except two against it.

In this ordinance, Jefferson assigned names to various portions of the territory. If his names had held, we should to-day read upon the map of the United States, Sylvania, Michigania, Cherronesus, Assenisipia, Metropotamia, Illinoia, Saratoga, Polypotamia, Pelispia, instead of the present names of the States west and north-west of Virginia. We have improved upon his names. Ohio is better than Pelispia; and the least agreeable of the present names is not so bad as Assenisipia.

Absorbed as he was in these public duties, he could not forget the desolation of his home; and he seems to have thought of returning to Monticello with some degree of dread. But when the strongest tie is severed, others grow stronger. He had another dream of the future now, suggested by his young friend, James Monroe, talking of buying a farm near Monticello with a view to settle there. His three most congenial and beloved friends at this time were James Madison, James Monroe, and William Short. We might almost style them his disciples; for they had been educated under his influence or guidance, and were curiously in accord with him on questions moral and political. Why, he asked, could not they all live near one another in Albemarle, and pass their days in study and contemplation, a band of brothers and philosophers? Madison, just disappointed in love, which kept him a bachelor for many a year, had gone home to his father's house in Orange, where he sought relief in the most intense and unremitting study. Who was better

fitted to console him than Jefferson, who had had a similar experience in his tender youth? Jefferson did his best, and begged him to ride over to Monticello as often as he chose, and regard the library there as his own. And more, "Monroe is buying land almost adjoining me. Short will do the same. What would I not give if you could fall into the circle. With such a society, I could once more venture home, and lay myself up for the residue of life, quitting all its contentions, which daily grow more and more insupportable."

There was a little farm two miles from Monticello, of a hundred and forty acres of good land, with a small, old, indifferent house upon it, that would just do, Jefferson thought, for a republican and a philosopher; for it was just such an establishment as his beloved friend, Dabney Carr, had been so happy in. It could be bought for two hundred and fifty pounds. "Think of it," he urged. "To render it practicable only requires you to think so." Madison, all unsuspecting of the different career in store for himself and his three friends, replied that he could neither accept nor renounce the captivating scheme. He could not then change his abode; but, in a few years, he thought he might make one of the circle proposed. The large estates of his father required his attention and presence. Monroe alone settled in the neighborhood, though Madison lived all his life within a day's ride.

With General Washington, too, we find Mr. Jefferson in close relations during the spring of 1784. They agreed in deploring the weakness, the utter insufficiency, of the central power, and in thinking there must be SOMETHING besides Congress, if only a committee of members to remain at the seat of government during the absence of the main body. The country was feeling its way to a constitution. Independence had been won, but a nation had not yet been created. It was just after receiving General Washington's concurrence, that Jefferson brought forward his proposition to divide the work of Congress into legislative and executive, and to intrust the executive functions to a permanent committee of one from each State. This was the first attempt towards a government; and its failure, as Mr. Jefferson records, was speedy and complete. A committee of thirteen was only a more disputatious and unmanageable Congress. The committee being appointed, Congress adjourned, leaving it the supreme power of the continent; but they "quarrelled very soon," split into two parties, abandoned their post, and left the



government without any visible head until the next meeting of Congress. Jefferson remarks that many attributed their disruption to the disputatious propensity of certain men; but the wise, to the nature of man. The failure of the executive committee had its effect in preparing the way for the convention of 1787.

On another point Jefferson and Washington were in full accord this winter. For more than ten years the general had been warmly interested in connecting the great system of western waters with the Atlantic Ocean by way of the Potomac River. Besides public reasons, General Washington had a private one for favoring this scheme. He owned a superb tract of land on the Ohio, which was dearer to his pride than important to his fortune; for he had won it by his valor and conduct in the defence of his native land in the French War. If the Potomac were but rendered navigable back to the mountains, and then connected with the nearest branch of the Ohio by a canal, this fine western estate would be advantageously accessible. The general was deep in the scheme when he was elected to take command of the army in 1775, and resumed it as soon as he was released in 1783; and he now pursued it with the more zeal for a new reason. He had become acquainted during the war with the pushing energy of the people of New York. He had prophetic intimations of the Erie Canal. In March, 1784, when De Witt Clinton was a school-boy of fifteen, General Washington, the father of our internal-improvement system, wrote thus to Thomas Jefferson, "With you, I am satisfied that not a moment ought to be lost in recommencing this business, as I know the Yorkers will delay no time to remove every obstacle in the way of the other communication, so soon as the posts of Oswego and Niagara are surrendered; and I shall be mistaken if they do not build vessels for the navigation of the lakes, which will supersede the necessity of coasting." Any one familiar with the magnificent line of cities created by the Erie Canal, and with the harbors of Buffalo, Toledo, Oswego, and Chicago, finds it difficult to realize that this sentence was written less than ninety years ago.

The general had acquired in some way a strong conviction of the resistless enterprise of the New Yorkers. He returns to the subject in a letter to Benjamin Harrison. "No person," he says, "that knows the temper, genius, and policy of those people as well as I do, can harbor the smallest doubt of their connecting New York and

the lakes by a canal. It is curious these same New Yorkers, in 1874, after having dug, enlarged, and superseded their own canal, should be carrying out Washington's idea in a way he never dreamed of, by completing the railroad from Richmond to the Ohio. Such is the "tempo, genius, and policy of those people."

A topic of the deepest interest at this time was the Society of the Cincinnati, the first annual meeting of which was to occur in May. Members of Congress, not of the order, viewed it with extreme disapproval, and were resolved, as Jefferson reports, "to give silent preferences to those who were not of the fraternity," in the bestowal of office. It was not in human nature for such men as Henry, Madison, Jefferson, Samuel Adams, Elbridge Gerry, and John Page, to regard with favor an institution designed to perpetuate the distinctions of the war, even to remote generations; an institution that would give a valuable advantage to the posterity of a raw lieutenant of one campaign over the offspring of the most illustrious sages of the civil service. Besides, the events of the last eighteen years had implanted in the minds of reflecting Americans a dread and horror of the hereditary principle, to which the recent bloody disruption of the British Empire was due. General Washington, who was to preside at the coming assembly, was troubled and anxious at the growing opposition. He asked Jefferson's opinion. Jefferson was utterly opposed to the order, and said so in a long and ingenious letter to the general; and when Washington passed through Annapolis, a few weeks after, on his way to the meeting, he called on Jefferson to talk the matter over with him.

They sat together alone at Jefferson's lodgings from eight o'clock in the evening until midnight. They agreed that the object of the officers in founding the society was to preserve the friendships of the war by renewing their intercourse once a year. Nothing more innocent than the *motive*. But they agreed, also, that there was great danger of the order degenerating into an hereditary aristocracy: and, meanwhile, it was odious to the great body of civilians. In the course of the conversation Jefferson suggested, that, if the hereditary quality were suppressed, there would be no harm in the officers who had actually served coming together in a social way now and then. "No," said the general, "not a fibre of it ought to be left, to be an eyesore to the public, a ground of dissatisfaction, and a line of separation between them and their country."

The general resumed his journey, fully resolved to use his influence with the members of the order to induce them to disband. He tried his best. Most of the old officers came into his views at length, and he thought he had secured a majority against going on; but just then arrived from France Major l'Infant, as Jefferson tells us, "with a bundle of eagles for which he had been sent there, with letters from the French officers who had served in America praying for admission into the order, and a solemn act of their king permitting them to wear its ensign." All was changed in a moment. Such was the revulsion of feeling, that the general could only obtain the suppression of the hereditary principle; which, however, sufficed to render the order as unobjectionable as the societies of similar nature which were formed after the late war.

Jefferson had a new pleasure during this session, that of writing to his daughter Martha in Philadelphia. No one who has ever loved a child can read his letters to his children without emotion; least of all, those written while the anguish of their irreparable loss was still recent. It is difficult to quote them, because nearly every sentence is so lovely and wise, that we know not what to select. Imagine all that the tenderest and most thoughtful father could wish for the most engaging child. But the burden of his song was, that goodness is the *greatest* treasure of human beings. "If you love me," he says, "strive to be good under every situation, and to *all living creatures*, and to acquire those accomplishments which I have put in your power." A curious trait of the times is this: "It produces great praise to a lady to spell well." Happy would it be for those benefactors of our race, the wise and faithful teachers of the young, if every parent would use such words as these in writing to his children at school: "Consider the good lady who has taken you under her roof, who has undertaken to see that you perform all your exercises, and to admonish you in all those wanderings from what is right, and what is clever, to which your inexperience would expose you; consider her, I say, as your mother, as the only person to whom, since the loss with which Heaven has been pleased to afflict you, you can now look up; and that her displeasure or disapprobation, on any occasion, would be an immense misfortune, which, should you be so unhappy as to incur by any unguarded act, think no concession too much to regain her good-will."

The session drew to great length. When pressing domestic

measures had been disposed of, Congress turned its attention to foreign affairs; and this led to an important change in the career of Jefferson. "I have been thrown back," he wrote to General Washington, April 16, 1784, "on a stage where I had never more thought to appear. It is but for a time, however, and as a day-laborer, free to withdraw, or be withdrawn, at will." Three weeks after these words were written, Congress found a piece of work for this day-laborer to do.

It was the golden age of "protection." All interests were protected then, except the interests of human nature; and every right was enforced, except the rights of man. British commerce and manufactures, since Charles II., had been so rigorously protected, that, when a member of Parliament moved that Americans should be compelled to send their horses to England to be shod, there was room for doubt whether he was in jest or earnest. James Otis *believed* he spoke ironically; only believed! But there was no doubt of the seriousness of the parliamentary orator who avowed the opinion that "not a hobnail should be made in America;" nor of the binding force of the law which made it penal for an American to carry a fleece of wool across a creek in a canoe. John Adams, looking back in his old age upon the studies of his early professional life, declared, that, as a young lawyer, he never turned over the leaves of the British statutes regulating American trade "without pronouncing a hearty curse upon them." He felt them "as a humiliation, a degradation, a disgrace," to his country, and to himself as a native of it.

One consequence of this fierce protection was, that America was not on trading terms with the nations of the earth; and Congress felt that one of its most important duties, after securing independence, was to propose to each of them a treaty of commerce. With France, Holland, and Sweden, such treaties had already been negotiated; but Congress desired commercial intercourse, "on the footing of the most favored nation," with Great Britain, Hamburg, Saxony, Prussia, Denmark, Russia, Austria, Venice, Rome, Naples, Tuscany, Sardinia, Genoa, Spain, Portugal, Turkey, Algiers, Tripoli, Tunis, and Morocco. Congress wielded sovereign power; a nation was coming into existence; and the conclusion of treaties was at once a dignified way of asserting those not sufficiently obvious truths, and a convenient mode of getting them acknowledged by

other nations. Congress, as Jefferson confesses, though it would not condescend to *ask* recognition from any of the powers, yet "we are not unwilling to furnish opportunities for receiving their friendly salutations and welcome."

Dr. Franklin and Mr. Adams, who still represented Congress in Europe, were not supposed to be equal to so much labor. May 7, 1784, Congress agreed to add a third plenipotentiary to aid them in negotiating commercial treaties; and their choice for this office fell upon Thomas Jefferson. The appointment was for two years, at the reduced salary of nine thousand dollars a year. He accepted the post; and, expecting to be absent only two years, he determined to spare himself a laborious journey home, and the re-opening of a healing wound, by going direct from Annapolis northward "in quest of a passage." This he could do the easier, since, as he records, "I asked an advance of six months' salary, that I might be in cash to meet the first expenses; which was ordered." His two younger children were in safe hands at home; and his eldest daughter he would take with him, and place at school in Paris. His nephews he left to the guardianship of James Madison, to whom, on the day after his election, he wrote in an affecting strain:—

"I have a tender legacy to leave you on my departure. I will not say it is the son of my sister, though her worth would justify it on that ground; but it is the son of my friend, the dearest friend I knew, who, had fate reversed our lots, would have been a father to my children. He is a boy of fine dispositions, and of sound, masculine talents. I was his preceptor myself as long as I staid at home; and, when I came away, I placed him with Mr. Maury. There is a younger one, just now in his Latin rudiments. If I did not fear to overcharge you, I would request you to recommend a school for him."

Mr. Madison fulfilled this trust with affectionate care, and kept his friend informed of the progress of his nephews during his long absence.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### ENVOY TO FRANCE.

MAY 11, four days after his election, the plenipotentiary left Annapolis for Philadelphia, a four days' journey then; and, while his daughter was getting ready for her departure, he improved the opportunity to collect precise and full information respecting the commerce of the port; for was he not going to Europe on commercial business? One of the toasts given in 1784, at the May-day festival of the St. Tammany Society of Philadelphia, which he probably read in the newspapers during his stay, gave him a hint of what was desired, "Free-trade in American Bottoms." Pleasing dream! Many a year must yet pass before it comes true. It was a buoyant, expectant time, when Mr. Jefferson made this sea-board journey. The refuse of the war was clearing away, and new projects were in the air. It was while Jefferson was in Philadelphia on this occasion, that some ingenious contriver managed to extract from the deep mud of the bottom of the Delaware those *chevaux-de-frise* which Dr. Franklin had placed there nine years before to keep out the British fleet, to the sore obstruction of the navigation ever since. It was an "Herculean task," said the newspapers, requiring "vast apparatus;" but up came the biggest *cheval* of them all at the first yank of the mighty engine.

But this was a small matter compared with the project for an 'air-balloon' of silk, sixty feet high, also announced while Jefferson was in Philadelphia, to be paid for by private subscriptions. Philadelphia, too, should behold the new wonder of the world, described at great length in a Paris volume lately received from Dr. Franklin. Gentlemen were invited to send their money, and philosophers their *advice*, to the committee having the scheme in charge. The glowing prospectus issued by the committee may have



drawn a guinea and a smile from Jefferson. "Is it not probable," asked these sanguine gentlemen, "that those who sometimes travel through the parched and sandy deserts of Arabia, where there is danger of perishing for want of water, or of being buried under mountains of sand suddenly raised by whirling eddies of wind, as hath too often been the case, would prefer a voyage by means of an air-balloon to any other known method of conveyance? In places where the plague may suddenly appear, it is capable, when improved, of rescuing those from danger who happen to be travelling through that region without any other means of making their escape. It may perform the same service to such as are suddenly surprised by unexpected sieges, and to whom no other means of safety may be left." "Quick advices may be given of intended invasions;" and, in short, war rendered so little destructive, that no one will think it worth while to resort to that "unchristian mode of arbitrating disputes." Then, "by means of these balloons, the utmost despatch may be given to express-boats," which they will both lift and draw. They were expected also to enable philosophers to push their discoveries into the upper regions of the air, to ascertain "the causes of hail and snow," and "make further improvements in thermometers, barometers, hygrometers, in astronomy and electricity." This programme of blessings did not tempt the guineas fast enough, until the committee added personal solicitation; and when, at last, the balloon ascended, they were obliged to charge two dollars for the best places in the amphitheatre.

It was a simple, credulous world, then, full of curiosity respecting the truths which science was beginning to disclose. This balloon prospectus, with its betrayals of ignorance, credulity, and curiosity, was perfectly characteristic of the period. I am not sure that Franklin and Jefferson would have deemed it so *very* absurd, though Franklin might have thought it improbable that a traveller caught by an unexpected siege would have a balloon in his trunk. Franklin had high hopes of the balloon. "Of what use is this discovery which makes so much noise?" some one asked him, soon after the first ascension in Paris. "Of what use is a new-born child?" was his reply.

In quest of a passage to France, the plenipotentiary, his daughter, and William Short, whom he was so happy as to have for a secretary left Philadelphia near the end of May, and went to New York

The monthly Havre packet, *La Sylphe*, had been gone ten days. After a few days' stay in New York, where he continued his commercial studies, the party resumed their "quest," travelling eastward from port to port in the leisurely manner of the time. At New Haven, could he fail to pause a day or two to view a college so distinguished as Yale, and converse with the president and professors, and promise to send them from Europe some account of the new discoveries and the new books? The newspapers, silent as to his stay in Philadelphia and New York, chronicle the arrival of His Excellency at New Haven on the 7th of June, and his departure for Boston on the 9th. At Boston the travellers met another disappointment, peculiarly aggravating. A good ship was within thirty-six hours of sailing, in which Mrs. Adams was going to join her husband; and she would have been as agreeable a companion to the father as a kind protector to the daughter. But, in those days, passengers had to lay in stores of various kinds, and make extensive preparations for a voyage, which could not be done in so short a time, even if the plenipotentiary had regarded his commercial information as complete. Mrs. Adams sailed without them; but, while Jefferson was thinking of returning in all haste to New York to catch the next French packet, he heard of a Boston ship loading for London, that would, it was thought, put him ashore on the French coast. It proved to be the ship *Ceres*, belonging to Nathaniel Tracy, one of the great merchants of New England, who was going in her himself, and would land the party at Portsmouth, after having passed the whole voyage in communicating commercial knowledge to Mr. Jefferson. Nothing could have been more fortunate.

Boston gave the Virginian a courteous and warm reception on this occasion. A chair in the chamber of the Massachusetts House of Representatives was assigned to "His Excellency, Thomas Jefferson, late governor of Virginia, and now one of the commissioners for negotiating treaties;" and "no small part of my time," as he wrote to Elbridge Gerry, "has been occupied by the hospitality and civilities of this place, which I have experienced in the highest degree." Mr. Gerry not reaching home in time to see him off, Jefferson left for him a present, not common then, which he was rather fond of giving, a portable writing-desk. To add to his knowledge of business, he made an excursion along the coast to Salem, Newburyport, Portsmouth, towns beginning already to feel the impulse towards the

remoter commerce which was to enrich them. Harvard, noted from of old for a certain proclivity towards science, had at this time, in Dr Willard, a president who was particularly interested in scientific discovery. Jefferson made his acquaintance now, became his correspondent, and thus kept the college informed of the progress of knowledge.

The Fourth of July was Sunday this year. There was the usual celebration on Monday; but it was on that day the Ceres sailed, bearing away the author of the Declaration of Independence. So far as we know, Jefferson was not yet known to the public as the writer of that document. About the time in the morning of July 5 when the Declaration was read in Faneuil Hall, the Ceres spread her sails, and glided out into the ocean between the emerald isles that form Boston Harbor. They had a splendid passage, — nineteen days from shore to shore, three days dead calm and codfishing on the Banks, only six passengers, and every thing delightful. Thirty-two days after leaving Boston, the plenipotentiary was at a hotel in Paris, while a house was making ready for him. He was at once a familiar member of the easy, happy circle of able men and amiable women who assembled at Dr. Franklin's pleasant abode in the suburban village of Passy.

The aged philosopher could not but smile at the mountain of new duties which Congress had imposed upon him, *instead* of the permission to return home for which he had applied. It so chanced that he was writing to Mr. Adams upon the subject on the very day of Jefferson's arrival in Paris; and he discussed it with that sly humor with which he knew how to parry and return every disagreeable stroke: "You will see that a good deal of business is cut out for us, — treaties to be made with, I think, twenty powers, in two years, — so that we are not likely to eat the bread of idleness; and, that we may not eat too much, our masters have diminished our allowance" (from \$11,000 to \$9,000 per annum). "I commend their economy, and shall imitate it by diminishing my expense. Our too liberal entertainment of our countrymen here has been reported at home by our guests, to our disadvantage, and has given offence. They must be contented for the future, as I am, with plain beef and pudding. The readers of Connecticut newspapers ought not to be troubled with any more accounts of our extravagance. For my own part, if I could sit down to dinner on a piece of their excellent salt

pork and pumpkin, I would not give a farthing for all the luxuries of Paris."

In three weeks Mr. Adams arrived; and the three plenipotentiaries held their first meeting at Dr. Franklin's house, agreeing to meet there every day until the business was concluded. Besides announcing their mission to various ambassadors, they did nothing during the first month except prepare the draught of a treaty such as they would be willing to sign. What an amiable, harmless, useless document it seems! But it was the first serious attempt ever made to conduct the intercourse of nations on Christian principles; and it was made by three men to whom Arrogance has sometimes denied the name of Christians! Many of its twenty-seven articles were nothing but the formal concession of the natural right of a man to go, come, stay, buy, and sell, according to his own interest and pleasure, subject only to the laws of the country in which he may be. One article provided that shipwrecked mariners should not be plundered; and another, that "when the subjects or citizens of the one party shall die within the jurisdiction of the other, their bodies shall be buried in the usual burying-grounds, or other decent and suitable places, and shall be protected from violence and disturbance." What a tale of savage intolerance is told by the mere proposal of such an article!

It was into the latter half of the treaty that the three representatives of the United States put most of their hearts. Their great object was to confine the evils of war, as much as possible, to belligerents. They desired to have war conducted in the manner of a play-ground fight, where a ring is formed, and no one is hit but the combatants, and *they* are prevented from striking a foul blow. No privateering. No confiscation of neutral property. No molestation of fishermen, farmers, or other noncombatants. No ravaging an enemy's coasts. No seizure of vessels or other property for the purposes of war. No crowding of prisoners of war into unwholesome places. Article XVII. was wonderful for its advanced magnanimity: "If the citizens or subjects of either party, in danger from tempests, pirates, or other accidents, shall take refuge with their vessels or effects within the harbors or jurisdiction of the other, they shall be received, protected, and treated with humanity and kindness, and shall be permitted to furnish themselves, at reasonable prices, with all refreshments provisions, and other things necessary

for their subsistence, health, and accommodation, and for the repair of their vessels." Such was the treaty drawn by three early Christians in Dr. Franklin's house at Passy in 1784. It marks "a new era in negotiation," wrote General Washington when he read it; and he regarded it always as the most original and liberal treaty ever negotiated.

When they had finished their draught, and when, as I suppose, the doctor had caused a few copies to be struck off on the little printing-press which he kept in his house for such odd jobs, they sought a conference with that worthy, but extremely unsentimental minister for foreign affairs, the Count de Vergennes, and asked him how they had better proceed in order to conciliate the twenty powers (including Algiers, Tunis, Morocco, and Tripoli), and dispose them to conclude such a treaty with the Honorable Congress. I wish we had some account of the interview. We only know, from Jefferson's too brief report, that the astute old diplomatist did not attach much importance to the labors of the commissioners. He evidently thought that Congress, in sending Jefferson to Europe on this errand, had performed a superfluous work, and that the proposal of such a treaty to the Dey of Algiers, or to the personage styled in the instructions of the commissioners "the high, glorious, mighty, and most noble Prince, King, and Emperor of the Kingdom of Fez, Morocco, Taffilete, Sus, and the whole Algasbe, and the territories thereof," would be a diplomatic absurdity. He thought it better, and the commissioners came into the same opinion, "to leave to legislative regulation, on both sides, such modifications of our commercial intercourse as would voluntarily flow from amicable dispositions."

The commissioners did, nevertheless, fulfil their instructions by "sounding" the several ambassadors resident at Paris, most of whom forwarded copies of the draught to their courts. At that moment there was in Europe but one intelligent man upon a throne, — "old Frederick of Prussia," as Jefferson styles him, who "met us cordially and without hesitation;" and with him the treaty, with unimportant changes, was concluded. Denmark and Tuscany also entered into negotiations. The other powers appeared so indifferent, that the commissioners could not, consistently with self-respect, press the matter. "They seemed, in fact," says Jefferson, "to know little about us, except as rebels who had been successful in throwing off the yoke of the mother country. They were ignorant of our com



merce, which had always been monopolized by England, and of the exchange of articles it might offer advantageously to both parties." In short, the commission to negotiate commercial treaties had but one important result, namely, the composition of the draught of the treaty, and its preservation in the Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States, against the time when the nations shall want it. It seems a mockery of noble endeavor that such a draught should have been placed on record on the eve of wars which desolated Europe for twenty years, during which every principle of humanity and right was ruthlessly trampled under foot. Napoleon Bonaparte was a youth of sixteen when the commissioners completed it. The treaty to this day remains only an admonition and a prophecy.

Nine months passed. On the 2d of May, 1785, the youngest of the commissioners received from Mr. Jay, secretary for the foreign affairs of Congress, a document of much interest to him, signed by the President of Congress, Richard Henry Lee :—

*"The United States of America in Congress assembled, to our trusty and well-beloved Thomas Jefferson, Esq., send greeting:—*

"We, reposing special trust and confidence in your integrity, prudence, and ability, have nominated, constituted, and appointed, and by these presents do nominate, constitute, and appoint you, the said Thomas Jefferson, our Minister Plenipotentiary to reside at the court of his most Christian Majesty; and do give you full power and authority there to represent and do and perform all such matters and things as to the said place or office doth appertain, or as may by our instructions be given unto you in charge. This commission to continue in force for the space of three years from this day (March 10, 1785), unless sooner revoked."

This honorable charge Jefferson gratefully and gladly accepted. "You replace Dr. Franklin," said the Count de Vergennes to him, when he went to announce his appointment. "I succeed; no one can replace him," was Jefferson's reply. He witnessed the memorable scene of Dr. Franklin's departure from Passy, on the 12th of July. All the neighborhood, and a great number of friends from Paris, gathered to bid the noble old man farewell. The king could not have been treated with an homage more profound or more sincere. Indeed, it was often remarked at the time, that only the young king



was ever greeted by the people of Paris so warmly as Franklin. The queen, mindful of his age and infirmities, had sent her own travelling-litter, a kind of Sedan chair carried between two mules, to convey him to Havre. At four o'clock on that summer afternoon, he was assisted into this strange vehicle, and began his long, slow journey, followed by the heartfelt benedictions of friends and neighbors. "It seemed," wrote Jefferson, "as if the village had lost its patriarch."

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF EUROPE.

THE United States has contributed to the diplomatic circles of the Old World some incongruous members, heroes of the caucus and the stump, not versed in the lore of courts, and unskilled in drawing-room arts. So, at least, we are occasionally told by persons who think it a prettier thing to bow to a lady than to an audience, and nobler to chat agreeably at dinner than to discourse acceptably to a multitude. Perhaps we shall do better in the diplomatic way by and by. Hitherto our diplomatists have won their signal successes simply by being good citizens. We have never had a Talleyrand, nor one of the Talleyrand kind (though we came near it when Aaron Burr was pressed for a foreign appointment), and no American has ever been sent to lie abroad for his country's good. We have had, however, besides a large number of respectable ministers in the ordinary way, three whose opportunity was, at once, immense and unique, — Franklin, Jefferson, and Washburne; and each of these proved equal to his opportunity.

It is not as a record of diplomatic service that Jefferson's five years' residence in France is specially important to us. France and America were like lovers then, and it is not difficult to negotiate between lovers. His master in the diplomatic art was the greatest master of it that ever lived, — Benjamin Franklin's excellence being, that he conducted the intercourse of nations on the principles which control men of honor and good feeling in their private business, who neither take, nor wish, nor will have, an unjust advantage, and look at a point in dispute with their antagonist's eyes as well as their own, never insensible to *his* difficulties and *his* scruples. It is what France did to Jefferson that makes his long residence there historically important; because the mind he carried

home entered at once into the forming character of a young nation, and became a part of it forever. All these millions of people, whom we call fellow-citizens, are perhaps more or less different in their character and feelings from what they would have been, if, in the distribution of diplomatic offices in 1785, Congress had sent Jefferson to London instead of Paris, and appointed John Adams to Paris instead of London.

At first he had the usual embarrassments of American ministers: he could read, but not speak, the French language, and he was sorely puzzled how to arrange his style of living so as not to go beyond his nine thousand dollars a year. The language was a difficulty which diminished every hour, though he never trusted himself to *write* French on any matter of consequence; but the art of living in the style of a plenipotentiary, upon the allowance fixed by Congress, remained difficult to the end. Nor could he, during the first years, draw much revenue from Virginia. He left behind him there so long a "list of debts" (the result of the losses and desolations of the war), that the proceeds of two crops, and the arrears of his salary as governor, voted by the legislature, only sufficed to satisfy the most urgent of them.

A Virginia estate was a poor thing indeed in the absence of the master; and unhappily, the founders of the government of the United States, in arranging salaries, made no allowance for the American fact, that the mere absence of a man from home usually lessens his income and increases his expenditure. Even Franklin took it for granted that we should always have among us men of leisure, most of whom would be delighted to serve the public for nothing. Who, indeed, could have foreseen a state of things, such as we see around us now, when the richer a man is the harder he works, and when, in a flourishing city of a hundred thousand inhabitants, not one man of leisure can be found, nor one man of ability who can "afford" to go to the legislature? Jefferson, Adams, and perhaps I may say *most* of the public men of the country, have suffered agonies of embarrassment from the failure of the first Congresses to adopt the true republican principle of paying for all service done the public at the rate which the requisite quality of service commands in the market. The only great error, perhaps, of Washington's career was his aristocratic disdain of taking fair wages for his work,—an error which most of his successors and

many of their most-valued ministers have rued in silent bitterness. Nay, he rued it himself. What anxious hours Washington himself passed from the fact that there were so few competent statesmen in the country who chanced to be rich enough to live in Philadelphia on the salary of a secretary of state!

Jefferson was somewhat longer than usual in getting used to what he called "the gloomy and damp climate" of Paris, — such a contrast to the warmth, purity, and splendor of the climate of his mountain home. We find him, too, still mourning his lost wife, and writing to his old friend Page, that his "principal happiness was now in the retrospect of life." Moreover, the condition of human nature in Europe astonished and shocked him beyond measure. He was not prepared for it; he could not get hardened to it. While experiencing all those art raptures which we should presume he would, — keenly enjoying the music of Paris above all, and the architecture only less, falling in love with a statue here and an edifice there, — still, he could not become reconciled to the hideous terms on which most of the people of France held their lives. At his own pleasant and not inelegant abode, gathered most that was brilliant, amiable, or illustrious in Paris. Who so popular as the minister of our dear allies across the sea, the successor of Franklin, the friend of Lafayette, the man of science, the man of feeling, the scholar and musical amateur reared in the wilderness? He liked the French, too, exceedingly. He liked their manners, their habits, their tastes, and even their food. He was glad to live in a community, where, as he said, "a man might pass a life without encountering a single rudeness," and where people enjoyed social pleasures without eating like pigs and drinking like Indians. But none of these things could ever deaden his heart to the needless misery of man in France. Read his own words: —

First to his young friend and pupil, James Monroe, in June, 1785, when he had been ten months in Paris: "The pleasure of the trip [to Europe] will be less than you expect, but the utility greater. It will make you adore your own country, — its soil, its climate, its equality, liberty, laws, people, and manners. My God! how little do my countrymen know what precious blessings they are in possession of, and which no other people on earth enjoy! I confess I had no idea of it myself."

To Mrs. Trist, in August, 1785: "It is difficult to

so good a people, with so good a king, so well-disposed rulers in general, so genial a climate, so fertile a soil, should be rendered so ineffectual for producing human happiness by one single curse, — that of a bad form of government. But it is a fact, in spite of the mildness of their governors, the people are ground to powder by the vices of the form of government. Of twenty millions of people supposed to be in France, I am of opinion there are nineteen millions more wretched, the most accursed in every circumstance of human existence, than the most conspicuously-wretched individual of the whole United States.”

To an Italian friend in Virginia, September, 1785: “Behold me, at length, on the vaunted scene of Europe! You are, perhaps, curious to know how it has struck a savage of the mountains of America. Not advantageously, I assure you. I find the general fate of mankind here most deplorable. The truth of Voltaire’s observation offers itself perpetually, that every man here must be either the hammer or the anvil. It is a true picture of that country to which they say we shall pass hereafter, and where we are to see God and his angels in splendor, and crowds of the damned trampled under their feet.

To George Wythe of Virginia, in August, 1786: “If anybody thinks that kings, nobles, or priests are good conservators of the public happiness, send him here. It is the best school in the universe to cure him of that folly. He will see here, with his own eyes, that these descriptions of men are an abandoned conspiracy against the happiness of the people. Preach, my dear sir, a crusade against ignorance; establish and improve the law for educating the common people. Let our countrymen know, that the people alone can protect us against these evils, and that the tax which will be paid for this purpose is not more than the thousandth part of what will be paid to kings, priests, and nobles, who will rise up among us if we leave the people in ignorance.”

To General Washington, in November, 1786: “To know the mass of evil which flows from this fatal source [an hereditary aristocracy], a person must be in France; he must see the finest soil, the finest climate, and the most compact State, the most benevolent character of people, and every earthly advantage combined, insufficient to prevent this scourge from rendering existence a curse to twenty-four out of twenty-five parts of the inhabitants of this country.”

To James Madison, in January, 1787: "To have an idea of the curse of existence under a government of force, it must be seen. It is a government of wolves over sheep."

To another American friend, in August, 1787: "If all the evils which can arise among us from the republican form of government, from this day to the day of judgment, could be put into scale against what this country suffers from its monarchical form in a week, or England in a month, the latter would preponderate. No race of kings has ever presented above one man of common sense in twenty generations. The best they can do is to leave things to their ministers; and what are their ministers but a committee badly chosen?"

To Governor Rutledge of South Carolina, August, 1787: "The European are governments of kites over pigeons."

To another American friend, in February, 1788: "The long-expected edict at length appears. It is an acknowledgment (hitherto withheld by the laws), that Protestants can beget children, and that they can die, and be offensive unless buried. It does not give them permission to think, to speak, or to worship. It enumerates the humiliations to which they shall remain subject, and the burthens to which they shall continue to be unjustly exposed. What are we to think of the condition of the human mind in a country where such a wretched thing as this has thrown the State into convulsions, and how must we bless our own situation in a country the most illiterate peasant of which is a Solon compared with the authors of this law. Our countrymen do not know their own superiority."

Such were the feelings with which he contemplated the condition of the French people. But he was in a situation to know, also, how far "the great" in France were really benefited by the degradation of their fellow-citizens. Their situation was dazzling; but there was, he thought, no class in America who were not happier than they. Intrigues of love absorbed the younger, intrigues of ambition the elder. Conjugal fidelity being regarded as something provincial and ridiculous, there was no such thing known among them as that "tranquil, permanent felicity with which domestic society in America blesses most of its inhabitants, leaving them free to follow steadily those pursuits which health and reason approve, and rendering truly delicious the intervals of those pursuits."

Such sentiments as these were in vogue at the time, even among



the ruling class. Beaumarchais' Marriage of Figaro was in its first run when Jefferson reached Paris. Doubtless he listened to the barber's soliloquy in the fifth act (a stump-speech *à la mode de Paris*), the longest soliloquy in a modern comedy, in which Beaumarchais, as we should say, "arraigns the administration." "I was thought of for a government appointment," says poor Figaro, "but, unfortunately, I was not fit for it. An arithmetician was wanted, — a dancer got it." Jefferson rarely mentions the theatre in his French letters; but the theatre in Paris is like dinner, too familiar a matter to get upon paper. Beaumarchais himself he knew but too well; for the brilliant dramatist was a claimant of sundry millions from the Honorable Congress for stores furnished during the war, which puzzled and perplexed every minister of the United States from Franklin to Rives.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### THE WORK OF HIS MISSION.

OUR plenipotentiary was one of the most laborious of men during his residence in Europe. He had need of all his singular talent for industry. The whole of a long morning he usually spent in his office hard at work; -and sometimes, as his daughter reports, when he was particularly pressed, he would take his papers, and retire to a monastery near Paris, in which he hired an apartment, and remain there for a week or two, all the world shut out, till his task was done. In the afternoon he walked seven miles into the country, and back again; and, in the evening, music, art, science, and society claimed him by turns. I must endeavor, in a few words, to indicate the nature and objects of such incessant toil.

And, first, as to his public and official duties. The two continents were then as far apart as America is now from Australia. It took Jefferson from fourteen to twenty weeks to get an answer from home; and, if his letters missed the monthly packet, there was usually no other opportunity till the next. It was part of his duty as minister to send to Mr. Jay, secretary for the foreign affairs of Congress, not only a regular letter of public news, but files of the best newspapers. He did, in fact, the duty of own correspondent, as well as that of plenipotentiary, with much that is now done by consuls and commercial agents. As it was then a part of the system of governments in Europe to open letters intrusted to the mail, important letters had to be written in cipher; which was a serious addition to the labor of all official persons. An incident of Mr. Jefferson's second year serves to show at once the remoteness of America from Europe, the difficulty of getting information from one continent to another, and the variety of employments which then fell to the lot of the American minister. He received a letter making inquiry concerning

a young man named Abraham Albert Alphonso Gallatin, who had emigrated from Switzerland to America six years before, and of whose massacre and scalping by the Indians a report had lately reached his friends in Geneva. It was to the American minister that the distressed family (one of the most respectable in Switzerland), applied for information concerning the truth of the report. In case this young man had fallen a victim to the savages, Mr. Jefferson was requested to procure a certificate of his death, and a copy of his will. It was in this strange way that Thomas Jefferson first obtained knowledge of the Albert Gallatin whom he was destined to appoint secretary of the treasury.

France and America, I say, were like lovers then. And yet, in one respect, the new minister found Frenchmen disappointed with the results of the alliance between the two countries. The moment the war closed, commerce had resumed its old channel; so that the new flag of stars and stripes, a familiar object on the Thames, was rarely seen in a port of France. Why is this? Mr. Jefferson was frequently asked. Does friendship count for nothing in trade? Is this the return France had a right to expect from America? Do Americans prefer their enemies to their friends? The American minister made it his particular business, first, to explain the true reason of this state of things, and then to apply the only remedy. In other words, he made himself, both in society and in the audience-room of the Count de Vergennes, an apostle of free-trade.

The spell of the protective system, in 1785, had been broken in England, but not in France. Jefferson showed the Count de Vergennes that it was the measure of freedom of trade which British merchants enjoyed that gave them the cream of the world's commerce. He told the count (an excellent man of business and an honorable gentleman, but as ignorant as a king of political economy), that if national preferences could weigh with merchants, the whole commerce of America would forsake England and come to France. But, said he, in substance, our merchants cannot buy in France, because you will not let them sell in France. One day he went over the whole list of American products, and explained the particular restriction, or system of restrictions, which rendered it impossible for American merchants to sell it in France at a profit. Indigo, — France had tropical islands, the planters of which she must "protect." Tobacco, — Oh, heavens! in what a coil and tangle of protec-

tion was that fragrant weed! First, the king had the absolute monopoly of the sale of it. Secondly, the king had "farmed" the sale to some great noblemen, who, in turn, had sub-let the right to men of business. These gentlemen had concluded a contract with Robert Morris of Philadelphia, giving him a complete monopoly of the importation for three years. Morris was to send to France twenty thousand hogsheads a year at a fixed price; and no other creature on earth could lawfully send a pound of tobacco to France.

The learned reader perceives that there was a tobacco Ring in 1785, which included king, noblemen, French merchants, and Mr. Jefferson's friend, Robert Morris. When, in the course of this enumeration, he came to the article of tobacco, and explained the mode in which it was "protected," the count remarked that the king received so large a revenue from tobacco, that it could not be renounced. "I told him," as Mr. Jefferson relates, "that we did not wish it to be renounced, or even lessened, but only that the *monopoly* should be put down; that this might be effected in the simplest manner by obliging the importer to pay, on entrance, a duty equal to what the king now received, or to deposit his tobacco in the king's warehouses till it was paid, and then permitting a free sale of it. '*Ma foi!*' said the count, 'that is a good idea: we must think of it.'"

They did think of it. Mr. Jefferson kept them thinking during the whole of his residence in Paris. In many letters and in conversation, vivid with his own clear conviction, and warm with his earnest purpose to serve both countries, and man through them, he expounded the principles of free-trade. "Each of our nations," he said, "has exactly to spare the articles which the other wants. *We* have a surplus of rice, tobacco, furs, peltry, potash, lamp-oils, timber, which France wants; *she* has a surplus of wines, brandies, esculent oils, fruits, manufactures of all kinds, which we want. The governments have nothing to do but *not to hinder their merchants from making the exchange.*"

To the theory of free-trade every thinking man, of course, assented. But when it came to practice, he generally found (as free-traders now do) that private interest was too powerful for him. It was in France very much as it was in Portugal. After negotiating for years with the Portuguese minister for the free admission of American products, Jefferson succeeded in getting his treaty signed, and

sent to Lisbon for ratification. The astute old Portuguese ambassador predicted its rejection. "Some great lords of the court," said he to Mr. Jefferson, "derive an important part of their revenue from their interest in the flour-mills near the capital, which the admission of American flour will shut up. *They* will prevail upon the king to reject it." And so it proved. Jefferson, however, was not a man to prefer no bread to half a loaf. He did really succeed in France, after twelve months' hard work and vigilant attention, aided at every turn by the Marquis de Lafayette, whose zeal to serve his other country across the ocean knew no diminution while he lived, in obtaining some few crusts of free-trade for the merchants of America; which had an important effect in nourishing the infant commerce between the two countries. Nor did he rest content with them. He could not break the Morris contract, nor even wish it broken; but, aided by Lafayette's potent influence, he obtained from the ministry an engagement that no contract of the same nature should ever again be permitted. To the last month of his stay in Europe, we find, in his voluminous correspondence, that he still strove to loosen what he was accustomed to call "the shackles upon trade."

His efforts in behalf of free-trade in tobacco exposed him to the enmity of Robert Morris and his kindred, one of the most powerful circles in the United States, including Gouverneur Morris, as able and honorable an aristocrat as ever stood by his order, — a man of Bismarckian acuteness, candor, integrity, and humor. In writing of this matter, in confidence, to James Monroe, Jefferson held this language: "I have done what was right; and I will not so far wound my privilege of doing that without regard to any man's interest, as to enter into any explanations of this paragraph with Robert Morris. Yet I esteem him highly, and suppose that hitherto he had esteemed me." The paragraph to which he alludes was one in a letter of the French minister of finance, in which there was an expression implying that Mr. Jefferson had recommended the annulling of the Morris contract. This he had not done. On the contrary, he had maintained that to annul it would be unjust. But he deemed it unbecoming in him as a public man to so much as correct this misapprehension.

The reader, perhaps, has supposed that the evils resulting from tariff-tinkering are peculiar to the United States. Mr. Jefferson

knew better. As often as he succeeded in getting a restriction upon trade loosened a little, an injured interest cried out, and did not always cry in vain. In 1788 he obtained a revisal of the tariff in favor of American products, which admitted American whale-oil (before prohibited) at a duty of ten dollars a tun. This was a vast boon to Yankee whalers. But an existing treaty between France and England obliged France to admit English oil on the terms of "the most-favored nation." At once the English oils "flowed in," over-stocked the market, and lowered the price to such a point, that the French fishermen and sealmen could not live. An outcry arose, which the French Ministry could not disregard. Then it was proposed to exclude all "European oils, which would not infringe the British treaty;" and this idea Jefferson, free-trader as he was, encouraged with patriotic inconsistency, because, as he says, it would give to the French and American fisheries a monopoly of the French market." The *arrêt* was drawn up; ministers were assembled; and in a moment more it would have been passed, to the enriching of Nantucket and the great advantage of all the New-England coast. Just then a minister proposed to strike out the word *European*, which would make the measure still more satisfactory to French oilmen. The amendment was agreed to; the *arrêt* was signed; and, behold, Nantucket excluded!

As soon as Jefferson heard of this disaster, he put forth all his energies in getting the *arrêt* amended. Not content with verbal and written remonstrance, he took a leaf from Dr. Franklin's book, and caused a small treatise upon the subject to be printed, "to entice them to read it," particularly the new minister, M. Necker, who, minister as he was, had "some principles of economy, and will enter into calculations." He succeeded in his object, and soon had the pleasure of sending to Nantucket, through Mr. Adams, a notification that the whalemens might put to sea in full confidence of being allowed to sell their oil in French ports on profitable terms. He testified to the generous aid he had had in this business from Lafayette: "He has paid the closest attention to it, and combated for us with the zeal of a native."

Other curious incidents of his five-years' war against the protective system press for mention; but, really, one suffices as well as a thousand. It is always the same story: the interests of men against the rights of man, — temporary and local advantage opposed



to the permanent interest of the human race, — a shrinking from a fair, open contest, and compelling your adversary to go into the ring with one hand tied behind him. Nevertheless, such is the nature of man, that the progress from restriction to freedom, whether in politics, religion, or trade, must be slow in order to be sure. It is human to cry, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," when you live by making images of the chaste goddess. Even Jefferson, a free-trader by the constitution of his mind, was not so very ill-content with a "monopoly" which shut English whalemens out of the ports of France, and let his own countrymen in. The principle was wrong, but he could bear it in this instance. It required many years of pig-headed outrage to kill his proud and yearning love for the land of his ancestors; but the thing was done at last, with a completeness that left nothing to be desired.

Among the powers with which the commissioners of the United States endeavored to negotiate treaties of amity and commerce on sublime Christian principles, were Tunis, Algiers, Tripoli, and "the high, glorious, mighty, and most noble King, Prince, and Emperor" of Morocco. Before Mr. Jefferson had held the post of plenipotentiary many weeks, he was reminded most painfully, that those powers were not yet, perhaps, quite prepared to conduct their foreign affairs in the lofty style proposed. A rumor ran over Europe, that Dr. Franklin, on his voyage to America, had been captured by the Algerines, and carried to Algiers; where, being held for ransom, he bore his captivity with the cheerfulness and dignity that might have been expected of him. Nor was such an event impossible, nor even improbable. The packets plying between Havre and New York were not considered safe from the Algerine corsairs in 1785. Nothing afloat was safe from them, unless defended by superior guns, or protected by an annual subsidy. Among the curious bits of information which Jefferson contrived to send to Mr. Jay, was a list of the presents made by the Dutch, in 1784, to the aforesaid King, Prince, and Emperor of Morocco. The Dutch, we should infer from this catalogue, supplied the emperor with the means of preying upon the commerce of the world; for it consists of items like these: 69 masts, 30 cables, 267 pieces of cordage, 70 cannon, 21 anchors, 285 pieces of sail-cloth, 1,450 pulleys, 51 chests of tools, 12 quadrants, 12 compasses, 26 hour-glasses, 27 sea-charts, 50 dozen sail-needles, 24 tons of pitch; besides such "extraordinary presents" as 2 pieces of

scarlet cloth, 2 of green cloth, 280 loaves of sugar, one chest of tea, 24 china punch-bowls, 50 pieces of muslin, 3 clocks, and one "very large watch." He learned, too, that Spain had recently stooped to buy a peace from one of these piratical powers at a cost of six hundred thousand dollars.

It was in the destiny of Mr. Jefferson, at a later time, to extort a peace from these pirates in another way, and, in fact, to originate the system that rid the seas of them forever. But at present the country which he represented was not strong enough to depart from the established system of purchase. The United States was a gainer even by the treaty for which Spain had paid so high a price; for Spain was then in close alliance with the republic which had humbled the great enemy of the House of Bourbon. In the spring of 1785 came news that the American brig *Betsy* had been captured and taken to Morocco, where the crew were held for ransom. It was the good offices of Spain that induced the King, Prince, and Emperor of Morocco to *make a present* to the American minister at Cadiz of the liberty of the *Betsy's* crew. But when Mr. Carmichael waited on the Spanish ambassador to thank him, "in the best Spanish he could muster," for the friendly act of the king, he was given to understand, that, unless the United States sent an envoy to Morocco with presents for the emperor, no more crews would be released except on the usual terms. Mr. Carmichael notified Mr. Jefferson of these events, and added that he feared further depredations from the Algerines. Thirteen prizes had recently been brought in by them, chiefly Portuguese, he thought. "The Americans, I hope, are too much frightened already," said he, "to venture any vessels this way, especially during the summer." And they ran some risk even in the more northern latitudes.

A month later Mr. Jefferson received a doleful letter from three American captains in Algiers, which brought the subject home to him most forcibly: "We, the subjects of the United States of America, having the misfortune of being captured off the coast of Portugal, the 24th and 30th of July, by the Algerines, and brought into this port, where we are become slaves, and sent to the work-houses, our sufferings are beyond our expressing or your conception, . . . being stripped of all our clothes, and nothing to exist on but two small cakes of bread per day, without any other necessaries of life." But the captains had found a friend: "Charles Logie

Esq., British consul, seeing our distressed situation, has taken us three masters of vessels out of the workhouse, and has given security for us to the Dey of Algiers, *King of Cruelties.*" The sailors, however, remained in the workhouses, where they would certainly starve, the captains thought, if Mr. Jefferson could not at once prevail upon Congress to grant them relief.

In writing this letter, the three captains provided Mr. Jefferson with seven years' trouble. During all the remainder of his residence at Paris, and years after his return home, one of his chief employments was to procure the deliverance of those unfortunate prisoners from captivity. After making some provision for their maintenance, he explained to Congress the necessity of treating with the pirates as the Spaniards had done, money in hand. He was authorized to give twenty thousand dollars to the High and Mighty Prince and Emperor of Morocco, and the same sum to the King of Cruelties, for a treaty of peace. Inadequate as these sums were, they seemed stupendous to a Congress distressed with the debt of the Revolution, fearing to learn by every arrival that their credit was gone in Europe, through the failure of their agents to effect a new loan. Jefferson and Adams took the liberty of doubling the price for a treaty with Algiers; offering forty thousand dollars for a treaty and the twenty prisoners. They felt that this was assuming a responsibility which nothing could justify but the emergency of the case. "The motives which led to it," wrote Jefferson to Mr. Jay, "must be found in the feelings of the human heart, in a partiality for those sufferers who are of our own country, and in the obligations of every government to yield protection to their citizens as the consideration for their obedience." He assured the secretary, "that it would be a comfort to know that Congress did not disapprove this step." He received that comfort in due time; but the forty thousand dollars did not get the treaty, nor bring home the captives. The agents whom he despatched returned with the report that upon such terms no business could be done.

And so the affair drew on. In the spring of 1786 Mr. Jefferson, upon an intimation received from Mr. Adams, hurried over to London to confer with the ambassador of Tripoli upon the matter; supposing that whatever bargain they might make with Tripoli would be a guide in their negotiations with Algiers and Morocco. The two Americans met the ambassador, and had a conversation with

him which one would think more suitable to A. D. 1100 than 1786. The first question discussed between them was, whether it were better for the United States to buy a temporary peace by annual payments, or a permanent peace by what our English friends elegantly style "a lump sum." The ambassador was much in favor of a permanent peace. Any stipulated annual sum, he said, might cease to content his country; and an increased demand might bring on a war, which would interrupt the payments, and give new cause of difference. It would be much cheaper in the long run, he assured them, for the United States to come down handsomely at once, and make an end of the business.

That question having been duly considered, the Americans were ready to listen to the terms; which were these: for a treaty of peace with Tripoli, to last one year, with privilege of renewal, twelve thousand five hundred guineas to the government, and one thousand two hundred and fifty guineas to the ambassador; for a permanent peace, thirty thousand guineas to the government, and three thousand guineas to the ambassador; cash down on receipt of signed treaty. N.B.—Merchandise not taken. On the same terms, the ambassador assured them, a peace could be had with Tunis; but, with regard to Algiers and Morocco, he could not undertake to promise any thing. Peace with the four piratical powers, then, would cost Congress at least six hundred and sixty thousand dollars. If the affair had not involved the life and liberty of countrymen, the American commissioners might have laughed at the disproportion between the sums they were empowered to offer and those demanded.

Disguising their feelings as best they could, they "took the liberty to make some inquiries concerning the ground of the pretensions to make war upon nations who had done them no injury." The ambassador replied: It was written in their Koran, that all nations which had not acknowledged the Prophet were sinners, whom it was the right and duty of the faithful to plunder and enslave; and that every Mussulman who was slain in this warfare was sure to go to paradise. He said, also, that the man who was the first to board a vessel had one slave over and above his share; and that when they sprang to the deck of an enemy's ship, every sailor held a dagger in each hand and a third in his mouth, which usually struck such terror into the foe that they cried out for quarter at once. It was the opinion of this enlightened public functionary

that the Devil aided his countrymen in these expeditions; for they were almost always successful.

It is difficult for us to realize, only eighty-six years after this conversation, that it could ever have been held; still less that the American commissioners should have seriously reported it to Mr. Jay, with an offer of their best services in trying to borrow the money in Holland or elsewhere, and in concluding the several bargains for peace with the four powers; least of all, that Mr. Jay should have submitted the offers of the ambassador to Congress. Congress, in their turn, referred the matter back to Mr. Jay for his opinion, which he gave with elaboration and exactness. The substance of his report was this: We cannot raise the money; and it would be an injury to our credit to attempt to do so, and not succeed.

Mr. Jefferson was obliged, therefore, to confine his efforts to the mere deliverance of the captives by ransom. This, too, was a matter demanding the most delicate and cautious handling; for the price of a captive was regulated like professional fees, according to the wealth of the parties interested. Let those professional pirates but suppose a *government* concerned in a slave's ransom, and the price ran up the scale to a height most alarming. Jefferson was obliged to conceal from every one, and especially from the prisoners, that he had any authority to treat for their release, — a course that brought upon him a kind of censure hard to bear indeed. While he was exerting every faculty in behalf of the captives, he would receive from them "cruel letters," as he termed them, accusing him, not merely of neglecting their interests, but of disobeying the positive orders of Congress to negotiate their ransom.

He availed himself at length of the services of an order of monks called the Mathurins, instituted for the purpose of begging alms for the ransom of Christian captives held to servitude among the Infidels. Agents of theirs constantly lived in the Barbary States, searching out captives, and driving hard bargains in their purchase. As it was known that the Mathurins could ransom cheaper than any other agency, they were frequently employed by governments and by families in procuring the deliverance of captives. The chief of the order received Mr. Jefferson with the utmost benignity, and won his favorable regard by making no allusion to the religious heresy of the American captives. He offered to undertake the purchase, provided the most profound secrecy were observed; and he thought the



twenty captives would cost Congress ten thousand dollars. Congress authorized the expenditure. But that was the time when it overtaxed the credit of the United States, even to subsist their half a dozen representatives in Europe. "The moment I have the money," Mr. Jefferson was obliged to write, "the business shall be set in motion." But the money was long in coming. A new government was forming at Philadelphia. All was embarrassment in the finances, and confusion in the minds, of the transitory administration. The poor captives lingered in slavery year after year, dependent for daily sustenance, for months at a time, on advances made by the Spanish ambassador. As late as 1793 we still find Mr. Jefferson busied about the same prisoners in Algiers.

While doing what he could for the relief and protection of his own countrymen, he set on foot a nobler scheme for delivering the vessels of all the maritime nations from the risk of capture by these pirates. He drew up a plan, which he submitted to the diplomatic corps at Versailles, for keeping a joint fleet of six frigates and six smaller vessels in commission, one-half of which should be always cruising against the corsairs, waging active war, until the four Barbary States were willing to conclude treaties of peace without subsidy or price. Portugal, Naples, the two Sicilies, Venice, Malta, Denmark, and Sweden, all avowed a willingness to share in the enterprise, provided France offered no opposition. Having satisfied the ambassadors on this point, he felt sure of success if Congress would authorize him to make the proposition as from them, and to support it by undertaking to contribute and maintain one of the frigates. But the power of the Congress of the old confederacy, never sufficient, was now waning fast. What could it ever do but *recommend* the States to pay their share of public expenses? And the recommendations of this nature, as Jefferson remarked, were now so openly neglected by the States, that Congress "declined an engagement which they were conscious they could not fulfil with punctuality." It was an excellent scheme. Jefferson had drawn it up in great detail, and with so much forethought and good sense, that it looks on paper as though it might have answered the purpose.

It fell to the lot of Jefferson to negotiate and sign a convention between France and the United States which regulated the consular services of both nations. Does the reader happen to know what



despotic powers a consul exercised formerly? He was a terrible being. He was invested with much of the sacredness and more than the authority of an ambassador. The laws of the country in which he lived could not touch him, — could neither confine his person, nor seize his goods, nor search his house. Over such of his countrymen as fell into his power he exercised autocratic sway. If he suspected a passenger of being a deserter or a criminal, he could send him home; if he caught a ship in a contraband act, he could order it back to its port. When Dr. Franklin came to arrange the consular service of the two countries, the Count de Vergennes simply handed him a copy of the consular convention established between France and the continental powers; and this the doctor accepted, signed, and sent home for ratification, supposing it to be the correct and only thing admissible. "Congress received it," as Jefferson reports, "with the deepest concern. They honored Dr. Franklin, they were attached to the French nation, but they could not relinquish fundamental principles." The convention was returned to Jefferson, with new instructions and powers; and he succeeded, after a long and difficult negotiation, in inducing the French government to limit those excessive consular powers. The government, he explains, anticipated a very extensive emigration from France to the United States, which, under the old consular system, they could have controlled; and hence they yielded it "with the utmost reluctance, and inch by inch." But they yielded it at last with frankness and good-humor, and the consular system was arranged as we find it now.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### UNOFFICIAL LABORS.

WHEN we turn from the plenipotentiary's public duties to his semi-official and voluntary labors, it is impossible not to be stirred to admiration and gratitude. I do not know what public man has ever been more solicitous to use the opportunities which his office conferred of rendering solid service to his country, to institutions, to corporations, to individuals. He kept four colleges — Harvard, Yale, William and Mary, and the College of Philadelphia — advised of the new inventions, discoveries, conjectures, books, that seemed important. And what news he had to send sometimes! It was he who sent to America the most important piece of mechanical intelligence that pen ever recorded, — the success of the Watt steam-engine, by means of which “a peck and a half of coal performs as much work as a horse in a day.” He conversed at Paris with Boulton, who was Watt's partner in the manufacture of the engines, and learned from his lips this astounding fact. But it did not astound him in the least. He mentions it quietly in the postscript of a long letter; for no man yet foresaw the revolution in all human affairs which that invention was to effect. He went to see an engine at work in London afterwards; but he was only allowed to view the outward parts of the machinery, and he could not tell whether the mill “was turned by the steam immediately,” or by a stream of water which the steam pumped up.

We are all familiar with the system of manufacturing watches, clocks, arms, and other objects, in parts so exactly alike that they can be used without altering or fitting. It was Jefferson who sent to Congress an account of this admirable idea, which he derived from its ingenious inventor, a French mechanic. He also forwarded specimens of the part of a musket-lock, by way of illustration.

The system, which was at first employed only in the manufacture of arms, seems now about to be applied to all manufactures. He sent to Virginia particular accounts of the construction of canals and locks, and of the devices employed in Europe for improving and extending the navigation of rivers; information peculiarly welcome to General Washington and the companies formed under his auspices to extend the navigation of the James and the Potomac back to the mountains.

Virginian as he was, he had a Yankee's love for an improved implement or utensil; and he was always sending something ingenious in that way to a friend. He scoured Paris to find one of the "new lamps" for Richard Henry Lee, failed to get a good one, tried again in London, and succeeded. Madison was indebted to him for getting made the most perfect watch the arts could then produce,—price six hundred francs,—and a portable copying-press of his own contriving, besides a great number of books for his library. A stroll among the book-stalls was one of his favorite afternoon recreations during the whole of his residence in Paris, so one of his daughters records; and he picked up many hundreds of prizes in the way of rare and curious books, for Madison, Wythe, Monroe, and himself.

Europe is still the chief source of our intellectual nourishment; but, when Jefferson was minister in Paris, it was the only source. America had contributed nothing to the intellectual resources of man, except Franklin; and the best of Franklin was not yet accessible. We had no art, little science, no literature; not a poem, not a book, not a picture, not a statue, not an edifice. Jefferson evidently recognized it as a very important part of his duty to be a channel of communication by which the redundant intellectual wealth of one continent should go to lessen the poverty of the other. He had in his note-book a considerable list of Americans, such as Dr. Franklin, James Madison, George Wythe, Edmund Randolph, Dr. Stiles, of whom he was the literary agent in Europe, for whom he received the volumes of the Encyclopædia as they appeared, and subscribed for copies of any work of value which was announced for publication. In advance of international copyright, and, indeed, before Noah Webster had procured a home copyright for his spelling-book from a few of the State legislatures (the beginning of our copyright system), Jefferson aided two American authors to gain something

from the European sale of their writings. He got forty guineas for an early copy of Ramsay's History of the Revolutionary War for translation into French; and when he found that the London book-sellers did not dare sell the book, he sent for a hundred copies, and caused it to be advertised in the London papers, that persons in England wishing the work could have it from Paris, per *diligence*. Similar service he rendered Dr. Gordon, author of the history of the war to which he had himself contributed.

Some opportunities which occurred to him of aiding the growth of a better taste in America for architecture, he eagerly seized. Virginia was about to disfigure Richmond with public buildings; and the commissioners wrote to him for plans, particularly a plan for a Capitol. What commission could have been more welcome? From his youth up, before he had ever seen an edifice that was not repulsive, he was an enthusiast in architecture; and now, in Paris, it was a daily rapture to pass one of his favorite buildings. He would linger near it, he tells one of his friends, for a long time; would often go out of his way to catch a view of it; loved to study it in new lights and unusual conditions of the atmosphere, and never grew weary of admiring it.

As soon, therefore, as he received the letter from Richmond, he engaged the best architect of the day, and entered upon the joyous work. They took for their model the *Maison Quarrée* of Nismes, which, he thought, was "one of the most beautiful, if not the most beautiful and precious morsel of architecture left us by antiquity; . . . very simple, but noble beyond expression." All the time he could spare from pressing public duties he spent in adapting the ancient model to modern utilities. But, with all his zeal, the plan consumed time; and he was aghast one day, to receive news from home that the commissioners were beginning to build without it. He wrote to Madison, begging him to use all his influence for delay. "How is a taste," he asked, "for this beautiful art to be formed in our countrymen unless we avail ourselves of every occasion when public buildings are to be erected, of presenting to them models for their study and imitation?" The loss of a few bricks, he thought, was not to be weighed against "the comfort of laying out the public money for something honorable, the satisfaction of seeing an object and proof of national good taste, and the regret and mortification of erecting a monument of our barbarism, which will be

loaded with execrations as long as it shall endure." He seems to have smiled at his own vehemence. "You see," he concluded, "I am an enthusiast on the subject of arts; but it is an enthusiasm of which I am not ashamed, as its object is to improve the taste of my countrymen, to increase their reputation, to reconcile to them the respect of the world, and procure them its praise."

Madison exerted himself; the work was stopped; the plan was accepted. But the home architect, as Professor Tucker tells us, mingled an idea or two of his own with those of the ancient master, and considerations of economy were allowed to modify parts of the design. The result many readers have seen in that ill-starred, forlorn-looking edifice, the Capitol of Virginia at Richmond. Near it, on the Capitol grounds, is the best thing America has yet paid for in the way of a monument to the memory of deserving men, — the monument to Washington and other Virginians most distinguished in the Revolutionary struggle. Jefferson was much occupied with details of this fine work during his residence in Paris. For Virginia, also, he bought some thousands of stands of arms and other warlike material; for who had yet so much as thought that Virginia was not a sovereign State?

There was no end of his services to the infant unskilled agriculture of his country. In Charleston and Philadelphia there was already something in the way of an agricultural society, to which he sent information, seeds, roots, nuts, and plants; thus continuing the work begun in his father's youth by John Bartram of Philadelphia, to whom be honor and gratitude forever! To the Charleston society, Jefferson's benefactions were most numerous and important. Upon receiving the intelligence that he had been elected a member of the society, he sent them, with his letter of acknowledgment, "some seeds of a grass that had been found very useful in the southern parts of Europe," and was almost the only grass cultivated in Malta. It is to be feared the seed was not duly cared for by the society; for the Northern eye looks in vain, in the Carolinas, for a vivid lawn or a fine field of grass. Afterwards he procured for them a quantity of the acorns of the cork-oak. Where are the cork-oaks that should have sprung from them? He burned with desire to introduce the olive culture into the Southern States; and he returns again and again to the subject in his letters. He saw what a great good the olive-tree was to Europe, from its hardiness, its fruitfulness,

the low quality of the soil in which it flourishes, and the agreeable flavor it imparts to many viands otherwise tasteless or disagreeable. He urged the Charleston society to make it a chief object to introduce the olive, and offered to send them bountiful supplies of plants of every valuable variety, and to be one of five persons to contribute ten guineas a year to their experimental culture in South Carolina.

"I" he wrote to President Drayton, "the memory of those persons is held in great respect in South Carolina who introduced there the culture of rice, a plant which sows life and death with almost equal hand, what obligations would be due to him who should introduce the olive-tree, and set the example of its culture! Were the owners of slaves to view it only as the means of bettering *their* condition, how much would he better that by planting one of those trees for every slave he possessed! Having been myself an eye-witness to the blessings which this tree sheds on the poor, I never had my wishes so kindled for the introduction of any article of new culture into our own country."

Olive-oil, however, despite his generous efforts, is not yet an American product. The society accepted his offers. He sent them a whole "cargo of plants." The culture was begun with enthusiasm. But whether from want of skill, or want of perseverance, or the unsuitableness of the climate, or the excessive richness of the soil, the trees did not flourish. The caper, too, of which he sent seeds and amplest information, we still import in long, thin bottles, from Europe. Cotton he dismisses with curious brevity, considering the importance it has since attained. In writing of East India products to the Charleston society, he says, "Cotton is a precious resource, and which cannot fail with you."

Rice was the great theme of his agricultural letters. He was surprised, upon settling for the first time in a Catholic community, at the vast quantities of rice consumed; for it was the great resource of all classes during Lent. Fish was then a costly article, so far from the sea. Voltaire laughs at the Paris dandies of his day, who alleviated the rigors of Lent by breakfasting with their mistresses on a fresh fish brought, post, from St. Malo, that cost five hundred francs, — a delicate mark of attention, he observes, to a pretty penitent. Rice, however, was the standing dish in France during the fasting-season, and the merchants timed their importations accordingly. Jefferson was struck with the small quantity of American



rice brought to French ports and the low price it brought. Upon inquiry, he was told that the American rice (which reached France by way of England) was inferior in quality to that of Piedmont, and not so well cleaned. He sent to Charleston specimens of the kinds of rice sold in Paris, explained the inconveniences of a circuitous commerce, urged the Carolinians to send cargoes direct to Havre, and told them to be sure to get the bulk of the supply in port a month before Lent. As to the imperfect cleaning, he resolved to investigate that point to the uttermost. Being at Marseilles in 1787, he inquired on every hand concerning the machine employed in Italy to hull and clean the rice. No one could tell him. The vast national importance of the matter, together with the warm responses which he had received from Charleston to his letters upon rice, induced him to cross the Alps, and traverse the rice-country on purpose to examine the hulling-mill employed there, to the use of which he supposed the higher price of the Italian rice was due. "I found their machine," he wrote to Edward Rutledge of South Carolina, "exactly such a one as you had described to me in Congress in the year 1783!"

But he did not cross the Alps in vain. Seeing that the Italians cleaned their rice by the very mill used in South Carolina, he concluded that the Italian rice was of a better kind, and resolved to send some of the seed to Charleston. It was, however, part of the barbaric protective system to prevent the exportation of whatever could most signally bless other nations; and no one was allowed to send seed-rice out of the country. Jefferson, falling back on the higher law, "took measures with a muleteer to run a couple of sacks across the Apennines to Genoa;" but, having small faith in the muleteer's success, he filled the pockets of his coat and overcoat with the best rice of the best rice-producing district in Italy, and sent it, in two parcels by different ships, to Charleston. The muleteer failed to run his sacks; but this small store reached the Charleston society, who distributed it among the rice-planters, a dozen or two of grains to each. These were carefully sown and watched, usually under the master's eye. The species succeeded well in the rice country, and enabled the South-Carolina planters to produce the best rice in the world. If the reader has had to-day a pudding of superior rice, its grains were, in all probability, descended lineally from those which Jefferson carried off in his pockets in 1787.

He afterwards sent the society rough seed-rice from the Levant, from Egypt, from Cochin-China, from the East Indies; besides an "improved tooth" of a rice-mill. He also perfected with the French government and with French merchants the best arrangements then possible for the direct importation of rice from South Carolina and Georgia. No man was ever more vigilant than he in detecting opportunities to benefit his country. How did he get unhulled rice from Cochin-China? "The young prince of that country, lately gone from hence, having undertaken that it shall come to me."

Nor did he confine his services to his own country; for, as he said more than once, he regarded the office which he filled as international, and he wished to be the *medium* of good to both countries. Among other American productions, he sent for two or three hundred pecan-nuts from the Far West, for planting in France. To Dr. Stiles he wrote, "Mrs. Adams gives me an account of a flower found in Connecticut, which vegetates when suspended in the air. She brought one to Europe. What can be this flower? It would be a curious present to this continent." Such hints were seldom dropped in vain. Some of his correspondents took extraordinary pains to gratify his desires of this nature. The venerable Buffon, getting past eighty then, and verging to the close of his illustrious career, was indebted to Jefferson for torrents of information concerning nature in America, as well as for many valuable specimens. He gave the great naturalist the skin of a panther, which the old man had never seen, and had not mentioned in his work; also the horns and skins of American deer, the feet and combs of American birds, and many other similar objects.

He did not, it seems, always agree with Buffon. The old man held chemistry in contempt,—mere cookery, he called it,—and held that a chemist was no better than a cook. "I think it," said Jefferson, "on the contrary, the most useful of sciences, and big with future discoveries for the utility and safety of the human race." He combated, also, the Count de Buffon's theory of the degeneracy of animals in America. After much discussion, he tried an argument similar to that which Dr. Franklin had used, when, in reply to a remark of the same nature, he requested all the Americans seated on one side of the table to stand, and then all the Frenchmen, who happened to sit in a row on the other side. The Americans towered gigantic above the little Gauls, and the doctor came off

triumphant. Jefferson, on his part, wrote to General Sullivan of New Hampshire to send him the bones and skin of a moose, mightiest of the deer kind; Sullivan exaggerating the importance of the object, on fire to do honor to his country and oblige its representative, formed a hunting party, plunged into the measureless snows of the New-Hampshire hills, found a herd, killed one, cut a road twenty miles to get it home, got the flesh from the bones, packed skeleton and skin in a great box, with horns of five other varieties of American deer, and sent it on its way to the ocean. In the course of time Mr. Jefferson received a bill of thirty-six guineas for the carriage of the box, and a glowing account from General Sullivan of his exertions in procuring its contents. He paid the bill with a wry face, but the moose did not arrive. Six months after the grand hunt, he wrote thus: "That the tragedy might not want a proper catastrophe, the box, bones and all, are lost; so that this chapter of natural history will still remain a blank. But I have written to him *not* to send me another. I will leave it for my successor to fill up, whenever I shall make my bow here." A week later, however, he had the pleasure of sending the box to the Count de Buffon, promising much larger horns another season. The naturalist gracefully acknowledged the gift, and owned that the moose was indeed an animal of respectable magnitude. "I should have consulted you, sir," said he, "before publishing my natural history, and then I should have been sure of my facts." He died next year, too soon to enjoy the enormous pair of buck's horns coming to Jefferson from his native mountains, to maintain in Europe the credit of his native continent.

The publication of Jefferson's "Notes on Virginia," in English and in French, was an interesting event of his residence in Europe. Saturated as the book was with the republican sentiment of which he was the completest living exponent, it was eagerly sought after in Paris, and had its effect upon the time. He appears to have taken a modest view of the merits of the work. "I have sometimes thought," he wrote to his friend Hopkinson of Philadelphia, "of sending my 'Notes' to the Philosophical Society as a tribute due to them; but this would seem as if I considered them as worth something, which I am conscious they are not. I will not ask for your advice on this occasion, because it is one of those on which no man is authorized to ask a sincere opinion."

A work much more important, upon which he valued himself more than upon any thing he ever wrote in his life, except the Declaration of Independence, and far more meritorious than that, was published in Paris in 1786. I mean his Act for Freedom of Religion, passed in that year by the Virginia legislature. He had copies of it printed, according to his custom. It was received and circulated with an ominous enthusiasm. I say ominous; for the first effect of ideas so much in advance of the state of things could not be but destructive and disastrous. The whole diplomatic corps complimented the author by asking for a copy to transmit to their several courts; and he had it inserted in the *Encyclopédie*, to which he had contributed articles, and material for articles, on subjects relating to the United States. "I think," he wrote to his old friend and mentor, George Wythe, that "our Act for Freedom of Religion will produce considerable good even in these countries, where ignorance, superstition, poverty, and oppression of body and mind in every form, are so firmly settled on the mass of the people, that their redemption from them can never be hoped." *Never* is a long time. He told George Wythe, that if every monarch in Europe were to try as hard to emancipate the minds of his subjects from ignorance and prejudice, as he was then trying to keep them benighted, a thousand years would not raise them to the American level. He attributed the superiority of Americans, in freedom and dignity of mind, to their severance from the parent stock, and their separation from it by a wide ocean; which had placed all things "*under the control of the common sense of the people.*"

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### HIS TRAVELS IN EUROPE.

A SUMMONS from Mr. Adams, his colleague in the commission for negotiating commercial treaties, called him to London in March, 1786. He spent two months in England. The visit was an utter and a woful failure. What evils might have been averted — the war of 1812, for one item — if that unhappy dotard of a king had had the least glimmer of sense, or the smallest touch of nobleness! He received these two gentlemen, representatives of an infant nation offering amity and reciprocal good, in a manner so churlish as left them no hope of being so much as decently listened to. And they were not decently listened to. Ministers were cold, vague, evasive. Merchants said to them, in substance, America *must* send us her produce, *must* buy our wares: we are masters of the situation. Why should we treat? What do *we* want more? Society, too, gave them the cold shoulder. These two men, the most important personages upon the island, if England could but have known it, were held of less account than a couple of attachés of the Austrian legation. It required "courage," as Mr. Adams intimates, for a nobleman to converse with them at an assembly. "That nation," wrote Mr. Jefferson, "hate us; their ministers hate us; and their king more than all other men." Strange infatuation! Fata. blindness!

Of course, being human, Mr. Jefferson did not relish England. He found the people heavy with beef and beer, of a growling temper, and excessively prone to worship power, rank, and wealth. "They are by no means the free-minded people we suppose them in America. Their learned men, too, are few in number, and are less learned, and infinitely less emancipated from prejudice, than those of France." In the mechanic arts, he admitted, they surpassed all

the world; and he enjoyed most keenly the English gardens and parks. London he thought a handsomer city than Paris, but not as handsome as Philadelphia; and the architecture generally, in England, the "most wretched" he ever saw, not excepting America, nor even Virginia, "where it is worse than in any other part of America I have seen."

He set the Londoners right on one point. The noted invention of the moment was a carriage-wheel, the circumference of which was made of a single piece of wood. As these wheels were patented and made in London, the invention was claimed as English. He told his friends, and caused the fact to be published, that the farmers in New Jersey were the first, since Homer's day, who were known to have formed wheels in that manner. Dr. Franklin, some years before, had chanced to mention it to the person who then held the patent. The idea struck him; and the doctor went to his shop, and assisted him in making a wheel of one piece. The Jerseymen did it by merely bending a green sapling, and leaving it bent till it was set; but as in London there were no saplings, the philosopher was kept experimenting for several weeks. He triumphed at length, and made a free gift of the process to the carriage-maker, who made a fortune by it. Jefferson visited the shop in which Dr. Franklin had worked out the idea, where he received the story from the owner, who gave the whole credit to Franklin, and "spoke of him with love and gratitude." He also found, in the *Iliad*, the passage which proves that the Greeks and the Jersey farmers employed the same process: "He fell on the ground like a poplar which has grown smooth in the western part of a great meadow, with its branches shooting from its summit. But the chariot-maker with the sharp axe has felled it, that he may bend a wheel for a beautiful chariot. It lies drying on the banks of a river."

In company with Mr. Adams, he made the usual tour of England, visiting the famous parks, towns, battle-fields, edifices. So far as his letters show, nothing kindled him in England but the gardens, "the article in which England excels all the earth;" and he made the most minute inquiries as to the cost of maintaining those exquisite places, in order to ascertain whether it were possible for him to have a really fine garden at Monticello. It is to be presumed he applauded Mr. Adams's harangue to the rustics on the battle-field of Worcester, — Cromwell's "crowning mercy." The impetuous Adams,



exalted by the recollections called up by the scene, was offended at the stolid indifference of the people who lived near by. "Do Englishmen," he exclaimed, "so soon forget the ground where liberty was fought for? Tell your neighbors and your children that this is holy ground, much holier than that on which your churches stand! All England should come in pilgrimage to this hill once a year!" The by-standers, as Mr. Adams reports, were animated and pleased by this compliment to their native field. The two Americans visited Stratford-upon-Avon; but Mr. Jefferson only records that he paid a shilling for seeing Shakspeare's house, another for seeing his tomb, four shillings and twopence for his entertainment at the inn, and two shillings to the servants. Mr. Adams, on the contrary, ventured the bold remark that Shakspeare's wit, fancy, taste, and judgment, his knowledge of life, nature, and character, were immortal.

Jefferson played his last piece upon the violin in Paris. Walking one day with a friend, four or five miles from home, absorbed in earnest conversation, he fell, and dislocated his right wrist. He grasped it firmly with his other hand, and, resuming the conversation, walked home in torture, of which his companion suspected nothing. It was unskillfully set; and he never, as long as he lived, recovered the proper use of it, — could never again write with perfect ease, could never again play upon his instrument. Mr. Randall remarks the curious fact, that, so inveterate had become the habit of entering his expenditures, he continued to record items that very afternoon, using his left hand. In the morning, before the accident, he entered the payment to his steward, Petit, of five hundred and four francs for various household expenses, and in the afternoon, after the accident, in a hand more legible, records the expenditure of "24 f. 10" for buttons, and "4 f. 6" for gloves. The next day he was out again, "seeing the king's library," for which he paid three francs.

The wrist being weak and painful five months after the accident, the doctors "filled up the measure" of their absurdity by advising him to try the waters of Aix in Provence. He tried those waters, and, deriving no benefit from them, resumed his journey, and enjoyed an instructive and delightful four months' tour of France and Italy; visiting especially the seaports, rice-districts, and regions noted for the culture of particular products. The cities, he says, he "made a job of, and generally gulped it all down in a day;" but he was "never satiated with rambling through the fields and farms

examining the culture and cultivators with a degree of curiosity which make some take me to be a fool, and others to be much wiser than I am." But he did not always find the towns so devoid of interest. It was upon this tour that he saw at Nismes the edifice which he had taken for a model for the Capitol at Richmond. "Here I am, madam," he wrote to one of his friends, "gazing whole hours at the *Maison Quarrée*,\* like a lover at his mistress. The stocking-weavers and silk-spinners around it consider me a hypochondriac Englishman about to write with a pistol the last chapter of his history. This is the second time I have been in love since I left Paris. The first was with a Diana at the Chateau de Laye-Epinaye in Beaujolois, a delicious morsel of sculpture by M. A. Slodtz. This, you will say, was in rule,—to fall in love with a female beauty; but with a house! It is out of all precedent. No, madam, it is not without precedent in my own history." At Vienna he owns to having been in a rage on seeing a superb Roman palace "defaced" and "hewed down" into a hideous utility.

When he saw men working long hours and hard for forty cents a week, children toiling with the hoe, women carrying heavy loads, tending locks, striking the anvil, and holding the plough, he sometimes made rather violent entries in his brief, hurried diary. For example, "Few chateaux, no farmhouses, all the people being gathered in villages. Are they thus collected by that dogma of their religion which makes them believe, that, to keep the Creator in good-humor with his own works, they must mumble a mass every day?"

The hopeless, helpless condition of the peasantry in some parts of France to which Nature had been most bountiful struck him to the heart again and again. It was his custom, as he wandered among the farms and vineyards, to enter their abodes upon some pretext, and converse with the wives of the absent laborers. He would con-

\* This edifice still enchants every intelligent beholder. In the life of Mr. Thomas Brassey, by Sir Arthur Helps (London, 1872), is the following passage by the son of the great contractor:—

"On our way from the station at Nismes to the hotel, we passed the *Maison Quarrée*, so justly celebrated for the exquisite symmetry of its architectural proportions. I do not think he had heard much about this building, perhaps he might never have heard of it before; but he immediately appreciated its great beauty, and remained at least half an hour upon the spot, in order that he might thoroughly examine that admirable monument of ancient art from every point of view. The excellent judgment in architectural art, and the sincere and unaffected enjoyment of the beautiful, which he displayed in the instance to which I have referred, made a strong impression on my youthful mind."

trive to sit upon the bed, instead of the offered stool, in order to ascertain of what material it was made; and he would peep on the sly into the boiling pot of grease and greens to see what was to be the family dinner. He had left Lafayette at Paris, deeply absorbed in the early movements of the coming revolution; and he begged him to come into the southern provinces, and see for himself what occasion there was for discontent. "To do it most effectually," he said, "you must be absolutely incognito; you must ferret the people out of their hovels, as I have done; look into their kettles; eat their bread; loll on their beds on pretence of resting yourself, but, in fact, to find if they are soft. You will feel a sublime pleasure in the course of this investigation, and a sublimer one hereafter, when you shall be able to apply your knowledge to the softening of their beds, or the throwing a morsel of meat into their kettle of vegetables."

What a republican such scenes as these made of him! How he came to hate, abhor, despise, and loathe the hereditary principle! And all the more, because his post gave him the means of knowing the exact calibre of the hereditary kings and nobles who took from these faithful laborers nearly all their toil produced, and left them thistles and garbage for their own sustenance. "There is not a crowned head in Europe," he wrote to General Washington in 1788, "whose talents or merits would entitle him to be elected a vestryman by the people of America;" and he gave it to the general as his opinion, that there was scarcely an evil known in Europe which could not be traced to the monarch as its source, "nor a good which was not derived from the small fibres of republicanism existing among them."

The king of France he knew was a fool; and the queen, at a moment when the fate of the monarchy seemed to hang upon a few millions more or less in the treasury, gratified to the full a mania for high play. The kings of Spain and of Naples knew but one interest in life,—the slaughter of birds, deer, and pigs. "They passed their lives in hunting, and despatched two couriers a week, one thousand miles, to let each other know what game they had killed the preceding days." The successor to the great Frederick was "a mere hog in body and mind." George III. was a madman, and his son an animal of the same nature as the king of Prussia. According to Jefferson, England was as happy in her Prince of

Wales in 1789, as she is in 1874. A friend (probably the Duke of Dorset) described to him the behavior of the prince at a little dinner of four persons:—

“He ate half a leg of mutton; did not taste the small dishes because small; drank champagne and Burgundy as small beer during dinner, and Bordeaux after dinner, as the rest of the company. Upon the whole, he ate as much as the other three, and drank about two bottles of wine without seeming to feel it. . . . He has not a single element of mathematics, of natural or moral philosophy, or of any other science on earth; nor has the society he has kept been such as to supply the void of education. It has been that of the lowest, most illiterate, and profligate persons in the kingdom. . . . He has not a single idea of justice, morality, religion, or of the rights of men, or any anxiety for the opinion of the world. He carries that indifference for fame so far, that he probably would not be hurt were he to lose his throne, provided he could be assured of having always meat, drink, horses, and women.”

Compared with the political system which placed such animals as these upon the summit of things, and made life burdensome, shameful, and bitter to nearly all but such, Jefferson thought the least good of the American governments a paragon of perfection. The very evils of democracy he learned to regard with a kind of favor. A little rebellion now and then, like that in Massachusetts in 1786, he thought, might be, upon the whole, beneficial. “It is true,” he wrote, that “our governments want energy;” and this, he confessed was “an inconvenience.” But “the energy which absolute governments derive from an armed force, which is the effect of the bayonet constantly held at the breast of every citizen, and which resembles very much the stillness of the grave, must be admitted also to have its inconveniences.” The outrageous license of the London newspapers seemed to him an evil not greater than the suppressions and the perversions of the more shackled press of the Continent. He made an acute observation on this point to Thomas Paine in 1787, the truth of which every inhabitant of New York who has glanced over the newspapers during the last few years can attest:—

“The licentiousness of the press produces the same effect which the restraint of the press was intended to do. If the restraint prevents things from being told, the licentiousness of the press *prevents things from being believed when they are told.*”

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### JEFFERSON AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

MAN proposes, woman disposes. Such is often the way of this world.

In the summer of 1780, James Madison, who was the man of all others most solicitous for the success of the new constitution of the United States, wrote to Jefferson asking him if he would accept an appointment at home in General Washington's administration. "You know," Jefferson replied, "the circumstances which led me from retirement, step by step, and from one nomination to another up to the present. My object is a return to the same retirement; whenever, therefore, I quit the present, it will not be to engage in any other office, and most especially any one which would require a constant residence from home." A few months after these words were written, he was in New York, Secretary of State; and it was a maiden of seventeen that brought him to it.

His situation in Paris had become too interesting to leave, too pleasant to last. What man was ever more happily placed? In the most delightful city of the earth, he held a post which put all its noblest resources at his command. His mind was occupied with honorable duties which practice had made easy to him; and the circle of his friends was among the most agreeable the world has known since human beings first learned to converse politely with one another. In the houses which he most frequented, — that of the Lafayettes, for example, — he found all that was truly elegant and refined in the ancient manners, joined to the interest in knowledge and in the welfare of man that distinguished the new period. High thinking was, as it were, in vogue. Every man, woman, and child in Paris, Jefferson said, had become a politician; so that wherever he went he met people ardently desirous to listen to him as a master

in the science of human rights. Nobles caught something of the new spirit, and rose superior to their rank. Simplicity and sincerity were recognized as the true elevation of manner. Jefferson, without thinking of it, was quite in the fashion when he finished a letter to Lafayette by saying, that, in America, people did not permit themselves to utter even truths when they had the air of flattery; and therefore he would say, once for all, "I love you, your wife, and children."

He was on happy terms, too, with the diplomatic corps. Little as he had cause to love the realm of Britain, it was, nevertheless, with the British ambassador, the Duke of Dorset, that he was most intimate; and his daughter struck up a girl's friendship with the duke's daughter, that lasted beyond the term of their residence in Paris. The officers who had served in America were among the favorites in Paris society, and Jefferson's house was their natural rendezvous. That prince of gossips and story-tellers, Baron Grimm, was among his familiar acquaintances. Madame de Staël, who was married during Jefferson's second year in Paris, he knew only as the daughter of Necker and the brilliant young wife of the Swedish ambassador. Among the lions who flourished in Paris at the time was De la Tude, who had been confined thirty-five years for writing an epigram upon Pompadour. "He comes sometimes," writes Jefferson, "to take a family soup with me, and entertains me with anecdotes of his five and thirty years' imprisonment. How fertile is the mind of man, which can make the Bastille and the dungeon of Vincennes yield interesting anecdotes!" That "family soup" of his played a great part in his social life. He lived in the easy, liberal style of Virginia, which harmonized as well with the humor of the time as with his own character and habits. Few set dinners, but a well-spread table always open and generally filled; no grand parties, but an evening circle that lured and detained the people fullest of the prevalent spirit. He had already the habit of mitigating business with dinner. If he had a difficult matter to conclude or discuss, it was usual with him to invite the parties interested to one of his light, rational, refreshing "family dinners," and afterwards, under its humanizing influence, introduce the troublesome topic.

There were plenty of Americans in Paris, even at that early day—that is, there were, perhaps, as many individuals as there are thousands now. "I endeavor to show civilities," he once wrote, "to *all* the Americans who come here!" There might have been three or four



in a month Gouverneur Morris was there during the later ferments, shaking his knowing head at the French dream of a millennium, and arguing with Jefferson by the hour against every thing that the plenipotentiary most believed; full of talk, self-confidence, and good-humor; apt to be right in his predictions, because exempt from the longings to which the heavy-laden and anxious portion of the human race are subject. Hence, all his life, as often as the millennium failed to come to time, he had the noble satisfaction of saying, "I told you so." Poor Mazzei was much in Paris at this time, ruined by his endeavor to serve Virginia with Tuscan crowns during the Revolutionary War, and now often compelled to figure in Jefferson's memorandum-book for French francs borrowed to supply his own necessities. Ledyard, the born traveller of Connecticut, came to the legation, poor and disappointed, incapable of remaining long in a place, plagued even from his boyhood with a mania to roam over the earth. He had sailed with Cook, and revealed the tactless barbarity of that navigator; had seen on the western coast of North America the richest of all fur-bearing regions; and had come to Paris to set on foot the enterprise which Astor attempted twenty-five years after, when Astoria was founded. "But for the war of 1812," Astor used to say, "I should have been the richest man that ever lived;" thus confirming Ledyard's view. Failing in his object, he was helpless in Paris; and Jefferson chalked out a bold scheme for him, worthy of his singular genius for travelling.

From his youth up, Jefferson had gazed from Monticello, wondering what there might be between his mountain-top and the Pacific Ocean. It was an inherited curiosity; for his own father had felt it, and, indeed, all intelligent Virginians, from the time when Captain John Smith sailed up the Chickahominy in quest of the South Sea. He now proposed to Ledyard to make his way through Russia to Kamtchatka; thence by some chance vessel to Nootka Sound; and so, by one means or another, to what we now call Oregon; and then strike into the wilderness, explore that vast unknown region, and endeavor to reach the western settlements of the United States.

It was an audacious scheme, only fit for Ledyard, only possible to just such a man. He jumped at it. Through Baron Grimm, who was Own Correspondent in Paris to the Empress Catherine, Jefferson tried to obtain the requisite permission, which she, knowing the

perils of the route, humbly refused; and Ledyard started without it. Ragged, penniless, hungry, gaunt, undaunted, he kept on, "kicked," as he wrote to Jefferson, "from town to town," and hoping "to be kicked round the world;" until he was within two hundred miles of Kamtchatka, where an order from Catherine arrested him. He was brought back, and turned loose in Poland. It was reserved for President Jefferson to get our first knowledge of the boundless prairie world, through the explorations of his neighbor, friend, and secretary, Captain Meriwether Lewis.

Mr. Hawthorne has told us, in his sly, humorous way, something of the odd projects and eccentric characters that solicit the notice of American representatives in Europe. Jefferson had his share of both. He saw, too, while living in Paris, how far-reaching the influence of the American Revolution was likely to be. He was among the first to hear of the agitation in the Spanish and Portuguese colonies of America, that has since led to their deliverance from all their oppressors, except those twin despots of the tropical world, Indolence and Appetite. A mysterious note reached him in October, 1786, from which he only learned that the writer was a foreigner, who had "a matter of very great consequence" to communicate, and wished him to indicate a safe channel. The plenipotentiary complied with the request. The letter arrived. "I am a native of Brazil," it began. "You are not ignorant of the frightful slavery under which my country groans. This continually becomes more insupportable since the epoch of your glorious independence." The Brazilians meant to rise, the writer continued, and they looked to the United States for support: he had come to France on purpose to say so to the plenipotentiary of the United States, because in America he could not act in the matter without exciting suspicion. If Mr. Jefferson desired further information, the writer could give it him.

Meet me at Nismes, Mr. Jefferson replied in substance, whither he would go "under the pretext of seeing the antiquities of that place." They met and conversed long. Jefferson reminded the Brazilian that he could only give him his ideas on the subject as an individual, having no authority to utter a word on behalf of Congress. Those ideas were that the United States were not in a condition to take part in any war, and that they particularly wished to cultivate the friendship of Portugal, a country with which they had

an advantageous commerce. "But," he added, "a successful revolution in Brazil could not be uninteresting to us;" and "prospects of lucre might possibly draw numbers of individuals to their aid, and purer motives our officers;" and citizens of the United States were free to leave their country whenever they wished. With this cold comfort the Brazilian was obliged to depart from Nismes, and leave Mr. Jefferson free to gaze with rapture upon the *Maison Quarrée*.

A similar series of mysterious approaches brought him, about the same time, face to face with a Mexican, whose country was also preparing to rise against its oppressors. In dealing with this gentleman, the minister showed that he had picked up in Paris or elsewhere a little of the diplomatist's craft. "I was more cautious," he reports, "with the Mexican than with the Brazilian;" and he threw cold water on his hopes by saying that he "feared they must begin by enlightening and emancipating the minds of their people." No revolutionist likes to be met with an observation of that nature. "I was led into this caution," Jefferson explains, "by observing that this gentleman was intimate at the Spanish ambassador's," and that he was in the service of the Spanish government at the very time of making the communication. "He had much of the air of candor," adds the suddenly-formed diplomatist; "but that can be borrowed, so that I was not able to decide about him in my own mind."

All of which was reported at great length to Congress, with the additional intelligence that Peru, which had already lost two hundred thousand men in failure to eject the hated Spaniards, could easily be roused to rebellion again. In one way, if in no other, Mr. Jefferson served Congress well: he provided them by every packet with long letters, which at that period, when journalism was but an infant art, must have been more interesting than we can now conceive, close packed as they were with information, curious, important, and new.

It was not in far-off Peru, Mexico, or Brazil, that he saw the most memorable proofs of the mighty influence of the "glorious Revolution" of which he had been a part. He witnessed the "glorious" part of the French Revolution, having been present at the Assembly of the Notables in 1787, and at the destruction of the Bastille in 1789. His sympathy with that supreme effort of France to escape

the oppression of outgrown institutions was entire and profound, but it was also considerate and wise. Living in the most familiar intimacy with Lafayette and the other leaders of the preliminary movements, he knew every thing and influenced every thing they did; for at first, while as yet the king and the nation seemed in harmony, his official position was no restraint upon him; and, to the last, his constant advice was, Save the monarchy; France is not ripe for a republic; get a constitution that will secure substantial liberty and essential rights, and wait for the rest.

I suppose a good many of Mr. Carlyle's readers were a little offended at Buckle's sweeping assertion that no history of the French Revolution exists, and that no man had yet appeared who possessed the knowledge requisite for writing such a work. Mr. Carlyle's French Revolution seems only to lack the form and cadence of poetry to rank with the great poems of all time, the Iliad, the Inferno, Paradise Lost, and Faust. Dickens might well call it a "wonderful work." Its brevity and pictorial power are wonderful indeed; and a young reader who rises from its perusal penetrated and awe-struck may be pardoned for thinking, that, among his other acquisitions, he has gained some insight into the French Revolution. He has gained every thing *but* insight. Mr. Carlyle does not sacrifice the true to the picturesque: he gives us picture in lieu of truth. He has all a poet's love for the picturesque, and is more guided in his selection of events for relation by their effectiveness than by their importance. Hence, as the antidotal Buckle remarks, we have a series of thrilling pictures, instead of that noblest and most difficult of all the products of the mind, a genuine history.

The narrative of events written by Jefferson in extreme old age, brief, cold, and colorless as it is, taken in connection with his numerous letters, official and private, written at the time, will be prized by the individual who will, at length, evolve the French Revolution from the chaos of material in which it is now involved. Unfortunately, Jefferson went too far in extirpating his egotism. He was not vain enough; he was curiously reticent concerning his own part in important events; he instinctively veiled and hid his personality. But for this he might have found time, in his busy retirement, to compose a history of the Revolution down to the taking of the Bastille, which would have been of imperishable interest. It was

not merely that he knew the men and witnessed the events; but he preserved his incredulity, accepted nothing upon mere rumor, and personally investigated occurrences. If a rumor reached him that "three thousand people had fallen in the streets," he and his secretary, Mr. Short, would go to the spot, and, after minute inquiry, reduce the number to "three." He was unwearied in sitting out the interminable sessions of the various assemblies, and thought little of riding to Versailles "to satisfy myself what has passed there, for nothing can be believed but what one sees or has from an eye-witness."

Occasionally his part in events was conspicuous, usually it was unseen, always it was such as became the representative of the United States. On the gathering of the Notables in 1787, his advice to Lafayette was, Not to attempt too much; to aim at securing a recurrence of the Assembly; to vote the king ample supplies in return for irreclaimable concessions; to make the English constitution their model, not as the best conceivable, but the best attainable. "If every advance," said he, "is to be purchased by filling the royal coffers with gold, it will be gold well employed." In the interval between the Assembly of the Notables of 1787, and the National Assembly of 1789, he was guide, philosopher, and friend to the liberal leaders; giving them numberless dinners and sound instruction in constitutional government; furnishing them with American precedents and English law-books, as well as with summaries and elucidations of his own. One darling object of the Lafayette party was to introduce trial by jury. It was Jefferson who supplied them with a list of works on the subject, and added a brief discourse, in which juries were justified on two grounds: 1, Because in every branch of government, legislative, executive, and judicial, an infusion of the people was necessary to the preservation of purity; 2, The chance of getting justice from a biassed judge was not as good as from a cast of the dice, but from a jury the chance was something better than from a cast of the dice. Hence, trial by jury was a good thing.

The frightful winter of 1788-89, when the mercury in Paris fell to twenty below zero; and the government was obliged to keep vast fires burning in the streets to preserve the poor from freezing; and every family that had any thing to spare was called upon for a weekly contribution for the purchase of food; and long *queues* of

hunger-stricken women and children besieged every baker's shop; and, on cards of invitation to dinner, guests were requested to bring their own bread; and the king himself was self-limited to his proper number of ounces, — this fearful season Jefferson was so happy as to be the means of mitigating to the people of France. In the autumn of 1787 it became known to the government that the supply of food was insufficient; and M. Necker asked the American minister to make the fact known in the United States, in order to stimulate the exportation of grain to France. Jefferson wrote to Mr. Jay on the subject, and Mr. Jay caused the letter to be inserted in the newspapers. The result was, that France received from America many thousand barrels of flour, — about thirty-five thousand, as it appears, — enough sensibly to lessen the distress, because the bulk of it arrived late, when the scarcity was extreme.

Wild Mirabeau, acting upon imperfect information, and eager to make a point against the ministry, charged M. Necker, in one of his harangues, with having refused an *offer* of American flour made by the American minister. Jefferson hastened to defend the government, and contrived to set M. Necker right with the public, without offending Mirabeau. The orator read Jefferson's exculpatory letter to the Assembly, and apologized for the error.

We have seen how susceptible Jefferson was to the spell of oratory, from the time when, as a boy, he had listened in rapture to the moonlight oration of an Indian chief in the Virginia woods, to the period when the eloquence of Patrick Henry charmed and amazed him in the House of Burgesses. And now, in Paris, he owned the resistless power of Mirabeau, of whose singular fascination he retained the liveliest recollection as long as he lived. William Wirt and Henry Clay both testified to having heard Mr. Jefferson speak of the sway of that strange being over the minds of men of every class. "He spoke of him," says Wirt, "as uniting two distinct and perfect characters in himself, whenever he pleased: the mere logician, with a mind apparently as sterile and desolate as the sands of Arabia, but reasoning at such times with an Herculean force which nothing could resist; at other times, bursting out with a flood of eloquence more sublime than Milton ever imputed to the cherubim and seraphim, and bearing all before him."

At the supreme moment of the Revolution, in July, 1789, the National Assembly paid homage, at once to the American people



and to their representative. They appointed a committee to draught a constitution, the chairman being the Archbishop of Bordeaux, and this committee formally invited the American minister to assist at their sessions, and favor them with his advice. But, as it was to the king that the plenipotentiary was accredited, he was obliged to decline. He was not, however, to escape so easily. When the constitution was under discussion in the Assembly, article by article, differences of opinion arose which debate could not reconcile, because the opinion of one powerful faction was prompted and supported by interest. Two questions rent the Assembly, at length, into hostile parties: 1, Shall the king have a veto? 2, Shall there be hereditary legislators in France? The nobility put forth all their energies, and used all their arts, to have both these vital questions answered affirmatively. The popular party were not united on either question; and hence there was wide-spread fear that the solid, small phalanx of the aristocracy would wrest the constitution to the perpetuation of their power.

In the midst of this alarm, Jefferson received a note from Lafayette, informing him that he should, the next day, bring a party of six or eight friends to dine with him. The hospitable Virginian replied that they would be welcome; and, at the time named, the party arrived, — just eight in all, including Lafayette. They proved to be leaders on the popular side, devoted to the cause, but unable to agree on the two dividing questions; and Lafayette, taking a hint from the usual tactics of Jefferson, and forgetting his official character, had brought them together in this way for a friendly conference. The dinner passed. The cloth being removed, wine, according to the custom of old Virginia, was for the first time placed upon the table. First eat, then drink, appears to have been the Virginian order. Lafayette introduced the subjects upon which an interchange of opinion was desired, reminded them of the state of things in the Assembly, and dwelt upon the deadly peril of the new-born liberty of France so long as the enemies of liberty were united and its friends divided. "I have my opinion," said he; "but I am ready to sacrifice it to that of my brethren in the same cause." Some common conclusion, he said, they *must* reach, and stand to, or the nobility would carry all before them; and, whatever they might now agree upon, he pledged himself to maintain at the head of the National Guard.

It was four o'clock in the afternoon when Lafayette ceased to speak, and it was ten in the evening when the conference ended. During those six hours, Jefferson says, "I was a silent witness to a coolness and candor of argument unusual in the conflicts of political opinion; to a logical reasoning and chaste eloquence, disfigured by no gaudy tinsel of rhetoric or declamation, and truly worthy of being placed in parallel with the finest dialogues of antiquity." The expedient was successful. Under the happy influence of Jefferson's early, rational dinner, not wholly vitiated by the light wines which he had personally sought among the vineyards of France and Italy, and with minds at once calmed and exalted by his silent, sympathetic presence, the deputies, at last, discovered ground upon which they could all stand. They agreed that the king should have a suspensive veto, and that there should be no hereditary legislators. France should be governed, thenceforth, by a constitutional king, and by one legislative body,—the latter elected by the people. Rallying upon these two principles, the liberal party presented a solid front to the aristocrats, and thus controlled the Revolution as long as it was controllable.

During this conference, the plenipotentiary had sat "silent" at the head of his table; nor had he had any part in causing the meeting to be held in his house. Nevertheless, he felt that the etiquette of his position had been violated; and, consequently, the next morning he went to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and explained the circumstances. The information was superfluous. The minister, who, as Jefferson intimates, was in the confidence of the patriots, had already learned what had passed, and had approved the conference before it was held. He said, that, so far from taking umbrage at the use to which Jefferson's house had been put, he earnestly wished that he would habitually attend such conferences, because he was sure he would moderate the warmer spirits, and promote attainable reforms only. Jefferson replied, that he knew too well the duties he owed to the king, to France, and to the United States, to meddle with the internal affairs of the country; and he should preserve carefully the attitude of a neutral and passive spectator, except that his heart's desire would ever be for the prevalence of measures most beneficial to the nation.

During these intense weeks, Jefferson had a foretaste of what he was to experience soon in New York and Philadelphia. He discov

ered that a man might be an American, a patriot, and a person of great ability and worth, and yet not sympathize at all with this mighty and hopeful movement. Almost every day or two Gouverneur Morris dropped in at the legation for a dinner and a chat with the minister; differing from him in opinion, in sentiment, in sympathy, yet glad of the information he obtained from him, and well affected towards him personally. Mark the difference between the humane and the Tory mind: Morris instinctively took sides with the hated aristocrats, associated chiefly with them, lamented their downfall, sympathized deeply with them in all their alarms and sorrows. When he saw the queen of France pass unsaluted by a single voice, he could not help calling upon the by-standers to give her a cheer; and only refrained himself from raising the cry, because he remembered in time that he was not a Frenchman. He honestly bewailed the spectacle of the "high Austrian spirit" abased to the point of the queen's bowing low in acknowledgment of one faint cheer. He exulted when the king showed for a moment the *ferté* which he deemed proper to "the Bourbon blood." He sent a letter of advice to the queen; and, at a later day, pressed upon the exiled Duke of Orleans a loan of fifteen hundred pounds. Such men as he are so constituted, that the brief and shallow distress of a wealthy and picturesque family brings tears to their eyes, while they can calmly accept as inevitable doom the desolation and hopeless anguish of whole provinces of unornamental people. Their sympathies are genuine and acute, but limited. Burke, doubtless, was sorry that France was unhappy; but the downfall and death of one picturesque woman tore his heart, and unsettled his mind.

"What is the queen disposed to do in the present situation of things?" Jefferson supposes some one to ask in this same summer of 1789. He answers the question thus: "Whatever rage, pride, and fear can dictate in a breast which never knew the presence of one moral restraint." Again he writes, "The queen cries, and sins on." That is, as Madame Campan explains, she had a woman's passion for deep play; and there was no one in France who could stay her hand, no one who could keep her from squandering thousands at a sitting. Ministers lamented, that, at such a crisis, France for the first time in ages should be cursed with a king who had the mania to live without a mistress, — a thing extremely inconvenient in a despotic court, where it makes the queen king. A virtuous man has no chance

whatever with such a wife as that. Let him be neglectful, contemptuous, dissolute; let him put upon her the ignominy of an avowed mistress; let him be a Louis XV. instead of a Louis XVI., — and she is as submissive as a lamb. “This angel, as gaudily painted in the rhapsodies of Burke,” wrote Jefferson forty years after, “with some smartness of fancy, but no sound sense, was proud, disdainful of restraint, indignant at all obstacles to her will, eager in the pursuit of pleasure, and firm enough to hold to her desires, or perish in their wreck. Her inordinate gambling and dissipations, with those of the Count d’Artois and others of her *clique*, had been a sensible item in the exhaustion of the treasury, which called into action the reforming hand of the nation; and her opposition to it, her inflexible perverseness and dauntless spirit, led herself to the guillotine, drew the king on with her, and plunged the world into crimes and calamities which will forever stain the pages of modern history. I have ever believed, that, had there been no queen, there would have been no revolution. No force would have been provoked or exercised.” He adds, that he would not have voted for the execution of the sovereign. He would have shut the queen up in a convent, and deprived the king only of irresponsible and arbitrary power.

Morris, on the contrary, throws the blame of the subsequent horrors — including both Robespierre and Bonaparte — upon the destruction of the nobility; and, in this opinion, he lived and died. He wrote thus in his diary, after getting home one evening from Jefferson’s house: “Mr. Jefferson and I differ in our systems of politics. He, with all the leaders of liberty here, is desirous of annihilating distinctions of order. How far such views may be right respecting mankind in general is, I think, extremely problematical. But, with respect to this nation, I am sure it is wrong, and cannot eventuate well.” On the Fourth of July, Mr. Jefferson entertained a large party of Americans at dinner, among whom and of whom were M. and Madame de Lafayette. Morris, after dinner, urged Lafayette to preserve, if possible, some constitutional power to the body of the nobles, “as the only means of preserving any liberty to the people.” Happy the Morris who records in his diary such a remark as this, on the eve of such a period as France was entering in the summer of 1789.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### RETURNING TO THE UNITED STATES.

PLACED in the midst of all this stir and effervescence, while as yet every thing wore a hopeful aspect, — the Bastille in ruins, the people easily triumphant everywhere, and the aristocrats acquiescent, submissive, or in flight, — we cannot wonder that Jefferson found his situation, as he said, too interesting to abandon. He had no thought of abandoning it. Nevertheless, an event had occurred in his household which made it necessary for him to visit Virginia for a short time; and while the Bastille was tumbling, he was impatiently waiting for the arrival of a six-months' leave of absence for which he had applied. And there was a member of his family who was waiting for it, perhaps, more impatiently than himself.

When he left Virginia, in 1784, he had three children, — Martha, twelve years of age; Mary, six; and Lucy, two. The oldest he took with him to Paris, where he placed her at a convent school; and the two others he left in Virginia under the care of their aunt, Mrs. Eppes. A few weeks after his arrival in Paris, the intelligence reached him that his youngest daughter, Lucy, a strangely interesting child, had died of whooping-cough, after a week of acute suffering. After this cutting stroke he began to long for the coming of her sister, whom he wished to have educated in Paris. But she was one of the most clingingly affectionate of all children; resembling those vines which we sometimes find in the woods, which cast adhesive tendrils round every object they touch, and can scarcely be disengaged without breaking. She could not hear of leaving her Virginia home without such distress as made her aunt shudder at the thought of sending her away. Her father tried to accustom her mind to the idea of leaving; telling her that he and her sister Martha could not live without her, and that he would

soon bring her back to her uncle, aunt, and cousins, whom she was so sorry to leave. "You shall be taught here," he wrote, "to play on the harpsichord, to draw, to dance, to read and talk French, and such other things as will make you more worthy of the love of your friends." To this he added a temptation more alluring: "You shall have as many dolls and playthings as you want for yourself, or to send to your cousins." He concludes with all the good advice that tender and thoughtful fathers give, with some items less usual: "Never beg for any thing," and, "remember, too, as a constant charge, not to go out without your bonnet, because it will make you very ugly, and then we shall not love you so much."

The little girl could not be tempted. She scrawled a brief reply, in which she said that she longed to see her father and her sister, but, "I am sorry you have sent for me. I don't want to go to France: I had rather stay with Aunt Eppes." In two postscripts she strove to impress the same lesson upon her father's mind: "I want to see you and Sister Patsy; but you must come to Uncle Eppes's house." The father, however, insisted, because, as he said, his reason told him that the dangers were not great, and the advantages to the child would be considerable. But she must not sail till just the right vessel offered, — a good ship, not too new and not too old, — nor until the right person was found to take charge of her. "A careful negro woman, as Isabel for instance, if she has had the small-pox, would suffice under the patronage of a gentleman." When he had mentioned every precaution that the most anxious fondness could suggest, he was still tormented with visions of new dangers. His long and fruitless negotiations with the Algerines called up the most horrible of all his apprehensions. Suppose she were taken into captivity by those pirates, who had already driven the American flag from the Mediterranean, and menaced American commerce in every part of the ocean! The thought preyed upon his mind to such a degree, that he wrote one letter to Mr. Eppes for no other purpose than to beg him once more not to confide the child to an American ship, but "to a French or English vessel having a Mediterranean pass." The possible peril of his daughter was a stimulant to his diplomatic exertions; and he told Mr. Eppes, that, if a peace were concluded with the Algerines, *he* should be among the first to hear it. "I pray you," he added, "to believe it from nobody else."



These precautions were not needless; for while the child was upon the ocean, in the spring of 1787, a Virginia ship going to Spain was attacked by a corsair. After an action of an hour and a quarter, the Virginians boarded and took her, bound the pirates with the shackles themselves would have worn if the battle had gone the other way, and so carried them to Virginia. Well might the father say, when he knew that she had sailed, "I shall try not to think of Polly till I hear that she has landed."

He did think of her, however, constantly; and he endeavored to prepare his elder daughter for the duties which the coming of so young a sister would devolve upon her. "She will become," he wrote to her, "a precious charge upon your hands. The difference of your age, and your common loss of a mother, will put that office upon you. Teach her, above all things, to be good, because without that we can neither be valued by others, nor set any value on ourselves." In his advice to his children and nephews, this truth is often repeated: "If ever you find yourself in any difficulty, and doubt how to extricate yourself, *do what is right*, and you will find it the easiest way of getting out of the difficulty." And, again, to his nephew, Peter Carr: "Give up money, give up fame, give up science, give the earth itself, and all it contains, rather than do an immoral act. And never suppose, that, in any possible situation or any circumstances, it is best for you to do a dishonorable thing."

She was really coming at length, though to the last moment she clung with all her little heart to her home. No promises, no stratagems, availed to reconcile her to going away. The ship lay at anchor in the river. Her cousins all went on board with her, and remained a day or two, playing about the deck and cabins, and making the ship seem like another home. Then using the device by which Pocahontas had been taken prisoner in the same waters a hundred and seventy years before, they all left the ship one day while she was asleep; and she awoke to find the sails spread, the familiar shore vanished, her cousins gone, and only her negro maid left of the circle of her home. Her affections then gathered about the captain of the vessel, to whom she became so attached, that parting with him, too, was agony. Mrs. Adams received her in London, where she remained two weeks, and won the heart of that estimable lady. "A finer child of her age I never saw," wrote Mrs. Adams. "So mature an understanding, so womanly a behavior, and so

much sensibility united, are rarely to be met with. I grew so fond of her, and she was so much attached to me, that, when Mr. Jefferson sent for her, they were obliged to force the little creature away."

It was a strange meeting in Paris between father and child, and between sister and sister. Martha, then a tall and elegant girl of fifteen, had a week's holiday from the convent to meet her sister. The little girl did not know either of them, nor would they have known her. But they were both enchanted with her. Besides being a girl of singular and bewitching beauty both of form and face, she was one of the most artless, unselfish, and loving creatures that ever blessed and charmed a home. Her father was abundantly satisfied with "her reading, her writing, and her manners in general;" and he poured forth eloquent gratitude to Mrs. Eppes for the patient goodness which had borne such fruit in the character and mind of his child. During the week's holiday, Martha took her sister occasionally to the convent, showed her its pleasant gardens and inviting apartments, familiarized her with the place, which, as they all thought, was to be her abode for some years. At the end of the week the new-comer went to the convent to reside, where as "Mademoiselle Polie" she soon became a universal favorite.

Both sisters learned to speak French almost immediately, and soon spoke it as easily as they did English; while the three adult members of the family, Humphries, Short, and Jefferson, when they had been two years in Paris, got on in speaking French not much better than when they landed. So, at least, Jefferson says in one of his letters. It *does* require about two years to begin to be at home in a foreign language; but, when you have reached a certain point, familiarity seems to come all at once.

The parent who keeps a daughter at a good specimen of a convent school for more than two years may count upon her having a fit of desire to become a nun; unless, indeed, the girl has much more or much less understanding than the average. These daughters of Mr. Jefferson were conscientious, affectionate, and sympathetic, lovers of tranquillity, of strong local attachments; but they were not exceptionally endowed with intellect. One day in the spring of 1789, he received a letter from Martha, in which she informed him of her wish to pass her days in the convent in the service of religion. At any time this would have been a startling

announcement to such a father; but particular circumstances greatly increased its effect upon him.

Among the young Americans who had been studying in European universities during Jefferson's residence in Paris, was a cousin of his own, Thomas Mann Randolph, known to the public in later years as member of Congress and governor of Virginia. In 1788 he left the University of Edinburgh, and, before returning to Virginia, made the usual tour of Europe, lingering several weeks at the legation in Paris, where he renewed his acquaintance with Martha Jefferson. The little playmate of his boyhood had grown to be a beautiful girl of sixteen; and she, on her part, saw the black-haired boy of her early recollections transformed into a tall, alert young man, fluent in conversation, and of distinguished bearing. From slight indications in Jefferson's letters of this year, I infer that the youth proposed to the father for the hand of the daughter; and that Jefferson, while approving the match and consenting to it, had not disturbed the school-girl's mind by making the offer known to her. Young Randolph sailed for Virginia in the fall of 1788; and the plenipotentiary, a few weeks after, applied for leave of absence, for the purpose of taking his daughters home. But at home the old government was going out, and a new government was coming in; and this was the reason why the leave asked for in November, 1788, did not reach Paris till late in the summer of 1789. During this interval it was that Mr. Jefferson received the letter from his daughter which notified him of her desire to espouse the Church.

He managed this difficult case with prompt and successful tact. He allowed a day or two to pass without noticing the letter. He drove to the convent on the third morning, and, after explaining and arranging the matter with the abbess, asked for his daughters. He received them with somewhat more warmth and tenderness than usual. Without uttering a word of explanation, he simply told them that he had come to take them away from school. As soon as they were ready, they entered the carriage, and were driven home, where they continued their education under masters; and neither then nor ever did a word pass between father and daughter on the subject of her letter. The dream of romantic and picturesque self-annihilation was soon dissipated in the healthy air and honest light of her father's house. She accepted her destiny with the joyous blindness of youth; and instead of the self-abnegation of the con-

tent, so easy and so flattering, she led a life of self-denial which was not romantic nor picturesque, but homely and most real.

Late in August, 1789, the tardy leave of absence arrived, and the family hastened to conclude their preparations for the voyage. There was not much to do. Every thing at the legation was to be left unchanged, in the care of Mr. Short, who was to be the official *chargé* till Mr. Jefferson returned. To the last hour of his stay, this most zealous, faithful, and vigilant of ministers continued to render timely and fortunate services to his country's commerce with France, which had grown under his fostering touch from next to nothing to something considerable. It had been happy for him, perhaps, if he had not gone to America then. In Paris he was in harmony with the prevailing tone. In Paris his fitness for his place was curiously complete. In Paris he was sole of his kind,—admired, believed in, trusted, liked, beloved. In Paris, with an ocean between him and New York, he might have said *No* to the invitation the acceptance of which changed the current of his life. But it was in his destiny to go, and go he must.

His five years' life in Paris had done much for his general culture, and more for his particular training as a public man. He had become a swift, cool, adroit, thoroughly trained, and perfectly accomplished minister; and this without ceasing to be a man and a citizen, without hardening and narrowing into the professional diplomatist, without losing his interest or his faith in mankind. We have seen how deeply he was moved, on his arrival in Europe, by the condition of the people; nineteen-twentieths of the whole population, as he rashly computed, being more wretched and more hopeless than the most miserable being who could be found in all the length and breadth of America. These first impressions were never effaced. When he had spent years in Europe, his disapproval of its political system—hereditary rank and irresponsible power—remained passionate and unspeakable. Whenever, in his letters or other writings of the time, he touches *that* theme, his style rises, intensifies, warms; his words become short and simple, his similes homely and familiar; every phrase betrays heartfelt conviction.

In his numerous contributions of material for the *Encyclopédie* and similar works, he had evidently tried to get into them as much of the genuine republican essence as the censor could be expected

to admit. It had been his delight to explain the state of things in America, where, as he said, no distinction between man and man had ever been known, except that conferred by office; where "the poorest laborer stood on equal ground with the wealthiest millionaire, and generally on a favored one whenever their rights seemed to jar;" where "a shoemaker or other artisan, removed by the voice of his country into a chair of office, instantly commanded all the respect and obedience which the laws ascribe to his office;" where, "of distinction by birth or badge, the people had no more idea than they had of the mode of existence in the moon or planets;" having merely heard there were such, and knowing they must be wrong. Hence, he said, that due horror of the evils flowing from that barbaric system could only be excited in Europe, where "the dignity of man is lost in arbitrary distinctions, where the human species is classed into several stages of degradation, where the many are crushed under the weight of the few, and where the order established can present no other picture than that of God Almighty and his angels trampling under foot the host of the damned."

Such utterances as these — and they abound in his Paris letters — were penned before Buncombe County in North Carolina had been "laid off." They grew from the native elevation of his mind. They attest his high-breeding, as well as his humanity and good sense. The gentleman speaks in them, as well as the citizen; for to be an American citizen, and not feel *so*, is to be of the Vulgar.

But, in those days, no American could boast of his country's freedom, without laying himself open to a taunt. Did Jefferson forget that the laborers of his own State were slaves, when he vaunted the equality of its people? Not always. He confessed the shame of it; he foretold the ruin enclosed within it. "What an incomprehensible machine is man!" he exclaims, "who can endure toil, famine, stripes, imprisonment, and death itself, in vindication of his own liberty, and, the next moment, be deaf to all those motives whose power supported him through his trial, and inflict on his fellow-men a bondage one hour of which is fraught with more misery than ages of that which he rose in rebellion to oppose!" But, then, he threw the burden of delivering the slaves of Virginia upon that convenient resource of self-indulgent mortals, "Providence." An "overruling Providence," he thought, would at

length effect what the masters of Virginia ought at once to do. When the measure of the slaves' tears should be full, then "a God of justice will awaken to their distress, and by diffusing light and liberality among their oppressors, or, at length, by his exterminating thunder, manifest his attention to the things of this world, and that they are not left to the guidance of a blind fatality."

To the moment of his departure from Europe, we find him still a warm lover of France, and devoted to the alliance between the two countries. The last letter which he wrote to Madison in Paris contains a passage on the alliance, which, coming from the placid Jefferson, we may almost call fiery:—

"When, of two nations, the one has engaged herself in a ruinous war for us, has spent her blood and money to save us, has opened her bosom to us in peace, and received us almost on the footing of her own citizens; while the other has moved heaven, earth, and hell to exterminate us in war, has insulted us in all her councils in peace, shut her doors to us in every port where her interests would admit it, libelled us in foreign nations, endeavored to poison them against the reception of our most precious commodities,—to place these two nations on a footing is to give a great deal *more* to one than to the other, if the maxim be true, that to make unequal quantities equal, you must add more to one than to the other. To say, in excuse, that gratitude is never to enter into the motives of national conduct, is to revive a principle which has been buried for centuries with the kindred principles of the lawfulness of assassination, poison, and perjury. . . . I know but one code of morality for men, whether acting singly or collectively."

Such was his feeling with regard to France and England in 1789 before there were "Gallicans" or "Anglicans," still less "Gallomaniacs" or "Anglomaniacs," among his countrymen.

And, since I am endeavoring to show what manner of mind Thomas Jefferson brought back with him to his native land in 1789, I must allude to another matter. He carried his view of the rights of the individual mind to an extreme, which, in that age, had few supporters in his own country. His moral system was strict; his "doxy" was startlingly lax. The advice he gave his nephews on these points, when they were college students, might be summed up



in words like these : Perfect freedom of thinking, but no other freedom! To do right and feel humanely, we are *bound* : it is an honorable bondage, and he is noblest who is most submissive to it; but, in matters of opinion, it is infamy not to be free. These sentences, among others, he addressed to Peter Carr in college in 1787 : —

“Religion. In the first place, divest yourself of all bias in favor of novelty and singularity of opinion. Indulge them on any other subject rather than that of religion. On the other hand, shake off all the fears and servile prejudices under which weak minds are servilely crouched. Fix Reason firmly in her seat, and call to her tribunal every fact, every opinion. Question with boldness even the existence of a God; because, if there be one, he must more approve of the homage of reason than of blindfolded fear. You will naturally examine, first, the religion of your own country. Read the Bible, then, as you would Livy or Tacitus. For example, in the Book of Joshua we are told the sun stood still for several hours. Were we to read that fact in Livy or Tacitus, we should class it with their showers of blood, speaking of statues, beasts, etc. But it is said that the writer of that book was inspired. Examine, therefore, candidly, what evidence there is of his having been inspired. The pretension is entitled to your inquiry, because millions believe it. On the other hand, you are astronomer enough to know how contrary it is to the law of nature. You will next read the New Testament. It is the history of a personage called Jesus. Keep in your eye the opposite pretensions : 1, Of those who say he was begotten by God, born of a virgin, suspended and reversed the laws of nature at will, and ascended bodily into heaven; and, 2, Of those who say he was a man of illegitimate birth, of a benevolent heart, enthusiastic mind, who set out with pretensions to divinity, ended in believing them, and was punished capitally for sedition, by being gibbeted, according to the Roman law, which punished the first commission of that offence by whipping, and the second by exile, or death *in furca*. See this law in Digest, lib. 48, tit. 19, ¶ 28, 3, and Lipsius, lib. 2, de cruce, cap. 2. Do not be frightened from this inquiry by any fear of its consequences. If it ends in a belief that there is no God, you will find incitements to virtue in the comfort and pleasantness you will feel in its exercise, and the love of others which it will procure you. If you find reason to believe there is a

God, a consciousness that you are acting under his eye, and that he approves you, will be a vast additional incitement: if that Jesus was also a God, you will be comforted by a belief of his aid and love. Your own reason is the only oracle given you by Heaven; and you are answerable, not for the rightness, but uprightness, of the decision."

Such sentiments as these, which he cherished as long as he lived, were familiar enough then to the educated class of the United States, as of Christendom generally; but they were seldom stated with such uncompromising bluntness as in the passage from which these sentences are selected. He disposed of subtler questions in the same letter with equal abruptness: "Conscience is as much a part of a man as his leg or arm. It is given to all human beings in a stronger or weaker degree, as force of members is given them in a greater or less degree. It may be strengthened by exercise, as may any particular limb of the body."

His long residence in a metropolis had not freed his mind from some provincial prejudices. He shared the common opinion of that age, that virtue was a product of the country, rather than the town, and that farmers were better citizens than mechanics or merchants. He spoke occasionally of mechanics as a class disposed to turbulence, as if he had derived his knowledge of them from Shakespeare's Julius Cæsar, rather than from the workshops of his own time. He hoped the period was remote when many of his countrymen would be employed in manufactures; which he evidently regarded, with Franklin, as a kind of necessary evil, or last resource of an over-populated country. But his special aversion was merchants. "Merchants," he wrote, "are the least virtuous citizens, and possess the least *amor patriæ*." The reason why Rhode Island was so difficult, and Connecticut so easy, to be brought to consent to reasonable measures, he thought, was this: In Connecticut there was scarcely a man who was not a farmer, and in Rhode Island almost every one was a merchant. All this, which savors of the country gentleman, seems to us of the present day crude and erroneous. Rhode Island might well pause, in 1787, before surrendering control of the business to which she owed her whole subsistence. Observe a one-eyed man, when splinters are flying, with what anxious vigilance he guards the organ which alone saves him from a lifetime's darkness. Rhode Island's commerce was like that last charge

in David Crocket's rifle, when he and the bear were eying one another across the brook.

Such a man was Thomas Jefferson on his departure from France. He had his limits, of course; he had his foibles; he had his faults. But the sum of his worth as a human being was very great; and he had more in him of that which makes the glory and hope of America than any other living creature known to us. American principles he more than believed in: he loved them, and he deemed their prevalence essential to the welfare of man.

What a plague it was to get across the sea eighty years ago! With trunks packed (and their trunks, as Jefferson intimates, were of American number and magnitude), the little family sat at home waiting a whole month for a ship; and, after all, they could do no better than charter one in London to take them in at the Isle of Wight. It was a month of alarm in Paris. The harvest had not relieved the scarcity of food; long *queues* of hungry people streamed still from every baker's shop; and the government itself, perishing of inanition, was obliged to spare a million a week to keep down the price of bread in Paris. Even in that dire extremity, the Protective System shut the ports of France against the food for want of which Frenchmen were dying; and Jefferson spent his last days, and even his last hours, in Paris, in trying to persuade the Ministry to *permit* the importation of salted provisions from the United States! Salt beef, objected the Count de Montmorin, will give people the scurvy. No, replied Jefferson: we eat it in America, and don't have the scurvy. The salt-tax will fall off, said the minister. Jefferson could not deny that it might a little; but, on the other hand, it would relieve the government from the necessity of keeping the price of bread below its value. But, resumed the Count, the people of France will not buy salt meat. Then, replied Jefferson, the merchants won't import it, and no harm will be done. And you cannot make a good soup of it, urged the Count. True, said Jefferson, but it gives a delightful flavor to vegetables. Besides, it will cost only half the price of fresh meat. He convinced the Count de Montmorin, who requested him to propose the measure to M. Necker. But, as he was summoned to join the ship, he could only argue it briefly in a letter to M. Necker, which he left for Mr. Short to deliver and enforce. August 26th, the day on which this letter was written, he and his daughters left Paris for Havre.

He might as well have waited a while longer. They were detained at Havre ten days, during which he was so fortunate as to effect another practicable breach in the Protective System. American ships bringing cargoes to Havre, found nothing to take from Havre, sometimes except salt; but salt could only be bought "at a mercantile price," at places on the Loire and Garonne, away round on the Biscay side of France, involving six or eight hundred miles of difficult and perilous coasting. He now obtained from the farmers-general a concession, by which American ships could load with salt at Honfleur, opposite Havre, paying only mercantile rates. It made a nice finish to his diplomatic career, — this valuable service to the merchants and mariners of his country.

Ten days further detention at Cowes gave the young ladies an opportunity to ride about the Isle of Wight, to peep into the deep well at Carisbrooke Castle, and stare at the window in the ruins out of which Charles I. looked when he was a prisoner there, perhaps with comments on the character of the decapitated from their father. Mr. Pitt, it appears, had the politeness to send an order to Cowes, exempting the baggage of the voyagers from search, an attention which Miss Jefferson remembered with gratitude, she being the member of the party who was most obliged.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### HIS WELCOME HOME.

TWENTY-THREE days of swift sailing and perfect autumn weather brought the ship into a dense fog off the coast of Virginia. For three days the thick November mist clung to the shore, preventing the captain from getting a glimpse of either cape. At length, trusting only to his calculations, in which, doubtless, a mathematical plenipotentiary had taken part, he stood in boldly, and escaped into Chesapeake Bay, with only a graze and a scare, just in time to avoid a storm that kept some companion vessels a month longer at sea. This, however, was but the beginning of mishaps. In beating up to Norfolk against the rising gale, they were run into by a vessel rushing seaward before the wind, and lost part of their rigging. At Norfolk, two hours after the passengers had landed, and before any of their effects had been taken ashore, the ship caught fire. The flames gained such headway, that the captain was on the point of scuttling the vessel. But at last, through the exertions of every sailor in port, the fire was got under, without damage to the papers of the minister or the quaint effects of his daughters. Nothing saved them but the thickness of the trunks; for the heat was so great in the state-rooms, that the powder in a musket standing in one of them was silently consumed.

Norfolk, which had been burned to the last house during the war, was little more than a village of shanties when Jefferson and his daughters landed there, November 18, 1789. They would have been puzzled to find shelter, as the only inn in the town was full, but for the generosity of its inmates, who insisted on giving up their rooms to them. On the very day of his landing, Jefferson read in a newspaper that President Washington had appointed him secretary of state. "I made light of it," he wrote soon after to a lady in

Paris, "supposing I had only to say *No*, and there would be an end of it."

In all Virginia there was scarcely such a thing, at that time, as a public conveyance. Friends, however, lent the party horses; and they journeyed homeward in the delightfully slow, easy, social manner of the time, stopping at every friend's house on and near their road. They were ten days or more in getting as far as Richmond. The legislature was in session, many of Jefferson's old colleagues being present. They could not let him pass through the capital of his native State without some mark of their regard. On the 7th of December, 1789, the House of Delegates appointed a committee of thirteen members, — sacred number! — with Patrick Henry for chairman, to congratulate him on his return, and to assure him of their esteem for "his character and public services." The committee waited upon him, and communicated the resolution of the House. His reply was in the taste of the period: —

"I receive with humble gratitude, gentlemen, the congratulations of the Honorable the House of Delegates on my return; and I beg leave, through you, to present them my thanks and dutiful respects. Could any circumstance heighten my affection to my native country, it would be the indulgence with which they view my feeble efforts to serve it, and the esteem with which they are pleased to honor me. I shall hope to merit a continuance of their goodness, by obeying the impulse of a zeal of which public good is the first object, and public esteem the highest reward. Permit me, gentlemen, for a moment, to separate from my general thanks the special ones I owe to you, the organs of so flattering a communication."

Resuming their journey, they arrived, early in December, at the mansion of Uncle Eppes in Chesterfield County, the happy home of Mary Jefferson's childhood. Here they halted for many days. It was at this place that Jefferson received the official announcement of his appointment as secretary of state. A gentleman from New York overtook him at Eppington, bearing his commission signed by the president: also a letter from the president, cordially inviting him to accept the place, yet giving him his choice to return to Paris if he preferred to do so. It was evident that General



Washington expected him to accept. Mr. Jefferson's reply was such as became the citizen of a republic. He told the president that he preferred to remain in the office he then held, the duties of which he knew and felt equal to, rather than undertake a place, the duties of which were more difficult and much more extensive. "But," he added, "it is not for an individual to choose his post. You are to marshal us as may be best for the public good." Therefore, if the president, after learning his decided preference to return to France, still thought it best to transfer him to New York, "my inclination must be no obstacle."

They were six weeks in reaching home. Two days before Christmas, — a joyful time of year everywhere, but nowhere, perhaps, quite so hilarious as in the Virginia of that generation, — all was expectation at Monticello. The house had been made ready. The negroes, to whom a holiday had been given, all came in from the various farms of the estate, dressed in their cleanest attire, and the women wearing their brightest turbans, and gathered, early in the day, about the house. Their first thought was to meet the returning family at the foot of the mountain; and thither they moved in a body, — men, women, and children, — long before there was any reason to expect them. As the tedious hours passed, the more eager of the crowd walked on; and these being followed by the rest, there was a straggling line of them a mile or two in length. Late in the afternoon, the most advanced descried a carriage at Shadwell, drawn by four horses, with postilions, in the fashion of the time. The exulting shout was raised. All ran forward; and soon the whole crowd huddled round the vehicle, pulling, pushing, crying, cheering, until it reached the steep ascent of the mountain, where the slackened pace gave them the opportunity they desired. In spite of the master's entreaties and commands, they took off the horses, and drew the carriage at a run up the mountain, and round the lawn to the door of the house.

It was no easy matter to alight. Mr. Jefferson swam in a tumultuous sea of black arms and faces, from the carriage to the steps of the portico. Some kissed his hands, others his feet; some cried, others laughed; all tried at least to touch him. Not a word could be heard above the din. But when the young ladies appeared; when Martha, whom they had last seen a child of eleven, stepped forth a woman grown, in all the glorious lustre of youth, beauty, and joy,

and when Mary followed, a sylph in form, face, and step, they all fell apart, and made a lane for them to pass, holding up their children to see them, and uttering many a cry of rapturous approval. The father and daughters entered the house at length; the carriage rolled away; the negroes went off chattering to their quarters; and there was quiet again at Monticello. "Such a scene," wrote Martha Jefferson long after, "I never witnessed in my life." As late as 1851, Mr. Randall heard a vivid description of it at Monticello, from an aged negro who was one of the boys of the joyful crowd.

The merry Christmas passed. One of the first visitors from beyond the immediate neighborhood was James Madison, who was about starting for New York to attend Congress. General Washington, it seems, had requested him to call at Monticello, and ascertain more exactly the state of Mr. Jefferson's mind with regard to the appointment. "I was sorry," Madison wrote to the president, January 4, 1790, "to find him so little biassed in favor of the domestic service allotted him, but was glad that his difficulties seemed to result chiefly from what I take to be an erroneous view of the kind and quantity of business." To the foreign department alone he felt equal, but he dreaded the new and unknown duties which had been annexed to that. Upon receiving this information, the president wrote again to Jefferson. The new business, he thought, would not be arduous; and, if it should prove so, doubtless Congress would apply a remedy. The office, in the president's opinion, was very important, on many accounts; and he knew of no one who could better execute it. He added a remark sure to have great weight with Jefferson, as, indeed, it ought: "In order that you may be better prepared to make your ultimate decision on good grounds, I think it necessary to add one fact, which is this, that your late appointment has given very extensive and very great satisfaction to the public." Still the president would not urge acceptance. He merely said, with regard to his own feelings, "My original opinion and wish may be collected from my nomination." Jefferson yielded without further parley. "I no longer hesitate," he wrote February 11, "to undertake the office to which you are pleased to call me." So Mr. Secretary had to break up the establishment at Paris, and send home the accumulated treasures of five years' haunting of Paris bookstalls and curiosity-shops.

The day after accepting office, a committee of his old constituents

of Albemarle arrived at Monticello, and presented an address of congratulation and commendation. It was unusually cordial and interesting. They sketched his whole public career with approval; and felicitated themselves upon the fact, that it was they who had introduced him to public life. Above all his other services, they extolled "the strong attachment he had always shown to the rights of mankind, and to those institutions that were best calculated to preserve them." Much as they should like to enjoy his services again, they assured him that they were too much attached to the common interests of their country, and too sensible of his merit, not to unite with the general voice that called him "to continue in her councils." In his reply, he again seized the opportunity to recall attention to first principles. The favor of his neighbors, he said, was, indeed, "the door through which he had been ushered on the stage of public life;" and, after becoming reference to that circumstance, he added these words, which contain the chief article of his political creed:—

"We have been fellow-laborers and fellow-sufferers; and Heaven has rewarded us with a happy issue from our struggles. It rests now with ourselves alone to enjoy in peace and concord the blessings of self-government, so long denied to mankind; to show by example the sufficiency of human reason for the care of human affairs; and that the will of the majority—the natural law of every society—is the only sure guardian of the rights of man. Perhaps even this may sometimes err; but its errors are honest, solitary, and short-lived. Let us then, my dear friends, forever bow down to the general reason of the society. We are safe with them, even in its deviations, for it soon returns again to the right way."

The lovers, meanwhile, were improving their time. February 25, 1790, the wedding occurred at Monticello. The clergyman who performed the ceremony was Mr. Maury, son of Jefferson's schoolmaster. Young Randolph was heir to large estates; and the pair, after living a while at Monticello, settled on land in the neighborhood. For a single week Jefferson witnessed and shared the happiness of his children; and then, in obedience to General Washington's urgent desire, he set out for New York. The president had already kept the office six months for him; business was accumu-

lating; he might well be a little impatient to see his secretary of state.

What a journey Jefferson had of it in the wet and stormy March of 1790! Twenty-one days of hard travel, including brief rests at Richmond, Alexandria, Baltimore, and Philadelphia! Delightful as old-fashioned travel may have been to a home-returning plenipotentiary, leisure being abundant, and the season propitious, it was misery to a secretary of state overdue, in chill and oozy March, at a point four hundred miles distant. He sent his carriage round to Alexandria in advance, intending to go in it the rest of the way. At that ancient and flourishing port, where he paused one day, he received an address from the mayor and citizens; from which we learn that his labors in behalf of commerce had become known to parties interested. The Alexandrians, besides approving his exertions in "the sacred cause of freedom," had a word of thanks for "the indulgences which his enlightened representations to the court of France had secured to their trade;" adding these words: "You have freed commerce from its shackles, and destroyed the first essay made in this country towards establishing a monopoly." The last remark was aimed, probably, at British merchants and their resident agents, who still had a tight grip upon Virginia estates, and did not want any Virginia ships to go to Havre. Jefferson waived this compliment with his usual excess of modesty, but did not refrain from a sentence or two upon general politics:—

"Convinced that the republican is the only form of government which is not eternally at open or secret war with the rights of mankind, my prayers and efforts shall be cordially contributed to the support of that we have so happily established. . . . It is, indeed, an animating thought, that, while we are securing the rights of ourselves and our posterity, we are pointing out the way to struggling nations, who wish, like us, to emerge from their tyrannies also. Heaven help their struggles, and lead them, as it has done us, triumphantly through them!"

All this was cordial to the people of that day, who had scarcely heard, as yet, that there were Americans who felt otherwise. No one could say, in March 1790, that it was the partisan who spoke such words.

During the night of his stay at Alexandria, a late winter storm covered the ground with snow to the depth of eighteen inches. He therefore left his carriage to be sent round by sea, and took a place in the stage, his horses being left, and ridden after him by his servants. So bad were the roads, that the lumbering vehicle, as he wrote back to his son-in-law, "could never go more than three miles an hour, sometimes not more than two, and in the night but one." During the few hours of his stay at Philadelphia, he had his last interview with Dr. Franklin, who was then on the bed from which he was to be borne, a month after, to his coffin. The old man, whose mental faculties seemed to remain undiminished to the last, listened with flushed face to Jefferson's narrative of all that had occurred lately in France. He asked eagerly what part his friends there had taken, what had been their course amid the torrent of events, and what their fate. Jefferson had volumes to impart to him, and Franklin was almost exhausted by the intensity of his interest in what he heard.

Sunday, March 21, 1790, "after as laborious a journey as I ever went through," Jefferson reached New York. A paragraph of a line and a half in the principal newspaper of the town announced his arrival; but, as he attacked immediately the accumulated business of his office, his name soon begins to appear at the end of public documents, below that of "G. Washington." The amount of work in prospect was a little alarming. Finding no suitable house vacant in "the Broadway," he hired a small one, No. 57 Maiden Lane, while he could look about him; for it was his habit and intention to keep house in comfortable style. The salary of his office then was three thousand five hundred dollars a year, five hundred more than the salaries of his colleagues in the cabinet. Hamilton lived in Pine Street, where so many lawyers still labor, but not live; and Colonel Aaron Burr was plodding at the law in Nassau Street, near Wall, where he had a large garden and grapery. Jefferson appears to have startled mankind by continuing at first to wear his French clothes, even red breeches and red waistcoat, the fashion in Paris.

## CHAPTER XL.

ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

WITH whatever reluctance and dread Jefferson may have accepted the office of secretary of state, his forebodings were realized. After five years' residence in Paris at the most interesting period of its history; after a kind of triumphal progress through Virginia, where delegations of grateful and admiring citizens had saluted him with addresses of congratulation; after some peerless weeks at Monticello, crowded with old friends and relatives gathered to attend his daughter's wedding, — he found himself, in the early spring of 1790, just when his gardens at home were fullest of allurements, closeted with four clerks (the whole force of his department), face to face with a Monticello of despatches, documents, applications, many of which were bulky and important papers, requiring close attention and hard work. It was like going to school after a particularly joyous vacation, — inky grammar and damp dictionary, instead of gun and picnic; keen contests with uncomplimentary equals and rivals, instead of the easily won applause of partial friends and affectionate sisters. He had enjoyed much and done much during the past few years: he was now to be tried and tested. The summer of his growth was suspended; the wintry blast was to blow upon him a while, pruning and hardening him. A tree does not look so pretty during this season, but the timber ought to improve.

He had a cordial welcome in New York. General Washington was relieved to find his cabinet complete after the new government had existed nearly a year, and glad to have near him a Virginian whom he knew, from of old, to be in singular accord with the American people. The leading citizens threw open their doors to him. Among members of Congress, whom should he find but that genial comrade of his youth, John Page? Oddly enough, one of



the first parties he attended, in the very first week of his residence, was the wedding of that confidant of his own early loves to a daughter of New York. Madison, too, was in Congress, with other allies and old colleagues. But it is plain, from his letters, that his heart was in Virginia; that he pined for his children, and took unkindly to the yoke of his office. He told his daughters, that, after having had them with him so long to cheer him in the intervals of business, he felt acutely the separation from them; but that his own happiness had become a secondary consideration with him, and he was only happy in their happiness. He was homesick during the whole period of his holding this office, except when he was at home.

Even his health failed at first. He attacked his arrears of business with such vigor and persistence as to bring on a three weeks' headache, which for several days even kept him from his office. And while the gloom of this malady still hung over him, the infant government was menaced with a stroke that appalled the group of persons nearest him, whose dearest hopes for themselves and for their country were bound up with it. The president, who had been drooping for some time, became alarmingly sick. Washington, too, found the desk a bad exchange from the saddle. It was his custom to read with the utmost care, pen in hand, all important despatches and papers, and to make abstracts of the most important. During the year that had elapsed since his inauguration, he had been going through, in the same thorough, attentive manner, the mass of papers which had been accumulating in the offices of government since the peace of 1783. Fidelity to a trust was the ruling instinct, the first necessity, in the nature of this most nearly perfect head of a commonwealth that ever lived. For several days in May, 1790, the inner circle of official persons in New York were anxious about him. He grew worse and worse. At one time the inmates of his house lost all hope, for he seemed to be dying. He rallied, however, and began slowly to improve. "He continues mending to-day," Jefferson wrote to his daughter, "and from total despair we are now in good hopes of him."

In a strange, unexpected way, Jefferson found himself in ill-accord with the tone of society in New York. He had come from Paris more a republican than ever, all glowing with the new hopes for mankind which the Revolution there had kindled. The patriots of France had drawn inspiration from America, and tried all their

measures by American standards. "Our proceedings," Jefferson wrote to Madison from Paris, in August, 1789, "have been viewed as a model for them on every occasion; and though, in the heat of debate, men are generally disposed to contradict every authority urged by their opponents, ours has been treated like that of the Bible, open to explanation, but not to question." He was now in that America whose conquest of freedom and peaceful establishment of a republican government intelligent men in other lands had owned among the noblest achievements of civilization. The faithful believer was now at Mecca. But he did not find the magnates of the temple so enthusiastic for the Prophet and the Koran as more distant worshippers.

While France for sixty years — ever since the publication of Voltaire's "English Letters," in 1730 — had been growing to a sense of the evils of excessive power in the government, America for ten years had had painful experience of the evils of an insufficient central authority.

A favorite toast in the Revolutionary Army, as General Knox records, was this, "A HOOP TO THE BARREL." Some officers preferred a plainer form of words, and gave the same sentiment thus, "Cement to the Union." The army, he says, abhorred the idea of being "thirteen armies." We can all imagine how much feelings of this nature would be increased when the troops co-operated with French soldiers, who served a single power, carried one flag, obeyed one general, received the same pay at regularly recurring periods, in a kind of money that did not waste and spend itself, even when it lay untouched in the pocket, — money to-day, paper to-morrow. We cannot wonder that officers should have longed for an *efficient* power at the centre, when we hear General Washington averring that to the want of it he attributed "more than half" of his own perplexities, and "almost the whole of the difficulties and distress of the army." Civilians came, at length, to share in this feeling, and no man more than Jefferson. When in Paris, in 1786, he was choking down the humiliation of bribing the Algerines to peace, instead of blowing the pirates out of water with honest guns under his country's flag, he desired nothing so much as that Congress should seize the happy occasion to found a navy. "It will be said," he wrote to Monroe, "there is no money in the treasury. There never will be money in the treasury till the Confederacy shows its

teeth. The States must see the rod: perhaps it must be felt by one of them. I am persuaded all of them would rejoice to see every one obliged to furnish its contributions."

Every thing had been pulling this way in America for ten years when Jefferson reached New York. He came from Paris when it was negatively charged with electricity, to New York positively charged. The whole soul of France was intent upon limiting the central power, but America's dearest wish had long been to create one.

There is a fashion in thinking, as well as in watch-chains and dog-carts. In the new, untried republic, which had had no experience of tyranny except to combat and defeat it, various influences had been drawing the minds of the educated class away from republican ideas. It was the mode to extol strong and imposing governments, to regret that the people were so attached to the town-meeting methods of conducting public business, and to anticipate the day when America would be ripe for a government "not essentially different from that which they had recently discarded." Nowhere was this tone so prevalent as in New York, — the chief seat of the royal authority for seven years of the war; the refuge of Tories; the abode, after the peace, of that ardent, positive, captivating spirit, Alexander Hamilton.

How difficult to extract the real Hamilton from the wilderness of contradictory words in which he is lost! Every thing we have about him partakes of the violence of his time. If we question his opponents, Jefferson informs us that Hamilton was "the evil genius of America;" and George Mason declares that he did the country more harm than "Great Britain with all her fleets and armies." If we consult his partisans, we are assured, that, after having created the government, he, and he alone, kept it in prosperous motion for twelve years. Every one has in his memory some fag-end of Daniel Webster's magnificent sentence, in which he represents Hamilton as touching the corpse of the Public Credit, and causing it to spring to its feet. And have we not a lumbering pamphlet, in seven volumes octavo, designed to show that George Washington was Punch, and Alexander Hamilton the man behind the green curtain, pulling the wires and making him talk? We have. It weighs many pounds avoirdupois. But we must rule out extreme and frenzied utterances, and endeavor to estimate this gifted and interesting

man as though he had had no worshippers, no rivals, and no sons.

It is not so very easy to see why he had any public career at all. When we have turned over the ton of printed matter to which he gave rise, and looked at all his busts and portraits, we are still at some loss to understand the victorious dash he made at America. A little fellow of about five feet seven, a stranger in a strange land, without an influential friend on earth, the child of a broken-down merchant in the West Indies, subsisting in New Jersey upon invoices of West India produce, we find him, from the start, having the best of every thing, distinguished at school, at college, in the army, taking an influential part in every striking scene of the war, and every crisis after the peace,—a public man, as it were, by nature. Nor was it a dash only. He held his own; and, rapid as his rise was, it was always the high place that sought him, never he the high place; unless, indeed, when he asked General Washington the favor of letting him head an attack on the enemy's works. Nor was it merely place and distinction that he won. The daughter of one of America's most noted and wealthy families became the proud and happy wife of this stranger when he was a lieutenant-colonel of twenty-three, without a dollar or an acre to fall back upon at the peace.

We do not get at the secret of all this from print or picture; so difficult is it to put upon paper or canvas that which gives a man *ascendency* over others. It is hard to define the Spirit of Command. Kent recognized it in Lear when he met the fiery old king in the wilderness, and told him he had that in his mien and bearing which he would fain call master. I once asked a Tennessean what kind of man General Jackson was. "He was this kind of man," said he: "if Andrew Jackson had joined a party of strangers travelling in the woods, and, half an hour after, they should be attacked by Indians, he would instantly take command, and all the rest would obey him." Nothing that has ever been put upon paper about Jackson so explains him as this chance saying of an unlettered man.

Of this commanding, self-sufficient spirit Hamilton had an ample share. His confidence in himself is among the curiosities of character; it was absolute and entire: and, hence, neither events nor men could teach him; and he died cherishing the delusions of his

youth. If to this remark his life furnishes one exception, it was when as a lad of sixteen he allowed himself to be converted from a supporter of the king to a defender of the colonies. But, it seems, even this conversion was only partial; for, when it came to a question of severance from the king, he wrote a pamphlet against Paine's "Common Sense." He appears to have had nothing that could be called youth. In the earliest of his effusions, whatever we may think of the sentiments, we perceive that the writer had no sense whatever of the deference due from youth to maturity. Nothing is more evident in his *aide-de-camp* letters than that he condescended to serve General Washington. He was but twenty-four when he wrote, after refusing to resume his place in the general's family, that he had remained in it as long as he had, not from regard to General Washington, nor because he thought it an honor or a privilege to assist him, but because the popularity of the general was essential to the safety of America, and he "thought it necessary he should be supported." It was also his opinion that the breach between them ought to be concealed, since it would have "an ill-effect" if it were known. In the records of youthful arrogance, there are few instances so amusing as this.

But, then, those who knew him best appear to have accepted him at his own valuation. Some unworthy opponents have dishonored themselves by sneering at his poverty and at the alleged insignificance of his family in the West Indies; but he brought with him from St. Croix a better title of nobility than any herald could have given him, — the admiring love of his friends there, who hailed his early honors in the United States with enthusiasm. His brother aids in General Washington's busy family loved him most warmly. In his early letters we catch gleams of the good fellow amid the formalities of the general-in-chief's official scribe. "Mind your eye to-night, my boy," he writes to a young friend on picket; and Meade, his colleague, writes to him as a lover to a mistress. "If you have not already writ to me," says Meade, "let me entreat you, when you go about it, to fill a sheet in close hand." At the same time, when governors, generals, members of Congress, and presidents of Convention wrote to him, they addressed him as a man of their own weight and standing, as a personage and an equal. The general-in-chief, too, overvalued the accomplishments he did not himself possess, — the fluent tongue, the ready pen, dexterity at figures.

Hamilton was singularly incapable of Americanization. Besides having arrived here a few years too late, his mind was invincibly averse to what we may call the town-meeting spirit, — the true public spirit, generated by the habit of acting in a body for the good of the whole, putting questions to the vote, and accepting the will of the majority as law. His instincts were soldierly. How he delighted in all military things! How he loved the recollection of his seven years' service in the army! In later years, though under a political necessity to detest Bonaparte, he found it impossible to do so with any heartiness, so bewitched was he with the mere skill with which that marauder of genius devastated the heritage of the people of Europe. He delighted to read of battles. It pleased him to have a tent upon his lawn, because it reminded him of the days when he and Lafayette and Meade and the young French officers were merry together; and he always retained in his gait something that betrayed the early drill. But it is questionable if he could ever have been greatly successful as a general, because, unlike Bonaparte, he thought officers were every thing, and soldiers nothing. When he was a bronzed veteran of twenty-two, he wrote a letter of ludicrous gravity to the president of Congress, urging the enrolment of negro slaves; in which he says that their stupidity and ignorance would be an advantage. It was a maxim, he observed, with some great military judges, — the king of Prussia being one, — that, "with sensible officers, soldiers can hardly be too stupid." Hence "it was thought" that the Russians would be the best soldiers in the world if they were commanded by officers of a more advanced country. The conclusion reached by this great military authority was this: "Let officers be men of sense and sentiment; and the nearer the soldiers approach to machines, perhaps the better."

As the utterance of a very young military dandy, airing his lavender kids in St. James's Park after an early breakfast at one, P.M., this would be merely funny: we should smile, and hope he would show to better advantage when the time came for action. And, indeed, Hamilton was a brave, vigilant, energetic officer, on fire to distinguish himself by being foremost where the danger was greatest. But this contempt for the undistinguished part of mankind (i.e. for mankind) he never outgrew. The ruling maxim of his public life, the source of its weakness, its errors, and its failure, was his, "Men in general are vicious."



This lamentable misreading of human nature, so worthy of a Fouché or a Talleyrand, he repeats in many forms, always assuming it to be a self-evident truth. It was certainly an unfortunate basis for a statesman who was to be the servant of a system founded on a conviction that men in general are well disposed. He could not be an American. Richly endowed as he was, he could not rise to that height. He knew it himself at last; for twenty years later, when he had outlived his success, and lost the control even of his own wing of the Federalists, we hear him saying, with his usual unconscious arrogance, "Every day proves to me, more and more, that this American world was not made for me." It certainly was not, nor was he made for this American world. It never, we may be sure, once crossed his mind, during his whole life, that possibly this American world might be right, and Colonel Hamilton wrong.

Every thing that happens to these self-sufficient persons seems to confirm them in their errors and strengthen their strong propensities. This American world, which Hamilton thought so much beneath him, had been too easy a conquest: he would have respected it more, perhaps, if it had given him a few hard knocks at an age when hard knocks are salutary. But when he began to write his first essays in the newspapers, literary ability was so rare in the world, — rarest of all in these colonies, — that his friends were agape with wonder. Every one flattered him. Then he early exhibited another imposing talent, that of oratory. He was haranguing meetings in New York when he was the merest boy both in years and appearance, and acquitting himself to admiration. He was but nineteen, and young-looking even for that age, when he thundered across Jersey, captain of a company of artillery, in General Washington's retreating army. Soon after, in his character of *aide-de-camp*, he was truly an important person, a power, as any efficient aid must ever be to a busy commander, as any competent secretary must ever be to the greatest minister. If he overestimated his importance, it was but natural and most pardonable. Few young fellows of twenty, who write despatches or editorials for a chief, can believe that the chief may be the true *author* of important despatches or thundering leaders which, perhaps, he never so much as looks over. The chief has created the situation which the writer but expresses. A secretary, while using his own hand often employs his chief's mind.

When the young French officers came over, and head-quarters were gay with young nobles, all enthusiasm for this novel service in a new world, Colonel Hamilton was a brilliant personage indeed, — so young, so handsome, so high in the confidence of the general and the army, and such a master of the French language! He must, I think, have spoken French in his boyhood, to have written it so well at twenty-three as we see he did. Who was now so much in request as our *cher Hamilton*?

But, if he caught his loose military morals from the Gauls, it was from the British that this Briton learned his politics. Before the war was over, he tells us, he “was struck with disgust” at the rise of a party actuated by “an undue complaisance” to France, — a power which, in helping us, had only been pursuing, he thought, *her own* interest. “I resolved at once,” he continues, “to resist this bias in our affairs.” He was British, as was natural. He had a British mind and a British heart. While in the immediate presence of the fact, that the English governmental system had split asunder the British Empire, he cherished the conviction that it was the best system possible. It was the hereditary Dunderhead with whom Great Britain was saddled, who began, continued, and ended, the business of severing America from the empire; and yet the very corruption of parliament, which had enabled an obstinate and unteachable king to carry his measures, Hamilton extolled as essential to its perfection. The grand aim of his public life was to make the government of the United States as little unlike that of Great Britain as the people would bear it. Nor did he reach these convictions by any process of reasoning. He was a Briton; and it was then part of a Briton’s birthright to enjoy a complete assurance of his country’s vast superiority to all others in all things. I honor him for the disinterested spirit in which he pursued his system, and the splendid contempt of all considerations of policy with which he avowed opinions the most unpopular. In spite of his errors and his faults, this alone would give him some title to our regard.

With all his other qualities, he had one which would have carried him to great heights in a more congenial scene. He had a wonderful power of sustained exertion. His mind was energetic and pertinacious. He thought little of sitting over a paper till the dawn dimmed his candles. His favorite ideas and schemes were never

inert within him : he dinned them into every ear ; and his incessant and interminable discourses upon the charms of monarchy rendered him, at last, a bore to his best friends.

He began at an early period of the war to take a laborious part in political discussion. While the army lay at Morristown in 1779, having less to do than usual at head-quarters, and having arrived at the mature age of twenty-three, he wrote to Robert Morris an anonymous letter, that must have filled a dozen sheets of large paper, upon the troubled finances of the country, recommending the establishment of a Bank of the United States. The scheme was wrought out in great detail, with infinite labor and uncommon ability for so young a financier. The scheme was founded upon Law's idea of utilizing the depreciated paper with which Louis XIX's profusion had deluged France. By receiving hundreds of millions of this paper at its market value, in payment for shares in his various enterprises, Law soon raised the price of paper above that of gold, and thus afforded the strange spectacle of people selling their family plate in order to buy a dead king's promises to pay. Hamilton, of course, intended to stop short of Law's fatal excesses. He was as honorable a person, in all matters pecuniary, as ever drew the breath of life ; and, consequently, *his* bank was to have a sound basis of two millions of pounds sterling of borrowed money : to which should be added a subscription of two hundred millions of dollars in the depreciated paper of Congress. At once, he thought, the paper would rise in value, and become an instrument of good. The existence of the bank, he thought, "would make it the *immediate* interest of the moneyed men to co-operate with the government in its support." This was the key to his financial system ; for he never advanced beyond the ideas of this production. It was ever his conviction, that a government could not stand which it was not the interest of capitalists to uphold ; and by capitalists he meant the class who control money, who live in cities, and can speculate in paper. He meant Wall Steeet ; though, as yet, the actual street of that name was only a pleasant lane of modest, Dutch-looking residences.

This portentous epistle was accompanied with notes, in one of which the youthful sage favors an honorable Congress with a few hints. "Congress," he observes, with the modesty so becoming his years, "have too long neglected to organize a good scheme of

administration, and throw public business into proper executive departments. For commerce, I prefer a board; but, for most other things, single men. We want a minister of war, a minister of foreign affairs, a minister of finance, and a minister of marine;" and having these, he thought, "we should blend the advantages of a monarchy and a republic in a happy and a beneficial union."

What Robert Morris thought of this production no one has told us. The author of it was evidently in earnest. He did not write the essay to amuse his leisure, nor merely to display his talents: he meant *bank*. He clearly saw the institution he recommended, believed in its feasibility, and, I am sure, felt himself competent to assist in establishing it, though he intended Mr. Morris to take the leading part. He concluded his long letter by saying that he had reasons which made him unwilling to be known; but a letter addressed to James Montague, Esq., lodged in the post-office at Morristown, would reach him; and even an interview might be had with the author, should it be thought material.

From this time the ingenious, intense, Scotch intellect of Alexander Hamilton was a power in the United States. Before the war was quite over he was in Congress; and one of the members said to him, "If you were but ten years older and twenty thousand pounds richer, Congress would give you the highest place they have to bestow." In New York, young as he was, without fortune, just admitted to the bar, we find him always discussing the great topics; always the peer of the most important men; always exerting his influence for one overruling object, — the founding of a "strong," a "high-toned" government; which should attract to it the trinity he believed in, — "character, talents, and property, — and raise the thirteen States to national rank. In the State of New York he became, not the most powerful, but by far the most shining, conspicuous, active personage.

Behold him, at length, in the Convention of 1787; which met at Philadelphia to make a constitution, — Washington its president, Franklin a member. It was this young lawyer, thirty years of age, who brought with him a plan of government, so completely wrought out, that, Madison says, it could have gone into operation at once, without alteration or addition. He had thought of every thing, and provided for every thing. There it was, in Hamilton's pocket, a GOVERNMENT, complete to the last detail. In making it,

too, he had exercised self-control: he had put far away from him his own dearest preferences; he had fixed his thoughts upon the people of the United States, allowed for their prejudices, their ignorance of Greek and Roman history, their infatuation in supposing they knew what was good for them. In a most able, ingenious, candid speech of five or six hours' duration, he told the Convention what he knew about government, and prepared the way for the reading of his plan. He said he did not offer it as the best conceivable, but only the best attainable. The British Constitution, he said, was "the best form." It was only a king who was, necessarily, "above corruption," who "must always intend, in respect to foreign nations, the true interest and glory of the people." Republicanism was a dream, — an amiable dream it was true, but still a dream. No matter: the people would have their government republican; and therefore, as long as there was any chance of its success, he would do his very utmost to afford it a chance. This he proposed to do by making the American republic as much like the British monarchy as possible.

His plan was such as might have been expected from a person so ingenious, so self-sufficient, so inexperienced, and so young. Nothing more unsuitable or more impracticable can be imagined than this government evolved from the depths of Hamilton's consciousness; for, even if the principles upon which it was founded had been admissible, it was far too complicated a machine for the wear and tear of use. Most of Hamilton's measures had the great fault of being too complex and refined. His enemies, indeed, accused him of purposely mystifying the people; but, in truth, he had so mathematical an intellect, that a statement might be as clear as the light to him, which was a mere conundrum to people in general. His scheme of government included, first of all, a popular assembly, or House of Commons, to consist of not less than a hundred members, elected by universal suffrage, which should have the control of the public purse, and the exclusive power to impeach. So far, so good. But assuming that men in general are ill-disposed, and stand ready to embrace the first opportunity of voting themselves a farm, his chief care was to keep this body in check! That was a point respecting which he was deeply solicitous. Here was a democratic assembly, to be *checked* by an elected senate, and both of them by an elected chief magistrate. His senate, accordingly, which was to consist of not

less than forty members, was to be a permanent body, elected by men of property. The senators, chosen by electors who had an estate in land for life, or for an unexpired term of fourteen years, were to hold their seats until removed by death or impeachment. It was the senate that was to declare war, ratify treaties, and control appointments.

The president of the republic was to be a tremendous personage indeed, more powerful far than any monarch of a country enjoying any semblance of liberty. No man could have any part even in electing him, who had not an inherited estate wholly his own, or for three lives, or "a clear personal estate of the value of a thousand Spanish dollars." Nor were these favored mortals to vote directly for the president: they were only to elect electors; and these electors were to vote for the president, each man handing in a sealed ballot. That done, the electors of each State were to elect two "second electors," who were to carry the sealed ballots to some designated place, where, in the presence of the chief justice, they were to open the ballots, and declare that man president who had a majority of the whole number. In case no one had a majority, then these second electors were to try *their* hand at electing, though they could only vote for the three candidates who had received the highest number of votes. If the second electors could not give a clear majority for any candidate, then the man who had received the highest number of votes of the first electors was to be declared elected.

Happily, when once a president had been evolved by this ingenious complication, the country could hope to enjoy a long period of rest; for he was to hold his office for life, unless removed by impeachment. Besides exercising all the authority which our present Constitution confers on the president, Hamilton's president was to have the power to appoint the governors of States, and to convene and prorogue Congress. The President of the Senate was to be the Vice-President of the United States; and the Supreme Court was to be about such a tribunal as we see it now.

When Dr. Channing was the ruling influence of Boston, forty years ago, the orthodox clergy used to describe his system of theology as "Calvinism with the bones taken out." The Convention of 1787 listened to Hamilton with attentive admiration, and then performed upon his plan of government an operation similar to that



which Dr. Channing was supposed to have done upon the ancient creed of New England. Nothing which *he* regarded as bone was left in it. The Constitution of 1787, though he admitted it to be an improvement upon the Confederation, he thought a "shilly-shally thing," which might tide the country over the crisis, and begin the construction of a nation, but could not endure. What he chiefly hoped from it was this, That it would sicken the people of republicanism, and reconcile it to the acceptance of his panacea of King, Lords, and Commons. For every reason, however, he deemed it necessary to give the new Constitution a trial; and, accordingly, it was Hamilton, the man who believed in it least, that did most to recommend it to the people. Gliding down the tranquil Hudson, in October, 1787, in one of the commodious packet-sloops of the time, he wrote in the cabin the first number of the series of newspaper essays now called "The Federalist." Absorbed as he then was in his young family and his profession, he found time, in the course of the winter, to write sixty-five of the eighty-five pieces of which the series consists; writing several of them, it appears, amid the bustle of his law-office, with the printer's boy waiting for the copy.

These essays by Hamilton, Madison, and Jay, Jefferson read in Paris with great satisfaction. He had lamented the absence, in the new Constitution, of a formal bill of rights, which should secure "the freedom of religion, freedom of the press, freedom from standing armies, trial by jury, and a constant *habeas corpus* act;" and he regarded a few of its provisions with some apprehension. The re-eligibility of the president, he thought, would result in the president usually holding the office as long as he lived; the tendency to re-elect being so powerful. He would have preferred a single term of seven years, which was often proposed, and once carried in the Convention. But the Federalist, he owns, "rectified him on several points," dissipated his apprehensions, and rendered him more than willing to accept the Constitution, and trust to the future for the needful amendments.

Thus we find persons of opposite political sympathies heartily commending a constitution which neither of them wholly approved: Hamilton, because it was, as he hoped, a step toward the only kind of government he believed in, — a limited monarchy; Jefferson, because he thought it would issue in a plain, republican government

simple, inexpensive, just sufficient to enable the thirteen States to deal with foreign nations as one power, and secure the prompt payment of the Revolutionary debt. When Hamilton commended the Constitution, he had in his mind his "favorite morsels," those features which gave the government some resemblance to a monarchy, which made it more imposing, and less dependent upon the people, than the Confederation which it displaced. Coming events, he felt sure, would quickly convince all thinking men that a democratic assembly could not be effectually "checked" by a democratic senate, nor either of them by a democratic chief magistrate; and then the whole of the character, talents, and property of America would demand the stiffening of the loose contrivance, by the insertion of the rivet, bolt, and screw, of an hereditary king and house of lords. Jefferson, on the other hand, looked upon the new government as an engine already more potent than the case required; cumbered with several superfluous appendages, easily capable of becoming oppressive; but he trusted to time and the republican habits of the people to lop its redundancies, and keep its dangerous possibilities in check. What Jefferson loved in the Constitution, Hamilton despised; and the changes in it which Hamilton hoped for, Jefferson dreaded.

## CHAPTER XLI.

### TONE OF NEW-YORK SOCIETY IN 1790.

IN the city of New York in 1790, when it contained a population of about thirty-five thousand people, "society" consisted of so few families, that, when one of them gave a grand party, the whole body of society would be present. In this small circle Hamilton was incomparably the most shining and captivating individual, and he found it well disposed toward his ideas. What is society? It properly consists of the victorious class, the leading persons in each of the honorable pursuits: the great mechanics, merchants, lawyers, doctors, preachers, teachers, actors, artists, authors, capitalists, farmers, engineers; the men and women who have conquered a safe and pleasant place for themselves in the world by serving the community with signal skill and effect. These are the aristocrats to whom we all render a proud and willing homage. We are even disposed to honor them too much, and undervalue the prodigious multitude of those who are equally worthy perhaps, though less gifted or less fortunate. But, in Hamilton's day, society chiefly consisted of families who had inherited estates, — people *descended* from victors. It is human in a conqueror to wish to throw around his conquest every possible safeguard. It is natural to a man who possesses a fine estate to lend a favoring mind to ideas, laws, usages, which tend to exempt that estate from the usual risks of waste and accident, and to reserve for the holders of inherited property the most coveted honors of the state. In New York, therefore, the young and eloquent propagandist carried all before him, and assisted to prepare for his coming colleague a painful surprise.

"I had left France," Mr. Jefferson wrote long after, "in the first year of her Revolution, in the fervor of natural rights, and zeal for reformation. My conscientious devotion to those rights could not

be heightened, but it had been aroused and excited by daily exercise. The president received me cordially, and my colleagues and the circle of principal citizens apparently with welcome. The courtesies of dinner-parties given me, as a stranger newly arrived among them, placed me at once in their familiar society. But I cannot describe the wonder and mortification with which the table conversations filled me. Politics were the chief topic, and a preference of kingly over republican government was evidently the favorite sentiment. An apostate I could not be, nor yet a hypocrite; and I found myself, for the most part, the only advocate on the republican side of the question, unless among the guests there chanced to be some member of that party from the legislative houses."

No one can glance over the memorials of the time without meeting on every side confirmation of this passage. The Hamiltonians, we perceive, were having it all their own way in New York; their immediate object being to surround the president with imposing ceremonial and court-like etiquette. Hamilton, strangely ignorant of human nature and of the people he aspired to serve, was infatuated with the idea of gradually reconciling them to the ludicrous pomp of a European court. When General Washington asked his opinion as to the etiquette of the president's house, he replied, that, though the notions of equality were *yet* too general and too strong to admit of "a proper distance" being maintained by the chief magistrate, still he must go as far in that direction as the people would endure, even to the point of incurring the risk of partial and momentary dissatisfaction. He recommended the adoption of the usual etiquette of the courts of Europe; except, that to "remove the idea of too immense an inequality," which, he feared, would excite dissatisfaction and cabal, the president might invite a few high officials to dinner now and then; though, on such occasions, "the president should never remain long at the table;" that is, as I suppose, not sit and booze after the ladies had retired. The president was to be so august and inaccessible a personage, that a member of the House of Representatives should have no right to an interview with him, even on public business, nor any foreigner of lower rank than ambassador. Senators, Hamilton thought, should be entitled to an interview, as the peers of France and England might demand to speak to their sovereign face to face; and, besides, the people would be glad to know there was one body of men whose right to

approach the president would be "a safeguard against secret combinations to deceive him."

All the writings of the time that most readily catch the eye are in this tone. The vice-president, John Adams, seized every occasion to dwell upon the necessity of decorating the head of the state with the most gorgeous properties. This son of New England, who had had a life-time's experience of the unquestioning obedience paid to the plainest citizen clad in the imperial purple of fair election or legal appointment, gave it as his opinion, that "neither dignity nor authority can be supported in human minds, collected into nations or any great numbers, without a splendor and majesty in some degree proportioned to them." He opposed the practice of styling the president His Excellency, for precisely the reason which made it a rule of the old French court to give every one some title of honor excepting alone the king. To style the president His Excellency, Mr. Adams thought, was to "put him on a level with a governor of Bermuda, or one of *his own* ambassadors, or a governor of any one of our States."

One would think, from reading the letters and newspapers of 1789 and 1790, that pickpockets and cut-throats could be driven, awe-struck, from their evil courses, by the magnificence of the president's house and the splendor of his chariot. Jefferson reached New York on Sunday, March 21, 1790. In all probability, some one was polite enough to hand him the newspaper of the day before, the Gazette of the United States, the organ of the administration, full charged with the Hamiltonian spirit. If so, he may have espied this little essay, — milk for babes, not yet fit for stronger food, — which harmonized perfectly with the prevalent way of thinking: —

"There must be some adventitious properties infused into the government to give it energy and spirit, or the selfish, turbulent passions of men can never be controlled. This has occasioned that artificial splendor and dignity that are to be found in the courts of so many nations. Some admiration and respect must be excited towards public officers, by their holding a real or supposed superiority over the mass of the people. The sanctions and penalties of law are likewise requisite to aid in restraining individuals from trampling upon and demolishing the government. It is confessed, that, in some situations a small degree of parade and solemnity, co-operating

with other causes, may be sufficient to secure obedience to the laws. In an early state of society, when the desires of men are few and easily satisfied, the temptations to trespass upon good order and justice are neither pressing nor numerous. Avarice and ambition increase with population; and in a large, opulent community the dazzling appendages and pompous formalities of courts are introduced to form a balance to the increasing ardor of the selfish passions, and to check that ascendancy which aspiring individuals would otherwise gain over the public peace and authority."

In a file of the same paper, the new secretary of state could see many indications that some progress had been made toward investing the president with royal trappings. He could read announcements respecting the supply of the president's family, signed "Steward of the Household." Poems upon the president frequently appeared, which were as absurdly adulatory as the effusions by which the British poet-laureate earned his pipe of sack. A systematic attempt was made to give queenly pre-eminence to the president's excellent wife. The movements of that industrious little lady were chronicled very much in the style of the London Court newsman when he essays to inform the world of the manner in which the queen has managed to kill another day. Every week the Gazette contained a full budget of court news, not unfrequently giving half a column of such announcements as these:—

"The most Honorable Robert Morris and Lady attended the theatre last evening."

"Monday last the Senate of the United States, with the Vice-President at their head, went in a body, in carriages, to the house of the President, and presented him with an address."

"We are informed that THE PRESIDENT, His Excellency the Vice-President, His Excellency the Governor of this State, and many other personages of the greatest distinction, will be present at the theatre this evening."

The following is the Gazette's account of the arrival in New York of Mrs. Washington, May 30, 1789:—

"Wednesday, arrived in this city from Mount Vernon, Mrs. WASHINGTON, the amiable consort of THE PRESIDENT of the United States Mrs. Washington from Philadelphia was accompanied by the Lady of Mr. Robert Morris. At Elizabethtown



Poin: she was met by the PRESIDENT, Mr. Morris, and several other gentlemen of distinction, who had gone there for that purpose. She was conducted over the bay in the President's barge, rowed by thirteen eminent pilots, in a handsome white dress; on passing the Battery a salute was fired; and on her landing she was welcomed by crowds of citizens, who had assembled to testify their joy on this happy occasion. The principal ladies of the city have, with the earliest attention and respect, paid their *devoirs* to the amiable consort of our beloved President, namely, the Lady of His Excellency the Governor, Lady Sterling, Lady Mary Watts, Lady Kitty Duer, La Marchioness de Brehan, the ladies of the Most Honorable Mr. Langdon, and the Most Honorable Mr. Dalton, the Mayoress, Mrs. Livingston of Clermont, Mrs. Chancellor Livingston, the Miss Livingstons, Lady Temple, Madame de la Forest, Mrs. Montgomery, Mrs. Knox, Mrs. Thompson, Mrs. Gerry, Mrs. Edgar, Mrs. M'Comb, Mrs. Lynch, Mrs. Houston, Mrs. Griffin, Mrs. Provost, the Miss Bayards, and a great number of other respectable characters. Although the President makes no formal invitations, yet the day after the arrival of Mrs. Washington, the following distinguished personages dined at his house, *en famille*: Their Excellencies the Vice-President, the Governor of this State, the Ministers of France and Spain, and the Governor of the Western Territory, the Honorable Secretary of the United States for Foreign Affairs, the Most Honorable Mr. Langdon, Mr. Wingate, Mr. Izard, Mr. Few, and Mr. Muhlenberg, Speaker of the Honorable House of Representatives of the United States. The President's levee yesterday was attended by a very numerous and most respectable company. The circumstance of the President's entering the drawing-room at three o'clock, not being universally known, occasioned some inaccuracies as to the time of attendance."

The president, though he was the farthest possible from relishing parade, had a particular aversion to familiar manners, and was half persuaded of the necessity of a certain state and ceremony in the intercourse between the head of a state and its citizens. Mr. Van Buren has preserved, in his work on our Political Parties, an anecdote of Washington, that throws light on his willingness to submit to the court etiquette advised by Hamilton. The story was related by Hamilton to Mr. John Fine of Ogdensburgh, who gave it to Mr. Van Buren. Mr. Fine recorded it thus: —

“When the Convention to form a Constitution was sitting in Philadelphia in 1787, of which General Washington was president, he had stated evenings to receive the calls of his friends. At an interview between Hamilton, the Morrises, and others, the former remarked that Washington was reserved and aristocratic even to his intimate friends, and allowed no one to be familiar with him. Gouverneur Morris said that was a mere fancy, and he could be as familiar with Washington as with any of his other friends. Hamilton replied, “If you will, at the next reception evening, gently slap him on the shoulder, and say, ‘My dear General, how happy I am to see you look so well!’ a supper and wine shall be provided for you and a dozen of your friends.” The challenge was accepted. On the evening appointed, a large number attended; and at an early hour Gouverneur Morris entered, bowed, shook hands, laid his left hand on Washington’s shoulder, and said, “My dear General, I am very happy to see you look so well!” Washington withdrew his hand, stepped suddenly back, fixed his eye on Morris for several minutes with an angry frown, until the latter retreated abashed, and sought refuge in the crowd. The company looked on in silence. At the supper, which was provided by Hamilton, Morris said, “I have won the bet, but paid dearly for it, and nothing could induce me to repeat it.”

It was not difficult to bring a gentleman of this reserved cast of character, who shrank from familiarities, to consent to being hedged about with etiquette. And there really seemed to prevail a mania to extol, exalt, and royalize the president. Indeed, Mr. Jefferson calls it, somewhere, “a frenzy.” If the president attended a ball, the managers must needs cause a platform to be erected at one end of the ball-room, several steps high, with a sofa upon it, and conduct thither the president and his “consort.” An attempt was made to have the president’s head engraved upon the coinage about to be issued by the new government. The levees were arranged and conducted exactly as at the palace of St. James; and, when the president rode abroad on any official errand, he used what was called the state carriage, — a cream-colored chariot drawn by six horses, and attended by white servants, in liveries of white cloth trimmed with scarlet.

All of which, we can now see, proves the innocence of the Hamil

tonians of any design to spring a king upon the country; for surely, people of their ability, who had formed a scheme to subvert republican government, would have most carefully avoided such a plain showing of their hand. They would at once have courted and deceived the multitude of republicans by casting aside the worn-out trumpery of kings, and weaving round the president the magic spell of utter simplicity.

This was Bonaparte's method. We find him, first, an extreme republican, using all the forms of that sect with rigor long after he was the ruling mind of France; next, an austere first consul, still dating his letters in the manner decreed by the republic, and calling his officers citizen-general; *last*, when his genius had dazzled and overwhelmed his intellect, and he was expanding to his ruin, he stooped to the imperial crown, and condescended to inquire how things had been done in the court of that gorgeous delusion, Louis XIV.

Nothing could be more artless and open than the manner in which our imposing-government men sought to commend their opinions to the public. Colonel Hamilton, indeed, censured the vice-president for going too far and too fast in that direction; disturbing people's minds prematurely, and not giving the new government that "fair chance" he was determined it should have. It was in this spring of 1790, when Jefferson and his four clerks were working their way down through the accumulated business of the state department, that Mr. Adams broke out in the Gazette with his weekly "Discourses on Davila," a chaos of passages from, and comments upon, a History of the Civil Wars of France by the Italian Davila, interspersed with long extracts from Pope, Young, Adam Smith, and any other author whom Mr. Adams might happen to think of in the fury of composition. The great object of the series was to show that there is a necessity, fixed in the constitution of the human mind, for such orders in the state as kings and nobles. The basis of Mr. Adams's political system, which he drew from his own heart, was this: Man's controlling motive is the passion for distinction. If any one should doubt this, he advises that benighted person to go and attentively observe the journeymen and apprentices in the first workshop, or the oarsmen in a cockboat, the members of a family, a neighborhood, the inhabitants of a house, the crew of a ship, a school, a college, a city, a village, the bar, the church, the exchange, a camp,

a court, wherever, indeed, men, women, or children are to be found, whether old or young, rich or poor, wise or foolish, ignorant or learned, and he will find every individual "strongly actuated by a desire to be seen, heard, talked of, approved, and respected by the people about him and within his knowledge." And, of all known distinctions, none is so universally bewitching as "an illustrious descent." One drop of royal blood, thought Mr. Adams, though illegitimately scattered, will make any man proud or vain; and why? Because it attracts the *attention* of mankind. Hence the wisdom and virtue of all nations have endeavored to utilize this passion, by regulating and legitimating it, by giving it objects to pursue, such as orders in the magistracy, titles of honor, insignia of office. — ribbons, stars, garters, golden keys, marshals' batons, white sticks, rings, the ivory chair, the official robe, the coronet. And this has been done most of all in republics, where there is no monarch to overtop and overshadow every one. Mr. Adams was most decided in his advocacy of the hereditary principle. "Nations," he remarked, "perceiving that the still small voice of merit was drowned in the insolent roar of the dupes of impudence and knavery in national elections, without a possibility of remedy, have sought for something more permanent than the popular voice to designate honor." Some of the nations, he continued, had annexed honor to the possession of land; others to office; others to birth; but the policy of Europe had been to unite these, and bestow the highest honors of the state upon men who had land, office, and ancestors. To the landed and privileged aristocracy of birth, Europe, according to the vice-president, owed "her superiority in war and peace, in legislation and commerce, in agriculture, navigation, arts, sciences, and manufactures." In this strain Mr. Adams continued to discourse, week after week, until he had published thirty-one numbers; when the public indignation alarmed the printer, and gave pause even to the impetuous author. Or, to use Mr. Adams's own language, written twenty-three years after: "The rage and fury of the Jacobinical journals against these discourses increased as they proceeded, intimidated the printer, John Fenno, and convinced me that to proceed would do more hurt than good."

For we must ever bear in mind, in reading of this period, that every utterance of a political nature by a person of note was read in the lurid and distorting light cast over the nations by the French

Revolution. From the fall of the Bastille in 1789, to the seizure of the supreme power by Bonaparte 1799, civilized man was mad. The news from France was read in the more advanced nations with a frenzied interest; for, besides being in itself most strange and tragic, it either flattered or rebuked every man's party feelings, helped or hindered every man's party dream or scheme. Each ship's budget was fuel to party fires, — both parties; for the news which flattered one enraged the other.

Mr. Adams had made up his mind respecting the French Revolution at once. He knew it to be wholly diabolical. No good could come of it. In these very Discourses, all written, as he says, to counteract the new French ideas, he did not hesitate to denounce the most vaunted proceedings of the popular party. In his old age, when Bonaparte's coarse and heavy hand made life more burdensome to nearly every virtuous family in Christendom, he was proud indeed to point, in the seventeenth of his Davila papers, to this sentence: "If the wild idea of annihilating the nobility should spread far and be long persisted in, the men of letters and the national assembly, as democratical as they may think themselves, will find no barrier against despotism." This in 1790, when Bonaparte was a yellow, thin little lieutenant of artillery twenty-two years old. He wrote the sentence, as he himself records, in the historic mansion upon Richmond Hill, near New York, at a moment when the view from his windows afforded him another proof of man's inherent love of distinctions. A deputation of Creek Indians were encamped within sight and hearing; and even among them there were "grandees, warriors, and sachems."

Neither this honest Adams nor the more adroit Hamilton — both public-spirited and patriotic — seem to have had any glimmering of the truth, so familiar to us, that institutions, like all things else, having served their turn, grow old, get past service, become obstructive, and die. Their discourses upon government read like the remarks that might be made by a young lobster of ability and spirit against the custom which has long prevailed in the lobster tribe of changing their shells. The ardent representative of young lobsterdom might point to the undeniable fact, that the old shells had answered an excellent purpose, had proved sufficient, had protected them in storm, and adorned them in calm. He might further descant upon the known inconveniences of change; the languor, the sickness, the

emaciation, the feverish struggle out of the time-honored incasement, and the long insecurity while the new armor was getting hardness and temper. Every word *true*. The only answer is: The time of year has come for a change; we must get other shells, or stop growing. As long as people generally are childlike enough to believe in the fictions upon which kingly authority rests, so long the institution of monarchy assists and blesses them, as the daily mass solaced and exalted Columbus, Isabella, the great Prince Henry of Portugal, and all the noblest and most gifted of that age; but when faith declines, and knowledge is in the ascendent, kings become ridiculous, and the most touching ceremonials of the past are an empty show.

Mr. Adams protested he could see no difference between the rich families of Boston and the great houses of a European city. "You and I," he wrote to his kinsman, Samuel Adams, in October, 1790, "have seen four noble families rise up in Boston,—the CRAFTS, GORFS, DAWES, and AUSTINS. These are as really a nobility in our town as the Howards, Somersets, Berties, in England." And when Samuel Adams remarked that "the love of liberty is interwoven in the soul of man," John Adams, vice-president of the United States, replied, "So it is, according to La Fontaine, in that of a wolf."

In 1790 Jefferson could scarcely have found in New York three drawing-rooms in which such sentiments as these were uncongenial with the prevailing temper. Mr. Jay, generally in accord with Hamilton, had suggested, in 1787, a governor-general of great powers, and senators appointed for life. General Knox, secretary of war, a soldier and nothing but a soldier, would have swept away at a stroke all the State governments, and established a standing army. With regard to the sentiment of equality which was asserting itself in France with so much emphasis, it was all but unknown in the United States. What Miss Sedgwick records in her autobiography of her father, an important public man of this period, was true then of nearly every person in liberal circumstances in town or country: "He was born too soon to relish the freedoms of democracy; and I have seen his brow lower when a free-and-easy mechanic came to the *front* door; and, upon one occasion, I remember his turning off the east steps (I am sure not kicking, but the demonstration was unequivocal), a grown-up lad who kept his hat on after being told to



take it off." Gentlemen of the period found no difficulty in yielding assent to the doctrine of human equality when they heard it melodiously read on the Fourth of July from the Declaration of Independence; but how hard to miss the universal homage once paid them as "gentlemen"! Many of them spoke with a curious mixture of wonder, scorn, and derision of what they seemed to think was a new French notion, "the contagion of levelism" as Chauncey Goodrich styled it. "What folly is it," asked this son of Connecticut, "that has set the world agog to be all equal to French barbers? It must have its run."

What a change for Jefferson was the New York of 1790, from such a city as Paris was in 1789! His dearest and deepest convictions openly and everywhere abhorred or despised! The worn-out, obstructive institutions of the past, the accursed fruits of which had excited in him a constant and vast commiseration for five years, extolled on every side as the indispensable conditions of human welfare!

Hamilton and Jefferson met, — the man of action and the man of feeling. Jefferson had brought with him, so far as appears, no prejudice against his colleague. In Paris he had recommended an English suitor, who had claims in America, "to apply to Colonel Hamilton (who was aid to General Washington), and is now very eminent at the bar, and much to be relied on." Nor is Hamilton known to have had any dislike to Jefferson. Naturally the man of executive force and the man of high qualities of mind regard one another with even an exaggerated respect. The mutual homage of Sir Walter Scott, poet and man of letters, and James Watt, the sublime mechanic, was not less natural than pleasing. In the presence of the genius who had cheered and charmed his life, and enriched his country's fame, making mountainous and unfertile Scotland dear to half the world, Watt looked upon his steam-engine as something small, commonplace, material; and, at the same instant, Scott was saying to himself, How petty are my light scribblings compared with the solid good *this* great man has done the world! This is the natural feeling between men of opposite excellences and noble character, who meet, as a sultan of the East might meet a monarch of the West, equals, without being rivals. It was otherwise with these two men, Jefferson and Hamilton. In their case, there were so many causes of antipathy, noble and ignoble, external and inter-

nal, that nothing short of thorough breeding in *both* could have kept them well with one another.

There is no contest so little harmful as an open one. The English people have originated no governmental device better than the arrangement of their parliament, by which the administration members sit facing the opposition, and the leaders of the two bodies fight it out openly in the hearing of mankind. These two men should have been avowed opponents, not colleagues, and debated publicly the high concerns respecting which they were bound to differ; so as to correct while exasperating one another; so as to inform, at once, and stimulate the public mind. Hamilton's fluency and self-confidence would have given him the advantage for a while; but Jefferson would have had the American people behind him, since it was his part to marshal them the way they were to go.

## CHAPTER XLII.

### THE CABINET OF PRESIDENT WASHINGTON.

“WE are in a wilderness, without a single footstep to guide us.” Thus wrote Madison to Jefferson, in June, 1789, from his seat in Congress, when President Washington, not yet three months in office, and without a cabinet, was surveying the thousand difficulties of his position: “the whole scene,” as the gloomy mind of Fisher Ames conceived it, “a deep, dark, and dreary chaos.”

The government of the United States at that moment consisted of General Washington, Congress, and a roll of parchment: the last named being the Constitution, the sole guide out of the “wilderness” of which Mr. Madison wrote. Footstep there was none. No nation had travelled that way before; though all nations may be destined to follow the path which the United States have since “blazed” and half beaten. Every thing was to be done, and there seemed nothing to do it with, not even money to pay the government’s board; there being as yet no treasury, no treasurer, and no treasure. And worse: this outline, this sketch, this shadowy promise of a government, was confronted with what seemed to the simple souls of the time a giant debt, — a thousand-armed Briareus, — debt in all forms, paper of every kind known to impecunious man. The total approached fifty-four millions of dollars, to say nothing of the debts of the several States, amounting to twenty-one millions more. Worst of all, fifteen millions of the general debt was arrears of interest! Hence, the credit of the government was low; not so low as that of the late Congress, whose Promise to Pay Bearer one dollar had passed, as money, in 1787, for eight cents; but so low that the money lent it to subsist upon for the first few months was lent chiefly as a mark of confidence in the men who solicited it.

There was not much real money in the country. No one, not even the richest man, could raise a large sum of unquestionable cash. The estate of General Washington was extensive, and not so unproductive as many; but, during the first year and a half of his presidency, he was often embarrassed, and was once obliged to raise money on his own note to Tobias Lear, at two per cent a month, in order to enable "The Steward of the Household" to pay off the butcher and the grocer before leaving for Mount Vernon. Years later we find the secretary of the treasury taken to task in Congress for presuming to advance the president a quarter's salary. The first Congress was paid, in part, by anticipating the duties at the custom-houses, each member receiving a certificate of indebtedness, which the collectors were required to receive for duties. The personal credit of the secretary of the treasury (when at last there was one) helped members to many a liberal shave, and lured from the Bank of New York several timely loans, which kept the life in a starving government.

"What are we to do with this heavy debt?" the new president asked of Robert Morris, who had so long superintended the finances of the Confederacy, both in war and in peace. The answer was, "There is but one man in the United States who can tell you: that is Alexander Hamilton." Colonel Hamilton agreed with Robert Morris in this opinion. He had had an eye upon the office of secretary of the treasury: not from any common-place ambition; but because, feeling equal to the post, he believed he could be of more service in it than in any other. "I can restore the public credit," said he to Gouverneur Morris. It was not in the nature of that cool, consummate disciple of Epicurus to sympathize with the spirit of martyrdom; and hence he endeavored to dissuade his young friend from encountering the obloquy and distrust which then so often assailed ministers of finance. Hamilton's reply was, that he expected calumny and persecution. "But," said he, "I am convinced it is the situation in which I can do most good." Washington was scarcely sworn in before he told Hamilton he meant to offer him the department of finance; and the next day Colonel Hamilton called upon his old comrade, Colonel Troup, then a thriving lawyer in New York, and asked him if he would undertake to wind up his law business. Troup remonstrated against his making so great a sacrifice. Hamilton replied to him as to Morris,

that the impression upon his mind was strong, that, in the place offered him, he could essentially promote the welfare of the country. Without being devoid of a proper and even strong desire to distinguish himself, doubtless he accepted the office in the spirit in which he urged some of his friends to take places under the experimental government. "If it is possible, my dear Harrison," he wrote to one of those who shrank from the toil, the wandering, and poverty of the Supreme Bench, "*give yourself* to us. We want men like you." Good and able men were wanted, because, as he said in the same letter, "I consider the business of America's happiness as yet to be done!"

It is the privilege of Americans, despite the efforts of so many misinterpreters of the men of that time, to believe that every member of General Washington's administration accepted office in the same high, disinterested spirit. Every one of them sacrificed his pecuniary interest, and most of them sacrificed their inclinations, to aid in giving the government a start. The salaries attached to their places were almost as insufficient as they are now. Not a man of them lived upon his official income, any more than the members of the government of to-day live upon theirs. In 1789 there seemed (but only seemed) a necessity for fixing the salaries of the dozen men upon whom the success of the system chiefly depended, at such a point that their service was generosity as much as duty. There is an impression that we owe to Jefferson the system of paying extravagantly low salaries to high men. Not so. He was far too good a republican to favor an idea so aristocratic. Make offices desirable, he says, if you wish to get superior men to fill them. In giving his ideas respecting the proposed new constitution for Virginia, he dwelt upon this point, and returned to it. There is nothing in the writings of Jefferson which gives any show of support to temptation salaries or to ignorant suffrage,—the bane and terror of our present politics.

Henry Knox, whom President Washington appointed secretary of war, had been, before the Revolution, a thriving Boston bookseller, with so strong a natural turn for soldiering that he belonged to two military companies at once, and read all the works in his shop which treated of military things. From Bunker Hill, where he served as volunteer aid to General Artemas Ward, to Yorktown, where he commanded and ably directed the artillery, he was an

efficient, faithful soldier; and after the war, being retained in service, he had the chief charge of the military affairs of the Confederacy, high in the confidence of the disbanded army and its chief. He was a man of large, athletic frame, tall, deep-chested, loud-voiced, brave, delighting in the whirl and rush of field-artillery and the thunder of siege-guns. But a secretary of war is the adviser of the head of the government on all subjects; and General Knox was only acquainted with one. Nor was he a man of capacious and inquisitive mind. He was one who must take his opinions from another mind, or not have any opinions. But such men, since they lack the only thing in human nature which is progressive, — original intelligence, — have usually a bias toward what we now call the conservative side of politics. We hear sometimes of “the car of progress.” Intellect alone appears to be the engine which crawls that celebrated vehicle, every thing else within us being burden or brake. Not only are indolence, ignorance, timidity, and habit conservative, but love and imagination also cling fondly to the old way, to the old house at home, and to all things ancient and sanctioned; so that, often, the highest genius in the community and its stolidest clodhopper belong to the same political party. Thackeray owned that he preferred the back seat in the car aforesaid, because it commanded a view of the country which *had been* traversed, — Queen Anne’s reign, instead of Queen Victoria’s; and we observe the same tendency in most men of illustrious gifts.

It is only intellect, the fearless and discerning mind, that discovers the better path, or welcomes the news that a better path has been discovered. Happy the land where this priceless force has free play; for, small as it ever is in quantity, we owe to it every step that man has made from the condition of the savage.

General Knox had much faith in the tools he was accustomed to use. His original remedy for the ills of the Confederacy was as simple and complete as a patent medicine: Extinguish the State governments, and establish an imposing general government, with plenty of soldiers to enforce its decrees. In the cabinet of President Washington, he was the giant shadow of his diminutive friend Hamilton. When Hamilton had spoken, Knox was usually ready to say in substance, “My own opinion, better expressed.”

These two men were established as members of the cabinet as early as September, 1789, Mr. Jay continuing to serve as secre-



tary for foreign affairs; and all of them were highly valued by their chief. How honorable and how right was the conduct of this group of men in setting the government in motion! What an honest soul breathes in this first note which the president ever wrote to the secretary of the treasury: "From a great variety of characters, who have made a tender of their services for *suitable offices*, I have selected the following. If Mr. Jay and you will take the further trouble of running them over, to see if among them there can be found one, who, under *all circumstances*, is more eligible for the post-office than Colonel O——, I shall be obliged to you for your opinion thereon by eleven o'clock. Another paper, which is enclosed, will show how the appointments stand to this time. And that you may have the matter *fully* before you, I shall add, that it is my *present* intention to nominate Mr. Jefferson for secretary of state, and Mr. Edmund Randolph as attorney-general; though their acceptance is problematical, especially the latter."

It was in this spirit that every thing was done, — public good the object, patient inquiry the means.

Edmund Randolph, who accepted the post of attorney-general, besides being a Randolph and a Virginian, had this claim to the regard of General Washington: he had been disinherited by his father for siding with the Revolution. He was a rising lawyer twenty-two years of age when his father, the king's attorney-general, withdrew to England, — an act upon which the son commented by mounting his horse, and riding by the side of General Washington as his volunteer aid, until the general could organize his military household. This marked "discrepancy" cost the young man his estate, and made his fortune. The next year, 1776, young as he was, Virginia sent him to the convention which called upon Congress to declare independence. At twenty-six he was a member of the war Congress, in which he served three years, and at thirty-three was governor of Virginia. Being a Randolph, we might infer, even without Mr. Wirt's full-length portrait of him in the *British Spy*, that he was a man of great but peculiar talents, — resembling his eccentric kinsman, John Randolph of a later day, but sounder and stronger than that meteoric personage. Tall, meagre, emaciated, loose-jointed, awkward, with small head, and a face dark and wrinkled, nothing in his appearance denoted a superior person except his eyes, which were black and most brilliant. Mr

Wirt, who knew him some years later, when, after much public service, he had resumed the leadership of the Virginia bar, tells us that he owed his supremacy there to a single faculty, that of seeing and seizing at once the real point at issue in a controversy. "No matter what the question," says Mr. Wirt, "though ten times more knotty than the gnarled oak, the lightning of heaven is not more rapid nor more resistless than his astonishing penetration. Nor does the exercise of it seem to cost him an effort. On the contrary, it is as easy as vision." John Randolph possessed a residuum of the same talent in his power of condensing one side of a question into an epigram of ten words, which pierced every ear, and stuck in every memory.

But Edmund Randolph, keen and bold as he was before judge and jury, where the responsibility of deciding lay with others, was timid and hesitating when it was his part to utter the decisive word. He saw clearly, he saw correctly; but, when the time came to vote, his ingenious mind conjured up difficulties, and he often gave his voice to the side his head disapproved, — his argument supporting one party and his vote the other; or, as Jefferson expressed it, he sometimes gave the shells to his friends, and the oyster to his enemies. Most men, whose profession it has long been to use words, would experience the same difficulty when called upon to deal with things; so much easier is it to be eloquent than to be wise. How confident the hero of the platform or of the editorial page! what vigorous blows he gets in at enemies, remote or imaginary! how striking the skill with which he barbs, and the audacity with which he shoots, the poisoned arrow which will rankle a lifetime in an unseen breast! But put the same man in a situation which requires him on his honor to *decide* the smallest practical question, and his confidence is gone. A government of orators and editors would never do, unless at or near the head of it there was one unfluent man trained in the great art of making up his mind.

Such were the gentlemen who were gathered round the council-table at the president's house in New York in 1790. How interesting the group! At the head of the table, General Washington, now fifty-eight, his frame as erect as ever, but his face showing deep traces of the thousand anxious hours he had passed. Not versed in the lore of schools, not gifted with a great sum of intellect, the eternal glory of this man is, that he used all the mind he

had in patient endeavors to find out the right way; ever on the watch to keep out of his decision every thing like bias or prejudice; never deciding till he had exhausted every source of elucidation within his reach. Some questions he could not decide with his own mind; and he knew he could not. In such cases, he bent all his powers to ascertaining how the subject appeared to minds fitted to grapple with it, and getting *them* to view it without prejudice.

I am delighted to learn that Mr. Carlyle can seldom hear the name of Washington pronounced without breaking forth with an explosion of contempt, especially, it is said, if there is an American within hearing. Washington is the exact opposite of a fell Carlylean hero. His glory is, that he was *not* richly endowed, *not* sufficient unto himself, *not* indifferent to human rights, opinions, and preferences; but feeling deeply his need of help, sought it, where alone it was to be found, — in minds fitted by nature and training to supply his lack. It is this heartfelt desire to be **RIGHT** which shines so affectingly from the plain words of Washington, and gives him rank so far above the gorgeous bandits whom hero-worshippers adore.

On the right of the president, — in the place of honor, — sat Jefferson, now forty-seven, the senior of all his colleagues; older in public service, too, than any of them; tall, erect, ruddy; noticeably quiet and unobtrusive in his address and demeanor; the least pugnacious of men. Not a fanatic, not an enthusiast; but an old-fashioned Whig, nurtured upon "old Coke," enlightened by twenty-five years' intense discussion, — with pen, tongue, and sword, — of Cokean principles. Fresh from the latest commentary upon Coke, — the ruins of the Bastille, — and wearing still his red Paris waistcoat and breeches, he was an object of particular interest to all men, and doubtless often relieved the severity of business by some thrilling relation out of his late foreign experience.

Opposite him, on the president's left, was the place of Hamilton, secretary of the treasury, in all the alertness and vigor of thirty-three years. If time had matured his talents, it had not lessened his self-sufficiency; because, as yet, all his short life had been success, and he had associated chiefly with men who possessed nothing either of his fluency or his arithmetic. A positive, vehement little gentleman, with as firm a faith in the apparatus of finance as General Knox had in great guns. He was now in the full tide of activ-

ity, lobbying measures through Congress, and organizing the treasury department; the most conspicuous man in the administration, except the president. As usual, his unseen work was his best. In organizing a system of collecting, keeping, and disbursing the revenue, he employed so much tact, forethought, and fertility, that his successors have each, in turn, admired and retained his most important devices. He arranged the system so that the secretary of the treasury, at any moment, could survey the whole working of it; and he held at command all the resources of the United States, subject to lawful use, without being able to divert one dollar to a purpose not specially authorized. He could not draw his own pittance of salary without the signatures of the four chief officers of the department, — comptroller, auditor, treasurer, and register.

“Hamilton and I,” Jefferson wrote, “were pitted against each other every day in the cabinet, like two fighting-cocks.” Age had not quenched the vivacity of either of the four secretaries: Jefferson, forty-seven; Knox, forty; Randolph, thirty-seven; Hamilton, thirty-three. When, in the world’s history, was so young a group charged with a task so new, so difficult, so momentous? At first, what good friends they were! No “opposition,” in the party sense, seems to have been thought of. “I remember,” said a lady who was living in 1858, “how Hamilton and Madison would talk together in the summer [of 1789], and then turn and laugh and play with a monkey that was climbing in a neighbor’s yard.” But how suddenly was all this changed when the administration set to work in earnest! An opposition sprang into being full-formed. By the time Jefferson took his seat in the cabinet, it had attained even menacing proportions; and it was chiefly due to Hamilton’s inexperience and precipitation, his ignorance of man, and his ignorance of America.

## CHAPTER XLIII.

### THE NEW GOVERNMENT AND THE PUBLIC DEBT.

IN September, 1789, when his appointment to the place of minister of finance had set the seal of Washington's approval to his reputation, Hamilton's position before the country was commanding. The dead corpse of the public credit, of which Mr. Webster spoke (repeating the tradition of his father's fireside), took a startling leap, even before Hamilton could be supposed to have "touched" it: thirty-three per cent from January to November. The mere establishment of a government, "clothed," as Hamilton expressed it, "with powers capable of calling forth the resources of the community," had wrought this third part of a miracle. The appointment of Hamilton, who was known to be in favor of using those powers to the uttermost, accelerated the rise, which received a further impetus when Congress, late in September, before adjourning over till January, referred the knotty subject of the public credit to the secretary of the treasury, requesting him to report a plan for its restoration. He threw himself upon this work with honorable ardor, not disdaining to consult Madison, Morris, and all accessible men competent to advise on a matter so full of difficulty. The rumor of what he intended to recommend had such effect upon the market, that the debt rose in price fifty per cent more in the last two months of 1789; making a rise of eighty-three per cent in the year. The day on which the report was read in the House of Representatives, January 14, 1790, was memorable for the throng of eager auditors that gathered to hear it in gallery and lobby, and the breathless interest with which so difficult a paper was listened to. The Senate still sat with closed doors, in secrecy meant to be awful; but the public were admitted to what the Federalists were pleased to designate the Lower House

Hamilton's report on the public credit is one of the most inter

esting documents in the archives of the United States. It began the strife of parties under the new Constitution. It was hailed with triumphant rapture by the moneyed few, and received by the landed many with doubt and distrust, which soon became opposition, hostility, rancor, mania.

How much does the reader suppose the Revolution cost per annum? Seventeen millions and a half of dollars; about ten days' expenditure of the late war. Such was "the price of liberty." The debt of the United States in January, 1790, was \$54,124,464. 53; of which, as before remarked, nearly fifteen millions were arrears of interest; and, besides this general debt, there was a chaos of State debts, amounting, as the secretary erroneously computed, to twenty-five millions more. Not eighty millions in all; not a month's expenditure during the Rebellion. But if the billions of our present debt were multiplied by two, the stupendous total would not affright us half as much as these figures did the people of 1790, four millions in number, mostly farmers and fishermen, without steam, without cotton, without the mines, without a West. It was a grave question with intelligent men, whether it was possible for the country to pay the interest, and carry on the general government at the same time. The expenses of supporting the government could not be kept, Hamilton thought, under six hundred thousand dollars a year, and the interest of the whole debt was four millions and a half. Would the country stand such a drain? The secretary thought it possible, but not probable. "It would require," he said, "an extension of taxation to a degree and to objects which the true interest of the public creditor forbids." This was a polite way of stating the case, but the meaning was sufficiently clear: The people will not bear a tax of a dollar and a quarter each per annum. What then?

The secretary's answer to this question was, Fund the debt at a lower rate of interest. But how could a country borrow at a lower rate, which already owed fifteen millions of unpaid interest? It was in answering this question that the young financier displayed too much ingenuity and not enough wisdom. He answered it very much as John Law would have done, if John Law had been a man of honor. His suggestions were so numerous, so complex, and so refined, as to suggest to opponents the idea that he had contrived them on purpose to puzzle the people. Nothing could be more



unjust. He was a financier of thirty-three, whose mind was as full of ideas as his pockets were empty of money and his life devoid of experience. But every page of his report is warm with the passion of honesty which possessed the author's mind. If some cool, practised man of the world, like Gouverneur Morris, had gone over this report, stricken out three out of every four of Hamilton's ingenuities, kept his best ideas, and given them the simplest expression, an admirable result might have been attained. But what could the most uncommercial and uncapitalled of all people on earth be expected to think of a scheme which would require the United States to embark in the business of selling annuities, and contracting loans "on the principles of a tontine, to consist of six classes"? I think I see the country gentleman of the period puzzling over the secretary's lucid explanations of the annuity business: "One hundred dollars, bearing an interest of six per cent for five years, or five per cent for fifteen years, and thenceforth of four per cent (these being the successive rates of interest in the market), is equal to a capital of \$122.510725, bearing an interest of four per cent; which, converted into a capital bearing a fixed rate of interest of six per cent, is equal to \$81.6738166."

A valuable suggestion was to turn the waste lands to account in paying part of the debt. He wished to raise one loan by giving every holder of the debt the option to fund his whole amount at six per cent, or, receiving one-third of it in land at twenty cents an acre, fund the rest at four per cent. Another loan of ten millions he proposed to effect on Law's own plan of utilizing depreciated bonds: every man subscribing one hundred dollars, to pay half in money and the other half in Congress paper; the whole to bear an interest of five per cent. A third scheme was founded upon the erroneous opinion, that the rate of interest would decline from six per cent to four in a few years. Besides suggesting six different plans of luring money from the public in aid of the government, he proposed a stiff duty upon liquors, wines, tea, and coffee. But even his tariff had the vice of complication. Each grade of tea (four in number) had its special rate of duty; and every barrel of liquor was to be tested by "Dica's hydrometer," to ascertain exactly how many degrees it was above or below proof. There were to be six rates upon liquor; beginning with twenty cents a gallon upon spirits ten per cent below proof, and rising to forty cents a gallon if it were forty per

cent above proof. If the report *had* been contrived, as some of its heated opponents charged, to perplex the people and multiply custom-house officers, it could hardly have been better done. Even the loans on "the tontine plan" were to be of "six classes."

Congress, of course, disregarded the refinements and the ingenuities, and adopted the substance of the report; the opposition concentrating upon two points.

The public debt, as the secretary remarked, was "the price of liberty." The veterans of the Revolution, a kind of sacred class at this period, had been the most numerous original holders of it; and many of them, through the failure of Congress to pay the interest, had been obliged to sell their claims for a small fraction of their amount. It was not as when a poor widow in a hard time sells her diamond for a quarter of its value; for, in the case of the Revolutionary soldier, it was neither his fault nor his necessity that lessened the value of his property, but the government's inability to keep its promise. Hence there was a wide-spread feeling in the country, that, in funding the debt, original holders should be credited with the full amount of their claims; but the "speculator" should receive only what he had paid for his certificate, with interest, and the rest should go to the original holder. The secretary of the treasury, anticipating this opinion, argued against it with equal ability and good feeling. Probably there is not to-day a man in Wall Street nor in the Treasury Department at Washington who will not give his approval to Hamilton's reasoning upon this point. But, in 1790, an immense number of the most able and just-minded men denounced it with bitterness. What! pay a speculator a thousand dollars, with ten years' arrears of interest, for a bond which he had bought from a veteran of the Revolution for a hundred and fifty! Yes, even so; because it is not in the power of so cumbrous a thing as a government to execute any scheme for avoiding this twofold wrong which would not cause more wrong than it would prevent. To those who have shall be given, and from those who have not shall be taken away that which they have. Such is the scheme of the universe, which man's devices can but regulate and mitigate; but, in a large number of instances, this profoundly beneficent law appears to the sufferers to work sheer cruelty. After a long and severe struggle, in which Madison strove worthily for the soldiers' interest, Congress accepted Hamilton's conclusion as the law of necessity governing the case.

This contest was at its height while Jefferson was floundering through the mud from Virginia to New York. Immersed at once upon his arrival in the business of his own department, and having a dislike of financial questions, he took no part in the strife. But Hamilton, unhappily, had cumbered his report with a recommendation that Congress should assume the debts of the States. To him, born in a little sugar-island, from which he had early escaped, and therefore unable to comprehend or sympathize with the hereditary love of the native citizen for the State in which he was born, nothing seemed more natural or more proper than this sweeping measure. Debt is debt. The people of the United States owe this money. How much better to arrange it all under the same system! He surveyed this tangled scene of debt as Bonaparte may be supposed to have looked upon the map of Europe when he was about to piece out a new kingdom for one of his brothers. Here is a nice little duchy to round off that corner; this pretty province will make a capital finish to the western boundary; and, to fill up this gap on the north, we'll gouge a piece out of the king of Prussia, poor devil. The reader, perhaps, in looking upon the map of New England, has sometimes thought what an improvement it would be to the symmetry of things to obliterate the lines which make Rhode Island a separate State, with its own apparatus of government; not expensive, indeed, but superfluous. If the reader has ever had this bold thought, let him, the next time he finds himself in Thames Street, Newport, propose the scheme of merging Rhode Island into Massachusetts to the inhabitants of that too narrow thoroughfare. The idea will seem to the worthy sons of Newport too preposterous to be considered; but if you could succeed in convincing one of them that the plan was seriously entertained, with some remote possibility of success, you would perhaps discover why Hamilton's plan of assumption excited, not disapproval merely, but passion. It cut deeply into State pride. It gave the party which had held out longest against the new Constitution an opportunity to turn upon the Federalists with a bitter, Did we not tell you so? What is *this* but consolidation?

Besides, the rapid rise in the value of the public debt, and especially the jump towards par which it gave when the funding resolution was passed, had had the usual effect (so familiar to us of this generation) of enriching several individuals not the most estimable

of men, and of luring from honest industry a considerable class of speculators. Whoever saw exaggerated Wall Street when gold was going up and down the scale at ten per cent a week, or whoever has read of the precisely similar scenes in Paris when Louis XIV. had died insolvent, leaving France littered with every kind of fluctuating paper for John Law to operate with and upon, can form some idea of the horror excited in the unsophisticated minds of country members in 1790 by the spectacle of sudden wealth gained by speculation in the public debt. As a rule, no sudden fortune is made without wrong to some and injury to many. It is in the highest degree undesirable for money to be made fast; and, in a healthy, proper state of things, it will seldom be done. During the colonial period, it is questionable if one individual had made a fortune even in so short a period as ten years, except by wrecking or privateering; and privateer fortunes were proverbially demoralizing and evanescent. It was thought remarkable that Franklin should have gained a competence in twenty years by legitimate business, and he never ceased to speak of it himself with grateful wonder. And what made these paper fortunes of 1790 and 1791 so aggravating to country gentlemen was, the serious decline in the value of their own lands. In Hamilton's report upon the public credit occurs this sentence: "The value of cultivated lands, in most of the States, has fallen, since the Revolution, from twenty to fifty per cent." And here were speculators in the public debt setting up their carriages in the face of honorable members of hereditary estates, hard put to it to pay their board! At that period, *all* Southern members were country members; the whole south, except Charleston, being "country."

On public grounds, too, the mania for getting rich in a week was deplorable, since it injured those who lost and spoiled those who gained. It was a true mania, as Hamilton himself admits. "In the late delirium of speculation," he wrote, after the worst of it was over, "large sums [of the public debt] were purchased at twenty-five per cent above par and upwards;" which was just what happened when John Law "touched the corpse" of French credit in 1717. "Since this report has been read," exclaimed a fiery member from Georgia, "a spirit of speculation and ruin has arisen, and been cherished by people who had an access to the information the report contained, that would have made a *Hastings* blush to

have been connected with, though long inured to preying on the vitals of his fellow-men. Three vessels, sir, have sailed within a fortnight from this port, freighted for speculation: they are intended to purchase up the State and other securities in the hands of the uninformed though honest citizens of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. My soul rises indignant at the avaricious and moral turpitude which so vile a conduct displays."

Thus the virtuous Georgian. And, indeed, few persons then perceived the usefulness of speculators,—the men who employ themselves in applying the redundancy of one place to the scarcity of another. Too many nutmegs in London, not enough nutmegs in New York: it is the speculator who remedies both evils at a stroke, with occasional advantage to himself. But how far a speculator may honorably avail himself of special knowledge is a question upon which Wayland's Moral Philosophy (school edition) is clear and decisive, but which presents difficulties in practical life. Those three fast-sailing schooners play a great part in the journalism and politics of the time. Whether they were phantom vessels or genuine two-masted schooners is not certain, but they excited profound and general horror. "If any man burns his fingers," said the indignant Jackson of Georgia, "which I hope to God, with all the warmth of a feeling heart, they may, they will only have their own cupidity to blame."

Now, the proposed assumption of the State debts, even if the principle could be admitted, even if the measure could be thought desirable or timely, was open to the obvious objection, that it would throw upon the market twenty-one millions more of the fuel that had caused this alarming conflagration. It would be like putting gallons of tar into the furnace of a Mississippi steamboat already making nineteen miles an hour, with a colored boy on the safety-valve; a proceeding usually applauded by the gamblers and betting men on board, though extremely displeasing to steady-going passengers.

Some of the States, moreover, had paid off half their war-debt; others were making strenuous efforts in that direction; but some had not diminished their indebtedness at all, nor tried to do so. The proposed assumption placed all the States upon a level. The five foolish virgins were to have their lamps filled for them at the door of the mansion, and to be allowed to flaunt into the banquet

ing-room on the same footing as their wise companions. The bad apprentice and the good apprentice were each to marry his master's daughter, inherit the business, and be lord-mayor.

For these and other reasons, a small majority of the House (31 to 29), in spite of the outcries of an army of creditors, and in spite of Hamilton's dazzling prestige and irrepressible resolution, rejected the plan of assumption. So acrimonious had been the debate, so intense the feeling on both sides, on the floor, in the lobby, in "the street," that when at last the rash scheme was rejected, it seemed as if the experiment of a general government had failed. Congress assembled every morning as usual, but only to adjourn at once; as the two sides were "too much out of temper to do business together." It was a case of Town *versus* Country, North against South, centralism against the rights and dignity of the State governments.

But why so much ill-humor? Because Hamilton and his friends, the men who were conducting the experiment of Federal government by the people, had no faith in the principle. It was not in their blood to submit at once, without a word, to the decision of a majority. The cogent arguments of Madison and the Republican members against assumption, instead of instructing this brilliant young pupil of John Law, only irritated him, only made him the more resolute to carry his point, only convinced him the more that the people do not know what is best for them. He had an unteachable mind. "I will not give him up yet," he said, when he heard of Madison's opposition; as though it were a moral aberration in a friend to object to his measures; and when it became clear that Madison was fixed in his opposition, he had the immeasurable insolence to say, "Alas, poor human nature!" The idea never crossed his mind of dropping the scheme. And we may be sure, that, at such a time, the clamor of an interested lobby will make itself heard; for the vote against assumption was a shivering blow to many a paper fortune.

Mr. Madison, in his bright and happy old age, once gave *his* version of the reason why Hamilton and himself had separated in 1790. Mr. Nicholas P. Trist preserves the anecdote. "I abandoned Colonel Hamilton," said Madison, "or Colonel Hamilton abandoned me, — in a word, we *parted*, — upon its plainly becoming his purpose and endeavor to *administration* the government



into a thing totally different from that which he and I both knew perfectly well had been understood and intended by the Convention which framed it, and by the people in adopting it."

In this extremity, to whom, of all men in the world, should Hamilton apply for assistance but Jefferson, his colleague of three weeks' standing, up to the eyes in the work of his own department! Chance gave him the opportunity. On an April day, as the secretary of state was walking from his house, 54 Maiden Lane, to the president's mansion, at the corner of Pearl and Cherry Streets, Hamilton met and joined him, and broke into the topic that filled his mind. The distance being much too short for his purpose, he "walked" his colleague to and fro in front of the president's house for half an hour, descanting upon the situation, dwelling especially upon the dangerous temper into which Congress had been wrought, and the fierce disgust of members whose States were supposed to have more to receive than to pay. That word of fearful omen, *secession*, was then first uttered in connection with the politics of the United States. There was danger, Hamilton said, of the secession of the opposing members, and the separation of their States from the Union. At such a crisis, he thought, members of the administration should rally round the *president*, who was "the centre on which all administrative measures ultimately rested," and give a united support to such as he approved. This misinterpretation of the situation shows us how much he was "bewitched by the British form." The man was incapable of comprehending the crisis. There *was* no crisis, except of his own making. One of the suggestions of his report having been rejected by the House of Representatives, he and his friends had only to acquiesce in becoming silence, and all was well. But confused by their familiarity with the English system, excited by the clamor of the street, and having an ample share of false pride, they must needs persist until they had produced a crisis.

Thus appealed to, Jefferson fell back upon the expedient which had been so successful in Paris during the French crisis of August, 1789,—a dinner. He told his anxious colleague that he was a stranger to the whole subject, not having yet informed himself of the system of finance adopted, and unable, therefore, to decide how far this measure of assuming the State debts was "a necessary sequence." But of one thing there could be no doubt: if its rejea

tion was really perilous to the Union at this early stage of its existence, all partial and temporary evils should be endured to avert that supreme catastrophe. "Dine with me to-morrow," he continued, "and I will invite another friend or two, and bring you into conference together. I think it impossible that reasonable men, consulting together coolly, can fail, by some mutual sacrifices of opinion, to form a compromise which is to save the Union."

The conference occurred. Jefferson, as usual with him on such occasions, did not join in the discussion, but only exhorted his friends to conciliation, and quieted their minds by his serene presence. A compromise was effected; but, unhappily, it was not a compromise of opinion. Contending interests had to be assuaged; and thus a vast permanent wrong was done in order to tide over a temporary inconvenience. Nay, two permanent wrongs: log-rolling was invented, and the city of Washington was sprawled over the soft banks of the Potomac.

As early as September, 1789, the question of a capital of the United States had been debated in Congress, and debated with that warmth and irritation which such a subject excites always. A Ring loomed up dimly upon the imaginations of members, supposed to have been formed "out of doors," in order to fix the capital at "Wright's Ferry on the Susquehanna;" a place which has since developed into Wrightsville, containing, according to the *Gazetteer*, "two saw-mills, and thirteen hundred and ten inhabitants." Few, perhaps, of these thirteen hundred and ten inhabitants know what a narrow escape their secluded village had of being the capital of their country. The members from New England and New York agreed in preferring it, as the point nearest the centre of population, wealth, and convenience; and for many days it seemed to have a better chance than any of the other places proposed, — Harrisburg, Baltimore, New York, Germantown, Philadelphia. Wright's Ferry was shown in the debates to be the veritable "hub of the universe," a region favored by nature above others; where, as one member remarked, not merely the soil, the water, and the "advantages of nature," were unsurpassed, but where, "if honorable gentlemen were disposed to pay much attention to a dish of fish, he could assure them their table might be furnished with fine and good from the waters of the Susquehanna."

But Wright's Ferry lost its chance through the opposition of the

Southern members; and the Ring rumor was the ass's jawbone which they used to kill the project. "Preconcerted out of doors," said Madison. "I am sorry the people should learn," remarked the loud Jackson of Georgia, whose home was a thousand miles from Wright's Ferry, "that the members from New England and New York had fixed on a seat of government." Such a report, he thought, would "blow the coals of sedition, and endanger the Union."

The members from New England and New York denied the offensive charge, and contended that Wright had fixed his ferry at the point which would be "the centre of population for ages yet to come." With regard to the country west of the Ohio, "an immeasurable wilderness," Fisher Ames was of opinion (and it was everybody's opinion) that it was "perfectly romantic" to allow it any weight in the decision at all. "When it will be settled, or how it will be possible to govern it," said he, "is past calculation." Southern gentlemen, on the other hand, denied the "centrality" of Wright, and maintained that the shores of the noble Potomac presented the genuine centre to the nation's choice. The Potomac! Horror! A deadly miasma hung over its banks; and no native of New England could remain there and live. "Vast numbers of Eastern adventurers," said Mr. Sedgwick of Massachusetts, "have gone to the Southern States, and *all* have found their graves there: they have met destruction as soon as they arrived." Centre of population? "Yes," said Sedgwick, "if you count the slaves;" but "if *they* were considered, gentlemen might as well estimate the black cattle of New England."

One remark made by Madison in the course of this long and too warm discussion has a particular interest for us who live under a network of telegraphic wires. "If," said he, "it were possible to promulgate our laws by some instantaneous operation, it would be of less consequence, in that point of view, where the government might be placed." But even in that case, centrality, he thought, would be but just, since the government would probably expend every year as much as half a million of dollars, and every citizen should partake of this advantage as equally as Nature had rendered it possible.

And so the debate went on day after day. The Susquehanna men triumphed in the House; but the senate sent back the bill with

"Susquehanna" stricken out, and "Germantown" inserted. The House would not accept the amendment, and the session ended before a place had been agreed upon. The subject being resumed in the spring of 1790, it was again productive of heat and recrimination; again the South was outvoted, and the Potomac rejected by a small majority. Baffled in the House, Southern men renewed their efforts over Mr. Jefferson's wine and hickory-nuts in Maiden Lane. Two sets of members were sour or savage from the loss of a measure upon which they had set their hearts: Southern men had lost the capital, and Northern men assumption. Then it was that the original American log-roller — name unrecorded — conceived the idea of this bad kind of compromise. The bargain was this: two Southern members should vote for assumption, and so carry it; and, in return for this concession, Hamilton agreed to induce a few Northern members to change their votes on the question of the capital, and so fix it upon the Potomac. It was agreed, at length, that for the next ten years the seat of government should be Philadelphia, and finally near Georgetown. How much trouble would have been saved if some prophetic member had been strong enough to carry a very simple amendment, to strike out ten years, and insert one hundred! And, in that case, what an agreeable task would have been devolved upon this generation, of repealing Georgetown, and beginning a suitable capital at the proper place!

To the last of his public life, Jefferson never ceased to regret the part he had innocently taken in this bargain. Even as a matter of convenience (leaving principle out of sight), he thought the separate States could reduce their chaos of debts to order, and put them in a fair way to be discharged, better, sooner, and cheaper, than it could be done by the general government. But, while the crisis lasted, the minds of all men were filled with dismay and apprehension; for the threat of disunion had then lost none of its terrors by repetition and familiarity. The letters of the time are full of the perils of the situation. Jefferson himself, in a letter to his young friend Monroe, dated June 20, 1790, held this fearful language: "After exhausting their arguments and patience on these subjects, members have been for some time resting upon their oars, unable to get along as to these businesses, and indisposed to attend to any thing else till they are settled. And, in fine, it has become probable, that, unless they can be settled by some plan of compromise, there will be no funding-

bill agreed to, and our credit (raised by late prospects to be the first on the exchange at Amsterdam, where our paper is above par) will burst and vanish, and the States separate to take care every one of itself."

And so Hamilton triumphed. The young republic rose in the estimation of all the money-streets of Christendom; and in Amsterdam, a few months later, a new United-States loan of two and a half millions of florins was filled in two hours and a half. What a contrast from the time when all Mr. Adams's pertinacity and eloquence, united with Mr. Jefferson's tact and suavity, had only been able to wring florins enough from Holland to keep the servants of Congress in Europe supplied with the necessaries of life! At home the sudden increase in the value of the widely scattered debt enriched many people, improved the circumstances of more, and gave a lift to the whole country. America began to be. New York entered upon its predestined career. Corner-lots acquired value. But the corpse of the public credit, having got firmly upon its feet, began soon to dance, caper, leap, and execute gymnastic wonders; for the young gentleman at the head of the treasury must needs apply the galvanic fluid once more. That "Bank of the United States," of which he had dreamed by the camp-fires of the Revolution, he was now in a position to establish. Deaf to the warnings of the prudent and the arguments of the wise, he forced it through Congress, and sat up all night writing a paper to convince the president that he ought to sign the bill. The books were opened. In a day — as fast, indeed, as the entries could be made — the shares were all taken, and large numbers of people were still eager to subscribe.

Then arose in the United States just such a mania for speculation as France experienced when the gambler Law, and the *roué* Regent, put their heads together in 1717. Every scrap of paper issued by the United States or bearing its sanction, whether debt or shares, acquired a fictitious value. "What do you think of this scrippomania?" asks Jefferson of a friend in August, 1791. "Ships are lying idle at the wharves, buildings are stopped, capitals are withdrawn from commerce, manufactures, arts and agriculture, to be employed in gambling; and the tide of public prosperity, almost unparalleled in any country, is arrested in its course, and suppressed by the rage of getting rich in a day. No mortal can tell when this will stop; for the spirit of gaming, when once it has seized"

subject, is incurable. The tailor who has made thousands in one day, though he has lost them the next, can never again be content with the slow and moderate earnings of his needle." Hamilton, too, was alarmed at the "extravagant sallies of speculation," which, he said, disgusted all sober citizens, and gave "a wild air to every thing." Such periods, happily, can never be of long duration: under the magic touch of Law, the corpse of French credit kept upon its feet eight months, then collapsed, and "a hundred thousand persons ruined." The period of inflation in the United States lasted about the same time, and was followed by the usual depression, and the sudden return of the speculating tailor to his needle.

We laugh at those periods of collapse when they are past; but, while they are passing, the hurricanes of the West Indies, the simooms of Sahara, the earthquakes of the Andes, are not more terrible. They once threatened to play the same part in the spiritual history of America as the "terrible aspects of Nature" did in that of Spain, where, as Mr. Buckle remarks, famines, epidemics, and earthquakes kept the human mind in a bondage of terror, and rendered it the easy prey of the priest.



## CHAPTER XLIV.

### JEFFERSON SETTLING TO HIS WORK.

THE secretary of state, meanwhile, was grappling with the weighty, unobtrusive duties of his place. No one knew, at first, what those duties were, or were not. For a while he was postmaster-general; and we find him inviting Colonel Pickering to dinner to confer upon a dashing scheme of sending the mail over the country at the furious pace of one hundred miles a day. His idea was to employ the public coaches for the service; but, as they only travelled by day, he wished to "hand the mail along through the night, till it may fall in with another stage the next day." He was commissioner of patents as well; and, in that capacity, saw what "a spring" was given to invention by the patent-law. Happy were the inventors to find so appreciative an examiner of their devices! Oddly enough, too, it was to him the House referred a pretended discovery of one Isaacs for converting sea water into fresh. He gave a quietus to the claim of the enterprising Isaacs by inviting him to try his hand upon a few gallons of salt water in the presence of Rittenhouse, Wistar, Hutchinson, and himself, all members of the Philosophical Society. The process proved to be a mere distillation (known and practised for many years), veiled by a little hocus-pocus of Mr. Isaac's own contriving. He reported against the claim, and advised that a short account of the best way of extemporizing a still on board ship be printed on the back of all ships' clearances with an invitation to forward results of such attempts to the secretary of state.

The question of establishing a mint was referred by a lazy House of Representatives to the secretary of state. Shall we send abroad to get our coins made, or manufacture them at home? At home said Mr. Jefferson. "Coinage is peculiarly an attribute of sovereign-

ty. . . . To transfer its exercise into another country, is to submit it to another sovereign." So the mint was established at Philadelphia, workmen were invited from abroad, and a quantity of copper ordered from Europe to be made into American cents.

Some questions, which would now be answered by the Supreme Court, were referred to him for an opinion. One was this: If the president nominates an ambassador, has the senate a right to change the grade of the nominee to plenipotentiary? It has not, was the opinion given. Even the validity of a grant of land was referred to him. Many a day of arduous toil, and many an hour of earnest consultation, were devoted by Jefferson in the summer of 1790 to a report, called for by the House, of a plan of establishing uniformity in coinage, weights, and measures; a subject familiar to his mind for many years. In this most elaborate and able paper, packed close with curious knowledge, and illumined with happy suggestions, he made one more attempt to introduce the decimal system. If his advice had been followed, school-boys to-day might be "saying" their tables in this fashion: "Ten points one line; ten lines one inch; ten inches one foot; ten feet one decad; ten decads one rood; ten roods one furlong; ten furlongs one mile." But this was too audacious for Congress to accept. The only decimal table adopted was the one relating to the new Federal money. But the people long clung to the familiar difficulties of pounds, shillings, and pence, aggravated by the intricacies of the different State currencies. After the lapse of eighty-two years, — so inveterate is habit — we are not yet universally submissive to the easy yoke of the decimal currency. "Dime" comes slowly into use; the words "sixpence" and "shilling" linger after the coins are gone; and the popular propensity is to call an eagle a "ten-dollar piece."

In addition to these domestic duties, it devolved upon the secretary of state to superintend the laying out of the District of Columbia, and the planning of the public edifices in the dense forest that covered the site of Washington. Hence, perhaps, the general resemblance of that city to ancient Williamsburg in Virginia, where the secretary of state attended college, studied law, played the violin, and loved Belinda. If Jefferson could have forgotten the spacious, pleasant old town, there was "dear Page" at his side, and plenty of other graduates of William and Mary, to remind him of it.

In the autumn of 1790 the government packed up its traps, and

removed from New York to Philadelphia. New-Yorkers took the loss good-humoredly enough, if we may judge from the newspapers. "And so Congress is going to Philadelphia," said one. "Well, then there is an end of every thing: no more pavement; no more improvements of any kind." And the editor wound up a long, jocular article by telling the story of Charles II. and the Lord Mayor of London. "What did the king say?" asked his Lordship of a deputation of aldermen just returned from court. "He says, if we don't give him more money, he'll remove his court to Windsor." "Is that all?" cried the Mayor. "I thought his Majesty said he'd take the Thames away." New York, too, has found its Thames sufficient.

In November, then, of 1790, the secretary of state, after a delightful month at Monticello, was established in Philadelphia, living in "four rooms" of a spacious lodging-house on the pleasant outskirts of the city, not far from where Dr. Franklin flew his immortal kite. Near by, the secretary had a stable and coach-house with stalls for six horses, four of which were occupied; so that Madison, Monroe, and himself could enjoy a canter together along the delicious banks of the Schuylkill. It was oftener a walk than a ride. Once it was a "wade." "What say you," he writes to Madison, during a rainy week in April, 1791, "to taking a wade into the country at noon? It will be pleasant above head at least, and the party will finish by dining here." He was raised to the dignity of grandfather in February, 1791. "Your last two letters," he writes to his daughter, "gave me the greatest pleasure of any I ever received from you. The one announced that you were become a notable housewife; the other, a mother. The last is undoubtedly the keystone of the arch of matrimonial happiness, as the first is its daily aliment." Monticello waited for him to name the baby. "Anne" was his choice, because it was a name frequent in both families.

He had also the honor, at this time, of being a kind of martyr to his principles. It was Jefferson who had taken the lead in destroying the ancient system of primogeniture and entail in Virginia; and one of the first great heirs who suffered by the reform was his own son-in-law, Randolph. The father of the young husband, a brisk and social old gentleman of the old school, gave alarming symptoms of a second marriage. A girl in her teens was the object of his

choice, upon whom he proposed to make a settlement so lavish as to greatly abridge the inheritance of the young couple, as well as to throw a great part of the charge of their immediate settlement upon Mr. Jefferson. The letter which he wrote to his daughter on this occasion has been a thousand times admired, and will be admired again as often as it is read by a person in whose disposition there is any thing of magnanimity or tenderness. He told her that Colonel Randolph's marriage was a thing to have been expected; for, as he was a man whose amusements depended upon society, he could not live alone. The settlement upon the old man's bride might be neither prudent nor just, but he hoped it would not lessen their affection for him.

"If the lady," he continued, "has any thing difficult in her disposition, avoid what is rough, and attach her good qualities to you. Consider what are otherwise as a bad stop in your harpsichord, and do not touch on it, but make yourself happy with the good ones. Every human being, my dear, must thus be viewed, according to what he is good for; for none of us, — no not one, — is perfect; and, were we to love none who had imperfections, this world would be a desert for our love. All we can do is to make the best of our friends, love and cherish what is good in them, and keep out of the way of what is bad; but no more think of rejecting them for it, than of throwing away a piece of music for a flat passage or two. Your situation will require peculiar attentions and respects to both parties. Let no proof be too much for either your patience or acquiescence. Be you, my dear, the link of love, union, and peace for the whole family. The world will give you the more credit for it in proportion to the difficulty of the task, and your own happiness will be the greater as you perceive that you promote that of others. Former acquaintance and equality of age will render it the easier for you to cultivate and gain the love of the lady. The mother, too, becomes a very necessary object of attentions."

The marriage took place, and the settlements upon the bride were made. The young couple, in consequence, were much more curtailed in their resources than any one had expected. But the daughter of Jefferson remained, for thirty-five years, "the link of love, union, and peace for the whole family;" one member of which, John Randolph of Roanoke, estranged as he was from her father, toasted her as "the noblest woman in Virginia."

## CHAPTER XLV.

### NEGOTIATIONS WITH ENGLAND AFTER THE REVOLUTION.

PRESIDENT WASHINGTON'S chief difficulties, after the public debt had been provided for, arose from the relations of the young republic with foreign powers. To weakness every thing is difficult. The necessity of keeping the peace was so manifest and so urgent, that the government could not meet the representatives of an unfriendly power on equal terms. The United States then signified merely a thin line of settlements along the Atlantic coast, open on the side of the ocean to a hostile fleet, and on the western boundary to the Indian tribes; Spain holding New Orleans, and Great Britain Canada. There was no army, no navy, no surplus revenue; and the country was but just recovering from the exhaustion and ravage of an eight-years' war. Happily, for one reason or another, from policy or sentiment, all Christendom wished well to the infant nation, excepting alone the king and ruling class of Great Britain. These could not forgive America the wrongs they had done her. There was, also, a small, but influential class in the United States, whose ancient fondness for the land of their ancestors had survived the war, and affected their judgment concerning questions in dispute between the two countries.

When General Washington came to the presidency in 1789, six years had elapsed since the peace. In the treaty of 1783, Great Britain had agreed to evacuate, without needless delay, every fortified place within the boundaries of the United States; and yet British garrisons still held seven American posts of little use to her, but of vital importance both to the honor and the safety of this country, — posts the retention of which was a menace as well as an injury; for they kept open the great natural highways from Canada into the United States. The posts were Detroit, Mackinaw

Oswego, Ogdensburg, Niagara, and two commanding places on Lake Champlain, called then Iron Point and Dutchman's Point. Independence was not complete while the English flag flew above these posts; nor were the frontiers safe. What could the Indians think of it? An Indian head is a small, poor thing, which cannot hold many ideas at a time. The Indians could see that familiar flag, and could recognize those red-coated soldiers as servants of the power to which they had been submissive for thirty years; but what could they know of President Washington and his government, distant a month's journey?

The fur-trade, too, which would have been important to an infant nation obliged to buy so much in Europe, was necessarily in the hands of men having access to those posts. John Jacob Astor was already a furrier in New York, doing business in 1790 at No. 40, Little Dock Street; but while the English held the posts, he could only tramp the eastern half of the State of New York, with his pack of gewgaws and paint upon his back, and gather furs from the friendly part of the Six Nations. A nice little business he had, it is true, but not sufficient to encourage him to think of building an Astor House or founding an Astor Library. Captain Cooper (father of Peter Cooper), who had a small hat-factory in the same street, and bought many a beaver-skin of this thriving furrier, would have had them cheaper if his neighbor could have ranged free over the western country. Another grievance was this: In evacuating New York, the British commander, in open disregard of the treaty, had permitted a large number of slaves to find passage in the fleet; three thousand of whom had been received on board under the eyes of the American commissioners appointed to prevent it, in spite of their remonstrance, and in consequence of an avowed order of the general in command.

To these substantial wrongs was added a neglect, an indifference, a silence, that looked like systematic discourtesy. Congress sent Mr. Adams to London, in 1785, to represent the new member of the family of nations near the court of one of the oldest. No English minister was sent to America till six years after. Mr. Adams, though he was received civilly enough, was kept haunting ante-chambers for three months before he began to get any certainty as to the reason why the posts were retained. When the king, in 1775, made war upon the colonies, suddenly suspending commercial intercourse,



America owed British merchants vast sums. The long-credit system had been so encouraged by the merchants, that the colonies were, perhaps, a year behindhand in their payments. The war lasted nearly eight years, and left the country exhausted and impoverished, — with an alarming public debt to provide for, with a host of needy soldiers to appease, with the means of recuperation destroyed, with the commerce of the West Indies closed to them, and all the old commerce gone into other hands. But the treaty of peace had not been signed before the British creditors began to clamor for their debts, with interest! Eight years' interest added to the principal! Interest for the long period when every port was blockaded, and the productive industry of the country suspended by the power which owed protection to both! Not Grotius, nor Vattel, no, nor Puffendorf, nor all these learned pundits in accord, were ever able to convince New England merchants or Virginia planters that this was right. Every State passed laws protecting its citizens against ruinous suits to recover these debts. There was a general intention to pay the ancient principal; but the war interest no Whig could feel to be just.

Mr. Adams had at length the satisfaction of sitting face to face with Mr. Pitt, the heaven-born minister, aged twenty-six, still in the splendid dawn of his wonderful career. "What are the principal points to be discussed between us?" Mr. Pitt inquired. The American minister enumerated them. The posts, the negroes, and a treaty of commerce, were the chief. With regard to the negroes, Mr. Pitt was candid and explicit. Carrying them off, he said, was so clearly against the treaty, that, if Mr. Adams could produce the requisite proof of their number and value, the British government "must take measures to satisfy that demand." This was a good beginning. Another point, relating to certain captures of American vessels after the armistice of 1783, Mr. Pitt thought was "clear," and could be "easily settled." But those were all the concessions the English minister was disposed to make. "As to the posts," said he, "that is a point connected with some others, that, I think, must be settled at the same time." We can imagine the eager interest with which Mr. Adams asked what those points were. "The debts," was Mr. Pitt's reply: "several of the States have interfered against the treaty, and by acts of their legislatures have interposed impediments to the recovery of debts, against which there are great complaints in this country."

The secret was out. The creditors, as Mr. Pitt remarked, were clamorous. In London they formed themselves into a society for the purpose of urging on the government to press their claims; and this society was so powerful, that no administration could willingly disregard its wishes.

The conversation continued. No American jury, Mr. Adams said, would ever award any interest for the time of the war. That would surprise people in England, Mr. Pitt observed; for wars never interrupted the interest or principal of debts; and he could see no difference between this war and any other, and English lawyers made none. This was too much for Mr. Adams. "I begged his pardon here," he reports, "and said that American lawyers made a wide difference: *they* contended that the late war was a total dissolution of all laws and government, and consequently of all contracts made under those laws." This being the case, he thought the two governments should come to an understanding, so that the same rule of law might be observed on both sides. Mr. Pitt seemed to think this not unreasonable; but he frankly owned that the administration "would not dare to make the proposal, without previously feeling out the dispositions of the persons chiefly interested."

From this subject they turned to the desired treaty of commerce, so necessary to enable America to pay these very debts. It was unaccountable, Mr. Adams said, that Great Britain should sacrifice the general interest of the nation to the private interest of a few individuals interested in the whale-fishery and ship-building, so far as to refuse to take American oil and ships in payment of the debts. Mr. Adams became eloquent on this point. "The fat of the spermaceti whale," he said, "gives the clearest and most beautiful flame of any substance known in nature; and we are all surprised that you prefer darkness, and consequent robberies, burglaries, and murders, in your streets, to the receiving, as a remittance, our spermaceti oil. The lamps around Grosvenor Square" (where Mr. Adams lived) "I know, and in Downing Street" (where this conversation occurred), "I suppose, are dim by midnight, and extinguished by two o'clock; whereas our oil would burn bright till nine o'clock, and chase away before the watchmen all the villains, and save you the trouble and danger of introducing a new police into the city."

The whole conversation was sprightly and good-tempered. Mr. Pitt sent a thrill of triumphant joy through the frame of Mr

Adams by saying, as the conference closed, that he was in favor of taking advantage of the recess to mature a plan for settling the differences. The American minister declared he was rejoiced to hear it. He would be ready at all times to attend whenever explanation was wanted. Meanwhile, he *was* anxious about the posts: he *would* like an answer on that point, so vital to the peace and safety, as well as to the business of his country. "I am in duty bound," said he, "to insist on their evacuation." To which the wary Pitt replied, that that point was connected with others, and he should be for settling all these together.

And that was all the satisfaction Mr. Adams received during his three years' residence in England. No summons from the Ministry came, no explanation was asked, no apology offered. King, Parliament, and people were against him, against America, against receiving oil from Nantucket, or ships from Maine; against remitting the war interest; against giving up the posts till the debts were paid; against affording a young nation the slightest chance of getting on in the world. In these circumstances, what could the Ministry do but do nothing? If Mr. Adams sought an interview, he never advanced a step beyond the point where Mr. Pitt and himself had left the controversy. *Give up the posts*, said Mr. Adams. *Pay the debts*, replied the English minister. What, cried Adams, *pay* the debts? No government was ever before asked to pay the private debts of its subjects. The treaty only stipulated that no lawful impediment should be put in the way of the recovery of the debts. "But," said the minister, "if lawful impediments *have been* thrown in the way" — Finally, the king himself, when Mr. Adams, weary of hopeless waiting, went to take formal leave, said bluntly, "Mr. Adams, you may with great truth assure the United States, that, whenever they shall fulfil the treaty on their part, I, on my part, will fulfil it in all its particulars."

Exasperating as all this was to the old Adam in human nature, Congress were patient under it. They referred the whole subject, as disclosed in Mr. Adams's letters, to John Jay, for his opinion. Mr. Jay, in an elaborate paper, which aimed to present the whole matter from the beginning, came to this strange conclusion: *We are wrong, and England is right!* The fourth article of the treaty of peace was in these words: "It is agreed that the creditors or either side shall meet with no lawful impediment to the recovery of

the full value, in sterling money, of all the *bona fide* debts heretofore contracted." The simple question was, according to Mr. Jay, "Have British creditors met with lawful impediments to the recovery of their American debts?" To this question, he said, but one answer could be given. They have; every State had passed laws impeding, delaying, or forbidding the collection of the debts. This infraction, Mr. Jay thought, justified Great Britain in holding the posts; "nor would Britain be to blame in continuing to hold them, until America shall cease to impede her enjoying every essential right secured to her and her people and adherents by the treaty."

Having reached this conclusion, he advised Congress, 1, To recommend the States to repeal the impeding laws; 2, To instruct Mr. Adams "candidly to admit that the fourth and sixth articles of the treaty had been violated in America;" and to say that the United States were taking efficacious measures for removing all cause of complaint. Congress accepted Mr. Jay's conclusions. They gave the required advice to the States, and gave it with all the requisite tact and dignity. A majority of the State legislatures repealed the laws; others were considering the subject, when the Constitution of 1787 removed the difficulty by rendering the general government unquestionably supreme in all matters of foreign concern.

But this sublime diplomacy did not touch the heart of the British creditor, nor change the policy of the government, nor assuage the animosity of the ruling class. As a rule, Americans who were able to pay their British debts paid them; but a considerable number, dead or ruined by the war, gave no sign. America remained an odious name in England, Mr. Adams informs us. Members of Parliament, he wrote, had been so long badgered and tormented on the subject, that they detested to hear the name mentioned, and the humor of the nation seemed to be neither to speak nor think of America. Four millions sterling had already been appropriated by Parliament to compensate banished Tories and ruined adherents. The pension-list had been lengthened by a long catalogue of American placemen; and still the lobbies and ante-chambers were haunted by a clamorous multitude of hungry claimants. We can hardly wonder, that when at length Mr. Adams, in weariness and despair, was preparing to leave, he should have been treated "with that dry

decency and cold civility which appears to have been the premeditated plan from the beginning."

Two years passed. The new government came into existence, with General Washington at its head. Great Britain still held the posts, retained the fur-trade, ruled the Indians, shut the ports of the West Indies, and sent no minister to Philadelphia. The president, after an attentive perusal of the papers and a survey of the situation, privately commissioned Gouverneur Morris, in October, 1789, to cross the channel, and "converse with his Britannic majesty's ministers" on the points in controversy, and "ascertain their views," and endeavor to discover whether negotiations could be re-opened with any fair prospect of a termination satisfactory to the United States.

It is a trial to the temper of an American citizen to read the record of Mr. Morris's mission. The policy of "dry decency and cold civility" was carried to an extreme which was sometimes too much for the warm temper of the American commissioner, who gave Mr. Pitt some pretty sharp retorts. On one occasion, after pressing the English minister hard for some basis of a negotiation, he got a glimpse of daylight.

MORRIS. If I understand you, Mr. Pitt, you wish to make a new treaty, instead of complying with the old one.

PITT. That is, in some sort, my idea.

MORRIS. I do not see what better can be done than to perform the old one. As to the compensation for negroes taken away, it is too trifling an object for you to dispute, so that nothing remains but the posts. I suppose, therefore, that you wish to retain those posts.

PITT. *Why, perhaps we may.*

MORRIS. They are not worth the keeping; for it must cost you a great deal of money, and produce no benefit. The only reason you can have to desire them is to secure the fur-trade; and that will centre in this country, let who will carry it on in America.

PITT. If you consider these posts as a trivial object, there is the less reason for requiring them.

MORRIS. Pardon me, sir, I only state the retaining them as useless to *you*. . . . Our national honor is interested. You hold them with the avowed intention of forcing us to comply with such conditions as you may impose.

PITT. Why, sir, as to the consideration of national honor, we may retort the observation, and say, our honor is concerned in your delay of performance of the treaty.

MORRIS. No, sir: your natural and proper course was to comply fully on your part, and if then we had refused compliance, you might rightfully have issued letters of marque and reprisal to such of your subjects as were injured by our refusal. But the conduct you have pursued, naturally excites resentment in every American bosom. We do not think it worth while to go to war with you for these posts; but we know our rights, and will avail ourselves of them when time and circumstances may suit.

PITT. Have you powers to treat?

MORRIS. I have not. We cannot appoint any person as minister, you so much neglected the former appointment.

PITT. Will you appoint a minister if we do?

MORRIS. I can almost promise we shall, but am not authorized to give any positive assurance.

PITT. Then the question is, How shall we communicate on this subject?

MORRIS. Perhaps it would be expedient for you to appoint a minister, and delay his departure till we have made a similar appointment.

PITT. We could communicate to the president our intention to appoint.

MORRIS. Your communication might encounter some little difficulty, because the president cannot properly hear any thing from the British consuls, these being characters unacknowledged in America.

PITT (*firing up a little*). I should suppose, Mr. Morris, that attention might as well be paid to what they say, as that the Duke of Leeds and myself should hold the present conversation with you.

MORRIS. By no means, sir. I should never have thought of asking a conference with His Grace, if I had not possessed a letter from the president of the United States.

PITT. We, in like manner, could write a letter to one of our consuls.

MORRIS. Yes, sir; and the *letter* would be attended to, but not the consul, who is in no respect different from any other British subject.

PITT. Etiquette ought not to be pushed so far as to injure business, and keep the countries asunder.



MORRIS. The rulers of America have too much understanding to care for etiquette; but I beg you to recollect, that you have hitherto kept us at a distance, instead of making advances. The president has gone quite as far as you had any reason to expect, in writing the letter I have just mentioned; and, from what has passed in consequence of it, we cannot but consider you as wishing to avoid an intercourse.

PITT. I hope you will endeavor to remove such an idea. I assure you, we are disposed to cultivate a connection.

MORRIS. Any communications which His Grace of Leeds may make shall be duly transmitted; but I do not like to write mere conversations. *Our* disposition towards a good understanding is evidenced, not only by the president's letter, but by the decision of a majority of the House of Representatives against laying extraordinary restrictions on British vessels in American ports.

PITT. Instead of restrictions, you ought to give us particular privileges, in return for those which you enjoy here.

MORRIS. I assure you I know of no particular privileges which we enjoy here, except that of being impressed, which, of all others, is the one we least wish to partake of.

DUKE OF LEEDS (*laughing*). You are at least treated in that respect as "the most favored nation," seeing that you are treated like ourselves.

PITT (*seriously*). We have certainly evidenced good-will towards you by what we have done respecting your commerce.

MORRIS. Your regulations were dictated by a view to your own interest; and therefore, as we feel no favor, we owe no obligation.

Here the conversation ended. Mr. Pitt said that the Duke of Leeds and himself would consult together, and give Mr. Morris the result of their deliberations. Doubtless they meant to do so; and, if the decision had rested with the three gentlemen present on this occasion, the posts would have been speedily surrendered, and a reasonable treaty of commerce concluded. But there was a royal Dunderhead in the way, the sum-total of whose American policy was this: "My American Tories stood by me: I will stand by them. Annul the confiscations, make good the lost debts, and *then* we'll talk about the posts." There was, also, an ignorant mercantile and manufacturing class, who had not yet begun to study

their Adam Smith, and who cherished the pride that goes with ignorance, whether its possessor is an Indian chief or a British cotton-spinner.

The conversation given above occurred May 21, 1790. May ended, June began and ended, July and August passed, September was gliding by, and yet Gouverneur Morris received not a line, not a word, from the ministry. Had they forgotten his existence? He had extensive affairs in Holland that demanded his presence; and yet he waited, — waited solely for the promised communication. Meanwhile, the nocturnal exploits of the press-gang in British seaports added new outrage to the old grievances. Morris, after waiting four months, was compelled to ask attention to his mission. He obtained "dry decency and cold civility" in return for his patient waiting; but he could never wring a satisfactory word from the ministers of a king, who, he said, "hated the very name of America." The president, acting upon Jefferson's advice, terminated his mission and sent him a thousand dollars to defray the expenses of his six months' residence in London. The outspoken founder of "Morrissania" returned polite acknowledgments of the president's consideration, and remarked to the secretary of state, that his detention in London had cost him four hundred and eighty-nine pounds six shillings and sixpence.

Such were the relations between the United States and Great Britain in 1790, when Jefferson and Hamilton began to discuss national affairs across the president's mahogany. And still the *penchant* of the secretary of the treasury was for Great Britain. Washington's was not: he had been cured of it years before. Jefferson's was not, of course. Hamilton had concurred with Mr. Jay and Mr. Adams in the opinion, that there had been violations of the treaty on *both* sides, and that, as America began it, England had not been to blame for retaining the posts. *Penchant* is a great matter. I am sure that Colonel Hamilton was most warmly attached, nay, wholly devoted to the country which he served; but this leaning toward Great Britain, and a certain British aversion to France, could not but have its effect upon his judgment.

In September, 1790, while Gouverneur Morris was still waiting in London, occurred one of those diplomatic crises, once so frequent, which threatened war between Great Britain and Spain, with strong probability of involving half of Europe in the strife. The president,

from many indications, concluded, that, in case the war broke out Mr. Pitt would strike at once, in his father's style, for New Orleans, and all the Spanish territory in that region; floating troops from Detroit down our lakes and rivers to meet a British armament from the sea. Two momentous questions arose in the president's mind, which he proposed to Jefferson and Hamilton, requesting answers in writing: 1, Suppose Lord Dorchester, the governor of Canada, should ask permission to send troops through the territories of the United States, what answer shall we give? 2, Suppose he should do it without leave ("the most probable proceeding"), what shall we do about it? The president was profoundly impressed with the magnitude of the danger to a young nation, exhausted with a long war, deep in debt, without army or navy, of having, as he said, "so formidable and enterprising a people as the British on both our flanks and rear, with their navy in front."

Mr. Jefferson's reply was short and explicit. Rather than have New Orleans and the mouth of the Mississippi a British possession, he thought, we should join in the *mêlée* of nations, and fight. But this was the *last* thing to do, not the first; and not to be done so long as any other decent expedient remained untried. If permission to pass troops should be asked and refused, and still they should pass, we must instantly declare war; since "one insult pocketed soon produces another." Let us, then, begin by trying a middle course. Avoid giving an answer. Then, if they march, we can accept an apology, or make it a "handle of quarrel hereafter," according to circumstances. If they should march without asking leave, we should resent, or forgive, or disregard it, just as we might find it most conducive to our main object.

Mr. Jefferson was ready with his brief opinion the day after the president asked for it. Hamilton took nineteen days, and sent in a treatise. Being out of his element, and beyond his depth, he floundered in a distressing manner, clutching at Puffendorf, Grotius, Vattel, and Barbeyrac. He wandered so far as to introduce a discourse upon his favorite topic of the United States owing no "romantic gratitude" to France, and no gratitude at all to Spain. The tone and spirit of this long essay are such as to justify much of the warmth of opposition which Hamilton's political system excited. It is evident that the insolence of the British government, and the outrage of holding the posts, had excited in his mind no indignation:

and that he was one of those, who, to use his own language, "would prefer an intimate connection between the United States and Great Britain as most conducive to our security and advantage." He dwelt upon the obvious unfitness of the country to enter into the war, and the little likelihood there was of our accomplishing our object if we did. His conclusions were, that, if Lord Dorchester should ask permission, it would be best to grant it; if he should march without permission, but commit no offence, we should remonstrate; but, if he should force a passage past a fortification, we must declare war.

Happily the European war-cloud blew over. In America the western sky was overcast, and General St. Clair was preparing the expedition against the hostile Indians which was to terminate in the surprise of the white army, and the massacre of six hundred troops. Jefferson and Hamilton differed again; for Jefferson was opposed to the expedition. He hoped, indeed, that General St. Clair would give the Indians "a thorough drubbing," since the affair had come to that; but he thought that "the most economical, as well as most humane, conduct toward them is to bribe them into peace, and retain them in peace by eternal bribes." A hundred years of present-giving, he said, would not cost as much as this single expedition; and then follows a sentence which reveals the heat of many a cabinet battle, as the lava on Vesuvius betrays past eruption: "The least rag of Indian depredation will be an excuse to raise troops for those who love to have troops and for those who think that a public debt is a public blessing." This to Charles Carroll of Carrollton, April, 1791.

Upon another practical question, the secretary of the treasury differed from the secretary of state. Hamilton opposed, Jefferson favored, a system of retaliating the restrictions imposed by Great Britain upon American commerce. With regard to commercial intercourse with foreign nations, the only system Jefferson ever heartily approved was this: "Perfect and universal free-trade, as one of the natural rights of man and as the only sound policy. We may style that his first choice. His second was this: Free-trade with any nation which will reciprocate. But, as no nation was yet prepared for so advanced a measure, he was in favor of reciprocating privileges conceded by a foreign power, and retaliating restrictions. "Free trade and navigation," he thought, "are not to be given in

exchange for restrictions and vexations, nor are they likely to produce a relaxation of them."

Great Britain imposed such restrictions upon American commerce as seem, at present, too preposterous for belief. From her West India Islands American vessels were utterly excluded; and only such American products were admitted as could not be dispensed with, — grain, horses, live animals used for food, timber, tar, and turpentine. But neither an American vessel nor American products of any kind whatever were admitted into one British possession which could do without them; not into Newfoundland, Canada, or India. From Great Britain itself, whale-oil, salt fish, salt provisions, were excluded, and grain only admitted when the people must have it or go hungry. Jefferson proposed to meet all this by "counter prohibitions, duties, and regulations," and at the same time go to the uttermost in responding to the more liberal policy of France.

Hamilton, ever desirous of a cordial alliance with Great Britain, favored an opposite policy; and Jefferson thought it was his influence which finally held back Congress from retaliating restriction by restriction. In the cabinet, Hamilton opposed the retaliation system "violently," and offered one argument which the placable Jefferson owned was cogent. It was of more importance, Hamilton said, for us to have the posts than an open commerce, because nothing but the possession of the posts would free us from the expense of the Indian wars; and therefore, while we were treating for the posts, it would be folly to irritate the English by restricting their commerce. The English government would say, "These people mean war, let us therefore hold what we have in our hands." Struck with this argument, Jefferson replied, "If there is a hope of obtaining the posts, I agree it would be imprudent to risk that hope by a commercial retaliation." He agreed to delay recommending his scheme to Congress till the next session.

For, when this conversation occurred, negotiations had been recommenced. In August, 1791, George Hammond, the first British plenipotentiary who ever made his bow to a president of the United States, reached Philadelphia; and, in the course of the following winter, he was in correspondence with the secretary of state upon the vexed questions. They were old Paris acquaintances, and both were truly desirous of adjusting the differences on a basis of justice. The despatch of Mr. Jefferson of May 29, 1792, in which he argues

the American case, is the longest and the ablest of his official papers. There is good reason to believe that it convinced Mr. Hammond; and we know that a large number of Jefferson's political opponents owned, that, whatever errors he may have committed in his public life, he was a great man when he argued the cause of his country against the honest misconceptions of the British minister. "He is only fit for a secretary of state," they would say, when his name was mentioned in connection with places more eminent. In this paper he proved by original documents, that "the treaty of 1783 was violated in England before it was known in America, and in America as soon as known, and that, too, in points so essential, as that, without them, it never would have been concluded." He also showed, by an array of documentary evidence, that "the recovery of the debts was obstructed *validly* in none of our States, *invalidly* only in a few, and that not till after the infractions committed on the other side." This despatch is perhaps unsurpassed among the diplomatic documents of recent times for the thoroughness with which the work undertaken was performed. Its tranquil, dispassionate tone, and its freedom from every thing that could irritate the self-love of the English government or the English people, are as remarkable as the perfect frankness and fulness with which the rights of his country are stated.

Jefferson invited Mr. Hammond to a "solo dinner" on the subject, a few days after the delivery of this despatch, when they conversed on the points at issue in the most open and friendly manner. The British minister admitted that the idea of England having committed the first infraction was a new element in the controversy. His court had never heard of it; and it "gave the case a complexion so entirely new and different from what had been contemplated, that he should not be justified in taking a single step." He could only send the despatch across the ocean, and await further instructions. From the whole of this conversation, Jefferson derived the impression, that the English government "had entertained no thought of ever giving up the posts." Toward the close of the interview, Mr. Hammond suggested the idea of neither party having fortified posts on the frontier, but trading-posts only; which, says Jefferson, "accorded well with two favorite ideas of mine, of leaving commerce free, and never keeping an unnecessary soldier."

Mr. Jefferson's despatch of two hundred and fifty manuscript



pages made its way to Downing Street, but not to the brain or the conscience of George III. Nothing came of it. The controversy remained open during the whole period of his tenure of office. He sent in, at last, his report, recommending commercial retaliation, but only to have the scheme defeated, as he always supposed by his colleague.

And we must keep in mind, that while these two gentlemen, Hammond and Jefferson, calmly conversed over their wine on these subjects, there was an American people whose conversation upon them was the farthest possible from being tranquil. The people might not be up in their Puffendorf, nor was Vattel often seen on the family table; but the St. Clair massacre struck horror to the coldest heart, and excited reflections in the dullest head. Every one could enter into such cases as that of Hugh Purdie, a native of Virginia, impressed in London streets, carried to sea in a man-of-war, ordered to be released by the admiralty, put in irons and flogged *after* those orders had been received, and set on shore in a strange land without the means of subsisting for a day. It took fifty years to get the hatred out of the hearts of the American people which was engendered, not so much by the war, as by this insolent persistence in outrage after the war.

## CHAPTER XLVI.

### THE FRENCH REVOLUTION IN AMERICAN POLITICS.

MEANWHILE the Revolution in France, followed at first with universal approval, was becoming an element of discord in the politics of the country; and nowhere were the questions involved discussed so warmly as in President Washington's cabinet. An accident revealed to the public in 1791 Jefferson's complete sympathy with the French people, placed him distinctly at the head of the popular party, and made him, at length, president of the United States.

At first, I repeat, all classes in all countries seemed to hail the proceedings of the French people as the beginning of a better day for France and for man: even kings, nobles, and the other classes most obviously interested in the existing system, cherished or affected a sentimental approval of the ideas most subversive of it. The destruction of the Bastille shook off from the popular party all such adherents. "The time of illusions is past," wrote the queen of France to Madame de Polignac, "and to-day we pay dear for our infatuation and enthusiasm for the American war." But it was not from the party assailed that the first protest reached the ear of Christendom. It was from a man whose whole public life had been a struggle against despotic principles, the most eloquent defender America ever had in Europe, Edmund Burke. From an Early period — as soon, indeed, as the king and queen of France had been brought face to face with the Revolution in that wild march from Versailles to Paris — he had recoiled from it with a horror which only his own mighty pen could express.

In November, 1789, Dr. Richard Price, an honored member of Franklin's familiar London circle published his famous sermon on Love of Country, in which he applied the example of France to the case of England, maintaining the principle now so familiar, that

government is, properly, the creature and servant of the people. It was in reply to this discourse that Edmund Burke wrote his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, — four hundred pages of rhapsody and passion, invested with the potent charm of his inthralling style. It was a sorry lapse from the Edmund Burke of the Stamp-act nights in the House of Commons. The work was so weak in argument, of substance so flimsy and transparent, as really to give some slight show of probability to the dastardly charge, that his motives in writing it were not disinterested. But we ought not to doubt that this poor pamphlet was the faithful expression of his state of mind at the time. In 1773, during a recess of Parliament, he had had a joyous holiday in France, when he saw all that was brightest and most bewitching there, in court and *salon*, in town and country, himself honored as the great orator of the British Parliament. Only the most pleasing recollections of that happy time lingered in his memory.

“It is now,” he wrote in his *Reflections*, “sixteen or seventeen years since I saw the queen of France, then the dauphiness, at Versailles; and surely never lighted on this orb, which she hardly seemed to touch, a more delightful vision. I saw her just above the horizon, decorating and cheering the elevated sphere she had just begun to move in, — glittering like the morning star, full of life and splendor and joy. O what a revolution! and what a heart must I have, to contemplate, without emotion, that elevation and that fall! Little did I dream, when she added titles of veneration to those of enthusiastic, distant, respectful love, that she should ever be obliged to carry the sharp antidote against disgrace concealed in that bosom; little did I dream that I should have lived to see such disasters fall upon her in a nation of gallant men, in a nation of men of honor and of cavaliers. I thought ten thousand swords must have leaped from their scabbards to avenge even a look that threatened her with insult. But the age of chivalry is gone. That of sophisters, economists, and calculators has succeeded; and the glory of Europe is extinguished forever. Never, never more shall we behold that generous loyalty to rank and sex, that proud submission, that dignified obedience, that subordination of the heart, which kept alive, even in servitude itself, the spirit of an exalted freedom. The unbought grace of life, the cheap defence of nations, the nurse of manly sentiment and heroic enterprise, is gone! It is gone, that

sensibility of principle, that chastity of honor, which felt a stain like a wound, which inspired courage while it mitigated ferocity, which ennobled whatever it touched, and under which vice itself lost half its evil, by losing all its grossness."

What a Celtic fluency and gorgeousness in these false, false words! In the composition of such a piece, how necessary an ingredient is that remoteness from the object depicted which veils all of it which is not enchanting! In this whole pamphlet, the agony and shame and panic-terror of fair France, how small and slight they seem compared with the discomfort endured by one Austrian woman rudely interrupted in her career of ignoble pleasures! Mr. Burke, too, had known personally many of the French nobility; and he had found them "tolerably well-bred," "frank and open," "with a good military tone, and reasonably tinctured with literature." "As to their behavior to the inferior classes, they appeared to me to comport themselves toward them with good-nature," and "I could not discover that their agreements with their farmers were oppressive." In speaking of the great multitude of industrious and frugal persons, whose toil maintained those tolerably well-bred nobles of a good military tone; in speaking, I say, of THE PEOPLE OF FRANCE, whom king and nobility had had in charge for a thousand years, and had permitted to remain grossly ignorant and squalidly poor, he used expressions surcharged with the most insolent and inhuman contempt. The march from Versailles to the Tuileries, he said, was like "a procession of American savages entering into Onondaga, and leading into hovels hung round with scalps their captives, overpowered with the scoffs and buffets of women as ferocious as themselves;" and he said, also, that when the nobles and priests had been expelled from France, learning itself would be "*trodden down under the hoofs of a swinish multitude.*" This hideous expression (which admitted more than the worst enemies of nobles and priests had ever charged against them) rang through Europe, imbittering every generous heart and maddening every excited head.

Never had pamphlet such success with the class it was written to please. George III., of his own motion, settled upon the author, whom he had hated for twenty-six years, a pension of twelve hundred pounds a year, and soon after a second pension of twenty-five hundred pounds a year. The king had also a number of copies

handsomely bound for presents; and when he gave one to a favorite, he would say, "This is a book which every gentleman ought to read." The Emperor of Germany, the Empress Catherine of Russia, the royal family of France, and even poor Stanislaus of Poland, sent the author some tribute of their sincere gratitude. The book had a great run with the public: in England nineteen thousand copies were sold in three months, and in France thirteen thousand of the French translation. During the first half-year, the number of replies which it called forth was thirty-eight.

Its effect upon the public was wholly and greatly bad, because it excited the reader without instructing him. It hardened the Tory's heart, and shut his mind to every truth which it most concerned him to know; while the humane portion of the people were only incensed at the contemptuous tone of the work toward all the most pitiable victims of aristocratic misrule,—those who had lapsed under it from citizens to populace. Mad world! For thirty years, in various capacities, public and private, Edmund Burke had served his countrymen on both sides of the ocean with fidelity and power, and got little by it but the opportunity to serve them better. He writes this false and foolish pamphlet, and behold him rich, and the world at his feet! The people gave him little but honor, and the kings rewarded him with all but that.

Among the friends of Mr. Burke, many may have been more grieved at his new departure, but none was more astonished, than Thomas Paine, then at Paris, pushing into publicity his own self-supporting bridge. He appears to have originated that kind of structure, now so common. Arriving in England, a year or two before, on the same errand, he had been Mr. Burke's guest for several weeks, during which they had made together the tour of the iron foundries of Yorkshire, and visited together some of Mr. Burke's political allies on the liberal side. "I am just going to dine with the Duke of Portland," writes Burke to Wilkes in August, 1788, "in company with the great American, Paine, whom I take with me." From Paris, Paine wrote occasionally to the great Whig orator; one letter, indeed, after Mr. Burke must have begun the composition of his work, in which Paine gave him an account, as he says, "how prosperously matters were going on in France;" not doubting that he was pouring his information into a sympathetic ear. Like most writers who make sentences that stick in the

general memory, and long remain part of the common speech of men, Thomas Paine composed very slowly and with great toil. One of his friends reports that the author of *Common Sense* knew by heart all that he had ever written, — so thoroughly had he wrought each sentence and each phrase. Nevertheless, in March, 1791, about four months after the publication of Burke's *Reflections*, he was ready with his reply to it, which he named "The Rights of Man." The two works from that time were competitors for the possession of the public mind; editions quickly following editions; each work execrated, and each extolled, with almost equal extravagance. Paine, with his usual generosity, gave up his copyright as soon as he discovered that it was an obstacle to cheaper issues; and at once, in every town where there was a press not controlled by squire or parson, there was a sixpenny edition of *The Rights of Man*. One hundred thousand copies were sold before the demand abated; and when the author followed up his success, the next year, with a *Second Part*, the government gave a prodigious impulse to the sale of both by a series of prosecutions, accompanied by a system of riots, — so familiar a resource of the Tory party in every recent age, from James I. to Dilke.

To say that Mr. Paine's pamphlet is superior to Burke's in every worthy quality of composition, is not to praise it; for Burke's production is a shallow, misleading, pernicious work. Let me rather say, that it is as good an answer to Burke as so rambling a rhapsody admits; and that for every one of Burke's swelling passages of declamation, Paine has an epigram which reduces it to its proper dimensions. So compassionate a man as Thomas Paine could not fail to be shocked at Burke's insensibility to all the anguish endured in France except that suffered by a few conspicuous individuals: "He pities the plumage, but forgets the dying bird." "His hero or his heroine must be a tragedy victim expiring in show, and not the real prisoner of misery, sliding into death in the silence of a dungeon." Burke's lamentation over the abolition of titles in France gave Paine an opportunity: "France has outgrown the babyhood of *count* and *duke*, and breeched itself in manhood. France has not levelled, it has exalted. It has put down the dwarf to set up the man. . . . Titles are like circles drawn by the magician's wand to contract the sphere of man's felicity. He lives immured within the Bastille of a word, and surveys at a distance the envied life of



man." On the union of Church and State, extolled by Burke, Paine had a happy word: "Take away the law-establishment, and every religion resumes its original benignity. In America a Catholic priest is a good citizen, a good character, and a good neighbor; an Episcopalian minister is of the same description; and this proceeds, independent of men, from there being no law-establishment in America."

The work was dedicated to George Washington, who cherished for this skilful and humane writer that warmth of grateful regard which is due from the patriotic sword to the patriotic pen. When Paine was about to leave Paris, in the spring of 1790, it was to his hands that Lafayette intrusted, for transmission to the president, the interesting relic which is preserved to this day at Mount Vernon. "I take over with me to London," he wrote to a friend in Philadelphia, March 16, 1790, "the key of the Bastille, which the Marquis intrusts to my care as his present to General Washington, and which I shall send by the first American vessel to New York." He was to go back to Paris in time to take part in the inauguration of the new constitution; "at which time there is to be a procession, and I am to return to Paris to carry the American flag." He added these words, the prophetic meaning of which the lapse of eighty-three years has not exhausted: "I wish most anxiously to see my much-loved America. It is the country from whence all reformation must originally spring." Nor did he forget that America, too, like all the rest of the world, needed reformation; and he wished that "a few well-instructed negroes could be sent among their brethren in bondage; for, until they are enabled to take their own part, nothing will be done."

His dedication to the president was in harmony with his habitual feelings: "I present you a small treatise in defence of those principles which your exemplary virtue hath so eminently contributed to establish. That the rights of man may become as universal as your benevolence can wish, and that you may enjoy the happiness of seeing the new world regenerate the old, is the prayer of . . . Thomas Paine."

A single copy of the work chanced to reach America about the first of May, 1791, in advance of the parcel sent by the author to the president. This copy was lent by the owner to Madison, who lent it to Jefferson; but, before the secretary of state had finished

reading it, the owner called upon him for it, as he had promised to lend it for reprinting. The owner, discovering that Mr. Jefferson had not done with it, asked him to send it himself, when he had finished the reading, to Mr. Jonathan B. Smith, a noted merchant of Philadelphia, once a member of Congress, whose brother, Samuel H. Smith, an enterprising young printer (founder in 1800 of the *National Intelligencer* at Washington), was to issue the American edition. Mr. Jefferson complied with this request. Not being acquainted with the merchant, he wrote him a short note to explain why he, a stranger, should send him the pamphlet, and added a few words of commendation of the work, "to take off," as he explained afterwards, "a little of the dryness of the note," and, as he might have added, because he was thrilled with triumphant delight at so vigorous and telling a vindication of American principles from a pen identified in the popular mind with the gloom and glory of the Revolution. "I am extremely pleased," he wrote, "to find it will be reprinted here, and that something is at length to be publicly said against the political heresies which have sprung up among us. I have no doubt our citizens will rally a second time round the standard of Common Sense."

So little importance did he attach to this hasty note, that he, the most scrupulous docketeer in the world, did not keep a copy of it. In a few days the pamphlet was published; and behold, printed on the cover, the material sentences of this note, attributed distinctly to the "Secretary of State"! "I was thunderstruck," he tells us, fearing that an excited public, applying the remark concerning "political heresies" to Mr. Adams's Discourses upon Davila, recently stopped by the growing indignation of the people, would force him to an antagonism with the vice-president. And who would believe the indorsement unauthorized? He was the more embarrassed, because he really had had those Discourses in his mind while writing the note. In familiar, half-jocular conversation with the vice-president, he had combated those "political heresies," always feigning to be ignorant of the author of Davila. Davila, indeed, had no friends; Hamilton himself censuring the Discourses, as ill-timed and injudicious. But ante-chamber chaff was very different from an open, serious collision between two officers of a government still on trial.

The mutterings of a coming storm were soon audible. A Major

Beckwith from Canada was loitering then about Philadelphia, a non-commissioned, semi-authorized, semi-recognized British agent, who was in punctual attendance at presidential levees, where he conversed freely with the president's secretary, Tobias Lear, who used to report the conversations at large to the president. The excellent Tobias, a dear lover of gossip, had much to tell General Washington (absent at Mount Vernon) in his letter of May 8, 1791, of the astonishment of this major on seeing Mr. Paine's work dedicated to the president of the United States, and commended by the secretary of state. The scene occurred at "Mrs. Washington's drawing-room." Major Beckwith was "surprised," not only at the dedication, but that the work should be "published in Philadelphia;" "especially as it contained many remarks that could not but be offensive to the British government." A highly Pickwickian conversation followed:—

LEAR. The pamphlet was written and published in England. The president has neither seen nor knows what it contains, and, of course, cannot in any sense be considered as approving its sentiments, or as being responsible for them.

BECKWITH. True: but I observe in the American edition, that the secretary of state has given a most unequivocal sanction to the book, as *Secretary of State*; it is not said as Mr. Jefferson.

LEAR. I have not seen the American, or any other edition of this pamphlet; but I will venture to say that the secretary of state has not done a thing which he would not justify.

BECKWITH. On this subject you will consider, that I have only spoken as an individual, and as a private person.

LEAR. I do not know you, sir, in any other character.

BECKWITH. I was apprehensive that you might conceive, that, on this occasion, I meant to enter the lists in more than a private character.

At this moment they were interrupted, and the awful conversation was not resumed. But the next day, when Mr. Edmund Randolph dined with Mrs. Washington "in a family way," Mr. Lear related to him what had passed. The attorney-general thought the matter important enough to report to his colleague, and asked him if he had authorized the printing of his note. Mr. Jefferson said he

had not, though he approved the work. The faithful Tobias, a few days after, had an opportunity to learn the sentiments of the vice-president. "I was at the vice-president's house," he records, "and while there Dr. and Mrs. Rush came in. The conversation turned upon this book, and Dr. Rush asked the vice-president what he thought of it. After a little hesitation, he laid his hand upon his breast, and said in a very solemn manner, 'I detest that book and its tendency, from the bottom of my heart.'"

As yet, however, though the reprint was rapidly spread abroad, eagerly read, and hotly discussed, the slow newspaper of the period was silent. About the middle of May, 1791, Jefferson and Madison, both exhausted with official labor during the session of Congress, set out on a tour to the northward, which they had long before promised themselves, leaving politics and all its irritations and misconceptions behind them.

Up the Hudson by sloop, — the true way, always, of enjoying it, — and then onward from Albany to Lake George on horseback, a ride of sixty miles, mostly through the primeval wilderness, with a taste of Saratoga water on the way, as it bubbled up from the springs where the deer had licked or lapped it from the beginning of time. A hut or two, and one frame-house built by General Schuyler seven years before, were all that man had done to mark the site; although, from the time (1767) when Sir William Johnson had been carried to Saratoga in a litter to drink the waters so highly extolled by his Indians, and had found them salutary, the springs had enjoyed a certain vague celebrity. All the scenes near by, made famous by Burgoyne's vain struggle with wild nature and brave men, they visited also; "the cataracts of the Hudson," too, of course, — great marvels then. The limpid crystal of Lake George, and the luxuriant foliage on its banks, awoke all the enthusiasm of the two Virginians, to whom some of the trees, and many of the shrubs, were new. "Lake George," wrote Mr. Jefferson to his daughter, "is, without comparison, the most beautiful water I ever saw." They walked to the picturesque, commanding bluff on which Fort Ticonderoga stood so long, its site still marked by ruins; and they visited the other spots of bloody memory in that region, as we do now; but not, like us, with guide-book in hand, for all that gory history was fresh and vivid then in every one's memory. Lake Champlain they did not see to advantage, — the day on which they crossed it being

rough and gusty; and they were not far enough north to see the three ranges of mountains in one view, — Green, White, and Adirondacks, — a multitudinous, billowy sea of mountains. But, while crossing this lake, he wrote a long letter to one of his daughters in a little book of birch-bark, which still exists; and some of the company shot at the squirrels swimming from New York to Vermont, where the States are three miles apart. Reaching Bennington, in Vermont, on a Saturday evening, they were detained till Monday morning, “the laws of the State not permitting us to travel on Sunday.” They crossed the State of Vermont to a point near umbrageous Brattleborough, on the Connecticut River; and, floating down that uncomfortable and capricious stream, made their way by the Sound to New York, and reached Philadelphia, in perfect health, after a month’s journey of a thousand miles.

These summer holidays of our modern life are delightful enough; only the getting into harness again is so disagreeable. Upon reaching Philadelphia, the secretary of state found the newspapers in full cry after him. Mr. Paine’s pamphlet, to use Jefferson’s homely expression, had “kicked up a dust.” There was a young lawyer in Boston, named John Quincy Adams, aged twenty-four, who did not approve the pamphlet, and perhaps still less the indorsement of Thomas Jefferson, and his seeming fling at the vice-president. This young lawyer, fresh from the courts of Europe, not the best school in which to learn the rights of man, answered “Mr. Pain” in a series of seven short newspaper essays, signed Publicola; not omitting to give the secretary of state a fair hit in passing, though polite and decorous to both. The fair hit was in reference to Mr. Jefferson’s unlucky use of the word “heresies.” Publicola asked, “Does he consider the pamphlet of Mr. Pain as the canonical book of political scripture? As containing the true doctrine of political infallibility, from which it would be heretical to depart in a single point? The expressions would, indeed, imply more: they seem, like the Arabian prophet, to call upon all true believers in the Islam of democracy to draw their swords, in the fervor of their devotion, to compel all their countrymen to cry out, There is but one Goddess of Liberty, and Common Sense is her prophet!”

This was but a fair retort, as Mr. Jefferson once acknowledged, but the young gentleman proceeded to discourse upon the superiority of the British system of government over the new French con-

stitution eulogized by Paine ; and he did this so well, that the essays were republished in England, with the name of John Adams on the title-page, as an antidote to what the Tories of the period courteously styled "the French disease." But the American people, who had had experience for a century and a half of the badness of the governmental system of Great Britain, did not relish the essays of Publicola. The leading principles of Thomas Paine's Rights of Man were, as Mr. Jefferson remarked at the time, "the principles of the people of the United States." They are such at this moment. The doctrines of the work, if they could now be put to the vote, would be sustained by a majority of a thousand to three. A political party might as well place itself in opposition to the multiplication table. Hence, as soon as Publicola appeared, Brutus, Agricola, Cato, and other noble Romans, threw themselves into the arena to defend the persons and axioms assailed, and thus "kicked up the dust" to which Mr. Jefferson alluded.

"I thank God," he wrote to Paine soon after, "that the people appear firm in their republicanism, notwithstanding the contrary hopes and assertions of a sect here, high in name but small in numbers. These had flattered themselves that the silence of the people under the 'Defence' and 'Davila' was a symptom of their conversion to the doctrine of King, Lords, and Commons. They are checked at least by your pamphlet, and the people confirmed in their good old faith." And to Colonel Monroe: "A host of writers have risen in favor of Paine, and prove, that, in this quarter at least, the spirit of republicanism is sound. The contrary spirit of the high officers of government is more understood than I expected. Colonel Hamilton avows that he never made a secret of his principles, yet taxes the imprudence of Mr. Adams in having stirred the question, and agrees that 'his business is done.' Jay, covering the same principles under the veil of silence, is steadily rising on the ruins of his friends."

Colonel Hamilton was mistaken in supposing that the vice-president's "business was done." The newspaper storm, however, alarmed Mr. Adams not a little. Mr. Jefferson gave him an explanation of the circumstances attending the publication of his note, which restored to its usual cordiality the old friendship between them, — a friendship, said Mr. Adams in reply, "which ever has been and still is very dear to my heart." But no private explanation



ould still the tempest out of doors. Chimeras dire haunted the vice-president's mind. "It is thought by some," he wrote to Jefferson, "that Mr. Hancock's friends are preparing the way by my destruction for his election to the place of vice-president, and that of Mr. Samuel Adams to be governor of this Commonwealth; and then the Stone-house faction" (Mr. Hancock lived in a stone house) "will be sure of all the loaves and fishes." All of which might have speedily come to pass if the later excesses and woful collapse of the French Revolution had not afforded a new, though short, lease of life to the old ideas, and given pause to all but the stanchest and farthest-sighted republicans. It was Robespierre that balked the Stone-house faction, — if there was such a faction; and it was the murder of the amateur locksmith of the Tuileries, beginning to be known as "Mr. Capet," that suspended the decline of the author of Davila.

Thus was Thomas Jefferson, the man of all others most averse to controversy, placed, without act or volition of his own, at the head of the Republicans of the United States. He took no part in the public strife. "I never did in my life," he wrote to Mr. Adams on this occasion, "either by myself or by any other, have a sentence of mine inserted in a newspaper without putting my name to it; and I believe I never shall." Nor do we ever find his name appended to any controversial piece or passage in the papers of his time.

But in the privacy of the president's cabinet the questions of the day were discussed between Colonel Hamilton and himself with ever-growing warmth. There was little harmony between them after the publication of Mr. Paine's *Rights of Man*, though no personal breach occurred for another year. On nearly every subject there was a difference between them, either of sentiment or of opinion; and on some points the difference was such that neither could quite believe in the other's sincerity. Hamilton, for example, could not comprehend, and therefore could not respect, the state of mind which caused Jefferson to oppose his darling, long-cherished scheme of a United States Bank. Other nations have national banks: why should not we? Jefferson replied in the words of the Constitution: "All powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States or to the people." To which plain statement of fundamental law, Hamilton opposed his mere opinion: "Congress can be considered as under

only one restriction which does not apply to other governments, — they cannot rightfully apply the money they raise to any purpose merely or purely local.” Hamilton laughed at the “metaphysical whimses” of the strict-constructionists, and predicted that “the most incorrigible theorist among the opponents of the bank would, in one month’s experience as head of the department of the treasury, be compelled to acknowledge that it is an *indispensable engine in the management of the finances.*”

In this dispute we find another proof, that, when two honest men differ, both are much in the right. How *convenient*, urged the secretary of the treasury, to have bank-notes that would be current in all the States of the Union! True, said Jefferson; and it would be still more convenient to have a bank the bills of which should be current all over the world; but it does not follow that there exists anywhere authority to establish such a bank! The bank was established, and proved an element of discord and a menace of evil, from the day of its creation to that of its final suppression in 1836. But the single utility which Hamilton claimed and Jefferson admitted has since been constitutionally attained by that most exquisite device of finance, the National-bank system of the United States.

Suppose *now* we had a Bank of the United States, with a capital of, say three hundred and fifty millions of dollars (about equivalent to the thirty-five millions of 1830), overshadowing Wall Street, its president holding the same relation to the business of to-day which Nicholas Biddle held to that of 1830!

## CHAPTER XLVII.

### THE QUARREL OF JEFFERSON AND HAMILTON.

POLITENESS appears to have been invented to enable people who would naturally fall out to live together in peace. And there is great need of etiquette in a world where antipathy plays a part not less essential than sympathy. It is as necessary to the continuance of animated nature that cat and dog should hate, as that cat and cat should love. A genuine and profound antipathy, therefore, may exist without either of the parties being to blame; and, in our complicated civilization, vast numbers of us are compelled to live in the nearest intimacy, or labor in the closest contact, with persons between whom and ourselves there is this incurable dislike. In such cases there is no peace, no dignity, save through the resolute observance of all the etiquette which the situation imposes.

It was this that kept our two secretaries, Jefferson and Hamilton, on friendly terms with one another for many months after both had discovered that they differed *in toto* and on every leading question. A breach of etiquette finally embroiled them past reconciliation. It was difficult to quarrel with Jefferson; since, besides being naturally placable and good-tempered, he had a vivid sense of the value of peace and a singular knowledge of the arts by which peace is preserved. He advised his daughters to avoid breaking with disagreeable people as long as they could with honor. Sacrifices and suppressions of feeling for such an object, he thought, cost much less pain than open separation. The effort of self-control was soon forgotten; but an open breach "haunts the peace of every day."

Hamilton, too, though much spoiled by applause too early and too easily won, seemed a good fellow; amiable at home, agreeable abroad; who sang his old song of *The Drum* at the annual dinner of the Cincinnati, and was welcome in all companies and circles till politi-

cal differences embittered men's minds. What a pleasant picture we have of the breakfast scene at his house, No. 24 Broadway, the mother seated at the head of the table, with a napkin in her lap, cutting slices of bread from a great family loaf of the olden time, and spreading them with butter for the younger boys, who stood round her, reading in turn from the Bible or Goldsmith's History of Rome; while the father, in the room adjoining, was seated at the piano playing an accompaniment to his daughter's new song, or singing it to her accompaniment. When the lessons were finished, and a stately pile of bread and butter was ready, all the eight children came to breakfast; after which, the younger ones were packed off to school, and the father went to his office.

Who more amiable than that father? There is a portrait of Mrs. Hamilton, as one of her sons relates, bearing the name of the painter, "T. Earle, 1787," which attests his goodness of heart. Earle was in the debtors' prison at the time, and Hamilton induced his young wife to go to the prison and sit for her portrait. She persuaded other ladies, and thus the artist gained money enough to pay his debts and get out of jail. No man was more ready than Hamilton to set on foot such good-natured schemes, though himself never too far from the debtors' prison. At this very time,—1791 to 1794,—while he was handling millions upon millions of the public money, he was pinched severely in the effort to live upon his little salary. "If you can conveniently lend me twenty dollars for a few days," he wrote to a friend, in September, 1791, "be so good as to send it by the bearer." The friend sent a check for fifty dollars. And Talleyrand said, in 1794, after coming from Hamilton's house, "I have beheld one of the wonders of the world,—a man who has made the fortune of a nation laboring all night to support a family."

Hamilton, alas! had more to support than *a* family. Two families, at least, we know he was supporting at this time; for it was during 1791 and 1792 that he had his affair with the Reynolds, which obliged him to buy the silence of the husband by the payment of a quarter's salary, not to mention smaller "loans" whenever that husband chose to apply.

Talleyrand made another remark upon Hamilton. When Mr. George Ticknor visited him in 1819, the old diplomatist was so warm in his eulogy of Hamilton, that the American was disposed modestly to waive part of the compliment by saying that the public

men of Europe had to do with larger masses and wider interests. "But," said Talleyrand, "Hamilton had divined Europe." He may have divined Europe. His misfortune was, that he had not divined America. In Europe, after a drill of twenty-five years in the British House of Commons, he might have been another Canning, a liberal Tory, the forerunner of Peel and Palmerston. In American politics it was impossible that he should ever have been at home, because he never could believe the truths, nor share the hopes, upon which the American system is based. In an ordinary period, however, he might have co-operated with Jefferson for a while, both being gentlemen and patriots; but the time was not ordinary. Christendom was losing its senses; and the discussions of the cabinet had a bass accompaniment out of doors, ever deepening, always becoming more vehement. And it is but fair to remember, that, if Jefferson had the inarticulate masses of the American people at his back, Hamilton was ceaselessly flattered by the articulate class, — the bar, the bench, the college, the drawing-room, the pulpit, the bureau. These two men, even if they had not become mutually repellent, would have been pulled apart by their adherents.

When the government, in 1790, removed from New York to Philadelphia, John Pintard, the translating clerk in the Department of State, chose not to go with it; and Jefferson gave the place — salary two hundred and fifty dollars a year — to the "poet Freneau," an old college classmate and friend of Madison and Henry Lee. Captain Philip Freneau, a native of New York, besides being a kind of mild American Peter Pindar, had suffered and sung the horrors of the New York prison-ships during the Revolutionary War. He was the bright, popular writer of his day, both in prose and verse; and, as he had contemplated "the British model" from the pestilential steerage of the Scorpion frigate anchored in the Hudson, he was never "bewitched" by it, but remained, to the end of his long life, a sound republican. No appointment could have been more natural, more proper, or more agreeable to the public. In recommending it, Mr. Madison's chief motive was to promote the interest of his friend, then gaining a precarious and slender livelihood as man-of-all-work on the New York Daily Advertiser. But he had another object in view. Restive under the opposition of Hamilton's organ at Philadelphia, the Gazette of the United States

Madison and Governor Henry Lee of Virginia had formed the project of setting up a weekly republican journal at the seat of government, to be edited, perhaps, by Captain Freneau. This scheme, half formed at the time of the appointment, could not but have had the approval of the secretary of state, stranger though he was to Freneau; and this may have suggested a remark which the secretary made in his note, offering him the place. The salary, Mr. Jefferson observed, was very low; but the office "gives so little to do as not to interfere with any other calling the person may choose, which would not absent him from the seat of government."

Eight months after, October 31, 1791, appeared the first number of the National Gazette, edited by Philip Freneau; capital furnished by Madison and Lee; twenty-one subscribers previously obtained by Jefferson among his neighbors in Virginia. Thus there were two Gazettes at Philadelphia, — Fenno's daily and Freneau's weekly; the one Hamiltonian, the other Jeffersonian. But the only part which the secretary of state took in the management of Freneau's Gazette was to lend the editor the foreign newspapers which came to the department. "I never did," he once wrote, "by myself or any other, or indirectly, say a syllable, nor attempt any kind of influence, . . . nor write, dictate, or procure any one sentence to be inserted, in Freneau's or any other gazette, to which my name was not affixed, or that of my office." The enterprise was chiefly Madison's, who wished to have a weekly paper of republican politics for circulation in *all* the States, Bache's daily paper not going much beyond the city of Philadelphia. Jefferson's sympathy with the object was complete; but the fact of Freneau's holding an office in his department is itself a kind of proof that he could not have regarded or used the paper as a personal organ. How absurd the supposition that a "politician" would thus display his hand! If Freneau's Gazette had been designed as Jefferson's organ, Jefferson surely would have begun by removing Freneau from office.

If the reader will turn over the files of Fenno, preserved in several public libraries, he will perceive the need there was of something antidotal to it. No opportunity was lost by the editor of reflecting upon republican institutions; and the adulation of the president was unceasing and offensive. Whatever question was uppermost, this Gazette of the United States might be depended



upon for taking the side least characteristic of the United States. The burden of its song was, government by the people is anarchy. If any one ventured to ask a Federalist, Why, then, are we not anarchic? the answer was, The high character of the president, and the universal awe which that character inspires, hold the demagogues in some decent show of restraint. It is WASHINGTON that saves us, not our "shilly-shally Constitution."

When Freneau's Gazette appeared, defending Paine, attacking Burke, criticising Hamilton's measures, especially his new Bank of the United States, and commending Jefferson's public acts, Fenno affected to be aghast. The morning after Freneau's second number was circulated, a writer in Fenno, without mentioning the name of the audacious sheet, burst into the most ludicrous fury. He began by saying that there were acts of baseness and villany so atrocious, that we could hardly persuade ourselves to believe that any of the human race were depraved enough to commit them; and he proceeded to mention a crime or two of this description, such as firing a city in the dead of night. But there is a depth of depravity, he continued, far beyond that. Such offences are of a mild type of turpitude compared with the revolting blackness of the one which he introduces to the reader's notice in his closing paragraph: "In a free republic, the officers of the people are entitled to double honor, because they have no inheritance in their office, and, when actuated by just principles, accept of public employments from motives superior to mercenary considerations. The crime, therefore, of individuals who devise the destruction and imbrue their hands in the innocent blood of such characters, is tinged with the blackest hue of hellish darkness."

Such was the spirit of a paper that derived an important part of its revenue from the patronage of the government, and an important portion of its contents from the pens of high officers of the government. Freneau continued his gazette, however, and did not refrain from imbruing his hands in the innocent blood of an eminent public character. He proceeded to the length of mentioning the secretary of the treasury by name. He descanted freely upon all that Hamilton had done, and all that he proposed; admitting many communications from republican friends; doing all that in him lay to controvert and ridicule the writers in Fenno, and defend the principle of government by the people for the people. Readers who

examine the file will find it difficult to believe that satire so mild and invective so harmless should have had power to kindle wrath in Federal minds.

Antipathy, meanwhile, was growing in the hearts of Jefferson and Hamilton, blinding both, misleading both. It is of the nature of antipathy to distort the view, and shut the mind to truth; and when it reaches the degree of rendering social intercourse difficult and mutual explanation impossible, men may advance from misconception to misconception, until the idea they have of one another becomes monstrous. Never before, since they were born, had either of these two encountered immovable opposition. The lives of both had been too easily triumphant. From their youth up they had experienced little but acquiescence, sympathy, and applause, until they met in Washington's cabinet, and each discovered in the other an invincible antagonist. The self-love of both was deeply wounded. Hamilton owned that he took Jefferson's opposition to the bank as a wrong done to *himself*. "Mr. Jefferson," he says, "not only delivered an opinion in writing against its constitutionality and expediency, but he did it in a style and manner which I felt as partaking of asperity and ill-humor toward *me*." This to Colonel Carrington, May, 1792. But who can now discover in Jefferson's opinion on the bank one word savoring of asperity or ill-humor? On the contrary, it seems studiously void of offence, full of respect for opposing opinions, and ends by advising the president to sign the bill "if the *pro* and *con* hang so even as to balance his judgment." This, he thought, would be paying only "a just regard to the wisdom of the legislature."

Miserable error, to attribute difference of opinion to baseness of motive! Oliver Wolcott, comptroller of the treasury, Hamilton's echo and successor (as genial a soul as ever cracked a walnut), betrays his chief's blinding antipathy in his letters of this time. "Mr. Jefferson," he writes, February, 1792, "appears to have shown rather too much of a disposition to cultivate vulgar prejudices; accordingly, he will become popular in ale-houses, and do much mischief to his country by exciting apprehension that the government will operate unfavorably." The comptroller interpreted the Publicola controversy, too, in his own merry fashion: "Mr. Adams and Mr. Jefferson seem much disposed to quarrel on the question, whether liberty can be maintained in a country which allows citi-

zens to be distinguished by the addition *Mr.*, *Esq.*, and *Deacon*, and whether Thomas Paine or Edmund Burke are the greatest fools." Hamilton's grammar was better than Wolcott's; but he, too, was at first disposed to laugh at Jefferson's notion of abolishing the small, lingering absurdities of the feudal system. But he soon ceased to laugh. Under Freneau's attacks, he became, very early in 1792, as sour and bitter in his feelings toward his colleague as so good-tempered a man could be; and he poured out all his heart to his old comrade, Colonel Carrington of Virginia. He said he was convinced — "unequivocally convinced" — that "Mr. Madison, co-operating with Mr. Jefferson, is at the head of a faction decidedly hostile to me and to my administration, and actuated by views, in my judgment, subversive of the principles of good government, and dangerous to the union, peace, and happiness of the country."

Such was Hamilton's conviction in May, 1792; and it remained his conviction until that fatal day in July, 1804, when he stood at Weehawken before Burr's pistol, a conscious martyr. What reasons had he for thinking so! He gives them at great length to Colonel Carrington: Madison and Jefferson disapproved his financial measures! They had openly said so; Madison in debate, Jefferson in conversation, — yes, even in conversation with *foreigners!* Some persons, whom the secretary of state "immediately and notoriously moves," had even whispered suspicions of his official integrity. It was also "reduced to a certainty," that Freneau, a "known anti-Federalist," had been "brought to Philadelphia by Mr. Jefferson to be the conductor of a newspaper." And such a newspaper! Evidently devoted to the subversion of *me* and my measures, as well as unfriendly to the government! Moreover, both Madison and Jefferson (and here Hamilton rises into capital letters) "HAD A WOMANISH ATTACHMENT TO FRANCE, AND A WOMANISH RESENTMENT AGAINST GREAT BRITAIN;" and this to such a degree, that, unchecked, they would in six months bring on "AN OPEN WAR BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND GREAT BRITAIN!" Mr. Jefferson was especially and extravagantly addicted to these womanish propensities.

"In France," continues Hamilton, "he saw government only on the side of its abuses. He drank deeply of the French philosophy, in religion, in science, in politics. He came from France in the moment of a fermentation which he had a share in exciting, and in

the passions and feelings of which he shared, both from temperament and situation. He came here, probably, with a too partial idea of his own powers, and with the expectation of a greater share in the direction of our councils than he has in reality enjoyed. I am not sure that he had not marked out for himself the department of the finances. He came electrified *plus* with attachment to France, and with the project of knitting together the two countries in the closest political bands. Mr. Madison had always entertained an exalted opinion of the talents, knowledge, and virtues of Mr. Jefferson. The sentiment was probably reciprocal. A close correspondence subsisted between them during the time of Mr. Jefferson's absence from this country. A close intimacy arose on his return. . . . Mr. Jefferson was indiscreetly open in his approbation of Mr. Madison's principles on first coming to the seat of government. I say indiscreetly, because a gentleman in one department ought not to have taken sides against another in another department."

Both the Virginians, he thought, were chagrined and out of humor, because, so far, he had usually triumphed over the opposition of one or both of them; and he proceeds to enumerate his victories, — funding, assumption, the bank, and others, — a "current of success on one side, and defeat on the other," which had "rendered the opposition furious." And worse defeat was in store for them; for it was evident, he thought, beyond a question, that "Mr. Jefferson aims, with ardent desire, at the presidential chair;" and, of course, Hamilton's influence with the community must be destroyed; and here the secretary of the treasury owns that he had already aided to frustrate the imaginary ambition of his colleague. It had been a question who should be president *pro tem.*, in case both the president and vice-president should die in office. Some members of Congress had proposed the chief justice, Mr. Jay; Mr. Madison had moved the secretary of state. "I acknowledge," says Hamilton, "though I took far less part than was supposed, I ran counter to Mr. Jefferson's wishes; for, if I had had no other reason for it, I had already experienced opposition from him, which rendered it a measure of self-defence." Finally, he read Mr. Jefferson thus: "A man of profound ambition and violent passions"

Thus may one honest and patriotic man misread another, when, attempting to evolve his character from the depths of his own consciousness, the gall of an antipathy tinges his thoughts.

The mere difference of opinion between them was extreme. One day in April, 1791, when the vice-president and the cabinet dined together at Jefferson's house to talk over some public question, the conversation turned, as it often did in those days, upon forms of government. "Purge the British Constitution of its corruption," said Mr. Adams, "and give to its popular branch equality of representation, and it would be the most perfect constitution ever devised by the wit of man." Hamilton waited a moment, and then said, "Purge it of its corruption, and give to its popular branch equality of representation, and it would become an impracticable government. As it stands at present, with all its supposed defects, it is the most perfect government that ever existed." What intelligent American citizen, whose memory of public events ran back to 1765, and who had access to the pigeon-holes of the state department, could be expected to listen to such an opinion without something like indignation?

But, in truth, when Hamilton pronounced the word *government*, he meant something radically different from Jefferson's idea of government. What is government? Jefferson's answer would have been: An agency for the execution of the people's will. Hamilton must have answered: A means of curbing and frustrating people's will. The British government had proved itself *practicable*, by being able, in the teeth of the people's will, to alienate and repel the American Colonies; and it had accomplished this by buying voters at the polls, and voters in the House of Commons. Hence, in a Hamiltonian sense, it was a "practicable" government. There were members of Congress who had a pecuniary interest in supporting Hamilton's financial system. This *he* regarded as legitimate and desirable; while good republicans could only think of it with horror, as if jurymen should sit in judgment on a cause in which their fortune was embarked.

A few months after, Hamilton seized an opportunity to explain himself to his colleague. Jefferson mentioned to him, in August, 1791, that he had received a letter from Mr. Adams, disavowing *Publicola*, and denying that he had ever had any wish to introduce the hereditary principle. Hamilton censured the vice-president for having stirred questions of that nature in the newspapers. "I own," he added, "it is my own opinion, though I do not publish it in *Dan* or *Beersheba*, that the present government is not that which



will answer the ends of society by giving stability and protection to its rights, and that it will probably be found expedient to go into the British form. However, since we have undertaken the experiment, I am for giving it a fair course, whatever my expectations may be." Hence, he thought Mr. Adams was wrong, however pure his intentions, to disturb, by the discourses on Davila, the public confidence in the present order of things. These avowals, apparently deliberate and made for a purpose, Jefferson thought worthy of preservation; and this conversation, accordingly, is the first of the "Anas" which give us so many interesting glimpses of the interior of General Washington's cabinet.

To this radical difference of opinion was added a grievance which was at once public and personal, wounding both to Jefferson's patriotism and pride. Hamilton was an inveterate lobbyist. Excluded from Congress by the Constitution, he nevertheless endeavored to exercise as much influence over legislation as an English Chancellor of the Exchequer who sits in Parliament. In his published correspondence, he mentions, with evident elation, several instances in which he had procured the passage or the rejection of measures. Upon occasions he would even threaten to *resign*, unless he had his way; and such was his ascendancy, that this absurd insolence provoked from his adherents neither resentment nor ridicule. The Republican members objected to the reference of legislative problems to members of the cabinet; regarding the cabinet as part of the executive power. Hamilton could not so much as believe that a member of Congress could have any other than a factious reason for opposing such a reference. He distinctly claimed it, as belonging to his office, to perform the duty which now devolves upon the Committee of Ways and Means. He regarded himself as an injured being when Madison opposed the reference to the secretary of the treasury of the question of ways and means for the Indian War. Madison, he says, even went so far as to "combat, *on principle*, the propriety of such reference;" well knowing, that, "if he had prevailed, a certain consequence was my *resignation*." Late in the debate he became apprised of the danger. "Measures of counteraction," he says, "were adopted; and when the question was called, Mr. Madison was confounded to find characters voting against him whom he had counted upon as certain."

Now, this interference with legislation was the more aggravating



to Jefferson, because the secretary of the treasury had such a vast patronage with which to make his interference effectual: one hundred clerks at Philadelphia, a custom-house at every port, bank-directors, loan-agents, — a thousand places in his gift. And these places were not the trivial and demoralizing gifts which a cabinet minister has at his disposal now, — the brief, precarious tenure of under-paid offices. A government office was then a career. You were a made man if you got one. A peaceful and dignified life could be founded upon it, and a family reared. Hamilton wielded more power of this kind than all the rest of the administration put together, multiplied by ten; and it is reasonable to conclude, that *some* voters in Congress (not as many, perhaps, as Jefferson thought) were influenced by the interest members had in Hamilton's various financial measures.

Before he had been a year in office, the secretary of state had had enough of it. Scrupulously avoiding all interference with the departments of his colleagues, never lobbying, immersed in the duties of his place, he found himself borne along by Hamilton's restless impetuosity, and compelled to aid in the execution of a policy which he could as little approve as prevent. He was nominally at the head of the cabinet, without possessing the ascendancy that belonged to his position. He seemed to himself, at once responsible and impotent; and he believed the sway of Hamilton over public affairs to be illegitimate, and to be upheld by illegitimate means. In the spring of 1791, when he had been in the cabinet little more than a year, he discovered, from a sentence in one of the president's letters to himself, that he had no thought of serving beyond the end of his term, which would expire March 4, 1793. Jefferson instantly resolved to make that the period of his own service also. He longed for repose. His affairs clamorously demanded his attention. He was utterly devoid of commonplace ambition. All pageantry was wearisome to him. If, in his earlier years, he had coveted the kind of distinction which place conferred, he had outgrown that foible long ago, and had now for himself but one wish, — to enjoy a busy, tranquil existence at home, among his farms, his books, his apparatus, his children, and his friends. What man above forty-five, not a fool, has ever had, for himself alone, any other dream but that?

With regard to the presidency, no one had as yet presumed to publish a conjecture as to what an infant nation was to do, when, at

last, deprived of its "father," it should be obliged — to use Jefferson's expression — to "go alone." Adams, Jay, and Jefferson were the three names oftenest whispered in conversation; but the situation was not ripe for any thing beyond a whisper, and all patriotic men concurred in desiring General Washington's continuance.

It was in February, 1792, in the course of a conference upon post-office affairs, that Jefferson disclosed to the president his intention to retire. It was not yet clear whether the post-office belonged to the Department of State or to that of the Treasury, and Jefferson wished the question settled. He told the president, that, in his opinion, it belonged, and ought to belong, to the State Department, because, among other reasons, the Treasury Department was already too powerful; wielding "such an influence as to swallow up the whole executive powers," so that "even the future presidents, not supported by the weight of character which himself possessed, would not be able to make head against it." He disclaimed all personal interest in the matter. If he was supposed to have any appetite for power, the intervening time was too short to be an object, for his own tenure of office would be exactly as long as that of the president's. "My real wish," said he, "is to avail the public of every occasion, during the rest of the president's period, to place things on a safe footing."

The conversation was interrupted here at its most interesting moment. The president asked him to breakfast with him the next morning, in order that the subject might be resumed. They met accordingly; and, when the post-office question had been duly considered, the president revived the topic of Jefferson's intention to retire. "In an affectionate tone," he told Jefferson that he had felt much concern at the intelligence. For his own retirement there were reasons enough, and he enumerated them; but he should consider it unfortunate if his own return to private life should bring on the resignation of the great officers of the government, which might give a shock to the public mind of dangerous consequence. Jefferson tried to re-assure the president on this point. He did not believe, he said, that any of his brethren thought of resigning. On the contrary, at the last meeting of the trustees of the sinking-fund, the secretary of the treasury had developed a plan of operations which contemplated years of his own personal service.

General Washington was not re-assured by this statement. He

clung to Jefferson. He remarked, that he considered the Department of the Treasury less important and less conspicuous than the Department of State, which "embraced nearly all the objects of administration," and that the retirement of a secretary of state would be more noticed. Symptoms of dissatisfaction, he added, far beyond what could have been expected, had lately shown themselves; and to what height these might arise, in case of too great a change in the administration, could not be foreseen.

Upon this Jefferson's tongue was loosed, and he expressed himself, without reserve, in words like these: "In my opinion, there is only a single source of these discontents, — the Treasury. A system has there been contrived for deluging the States with paper-money instead of gold and silver; for withdrawing our citizens from the pursuits of commerce, manufactures, buildings, and other branches of useful industry, to occupy themselves and their capitals in a species of gambling destructive of morality, which has introduced its poison into the government itself. It is a fact, as well known as that you and I are now conversing, that particular members of the legislature, while those laws were on the carpet, feathered their nests with paper, then voted for the laws, and constantly, since, have lent all the energy of their talents, and the instrumentality of their offices, to the establishment and enlargement of their system. They have chained the system round our necks for a great length of time; and, in order to keep the game in their own hands, they have, from time to time, aided in making such legislative constructions of the Constitution as make it a very different thing from what the people thought they had submitted to. And now they have brought forward a proposition far beyond any one advanced before; to which the eyes of many are now turned, as the decision which is to let us know whether we live under a limited or an unlimited government."

"To what proposition do you allude?" asked the president.

"To that," replied Jefferson, "in the Report of Manufactures (by Hamilton), which, under color of giving bounties for the encouragement of particular manufactures, meant to establish the doctrine, that the Constitution, in giving power to Congress to provide for the general welfare, permitted Congress to take every thing under their charge which *they* should deem for the public welfare. If this was maintained, then the enumeration of powers in the Constitution does not at all constitute the limits of their authority."

With this topic the conversation ended. The mingling of justice and injustice in Jefferson's observations is obvious. He was chiefly unjust in ascribing the ill-working of some of Hamilton's measures to design; whereas, the inflation of values, and the consequent mania for speculation, were unforeseen, and were by no one more regretted than by Hamilton. The real grievances of the Republicans at that moment were two: 1, Hamilton's free-and-easy construction of the Constitution. 2, The interference of the Treasury Department with legislation. During that very week the Republicans made a serious effort toward turning the secretary of the treasury and his allies out of the lobby by breaking up the system of referring questions to members of the cabinet. After a long debate, the House adjourned without coming to a vote; but Madison and his friends went home that afternoon in the highest spirits, so sure were they of victory on the day following. During the evening, as they believed, the special adherents of the secretary of the treasury bestirred themselves with such effect, that, — to employ Jefferson's own words, — "The *Treasury* carried it by thirty-one to twenty-seven." But even this triumph was esteemed only the forerunner of defeat, so omnipotent had the Treasury once been. "It showed," Jefferson thought, "that *Treasury* influence was tottering."

So far the personal intercourse between the two diverging ministers was agreeable; and we even observe in their official correspondence an apparent effort to conciliate. In March, 1792, Jefferson submitted the draught of a cabinet paper for Hamilton's review and emendation; and when it came back with comments, Jefferson appears to have made a point of accepting as many of his colleague's suggestions as possible. Out of ten emendations he adopted all but one, which would have involved a looser construction of the Constitution than he approved. As late as February, 1792 (a month before the conversation with the president), Jefferson, in returning his colleague's Report on the Mint, commended the performance, suggested a change or two, and ended his note thus: "I hazard these thoughts to you extempore, and am, dear sir, respectfully and affectionately yours."

This, however, was the year of the presidential election. For the presidency, there was, indeed, but one candidate; but Mr. Adams's incoherences upon Davila, and his son's essays in the name of *Publicola*, cost him a severe contest for the vice-presidency; George

Clinton of New York being the candidate of the Republicans. Need it be said that the two Gazettes, Fenno and Freneau, improved the occasion? But how mild the prose and verse of Captain Freneau compared with the vituperation and calumny which have since made the party press as powerless to abase as to exalt!

“ On Davila’s page  
Your discourses so sage  
Democratic numsculls bepuzzle,  
With arguments tough  
As white leather or buff,  
The Republican bull-dogs to muzzle!”

It is to be presumed that the vice-president did not take seriously to heart such fooling as this, which is a fair enough specimen of “Jonathan Pindar’s” doggerel. Hamilton and his friends were assailed in prose not quite so pointless. Perhaps the following was as “severe” as most of the editorial paragraphs, if only from its containing a portion of truth: “The mask is at length torn from the monarchical party, who have, with but too much success, imposed themselves upon the public for the sincere friends of our republican Constitution. Whatever may be the event of the competition for the vice-presidency, it has been the happy occasion of ascertaining the two following important truths: First, that the name of Federalist has been assumed by men who approve the Constitution merely ‘as a promising essay toward a well-ordered government;’ that is to say, as a step toward a government of King, Lords, and Commons. Secondly, that the spirit of the people continues firmly republican.” Often, however, the secretary of the treasury was specially designated; and his financial system was always condemned, as Jefferson condemned it in the hearing of the president.

When Hamilton read his Freneau, week after week, during that exciting summer of 1792, he read it, not at all as the publication of Captain Philip Freneau, mariner and poet, but, wholly and always, as the utterance of Thomas Jefferson, secretary of state. He was right, and he was wrong. Jefferson, to people like-minded with himself, was a pervading and fascinating intelligence. His easy manners, his long experience, his knowledge of nature, men, and events, his sanguine trust in man, his freedom from inhuman pride, his prodigious Christianity, his great gifts, his great fame, and his

great place, all conspired to make him the oracle of his circle, as he was the soul of his party. Freneau could not help infusing a good deal of Jefferson into almost every thing he wrote. But although that was the only kind of influence which the secretary of state ever exerted over the pen of his translating clerk, Hamilton could not believe it. He took it for granted that the National Gazette was edited in his colleague's office, with his colleague's assistance, for the purpose of subverting himself. Irritated and indignant, the secretary of the treasury composed, July 15, 1791, the epistle following, and had it inserted in the other Gazette, — the Gazette of the United States : —

“MR. FENNO, — The editor of the National Gazette receives a salary from government.

“*Quere.* Whether this salary is paid him for *Translations*, or for publications, the design of which is to vilify those to whom the voice of the people has committed the administration of our public affairs, — to oppose the measures of government, and, by false insinuations, to disturb the public peace ?

“In common life it is thought ungrateful for a man to bite the hand that puts bread in his mouth ; but, if the man is hired to do it, the case is altered. T. L.”

Freneau was not politician enough, nor guilty enough, to pass by this hint in silence. He repelled the insinuation, which gave Hamilton a pretext for following it up. A series of strongly written, incisive articles, from the pen of the secretary of the treasury, appeared in Fenno ; in which Jefferson was attacked by name. Some of these articles (there were twelve in all) were signed, “An American ;” others, “Amicus ;” others, “Catullus ;” one, “Metellus ;” one, “A Plain, Honest Man :” but all of them are included in the authorized edition of the works of Alexander Hamilton. They appeared from time to time, during the rest of the presidential “campaign ;” calling forth replies from “Aristides” and other sages of antiquity, but eliciting no printed word from Jefferson. The burden of the earlier numbers was, that Mr. Freneau was brought from New York to Philadelphia, and quartered upon the government, by Mr. Jefferson, for the purpose of establishing a



gazette hostile to the government. (Denied by Freneau on oath.) When that topic was exhausted, Colonel Hamilton endeavored to show, by fragments of Jefferson's letters to Madison from France, that his colleague had been an original opponent of the Constitution. (Disproved by Madison's publishing *the whole* of the quoted passages.) Hamilton proceeded to descant upon Mr. Jefferson's indorsement of Paine's reply to Burke: accusing him, first, of an intention to wound and injure Mr. Adams; and, secondly, of a dastardly denial of the same, when he found that "discerning and respectable men disapproved the step." After relieving his mind of many a column of fluent and vigorous outrage, he called upon Mr. Jefferson to resign his office.

"If," said Metellus, "he cannot coalesce with those with whom he is associated, as far as the rules of official decorum, propriety, and obligation may require, without abandoning what he conceives to be the true interest of the community, let him place himself in a situation in which he will experience no collision of opposite duties. Let him not cling to the honor or emolument of an office, whichever it may be that attracts him, and content himself with defending the injured rights of the people by obscure or indirect means. Let him renounce a situation which is a clog upon his patriotism."

The effect upon the public mind of this ill-timed breach of official decorum was such as we should naturally suppose it would be. The thin disguise of the various signatures adopted by the secretary of the treasury deceived only readers distant from the capital, and them not long; for Hamilton, besides betraying himself by the power of his stroke, seems, in some passages, to have courted discovery, — pushing aside the gauzy folds of the curtain, and all but crying out, *Behold, it is I, the administration!* "Society" applauded. The drawing-room eyed Jefferson askance. It could not quite cut a secretary of state, but its bow was as distant as its habitual deference to place and power would permit; and to this day, if indeed we can be said to have a drawing-room now, it has loved to repeat the traditional disparagement. But the articles had not the political effect which their ingenious author intended; for, while they emphasized Jefferson's position as the Republican chief, they really — so Federalists themselves report — lowered Hamilton in the view of the country. He lost that prestige of reserve and mystery that gathers round a name associated in the public mind

only with affairs of national magnitude, and subjects of general importance. The people were not pleased to discover, in an adviser of the president, a partisan, positive, vehement, ingenious, and unjust, a coarse assailant of a name hallowed by its association with the birthday of the nation. Hamilton lost something which is of no value to an anonymous writer in a presidential "campaign," but is of immense value to a public man, — WEIGHT. And, with all this, he did not retard the development of the new-born opposition. George Clinton received fifty electoral votes for the vice-presidency, Jefferson four, and Burr one, to seventy-seven for Mr. Adams.

There was one man in the country who was great enough to do justice to both these men, and to feel only sorrow for their dissensions. How the president tried to reconcile them is a pleasing and noble passage of his history. He wrote a kind, manly letter to each of them, employing similar arguments and several identical phrases in both letters; reminding them of the difficulties and dangers of the country's position, encompassed as it was by avowed enemies and insidious friends, and urging them to a more charitable interpretation of one another.

Both secretaries replied, as it chanced, on the same day, September 9, 1792. Hamilton owned that he had attacked his colleague in the newspapers, and intimated, that, for the present, he could not discontinue his assaults. He justified his conduct thus: "I *know* that I have been an object of uniform opposition from Mr. Jefferson, from the moment of his coming to the city of New York to enter upon his present office. I *know*, from the most authentic sources, that I have been the frequent subject of the most unkind whispers and insinuations from the same quarter. I have long seen a formed party in the legislature under his auspices, bent upon my subversion. I cannot doubt, from the evidence I possess, that the National Gazette was instituted by him for political purposes; and that one leading object of it has been to render me, and all the measures connected with my department, as odious as possible." These, however, were personal wrongs, which he had resolved to bear in silence. But when he saw that a party had been formed "deliberately bent upon the subversion of measures, which, in its consequences, would subvert the government," then he had felt it to be his duty to defeat the nefarious purpose by "drawing aside the veil from the principal actors."

Jefferson's reply was long, vehement, and powerful. So far as it was exculpatory of himself, it was perfectly successful; but, at such a moment, he must have been either more or less than man to have been just to his antagonist. Nor is there any one now alive competent to say precisely how far he was unjust to him. Who can tell us to what point "treasury influence" may have influenced legislation, and how far Colonel Hamilton may have deemed it right and legitimate to enlist the interests of men on the side of what he called "government"? One thing we do know: the rule which Jefferson prescribed for his own conduct as a member of the cabinet is the true republican rule. "If," said he, "it has been supposed that I have ever intrigued among the members of the legislature to defeat the plans of the secretary of the treasury, it is contrary to all truth. As I never had the desire to influence the members, so neither had I any other means than my friendships, which I valued too highly to risk by usurpations on their freedom of judgment and the conscientious pursuit of their own sense of duty."

This was the right view to take of the limits prescribed by the spirit of the Constitution to his place. But, though we know Hamilton gloried in holding an opposite opinion, we do not know how far he carried his ideas in practice. That he interfered *habitually* in legislation, and was proud of his success in so doing, his letters plainly reveal. Jefferson charges him with using his power as minister of finance to control votes. "That I have utterly," writes the secretary of state, "in my private conversations, disapproved of the system of the secretary of the treasury, I acknowledge and avow; and this was not merely a speculative difference. His system flowed from principles adverse to liberty, and was calculated to undermine and demolish the republic, by creating an influence of his department over the members of the legislature. I saw this influence actually produced, and its first fruits to be the establishment of the great outlines of his project by the votes of the very persons, who, having swallowed his bait, were laying themselves out to profit by his plans; and that had these persons withdrawn, as those interested in a question ever should, the vote of the disinterested majority was clearly the reverse of what they made it." He accused his colleague, too, of defeating the system of favoring French commerce and retaliating British restrictions, by cabals with members of Congress.

Another retort of Jefferson's gives pause to the modern inquirer. Who can say with any thing like certainty, whether, in the passage following, Mr. Jefferson uttered truth pure and simple, or truth colored, distorted, and exaggerated by antipathy?

"I have never inquired," said he, "what number of sons, relations, and friends of senators, representatives, printers, or other useful partisans, Colonel Hamilton has provided for among the hundred clerks of his department, the thousand excisemen, custom-house officers, loan-officers, appointed by him, or at his nod, and spread over the Union; nor could ever have imagined, that the man who has the shuffling of millions backwards and forwards from paper into money, and money into paper, from Europe to America, and America to Europe, the dealing out of treasury secrets among his friends in what time and measure he pleases, and who never slips an occasion of making friends with his means, — that such a one, I say, would have brought forward a charge against me for having appointed the poet Freneau, translating clerk to my office, with a salary of two hundred and fifty dollars a year."

A passage followed, in relation to this appointment, which had a wonderful currency years ago, and is still occasionally revived. He declared, that, in appointing Freneau, he had been actuated by the motive which had induced him to recommend to the president for public employment such characters as Rittenhouse, Barlow, and Paine. "I hold it," he added, "to be one of the distinguishing excellences of an elective over hereditary succession, that the talents which Nature has provided in sufficient proportion should be selected by the society for the government of their affairs, rather than that this should be transmitted through the loins of knaves and fools, passing from the debauches of the table to those of the bed."

In conclusion, he said, that, as the time of his retirement from office was so near (only six months distant), he should postpone any public reply which he might deem it best to make to the Fenwick articles until he was a private citizen, — a period to which he looked "with the longing of a wave-worn mariner, who has at length the land in view, and shall count the days and hours which still lie between me and it." *Then* he would be free to defend himself, without disturbing the quiet of the president; but, if he did break silence, he should subscribe his name to whatever he wrote. Con-

scious, he said, of having merited the esteem of his countrymen, which he dearly prized, by an integrity which could not be reproached, and by an enthusiastic devotion to their rights and to liberty, he "would not suffer his retirement to be clouded by the slanders of a man whose history, from the moment at which history could stoop to notice him, was a tissue of machinations against the liberty of the country which had not only received and given him bread, but heaped its honors upon his head." But during the short time he had to remain in office, he should find "ample employment in closing the present business of the department."

This letter was written at Monticello. On his way to Philadelphia he stopped, as usual, at Mount Vernon, when the president renewed the subject in conversation, and urged him to reconsider his intention to resign; for he "thought it important to preserve the check of his opinions in the administration to keep things in the proper channel and prevent them from going too far." The check! The check to what? The president said he did not believe there were ten men, worth consideration, in the country, who had so much as a thought of transforming the republic into a monarchy. Mr. Jefferson replied that there was "a numerous sect who had monarchy in contemplation, of whom the secretary of the treasury was one." The most intimate friend Hamilton ever had was Gouverneur Morris, who pronounced his funeral oration. This exquisite writer stated Hamilton's opinions at much length in 1811, in a letter to Robert Walsh of Philadelphia. The following are some of Morris's expressions: "General Hamilton disliked the Constitution, believing all republican government radically defective. . . . He hated republican government. . . . He trusted, that, in the changes and chances of time, we should be involved in some war, which might strengthen our union and nerve the executive. . . . He never failed on every occasion to advocate the excellence of, and avow his attachment to, monarchical government." The other points of difference were gone over, but without lessening Mr. Jefferson's passionate desire to retire from public life. But, on reaching Philadelphia, friends insisted on his remaining in office with such pertinacity, and offered reasons so cogent, that he knew not how either to rebut or accept them.

## CHAPTER XLVIII.

### CAUSES OF HIS DESIRE TO RESIGN.

No language can overstate his longing for retreat. Six months before the Fenno assaults began, this had been the burden of his letters to his family and friends. "The ensuing year," he wrote to his daughter, in March, 1792, "will be the longest of my life, and the last of such hateful labors: the next we will sow our cabbages together." To other friends he said that the 4th of March, 1793, was to him what land was to Columbus. He had sent to Scotland for one of the new threshing-machines, and a plough of his invention had recently won a medal in France. He had engaged mechanics in Europe to work upon his house, and upon other schemes which he had formed. He was packing his books in view of the termination of the lease of his house in Philadelphia, and had arranged for one of its inmates, "Jack Eppes," to enter William and Mary in the spring. Schemes upon schemes were forming in his mind for extricating his great estate from encumbrance, and turning its latent resources to better account than could be expected from overseers. But the attacks in the newspapers and the hostility of powerful classes, though they intensified his desire for repose, seemed to interpose a barrier which he could not pass. He was torn with contending emotions. "I have been," he wrote to his daughter in January, 1793, "under an agitation of mind which I scarcely ever experienced before, produced by a check on my purpose of returning home at the close of this session of Congress." Madison, Monroe, Page, Randolph, all friends and all partisans, united in the opinion that he must not give the Federalists the triumph of being able to say, with an appearance of truth, that Hamilton had driven him from office. He consented, at length, to remain a short time longer. He sent most of his library home, sold the bulkier articles of his fur-



niture, gave up his house, took three rooms in the suburbs, and "held himself in readiness to take his departure for Monticello the first moment he could do it with due respect to himself." Thus he wrote to the father of "Jack Eppes," in April, 1793.

But why this agonizing desire for retirement? Thereby hangs a tale. If we give ten reasons for a certain course of conduct, there is often an eleventh which we do not give; and that unspoken one is apt to be *the* reason. He could no longer afford to serve the public on the terms fixed by Congress. It was not merely that his salary did not pay the cost of his Philadelphia establishment, nor that his estate was ill-managed by overseers. An ancient debt hung, as he says, "like a millstone round his neck,"—a debt which he had twice paid, although not incurred by him. Upon the death of his wife's father, twenty years before, he had received property from his estate worth forty thousand dollars, but subject to a British debt of thirteen thousand. Impatient of debt, he sold a fine farm near Monticello for a sum sufficient to discharge it; but, by the time he received the money, the war of the Revolution had begun. Virginia invited all men owing money to Great Britain to deposit the same in her treasury, the State agreeing to pay it over to the British creditor after the war. The identical coin which Jefferson received for his farm he himself carried to the treasury in Williamsburg, where it was immediately expended in equipping troops.

The legislature of Virginia, however, thought better of this policy, rescinded the resolution, and returned the sums received under it. But Jefferson was obliged to take back his thirteen thousand dollars in depreciated paper, which continued to depreciate until it was worthless. In fact, the thirteen thousand dollars just sufficed to buy him one garment; and in riding by that farm, in after years, he would sometimes point to it, and say laughing, "That farm I once sold for an overcoat." At the end of the war, during which Cornwallis destroyed more than enough of his property to pay this debt, he had, as he remarked, "to lay his shoulders to the payment of it a *third* time," in addition to a considerable debt of his own, incurred just before the outbreak of hostilities. "What the laws of Virginia," he wrote to his creditor in England, "are, or may be, will in no wise influence my conduct. Substantial justice is my object, as decided by reason, not by authority or compulsion." Ever since the war closed, he had been struggling to

reduce these debts, and finally made an arrangement for paying them off at the rate of four hundred pounds sterling a year. How easy this ought to have been to a person owning ten thousand acres of excellent land, "one hundred and fifty-four slaves, thirty-four horses, five mules, two hundred and forty-nine cattle, three hundred and ninety hogs, and three sheep!" But only two thousand acres of his land were cultivated; nine of his horses were used for the saddle; and the labor of his slaves had been for ten years directed by overseers. In 1793 the greater part of the debt remained to be discharged; and he saw, whenever he visited Monticello, such evidences of "the ravages of overseers" as filled him with alarm. He had now a son-in-law to settle, a second daughter to establish, a mountainous debt to pay, a high office to live up to, and an estate going to ruin. Behold his eleventh, unuttered reason for the frenzy which possessed him to live at home.

He might well desire to see the reign of overseers brought to an end on his estate. Readers remember, perhaps, General Washington's experience with them. How, when he owned one hundred and one cows, he was compelled to buy butter for his own table; and how, after building one of the best barns in the country, where thirty men could conveniently wield the flail, he could not prevent his manager from treading out the grain with horses, — so impossible was it, he says, "to put the overseers of this country out of the track they have been accustomed to walk in." He reached home for his annual vacation in 1793, about the middle of September, and caught this truly conservative gentleman in the act. "I found a treading-yard," wrote the president, "not thirty feet from the barn-door, the wheat again brought out of the barn, and horses treading it out in an open exposure, liable to the vicissitudes of weather." With such men to manage, the general thought the new threshing-machine would have a brief existence. What need there was, then, of the master's eye upon an encumbered estate!

Jefferson settled to his work again in Philadelphia, and watched for a good opportunity to resign. Through the good offices of the president, a truce was arranged between the two hostile secretaries, who tried their best to co-operate in peace, not without success. Hamilton, in particular, was scrupulously careful to avoid the error of interfering, or seeming to interfere, in his colleague's department. At heart each felt the sincerity and patriotic intentions of the

other, and Jefferson had even an exaggerated idea of Hamilton's ability. The elections, too, of 1792, had strengthened the Republicans in Congress, who gained a decisive triumph in the first month of the session, by defeating (thirty-five to eleven) a proposition to allow members of the cabinet to attend the house of Representatives, and explain "*their* measures" to the House. This made it easier for Jefferson to continue. And, besides, the French Revolution, of late, had turned in arms upon the kings banded against it, and seemed to be able, contrary to all expectation, to hold its own. As yet nearly all America was in enthusiastic sympathy with France. When the news arrived of a movement favorable to the French, the "monocrats," as Jefferson styled the *Othercrats*, made wry faces; but the Republicans set the bells ringing, illuminated their houses, and wore a tri-colored cockade in their hats.

The time was at hand when the youngest of the nations would need in its government the best talent it could command, and, above all, in the department which directed its intercourse with foreign nations. The French king had been dethroned, and was about to be brought to trial, all the world looking on with an interest difficult now to conceive. It stirred Jefferson's indignation sometimes, to observe that mankind were more attentive to the sufferings of the king and queen than to the welfare of the people of France. "Such are the fruits," he once wrote, "of that form of government which heaps importance upon idiots, and which the Tories of the present day are trying to preach into our favor." It pleased many of the Republicans, however, to learn that Thomas Paine, one of themselves, was exerting himself ably to save the king's life. Paine said in the Convention, that "Louis Capet," if he had been slightly favored by fortune, — if he had been born in a private station in "an amiable and respectable neighborhood," — would have been, in all probability, a virtuous citizen; but cursed from the dawn of his reason with ceaseless adulation, and reared in "brutal luxury," he was a victim of monarchy, as well as the agent of its ill-working. England, he reminded the Convention, had cut off the head of a very bad Charles Stuart, only to be plagued, a few years after, with a worse; but when, forty years later, England had *banished* the Stuarts, there was an end to their doing harm in the world.

What a happy stroke was this in a French Assembly! He followed it up by offering to accompany the fallen king to the only ally

France then had, the United States, where the people regarded him as their friend. "His execution, I assure you," said this master of effective composition, "will diffuse among them a general grief. I propose to you to conduct Louis to the United States. After a residence of two years, Mr. Capet will find himself a citizen of America. Miserable in this country, to which his absence will be a benefit, he will be furnished the means of becoming happy in another."

There was a passage in this speech to which the bloody scenes about to occur in Paris give a singular significance. Part of the long period of re-action towards barbaric (i.e. ancient) ideas and institutions, which began with the French guillotine, and from which we are only now emerging, might have been spared mankind if Thomas Paine could have spoken French as well as he wrote English, and brought this warning home to the Convention with the oratorical power of a Mirabeau. "Monarchical governments," he said, "have trained the human race, and inured it to the sanguinary arts and refinements of punishment; and it is exactly the same punishment which has so long shocked the sight and tormented the patience of the people, that now, in their turn, they practise in revenge upon their oppressors. But it becomes us to be strictly on our guard against the abomination and perversity of monarchical examples. As France has been the first to abolish royalty, let her also be the first to abolish the punishment of death." In these words spoke the humane spirit in which the French Revolution originated.

The execution of the king, January 21, 1793, saddened every well-constituted mind in Europe and America. It lessened the sympathy of a vast number of persons with the revolution; and all but the most extreme republicans felt in some degree the infinite impolicy of the act. From that time the good-will of mankind for unhappy France would have more sensibly diminished, but that the world in arms seemed gathering for her destruction.

It was a mad time. The manager of a Philadelphia theatre thought it opportune to revive the tragedy of Cato. Before the play began, the company of actors sang upon the stage *La Marseillaise*, when the whole theatre rose, and joined in the chorus. At the end of each act this performance was repeated. Every evening afterwards, as soon as the musicians entered the orchestra, a cry arose for *La Marseillaise*, and no other music would be listened to.

Usually some portion of the audience caught the fury of the piece, and thundered out the familiar refrain. But as the guillotine continued its ravages, the enthusiasm decreased; and, instead of the universal and deafening demand for the French hymn, there would be, at length, only a score or two of voices from the gallery, all the rest of the house sitting in grim silence. Finally, on a night long remembered in the theatre, one defiant soul ventured to give the usual sign of disapproval. Instantly the whole house burst into one overwhelming hiss; and never was the terrible piece played again. Soon the new song of Hail Columbia took its place in popular regard, and was, for some years, played at every theatre just before the rising of the curtain.

The change of government in France produced political complications with which the cabinet of General Washington had to deal at once and practically. Questions of law and of finance, as well as of opinion and sentiment, had to be, not only discussed, but rightly decided under penalty of being drawn into the maelstrom of the war. Our two "cocks," exasperated by previous encounters, were now pitted against each other every day; but they were under bonds to keep the peace, and each was further restrained by the perils of the situation. Hamilton, by himself, might have involved the country in an entangling alliance with the powers hostile to the revolution. Jefferson alone might have found it difficult to avoid a too helpful sympathy with beleaguered, bewildered France. The result of their antagonism was an honorable neutrality, useful to France, not injurious to the allies, and exceedingly profitable to the United States.

How irreconcilable they were in their feelings respecting the great events of 1793! "Sir," said Hamilton, in August, to Edmund Randolph, "if all the people in America were now assembled, and were to call on me to say whether I am a friend to the French Revolution, I would declare that I have it in abhorrence." Jefferson, on the contrary, wrote thus to his old friend Short, just before the execution of the king: "My own affections have been deeply wounded by some of the martyrs to this cause; but rather than it should have failed, I would have seen half the earth desolated! Were there but an Adam and an Eve left in every country, and left free, it would be better than as it now is."

Gouverneur Morris was then American minister in France, — a



very able gentleman and honorably frank in the avowal of his opinions. Mark this striking sentence, written by him as far back as 1790: "The French Assembly have taken genius instead of reason for their guide, adopted experiment instead of experience, and wander in the dark because they prefer lightning to light." He meant Mirabeau. But a few weeks after, writing to General Washington, he gave such a list of the ancient abuses which the revolution had abolished as amount to a compensation to France for all the revolutionary miseries she has suffered from Mirabeau to Thiers. As the revolution advanced, though Jefferson, in official instructions, had cautioned him to avoid the utterance of opinions hostile to the revolution, he gave such offence to the revolutionary leaders that Lafayette complained of it to the president. But, in 1792, he redeemed himself nobly. Upon the dethronement of the king, when all the diplomatic corps left Paris, the American minister alone, rightly interpreting his mission, remained. "The position," as he truly wrote to Mr. Jefferson, "is not without danger; but I presume, that, when the president did me the honor of naming me to this embassy, it was not for my personal pleasure or safety, but to promote the interests of my country." And he remained at his post all through the period of the terror, though the ministry gave him pretext enough for abandoning it, and though even the sanctuary of his abode was violated by a committee in search of arms. The fury of the people, he wrote to Mr. Jefferson, was such as to render them capable of all excesses without being accountable for them. The calm courage and utter frankness of this splendid old Tory conciliate the modern reader. The French ministry, however, abhorred him to such a point, that they made it a matter of formal complaint to Mr. Jefferson, that this representative of a republic, in a despatch addressed to the government of a republic (a few days old), had used the familiar expression, "*Les ordres de MA COUR.*"

But the cabinet question was this: The king being dethroned, who was authorized to give a valid receipt for the money which the United States was paying to France from time to time? Upon this point, the orders of Gouverneur Morris's *court* were necessary; and the real secret of the animosity of the French ministers was, that he would not and could not pay over to them the sums due nominally to the king. The ministers remonstrated in their own way, and sent complaints across the sea. Morris, at his own table, and in the



hearing of his servants, indulged himself in calling them a set of damned rascals, and in predicting (he was curiously fond of prophesying) that the king would have his own again. Upon the pecuniary question, the opinions of the cabinet were divided.

Jefferson's opinion: Every people may establish what form of government they please, and change it as often as they please. But the National Assembly of France, to which all power had fallen by necessity upon the removal of the king, had not been elected by the people of France as an executive body. For the moment, therefore, the French government was, at best, incomplete. But a national convention had been elected in full view of the crisis, and for the express purpose of meeting its requirements. *That* convention would be, when organized, a legitimate government, qualified to give a valid receipt to the United States.

Hamilton's opinion: He doubted whether the convention would be a legitimate body. In case the monarchy should be re-established, the king might disallow payments made to it. He was for stopping payment altogether until there was something more stable and regular established in France.

On this occasion General Knox, secretary of war, ventured to express an opinion. "For once," says Jefferson, "Knox dared to differ from Hamilton, and to express very submissively an opinion that a convention named by the whole body of the nation would be competent to do any thing." The result was, that the secretary of state was requested to write to Gouverneur Morris, directing him to suspend payments until further orders. A few days after arrived the despatches in which the French ministry complained of the too candid Morris and of his insolent contempt of a sister republic in speaking of "*ma cour*." Upon this delicate subject the president conversed with the secretary of state in a manner which exhibits the situation.

THE PRESIDENT. The extracts from Ternant (French plenipotentiary in Philadelphia) I consider very serious, in short, as decisive. I see that Gouverneur Morris can be no longer continued there consistently with the public good. The moment is critical in our favor (that is for getting free-trade with the French West Indies and freer trade with France), and ought not to be lost. Yet I am extremely at a loss what arrangement to make.

JEFFERSON. Might not Gouverneur Morris and Pinckney (American minister in England) change places ?

THE PRESIDENT. That would be a sort of remedy, but not a radical one. If the French ministry conceive Gouverneur Morris to be hostile to them, if they were jealous merely on his proposing to *visit* London, they will never be satisfied with us at placing him in London permanently. You have unfixed the day on which you intended to resign ; yet you appear fixed in doing it at no great distance of time. In that case, I cannot but wish that you would go to Paris. The moment is important. You possess the confidence of both sides, and might do great good. I wish you could do it, were it only to stay there a year or two.

JEFFERSON. My mind is so bent on retirement, that I cannot think of launching forth again on a new business. I can never again cross the Atlantic. As to the opportunity of doing good, *this* is likely to be the scene of action, as Genet is bringing powers to do the business here. I cannot think of going abroad.

THE PRESIDENT. You have pressed me to continue in the public service, and refuse to do the same yourself.

JEFFERSON. The case is different. You unite the confidence of all America, and you are the only person who does so. Your services, therefore, are of the last importance. But, for myself, my going out would not be noted or known. A thousand others can supply my place to equal advantage ; and, therefore, I feel myself free.

THE PRESIDENT. Consider maturely, then, what arrangement shall be made.

Here the conversation ended. Mr. Jefferson did not remind the president of the vast difference in their pecuniary condition. He did not remark that General Washington was so rich a man, that not even the ravages of Virginia overseers could quite ruin him, but that Thomas Jefferson could only continue to serve the public at the imminent risk of financial destruction.

Meanwhile Genet was coming, — the first minister sent by the Republic of France to the Republic of the United States. The Republicans of the United States awaited his arrival with inexpressible ardor, and were prepared to give him one of those “receptions” for which the country has since become noted, — receptions which are

so amusing and agreeable to all but the victim. Colonel Hamilton was by no means elevated at the prospect of his coming. At a cabinet meeting a short time before the landing of the expected minister, he had dropped this remark: "When Mr. Genet arrives, whether we shall receive him or not will then be a question for discussion."

## CHAPTER XLIX.

### GENET COMING.

It seemed an odd freak of destiny that sent Edmond Genet, a *protégé* of Marie Antoinette, to represent the Republic of France in the United States. Gouverneur Morris, in his neat, uncompromising manner, sums up this young diplomatist, aged twenty-eight in 1793, as "a man of good parts and very good education, brother to the queen's first woman, from whence his fortune originates." Even so. He was a brother of that worthy and capable Madame Campan, first *femme de chambre* to Marie Antoinette, and, after the queen's death, renowned through Europe as the head of a seminary for young ladies in Paris. It was she who wrote a hundred circulars with her own hand because she had not money to get them printed, and received sixty pupils the first year, — Hortense, ere long, from Napoleon's own hand.

The father of this respectable, energetic family was, nearly all his life, under the influence of English and American ideas and persons. He lived in England many years, where he acquired familiar command of the English language, and a fond, wide acquaintance with English literature. Upon returning to his native land he seems — if we may judge from the long catalogue of his publications — to have adopted it as a profession to make England known to France. Beginning with two volumes of Pope's best letters in 1753, he continued to publish translations from the English, and original works relating to England, until, in 1765, the list embraced twenty-two volumes. A few years later, when he held the post of chief clerk to the department of foreign affairs, he was in frequent intercourse with Dr. Franklin, Silas Deane, Beaumarchais, and all the American circle. His house, too, from 1765 to 1781, when he died, was one of those agreeable haunts of men connected with literature and art

which had, at that period, an *éclat* rivalling that of the great houses, where Power in its cruder forms of wealth and rank was represented. From such a home, it was natural enough that Henrietta Genet, at fifteen, should be invited to fill the place of reader to Mesdames the sisters of Louis XV., to be in due time advanced to a place of real importance in the *régime* of the period, — that of “first woman” to the young queen.

Nor was her brother's career quite such a caprice of fortune as it seemed. If, as a boy, he was noted in the palace for the warmth of his republican sentiments, it was only that he was in the mode. Did not the queen smile benignantly upon Franklin, and chat familiarly with him while she held the cards waiting her turn to play? Who more distinguished at court than Lafayette, the stern republican of nineteen? When the queen desired to give young Genet a start in the diplomatic career, his grand republican sentiments were rather a point in his favor than otherwise; and, at twenty-four, he had reached a position in the diplomatic service to which only court favor of the most irresistible description could have pushed so young a man. He was secretary of legation at St. Petersburg; whence, according to Morris, he wrote in so republican a style, that his despatches, read after the dethronement, made his fortune with the chiefs of the Gironde, who named him ambassador to Holland, his appointment bearing date November 14, 1792.

Suddenly the programme was changed, for a reason never conjectured till within these few months past. The Holland commission was revoked in December, and M. Genet was appointed to represent France in America. Genet, it appears, was at once a Girondist and a grateful friend to his royal benefactors, whom he was now in the habit of styling “Louis and Madame Capet.” The Girondists had adopted the scheme proposed by Thomas Paine of sending this hapless pair and their children to the United States; and Genet, as we are now assured, was selected for the purpose of promoting the project. A well-known writer, who has made a particular study of that period, and who apparently derived his information from the American family of M. Genet, holds this language, and emphasizes it by the use of italics: —

“M. Genet was selected for the mission to America, by the more moderate republicans in France, because of his friendship with the deposed monarch, and for the express purpose of conducting the

imprisoned king and the royal family secretly to America. This arrangement was entered into at a meeting of the leading Girondists, at which our own Thomas Paine assisted; and it was at that meeting that M. Genet was tendered the mission, and accepted it, playfully describing, in response, to what occupations such and such of the royal exiles could be appropriated, on their arrival in America." \*

But it was no longer in the power of the more moderate republicans to control the course of events. If France was mad, England was not sane; and the man in England whose voice was mightiest, who should have been the great tranquillizing influence of the hour, was the maddest public man in Europe. "I vote for this (alien) bill," said Burke in Parliament, about the time of Genet's appointment, "because I consider it as the means of saving my life and all our lives from the hands of assassins. When they smile, I see blood trickling down their faces: I see that the object of all their cajoling is blood." How was the mighty fallen! Here was genius stooping to clothe in powerful language the imbecile panic of ignorance. The raving of Burke, by infecting the policy of England, was among the influences in the French Convention that decided the king's fate. Louis was exiled to the other world, instead of going with Genet and Paine to the shores of the peaceful Delaware. A few hours after the news of his execution reached London, the British government, in effect, declared war against France; and, as soon as this intelligence reached Paris, February 1, 1793, France declared war, in form, against England.

Thus began the bloodiest struggle the modern world has known, which only ended after Waterloo. There was no pretext for the war which will bear the light of to-day. All thrones, it is true, were menaced in the fall of the French throne; and no king felt so sure of his head after January 21, 1793, as he had before that memorable date. Here was motive enough for the king of England, but not for the realm of Britain. The reason why Great Britain struck France in 1793 was, as the world is now informed, because France was weak. Such is the explanation given of the origin of this infernal war by a work that speaks to foreign nations with an

\* New York Historical Magazine for February, 1871, p. 143. Article by the editor, H. P. Dawson.



authority semi-official. France was sorely afflicted, distracted, anarchic. "All Europe was now leagued against her. Within she was divided by faction, and without she was assailed by immense hosts of the best disciplined soldiers of Europe, conducted by the most skilful leaders, to whom she had nothing to oppose but an undisciplined multitude, led on by inexperienced chiefs. In this state of things it seemed a *safe* measure to make war against her. To do so was only to retaliate the conduct she had herself pursued when she effected the dismemberment of the British Empire by assisting our revolted Colonies."\* Such is the nature of dynastic rule. Such was that "British form," of which British Hamilton was so enamoured.

It was from the frenzy and delirium of all this that Citizen Genet sailed in the frigate *L'Embuscade* for the United States. He had, indeed, been ranked with the more moderate republicans; but in February, 1793, moderation was a quality unknown to the heart of civilized man. He was a Frenchman; he was a republican; he was twenty-eight; he was bearing to America the news that England, too, had sided in arms against his country. Long was this frigate tossed upon the wintry deep. She was driven far to the southward of her course, and the great tidings which she brought reached President Washington before *L'Embuscade* was heard of at the seat of government.

The genius for rectitude which General Washington possessed was never so manifest as on this occasion. Passion spoke but one voice. Here was our ally attacked by the great naval power of the world because she seemed prostrate and helpless! Here was France threatened with dismemberment because she had helped *us* in the crisis of *our* destiny! Here was the king who warred upon Americans, because they had demanded to govern America, presuming to deny the right of Frenchmen to govern France! Generosity, justice, gratitude, pride, and even policy, appeared to call upon the two republics to make common cause against the common foe. Was not England the common foe? Did she not hold the United States by the throat? What was the retention of the seven posts but suspended war? Such were the thoughts that naturally rose in the minds of a vast majority of American citizens when the news was

\* *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. v. p. 547.

circulated. The president had but to remain passive, he had but to linger another month at Mount Vernon, and every vessel that could have carried half a dozen guns and forty men would have been afloat in quest of British prizes. And to this hour, if you will imbue yourself with the spirit of that time, and shut out all those larger and nobler considerations which alone should control the decisions of a government, you will often find yourself ready to exclaim, Oh that he had!

Then, there were treaties with France to be considered, — treaties that seemed to many all the more sacred now because they were made when France was powerful and we were weak. Knotty questions started up as men in 1793 read those two treaties of 1778, — one of “Amity and Commerce,” and the other of “Alliance,” both bearing the name of Franklin, both signed by dead Louis. By the first, French men-of-war and French privateers *might*, and British *might not*, bring their prizes into American ports. By the second, the United States guaranteed “to his Christian Majesty the present possessions of the crown of France in America.”

General Washington was at Mount Vernon when Mr. Jefferson’s letter reached him, announcing the declaration of war between France and England. All the peril of the crisis flashed upon his mind. Its difficulties, too, occurred to him as he travelled post-haste to Philadelphia; and on his arrival he drew up, for the instant consideration of the cabinet, a list of questions embracing the situation: Shall we warn our citizens not to interfere in this contest? Shall we formally proclaim ourselves neutral? Ought we to receive the coming Genet? And, if we ought, how? Do our treaties with the late king hold? If we have the right to renounce or suspend the treaties, is it best to do so? Would it be a breach of neutrality to consider the treaties still in operation? Supposing the treaties in force, what precisely are the rights of France, and what precisely are our duties to France? If the French royal family should send us a representative, shall we receive *him* too? Ought Congress to be convened? And, if it ought, on what grounds should the call be placed?

The cabinet met at the president’s house on the following day, April 19. Upon one of the questions there was a substantial unanimity of opinion: it was agreed to notify American citizens that they could only join in the fight at their own peril. Mr. Jefferson,

however, prevailed so far as to keep the word "neutrality" out of the proclamation. He preferred that his country should not needlessly declare itself neutral in a contest concerning which its heart knew no neutrality. But on the other questions there was a difference of opinion in the cabinet which could not sufficiently argue itself in words spoken across the table of the president's office. To warm debates, long written papers succeeded, in which Hamilton displayed more of his fatal ingenuity than usual, and Jefferson all the wisdom that comes of a man's central principle being sound. The president's questions relating to France resolved themselves, it was found, into one, namely, Does the decapitation of Louis absolve the United States from obligation contracted nominally with *him*? In other words, Are the treaties still valid? Was it with France, or with Louis, that we made them? Here is M. Ternant, the resident French plenipotentiary, whose commission bears the king's signature; and somewhere on the ocean is Citizen Genet, coming to supersede him, whose commission has been issued neither by Louis nor by his heir.

Shall we receive Genet? *Of course*, said, in substance, the two Republican members, Jefferson and Randolph. *We must*, reluctantly said the two Federalists, Hamilton and Knox. But how? As plenipotentiaries are usually received, or with reserves and qualifications? It was in discussing this question that the two fighting-cocks of the cabinet joined battle, and fought out their difference. Hamilton's opinion was, that, before M. Genet was admitted to an audience with the president, the government should "qualify" that reception by declaring that the question of the validity of the treaties was "reserved." In supporting this opinion, he took the ground which George III. had taken in making war upon France: he presumed to sit in judgment upon the acts of the French people. He arraigned the revolution! "No proof," said he, "has yet come to light sufficient to establish a belief that the death of Louis is an act of national justice." He also said, "It was from Louis XVI. that the United States received those succors which were so important in the establishment of their independence and liberty. It was with him, his heirs and successors, that they contracted their engagements, by which they obtained those precious succors." Amplify these two statements to a vast extent; support them by a prodigious number of curiously subtle and remote rea-

sons; throw in the usual citations from Vattel, Grotius, Wolf, and Puffendorf; add some remarks upon the danger of guaranteeing to France islands that might be taken by the English,—and you have the substance of Hamilton's paper upon the reception of Genet.

Jefferson replied to it at much length. Besides giving his colleague an ample supply of Vattel, Puffendorf, Grotius, and Wolf, arranged in parallel columns, executed with singular neatness, he favored him with some passages of pure Jefferson, which have become part and parcel of the diplomatic system of the United States.

"If," said Mr. Jefferson, "I do not subscribe to the soundness of the secretary of the treasury's reasoning, I do most fully to its ingenuity. . . . I consider the people who constitute a society or nation as the source of all authority in that nation; as free to transact their common concerns by any agents they think proper; to change those agents individually, or the organization of them in form or function, whenever they please; that all the acts done by these agents, under the authority of the nation, are the acts of the nation, are obligatory on them, and inure to their use, and can in no wise be annulled or affected by any change in the form of the government or of the persons administering it. Consequently, the treaties between the United States and France were not treaties between the United States and Louis Capet, but between the two nations of America and France; and the nations remaining in existence, though *both* of them have since changed their forms of government, the treaties are not annulled by these changes."

He admitted, however, that, as there are circumstances which sometimes excuse the non-performance of contracts between man and man, so there are between nation and nation. "When performance, for instance, becomes impossible, non-performance is not immoral; so, if performance becomes self-destructive to the party, the law of self-preservation overrules the law of obligation to others. For the reality of these principles, I appeal to the true fountains of evidence, the head and heart of every rational and honest man. It is there Nature has written her moral laws, and where every man may read them for himself. He will never read there the permission to annul his obligations for a time or forever, whenever they become dangerous, useless, or disagreeable."

It seems strange to us that principles like these could ever have been subjects of debate in the cabinet of a president of the United

State. The president's decision was, that Genet should be received without qualification, that is, without insulting the authority that commissioned him. As to the treaties, General Washington told Jefferson that he had never had a doubt of their validity; but, since the question had been raised, he had thought it best to have it considered.

## CHAPTER I.

### EDMOND GENET IN THE UNITED STATES.

THE proclamation which announced to mankind that the duty and interest of the United States required that they should "pursue a conduct friendly and impartial towards the belligerent powers," and warning American citizens to avoid all acts inconsistent with that policy, was published on the 22d of April, 1793. On that very day, as it chanced, news reached the government that L'Embuscade, with Genet on board, had put into the port of Charleston, and that the minister, wearied of his long voyage, would tempt the main no more, but would send the frigate to Philadelphia, and perform the journey himself by land.

The people of the United States were troubled with no scruples in regard to Genet's commission. They gave him a reception like that which, in recent years, astounded and deluded the Hungarian Kossuth. It was on the 8th of April that L'Embuscade, of forty guns and three hundred men, "Citizen Bompard" commanding, cast anchor in the harbor of Charleston, forty-five days from Rochefort. M. Genet was so little identified with the extremists in France, that, on his way to join his ship, he had been arrested on a charge of being concerned in a plot to convey the Dauphin to the United States. The ship, on the contrary, made extravagant professions of loyalty to the Revolution. Her figure-head was a liberty-cap. On her stern there was a carved representation of the same. Her foremast was also converted into a liberty-pole by being crowned with that emblematic article of attire. Around her mizzen-top was a sentence to this effect: "WE ARE ARMED TO DEFEND THE RIGHTS OF MAN." Her main-top bore the following: "FREEMEN, WE ARE YOUR BROTHERS AND FRIENDS." Her fore-top was a warning to tyrants: "ENEMIES OF EQUALITY, RELINQUISH YOUR PRINCIPLES,



OR TREMBLE!" Besides being thus decorated, she came into Charleston Harbor with a British prize in her wake, a pleasing foretaste of the rich pickings to which the ocean invited men of enterprise who were also lovers of liberty.

Charleston was then a city of greater commercial importance than it has been within living memory. Many French merchants resided there. Amid the *fêtes*, dinners, balls, receptions, which hospitable Charleston exchanged with a frigate enthusiastic for liberty, these French merchants thronged about Citizen Genet, full of zeal for their country, and extremely desirous to display that zeal in the profitable form of privateering. They were willing to fit out vessels at their own expense: all they asked of Genet was authority. Only give us commissions, said they, and we will do the rest. Citizen Genet consulted Governor Moultrie on the subject. The governor, a better soldier than lawyer, and probably not uninfluenced by the prevalent "exaltation," told him he "knew no law against it," but begged, that, whatever he might do in the way of commissioning privateers, he would do without consulting farther the governor of South Carolina. What could Genet desire more? Two vessels, bought and equipped by French merchants, manned in part by Americans, were commissioned by Citizen Genet; and L'Embuscade used also to leave her anchorage in the morning, cruise off the harbor all day, and return to safety in the evening. Not a British vessel dared stir. Citizen Bompard publicly offered a lieutenancy in the French navy to any competent American who would engage to pilot the frigate along the coast. He obtained a pilot on these terms, and stood out to sea, returning to Charleston no more.

On her short passage to Philadelphia she captured two British prizes, — a brig named the Little Sarah, and a valuable ship called the Grange. Seldom has staid Philadelphia known an afternoon of such thrilling excitement as when these vessels cast anchor in the Delaware, opposite one of the principal wharves. The frigate's thundering salute of fifteen guns — one for each State — could only be returned by two field-pieces on Market-street Wharf, and these worked by volunteers; but the cannonade sufficed to summon all the movable population of the town to the river-side. The shipping was dressed in flags and streamers. Cheers from the spectators saluted the frigate as she glided past each dock, answered by cheers from the ship; and when she had dropped her anchor, her crew swarmed up

into the rigging, manned the tops and yards, and gave what a reporter of the period styled "three or four concurrent cheers." The most rapturous moment of all, according to Mr. Jefferson, was when the Grange was descried with the British colors upside-down and the flag of France flying above them. The thousands and thousands of the yeomanry of the city, he tells us, who crowded the wharves, "burst into peals of exultation." It was about five in the afternoon when L'Embuseade cast anchor. Every procurable boat put off to her crowded with passengers, until there were as many Philadelphians on board as Frenchmen. Each boat-load, we are assured, was welcomed with effusion. Philadelphia "fraternized" with L'Embuseade. "I wish," said Jefferson, in a confidential letter to Monroe, "we may be able to repress the people within the limits of a fair neutrality."

Some days after arrived the Citizen Genet, not the plenipotentiary, but one of the privateers which he had commissioned at Charleston, bringing in two more prizes, both British. This was cheering indeed. But now Citizen Genet himself was at hand. Five weeks had elapsed since his landing at Charleston, — so many dinners had he been compelled to eat, and so many ovations to undergo, in the cause of liberty. From Charleston to Philadelphia, wherever there were people to make a demonstration, the people were only too glad to demonstrate. Nay, more, merchants of Alexandria and Baltimore offered to sell to a beleaguered ally provisions below the market price. Six hundred thousand barrels of flour were offered Citizen Genet on terms more favorable than those granted to the most favored customer.

On the 16th of May the rumor was spread abroad in Philadelphia, that the representative of the French Republic was approaching the city from the south. The bells of Christ Church rang out a peal of welcome. By every road crowds hurried towards Gray's Ferry; but they were too late: Genet was so fortunate as to get over the river and into the city, even to the City Tavern, before any great number of the people could intercept him. A committee of seven distinguished Republicans, headed by the venerated Rittenhouse, had been appointed to address the plenipotentiary on his arrival. This committee, preceded by their chairman, marched toward the hotel, three abreast, joined as they went by other citizens, who also walked in threes; until there was a long line of gentlemen trailing after the

committee. These entered the hotel, and were presented to M. Genet, while a prodigious crowd filled the street, and rent the air with cheers. The address was read. It was fortunate the minister was familiar with the English language; for, being unprepared for such a reception, he was obliged to reply extempore. His youthful appearance, his bearing, at once affable and distinguished, the responsive warmth of his demeanor, and even the French accent with which he spoke, all served to heighten the enthusiasm.

“I am no orator,” he began with faltering tongue, “and I should not at any time affect the language of eloquence. But even in uttering the genuine and spontaneous sentiments of my heart, on an occasion so interesting and so flattering, I experience some embarrassments, arising from my defective acquaintance with the language in which I am about to speak. But this defect, I am certain, free-men will readily excuse, if they are convinced of the sincerity of the sentiments which I shall deliver. I cannot tell you, gentlemen, how penetrated I am by the language of the address to which I have listened, nor how deeply gratified my fellow-citizens will be in reading so noble an avowal of the principles of the Revolution of France, and on learning that so cordial an esteem for her citizens exists in a country for which they have shed their blood and disbursed their treasures, and to which they are allied by the dearest fraternal sentiments and the most important political interests. France is surrounded with difficulties: but her cause is meritorious; it is the cause of mankind, and must prevail. With regard to you, citizens of the United States, I will declare openly and freely (for the ministers of republics should have no secrets, no intrigues), that, from the remote situation of America, and other circumstances, France does expect that you should become a party in the war; but, remembering that she has already combated for your liberties (and if it were necessary, and she had the power, would cheerfully again enlist in your cause), we hope (and every thing I hear and see assures me our hope will be realized) that her citizens will be treated as brothers in danger and distress. Under this impression, my feelings at this moment are inexpressible; and when I transmit your address to my fellow-citizens in France, they will consider this day as one of the happiest of their infant republic.”

When M. Genet ceased to speak, the feelings of the auditors, if

we may believe the newspapers of the day, were such as could not be adequately expressed by shouts. Some natural tears were shed. In response to the cheers from the street, M. Genet turned to a window, and delivered a short but most moving speech to the concourse below. The committee then took "an affectionate leave," and all the company withdrew "in peace and order;" "every man," adds a reporter, "departing with this virtuous and patriotic satisfaction, that he had, at once, testified his gratitude to a faithful ally in the hour of her distress, and demonstrated his attachment to those republican principles which are the basis of the American government."

The next day Citizen Genet issued a general thanksgiving to the people who had greeted him so cordially on his journey. He sent also a formal reply to the citizens' address of the day before. "My conduct," he said in this reply, "shall be to the height of our national political principles. An unbounded openness shall be the constant rule of my intercourse with those wise and virtuous men into whose hands you have intrusted the management of your public affairs. I will expose candidly to them the great objects on which it will be our business to deliberate; and the common interest of both nations will, I have no doubt, be the compass of our direction; for, without such a guide, what would become of both nations, exposed, as we mutually are, to the resentment, the hatred, and the treachery of all the tyrants of the earth, who, you may rest assured, are at this moment armed, not only against France, but against liberty itself?"

This was but the beginning of Philadelphia's entertainment of the plenipotentiary. Deputation succeeded deputation; dinner followed dinner. First, the officers of the French frigate were invited to a grand banquet, at which one hundred gentlemen assisted. The Marseillaise was sung, of course, all standing; and all joining in the chorus. In the midst of the effusive toast-giving, a delegation of the "mariners of L'Embuscade" entered the dining-room; for at this happy epoch sailors, too, were citizens and even fellow-citizens. Such was the "effusion" of the hour, that Philadelphians were seen "embracing" the mariners; and then again the whole company burst into a patriotic song. A few days after, Citizen Bompard entertained the Governor of Pennsylvania and a distinguished company on board the frigate, with the usual "hymns to liberty" and

toasts. Again the mariners bore a part, which a reporter thus describes:—

“As the American citizens were preparing to leave the frigate, Citizen Dupont, the boatswain, addressed them in the name of his messmates, in a short speech replete with feeling, and nearly as follows: ‘You see before you your friends the French. Several of us have shed their blood to establish your liberty and independence. We are willing, if necessary, to shed to the last drop of what remains for the maintaining of that freedom, which, like you, we have conquered. We are still your good friends and brethren; and, if you should again want our assistance, we shall always be ready to give you proofs of our attachment.’ The governor answered this artless and energetic address by expressing his most sincere wishes for the happiness of the French nation, and the success of the frigate *L’Embuscade*.”

Then came the grandest festival of all,—a banquet to M. Genet, attended by two hundred gentlemen, tickets four dollars! The toasts, on this occasion, betray the touch of abler hands than those which had penned the sentiments given at the other feasts. If Mr. Jefferson did not indite some of these sentences for an anxious committee, they certainly bear a strong resemblance to some that occur in his writings. The toasts contain the Republican code of the period:—

1. The people and the law.
2. The people of France: may they have one head, one heart, and one arm in the support of the righteous cause of liberty!
3. The people of the United States: may liberty only be their idol, and freemen only be their brethren!
4. The Republics of France and America: may they be forever united in the cause of liberty!
5. May principles, and not men, be the objects of republican attachment!
6. May France give an example to the world, that the balances of a government depend more upon knowledge and vigilance than upon a multifarious combination of its power!
7. In complaining of the temporary evils of revolutions, may we never forget that the greater evils of monarchy and aristocracy are perpetual!
8. The spirit of seventy-six and of ninety-two: may the citizens of America and France, as they are equal in virtue, be equal in success!
9. May true republican simplicity be the

only ornament of the magistrate in every elective government! 10. Confusion to the councils of the confederated despots, and dismay to their hosts: may they never be able to form a centre of union or of action! 11. May France prove a political Hercules, and exterminate the Hydræ of despotism from the earth! 12. Peace, liberty, and independence: may the tyrants and traitors of all countries be punished by the establishment of the happiness which they wish to betray or destroy! 13. May the systems of the United States be entirely their own, and no corrupt exotic be ingrafted upon the tree of liberty! 14. May the defects of individuals teach us to place our hopes of the safety and perpetuity of freedom on the whole body of the people! 15. May the clarion of freedom, sounded by France, awaken the people of the world to their own happiness, and the tyrants of the earth be prostrated by its triumphant sounds!

The reader observes that the toasts are fifteen in number; the recent admission of Tennessee and Kentucky to the Union having broken the spell long attached to the number thirteen. He also remarks that principles are toasted, not men. The birthday of George III. occurring during the same week, there was a banquet on that occasion too, the toasts of which seem to have been designed as a reply to this remarkable series. This feast derived additional *éclat* from the recent marriage of the English minister, George Hammond, to a young lady of Philadelphia. Four Georges were toasted, — George III., George, Prince of Wales, George Washington, and George Hammond; and, to mark the contrast, a neat sentiment was offered, more human and more wise than the republican toast at which it was aimed: “Men *and* principles: may neither be forgotten, if deserving remembrance!” The other toasts were less brilliant than characteristic. One of them was as much designed to single out Alexander Hamilton for honor as though he had been mentioned by name: “The proclamation of neutrality: may the heart that dictated and the head that proposed it live long to enjoy the blessings of all true friends to humanity!” Other toasts were these: “All good Americans: may moderation be their principle, neutrality their resolution, and industry their motto!” “The cap of liberty; but may those who wear it know there is another for licentiousness!”

In the mere matter of toasts, it must be owned, the republicans of 1793 succeeded somewhat better than “the monarchs.” For the



moment it seemed as if all petty distinctions had melted away in the fiery heat of the popular sympathy with France, encompassed, as she was, by the armies of conspiring kings. And interesting it is to note, that the events, which had united the American people in sympathy with France, had rallied the people of England to their king's support. The declaration of war following instantly the execution of Louis, appeared to destroy the prestige of the opposition, and to give the Tories the command of a congenial mob. Thomas Paine, notwithstanding his adroit and courageous effort to rescue France and the republican cause from the dishonor of putting the king to death, became odious in England. It was a kind of fashion in country towns to burn him in effigy, — a ceremony in which the county magnates and municipal officers joined with Sunday schools and parish clergy. At Bristol, for example, in February, 1793, there was a performance of this kind that is worthy of remembrance as a curiosity of human folly.

“The cavalcade,” as the Bristol Journal exultingly relates, “proceeded through our principal streets in the following order: Four constables headed about one hundred of the biggest boys from their Sunday schools, with colors and banners, having different mottoes, as, ‘God save the King,’ ‘Church and King,’ ‘King and Constitution,’ ‘Sunday Schools,’ etc., decorated with blue and orange-colored ribbons, and white staves in their hands. Then followed on foot many hundreds of colliers, etc., belonging to several friendly societies or clubs, with blue cockades in their hats, large, elegant silk colors, with their respective devices and mottoes in letters of gold. After them followed twelve javelin-men, and the under and high sheriffs on horseback, the horses richly caparisoned. Next came the prisoner, seated in a chair, drawn in a coal-cart guarded by twenty-four constables, and dressed in a black-trimmed coat, white waistcoat, Florentine breeches, white stockings, cocked hat, with a French cockade, bag wig, etc. On his right hand stood the D—, a well-made figure, about six feet high, with his left hand on Paine's shoulder, and under his right arm a real fox. On Paine's left hand sat a person in a clergyman's habit. The hangman followed on horseback with his black axe, amidst the acclamation of such a concourse of nobility to bring up the rear as, we believe, was never before seen on the like occasion. They made a stand at the Exchange and Custom House, and sung God save the King, ther

proceeded to a place called Truebody's Hill, in their own parish, where the figures were first hung on a gallows near thirty feet high, and then burnt."

All of which was done, the editor states, without eliciting a dissentient manifestation of any kind. Dr. Priestley, whose house had been destroyed, and his library scattered over the land, by a Tory mob the year before, now shared with his friend Paine the honors of many a scene like that of Bristol. He was discovering that England was not a comfortable dwelling-place for a republican.

All went well with Citizen Genet as long as there was nothing to be done but receive enthusiastic deputations, and assist at effusive banquets. Those British prizes, too, did not come amiss. Waging war in the sacred cause of liberty is not arduous so long as the sea swarms with unwarmed prizes, and there are no hard knocks to risk in taking them. It was not until M. Genet read the president's proclamation of neutrality, that he experienced a premonitory chill. He thought the president should have waited to hear what he had to communicate before taking a step so decisive. It was at Richmond that he read the proclamation; and Governor Henry Lee endeavored to convince him, that, in adopting the policy of neutrality, the president had served France. Genet seemed to acquiesce; but he thought the safety of the United States depended on the success of France in the war. If, said he, the Bourbons are restored, the kings of Europe will unite to crush liberty in the United States. On his arrival at Philadelphia he heard that the president of the United States, a few days before, had gone to the length of admitting to a private audience two *émigrés* of the most pronounced quality, the Vicomte de Noailles and M. Talon. M. de Noailles had served in the American war, by the side of Lafayette, under Washington's own eye, and had been among the most decided republicans in France, until terror had precipitated the Revolution into chaos and massacre. Then he had resigned his rank in the army, and became an *émigré*. M. Talon had actually assisted the king's flight, and escaped to America only after lying in close concealment for many weeks. And these men had been admitted to a *private* audience! M. Genet was losing his head; else he would have felt how particularly welcome both these gentlemen must have been to General Washington, and what a claim one of them had to cordial recognition from a president of the United States.

Citizen Genet stood at length in the impassive, and perhaps slightly austere, presence of General Washington. He observed that the room was decorated with what he was pleased to style "medallions of Capet and his family," then regarded in France as emblematic of the most extreme "re-action." M. Genet, who owed his advancement to the favor of "Madame Capet," had reached such a pitch of exaltation as to be, as he said afterwards, "extremely wounded" at this exhibition. Controlling his feelings, however, the plenipotentiary made his bow, and delivered a speech, conceived in a style of magnanimity which is inexpensive, indeed, but congenial to the "Latin" mind. "We know," said he in substance, "that, under present circumstances, we have a right to call upon the United States for the guaranty of our West India islands. But we do not desire it. We wish you to do nothing but what is for your own good, and we will do all in our power to promote it. Cherish your own peace and prosperity. You have expressed a willingness to enter into a more liberal treaty of commerce with us. I bring full powers to form such a treaty, and a preliminary decree of the National Convention to lay open our country and its colonies to you for every purpose of utility, without your participating in the burden of maintaining and defending them. We see in you the only people on earth who can love us sincerely, and merit to be by us sincerely loved."

In short, as Mr. Jefferson remarked at the time, "he offers every thing, and asks nothing." The president responded to this effusion in a manner which was not pleasing to M. Genet. Warmly as he spoke of the friendship of the people of the United States for *France*, he said nothing of the Revolution. Not a revolutionary sentiment, as M. Genet complained, escaped his lips, "while all the towns from Charleston to Philadelphia had made the air resound with their most ardent wishes for the French Republic."

The president may well have been somewhat graver than usual during this interview. The spectacle of the British ship *Grange*, with the British colors reversed, and the glorious flag of France flying over them, was thrilling to the republicans of Philadelphia; but Mr. Hammond, the British minister, did not find it agreeable. Several days before Genet's arrival he had sent in a remonstrance. Many of the sweet hours of his honeymoon he was obliged to spend in writing memorials and despatches, and in toying with Vattel, Wolf, Grotius, and Puffendorf. He was a polite but urgent and strenuous diplo-

matist; who, as Mr. Jefferson remarked, "if he did not get an answer in three days or a week, would goad a secretary of state with another letter." He demanded the surrender of the Grange to her owners. He objected to the proceedings of M. Genet, and required the surrender of all the prizes taken in consequence of those proceedings. He complained that a French agent was buying arms for France in the United States. These demands had been most anxiously considered by the president, and debated in the cabinet by Hamilton and Jefferson with a warmth and pertinacity worthy of the importance of the crisis. A crisis we may well style it; for, in truth, the independence of an infant nation was never so menaced as that of the United States was then, and the moral questions involved presented real difficulties. The passion of the country was to help France; but that involved war with two powers, each of which had the United States at a disadvantage. England retained the seven posts, and was mistress of the sea. Spain held Florida and the mouth of the Mississippi, which gave her ascendancy over the Creek Indians, the most numerous, powerful, and warlike system of tribes in North America. As the ancient alliance between France and Spain had been dynastic only, not national, the Revolution had dissolved it, and thrown Spain into the coalition of kings. The Creeks were already threatening the frontiers. The mouth of the Mississippi, never too wide open for the convenience of Kentuckians, showed symptoms of closing tight to American commerce; and the tone of the Spanish government in its intercourse with that of the United States was such as usually precedes the invention of a pretext for open hostility.

In these circumstances President Washington could see but one course, which was sanctioned both by prudence and morality,—absolute neutrality. The country was shut up to that policy. The government could not be said to have a choice; because, even if it had been shown that the United States were morally bound to help France in her dire and pitiable extremity, it was manifest that the United States were powerless to do so by arms. No man saw this more clearly than Jefferson. The difference between him and Hamilton was this: Hamilton's sympathies were wholly and warmly with the coalition of kings, and Jefferson's with the French people. Both accepted neutrality as a necessity of the case, and both with reluctance: Hamilton because he longed to help England; and Jefferson,

because he yearned to help France. In every question that came up, therefore, Jefferson desired to do as much, and Hamilton as little, to oblige and justify France, as Vattel, the treaties, and eternal justice would permit. Between them sat Washington, a just man, who *because* his inclination was toward France, was all the more on his guard against any influence favoring that side.

FIRST QUESTION. — Shall we give up the ship *Grange*? Yes; because she was taken when lying at anchor off Cape Henlopen, within the jurisdiction of the United States. Genet was requested to surrender her accordingly.

SECOND QUESTION. — Is it right and lawful for our citizens to sell arms to agents of France? It is. They may sell to either power. "Our citizens," wrote Jefferson to Hammond, "have always been free to make, vend, and export arms. It is the constant occupation and livelihood of some of them. To suppress their callings, the only means perhaps of their subsistence, because there is a war existing in foreign and distant countries, in which we have no concern, would scarcely be expected. It would be hard in principle and impossible in practice." But if any of these American arms are taken on their way to a belligerent port, the American vender has no redress.

THIRD QUESTION. — May privateers be fitted out, manned, or commissioned in American ports? Decidedly not. No citizen of the United States may enlist under either flag. Besides the duty we owe to other nations, "our wish to preserve the morals of our citizens from being vitiated by courses of lawless plunder and murder" would induce us to use all proper means to prevent this "with good faith, fervor, and vigilance."

FOURTH QUESTION. — Well, then, ought we to surrender the prizes which Genet's Charleston privateers have brought in? On this point the difference between Hamilton and Jefferson was irreconcilable. Hamilton thought that the commissioning of those vessels by Genet was an affront and a wrong to the United States, for which apology and reparation should be demanded from France. It was his opinion also, that, since the privateers were unlawfully commissioned, the captures were unlawful, and should be restored by the United States. Jefferson contended, that, although Genet's conduct toward the United States was improper, yet he *had* a right to issue commissions to privateers. Genet had done a right thing in a wrong place

The *commissions*, therefore, were valid, notwithstanding the offence against the United States; and hence the captures were lawful, and might be retained. Edmund Randolph, the attorney-general, gave an ingenious opinion, to this effect: The French may lawfully sell their prizes, but the privateers themselves cannot remain in American ports. They must be ordered away, not to return to the United States "until they should have been to the dominions of their own sovereign, and thereby purged the illegality of their origin." This opinion was the one which the president adopted. Genet was notified of the President's conclusion, and informed that he was expected to act in accordance therewith. The prizes he might sell, but the privateers he must order away.

FIFTH QUESTION. — M. Genet asked, as a favor to his beleaguered country, that the United States should advance some instalments of its debt to France, which he proposed to send home in the form of produce. Hamilton advised that this request be bluntly refused, without a word of explanation. Jefferson's opinion was, that the request should be complied with so far as it could be done lawfully; and if it could not be done lawfully, then the refusal should be explained so far as it could be without compromising the credit of the United States. It was found that the debt could not be advanced without violating both the letter and the spirit of the law; that is, without borrowing at six per cent to pay a debt at five. Mr. Jefferson's advice was followed.

M. Genet was shocked and amazed at the course of the administration. His reception had bewildered him. Though belonging to a nation given to "demonstrations," he was as completely deceived as Kossuth was; and he was the more misled because he had just come from a country where the people and the government had been for years belligerent powers. The United States, he concluded, had a Capet! Interpreting America by the light of France, he fell naturally into the delusion, that though he was, as a matter of form, accredited to the president of the United States, yet it was with the people of the United States, the Sovereign People, that he really had to do. The ship *Grange*, indeed, he gave up, though not without a wry face, nor without making a merit of the act. When, however, Mr. Jefferson informed him that he was expected to send away the privateers to purge the illegality of their origin, he merely shrieked. And yet there was some method in his shriek. It was a



shriek of insulting defiance which alone would have justified the president in asking his recall.

"If," wrote Genet, "our merchant vessels or others are not allowed to arm themselves, when the French alone are resisting the league of tyrants against the liberty of the people, they will be exposed to inevitable ruin in going out of the ports of the United States, which is certainly *not the intention of the people of America*. Their fraternal voice has resounded from every quarter around me, and their accents are not equivocal; they are as pure as the hearts by whom they are expressed; and the more they have touched my sensibility, the more I wish, sir, that the Federal government should observe as far as in their power the public engagements contracted by both nations; and that by this conduct, they will give, at least to the world, the example of a true neutrality, which does not consist in *the cowardly abandonment of their friends* in the moment when danger menaces them, but in adhering strictly, if they can do no better, to the obligations they have contracted with them."

And soon after, when he learned that two Americans who had gone privateering in the *Citizen Genet* were in prison awaiting trial for the offence, he shrieked again. The crime laid to their charge, he said, was one which his pen almost refused to state, and which the mind could not conceive. Their crime was serving France, and "defending with her children the common glorious cause of liberty." With both treaties open before him, he declared, and kept declaring, that the United States were *bound* by treaty to permit the equipping of privateers in American ports, and to allow all citizens who chose to take service in them. There is not a word in either treaty which gives support to the position.

This was bad diplomacy, even for a tyro; nor did it promote any of M. Genet's objects. Mr. Hammond might well congratulate himself upon having such a competitor. The president's conduct, on this occasion, would have been exquisite art, if it had not been simple truth and fidelity. After listening to many a hot discussion in the cabinet between Jefferson and Hamilton on the questions of international law at issue, he resolved to refer the whole subject of the rights and duties of neutrals, and the true interpretation of the French treaties, to the judges of the Supreme Court, summoned expressly for that purpose. Twenty-nine questions were drawn up

for their consideration, which covered the whole field of inquiry. But, as the solution of so many problems would take time, the entire fleet of privateers and prizes, seven vessels in all, were ordered not to depart, "till the further order of the president." M. Genet would have done better to sell his prizes while he could.

"Never, in my opinion," wrote Jefferson to Madison, July 8, 1793, "was so calamitous an appointment as that of the present minister of France here. Hot-headed, all imagination, no judgment, passionate, disrespectful, and even indecent toward the president, in his written as well as his verbal communications, before Congress or the public they will excite indignation. He renders my position immensely difficult. He does me justice personally; and, giving him time to vent himself and become more cool, I am on a footing to advise him freely, and he respects it; but he will break out again on the very first occasion, so that he is incapable of correcting himself."

When these words were written, Citizen Genet was "breaking out" in a manner unexampled in the annals of diplomacy. Not by words only, but by an open and unequivocal act, he had resolved to defy the administration! Among the prizes captured by L'Embassade was a vessel named the *Little Sarah*, then lying in the Delaware, within a mile or two of the president's house. After having been most distinctly and at great length informed by Mr. Jefferson, officially, that no vessel could lawfully be equipped in a port of the United States for a purpose hostile to a nation at peace with the United States, M. Genet changed the name of the *Little Sarah* to *Le Petit Démocrate*, pierced her for fourteen guns, armed and equipped her for a cruise, placed on board of her a crew of one hundred and twenty men, and was about to send her to sea. This act was the more flagrant because it was done while the president was absent at Mount Vernon. Colonel Hamilton, who was the first officer of the government to discover the project, caused the governor of Pennsylvania to be notified. Governor Mifflin, Republican as he was, gave orders on the instant (it was late Saturday evening, July 6) to call out a body of militia to prevent the *Little Democrat* from sailing. The secretary of the State of Pennsylvania, Mr. G. J. Dallas, another Republican, suggested, that perhaps M. Genet would be found accessible to reason, if he were approached in a friendly spirit. Before summoning the militia, therefore, Mr

Dallas was requested to try the effect of argument and persuasion upon the mind of the plenipotentiary.

M. Genet and Mr. Dallas met at eleven o'clock on Saturday evening, at M. Genet's house. They talked till midnight, or, rather, M. Genet stormed till midnight. He utterly refused to detain the vessel, ending with these words: "I hope no attempt to seize her will be made; for, as she belongs to the republic, she must defend the honor of her flag, and will certainly repel force by force."

Early on Sunday morning Mr. Jefferson, at his house on the Schuylkill, received a despatch from the governor to the effect that the vessel was to sail that day, and requesting him to detain her at least until the president's return, which was expected on Wednesday. An hour or two later Mr. Jefferson was at Genet's house, listening to a repetition of the tempest with which Mr. Dallas had been favored the night before. But Jefferson knew his man. "I found it necessary," he records, "to let him go on, and, in fact, could do no otherwise; for the few efforts which I made to take some part in the conversation were quite ineffectual." The storm showed, at last, some signs of abating, when the angry diplomatist said that as soon as the president arrived he meant to ask him to convene Congress. Mr. Jefferson availed himself of the lull to give him a little elementary instruction in the nature of constitutional government. He explained to him how it was that Congress could have no voice in the questions which had arisen, since they belonged to the executive department of the government. "If Congress were sitting," said the secretary of state, "they would take no notice of them." "Is not Congress the sovereign?" asked Genet. "No," replied Jefferson: "Congress is sovereign in making laws only; the executive is sovereign in executing them, and the judiciary in construing them when they relate to their department." "But," said Genet, "at least Congress is bound to see that the treaties are observed." Again Mr. Jefferson set him right. No, said he, the president is to see that treaties are observed. "If," asked Genet, "he decides against a treaty, to whom is a nation to appeal?" "The Constitution," replied Jefferson, "has made the president the last appeal."

This idea, which was new to the plenipotentiary, seemed to him utterly preposterous. He bowed to Mr. Jefferson, and said that he "would not make him his compliments upon such a Constitution!"

He expressed the utmost astonishment at it; and the contemplation of such an absurdity was so amusing as to restore him to good-humor. Mr. Jefferson seized the happy moment to expostulate with him on the impropriety of his conduct. Genet took it in good part. "But," said he, "I have a right to expound the treaty on our side!" "Certainly," replied Jefferson, "each party has an equal right to expound their treaties. You, as the agent of your nation, have a right to bring forward your exposition, to support it by reasons, to insist on it, to be answered with reasons for our exposition where it is contrary; but when, after hearing and considering your reasons, the highest authority in the nation has decided, it is your duty to say you think the decision wrong, that you cannot take upon yourself to admit it, and will represent it to your government to do as they think proper; but, in the mean time, you ought to acquiesce in it, and to do nothing within our limits contrary to it."

M. Genet, inexperienced as he was in the diplomatic art, could not object to this statement. His silence appearing to give assent, Mr. Jefferson came to the point, and pressed him to detain the *Little Democrat* till the president's return. "Why detain her?" asked Genet. "Because," replied Jefferson, "she is reported to be armed with guns acquired here." No, said Genet, the guns are all French property. Mr. Jefferson, however, insisted that the vessel should not sail, and said that her departure "would be considered a very serious offence." After some hesitation, M. Genet, partly by words, partly by look and gesture, intimated to Mr. Jefferson that the *Little Democrat*, not being yet ready for sea, would not sail till the president's return. "But," said he, "she is to change her position, and fall down the river to day." "What," asked Jefferson, "will she fall down to the lower end of the town?" M. Genet's reply was: "I do not know exactly where, but somewhere there for the convenience of getting ready some things; but let me beseech you not to permit any attempt to put men on board of her. She is filled with high-spirited patriots, and they will unquestionably resist; and *there is no occasion, for I tell you she will not be ready to depart for some time.*"

Mr. Jefferson said he would then take it for granted that the vessel would not be ready before the president's return; and, in the mean time, the government would make inquiries into the facts of her armament, for the president's information. He immediately reported this conversation to the governor, who dismissed the militia called out in the morning.

The next day there was a cabinet meeting on the subject at the State House, the governor having asked advice as to the steps he should take in the absence of the president. The governor informed the secretaries that two of the Little Democrat's new cannon had been, as he had good ground for believing, bought in Philadelphia. Colonel Hamilton and General Knox advised that a battery should be thrown up on Mud Island, and manned by militia; and, if the vessel should attempt to leave before the pleasure of the president should be known, she should be prevented by force. Jefferson dissented. He dissented strongly; and he has left us the reasons of his dissent, expressed with a blending of dignity and passion, of lawyer-like coolness and philanthropic fire, which speak to us both of the man and the time. He was satisfied, he said, that the vessel would not sail until the arrival of the president, who was known to be but forty-eight hours distant; and it was not respectful to him to resort to a measure so unusual and so extreme, when he was so near at hand. The erection of the battery, too, would probably *cause* the departure it would be designed to prevent; and the vessel would sail, after having added blood to the other causes of exasperation. Blood usually closed the hearts of men and nations to peace. Besides, a French fleet of twenty men-of-war and a hundred and fifty merchant vessels was hourly expected in the Delaware: it might arrive at the scene of blood in time to join in it. And if the Little Democrat should sail to-day, how easily we could explain the matter to the belligerents! How capable of demonstration *our* innocence! And suppose there *are* fifteen or twenty Americans on board of her: are there not ten times as many Americans on board English vessels, impressed in foreign ports? Are we as ready and disposed to sink British ships in our harbors as we are to fire upon this French vessel for a breach of neutrality far less atrocious? How inconsistent for a nation, which has been patiently bearing for ten years the grossest insults and injuries from their late enemies, to rise at a feather against their friends and benefactors; and that, too, at a moment when circumstances have knit their hearts together in a bond of the most ardent affection! And how monstrous to *begin* a quarrel by an act of war! England wrongs us deeply and essentially; we negotiate; we submit to the outrage of her insolent silence; but let one excited Frenchman do us an injury which his government would instantly disavow, and we are ready to precipitate a war!

“I would not,” said Jefferson, “gratify the combination of kings with the spectacle of the only two republics on earth destroying each other for two cannon; nor would I, for infinitely greater cause, add this country to that combination, turn the scale of contest, and let it be from our hands that the hopes of man received their last stab.”

The battery was not erected upon Mud Island. The *Little Democrat* dropped down the river as far as Chester, where she lay at anchor until the president's return to the seat of government. As soon as the president could master the facts of the situation, he caused M. Genet to be informed, that, since all the questions in dispute were referred to the judges, “it was expected” that the *Little Democrat*, as well as the other prizes and privateers, would remain where they were until further notice. Within three days after the date of this communication *Le Petit Démocrate* put to sea. It was then that the administration, formally and distinctly assuming the responsibility of all the damage she might do the belligerents, adopted the doctrine of international obligation which has recently been applied, with such happy and hopeful results, to the case of the *Alabama*. Mr. Jefferson officially notified M. Genet, that, in case the *Little Democrat* made any prizes, the government of the United States held itself bound to restore the same or to compensate the owners, “the indemnification to be reimbursed by the French nation.”

M. Genet behaved like a man who has crossed the Rubicon, and means to press on to mastery or destruction. It was evident that he was bent upon fully executing his threat of appealing to the people. Besides assisting to form Jacobin clubs in the Atlantic cities, distributing considerable sums of money for the purpose; besides organizing a troop of mounted Frenchmen with whom he paraded Philadelphia on festive days; besides playing other pranks of the same histrionic nature, — he continued to defy and frustrate the government in its resolve to hold the balance even between the warring powers. Other vessels, in New York and Baltimore, he was getting ready for cruising in quest of British prizes. He was still intent upon organizing an expedition in Kentucky for an attempt upon New Orleans; and this in the teeth of Mr. Jefferson's emphatic notification, that “his enticing men and officers in Kentucky to go against Spain was putting a halter around their necks.”



This Kentucky scheme of Genet's was set on foot at the very moment when it seemed as if Spain was only waiting for a pretext to declare war against the United States. Jefferson's famous despatch to Madrid, the most energetic of all his official papers, in which he warned Spain to let the Creeks alone, was crossing the ocean at the time. Never before, never since, has the government of the United States taken a firmer or loftier tone than at this threatening crisis. "We confide in our strength," wrote Mr. Jefferson, "without boasting of it; we respect that of others without fearing it. If we cannot otherwise prevail on the Creeks to discontinue their depredations, we will attack them in force. If Spain chooses to consider our defence against savage butchery as a cause of war to her, we must meet her also in war, with regret, but without fear; and we shall be happier, to the last moment, to repair with her to the tribunal of peace and reason." What a time was this for Citizen Genet to be, not merely fomenting war with Spain, but preparing to wage war by attacking a Spanish post!

All cabinet questions were now merged into one,—What shall we do with Genet? "Send him out of the country," said robust Knox at the cabinet meeting of August 1, when this dreadful question was first discussed. "Publish the whole correspondence," said Hamilton, "with a statement of his proceedings, thus anticipating him in his threatened appeal to the people." Jefferson's advice, supported warmly by Randolph, was this: To send a history of his doings in America, with copies of the letters between Genet and himself, to the French government, and request, with all the delicacy possible, the recall of Genet. For two days the subject was debated with a heat and passion unexampled; Hamilton twice haranguing his audience of four individuals for three-quarters of an hour, in a manner, as Jefferson reports, "as inflammatory and declamatory as if he had been speaking to a jury." He dwelt upon the new Jacobin Society just formed in Philadelphia, on the model of the dread club to which Robespierre owed his power. The publication of Genet's letters, Hamilton thought, would crush this terrible organization. Jefferson, on the contrary, thought that the club would die out of itself if it were only let alone: opposition alone could give it undue importance.

The president was, like Othello, "perplexed in the extreme." If we may believe the exaggerating memory of Mr. John Adams, a

vast multitude of the noisier part of the population of Philadelphia sided with Genet at this moment. Years after we find him writing to Jefferson of the terror of 1793, when "ten thousand people in the streets of Philadelphia, day after day, threatened to drag Washington out of his house, and effect a revolution in the government, or compel it to declare war in favor of the French Revolution and against England." The Republican newspapers, too, were all that Genet could have wished. The president was no longer spared, either in prose or verse; and there was even a burlesque poem in which he was represented as being brought to the guillotine. At one of these cabinet meetings, irritated by Knox reminding him of this pasquinade, he lost his self-control for a moment. Voltaire wickedly remarks that Newton "consoled" mankind for his unapproachable supremacy in the realm of science by coming at last to write on the Prophecies. George Washington occasionally solaced the self-love of *his* admiring friends by getting into a good honest passion, like an ordinary mortal. Bursting into speech, he defied any man to produce a single act of his since he had been in the government which was not done from the purest motives. He declared that he had never repented but once of having slipped the moment of resigning his office, and that was every moment since. "By God!" he exclaimed, using the familiar oath of the period, "I would rather be in my grave than in my present situation! I would rather be on my farm than be made emperor of the world; and yet they are charging me with wanting to be a king!" That rascal Freneau, he continued, sent him three of his papers every day, as if *he* would become their distributor; and he could see nothing in this but an impudent design to insult him.

Happy the mortal who has no worse fault than a rare outburst of legitimate and harmless anger! It was embarrassing to get back to the question after this explosion. The subject was, however, resumed; and the president decided to follow Mr. Jefferson's advice, of appealing to the French government; and asking Genet's recall, reserving the expedient of appealing to the American people to a later day. With all the discretion conceivable, and with a most happy mixture of frankness, friendliness, and decision, the secretary of state performed this difficult duty. In due time M. Genet was recalled, and his proceedings were disavowed; but France was a long way off in 1793, and some months elapsed before the letter of recall

reached the plenipotentiary. In the mean time he continued his course of reckless defiance. He executed his threat of appealing to the people, by publishing a portion of his official correspondence with Mr. Jefferson; and the people, with a near approach to unanimity, condemned him.

This summer of delirium at Philadelphia ended in the panic and desolation of the yellow fever, from which every member of the government fled, Jefferson last of all. In New York, where M. Genet then resided, love softened his heart, and assisted to restore serenity to his mind. Miss Cornelia Clinton, the daughter of that stanch Republican chief, George Clinton, governor of the State of New York, was the young lady to whom he paid his court; and paid it with such success, that, when he received his recall, he married her, and settled in the State. He spent there the rest of his days, a good citizen, a worthy gentleman, though never quite able to understand how it was that the American people cherished such veneration for the character of their first president. Every thing would have gone well with his mission, he thought, had it not been for the invincible resolution of President Washington. He died at Jamaica, Long Island, in 1834, after contributing much to agricultural improvement and the progress of science. His virtues were his own; his errors were those of the time in which he was called upon to act.

## CHAPTER LI.

### JEFFERSON RESIGNS, AND RETIRES TO MONTICELLO.

MEANWHILE Jefferson was longing for retreat with ever-growing desire. Hamilton, too, wearied of the vain effort to maintain two families upon his little salary, had made up his mind to return to the New York bar, and only remained for a while longer, like Jefferson, in compliance with Washington's earnest entreaty. Hamilton, however, was not so painfully situated as his colleague, for he had society on his side. The people he oftenest met approved his course and valued his character. Jefferson had few adherents among the rich and the educated. It is only the human race in general that is the gainer by the ideas of which he was the exponent. Classes may be benefited, or may think themselves benefited, by abuses, by privilege, by "protection," by "caste;" and those classes often know enough to flatter and retain the occasional gifted men,—the Cannings, the Peels, the Hamiltons,—whom birth, breeding, or circumstances throw in their way. Fair play and equal rights are the common and eternal interest of human nature. No man has ever been so loved in the United States, or loved so long, as Thomas Jefferson was by those who had no interest apart from this common interest, and no hope or desire except to share the common lot of man. But the elegant class of Philadelphia in 1793 held him in aversion; for the commerce of the United States, by which they were chiefly sustained, was in British hands. Genet was warring upon that commerce, and Jefferson had to share the odium of his irrepressible zeal. His letters to Madison and Monroe of this year show us that he felt acutely the alienation of the people around him, and saw, too, how powerless he was to stem the tide of reaction which the guillotine in France and Genet in America had caused.

"The motion of my blood," he wrote to Madison in June, 1793, "no longer keeps time with the tumult of the world. It leads me to seek for happiness in the lap and love of my family, in the society of my neighbors and my books, in the wholesome occupations of my farm and my affairs, in an interest or affection in every bud that opens, in every breath that blows around me, in an entire freedom of rest, of motion, of thought, owing account to myself alone of my hours and actions. What must be the principle of that calculation which should balance against these the circumstances of my present existence, — worn down with labors from morning to night, and day to day, knowing them as fruitless to others as they are vexatious to myself; committed singly in desperate and eternal contest against a host who are systematically undermining the public liberty and prosperity; even the rare hours of relaxation sacrificed to the society of persons in the same intentions, of whose hatred I am conscious even in those moments of conviviality when the heart wishes most to open itself to the effusions of friendship and confidence; cut off from my family and friends, my affairs abandoned to chaos and derangement; in short, giving every thing I love in exchange for every thing I hate, and all this without a single gratification in possession or prospect, in present enjoyment or future wish."

All his confidential letters of 1793 are in this tone. But, as often as he alluded to the necessity under which he rested of retiring, General Washington urged him to remain with such importunity that he knew not how to resist. When the president discovered that he could not prevail, he begged him at least to defer his resignation; for, said he, "like a man going to the gallows, I am willing to put it off as long as I can." Jefferson remained in office through the year. "Yesterday," he wrote to his daughter, December 22, 1793, "the president made what I hope will be the last set at me to continue; but in this I am now immovable by any considerations whatever." So, indeed, it proved. He *could* not continue without ruin; and such was the urgency of the case, that his going home did but postpone the catastrophe. The president accepted his resignation January 1, 1794. "The opinion," wrote General Washington on this occasion, "which I had formed of your integrity and talents, and which dictated your original nomination, has been confirmed by the fullest experience, and both have been eminently dis-

played in the discharge of your duty." Five days after he was on his way to Monticello, having held the post of secretary of state two months less than four years.

Strange to relate, he went out of office in a blaze of glory, to which even the fine ladies and gentlemen of the "Republican court" were not wholly insensible. When Congress met, the correspondence between Thomas Jefferson and the two plenipotentiaries, George Hammond and Edmond Genet, was published in a massive pamphlet. The intense interest of the public in the recent transactions, now fully disclosed for the first time, caused this collection to be widely disseminated and most eagerly scanned. What candid person has ever read that correspondence without enjoying Jefferson's part of it? It shows him at his best. His singular diligence and skill in gathering information were happily displayed; and all men saw that he had never — not in a single phrase — gratified his feelings as a man at the expense of his duty as a public officer. It was evident that he distinguished between France and her plenipotentiary, and that he did not withdraw his sympathy from that distracted nation at the moment of her extremest need. And whatever wrath may have swelled within him at the conduct of the English government toward his country, he preserved always the conciliatory tone which renders easy the adoption of a worthier policy. The people of the United States appreciated the merit of his despatches, and many of them recognized the difficulties which so warm a partisan as he must have overcome in producing them. His opponents, as we are informed by the most respectable of them all, Chief Justice Marshall, were conciliated for the moment. Their prejudices were "dissipated." They even flattered themselves, while under the spell of his benign and large intelligence, that the sentiments which Hamilton, their idol, had contested and reviled in the cabinet were *their own!* "The partiality for France," says Marshall, in his *Life of Washington*, "that was conspicuous through the whole of the correspondence, detracted nothing from its merit in the opinion of the friends of the administration, because, however decided their determination to support their own government in a controversy with any nation whatever, they felt all the partialities for that republic which the correspondence expressed. The hostility of his enemies, therefore, was, for a time, considerably lessened, without a corresponding diminution of the attachment of his friends."



Genet might have destroyed the Republican party, if the Republican chief had not, with so much tact and right feeling, repudiated the plenipotentiary while conciliating France. The re-action of the following years no man could have prevented. The re-action was necessary. France had torn down, without having acquired the ability to construct. Not a community on earth was yet ripe for the republican system, except that of the American States, wherein a majority of the people were accessible through their understandings. It was necessary for Christendom to wait another century before resuming revolution at the point where the Terror interrupted it in 1792.

In reading the records of those years, we discover in Jefferson some human foibles, some morbidness, some impatience with virtuous stupidity, some misinterpretation of men and events. He did not, indeed, misconceive the Federalists as grossly as they misrepresented him; and yet he did misconceive them. On one occasion, when he was attributing to some of them an intention to avail themselves of the first opportunity to convert the government into something like monarchy, Washington set him right in half a dozen words: *Desires there may be, but not designs.* This we now know was the truth; but we know, also, how easily desires become designs; and we know the contempt and utter distrust in which the leading Federalists of the day held the republican system which Jefferson loved, and which is evidently destined to govern the world. We know that Hamilton passed the remaining years of his life awaiting the crisis which should call him to contend in arms for the ideas which he vainly struggled for in the cabinet and the Convention.

Jefferson was clear in his great office, and he lived up to his great principles. Being asked by a neighbor to write something that should help him into Congress, Jefferson said, "From a very early moment of my life, I determined never to intermeddle with elections by the people, and have invariably adhered to this determination." Much as he loved his old friend and secretary, William Short, he would not assist him to sell the little public stock which he possessed, saying, "I would do any thing my duty would permit; but were I to advise your agent (who is himself a stock-dealer) to sell out yours at this or that moment, it would be used as a signal to guide speculation." Invited to share in a promising speculation, he declined, on the ground that a public man should preserve his mind free fro

possible bias of interest. When the fugitives from the St. Domingo massacre arrived in 1793, destitute and miserable, he wrote to Monroe: "Never was so deep a tragedy presented to the feelings of man. I deny the power of the general government to apply money to such a purpose, but I deny it with a bleeding heart. It belongs to the State governments. Pray urge ours to be liberal." In his French package came one day a letter from the wife of a groom in the stables of the Duke of Orleans in Paris, addressed to her sister, a poor woman who lived fifteen miles from Monticello. He was careful to enjoin it upon his daughter, not merely to forward the letter, but to send it to the woman's house by a special messenger.

We observe, too, that he still looked wistfully to the unexplored West. As a member of the Philosophical Society, he took the lead in 1792 in raising a thousand guineas to send Andrew Michaud to grope his way across the continent, and find out all he could of the great plains and rivers, the Indians and the animals, the bones of the mammoth, and whatever else a Philosophical Society and an American people might care to know. Andrew Michaud did not find the Pacific Ocean; and the task remained undone till Jefferson, ten years later, found the predestined man in Meriwether Lewis, a son of one of his Albemarle neighbors.

## CHAPTER LII.

### ARRIVAL OF DR. PRIESTLEY IN THE UNITED STATES.

TIME brings its revenges. I read, in a recent number of the *London Athenæum*, a quiet advertisement informing the public that "it is proposed to honor the memory of Dr. Priestley, and to commemorate his discoveries, and his services to the scientific world, by the erection of a statue in Birmingham, where he lived so many years."

The advertisement goes on to say, that, as no other public memorial of Dr. Priestley exists, it is believed that a large number of persons interested in science will be glad to contribute something to perpetuate the memory "of the father of Pneumatic Chemistry, the discoverer of oxygen, and one of the most illustrious men of science whom the last century produced." Then follows a list of sixty-six subscriptions, varying in amount from fifty pounds to ten shillings. Among the names we recognize those of Professor Huxley, Mr. Martineau, Dr. Russell, Sir Rowland Hill, and several other members of the Royal Society.

A statue to Priestley in Birmingham! Does the reader happen to remember how Dr. Priestley left Birmingham eighty years ago? July the 14th, 1791, some of the liberal people of that city proposed to celebrate by a public dinner the anniversary of the destruction of the Bastille, which had taken place two years before. But two years in revolutionary times is equal to a century. When the Bastille was destroyed, in 1789, the event was hailed with joy throughout the world; but, during the two years following, the revolutionists of Paris had committed excesses which had repelled and disheartened all but the staunchest friends of liberty, — all but such as Priestley, who was recognized in Birmingham as a chief and representative of the liberal party. Priestley had published a reply to the *Reflections of Edmund Burke*. He had been named a citi

zen of the French Republic. He had defended the Revolution in the local press.

The aristocratic faction of Birmingham, whose instinct was then, and is now, to advance their cause by violence, determined to prevent the celebration. It is easy to stir up a riot in times of popular excitement, but it is not so easy to limit or check its ravages. After breaking up the banquet, and destroying the tavern in which it was given, the mob rushed to the house of Priestley, who had not attended the dinner, broke it open, and compelled the family to seek safety in flight. The rioters took out his books in armfuls, — those precious books, the solace of his life, which he had been fifty years in gathering, for he was a hoarder of books from his infancy. His library was scattered over the road for half a mile, and his torn manuscripts covered the floors of his house. His apparatus was broken to pieces; and, when the destruction of the interior was complete, the house was set on fire. The fire, however, was extinguished before further harm was done.

This disaster, strange to relate, made the philosopher's fortune; for although the jury, after a trial of nine years, awarded him but twenty-five hundred pounds damages, of his claim of more than four thousand, the liberal portion of the public subscribed handsomely to make good his loss. His own brother-in-law, as Lord Brougham tells us, gave him ten thousand pounds, besides settling upon him an annuity of two hundred pounds for life. As he already had a pension of one hundred and fifty pounds a year from Lord Shelburne, whose librarian he had formerly been, he was now in very liberal circumstances for a philosopher. In Pennsylvania, where he spent the residue of his life, such an income, at that period, was even superabundant.

There is an error in the advertisement quoted above. It is not true, that no "public memorial" of Dr. Priestley has been erected. Every soda-fountain is his monument; and we all know how numerous and how splendid *they* are. Every fountain, too, whence flows the home-made water of Vichy and Kissingen is a monument to Priestley; for it was he who discovered the essential portions of the process by which all such waters are made. The misfortune is, however, that, of the millions of human beings who quaff the cool and sparkling soda, not one in a thousand would know what name to pronounce, if he were called upon to drink to the memory of the

inventor. And really his invention of soda-water is a reason why Americans should join in the scheme to honor his memory. He not only did all he could to assist the birth of the nation, but he invented the national beverage.

Yet he always protested that he was very little of a chemist; and often said that his making chemical experiments at all was a kind of accident. A Yorkshireman by birth, the son of a cloth-finisher, he was one of those boys who take to learning as a duck takes to the water. He was an eager, precipitate student from his childhood up. Not content with the Latin and Greek of his school, he must needs learn Hebrew in the vacations, and push on into other ancient languages of the East, — Chaldaic, Syriac, Arabic, — not neglecting such trifles as French, Italian, and German. This way of passing youth never fails to do lasting injury. He had an aversion to the glorious sports of the play-ground, and to all the lighter literature. Need I say, then, that, before he was eighteen years of age, his health had completely broken down, and he was obliged to lay aside his books for months.

Beginning life as a Calvinist minister, he gradually adopted a milder theology, — became, in fact, a Unitarian, and abandoned the pulpit for a time. Then he set up a school. He spent many years in teaching and writing school-books; his first publication being an English grammar for children. At one school, where he taught for a while, a course of lectures was given upon chemistry, a science of which he knew nothing, not even its object or nature. Attending these lectures, his curiosity was awakened, and he began to experiment.

It was Dr. Franklin's influence, however, that weaned him from other subjects, and caused him to devote his main strength to science. In 1761, when Dr. Franklin was in London, Priestley, who was in the habit of visiting the city once a year, sought the acquaintance of Franklin, and became intimate with him. Franklin related to him the history of those delightful six winters, during which he and his Philadelphia friends were experimenting in electricity. The young schoolmaster, who had already some success in book-making, now offered to write a history of electricity, if Franklin would put him in the way of getting the material. Twelve months after, Franklin had the pleasure of receiving from his industrious friend a copy of the work, one of those square, massive quartos, in which the

science of that age was usually given to the world. In this work was printed, for the first time, the narrative of Franklin's immortal experiment with the kite, which Priestley received from the experimenter's own lips. It is a curious fact in the history of science, that Dr. Franklin himself never took the trouble to write out an account of this experiment, — the most daring, ingenious, and celebrated which science records. The work was remarkably successful, passing through three editions in nine years. From this time onward, Priestley was almost wholly a man of science, and no year passed without his adding something to human knowledge. He very greatly increased our knowledge of the air we breathe, and its constituent gases.

He would have been even more successful, if he had been earlier favored by fortune. Being compelled, through his poverty, to spend a large portion of his time and strength in earning his livelihood, he could not follow out his discoveries, nor pursue them with that watchful calm so necessary for avoiding error and perfecting truth. His zeal, however, made up in some degree for his lack of means; and the list of his discoveries will always invest his name with distinction.

During the whole period of Franklin's residence in England, Priestley aided him by his pen and influence in opening the eyes of the public to the folly of the ministry in estranging the American colonies. The last day of Franklin's stay in London, Priestley spent with him from morning to night, without interruption, looking over American newspapers just arrived. Franklin was completely overcome with the prospect of a civil war, and the dismemberment of the empire.

"A great part of the day," says Dr. Priestley, "he was looking over a number of American newspapers, directing me what to extract from them for the English ones; and in reading them he was frequently not able to proceed for the tears literally running down his cheeks."

The two friends never met again for it was not until 1794, when Franklin had been dead four years, that the English philosopher landed in New York. He had a distinguished public reception in the city; and, proceeding to Philadelphia, he was invited to become Professor of Chemistry in the University of Pennsylvania. He declined, on the ground that he did not know enough of the subject



He refused also an offer, most munificent for that day, of a thousand dollars for a course of scientific lectures in Philadelphia. His labors in America were chiefly theological; and he resided usually on his son's farm in Northumberland County, Pennsylvania. He was an immense personage in his day. The public were constantly reminded of his existence by some publication bearing his name. According to Allibone, he gave the public one hundred and forty-one separate works.

In those days people attached much more importance than we do to a man's religious opinions; and consequently Dr. Priestley, though an exquisite Christian in temper and practice, incurred odium for his heterodoxy. The famous Robert Hall, a great admirer of Priestley, hearing one day that he had been ill spoken of on account of his regard for Priestley, broke out in this magnificent manner:—

“Are we suddenly fallen back into the darkness and ignorance of the Middle Ages, during which the spell of a stupid and unfeeling uniformity bound the nations in iron slumber, that it is become a *crime* to praise a man for talents which the whole world admire, and for virtues which his enemies confess, merely because his religious creed is erroneous? If any thing could sink orthodoxy into contempt, it would be its association with such Gothic barbarity of sentiment, such reptile manners.”

Thus spoke an English dissenter. But Dr. Priestley, after escaping the violence of re-action in England, crossed the ocean at a time when re-action was about to resume power in America. Even the honors paid him on his arrival had something of a partisan character; and Republicans made it as much a point to pay him attention as Federalists to avoid doing so. All the Franklin circle of Philadelphia gathered round him; and the Philosophical Society, founded by Franklin, gave him cordial welcome. Jefferson, during the coming years, found solace in his society and correspondence, and went to hear him as often as he preached in the Unitarian chapel.

It stirred Jefferson's indignation, that a man of science so amiable as Priestley, who, he thought, honored his country by selecting it as an asylum, should have been made the object of party vituperation.

## CHAPTER LIII.

### JEFFERSON AS A FARMER.

EIGHT bushels of wheat to the acre is not brilliant agriculture; nor could the production of eighteen bushels of Indian corn to the acre, at the present time, be thrown in the face of a rival farmer with any reasonable hope of abasing his pride. But in 1796, when Mr. Jefferson had been two years at home after retiring from the office of secretary of state, and was showing his home-farm to an old French friend, the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, these were the figures he gave as the utmost he could then extract from his lands in the garden of Virginia. The land was cheap enough, however, — four or five dollars an acre; and wheat sold in Richmond at two dollars and a half a bushel. Mr. Jefferson boasted that the wheat grown upon his mountain slopes was whiter than the low-country wheat, and averaged five or six pounds heavier to the bushel.

Overseers, during his ten years' absence in the public service, had ravaged his farms in the fine old fashion of old Virginia. The usual routine was this: When the forest was first cleared, laying bare the rich, deep, black, virgin soil, the slow accumulation of ages of growth and decay, tobacco was grown for five successive years. That broke the heart of the land, and it was allowed to rest a while. Then tobacco was raised again, until the crop ceased to be remunerative; and then the fields were abandoned to the crops sown by the methods of Nature; and she made haste to cover up with a growth of evergreens the outraged nakedness of the soil. But Jefferson had, long before, abandoned the culture of the exacting weed on his Albemarle estate. His overseers, therefore, had another rotation, which exhausted the soil more completely, if less rapidly. They sowed wheat in the virgin soil among the stumps; next year, corn; then wheat again; then corn again; and maintained this rotation

as long as they could gather a harvest of five bushels of wheat or ten bushels of corn to the acre; after which Nature was permitted to have her way with the soil again, and new lands were cleared for spoliation. There was then no lack of land for the application of this method of exhaustion. Out of Mr. Jefferson's five thousand five hundred and ninety-one acres and two-thirds in Albemarle, less than twelve hundred were under cultivation. His estate of Poplar Forest was nearly as large, but only eight hundred acres were cleared. The land upon which the Natural Bridge was situated, one hundred and fifty-seven acres in extent, was a wilderness; though he always hoped to build a hut there for retirement and repose, amid a scene which awoke all his enthusiasm.

This system of agriculture wasted something more costly than Virginia land, namely, African muscle. One hundred and fifty-four persons called Thomas Jefferson master; equivalent, perhaps, to a working-force of eighty efficient field-hands. Give an Illinois or Ohio farmer of ability the command of such a force, on the simple condition of maintaining it in the style of old Virginia, and in fifteen years he could be a millionaire. But, on the system practised in Albemarle in 1795, the slaves had two years' work to do in one. No sooner was the wretched crop of the summer gathered in, and the grain trodden out with horses, and the pitiful result set afloat in barges bound for Richmond, than the slaves were formed into chopping-gangs, who made the woods melodious with the music of the axe during the long fall and winter. All the arts by which the good farmer contrives to give back to his fields a little more than he takes from them were of necessity neglected; and the strenuous force of the eighty hands was squandered in an endless endeavor to make good the ravage of the fields by the ravage of the woods. Mr. Jefferson's eight bushels of wheat, his eighteen of corn, and his scant ton of clover to the acre, was the beginning of victory, instead of the continuation of defeat.

It was on the 16th of January, 1794, that he surveyed once more his Albemarle estate from the summit of Monticello. Every object upon which he looked betrayed the ten years' absence of the master: the house unfinished, and its incompleteness made conspicuous by the rude way in which it was covered up; the grounds and gardens not advanced beyond their condition when he had last rambled over them by the side of the mother of his children; his fields all lying

distinct before him like a map, irregular in shape, separated by zigzag fences and a dense growth of bushes; outhouses dilapidated; roads in ill-repair; the whole scene demanding the intelligent regard which he was burning to bestow upon it. Never was there a Yankee in whom the instinct to improve was more insatiable; and seldom, out of old Ireland, has there been an estate that furnished such an opportunity for its gratification as this one in old Virginia. "Ten years' abandonment of my lands," he wrote to General Washington, "has brought on them a degree of degradation far beyond what I had expected."

After the lapse of two years and a half, the Duke de la Rochefoucauld saw a different prospect from the portico of Monticello. The summit, indeed, was disfigured with the litter of building; for, as the exile informs us, Mr. Jefferson, who had formerly studied architecture and landscape-gardening in books only, had since seen in Europe the noblest triumphs of both, and was endeavoring now to improve upon his original designs. Monticello, the duke remarks, had been infinitely superior before to all other homes in America; but in the course of another year he thought, when the central dome would be finished, and the new designs happily blended with the old, the house would rank with the most pleasant mansions in France and England. And how enchanting the panorama! Nothing to break the view to the ocean, from which, though it was a hundred and fifty miles distant, the cooling breeze reached the mountain on a summer day about two in the afternoon. The traveller thought the prospect faultless except in two particulars, — too much forest and too little water. His European eye craved a cultivated expanse, — craved castle-crowned heights, the spire piercing the distant grove, the farm-house, the cottage, and the village clustering in the vale; and without a mass of water, he thought, the grandest view lacks the last charm.

In the whole world it had been difficult to find men who had more in common than these two, — the exile from distracted France, and the American who never loved France so much as when the banded despotisms of Europe had driven her mad. Jefferson had last seen the duke, when, as president of the National Assembly of 1789, he was striving, with Jefferson's cordial sympathy, to save kingship and establish liberty. It was La Rochefoucauld who sought the king's presence at Versailles on a memorable occasion

in July, 1789, and laid before that bewildered locksmith the real state of things at Paris. "But this is a revolt, then!" said the king. "Sire," replied the duke, "it is a revolution!" Two days after the Bastille was in the hands of the people. Besides the political accord between Jefferson and his guest, they were both improvers by nature, and both most zealous agriculturists. For years the French nobleman had had upon his estate a model farm for the purpose of introducing into his neighborhood English methods of tillage and improved utensils. He had maintained also an industrial school, and endeavored to plant in France the cotton manufacture which was beginning to make the world tributary to England. In a word, he was a citizen after the best American pattern, which is another way of saying that he was a man after Jefferson's own heart.

We can easily imagine the family group as they would gather on the portico to see the master of the house and his guest mount for a morning's ride over the farms. Jefferson was now approaching fifty-three, and his light hair was touched with gray; but his face was as ruddy, his tall form as erect, his tread as elastic, his seat in the saddle as easy, as when at twenty-one he had galloped from Shadwell with Dabney Carr. From his youth temperate and chaste, keeping faith with man and woman, occupied always with pursuits worthy of a man, neither narrowed by a small ambition, nor perverted by malignant passions, nor degraded by vulgar appetites, equable, cheery, and affectionate, he only reached his prime at sixty, and shone with mellowing lustre twenty years longer, giving the world assurance of an unwasted manhood. The noble exile was forty-nine, with thirty-one years of vigorous life before him. The eldest daughter of the house, at home now because her father was at home, the mother of three fine children, had assumed something of matronly dignity during her six years of married life; and her husband had become a perfect Randolph, — tall, gaunt, restless, difficult to manage, and not very capable of managing himself. He vented superfluous energy, Mr. Randall tells us, in riding eighty miles a day through Virginia mud, and, rather than take the trouble of riding another mile or two to a bridge, would swim his foaming steed across a river in full flood. If making cavalry charges were the chief end of man, he had been an admirable specimen of our race; but, for life as it is in piping times of peace, he w

always a desirable inmate, despite his hereditary love of botany, and his genuine regard for his father-in-law.

Maria Jefferson, now seventeen years of age, attracted the French traveller; and he easily read the open secret of her young life. "Miss Maria," he observes, "constantly resides with her father; but as she is seventeen years old, and is remarkably handsome, she will doubtless soon find that there are duties which it is sweeter to perform than those of a daughter." "Jack Eppes" may have been one of the Monticello circle during those pleasant June days of 1796, when the Duke de la Rochefoucauld surprised Mr. Jefferson in the harvest-field under a scorching sun. Perhaps the guest of the house may have said to the young college-student what he recorded in his narrative. He may even have accompanied the remark with the nearest thing to a wink which the politeness of the *ancien régime* permitted. "Mr. Jefferson's philosophic mind," observes the exile, "his love of study, his excellent library, which supplies him with the means of satisfying it, and his friends, will undoubtedly help him to endure this loss; which, moreover, is not likely to become an absolute privation, as the second son-in-law of Mr. Jefferson may, like Mr. Randolph, reside in the vicinity of Monticello, and, if he be worthy of Miss Maria, will not be able to find any company more desirable than that of Mr. Jefferson."

But the horses await their riders. We may be sure that both gentlemen were well mounted. Virginia took the lead of all the thirteen colonies in breeding horses; and Jefferson, though he differed from his countrymen in things more important, surpassed them in his love of fine horses. And, curiously enough, it was only in dealing with horses that he was ever known to show any thing of that spirit of domination which marks some varieties of common men. With a pilfering negro, an uncomfortable neighbor, a refractory child, or a perverse colleague, his patience seemed inexhaustible; but let a horse rebel, and the lash instantly descended, and the battle never ceased until the animal had discovered which of the two held the reins. He always loved the exhilaration of a race, and did not permit false ideas of official decorum to prevent his attending races near the seat of government, no matter what office he may have held. The saddle alone was his test of the quality of a horse, the trotting-wagon being unknown in the land of corduroy roads. Jefferson and the horsemen of that age liked to share the labor and



peril of the ride with the horse, seeking no vantage-ground of a vehicle from which to exercise mastery over him. He liked a horse fiery and sure-footed, that could gallop down his mountain on a dark night, and carry him through flood and mire safe to the next village, while a negro would be fumbling over the broken bridle of his mule.

On this occasion, however, there was no need of haste, and the two gentlemen descended at their ease the winding road to the country below. The French agriculturist was too polite to hint that his American brother's methods were defective; and yet he appears to have thought so. Mr. Jefferson, he intimates, was a book-farmer. "Knowledge thus acquired often misleads," the exile remarks, and "yet it is preferable to mere practical knowledge." In arranging his new system, Mr. Jefferson had betrayed a mathematical taste. All the old, unsightly fences, with their masses of bushes and brambles, having been swept away, he had divided his cultivated land into four farms of two hundred and eighty acres each, and divided each farm into seven fields of forty acres, marking the boundaries by a row of peach-trees, of which he set out eleven hundred and fifty-one during his first year at home. The seven fields indicated his new system of rotation, which embraced seven years: first year, wheat; second, corn; third, pease or potatoes; fourth, vetches; fifth, wheat again; sixth and seventh, clover. Each of the four farms, under its own overseer, was cultivated by four negroes, four negresses, four horses, and four oxen; but at harvest and other busy times the whole working-force was concentrated. Upon each farm Mr. Jefferson had caused to be built a great log-barn, at little cost except the labor of the slaves.

He did not fail to show his guest the new threshing-machine imported from Scotland, where it was invented, — the first specimen ever seen in Virginia. It answered its purpose so well, that several planters of the State had sent for machines, or were trying to get them made at home. "This machine," records the traveller, "the whole of which does not weigh two thousand pounds, is conveyed from one farm to another in a wagon, and threshes from one hundred and twenty to one hundred and fifty bushels a day." Mr. Jefferson showed him, also, a drilling-machine for sowing seed in rows, invented in the neighborhood, with the performance of which the master of Monticello was well pleased. Doubtless the two farmers discussed again that plough of Mr. Jefferson's invention for which

he had received, in 1790, a gold medal from France. During his European tours he had been struck with the waste of power caused by the bad construction of the ploughs in common use. The part of the plough called then the mould-board, which is above the share, and turns over the earth, seemed to him the chief seat of error; and he spent many of the leisure hours of his last two years in France in evolving from Euclid the mould-board which should offer the minimum of resistance. Nothing is more likely than that he had discussed the subject many a time in Paris with so ardent an agriculturist as the Duke de la Rochefoucauld. Satisfied, at length, that he had discovered precisely the best form of mould-board, he sent a plough provided with one to the Royal Agricultural Society of the Seine, of which the duke was a member. The medal which they awarded it followed the inventor to New York; and, eighteen years after, the society sent President Jefferson a superb plough containing his improvement.

An agreeable incident in connection with that plough invention has been reported. Among the many young Virginians who were educated under the direction of Mr. Jefferson was the late William C. Rives, born almost in the shadow of Monticello. In 1853, when, for the second time, Mr. Rives was American Minister at Paris, he was elected a member of the Agricultural Society, then temporarily dishonored by the prefix "Imperial" to its name. In his address at his public reception, Mr. Rives alluded to the prize bestowed by the society half a century before upon one of his predecessors. "Yes," said the president, "we still have, and will show you, the prize plough of Thomas Jefferson."

The French traveller was interested in seeing at Monticello a principality of two hundred inhabitants almost independent of the world without; for Mr. Jefferson showed him a cluster of little shops wherein his own negroes carried on all the necessary trades, such as carpentry, cabinet-making, shoe-making, tailoring, weaving. The masonry of the rising mansion was also executed by slaves. There was a mill upon the estate for the accommodation of the neighborhood. For many years the making of nails had been one of the winter industries of American farmers, all nails being then of the wrought description; and Mr. Jefferson, too, had his nail-forge, wherein a foreman and half a dozen men and boys hammered out nails for the country round about. When James Monroe built his

house near by, it was from his former instructor that he bought his nails. At times Jefferson had as many as ten nailers at work, — two fires, and five hands at each fire; and he supplied the country stores far and near with nails, at an excellent rate of profit. His weaving-house grew, also, into a little factory of sixty spindles, producing cotton cloth enough for all his plantations, as well as a redundancy for the village stores. Some of the black mechanics whom the exile saw on his friend's estate were among the best workmen in Virginia. One man is spoken of as being a universal genius in handiwork. He painted the mansion, made some of its best furniture, repaired the mill, and lent a hand in that prodigious structure of the olden time, a family coach, planned by the master.

The duke bears testimony to the kind, considerate way in which the slaves were treated. They had not only substantial justice, he tells us, but received special reward for special excellence. In the distribution of clothes, Mr. Randall adds, it was a system at Monticello to give better and handsomer garments to those who lived decently together in families than to the unmarried, — an expedient which had obvious good results. This was not freedom; but, in the Virginia of that period, there was room and chance of welfare for every kind of creature, excepting a free negro.

The exile remained a week at Monticello in June, 1796, and then left his brother farmer to pursue his labors. "On several occasions," the duke records, "I heard him speak with great respect of the virtues of the president, and in terms of esteem of his sound and unerring judgment." He adds these remarks: "In private life, Mr. Jefferson displays a mild, easy, and obliging temper, though he is somewhat cold and reserved. His conversation is of the most agreeable kind, and he possesses a stock of information not inferior to that of any other man. In Europe he would hold a distinguished rank among men of letters, and as such he has already appeared there: at present he is employed with activity and perseverance in the management of his farms and buildings; and he orders, directs, and pursues, in the minutest detail, every branch of business relative to them. I found him in the midst of the harvest, from which the scorching heat of the sun does not prevent his attendance.

## CHAPTER LIV.

### CANDIDATE FOR THE PRESIDENCY.

**HAD** he, then, really accepted this plantation life as a career for the remainder of his days?

In the first exultation at his recovered ease and liberty, in 1794, he thought he had. "I return to farming," he wrote to his old friend and colleague, John Adams, in the midst of the joyous April work of that year, "with an ardor which I scarcely knew in my youth, and which has got the better entirely of my love of study. Instead of writing ten or twelve letters a day, — which I have been in the habit of doing as a thing in course, — I put off answering my letters now, farmer-like, till a rainy day, and then find them sometimes postponed by other necessary occupations." At first, too, he was even indifferent to the newspapers. Young Buonaparte (he had not yet dropped the *u* from his Italian name) had cannonaded the English out of Toulon Harbor a few weeks before; and, though his name was still unknown, his genius was making itself felt in the organization of the French armies. The great Toulon news, which reached Monticello by private letters a month after the master's return, recalled him to his old self for a moment. He even indulged in a little sanguine prophecy. "Over the foreign powers," he wrote in April, 1794, "I am convinced the French will triumph completely." The French, led by Napoleone di Buonaparte, a general of alien race, *did* triumph over the foreign powers; but the rest of Mr. Jefferson's anticipation, happily, was not realized: "I cannot but hope that that triumph, and the consequent disgrace of the invading tyrants, is destined, in the order of events, to kindle the wrath of the people of Europe against those who have dared to embroil them in such wickedness, and to bring, at length, kings, nobles, and priests to the scaffolds which they have been so long

deluging with human blood. I am still warm whenever I think of these scoundrels; though I do it as seldom as I can, preferring infinitely to contemplate the tranquil growth of my lucerne and potatoes."

Nor did the lapse of a long summer change his mind. General Washington naturally concluded, that the coming retirement of Hamilton from the cabinet would remove the cause of Jefferson's aversion to a cabinet office; but it did not. In September, 1794, when an express from Philadelphia dismounted at his door, bearing an invitation from the president to resume the office of secretary of state, he replied that *no* circumstances would ever more tempt him to engage in any thing public. . . . "I thought myself perfectly fixed in this determination when I left Philadelphia; but every day and hour since has added to its inflexibility." The president was sorely embarrassed. The aristocratical sentiment which had fixed the salaries of the higher offices at such a point that only rich men could accept them with safety to their affairs and their honor, made it always difficult to fill them aright, and sometimes impossible. Jefferson sympathized with him, but felt himself justified in refusing. "After twenty-five years' continual employment in the service of our country," he wrote to a friend, "I trust it will be thought I have fulfilled my tour, like a punctual soldier, and may claim my discharge."

These words were written in November, 1795. In June, 1796, when the Duke de la Rochefoucauld discovered him in the scorching harvest-field, he was the candidate of the Republican party for the presidency. It was the year of the presidential election, and the noise of that quadrennial uproar was beginning to resound in every village. General Washington was going out of office in March, 1797. Where was the American citizen indifferent to the mighty question, Who should succeed him? In 1796, for the first time, there was a contest for the first office, — for Washington never had a competitor; and we can all imagine — we who are familiar with such scenes — with what ardor a young republic, in peril between two such powerful belligerents as France and England, would spring to a contest so novel, so interesting, so momentous.

How are we to reconcile the habitual language of Jefferson in 1794 and 1795 with his position before the country in 1796? It is not necessary to reconcile it, since it is permitted to every man to change



his mind ; and considering the limits and defects of that portion of our organization, what can we do better with our minds than change them ? But the discrepancy was much more apparent than real. In predicting the future, Jefferson's hopeful disposition frequently led him astray ; but his judgment concerning the issue of a contested election was remarkably sound. His conviction was, that the time had not yet come for a national triumph of the Republicans. The bloody lapse of the French Revolution was too recent, the tide of re-action too strong, *vis inertiae* of ancient habit too general, Hamilton too active, Bonaparte too young (he was in Italy now, and *had* dropped the Italian *u* from his name), the French Directory was too touchy, and the French marine too indiscriminate in the matter of prize-taking on the ocean, to afford a Republican calculator ground for expecting an immediate triumph of his half-organized party in the United States. Nor had the Federalists yet filled up the measure of their errors, nor attained that advanced degree of madness which *immediately* precedes destruction. The country, too, was getting rich by supplying the belligerents with flour, beef, pork, fish, fruit, potatoes, and rum. Those square, spacious, handsome houses, which still give an air of mingled comfort and grandeur to the old towns on the New England coast, — Newburyport, Portsmouth, Salem, Portland, — and others, were beginning to be built. As President Washington remarked in March, 1796, in a letter to Gouverneur Morris, "No city, town, village, or even farm, but what exhibits evidence of increasing wealth and prosperity, while taxes are hardly known but in name."

Jefferson, therefore, felt that he was in small danger of being torn from Monticello by an election to the presidency. Vice-president, indeed, he might be, through that absurd relic of Hamilton's mischievous ingenuity, the electoral college, which even now, in 1874, waits to be swept into oblivion. By the system as then established, the candidate receiving the next to the highest number of electoral votes was declared to be vice-president ; so that there was always a probability that the presidential candidate of the party defeated would be elected to the second office. That office, however, happened to be the only one, in the gift of the people or of the president, which Jefferson thought desirable *in itself*: first, because the salary paid the cost of four months' residence at the seat of government ; secondly, because it gave the occupant eight months' leisure ;



and, thirdly, because it enhanced a man's power to disseminate and recommend principles, without his joining in the conflict of parties.

Behold him, then, in a new character, one of the most trying to human virtue, digestion, nerve, and dignity ever contrived by mortals for a mortal, — candidate for the presidency! To him, partly because he was a Democrat, partly because he was Jefferson, it was less trying than to any other man that ever was subjected to it. At once, without effort, without a precedent to guide him, without consultation with friends, he comprehended the morality of the situation, and assumed the proper attitude toward it. His tone, his demeanor, his feelings, his conduct, were all simply right; and, since a considerable portion of the inhabitants of the United States expect one day to stand in the same bewildering relation to the universe, it may be useful to some of them to know how he comported himself.

His grand advantage was, that he did not want the office. He was in the position of a belle who is wooed, not in that of the pale and anxious lover who trembles with desire and fear. It is an immense thing, if you have property to dispose of, to be able to stand serene in the market, not caring whether you sell it this year or next, or never. Nor was this any thing so very meritorious in such a man. All men, it is true, love power, who are capable of wielding power; but there are grades and kinds of power. All men love; but each man's love takes the quality of his nature. The noble love nobly; the base, basely; the common, commonly. The feeling that bound together in sweet and sublime accord Goethe and Schiller, the noblest pair of lovers since Socrates and Plato, was only called love; and the instinct that originally drew Bill Sikes to the side of Nancy was also love, of the Sikes quality, the best he had to bestow. In like manner, power is of as many grades as there are grades of men. Rude physical strength is power in the dawn of civilization. In a commercial city, to possess five million dollars is power. A refinement upon this crude form was that mystical device of former ages, now no longer potent, styled Rank. Great ministers like Richelieu were an advance upon the men of mere pedigree, as the Leader of the House of Commons is an advance upon *them*. Latest and highest is that power which Jefferson craved, — that of governing men and moulding institutions by the promulgation of heartfelt truth.

Valuing power, but not place, he found it easy to adhere to the rule which he adopted: To avoid writing or conversing on politics during the contest, except with two or three confidential friends. According to Mr. Adams, it was in 1793, soon after the publication of Jefferson's correspondence with Genet and Hammond, that the movement began which ended in his nomination. Boston, of all places in the world, originated it! Boston, too, enjoys the credit of having originated the method by which it was done, as well as the word which describes that method, — CAUCUS. "The Republican party," says Mr. Adams, "had a caucus in 1793, and wrote to Mr. Jefferson, upon his resignation of the office of secretary of state, that, if he would place himself at their head, they would choose him at the next election; and they organized their party by their correspondences through the States." Whatever civil reply the candidate may have made to these gentlemen, he did *not* place himself at their head, but remained passive and silent from that time until the question had been decided.

These Jeffersonian rules will guide any man with safety and dignity through the thousand snares of such a contest: 1, Don't want the office; 2, Utter no syllable concerning it beyond the narrowest circle of tried confidants.

It was the Jay treaty of 1794, ratified in 1795, and executed in 1796, which imbittered politics during this strife for the control of the administration, and nearly gave it to Jefferson. Who shall now presume to judge between the able and honest men of that day who so widely differed concerning this treaty? Having sent Mr. Jay to England to negotiate, we can easily admit that the president did well to ratify the treaty which resulted; but the difficult question is, Was it becoming in the United States to send a special envoy, the chief judge of its highest court, to negotiate with a country from which it had received, and was hourly receiving, indignity and wrong? It was no more becoming than it is becoming in a man, creation's lord, to make terms with a lion that has got his hand in its mouth, or with a bull which has obtained prior possession of a field. It was not becoming in Galileo to kneel submissive before the herd of infuriate inquisitors who had power to roast him. But it was right. He had been a traitor to his class and to his vocation, to science and to man, if he had allowed those tansured savages to rack and burn an aged philosopher. His he was a wiser fidelity to truth. There

is sometimes an accidental and extreme inequality of force between a spoiler and his victim which suspends the operation of some moral laws in favor of the victim, and makes a device justifiable, which, in ordinary circumstances, would be dastardly.

It is difficult for us to realize the weakness of the country over which George Washington presided. If its four millions of people had all been cast in the heroic mould, capable of Spartan discipline, like-minded, demanding for their country, with unanimous voice, only untarnished honor, with or without prosperity, even in that case it had been a doubtful question; for there would still have been a hand in the lion's mouth, — Detroit and the chain of lake-posts occupied by British garrisons, the mouth of the Mississippi held by the Spanish, and no single port of the coast capable of keeping out an armed sloop. But the people of the United States had only their fair share of heroic souls; and there was the most honest and irreconcilable difference of opinion among them as to which of the belligerents was really fighting the battle of mankind and civilization. President Washington was as right in sending Mr. Jay to London as the Republicans were right in opposing it. The president, surveying the whole scene from the watch-tower of his office, weighing all the circumstances, hearing all opinions, considering all interests, felt it admissible to court a power he could not crush. Republicans, considering only the obvious facts of the situation, longing to see their country joining heart and hand with France in her unequal strife, yet willing to be neutral, could not but lament a policy which looked like abasement to a powerful foe, and abandonment of a prostrate friend. The modern student of those mad times finds himself at this conclusion: "If I had been Washington, I should have made the treaty: if I had been Jefferson, I should have held it in execration."

What a struggle it cost the president to choke down this huge bolus of humiliation is revealed in his letters. If he had put off the departure of the envoy a few weeks, he would, perhaps, have put it off forever, and the course of events in the United States had gone otherwise. While Mr. Jay was upon the ocean, Colonel Simcoe, the Governor of Upper Canada, published a protest which claimed jurisdiction over a wide expanse of *territory* of the United States which the posts commanded. The president, during the whole of his administration, never wrote an official letter showing such warmth

of indignation as the one which he instantly penned to Mr. Jay, hoping to send it by a vessel on the point of sailing from New York. The best of Washington's letters are those which we know he must have written with his own hand; and this is one of them. It is the letter of a man, not of a secretary. Smooth and polished it is not; but it has the eloquence of deep emotion struggling in vain for adequate expression. He begins by saying, that, on this irregular and high-handed proceeding, he would rather hear what the ministry of Great Britain will say than pronounce his own sentiments. Nevertheless, he does tell Mr. Jay, that, although this amazing claim of Colonel Simcoe is the most audacious thing yet done by British agents in America, it is by no means the most cruel. To this the president adds a paragraph which contains ten years of bloody History:—

“There does not remain a doubt in the mind of any well-informed person in this country, not shut against conviction, that all the difficulties we encounter with the Indians, their hostilities, the murders of helpless women and innocent children along our frontiers, result from the conduct of the agents of Great Britain in this country. In vain is it, then, for its administration in Britain to disavow having given orders which will warrant such conduct, whilst their agents go unpunished; whilst we have a thousand corroborating circumstances, and, indeed, almost as many evidences, some of which cannot be brought forward, to prove that they are seducing from our alliance, and endeavoring to remove over the line, tribes that have hitherto been kept in peace and friendship with us at a heavy expense, and who have no cause of complaint, except pretended ones of their creating; whilst they keep in a state of irritation the tribes who are hostile to us, and are instigating those who know little of us or we of them, to unite in the war against us; and whilst it is an undeniable fact, that they are furnishing the whole with arms, ammunition, clothing, and even provisions, to carry on the war; I might go farther, and, if they are not much belied, add men, also, in disguise.”

Thus General Washington, in August, 1794. Mr. Wendell Phillips was much censured some time ago for expressing a similar opinion on the platform. The president proceeded to declare that

nothing short of a surrender of the posts could prevent war between the two countries; and Mr. Jay was to say to the ministry, "Give up the posts, — peace! Keep the posts, — war!"

Contrary to expectation, the amiable and virtuous envoy found court, parliament, ministry, people, king, all desirous of a better understanding. And who could have been better chosen for such an embassy to such a country than John Jay, a devoted member of the English Church, a friend of Wilberforce, a gentleman whose virtues, tastes, foibles, and limitations were as English as if he had been born and reared in a rural parish of Sussex? The king smiled benignantly upon him, and told him he *thought* he would succeed in his mission. After five months' negotiation, a treaty was concluded which Mr. Jay was willing to sign; not because he thought it good and sufficient, but because he knew it to be the least bad then possible, and, upon the whole, better than none, — better than drifting into war. The posts were to be surrendered. Commissioners were to be appointed — two by the king, two by the president, and one by these four — to award damages to the owners of American ships illegally captured. Other commissioners were to settle the claims of the English creditors of American merchants. American vessels of seventy tons' burden could trade between the West Indies and the United States, but not carry West India produce to any other country. American ships could trade with the East Indies and other distant British possessions, on possible terms. But whatever could feed a French soldier, or equip a French ship, was declared contraband; and an American captain obtained from the treaty neither any limitation of the right of search, nor the slightest additional protection against the press-gang. No compensation was made for the loss of millions of dollars and many hundreds of lives through the eleven years' lawless retention of the posts, and none for the negroes carried off from New York and Virginia after the peace of 1783.

In the innocence of his heart, Mr. Jay supposed at first that the concessions of the treaty were due to a revival of friendly feeling on the part of the English people. On the eve of his departure for America, the merchants concerned in American commerce gave him a dinner, at which the leading cabinet ministers and two hundred merchants assisted. When the health of the president was proposed, the company could not express all their enthusiasm in the "three

cheers" prescribed by the chairman, but prolonged them to six. Every toast, Mr. Jay reports, which referred in a friendly manner to America, was received with "general and strong marks of approbation." At length an incident occurred which threw light upon the unconscious motive of the cheerers. "Toward the conclusion of the feast," Mr. Jay relates, "I was asked for a toast. I gave a neutral one, namely, 'A safe and honorable peace to all the belligerent powers.' You cannot conceive how coldly it was received; and though civility induced them to give it three cheers, yet they were so faint and single, as most decidedly to show that peace was not the thing they wished. These were *merchants*." If Mr. Jay had desired to hear thunders of applause, and see the glasses dance on the thumped mahogany, he should have given, War eternal, and British bottoms forever!

The treaty was received in the United States with what must have seemed, at the time, universal execration. Even Hamilton, though he favored ratification, pronounced it, and justly pronounced it, "execrable;" nor was he entirely wrong in saying that Mr. Jay was "an old woman for making it." It *was* because Mr. Jay possessed some of the traits which we revere in our grandmothers, that he was able to make the treaty. Posterity's verdict on this matter is one in which each successive student of the period will finally acquiesce: that a president of the United States has seldom done an act more difficult, more wise, or more right than the ratification of the Jay treaty of 1794, which procured the surrender of the posts, inaugurated the policy that naturally issued in arbitration, made some slight beginnings of reciprocity and free trade, and postponed inevitable war for eighteen years. If ever there was a case in which half a loaf was better than no bread, surely it was this.

But the agonizing want of the other half of the loaf justifies the opposition. That was the time when collections were still made in churches for the ransom of American mariners in captivity among the Algerines; when *the whole crew* of an American vessel was frequently impressed by a British man-of-war at out-of-the-way places, like the Barbadoes; when a neutral vessel had *no* rights which a "dashing" British captain would allow to stand between himself and his object; when a *suspicion* that a schooner containing provisions was bound for a French port often sufficed to condemn her. A



search in the old garrets of Salem, Gloucester, Newburyport, New London, or any other old town on the coast, would discover hundreds of letters like those given by Mrs. E. Vale Smith in her History of Newburyport. One captain of a schooner writes home, in 1794, from Martinico: "We are continually insulted and abused by the British. The commodore says, 'All American property here will be confiscated.' My schooner is unloaded, stripped, and plundered of every thing. Nineteen American sail here have been libelled; seven of them were lashed together, and drifted ashore, and stove to pieces." Worse outrages occurred in 1796, when the Republicans were concentrating all their forces upon defeating the appropriation needful for the execution of the Jay treaty. How grand in Washington to ratify it! How pardonable the execrations that form a great part of the glory of the act!

It was in April, 1796, that the battle of the treaty was fought in the House of Representatives. The man that saved it was, as tradition reports, Fisher Ames of Massachusetts, whose speech in its defence, delivered to a concourse of people, lived in the memory of that generation as the greatest achievement of eloquence which the American parliament had yet exhibited. He was just the man to plead for such a treaty; for he was a conservative by the nature of his mind, and the pulmonary disease which was to terminate his existence twelve years after had already overspread his face with pallor and tinged his mind with gloom. A man so gifted as he was, if in robust and joyous health, might have been brought to vote for the treaty, but he could not have defended it with such warmth and pathos. His appearance, as he rose to speak, was that of a man with one foot in the grave; and his first words gave the impression to the audience that they were assisting at a scene like those in which Chatham, swathed in flannel, had risen in the House of Lords to speak for the rights of Englishmen violated in America, or to rebuke the employment of savages in a war upon brethren. "I entertain the hope," he faltered, "perhaps a rash one, that my strength will hold me out to speak a few minutes." He was not, however, as near death as he looked; and as he went on, speaking in a peculiar, reserved tone, low, but solemn, weighty, and penetrating, he gathered strength, and spoke for an hour in a manner which enthralled every hearer. Toward the close occurred the famous tomakawk passage, in which he foretold the consequences

to the frontiers of a longer retention of the posts by the English. On reaching this subject, the orator was no longer an invalid. He was transfigured. His words seemed fraught with passionate apprehension, and drew tears from the eyes, not of women only, but of judges grown gray on the bench. Such poor sentences as these fell from his lips in tones that disguised their poverty and irrelevancy:—

“By rejecting the posts, we light the savage fires, we bind the victims. This day we undertake to render account to the widows and orphans whom our decision may make, to the wretches that will be roasted at the stake, to our country, and, I do not deem it too serious to say, to conscience and to God. The voice of humanity issues from the shade of the wilderness. It exclaims, that, while one hand is held up to reject this treaty, the other grasps a tomahawk. I can fancy that I listen to the yells of savage vengeance and the shrieks of torture; already they seem to sigh in the western wind; already they mingle with every echo from the mountains. This treaty, like a rainbow on the edge of the cloud, marked to our eyes the space where the storm was raging, and afforded at the same time the sure prognostic of fair weather. If we reject it, the vivid colors will grow pale: it will be a baleful meteor, portending tempest and war.”

When by such appeals as these he had wrought upon the feelings and the fears of his auditors, he again, by a stroke of the orator's art, drew attention to himself. “I have,” said he, “as little personal interest in the event as any one here. There is, I believe, no member who will not think his chance to be a witness to the consequences greater than mine. If, however, the vote should pass to reject, and a spirit should arise, as it will, with the public disorders to make confusion worse confounded, even I, slender and almost broken as my hold upon life is, may outlive the government and Constitution of my country.

The last stroke completed the subjugation of his audience. “My God!” exclaimed Irish Judge Iredell (of the Supreme Court) to Vice-president Adams seated at his side, “how great he is! how great he has been!” “Noble!” cried Adams. “Bless my stars!” broke in the judge, after a pause, “I never heard any thing so great

since I was born!" "Divine!" chimed in the vice-president. And so they continued their interchange of interjections while the tears rolled down their cheeks. "Not a dry eye in the house," Mr. Adams reports, "except some of the jackasses who had occasioned the oratory. These attempted to laugh, but their visages grinned horribly ghastly smiles." The ladies, he adds, wished the orator's soul had a better body. Forty-eight hours after, the treaty was carried by a vote of fifty-one to forty-eight.

It is not unlikely that Fisher Ames's appeal to the apprehensions and sympathies of the House, supported by his artful allusion to the *interests* involved, may have added the needful votes to the side of the administration. He did not disdain to remind his auditors on this occasion, that "profit was every hour becoming capital," and that "the vast crop of our neutrality was all seed-wheat, and was sown again to swell almost beyond calculation the future harvest of our prosperity." He was right there. Seldom has there been a treaty that brought in a larger return of profit, and never one that yielded less honor. Many interests united in the demand for the treaty. It was only the honor and dignity of the nation that could be sacrificed by accepting it; and they were only saved by the hard necessity of the case. A hand was in the lion's mouth which it was a thing of necessity to get out; and on the 1st of June, 1796, when the posts were surrendered, that indispensable preliminary to a fair fight was accomplished.

From the airy height of Monticello, Jefferson surveyed this troubled scene with the deepest interest. He held the treaty in abhorrence. He thought the honest part of its friends were influenced by an excessive, unreasonable dread of the power of Great Britain; and the dishonest, by the vast pecuniary interests involved. He speaks of one person, high in office, who was possessed in turn by a mortal fear of two bugbears,—a British fleet and the democratical societies. Years after the storm of this controversy had blown over, he still adhered to the opinion, that, "by a firm yet just conduct in 1793, we might have obtained a respect for our neutral rights." Not being a military man, having, indeed, no military instincts, the recovery of the posts did not strike his mind as a compensation for the defects of the treaty; and inhabiting a part of the country which shared the perils of the situation, *but not its prosperity*, which bore the shame of a violated flag without deriv-

ing profit from the commerce that escaped interruption, he desired ardently the rejection of the treaty. Once, in the heat of the controversy, he declared that General Washington was the only honest man who favored it. Silence, however, became a candidate for the presidency; and, though he lent the aid of his experience and knowledge to Madison in private conferences, he uttered not a word designed for the public eye or ear. After the final acceptance of the treaty in April, 1796, he passed a quiet, pleasant summer in the congenial labors of his farm and garden, and in building his house, never going seven miles from home.

To secure the influence of General Washington was one of the objects of both parties. The president could have decided this election by merely letting it be distinctly known which of the two candidates he preferred for his successor. Nor were attempts wanting to bias his mind. Only a few months after Jefferson's return home, in 1794, Governor Henry Lee of Virginia, a recent convert to Federalism, felt it to be his duty to do a dastardly act: he was constrained by his conscience to report to the president a question which Mr. Jefferson was said to have addressed to a guest at his own house. Lee was not present when this awful question was asked; but he had received his information from the "very respectable gentleman" of whom Mr. Jefferson had made the inquiry: "Was it *possible* that the president had attached himself to England, and was governed by British influence?" General Washington, though he stooped to reply to this small infamy, marked his sense of it by immediately (two days after) sending an express to invite Jefferson back to his old place in the cabinet. And now, in the summer of 1796, we find him writing to Jefferson in the most frank and friendly manner, as of old, though evidently smarting under the sharp attacks of the Republican press. People told him, he wrote, that Mr. Jefferson had represented the president as being too much under Hamilton's influence. "My answer," said he, "has invariably been, that I had never discovered any thing in the conduct of Mr. Jefferson to raise suspicions in my mind of his insincerity; that, if he would retrace my public conduct while he was in the administration, abundant proofs would occur to him, that truth and right decisions were the sole objects of my pursuit; that there were as many instances within his own knowledge of my having decided *against* as *in favor* of the opinions of the person evidently

alluded to; and, moreover, that I was no believer in the infallibility of the politics or measures of any man living." At the same time, he bitterly complained that he should be rewarded for an honest attempt to avert a desolating war, by being assailed "in such exaggerated and indecent terms as could scarcely be applied to a Nero, a notorious defaulter, or even to a common pickpocket." Mrs. Washington, who is said to have hated "filthy democrats" with all the ardor of a lady of the old school, sent her "best wishes" to the chief democrat on this occasion. Indeed, nothing like a breach ever occurred between the two families or the two men; and Jefferson never failed, on any occasion, to the last day of his life, to do justice, not alone to the integrity of Washington, — which was never questioned, — but to his mind and judgment, which Hamilton underrated, if he did not despise. To Jefferson's pen we owe the best characterization of Washington which comes down to us from his contemporaries.

The strife of parties continued during the summer and autumn of 1796. The contest was unexpectedly close. The Jay treaty, though the remoter commerce of the young nation was almost created by it, seemed at first, to the great damage of his friends, only to give new audacity to the dashing British captain. "Three hundred American vessels seized, and one thousand American sailors impressed," during the year following its ratification! Such was the statement of the Republican press of the period. Long lists of seizures lie before me, — not three hundred, it is true, nor one hundred, but enough to stir the indignation of those who read the particulars, even at this late day. Nor was the news from France re-assuring. Republicans, in 1796, could point to France, after exhibiting the catalogue of British impressments and captures, and say, with alarming appearance of truth, The Jay treaty, which has not conciliated our most dangerous enemy, has alienated our only friend.

James Monroe replaced in Paris the brilliant aristocrat, Gouverneur Morris, a few days after the execution of Robespierre had broken the spell of terror. The National Convention received the young Republican with every honor which enthusiasm could suggest. Reiterated plaudits greeted his entrance, and followed the reading of a translation of his address. The chairman of the Convention replied in a style of rhetorical flourish that made Monroe's plain speech seem a model of Roman simplicity. "Why," said the president

at length, "should I delay to confirm the friendship of our republics by the fraternal embrace I am directed to give you in the name of the French people? Come and receive it in the name of the American people; and may this scene destroy the last hope of the impious band of tyrants!" Mr. Monroe was then conducted to the president, who, as the *Moniteur* of the next day reports, "gave the kiss and embrace in the midst of universal acclamations of joy, delight, and admiration." Republican Paris smiled upon the new minister. He found it not difficult to procure the release of Thomas Paine from the Luxembourg. He wrote consolingly to Paine in his prison, claiming him as an American citizen concerning whose welfare Americans could not be indifferent, and for whom the president cherished a grateful regard. He received the sick and forlorn captive into his house, and entertained him for a year and a half. All went well with Mr. Monroe until the rumor of Jay's mission reached Paris. From that hour to the convention of 1800, the relations of the United States with France had but one course, from bad to worse; French captains, at length, surpassing the English in dashing exploits upon schooners hailing from the American coast.



## CHAPTER LV.

### ELECTED VICE-PRESIDENT.

It was for these reasons that the voters were so evenly divided in November, 1796, between the candidates of the two parties, — Adams and Pinckney, Jefferson and Burr. Jefferson had the narrowest escape from being elected to the presidency: Adams 71, Jefferson 68, Pinckney 59, Burr 30, Samuel Adams 15, Oliver Ellsworth 11, George Clinton 7, Jay 5, Iredell 2, George Washington 2, John Henry 2, Samuel Johnson 2, C. C. Pinckney 1. It was a geographical result. For Adams, the North; for Jefferson, the South, — except that Jefferson received every Pennsylvania vote but one, and Adams seven from Maryland, one from Virginia, and one from North Carolina. Hamilton might well say that Mr. Adams was elected by a kind of “miracle;” for the three votes that elected him were, so to speak, unnatural, eccentric, contrary to all rational expectation, against the current of popular feeling in the States which gave them, namely, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Virginia. According to the Constitution, not then amended, Mr. Jefferson, having received next to the highest number of electoral votes, was elected vice-president.

December was well advanced before he knew the result. His feelings on learning it were fully expressed in a confidential letter to his other political self, James Madison. He said the vote had come much nearer an equality than he had expected, and that he was well content with his escape. “As to the first office,” said he, “it was impossible that a more solid unwillingness, settled on full calculation, could have existed in any man’s mind, short of the degree of absolute refusal. The only view on which I would have gone into it for a while was, to put our vessel on her republican tack, before she should be thrown too much to leeward of her true principles. As to

the second, it is the only office in the world about which I am unable to decide in my own mind whether I had rather have it or not have it. Pride does not enter into the estimate; for I think with the Romans, that the general of to-day should be a soldier to-morrow if necessary. I can particularly have no feelings which would revolt at a secondary position to Mr. Adams. I am his junior in life, was his junior in Congress, his junior in the diplomatic line, his junior lately in our civil government." Nay, more: "If Mr. Adams can be induced to administer the government on its true principles, and to relinquish his bias to an English constitution, it is to be considered whether it would not be, on the whole, for the public good to come to a good understanding with him as to his future elections. He is, perhaps, the only sure barrier against Hamilton's getting in."

Having settled these affairs of state, he proceeds to discourse upon a parcel of books which Madison had lately sent him. In this letter to Madison he enclosed an open one to Mr. Adams, leaving it to Madison's discretion to forward or return it. Jefferson's doubt as to the propriety of sending this letter arose from the awkwardness of professing indifference to public honors. Not one man in five could then believe such professions sincere; and we see, in all the campaign frenzy of those years, the most unquestioning assumption that Jefferson's every act and word had but one object, — the presidency. He desired to say to Mr. Adams how satisfied he was, personally, with the result of the election, and to congratulate him upon the honor his country had done him. "I leave to others," he wrote, "the sublime delight of riding in the storm, better pleased with sound sleep and a warm berth below, with the society of neighbors, friends, and fellow-laborers of the earth, than of spies and sycophants. No one, then, will congratulate you with purer disinterestedness than myself. The share, indeed, which I may have had in the late vote, I shall still value highly, as an evidence of the share I have in the esteem of my fellow-citizens. But still, in this point of view, a few votes less would be little sensible; the difference in the effect of a few more would be very sensible and oppressive to me. I have no ambition to govern men. It is a painful and thankless office."

Upon reflection, Mr. Madison deemed it best not to send this letter. The "ticklish temper," of Mr. Adams, the consideration due to those who had so vehemently contested his election, and the probable future necessity of opposing his measures, induced him to keep

the letter till Mr. Jefferson's arrival at the seat of government. At the same time Mr. Madison admitted "the duty and policy of cultivating Mr. Adams's favorable disposition, and giving a fair start to his executive career."

As soon as the result of this long contest was known, an imaginative paragraphist evolved the report, that Mr. Jefferson would not deign to accept the second office. The rumor rapidly spread itself over the country. Madison wrote to Monticello, suggesting that the best way to dispel so absurd an imputation was for Mr. Jefferson to come to Philadelphia and be publicly sworn in on the 4th of March. It was one of the "cold winters" of the century. On the very day upon which Madison wrote this letter the shivering lord of Monticello, in the course of a long meteorological letter to Volney (in exile at Philadelphia) used these words: "It is at this moment so cold, that the ink freezes in my pen, so that my letter will scarcely be legible." It is to be feared that the remodelled mansion was not yet weather-proof. For so healthy a man, Jefferson was curiously susceptible of cold; and he once wrote that he had suffered during his life more from cold than from all other physical causes put together. He resolved however, as he told Madison, to appear in Philadelphia on the day of the inauguration, "as a mark of respect for the public, and to do away with the doubts which have spread that I should consider the second office as beneath my acceptance." The journey, however, he owned, was "a tremendous undertaking for one who had not been seven miles from home since his resettlement."

Jefferson's aversion to ceremonial was manifested on this occasion. It was an article of his political creed, that political office stood upon the same footing as any other respectable vocation, and entitled the holder to no special consideration; no respect except that which justly rewards fidelity to any important trust; no etiquette except such as that very fidelity necessitates; no privileges except those legally given to facilitate the discharge of public duty. Holding this opinion, he wrote to Mr. Tazewell of the Senate, asking him to prevent the sending of a costly and imposing embassy to notify him of his election, as had been done when General Washington and Mr. Adams were first elected. Better drop a letter into the post-office, said he in substance: it is the simplest, quickest and surest way. He begged Madison, also, to discourage any thing that might be proposed in the way of a public reception at Phila

delphia. "If Governor Mifflin" (of Pennsylvania, a pronounced Republican), "should show any symptoms of ceremony, pray contrive to parry them."

When John Howard was appointed high-sheriff of his county, he conceived the novel idea of inquiring what duties were attached to the office. The duties of a high-sheriff, he was informed, were to ride into town on court days in a gilt coach, entertain the judges at dinner, and give an annual county ball. But Howard pushed his eccentricity so far as to look into the law-books, to see if there might not be something else required at the hands of a high-sheriff. There *was*: he was to inspect the jail! He inspected the jail; and his inspection had the unprecedented quality of being real. He looked; he felt; he smelt; he tasted; he weighed; he measured; he questioned. The reformation of the jails of Christendom dates from that incongruous act. So Jefferson, soon after his election to an office that made him chairman of the Senate, awoke to the fact that he was, from twelve years' disuse, "entirely rusty in the parliamentary rules of procedure." He had once been well versed in those rules. Among the many curious relics of his tireless, minute industry, which have been preserved to this day, is a small, well-worn, leather-bound manuscript volume of one hundred and five pages, entitled "Parliamentary Pocket-book," begun by him when he was a young lawyer, expecting soon to be a member of the parliament of Virginia. This work, which contained the substance of ancient parliamentary law and usage, he now fished from its hiding-place; and upon it, as a basis, he gradually constructed his "Manual of Parliamentary Practice," which still governs our deliberative bodies. After amending it, and adding to it for four years, aided by the learning and experience of his ancient master in the law, George Wythe, he left it in manuscript to the Senate, as the standard by which he had "judged and was willing to be judged."

The opening paragraph betrays the habit of his mind, and shows from what quarter he habitually expected danger: "Mr. Onslow, the ablest among the speakers of the House of Commons, used to say, It was a maxim he had often heard, when he was a young man, from old and experienced members, that nothing tended more to throw power into the hand of administration, and those who acted with a majority of the House of Commons, than a neglect of, or departure from, the rules of proceedings; that these forms, as

instituted by our ancestors, operated as a check and control on the actions of the majority; and that they were, in many instances, a shelter and protection to the minority against the attempts of power." This little Manual is a wonderful piece of work, compact with the brief results of wide research. This sentence startles one who now turns over its pages: "WHEN THE PRIVATE INTERESTS OF A MEMBER ARE CONCERNED IN A BILL OR QUESTION, HE IS TO WITHDRAW!"

In 1797 it was still ten days' ride from Monticello to Philadelphia. When Mr. Jefferson's man, Jupiter, drove his chaise round to the door on the 20th of February, the master did not forget that a few weeks before he had been elected president of the Philosophical Society; and, accordingly, he placed in the carriage some bones of the mastodon, lately come into his possession, the size of which had filled him with special wonder. With the Parliamentary Pocket-book in his trunk, and these bones under the seat, he was well set up in both his characters. From Alexandria he took the public coach, and sent his own vehicle home; not omitting to record in his diary that the stage-fare from Alexandria to Philadelphia was \$11.75, — no great charge for six days' ride in February mud. Mr. Madison did not succeed in parrying the symptoms of ceremony; for we read in a Philadelphia newspaper of the time, that on Thursday, the 2d of March, "the company of artillery welcomed that tried patriot, Thomas Jefferson, with a discharge of sixteen rounds from two twelve-pounders, and a flag was displayed from the park of artillery bearing the device 'Jefferson, the Friend of the People.'"

The inauguration of a new president, like the accession of a young prince to a throne, is naturally a time of joyous excitement, but the present occasion was clouded with apprehension. Every newspaper of those early weeks of 1797, which contained news from abroad, had from one to a dozen items like this: "The ship *Eliza*, on her passage from Liverpool to New York, sprang a leak, and was obliged to bear away to the West Indies. In sight of Martinico she was taken by a *French* privateer, and run ashore, where she was totally wrecked. The captain was imprisoned thirty-two days, and then released without trial." This from the only power in the world which could be regarded as the natural ally of the United States! This from the native land of Lafayette! And now the great

character which had stood between contending parties, himself no partisan, was to withdraw from the scene, leaving the crisis to be dealt with by men untried in the responsibilities of government. Good citizens might well be anxious for their country.

On reaching Philadelphia, Jefferson went at once to pay his respects to Mr. Adams, who, the next morning, returned the call, and started immediately the topic that was upon every man's mind and tongue, — the danger of a rupture with France. The president elect said that he was impressed with the necessity of sending an embassy to that country. The first wish of his heart would have been to intrust the mission to Jefferson; but he supposed that was out of the question, as it did not seem justifiable for a president to send away the person destined to take his place in case of accident to himself, nor decent to remove from competition one who was a rival for the public favor. He had resolved, he said, to send an imposing embassy of three distinguished persons, — Elbridge Gerry from New England, from Virginia James Madison, from South Carolina C. C. Pinckney. The dignity of the mission, he thought, would satisfy France; and its selection from the three great divisions of the country would satisfy the people of the United States. Mr. Jefferson agreed with the president elect as to the impropriety of his leaving the post assigned him by the people, and consented to make known his wishes to Madison. Mr. Adams was all candor and cordiality on this occasion. In the elation of the hour, he evidently regarded Mr. Jefferson as a colleague, with whom it was but natural for him to consult. In his swelling moments, during these first days of his elevation, he liked to compare Jefferson's position in the country with that of prince-royal or heir-apparent to a throne, — much too exalted a personage to be sent on any mission.

On the last day of Washington's term, Jefferson was one of the guests at the dinner given by the president to the conspicuous persons of the capital with whom he had been officially connected. It was a merry dinner; for, on this occasion, he who was to lay down the burden of power was happier than they who were to take it up. On Saturday, the 4th of March, occurred the memorable scenes of the inauguration so often described. At eleven Mr. Jefferson, in the Senate Chamber, was sworn into office, assumed the chair, and delivered the usual brief address. He concluded with a cordial tribute to



Mr. Adams: "No one more sincerely prays that no accident may call me to the higher and more important functions which the Constitution eventually devolves on this office. These have been justly confided to the eminent character which has preceded me here, whose talents and integrity have been known and revered by me through a long course of years, and have been the foundation of a cordial and uninterrupted friendship between us; and I devoutly pray he may be long preserved for the government, the happiness, and prosperity of our common country."

The Senate, with Mr. Jefferson at their head, then proceeded to the Representatives' Hall, where Mr. Adams took the oath, and delivered his robust inaugural, so worthy of him and of the occasion, so little appreciated by the party leaders who were to deceive, mislead, and destroy him. General Washington's fine sense of propriety was shown on this occasion in a trifling incident that caught every eye and dwelt in many memories. After Mr. Adams had left the chamber, the general and Mr. Jefferson rose at the same moment to follow him; and Mr. Jefferson, of course, stood aside to let the ex-president take the lead in leaving the chamber. But the private citizen pointedly refused to accept the precedence over the vice-president. Mr. Jefferson was obliged to go first.

That afternoon there was a mighty banquet given in honor of the retiring chief by the merchants of Philadelphia; which was attended by the president, the vice-president, members of Congress, the cabinet, the foreign ministers, and a great company of noted citizens. The circus was converted into a banqueting-hall, to which the company marched, two and two, from the great tavern of the day. The toast given by Jefferson was very significant to the men of that time, little as it conveys to us: "Eternal union of sentiment between the commerce and agriculture of our country." Benevolent readers will be pleased to learn, that, in accordance with a kindly custom of the period, "the remains of this festival were given to the prisoners in the jail, and the sick in the hospital, that the unfortunate and afflicted might also rejoice."

Sunday passed. If we may judge from the vituperation of after-years, Mr. Jefferson took the liberty of attending the Unitarian chapel, where Dr. Priestley might then be occasionally heard, instead of exhibiting himself at Christ Church, which had been more politic

On Monday Mr. Adams and himself again dined with Genera

Washington. As they chanced to leave at the same moment, they walked together until their ways diverged, and Mr. Jefferson seized the opportunity to inform the president that Madison declined the French mission. The topic had evidently become an embarrassing one to the president. Objections, he said, in his honest, tactless manner, had been made to the nomination of Mr. Madison; and he continued to stammer excuses till the welcome corner of Market Street and Fifth Street gave him an undeniable excuse for breaking off the conversation.

Mr. Adams never again consulted the vice-president on a political measure. They exchanged punctually the civilities which their situations and their ancient friendship demanded; but never again did they converse on a measure of the administration. Mr. Jefferson, as he strolled along Fifth Street in the silence and solitude of a Philadelphia evening, mused upon the cause of the sudden change in the president's tone on the subject of the French mission. He arrived at a probable solution of the mystery: Mr. Adams had met the cabinet that Monday morning for the first time. Madison to France! What a proposition to make to a knot of Federalists, sore and hot from the strife of 1796! Madison, the thorn in Hamilton's side for seven years, to be selected for the most conspicuous honor in the administration's gift by Hamilton's own satellites and *protégés*! Mr. Adams, as Jefferson conjectured, rose from the council-table in an altered mood; and "as he never acted on any system, but was always governed by the feeling of the moment," he gave up his dream of steering impartially between the two parties, and employing the talents of both, in the lofty style of Washington. It is not given to every man to bend the bow of Ulysses! The king and the heir-apparent seldom agree in politics while the king reigns!

## CHAPTER LVI.

### HAMILTON'S AMOUR WITH MRS. REYNOLDS.

WHETHER the people of the United States should govern or be governed, or, in other words, whether America should remain America or become merely a greater Britain, — that was the issue in the infuriate presidential election of 1800. The issue was confused, as it always is, by intrigue, accident, and personality: but the people saw it clearly enough; for of all the devices of man for clarifying and disseminating truth, nothing has yet been invented so effective as one of our hotly contested presidential elections. Millions of lies are generated only to be consumed; and the two warring principles stand at last clearly revealed, for each man to choose, according to his nature. Never once, from 1789 to 1872, have the people of the United States failed to reach a decision, which, upon the whole, was *best*; not once, little as some of us could think so on the morning after certain elections that could be named.

The discussion which had begun in the privacy of President Washington's cabinet in 1790, between American Jefferson and British Hamilton, at length divided the nation into two parties. The representative individuals who began it were now in situations that seemed to withdraw them from the arena of strife, — Hamilton a lawyer at the New York bar, Jefferson in the chair of the Senate. — and yet it was about these two men that the strife concentrated. It was still Hamilton who led the party of re-action; it was still Jefferson who inspired the Republicans, — each deeply and entirely convinced, that upon the supremacy of his ideas depended, not the welfare of America only, but the happiness of man. What a might there is in disinterested conviction! It sometimes invests common talents with a far-reaching and late-enduring power which unprincipled genius never wields.

And it so chanced in this first year of Mr. Adams's presidency, 1797, that both these individuals, without agency of their own and to their extreme annoyance, were invested with a new and intense conspicuousness. They awoke to find "the eyes of the universe" fixed upon them.

In April, 1796, in the heat of the debates upon the Jay treaty, Mr. Jefferson had occasion to write a long letter of business to his old neighbor, Mazzei, then happily settled in his native Italy. By way of a friendly finish to a letter of dull detail, he appended a short paragraph upon politics, writing hastily and without reserves, as republican to republican. He told Mazzei, that, since he had left America, the aspect of politics had wonderfully changed. An Anglican monarchical and aristocratical party had sprung up, small in numbers but high in station, whose avowed object was to draw us over to the substance, as they had already to the forms, of the British government. On the side of republicanism pure and simple were these three,—the people, the planters, and the talents; against republicanism pure and simple, placemen, office-seekers, the Senate, "all timid men who prefer the calm of despotism to the boisterous sea of liberty, British merchants and Americans trading on British capitals, speculators and holders in the banks and public funds, a contrivance invented for the purposes of corruption, and for assimilating us in all things to the rotten as well as the sound parts of the British model." He added these observations: "It would give you a fever were I to name to you the apostates who have gone over to these heresies,—men who were Samsons in the field and Solomons in the council, but who have had their heads shorn by the harlot England. In short, we are likely to preserve the liberty we have obtained only by unremitting labors and perils. But we shall preserve it; and our mass of weight and wealth on the good side is so great as to leave no danger that force will ever be attempted against us. We have only to awake, and snap the Lilliputian cords with which they have been entangling us during the first sleep which succeeded our labors."

Upon receiving this letter, Mazzei translated the political paragraph into Italian, and had it inserted in one of the newspapers of Florence; as an extract from a letter from Thomas Jefferson, late secretary of state of the United States. The editor of the Paris *Moniteur* espied it, translated it into French, and transferred it to

his journal. An American editor translated it back into English, printed it, and soon all America was ringing with it.

It would be difficult to compress into a few lines a greater amount of exasperating offence than Jefferson had managed to pack into these; for it was not individuals who were hit, but classes, and classes, too, that had weapons with which to return the stroke. The passage had another peculiarity: to the few extreme Federalists it had the bitter sting of truth; while the mass of the party honestly resented it as calumny. Nor could the writer disavow or explain it away, despite the errors of translation that intensified some phrases. Upon reflection, and after consultation with Madison, he decided to adhere to his ancient rule, and publish not a word of personal explanation. But nothing that Jefferson ever did or wrote in his whole life gave such deep, wide, and lasting offence as this hasty postscript, written in the heat of controversy, and published with criminal thoughtlessness by a sincere friend four thousand miles away. Those figures of speech which are the natural utterance of a kindled mind, how they delight and mislead the unconcerned hearer! how they rankle in the wounds of self-love!

Hamilton's affair was a thousand times worse than this; and yet, strange to say, it gave less offence, and seemed to be sooner forgotten. To clear himself from a charge of peculation during his tenure of the treasury, he was obliged to publish in great detail the history of his amour with a married woman, named Reynolds. His pamphlet on this subject will be valuable to any one who may desire to pursue Mr. Lecky's line of investigation in America, and get further light upon the history of morals. It is a highly interesting fact, that, A. D. 1797, one of the foremost men of the United States, a person who valued himself upon his moral principle, and was accepted by a powerful party at his own valuation in that particular, should have felt it to be a far baser thing to cheat men of their money than to despoil women of their honor. In this pamphlet he puts his honorable wife to an open shame, and publishes to the world the frailty of the woman who had gratified him; and this to refute a calumny which few would have credited. His conduct in this affair throws light upon his political course. He could be false to women for the same reason that he could disregard the will of the people. He did not look upon a woman as a person and an equal with whom faith was to be kept, any more than he recognized

the people as the master and the owner whose will was law. Original in nothing, he took his morals from one side of the Straits of Dover, and his politics from the other.

What more amusing than the high-stepping morality of the opening of this pamphlet, where the author declares that the spirit of Jacobinism (Hamilton's word for the opinions of his opponents) threatens more mischief to the world than the three great scourges, War, Pestilence, and Famine; and that it is, in fact, nothing other than "*a conspiracy of Vice against Virtue!*" It was after precluding upon this theme, that the representative of Injured Innocence told his story. In the summer of 1791, a woman had called at his house in Philadelphia, and asked to speak with him in private. As soon as they were alone, she had related a piteous tale, — how her husband, after treating her cruelly, had left her destitute, and gone off to live with another woman. She now desired only to get home to her friends in New York; and, knowing that Colonel Hamilton was a New Yorker, she had ventured to come to him, as a countryman, and ask him to give her money enough for the journey. He replied that her situation was interesting, and that he was disposed to help her, but he had no money, — a very common case with the secretary of the treasury. He told her to leave her address, and he would call or send in the evening.

"In the evening," he says, "I put a bank-bill in my pocket, and went to the house. I inquired for Mrs. Reynolds, and was shown up stairs, at the head of which she met me, and conducted me into a bedroom. I took the bill out of my pocket, and gave it to her. Some conversation ensued, from which it quickly appeared that other than pecuniary consolation would be acceptable. After this I had frequent meetings with her, most of them at my own house; Mrs. Hamilton with her children being absent on a visit to her father."

These "frequent meetings," which began in July, continued until December, when they were rudely interrupted by the return of the husband, and his discovery of what had occurred in his absence. The honorable secretary received one morning a chaotic letter from Mrs. Reynolds, who had then become "Maria" to him, in which she announced the appalling fact, in the ladies' spelling of the period, that irate Reynolds "has swore if he dose not see or hear from you to-day, he will write Mrs. Hamilton."



A letter not less chaotic, nor better spelled, soon arrived from Mr Reynolds; and this led to an interview between the husband and the paramour, — not at Weehawken, but in Colonel Hamilton's house. The consolation which the husband desired could not be described as "other than pecuniary." He asked for a place under government. But Colonel Hamilton was never capable of the infamy of saddling such a fellow upon the public service. In the vain attempt to shut the man's mouth, he committed very great folly, it is true, but no crime: he tried to buy his silence with money, — with a thousand dollars, paid in two instalments; six hundred dollars on the 22d of December, 1791, and the remainder January 3, 1792. The reader knows very well what followed; for he lives in the advanced year 1874, when the truth is familiar that blackmail is a case of interminable subtraction. The thousand dollars which was squeezed with so much difficulty out of a small salary kept the noble Reynolds quiet for fourteen days. On the 17th of January, 1792, the secretary of the treasury of the United States had the pleasure of receiving the following note: —

"Sir I suppose you will be surprised in my writing to you Repeatedly as I do. but dont be Alarmed for its Mrs. R. wish to See you. and for My own happiness and hers. I have not the Least Objections to your Calling. as a friend to Bouth of us. and must Rely intirely on your and her honor. when I conversed with you last. I told you it would be disagreeable to me for you to Call, but Sence, I am pritty well Convinsed, She would onely wish to See you as a friend. and sence I am Reconciled to live with her, I would wish to do every thing for her happiness and my own, and Time may ware of every thing, So dont fail in Calling as Soon as you Can make it Conveanant. and I Rely on your befriending me if there should any thing offer that would be to my advantage. as you Express a wish to befrind me. So I am yours to Serve

"JAMES REYNOLDS."

From this letter it appeared that Mr. Reynolds wished to open a new account with a gentleman who was so free with his money. But the burnt child avoided the fire. Colonel Hamilton did not call. Late one evening, a maid-servant left at his door an epistle still more moving from "Maria" herself. She could "neither Eate

nor sleep." She had been on the point of doing "the moast horrid acts," the thought of which made her "shuder." She felt that she was not long for this world; and all she asked was to "se" him once more. "For God sake," she concluded, "be not so voed of all humannity as to deni me this Last request but if you will not Call some time this night I no its late but any tira between this and twelve A Clock I shall be up Let me Intreat you If you wont Come to send me a Line oh my head I can rite no more do something to Ease My heart or Els I no not what I shall do for so I cannot live Commit this to the care of my maid be not offended I beg."

But even this tender appeal did not bring the truant to her feet. She wrote again two days after, on "Wensday Morning ten of Clock," imploring him "if he has the Least Esteeme for the unhappy Maid whos grateest fault Is loveing him that he will come as soon as he shall get this and till that time My breaste will be the seate of pain and woe." Nor did she omit the truly feminine postscript: "P. S. If you cannot come this Evening to stay just come only for one moment as I shal be Lone Mr. is going to sup with a friend from New York." This postscript, it to be feared, proved too much for the "virtue" of a man against whom the spirit of Jacobinism had formed a conspiracy with vice. At least we know that relations between the woman and the cabinet minister were re-established, and that the husband promptly brought in his bill. If we may judge from the specimens of receipts signed James Reynolds which Hamilton gives in his pamphlet, we may conclude, that whenever James Reynolds felt the need of a little money, which was only too often, he was in the habit of applying to the honorable secretary of the treasury for a small loan; which alas! the secretary dared not refuse. He responded promptly too; for we find the receipt bearing the same date as the begging letter.

What a snarl for the leader of a national party to be caught in, in the year of a presidential election, — the wife pestering him with her tears and her awful letters, and the husband bleeding him every few weeks of a fifty-dollar bill, so needed for his own teeming household! We cannot wonder that he should have broken out in that indecorous manner, in the newspapers, against his colleague. The affair became loathsome beyond expression, and he could get neither peace nor respite. With a shabby servant-girl leaving crumpled notes at his door at nine o'clock in the evening, and a man of the Reynolds

stamp, to whom he dared not deny a private interview, hanging round his office in the daytime, he could not hope long to escape suspicion, if he did detection; and, as time went on, the importunities of both became alarmingly frequent. If he abstained from going near the woman for a few days, he received a letter from the husband, begging him to call.

“Sir I am sorry to be the barer of So disagreeable. an unhappy infirmation. I must tell you Sir that I have bin the most unhappiest man, for this five days in Existance, which you aught to be the last person I ever Should tell my troubles to. ever Sence the night you Called and gave her the Blank Paper. She has treated me more Cruel than pen cant paint out. and Ses that She is determined never to be a wife to me any more, and Ses that it is a plan of ours. what has past god knows I Freely forgive you and dont wish to give you fear or pain a moment on the account of it. now Sir I hope you will give me your advise as freely as if Nothing had ever passed Between us I think it is in your power to make matter all Easy again. and I suppose you to be that Man of fealing that you would wish to make every person happy Where it in your power I shall wate to See you at the office if its Convenant. I am sir with Asteem yours

“JAMES REYNOLDS.”

Only six days passed before the husband handed in his account. The date of the note just given was April 17. The date of the following was April 23:—

“Sir I am sorry I am in this disagreeable sutivation which Obliges me to trouble you So offen as I do. but I hope it wont be long before it will be In my power to discharge what I am indebted to you Nothing will give me greater pleasure I must Sir ask the loan of thirty dollars more from you, which I shall asteem as a particular favour. and you may Rest ashured that I will pay you with Strickest Justice. for the Reliefe you have aforded me, the Inclosed is the Receipt for the thirty dollars. I shall wate at your office. Sir for an answer I am sir your very Humble Servant,

“JAMES REYNOLDS.”

The connection became intolerable to the victim at last, and he contrived to shake it off. But Reynolds, five years after, finding himself in jail for debt, thought to extricate himself by selling Hamilton's good name to his political opponents; and he had letters to show, in Hamilton's own hand, proving, that, between this dastardly and ignorant wretch and the secretary of the treasury, *some* incongruous connection involving pecuniary transactions had existed. It was to explain the incongruity, that, in July, 1797, Hamilton felt himself obliged to publish the pamphlet relating the rise and progress of this "amorous intrigue," with enough of the letters to show that the sinner in the case was not the Honorable Secretary of the Treasury, but only a weak, vain, and limited human being, named Alexander Hamilton.

## CHAPTER LVII.

### THE GRAND EMBASSY TO FRANCE IN 1797.

PUBLIC opinion might have judged Hamilton with almost as much severity for this amour as the Federalists condemned Jefferson for his Mazzei paragraph, if public events had not given a brief but overwhelming ascendancy to the political system which Hamilton represented. By the time his pamphlet had made its way through the remoter States, the French imbroglio assumed a character that destroyed in a moment (and for a moment) all that popular sympathy with France which had constituted a great part of the political capital of the Republican party. For a time, say about a year, Republicanism was under a cloud; and that man was the hero of every circle who was loudest against France. Hamilton saw his dream of a consolidating war on the point of realization. The poor man was excessively vain of his military prowess, and had no more doubt of his eminent fitness to command an army than Lord John Russell was once supposed to have of his ability to command the Channel fleet. It was a bewildering turn in public affairs for a man who regarded war as the noblest vocation of human beings, who esteemed himself singularly endowed by nature to shine in that vocation, and who felt that only a war could save "social order" in the United States.

It was the exploits of three French "strikers," that deceived and maddened the American people in 1798. Vain-glorious Americans pretend that *striking* is an American invention, practised first in New York, and then at Albany, upon persons interested in a pending act. "Pay me five thousand dollars," says the professional striker, "and your bill will pass." And no man can say whether or not the bill passes in consequence of the striker's influence, or whether the striking was or was not authorized by members. It

was the Eastern Continent, not the Western, that originated this fine device.

President Adams carried out his scheme of sending to France an imposing embassy of three gentlemen of the first distinction. The Directory had refused to receive *one* American plenipotentiary, General C. C. Pinckney, — refused even to give him “cards of hospitality,” legalizing his residence in Paris; and, finally (January 25, 1797), notified him that he had no legal right to remain in France. The cause of this remarkable behavior was the Jay treaty; or, as the French government styled it, “the condescension of the American government to its ancient tyrants.” Imagine the effect in the United States of an insult so emphatic and so unprovoked! The best friends of France were the most wounded and dismayed; while the party in power, in extra session of Congress assembled, voted every thing short of downright war, and might even have precipitated actual hostilities, but for the overshadowing, portentous prestige of General Bonaparte. In the nick of time was published an “Order of the Day,” dated “30 Germinal, An V” (or vulgarly, April 19, 1797), in which that “Général-en-Chef” informed his army, in five lines, that the preliminaries of peace had been signed the day before between the emperor of Austria and the French Republic. This brief document notified mankind that General Bonaparte, with resources vastly increased, was now free to direct his exclusive attention to the war with perfidious Albion, either by way of Calais and Dover, or Egypt and Calcutta. This intelligence, as Jefferson remarked at the time, “cooled the ardent spirits,” and therefore, instead of war, we had the grand embassy, — C. C. Pinckney, John Marshall, and Elbridge Gerry. Pinckney and Marshall were Federalists; Gerry a Republican.

How warmly Mr. Jefferson urged Mr. Gerry to accept the mission is worthy of remembrance, in view of its result. “If,” wrote Jefferson, “we engage in a war during our present passions, and our present weakness in some quarters, our Union runs the greatest risk of not coming out of that war in the shape in which it enters it. My reliance for our preservation is in your acceptance of this mission. I know the tender circumstances which will oppose themselves to it. But its duration will be short, and its reward long. You have it in your power, by accepting and determining the character of the mission, to secure the present peace and eternal union of



your country. If you decline, on motives of private pain, a substitute may be named who has enlisted his passions in the present contest, and, by the preponderance of his vote in the mission, may entail on us calamities, your share in which, and your feelings, will outweigh whatever pain a temporary absence from your family could give you."

Elbridge Gerry had now been in the service of his country for nearly a quarter of a century. Before the Revolutionary War, he was a thriving merchant at Marblehead, a town situated on a point that extends two or three miles out into Massachusetts Bay, and was inhabited at that time only by fishermen and merchants. Being a merchant and a man of substance, he naturally took the lead in such a community during the agitation which preceded the Revolutionary War. He was a just, public-spirited, thoughtful, and resolute man, a great friend and constant correspondent of Samuel Adams, who was the soul and centre of the opposition to the king in Massachusetts for twenty years.

"The whole business of life," wrote Gerry to Adams, when the news of the Boston Port Bill reached Marblehead, "seems involved in one great question, *What is best to be done for our country?*"

That sentence perfectly describes both the feelings and the conduct of Elbridge Gerry at that period. Politics became, indeed, the whole business of his life; and, after serving his State in various honorable capacities, he found himself a member of the Continental Congress, in which character he signed the Declaration of Independence. He served during the gloomiest period of the war, on that most laborious and responsible committee which had charge of the finances of the country. As the war went on, the forty gentlemen who composed the Congress of the United States were reduced to sad straits. At one period, when a dollar in gold was worth four thousand in paper, if, indeed, it could be said to have any value, Mr. Gerry described his own situation thus:—

"I now owe one hundred and forty-seven dollars (gold) for board, and some little borrowed of my landlady, besides twenty-six borrowed for every-day expenses, and perhaps sixteen more to tailors and shoemakers. How, under Heaven, am I to get this with provincial paper, which does not pass here for any thing at all, and is next to nothing where it was issued? You speak of my soon

being at home! I own no horse, or I might ride away from these great debts, and ask charity on the road for a delegate from Massachusetts, to enable him to reach home."

The supreme power of the country, nevertheless, and the control of two armies, were in the hands of these forty men who were troubled to pay their board. Gerry took it in good part, and made a joke of it. He guarded the public treasury with vigilance and sternness. It was he, in fact, who, as chairman of the treasury-board, rejected the corrupt claims of General Arnold, which kindled the anger of the traitor, and caused him to appeal to Congress from Gerry's decision, with severe remarks upon the conduct of the chairman of the financial committee. Mr. Gerry replied to Arnold's abuse with a remark which some public servants of the present day might use with propriety.

"If," said he, "the faithful discharge of official duty, unpleasant enough in itself, is to bring with it the liability of personal attack from men who have neither honesty in their public dealings nor courtesy in private life, it might be well to abolish all guards upon the treasury, and admit rapacity and crime to help themselves at pleasure."

Elbridge Gerry, though a strictly virtuous and honorable man, was one of those who are sometimes described as "difficult to get along with." He had a spiritual malady, not uncommon in New England at that period, which still troubles some Yankees, otherwise excellent: He was morbidly suspicious. He was prone to attribute evil motives. His companions felt that he was doubtful of their sincerity; and he did indeed habitually expect public men to abuse their trust. John Adams was full of this untrusting, distrusting spirit, and I have often wondered how it could be, that men so honest and sincere as John Adams and Elbridge Gerry could instinctively attribute to other men baseness of which they were themselves incapable. Along with this suspiciousness, there was in Elbridge Gerry a tenacity of mind which caused him to adhere to a groundless suspicion or a trifling right as firmly as to interests the most sacred and the most important. In the midst of the revolutionary period, Congress having refused him the ayes and noes on a motion, he protested against the refusal as a wrong done to his State; and, after waiting a month for Congress to redress his grievance, he aban-

doned his seat, and referred the subject to the legislature of Massachusetts. Nor, when re-elected to Congress, would he accept the seat until the affair had been adjusted.

He was one of the original founders of our Democratic party, — one of those, who, even before the war ended, had a dread of increasing the power of the central government, and a horror of the parade and pageantry which called to mind this vice-regal system.

At the close of the war, when the treaty of peace was presented to Congress for its consideration, there were only three members in the body who had signed the Declaration of Independence, — Mr. Jefferson, Mr. Gerry, and Mr. Ellery of Rhode Island; all of whom were named upon the committee to whom the treaty was referred. He witnessed the memorable scene of Washington's resigning his commission at Annapolis. He served also in the Constitutional Convention of 1787.

But the great event of his life, and that which alone will cause him to be remembered in history, was the part which he took in preserving peace, in 1798, between the United States and France.

After the departure of the envoys in August, there was a lull in the storm of politics; and several months of expectation passed, increasing as time went on, until the mere delay created alarm. The summer passed, the autumn glided by, winter began, Congress convened, the winter ended, and still the dreadful question of peace or war remained unanswered. What of our envoys? How has our sublime embassy been received? It was not until it had been gone seven months, that any authoritative answer could be given to such inquiries, even by the president. And then what an answer! Let us accompany these gentlemen on their mission.

It was on the 4th of October, 1797, that the three envoys found themselves in Paris, — two having come fresh from the United States, and General Pinckney from Holland. On that very first morning they had an experience which was a fit prelude to what was to come. The musicians of the Directory, in accordance with ancient custom ("everybody does it, my dear sir"), called upon them for a present, and got from each, as Mr. Gerry reports, "fifteen or twenty guineas." Next, a deputation of fish-women, also in accordance with ancient custom, presented themselves for the same purpose. "When the ladies," wrote Mr. Gerry, "get sight of a minister, as they did of my colleagues, they smother him with

kisses." But Mr. Gerry escaped this part of the penalty by sending one of the secretaries of the mission, Major Rutledge, to "negotiate for me." Gerry paid the guineas, and Rutledge, it is to be presumed, drew the kisses.

The next morning business began. The envoys sent a messenger to notify verbally M. de Talleyrand, Minister of Foreign Affairs, of their arrival in Paris, and to ask him to name a time when he would be at leisure to receive one of their secretaries with a formal and written notification. Answer: The next day, at two o'clock. Major Rutledge, punctual to the time, delivered the usual letter, announcing the object of the embassy, and requesting the minister to appoint an hour for them to present their letters of credence. To the cordial and stately letter of the three envoys, Talleyrand gave a verbal reply: "The day after to-morrow at one o'clock." They waited upon him at the hour appointed. He was not at home! His chief secretary informed them that he had been compelled to meet the Directory, but would be glad to see them at three o'clock. They called again at three o'clock. He was "engaged with the Portuguese minister;" and the envoys waited till he was disengaged, about ten minutes. They were then introduced, and presented their letters, which the minister read and kept. He then informed them that the Directory had required him to draw up a report upon the relations of France with the United States, which he was then engaged upon, and would complete in a few days; when we would let them know "what steps were to follow." They asked him if, in the mean time, the usual cards of hospitality would be necessary. Yes, and they should be sent to them. He rang his bell, told his secretary to make them out. The envoys then withdrew; and, on the day following, the cards were brought to them.

Ten days passed. No letter from M. de Talleyrand.

But, on the morning of October 18, the strikers began their attempts upon the envoys. A certain "Mr. W." called upon General Pinckney, and informed him that "a Mr. X was a person of considerable credit and reputation, and that the envoys might place great reliance upon him;" and, in the evening of the same day, who should happen to drop in upon the envoys but the same Mr. X? After sitting a while, this Unknown Quantity whispered to General Pinckney that he was the bearer of a message to him from M. de Talleyrand. The general immediately showed the message-bearer

into the next room, and lent an attentive ear to his communication, which was to this effect: M. de Talleyrand, who had a great regard for the American people, was very desirous to promote a reconciliation between them and France, and was ready, in confidence, strict confidence, to suggest a plan which he thought would answer the purpose. "I shall be glad to hear it," said the envoy. Mr. X resumed: The Directory was exceedingly irritated at some passages of the president's speech. First, those passages must be "softened." That was essential, even to the mere reception of the envoys by the Directory. Then the United States must lend some money to France. But, besides this, "*a sum of money was required for the pockets of the Directory and ministers.*" "What passages of the president's speech have given offence?" asked General Pinckney. Mr. X did not know. "What amount of loan is expected?" Mr. X could not tell. "How much for the pockets of the Directory?" On *this* point, and on this only, the striker possessed exact information: "Twelve hundred thousand francs," or, say, a matter of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, gold!

In the secret recesses of his soul, it is to be presumed, General Pinckney whistled. But, being on duty, he only *said*, that he could not so much as take these propositions into consideration, until he had consulted his colleagues. He consulted his colleagues. Their answer was: Let Mr. X meet us *all* face to face; and, to avoid mistakes, let him reduce his propositions to writing. Mr. X consenting, he came the next evening, and submitted in writing the same "suggestions." He was careful to explain, on this occasion, that his communication did not come directly from M. de Talleyrand: Oh, no! but from "a gentleman in whom M. de Talleyrand had great confidence." Other interviews followed; and, at length, the envoys had the pleasure of meeting that very gentleman in whom M. de Talleyrand had so much confidence. He did but confirm what Mr. X had said. "You can have your treaty, gentlemen," said he; "but I will not disguise from you, that, satisfaction being made (softening the president's speech), the *essential* part of the treaty remains to be adjusted: MONEY IS NECESSARY; MUCH MONEY."

For a month or more, this head striker kept coming and going, making various propositions, and pretending to bring from Talleyrand various suggestions; but always the burden of his song was *The douceur; the loan; money; much money!* The envoys, hav

ing once for all declined to entertain any proposition of that nature, fought shy of the subject, and turned a deaf ear to hints. Take the following as a sample of these lofty conversations:—

HEAD STRIKER. Gentlemen, you do not speak to the point. The point is money! It is expected you will offer money.

ENVOYS. We have spoken to that point very explicitly: we have given an answer.

HEAD STRIKER. No: you have not. What is your answer?

ENVOYS. It is No, no; not a sixpence!

HEAD STRIKER. Think of the dangers which threaten your country. Would it not be prudent, even though you may not make a loan to the nation, to interest an influential friend in your favor? Consider the character of the Directory: they care nothing for the justice of the case; they can only be reached by a judicious application of money.

ENVOYS. We have no proof of this, even if we were disposed to give the money.

HEAD STRIKER. When you employ a lawyer, you give him a fee without knowing whether the cause can be gained or lost. It is necessary to have a lawyer, and you pay for his services whether those services are successful or not. So, in the present state of things, the money must be advanced for the good offices the individuals are to render, whatever may be the effect of those offices.

ENVOYS. There is no parallel in the cases; for the lawyer cannot command success. But the Directory has but to order that no more vessels should be seized, and to release those now held, and there could be no opposition to the order.

HEAD STRIKER. All the members of the Directory are not disposed to receive your money. Merlin, for example, is paid from another quarter, and would touch no part of your *douceur*.

ENVOYS. We have understood that Merlin is paid by the privateers.

HEAD STRIKER (nodding assent). You pay money to obtain peace with the Indians and with the Algerines, and it is doing no more to pay France for peace. Does not your government know that nothing is to be obtained here without money?

ENVOYS. Our government has not even suspected such a state of things.



HEAD STRIKER (with an appearance of surprise). There is not an American in Paris who cannot give you that information.

The gentleman, with what the envoys in their despatch styled "vast perseverance," continued to urge this view upon them, returning to "the point" again and again; they ever adhering to their original reply, "Not a sixpence." It was General Pinckney who afterwards converted that homely Not a Sixpence into an electric and immortal phrase, "Millions for Defence, but not a Cent for Tribute." At the end of thirty days, the envoys seemed no nearer recognition than on the day when the fishwomen had smothered them with kisses.

Elbridge Gerry alone had known Talleyrand in the United States. One of the mysterious go-betweens informed him, one day, that M. de Talleyrand had expected to meet and converse with the envoys individually. Mr. Gerry reported this intimation to his colleagues, who thought that he might, considering his acquaintance with the minister, call upon him. He did so. They conversed freely upon the relations of the two countries; and Mr. Gerry thus learned precisely what the Directory expected as conditions preliminary to a treaty: 1, An apology for certain expressions in the president's speech; as when he said, France must be convinced "we are not a degraded people," "fitted to be the miserable instruments of foreign influence." 2, A *voluntary* loan of fifteen or sixteen million florins. Nothing was said touching a *douceur*. Mr. Gerry having reported the conversation to his colleagues, they all agreed that neither of these preliminaries was admissible, — no apology, and not a sixpence; and they caused this information to be conveyed to Talleyrand by one of the mysterious emissaries. But, in recognition of Mr. Gerry's call, Talleyrand invited him to one of his diplomatic dinners. Mr. Gerry went to the dinner, and, in return, gave Talleyrand a dinner. No progress, however, was made in the business of the mission, and Mr. Gerry declined further civilities.

For six months the envoys vainly endeavored to bring the Directory to reason. From first to last, the cry was, Money, money, money! "We are engaged in a death-grapple with our only foe, *your* foe, liberty's foe, mankind's foe: we lent you money when you were in a similar situation; lend us some in our struggle." Such was the substance of the later messages from the Directory

And, above the uproar of events, Thomas Paine's voice made itself heard, expressing exultation at the proposed descent upon England, and offering material aid toward it. Not much, it is true; but enough to create a "scene" in the Council of Five Hundred, and stimulate the loan. The chairman of that excitable body read aloud Paine's letter on the 31st of January, 1798; in which he said, that, although in his present circumstances he could not subscribe to the invasion loan, yet his economy enabled him to make a small donation. "I send one hundred livres, and, with it, all the wishes of my heart for the success of the descent, and a voluntary offer of any service I can render to promote it. There will be no lasting peace for France, nor for the world, until the tyranny and corruption of the English government be abolished, and England, like Italy, becomes a sister republic." This letter was received with acclamations, and unanimously ordered to be printed.

But the American envoys refused to take the hint. "No," they replied in substance, "a loan to France will embroil us with England." "Well, then," rejoined Talleyrand, "make us a loan *payable after the war*." On this last proposition the envoys differed in opinion; Marshall and Pinckney rejecting it as not fit to be entertained, Gerry willing to "open negotiations on the basis" of such a loan. The difference proved irreconcilable; and, after numberless attempts to arrange the difficulty, Talleyrand notified the envoys that the two gentlemen who refused to consider the proposition might expect to receive their passports, but Mr. Gerry was desired to remain. Gerry replied, that he had no authority to conclude any thing apart from his colleagues: he could only, in their absence, confer with the French minister unofficially, and communicate with his own government as a private citizen. Messrs. Marshall and Pinckney departed. Mr. Gerry, eager as he was to rejoin his family, and foreseeing the ruin to his affairs from his prolonged absence, which actually occurred, was induced to stay. Talleyrand officially informed him, "by order of the Directory," that his departure from France would be instantly followed by a declaration of war; which, if he remained, would be withheld until he could hear from his government.

## CHAPTER LVIII.

### HAMILTON IMPROVES THE OPPORTUNITY.

AND so this weighty embassy, this grand and magnanimous endeavor to restore the ancient friendship between two estranged nations, seemed to end pitifully in an intrigue to get a little money. French cruisers had despoiled American commerce of many millions of dollars; and a demand was now made of millions more, before the claim for redress would be listened to! Half a dozen corrupt men, whirled aloft in the storm of the Revolution, committed this outrage; but to the people of the United States, remote from Europe, unversed in its tortuous and childish politics, what could it seem but the act of France? For a short time France had few friends in the United States; and the extremists of the Federalist party, led by Hamilton, had every thing their own way.

Judge of the effect of this intelligence upon the public mind by events: Gerry recalled; Marshall received home like a conqueror; meetings everywhere; addresses "poured into" the president's office from every town, "offering life and fortune;" a navy department created; a navy voted; guns ordered; small arms purchased to a vast amount; an army of ten thousand regulars, and any number of militia authorized, *in case* war was declared, or the country invaded; Washington induced to accept the command as lieutenant-general; three major-generals, and nine brigadiers commissioned; Hamilton nominally second in command, but practically commander-in-chief; the fortification of harbors begun; merchant vessels authorized to arm and to resist French men-of-war; naval commanders ordered to seize and bring in any French vessel which had molested, or was suspected of being about to molest, American ships; the president authorized to suspend commercial intercourse between France and the United States. In a word, the power and resources of the

country were placed at the disposal of the president, to be by him employed in waging war against France, at his discretion. Hamilton saw the dream of his life about to be realized, — a war, in which he should win the only distinction he valued, — military glory, — and employ, at least, *the prestige* of a victorious sword on behalf of what he was accustomed to style “social order.” All this year 1798, he was in earnest, confidential correspondence with Miranda, the South American patriot, who was in England striving to unite William Pitt and Alexander Hamilton, or, in other words, the government of England and the United States, in an expedition to invade and wrest from Spain her American colonies.

This was to Hamilton a captivating scheme, as it was a few years later to Aaron Burr. But Hamilton, ardently as he cherished it, expressly stipulated that he could have nothing to do with it, “unless patronized by the government of this country.” The country, he wrote in August, 1798, was not quite ready for the undertaking; “but we ripen fast.” The plan, he thought, should be this: A fleet of Great Britain, an army of the United States, a government for the liberated territory agreeable to both the co-operators. Mr. Pitt, it seems, was decided for the scheme. Miranda replied to Hamilton’s August letter in October. “Your wishes are in some sort fulfilled,” wrote the South American; “since they have agreed here that no English troops are to be employed on shore, seeing that the auxiliary land forces should be American only, while the naval force shall be purely English. All difficulties have vanished, and we only await the fiat of your illustrious president to set out like a flash.” To this point Hamilton had brought the mad scheme without the illustrious president knowing any thing of it.

But even this was not the wildest nor the worst of Hamilton’s misuse of the transient power which circumstances gave him in 1798. What shall be said of his attempt to fasten upon the United States the stupid and shameful repressive system of George III.? What of the Alien Laws, inspired by him, approved by him, passed by his adherents? The mere rumor of the intention to pass such laws sent shiploads of French and Irish exiles hurrying home, and prevented worthy men from seeking needful refuge here. Kosciuszko and Volney departed; Priestley was not deemed safe; noble Gallatin was menaced. By these Alien Laws, the wonder and opprobrium of American politics, servile copies of Pitt’s servile

originals, the president could order away "all such aliens as he should judge dangerous to the peace and safety of the United States;" and the alien who disobeyed the order was liable to three years' imprisonment. Other clauses and amendments placed the entire foreign population of the United States, and all who might in future seek their shores, under strictest surveillance; and, in case of war with France, every Frenchman not naturalized was to leave the country, or be forcibly put out of it.

But even this was not so monstrous as the Sedition Law, also borrowed from recent British legislation. Five years' imprisonment and five thousand dollars' fine for conspiring to oppose any measure passed by Congress, or for attempting or advising a riot or insurrection, whether "the advice or attempt should have the proposed effect or not." Imprisonment for two years, and a fine of two thousand dollars, for writing, speaking, or publishing "any false, scandalous, and malicious writing or writings against the government of the United States, or either house of the Congress of the United States, or the president of the United States, with intent to defame the said government, or either house of the said Congress, or the said president; or to bring them, or either of them, into contempt or disrepute; or to excite against them, or either or any of them, the hatred of the good people of the United States; or to stir up sedition within the United States; or to excite any unlawful combinations therein, for opposing or resisting any law of the United States." Is it not incredible? But I have open before me, at this moment, a ponderous law-book of seven hundred and twenty-one large pages, two-thirds filled with "State Trials" under the Alien and Sedition Laws.

To these base imitations the Federalists added an originality that surpassed in refined absurdity any thing devised by Pitt or executed by Castlereagh. A very worthy, benevolent physician, Dr. George Logan of Philadelphia, appalled at the prospect of two friendly nations being thus cruelly misled into a bloody war, scraped together a little money with much difficulty, and went to France to try and prevent, by purely moral means, by mere remonstrance and persuasion, a calamity so dire and so unnecessary. He discovered by conversations with Talleyrand and others, and so reported, that there was nothing the French government so little desired as war with the United States. To parry this blow, the Hamiltonians

passed what was called, in party parlance, the Logan Law, — five thousand dollars' fine and three years' imprisonment to any future Logan, or any person who "should carry on any verbal or written correspondence or intercourse with any foreign government, or any officer or agent thereof, with an intent to influence the measures or conduct of any foreign government, or any officer or agent thereof, in relation to any disputes or controversies with the United States." Hamilton was not going to be balked of his war and his *Miranda* project by any sentimental Quaker; least of all, by one for whom Jefferson had procured a safe conduct, and provided with a certificate of citizenship! Dr. Logan won great honor by this worthy and useful attempt; and in 1810, after an honorable public career in Pennsylvania, he went to England to endeavor, by the same means, to prevent war between the United States and Great Britain.

From his lofty seat in the chair of the Senate, Jefferson surveyed the momentary triumph of the re-actionists, and prepared to frustrate their intentions. Not for a moment was he deceived concerning the real disposition of France. One of the first letters that he wrote, after reading the despatches of the envoys, contains these words: "You will perceive that they have been assailed by swindlers, whether with or without the participation of Talleyrand is not apparent. But that the Directory knew any thing of it is neither proved nor probable." The lapse of seventy-five years has added little to our knowledge of that intrigue. "Assailed by swindlers," — that is about all we are sure of at this moment. In reckoning up the wrongs inflicted by France upon his country, he ruled out, therefore, all that mass of curious dialogue, — thirty-six pages of cipher, — between the envoys and the individuals whom Mr. Adams considerately named X, Y, Z, and who are at once named and explained to modern ears by the word strikers. Hence, his position and that of his friends, Madison, Gallatin, Monroe, Giles, and the rest of the Republican forlorn hope: "The peace-party will agree to all reasonable measures of internal defence, but oppose all external preparations." With regard to the Alien and Sedition Laws, he thought they were an experiment to ascertain whether the people would submit to measures distinctly contrary to the Constitution. If the experiment succeeded, the next thing would be a life presidency; then an hereditary presidency; then a Senate for life. "Nor," said he, October 1798, "can I be confi-



dent of their failure, after the dupery of which our countrymen have shown themselves susceptible."

He soon, however, had new evidence of the truth of the words he had spoken to his Albemarle neighbors on returning from France in 1790: "The will of the majority, the natural law of every society, is the only sure guardian of the rights of man. Perhaps even this may sometimes err; but its errors are honest, solitary, and *short-lived*."

How he toiled and schemed to enlighten the public mind at this crisis, his letters of the time reveal, and the hatred of the enemies of freedom attest. He was the soul of the opposition. By long, able, earnest letters to leading public men in many States, he roused the dormant and restrained the impetuous. He induced good writers on the Republican side, Madison above all, to compose the right articles for the press. Madison, overpowered in Congress, and regarding the Constitution as set aside, and no longer any restraint upon an arrogant and exulting majority, had retired to the legislature of Virginia, as a general falls back to make a new stand in the fastnesses of his native, familiar hills. "Every man," wrote Jefferson to him in February, 1799, "must lay his purse and his pen under contribution. As to the former, it is possible I may be obliged to assume something for you. As to the latter, let me pray and beseech you to set apart a certain portion of every post-day to write what may be proper for the public. Send it to me while here; and when I go away I will let you know to whom you may send, so that your name shall be sacredly secret. You can render such incalculable services in this way as to lessen the effect of our loss of your presence here." At the same time Jefferson, acting on behalf of a club of choice spirits to which he belonged, endeavored to induce Madison to publish the notes taken by him of the debates in the Convention of 1787. The project failed. The work was, indeed, too voluminous, and yet all too brief, for the purpose of recalling the public mind to a sense of constitutional obligation. And what did the Hamiltons of the day care for the intentions of that convention? Every pen, however, that could be used with effect against the military faction, Jefferson sought out, and stimulated; urging upon his friends the powerlessness of blackguard vituperation, if met by good sense, and strong, clear, dignified reasoning.

He restrained as well as impelled. In the midst of the war-fury of May, 1798, John Taylor of Caroline thought the time had come for Virginia and North Carolina to begin to think of setting up for themselves. No, said Jefferson: "if, on a temporary superiority of one party, the other is to resort to a scission of the Union, no federal government can ever exist. If to rid ourselves of the present rule of Massachusetts and Connecticut, we break the Union, will the evil stop there? Suppose the New England States alone cut off, will our nature be changed? Are we not men still to the south of that, and with all the passions of men? Immediately we shall see a Pennsylvania and a Virginia party arise in the residuary confederacy, and the public mind will be distracted with the same party spirit. What a game, too, will the one party have in their hands, by eternally threatening the other, that, unless they do so and so, they will join their Northern neighbors! If we reduce our Union to Virginia and North Carolina, immediately the conflict will be established between the representatives of these two States, and they will end by breaking into their simple units. Seeing, therefore, that an association of men who will not quarrel with one another is a thing which never yet existed, from the greatest confederacy of nations down to a town meeting or a vestry, seeing that we must have somebody to quarrel with, I had rather keep our New England associates for that purpose than to see our bickering transferred to others."

No language can overstate the boiling fury of party passion then. Social intercourse between members of the two parties ceased, and old friends crossed the street to avoid saluting one another. Jefferson declined invitations to the usual gatherings of "society," and spent his leisure hours in the circle that met in the rooms of the Philosophical Society, ever longing for the end of the session and the sweet tranquillity of his home. "Here," he writes to his daughter Martha, in February, 1798, "your letters serve like gleams of light, to cheer a dreary scene, where envy, hatred, malice, revenge, and all the worst passions of men, are marshalled, to make one another as miserable as possible. I turn from this with pleasure, to contrast it with your fireside, where the single evening I passed at it was worth more than ages here." Again, in May: "For you to feel all the happiness of your quiet situation, you should know the rancorous passions which tear every breast here, even of the sex which should be a stranger to them. Politics and party hatreds destroy the hap-

piness of every being here. They seem, like salamanders, to consider fire as their element." And again, in February, 1799: "Your letter was, as Ossian says, or would say, like the bright beams of the moon on the desolate heath. Environed here in scenes of constant torment, malice, and obloquy, worn down in a station where no effort to render service can avail any thing, I feel not that existence is a blessing but when something recalls my mind to my family or farm."

If a man so placid as Jefferson was moved so deeply, we cannot wonder at the frenzy of nervous and excitable spirits. President Adams seemed at times almost beside himself. Many readers remember the remarkable account given by him of scenes in the streets of Philadelphia, on what he calls "my fast day," May 9, 1798: "When Market Street was as full as men could stand by one another, and even before my door; when some of my domestics, in frenzy, determined to sacrifice their lives in my defence; when all were ready to make a desperate sally among the multitude, and others were with difficulty and danger dragged back by the others; when I myself judged it prudent and necessary to order chests of arms from the war-office to be brought through by-lanes and back-doors; determined to defend my house at the expense of my life, and the lives of the few, very few, domestics and friends within it." This record was mere midsummer madness. On referring to the Philadelphia newspapers of the time, I read in Claypoole, of May 11, 1798, that "the Fast was observed with a decency and solemnity never before exhibited on a similar occasion."

There was, indeed, a slight disturbance. For the warning of students, and particularly for the benefit of those who may hereafter investigate THE LAWS GOVERNING THE GENERATION OF FALSEHOOD, I will copy two newspaper accounts of Mr. Adams's terrible riot. Claypoole, May 11: "After the solemnities of the day were ended, towards evening, a number of butcher-boys made their appearance at the State House garden with French cockades in their hats. Some disturbance ensued; but, several of them being taken up and committed to jail, order was restored, and tranquillity reigned through the night." The following is from another Philadelphia paper, the Merchants' Daily Advertiser, May 10, 1798: "About six o'clock information was received at the mayor's office, that a number of persons were marching about the city in a very disorderly manner, with

French cockades in their hats. A short time after, the mayor, with the secretary of state, the attorney-general, and one of the aldermen, being at the attorney-general's office, were informed that thirty or forty persons of the above description were close at hand: they accordingly went out to disperse them. Upon the appearance of the civil officers, the mob took out their cockades and dispersed. However, one fellow, more hardy than the rest, persisted in keeping in his cockade, and swore he would not leave the ground, in consequence of which he was committed to prison. Several of these persons, after they had been dispersed, are said to have assembled again in different parts of city; but the spirited exertions of the citizens soon put an end to the business. The cavalry paraded through the city during the night; and a number of young men, who voluntarily offered themselves to the mayor as guards to the military stores, mint, &c., were accepted, and stationed at their posts under proper officers. At the time this paper went to press (three o'clock in the morning), we could not learn that any fresh attempt had been made to disturb the public tranquillity."

Mr. Adams might have spared himself such an alarm. He was riding then upon the topmost wave of popularity. The only trace of opposition to the war measures which I can discover in the press during that month, except in the Congressional debates, is a toast given at the annual banquet of the Tammany Society of New York: "May the Old Tories, and all who wish to engage the United States in a war with any nation, realize the felicity they anticipate by being placed in front of the first battle." This sentiment was honored by an extraordinary number of cheers, even "thirteen." Nevertheless, Mr. Adams was safe in his house. All men can be driven mad by outrage; but riot and violence are the natural and familiar resort of Old Tories. It is of the essence of republicanism to prevail by arguments addressed to the conscience and understanding.

The conduct of the Republican leaders, in this year of supreme trial, was temperate, patriotic, and wise. They saw the Constitution of their country, even its most cherished and sacred provisions, those which made the United States an asylum to the *élite* of the nations, and those which secured to thought a free expression, — even those they saw trampled under foot. Their resort was to the reason and conscience of their fellow-citizens: they prepared to repeat the wise and humane tactics of the period preceding the

Revolution, — eleven years of remonstrance and entreaty. In October, 1798, two Republicans, George Nicholas of Kentucky, and Wilson C. Nicholas of Virginia, met at Monticello, to consult their chief upon the situation. These brothers, like Madison, had retired from Congress to endeavor to make head in the legislatures of their States against the bold, blind, arrogant men who controlled the government. The result of their deliberations was the “Kentucky Resolutions,” draughted by Jefferson, and the “Virginia Resolutions,” draughted by Madison; by the passage of which the legislatures of those States declared that the Alien and Sedition Laws, being contrary to the plainest letter of the Constitution, were “altogether void and of no force.” Jefferson’s draught uttered only the simple and obvious truth, when it said that “these and successive acts of the same nature, unless arrested at the threshold, will *necessarily* drive these States into revolution and blood;” “for this commonwealth is determined, as it doubts not its co-States are, to submit to undelegated, and consequently unlimited power, in no man or body of men on earth.” The last of the Kentucky Resolutions provided for a Committee of Conference and Correspondence, who should have in charge to exchange information and sentiments with the legislatures of other States.

One would have expected Hamilton to pause and reconsider his course upon reading such a weighty and cogent protest as this. He did not. His was the unteachable mind of a Scotch Jacobite. His response to the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions of 1798 is published at length in his works, in the form of his annual political programme for 1799, addressed to Jonathan Dayton, long the speaker of the House, and then about to enter the Senate. Circumstances, he said, aided by the extraordinary exertions of “the friends of government,” had, indeed, gained something for “the side of men of information and property;” but, after all, “public opinion has not been ameliorated,” and “sentiments dangerous to social happiness have not been diminished.” The Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions could be considered, he thought, “in no other light than as an attempt to change the government;” and it was “stated” that “the faction” in Virginia was preparing to follow up hostile words by hostile acts, and was actually gathering arms, stocking arsenals, and levying new taxes. In these circumstances, the “supporters of government,” while preparing to meet force with force



should adopt "vigorous measures of counteraction," "surround the Constitution with more ramparts," and thus "disconcert its enemies."

He advised the following measures: 1. The division of each State into small judicial districts (Connecticut, for example, into four), with a federal judge in each, appointed by the president, for the trial of offenders against the general government. 2. The appointment by the president in each county of "conservators or justices of the peace, with only ministerial functions," and *paid by fees only*, in order to give efficacy to laws which the local magistrates were indisposed to execute. 3. The keeping up of the army and navy nearly on the scale adopted in view of war with France. 4. A military academy. 5. The establishment of government manufactories of every article needful for the supply of an army. 6. The prompt calling out of the militia by new laws, "to suppress unlawful combinations and insurrections." 7. "The subdivision of the great States ought to be a cardinal point in the federal policy;" and Congress ought to have, by constitutional amendment, the power to subdivide them, "on the application of any considerable portion of a State containing not less than a hundred thousand persons." 8. "Libels, if levelled against any officer whatsoever of the United States, shall be cognizable in the courts of the United States:" "they ought not to be left to the cold and reluctant protection of State courts." Finally: "But what avail laws which are not executed? Renegade aliens conduct more than one-half of the most incendiary presses in the United States; and yet, in open contempt and defiance of the laws, they are permitted to continue their destructive labors. Why are they not sent away? Are laws of this kind passed merely to excite odium, and remain a dead letter? Vigor in the executive is at least as necessary as in the legislative branch: if the president requires to be stimulated, those who can approach him ought to do it."

Here we have a complete apparatus of tyranny, such as a Jeffreys might have sketched for a Stuart. It justifies Jefferson's severest judgment concerning the spirit and tendency of this limited and unwise man; and it calls to mind that sentence hurled at Demosthenes by his rival in the presence of the people of Athens: "He who acts wickedly in private life cannot prove excellent in his public conduct." I do not know enough of the laws of our being to



explain the truth, but a truth it *is*, that the paramour of a Reynolds was never yet capable of founding a safe system for the guidance of a nation. Immoral men may be gifted and amiable, but they are never wise.

And now it fell to the lot of honest John Adams, by doing the noblest action of his life, to reduce Alexander Hamilton to something like his natural proportions, while dispelling his silly dream of leading an American army to conquest in South America, and picking up a French island or two on the way. We all know Mr. Adams's boisterous foibles. But if all the other actions of his life had been foolish, this one act, now to be related, would entitle him to a high place among the worthies of America.

Upon the return of Elbridge Gerry from France, October 1, 1798, he found himself, in the circles naturally frequented by a person of his character and services, the most odious of men. At Cambridge even his family had been subjected to outrage in his absence. Anonymous letters reached his young wife by "almost every post," attributing his prolonged stay in France to the cause of all others the most distressing to an honorable woman; and "on several occasions," as his biographer adds, "the morning sun shone upon a model of a guillotine, erected in the field before her window, smeared with blood, and having the effigy of a headless man." It was known that his house contained only women and children; but savage yells, and bonfires suddenly blazing under their windows, disturbed and terrified them at night. After leaving his despatches with the cabinet at Philadelphia, and visiting his home, Mr. Gerry drove out to Quincy, where, most fortunately, the president was passing his vacation, — far from a cabinet devoted to Hamilton and determined upon war. In long conferences, renewed from day to day, Mr. Gerry proved, to the perfect satisfaction of Mr. Adams, that the government and people of France desired peace with the United States, and would respond cordially to a re-opening of diplomatic relations. He showed to the president letters from Talleyrand, offering him, in the name of the Directory, a public reception; abandoning the demand for a loan and an apology for the president's speech; positively engaging to receive another American minister with all due respect; and declaring a willingness to enter into just commercial arrangements on the basis of conceding to the United States the neutrality they claimed. Mr. Gerry had something

better to show the president than promises. At Havre, as he was about to sail, he had received a copy of an order of the Directory to the French officer in command of the West India fleet, to restrain the lawless spoliation of American commerce by French privateers. He told the president, too, that the French, dazzled and inflated beyond measure by Bonaparte's victories, had treated other nations with far greater insolence than they had the United States. The government had sent off from Paris thirteen foreign ambassadors, and even gone to the length of imprisoning one, and confining another to his house under guard.

Mr. Adams, instructed and convinced by Mr. Gerry, had the great and rare courage to act upon his conviction. Against the opinion of his cabinet, contrary to the cry and expectation of his party, to the infinite disgust and cutting disappointment of Hamilton, as well as to his own speedy downfall and immortal glory, he re-opened diplomatic relations with France, which led to a peace that has lasted seventy-three years. It was his own act, and Elbridge Gerry alone shares with him the glory of it. Mr. Adams, in one of his public letters of a later day, tells the story of Mr. Gerry's appointment and success in a few lines: "I called the heads of departments together, and proposed Mr. Gerry. All the five voices were unanimously against him. Such inveterate prejudice shocked me. I said nothing, but was determined not to be the slave of it. I knew the man infinitely better than all of them. He was nominated and approved, and finally saved the peace of the nation; for he alone discovered and furnished the evidence that X, Y, and Z were employed by Talleyrand; and he alone brought home the direct, formal, and official assurances upon which the subsequent commission proceeded, and peace was made." February 17, 1799, the president, to the equal astonishment of Federalists and Republicans, nominated William Vans Murray plenipotentiary to the French Republic.

Hamilton had a prompt revenge, but it inured to the good of the country. The strange manner in which both the folly and the crimes of public men in the United States have issued in lasting public benefit, is an argument for Providence that sometimes staggers the staunchest unbeliever. Hamilton destroyed the Federalists, and Calhoun killed slavery. When the time came for choosing candidates for the presidency, Hamilton was resolved to push John Adams from his seat, though in doing so he prostrated his own party.

“For my individual part,” he wrote to Theodore Sedgwick, “my mind is made up. I will never more be responsible for Adams by my direct support, even though the consequence should be the election of Jefferson. If we must have an enemy at the head of the government, let it be one whom we can oppose, and for whom we are not responsible, who will not involve our party in the disgrace of his foolish and bad measures. Under Adams, as under Jefferson, the government will sink.”

A bungling business he made of it; but he had his way. His first thought was to lure General Washington from the retreat he so much loved, needed, and deserved; but when the letter of Gouverneur Morris, proposing this ungrateful scheme, reached Mount Vernon, Washington lay cold in death. Then Hamilton brought once more into play that baleful ingenuity of his which had misled him so often. He attempted a manœuvre which every competent corporal knows to be necessarily fatal,—a change of front under the enemy’s hottest fire. First by secret manipulations of legislatures, and afterwards by an open, printed appeal, signed by his name, he endeavored to bring C. C. Pinckney, the Federalist candidate for the vice-presidency, into the presidency over Mr. Adams. By thus rending his own party in twain, he made the victory easier to the Republicans; and perhaps it was he who made that victory theirs in 1800 instead of 1804.

Nor can we award him even the credit of submitting to the decision of the people, which is one of the two vital conditions of a republic’s existence; the other being a pure ballot-box. The election in New York went against him; i.e. the people elected a legislature pledged to choose Republican electors. He instantly wrote to Governor Jay, urging him to summon at once the *existing* legislature (whose time had still seven weeks to run), and get it to pass a law depriving the legislature of the power to elect electors, and devolving it upon the people by districts. This manœuvre would give the beaten Federalists a second chance. It would rob the Republicans of their victory. It would compel them to gird on their armor again, and descend a second time into the arena. It was losing the game, grabbing the stakes, and demanding another chance to win them, with points in favor of the grabber.

To a person unacquainted with Hamilton’s peculiar character, this advice to the governor seems simply base. But the error, like mil-

lions of other errors of our short-sighted race, was not half so much moral as mental. It was ignorance and incapacity rather than turpitude. He said to the governor, in substance: I own that this measure is not regular, nor delicate, nor, in ordinary circumstances, even decent; but "scruples of delicacy and propriety ought not to hinder the taking of a *legal* and *constitutional* step to prevent an atheist in religion and a fanatic in politics from getting possession of the helm of state." You don't know these Republicans as I do, he continued. The party is "a composition, indeed, of very incongruous materials, but all tending to mischief; some of them to the overthrow of the government by stripping it of its due energies, others of them to a revolution, after the manner of Bonaparte. I speak from indubitable facts, not from conjectures and inferences." Now, my dear sir, these people call to their aid "all the resources which vice can give:" can we, then, hope to succeed, we *virtuous*, if we confine ourselves "within all the ordinary forms of delicacy and decorum?" No, indeed. But, of course, we must "frankly avow" our object. You must tell the legislature that our purpose is to reverse the result of the late election, in order to prevent the general government from falling into hostile hands, and to save the "great cause of social order." To us, this long epistle to Mr. Jay reads more like mania than wickedness. This man had lived in New York twenty years without so much as learning the impossibility of its people being made to submit to an avowed outrage so gross! Governor Jay was at no loss to characterize the proposal aright. Instead of plunging the State into civil war by adopting the measure, he folded Hamilton's letter, and put it away among his most private papers, bearing this indorsement: "*Proposing a measure for party purposes which I think it would not become me to adopt.*"

Mr. Jefferson's attitude during this intensest of all known political struggles is an interesting study. The simplicity of his political system was such, that he could give a complete statement of it in a few lines; and it was so sound, that the general government, from 1789 to 1873, has worked well so far as it has conformed to it, and worked ill as often as it has departed from it. Jefferson was so **RIGHT**, that every honest patriotic man who has since gone to Washington after having learned his rudiments from Jefferson, and has had strength enough to vote up to the height of his convictions, has made a respectable public career, no matter how ordinary his endow-

ments; while every public man who has not accepted this simple clew to the labyrinth of public business has made a career which time and events will condemn, though he may have had the talents of a Webster or a Clay.

This is the Jeffersonian system in brief: "Let the general government be reduced to foreign concerns only, and let our affairs be disentangled from those of all other nations, except as to commerce, which the merchants will manage the better the more they are left free to manage for themselves, and our general government may be reduced to a very simple organization, and a very unexpensive one; a few plain duties to be performed by a few servants."

This was the basis. He explained himself more in detail to Elbridge Gerry, in January, 1799. He said he was in favor of fulfilling the Constitution in the sense in which it was originally interpreted by the men who drew it, and as it was accepted by the States upon their interpretation. He objected to every thing which tended to monarchy, or which even gave the government a monarchical air and tone. He claimed for the States every power not *expressly* yielded by the Constitution to the general government. He demanded that the three great departments of the government, Congress, the Executive, and the Judiciary, should each keep to its sphere, neither of them encroaching upon any of the others. He desired a government rigorously frugal and simple, and the application of all possible savings to the discharge of the public debt. In peace, no standing army, and only just navy enough to protect our coasts and harbors from ravage and depredation. Free-trade with all nations; political connection with none; little or no diplomatic establishment. Freedom of religion; perfect equality of sects before the law; freedom of the press; free criticism of government by everybody, whether just or unjust. Finally, in the great struggle which began with the dawn of human reason, and will end only when reason is supreme in human affairs, namely, the struggle between Science and Superstition, he was on the side of Science. Personally, he was in favor of "encouraging the progress of science in all its branches;" and he was opposed to "overawing the human mind by stories of raw-head and bloody bones," which made it distrustful of itself, and disposed to follow blindly the lead of others. The first object of his heart, he said, was his own country, — not France, not England, — and the one no more than the other, except:



as one might be more or less friendly to us than the other. The depredations of France upon our commerce were indeed "atrocious," but he believed that a mission sincerely disposed to peace would obtain retribution and honorable settlement. These were his principles, but he indulged no antipathy to those who differed from him. "I know too well," said he, "the texture of the human mind and the slipperiness of the human reason, to consider differences of opinion otherwise than differences of form and feature. Integrity of views, more than their soundness, is the basis of esteem."

Such is a brief outline of his opinions, political and other, in view of the fact well known, that he would again be the candidate of his party for the presidency in 1800.

The tranquil dignity of the candidate's demeanor was pleasing to witness. During 1798 and 1799 he devoted a great part of his time and strength to enlightening the public mind; employing for this purpose all that his party possessed of bright intelligence and practised ability. But when, in 1800, the contest lost the character of a conflict of ideas, and assumed that of a competition of persons, he ceased to write letters, withdrew to Monticello, and spent an unusually laborious summer in improving his nail-factory, burning bricks for his house, and superintending his farms; rarely going farther from home than the next village; never too busy to keep up his meteorological records, and look after the interests of the Philosophical Society.

Indeed, if we may judge from his letters, the more furiously the storm of politics raged about him, the more attentive he was to philosophy. It was in the very heat of the war frenzy of 1798 that he wrote his well-known letter to Mr. Nolan, asking information concerning those "large herds of horses in a wild state," which, he had been recently informed, were roaming "in the country west of the Mississippi." He entreated Mr. Nolan to be very particular and exact in detailing "the manners, habits, and laws of the horse's existence" in a state of nature. It was also during the very crisis of the French imbroglio, in February, 1799, that he penned his curious letter about the steam-engine; in which he expressed a timid hope, that perhaps the steam-engine, as now improved by Watt, might be available for pumping water to the tops of houses for family use. Every family, he said, has a kitchen fire; small, indeed, but sufficient for the purpose. To these years seems to



belong also his invention of the revolving chair, which the newspapers of that day used to style "Mr. Jefferson's whirligig chair," now a familiar object in all countries and most counting-rooms. The party papers of the time had their little joke even upon this innocent device; insisting that Mr. Jefferson invented it to facilitate **his looking all ways at once.**

## CHAPTER LIX.

### THE CAMPAIGN LIES OF 1800.

THAT product of the human intellect which we denominate the Campaign Lie, though it did not originate in the United States, has here attained a development unknown in other lands. It is the destiny of America to try all experiments and exhaust all follies. In the short space of seventy-seven years, we have exhausted the efficiency of falsehood uttered to keep a man out of office. The fact is not to our credit, indeed; for we must have lied to an immeasurable extent before the printed word of man, during six whole months of every fourth year, could have lost so much of its natural power to affect human belief. Still less is it for our good; since Campaign Truths, however important they may be, are equally ineffectual. Soon after the publication of a certain ponderous work, called the Life of Andrew Jackson, one of the original Jackson men of Pennsylvania met the author in the street, and said in substance, "I am astonished to find how little I knew of a man whose battles I fought for twelve years. I heard all those stories of his quarrels and violence; but I supposed, OF COURSE, they were Campaign Lies!"

Thomas Jefferson, who began so many things in the early career of the United States, was the first object upon whom the Campaign Liar tried his unpractised talents. The art, indeed, may be said to have been introduced in 1796 to prevent his election to the presidency; but it was in 1800 that it was clearly developed into a distinct species of falsehood. And it must be confessed, that, even amid the heat of the election of 1800, the Campaign Liar was hard put to it, and did not succeed in originating that variety and reckless extravagance of calumny which has crowned his efforts since. Jefferson's life presented to his view a most discouraging monotony of innocent and beneficial actions, — twenty-five years of laborious

and unrecompensed public service, relieved by the violin, science, invention, agriculture, the education of his nephews, and the love of his daughters. A life so exceptionally blameless did not give fair scope to talent; since a falsehood, to have its full and lasting effect, must contain a fraction of a grain of truth. Still, the Campaign Liar of 1800 did very well for a beginner.

He was able, of course, to prove that Mr. Jefferson "hated the Constitution," had hated it from the beginning, and was "pledged to subvert it." The noble Marcellus of New York (Hamilton apparently) writing in Noah Webster's new paper, the Commercial Advertiser, soared into prophecy, and was thus enabled to describe with precision the methods which Mr. Jefferson would employ in effecting his fell purpose. He would begin by turning every Federalist out of office, down to the remotest postmaster. Then he would "tumble the financial system of the country into ruin at one stroke;" which would of necessity stop all payments of interest on the public debt, and bring on "universal bankruptcy and beggary." Next he would dismantle the navy, and thus give such free course to privateering, that "*every* vessel which floated from our shores would be plundered or captured." And, since every source of revenue would be dried up, the government would no longer be able to pay the pensions of the scarred veterans of the Revolution, who would be seen "starving in the streets, or living on the cold and precarious supplies of charity." Soon the unpaid officers of the government would resign, and "counterfeiting would be practised with impunity." In short, good people, the election of Jefferson will be the signal for Pandora to open her box, and *empty* it upon your heads.

The Campaign Liar mounted the pulpit. In the guise of the Reverend Cotton Mather Smith of Connecticut, he stated that Mr. Jefferson had gained his estate by robbery and fraud,—yea, even by robbing a widow and fatherless children of ten thousand pounds, intrusted to him by the dead father's will. "All of this can be proved," said the Reverend Campaigner. Some of the falsehoods were curiously remote from the truth. "He despises mechanics," said a Philadelphia paragraphist of a man who doted on a well-skilled, conscientious workman. "He despises mechanics, and owns two hundred and fifty of them," remarked this writer. That Monticello swarmed with yellow Jeffersons was the natural conjecture

of a party who recognized as their chief the paramour of a Reynolds. "Mr. Jefferson's Congo Harem" was a party cry. There were allusions to a certain "Dusky Sally," otherwise Sally Henings, whose children were said to resemble the master of Monticello in their features and the color of their hair. In this particular Campaign Lie, there was just that fractional portion of truth which was necessary to preserve it fresh and vigorous to this day. There is even a respectable Madison Henings, now living in Ohio, who supposes that Thomas Jefferson was his father. Mr. Henings has been misinformed. The record of Mr. Jefferson's every day and hour, contained in his pocket memorandum books, compared with the record of his slaves' birth, proves the impossibility of his having been the father of Madison Henings. So I am informed by Mr. Randall, who examined the records in the possession of the family. The father of those children was a near relation of the Jeffersons, who need not be named.

Perhaps I may, in view of recent and threatened publications, copy a few words from Mr. Randall's interesting letter on this subject. They will be valued by those who believe that chastity in man is as precious a treasure as chastity in woman, and not less essential to the happiness, independence, and dignity of his existence:—

"Colonel Randolph (grandson of Mr. Jefferson) informed me (at Monticello) that there was not a shadow of suspicion that Mr. Jefferson, in this or any other instance, had any such intimacy with his female slaves. At the period when these children were born, Colonel Randolph had charge of Monticello. He gave all the general directions, and gave out all their clothes to the slaves. He said Sally Henings was treated and dressed just like the rest. He said Mr. Jefferson never locked the door of his room by day, and that he, Colonel Randolph, slept within sound of his breathing at night. He said he had never seen a motion or a look or a circumstance which led him to suspect, for an instant, that there was a particle more of familiarity between Mr. Jefferson and Sally Henings than between him and the most repulsive servant in the establishment, and that no person living at Monticello ever dreamed of such a thing. Colonel Randolph said that he had spent a good share of his life closely about Mr. Jefferson. — at home and on his journeys, in all sorts of circumstances, — and he believed him to be as chaste

and pure, "as immaculate a man as ever God created." Mr. Jefferson's eldest daughter, Mrs. Governor Randolph, took the Dusky Sally stories much to heart. But she spoke to her sons only once on the subject. Not long before her death, she called two of them to her, — the Colonel, and George Wythe Randolph. She asked the Colonel if he remembered when Henings (the slave who most resembled Mr. Jefferson) was born. He turned to the book containing the list of slaves, and found that he was born at the time supposed by Mrs. Randolph. She then directed her son's attention to the fact, that Mr. Jefferson and Sally Henings could not have met, were far distant from each other, for fifteen months prior to the birth. She bade her sons remember this fact, and always defend the character of their grandfather. It so happened, when I was examining an old account-book of Mr. Jefferson's, I came *pop* on the original entry of this slave's birth; and I was then able, from well-known circumstances, to prove the fifteen months' separation. . . . I could give fifty more facts, if there were any need of it, to show Mr. Jefferson's innocence of this and all similar offences against propriety."

So much for this poor Campaign Lie, which has been current in the world for seventy-four years, and will, doubtless, walk the earth as long as weak mortals need high examples of folly to keep them on endurable terms with themselves.

Religion, for the first and last time, was an important element in the political strife of 1800. There was not a pin to choose between the heterodoxy of the two candidates; and, indeed, Mr. Adams was sometimes, in his familiar letters, more pronounced in his dissent from established beliefs than Jefferson. Neither of these Christians perceived, as clearly as we now do, the absolute necessity to unreasoning men of that husk of fiction in which vital truth is usually enclosed; nor what a vast, indispensable service the Priest renders the ignorant man in supplying fictions for his acceptance less degrading than those which he could invent for himself. Mr. Adams, however, was by far the more impatient of the two with popular creeds, as he shows in many a comic outburst of robust and boisterous contempt. He protested his utter inability to comprehend that side of human nature which made people object to paying a pittance for his new navy-yards, and eager to throw away their money upon such struc-

tures as St. Paul's in London and St. Peter's at Rome. As for the doctrine of the Trinity, he greatly surpassed Jefferson in his aversion to it. He scolded Jefferson for bringing over European professors, because they were "all infected with Episcopal and Presbyterian creeds," and "all believed that that great Principle which has produced this boundless universe, — Newton's universe and Herschel's universe, — came down to this little ball, to be spit upon by Jews." Mr. Adams's opinion was, that "until this awful blasphemy was got rid of, there will never be any liberal science in this world."

And yet *he* escaped anathema. Mr. Jefferson, on the contrary, was denounced by the pious and moral Hamilton as "an atheist." The great preacher of that day in New York was Dr. John Mason, an ardent politician, as patriotic and well-intentioned a gentleman as then lived. He evolved from Jefferson's Notes on Virginia the appalling truth, that the Republican candidate for the presidency did not believe in a universal deluge! He sounded the alarm. A few weeks before the election, he published a pamphlet entitled *The Voice of Warning to Christians on the ensuing Election*; in which he reviewed the Notes, and inferred, from passages quoted, that the author was "a profane philosopher and an infidel." "Christians!" he exclaimed, "it is thus that a man, whom you are expected to elevate to the chief magistracy, insults yourselves and your Bible!" An interesting character was this Dr. Mason, if we may believe the anecdotes still told of him by old inhabitants of New York. What a scene must that have been when he paused, in the midst of one of his rousing Fast-day sermons, and, raising his eyes and hands to heaven, burst into impassioned supplication: "Send us, if Thou wilt, murrain upon our cattle, a famine upon our land, cleanness of teeth in our borders; send us pestilence to waste our cities; send us, if it please Thee, the sword to bathe itself in the blood of our sons; but spare us, Lord God Most Merciful, spare us that curse, — most dreadful of all curses, — an alliance with Napoleon Bonaparte!" An eye-witness reports that, as the preacher uttered these words with all the energy of frantic apprehension, the blood gushed from his nostrils. He put his handkerchief to his face, without knowing what he did, and, instantly resuming his gesture, held the bloody handkerchief aloft, as if it were the symbol of the horrors he foretold. To such a point, in those simple old days, could campaign falsehood madden able and good men!



The orthodox clergy were not averse then, it appears, to "politics in the pulpit." Our historical collections yield many proofs of it in the form of pamphlets and sermons of the year 1800. It cheers the mind of the inquirer, in his dusty rummaging, to measure the stride the public mind has taken in less than three-quarters of a century. "Hold!" cries one vigorous lay sermonizer (Claims of Thomas Jefferson to the Presidency examined at the Bar of Christianity), — "hold! The blameless deportment of this man has been the theme of encomium. He is chaste, temperate, hospitable, affectionate, and frank." BUT he is no Christian! He does not believe in the Deluge. He does not go to church. "Shall Thomas Jefferson," asks this writer, "who denies the truth of Christianity, and avows the pernicious folly of all religion, be your governor?"

One writer proves his case thus: 1, The French Revolution was a conspiracy to overthrow the Christian religion; 2, Thomas Jefferson avowed a cordial sympathy with the French Revolution; 3, Therefore Thomas Jefferson aims at the destruction of the Christian religion. To this reasoning facts were added. Mr. Jefferson, fearing to trust the post-office, had written a letter *in Latin* to an infidel author, approving his work, and urging him to print it. Then look at his friends! Are they not "deists, atheists, and infidels?" Did not General Dearborn, one of his active supporters, while traveling to Washington in a public stage, say, that "so long as our temples stood, we could not hope for good order or good government"? The same Dearborn, passing a church in Connecticut, pointed at it, and scornfully exclaimed, "Look at that painted nuisance!" But the most popular and often-repeated anecdote of this nature, which the contest elicited, was the following: "When the late Rev. Dr. John B. Smith resided in Virginia, the famous Mazzei happened one night to be his guest. Dr. Smith having, as usual, assembled his family for their evening devotions, the circumstance occasioned some discourse on religion, in which the Italian made no secret of his infidel principles. In the course of conversation, he remarked to Dr. Smith, 'Why, your great philosopher and statesman, Mr. Jefferson, is rather further gone in infidelity than I am;' and related, in confirmation, the following anecdote. That, as he was once riding with Mr. Jefferson, he expressed his 'surprise that the people of this country take no better care of their public buildings.' 'What buildings?' exclaimed Mr. Jefferson. 'Is that not a

church?' replied he, pointing to a decayed edifice. 'Yes,' answered Mr. Jefferson. 'I am astonished,' said the other, 'that they permit it to be in so ruinous a condition.' '*It is good enough,*' rejoined Mr. Jefferson, '*for him that was born in a manger!*' Such a contemptuous fling at the blessed Jesus could issue from the lips of no other than a deadly foe to his name and his cause."

This story had the greater effect from the constant repetition of the unlucky passage of Jefferson's letter to Mazzei upon the Samsons and Solomons who had gone over to the English side of American politics. Fifty versions of it could easily be collected, even at this late day, but the one just given appears to be the original. It is startling to discover, while turning over the campaign litter of 1800, that, in the height and hurly-burly of the strife, there was spread abroad, all over the land, a report of Mr. Jefferson's sudden death, which it required several days to correct, even in the Atlantic cities.

It was first printed in the Baltimore American. "I discharge my duty," said the gentleman who brought the news from Virginia, "in giving this information as I received it; but may the God who directed the pen and inspired the heart of the author of the Declaration of American Independence procrastinate, if but for a short time, so severe a punishment from a land which heretofore has received more than a common share of his blessings!"

It is not clear, upon the first view of the subject, why Jefferson should have been singled out for reprobation on account of a heterodoxy in which so many of the great among his compeers shared. He attributed it himself to the conspicuous part he had taken in the separation of Church and State in Virginia; a policy which the clergy opposed with vehemence in each State, until, in 1834, the divorce was complete and universal by the act of Massachusetts. Readers of Dr. Lyman Beecher's Autobiography remember how earnestly that genial hunter before the Lord fought the severance in Connecticut. Some of the clergy, Jefferson thought, cherished hopes of undoing the work done in Virginia and other States through Madison, Wythe, and himself. But, said he, "the returning good sense of our country threatens abortion to their hopes, and they believe that any portion of power confided to me will be exerted in opposition to their schemes. And they believe rightly; for I have sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man."

He avoided, on principle, that line of conduct, so familiar to public men of the fourth, fifth, and sixth rank, which Mark Twain has recently called "currying favor with the religious element." While he was most careful not to utter a word, in the hearing of young or unformed persons, even in his own family, calculated to disturb their faith, he was equally strenuous in maintaining his *right* to liberty both of thought and utterance. Thus, at a time when the word "Unitarian" was only less opprobrious than infidel, and he was a candidate for the presidency, he went to a church of that denomination at Philadelphia, in which, as he says, "Dr. Priestley officiated to numerous audiences." "I never will," he once wrote, "by any word or act, bow to the shrine of intolerance, or admit a right of inquiry into the religious opinions of others. On the contrary, we are bound, you, I, and every one, to make common cause, even with error itself, to maintain the common right of freedom of conscience. We ought, with one heart and one hand, to hew down the daring and dangerous efforts of those who would seduce the public opinion to substitute itself into that tyranny over religious faith which the laws have so justly abdicated. For this reason, were my opinions up to the standard of those who arrogate the right of questioning them, I would not countenance that arrogance by descending to an explanation."

It strengthened Jefferson's faith in republican institutions, that his countrymen rose superior to religious prejudices in 1800, and gave their votes very nearly as they would if the religious question had not been raised. Tradition reports, that, when the news of his election reached New England, some old ladies, in wild consternation, hung their Bibles down the well in the butter-cooler. But, in truth, the creed of Jefferson is, and long has been, the real creed of the people of the United States. They know in their hearts, whatever form of words they may habitually use, that Christianity is a *life*, not a belief; a principal of conduct, not a theory of the universe. "I am a Christian," wrote Jefferson, "in the only sense in which Jesus wished any one to be, — sincerely attached to his doctrines in preference to all others." One evening, in Washington, having, for a wonder, a little leisure, he took two cheap copies of the New Testament, procured for the purpose, and cut from them the words of Jesus, and such other passages of the evangelists as are in closest accord with them. These he pasted in a little book, and entitled it,

The Philosophy of Jesus extracted from the Text of the Evangelists. Two evenings were employed in this interesting work; and when it was done he contemplated it with rapturous satisfaction. The words of Jesus, he thought, were "as distinguishable from the matter in which they are imbedded as diamonds in dunghills. **A more precious morsel of ethics was never seen.**"

## CHAPTER LX.

### THE TIE BETWEEN JEFFERSON AND BURR.

THE peculiar result of the election of 1800 is familiar to most readers: Jefferson, 73; Burr, 73; Adams, 65; C. C. Pinckney, 64; Jay, 1. Again Hamilton's preposterous device of the electoral college brought trouble and peril upon the country; for the Federalists, as soon as the tie was known, made haste to fill up the measure of their errors by intriguing to defeat the will of the people, and make Burr president instead of Jefferson. I need not repeat the shameful story. For many days, during which the House of Representatives balloted twenty-nine times, the country was excited and alarmed; and nothing averted civil commotion but the wise and resolute conduct of the Republican candidates. At Albany, where Burr's duties as a member of the legislature of New York detained him during the crisis, an affair more interesting to him even than the presidential election was transpiring. Theodosia, his only daughter, the idol of his life, was married at Albany, February 2, 1800 (a week before the balloting began), to Joseph Alston of South Carolina. He performed but one act in connection with the struggle in the wilderness of Washington. He wrote a short, decisive note to a member of the House, repudiating the unworthy attempt about to be made to elevate him. His friends, he truly said, "would dishonor his views and insult his feelings by a suspicion that he would submit to be instrumental in counteracting the wishes and the expectations of the United States;" and he constituted the friend to whom he wrote his proxy to declare these sentiments if the occasion should require. Having despatched this letter, and being then at a distance of ten\* days' travel from the seat of government, he did nothing, and *could* do nothing, further.

\* "New York and Albany Mail Stage—

"Leaves New York every morning at six o'clock, lodges at Peekskill and Rhinebeck, and arrives in Albany on the third day. Fare of each passenger through, eight dollars; and

Jefferson's part was much more difficult. Besides that a great party looked to him as the repository of their rights, his own pride was interested in his not being made the victim of a corrupt intrigue. As the president of the Senate, he was in the nearest proximity to the scene of strife, liable to take fire from the passions that raged there. Seldom has a fallible man been placed in circumstances more trying to mind and nerve.

There were four evil courses possible to the Federalists; each of which Jefferson had considered, and was prepared for, before the balloting began.

1. They might elect Aaron Burr president, and himself vice-president. In that case, because the election would have been "agreeable to the Constitution," though "variant from the intentions of the people," his purpose was to submit without a word. "No man," he wrote a few weeks later, "would have submitted more cheerfully than myself, because I am sure the administration would have been Republican."

2. The Federalists could offer terms to Jefferson, and endeavor to extort valuable concessions from him. Upon this point, too, his mind was made up; and he met every approach of this nature by a declaration, in some form, that "he would not come into the presidency by capitulation." He has himself recorded several of these attempts at negotiation. "Coming out of the Senate one day," he writes, "I found Gouverneur Morris on the steps. He stopped me, and began a conversation on the strange and portentous state of things then existing, and went on to observe, that the reasons why the minority of States was so opposed to my being elected were, that they apprehended, that, 1, I would turn all Federalists out of office; 2, Put down the navy; 3, Wipe off the public debt. That I need only to declare, or authorize my friends to declare, that I would not take these steps, and instantly the event of the election would be

1 cent per mile way passengers. For seats apply to William Vandervoort, No. 48, corner of Courtland and Greenwich Streets, New York, and of T. Wetmore, Albany."—*New York Evening Post*, Sept. 11, 1804.

"The New York and Albany Mail Stage on the West Side of the River —

"Will leave New York every Sunday, Tuesday, and Thursday, at two o'clock in the afternoon, lodges at Hackensack, Goshen, and Kingston, and arrives at Albany the third day. Fare of each passenger through, eight dollars. Way passengers, *five cents per mile*. For seats apply to John Oakley, No. 75 Vesey Street, opposite the Bear Market, New York.

"Extra carriages and horses may be had at any time by applying at Hoboken or Hackensack."—*New York Evening Post*, Nov. 6, 1804.



fixed. I told him that I should leave the world to judge of the course I meant to pursue by that which I had pursued hitherto, believing it to be my duty to be passive and silent during the present scene; that I should certainly make no terms; should never go into the office of president by capitulation, nor with my hands tied by any conditions which should hinder me from pursuing the measures which I should deem for the public good." Other interviewers, some of whom held the election in their hands, had no better success.

3. The balloting could have been continued day after day, until the end of Mr. Adams's term, two weeks distant; when, there being no president and no vice-president, anarchy and chaos might have been expected. For this emergency, also, Jefferson had provided a plan, which, he always thought, would have prevented serious trouble. The Republican members of Congress, in conjunction with the president and vice-president elect, intended to meet, and issue a call to the whole country for a convention to revise the Constitution, and provide a suitable, orderly remedy for the lapse of government. This convention, as Jefferson remarked to Dr. Priestley, "would have been on the ground in eight weeks, would have repaired the Constitution where it was defective, and wound it up again."

4. But unhappily there was a fourth expedient contemplated, which was fraught with peril to the country's peace. It was proposed to pass a law devolving the government upon the chairman of the Senate (to be elected by the Senate), in case the office of president should become vacant. At once he declared, in conversations meant to be reported, that such an attempt would be resisted by force. The very day, said he, that such an act is passed, the Middle States (i.e. Virginia and Pennsylvania) will arm. And when we know that James Monroe was the governor of Virginia, and Thomas McKean governor of Pennsylvania, we may be sure that this was no empty threat. Not for a day, he added, will such a usurpation be submitted to. "I was decidedly with those," he explained a few weeks after, "who were determined not to permit it. Because, that precedent once set, it would be artificially reproduced, and would soon end in a dictator."

But he was not wanting in efforts to prevent a calamity so dire. There was one man who could have instantly frustrated the scheme by his veto,—Mr. Adams, the president, with whom Jefferson, with that indomitable good-nature and inexhaustible tolerance of

his, had maintained friendly relations through all the mad strife of the last years. Upon reaching the seat of government at the beginning of this session, he had hesitated before calling at the presidential mansion. Knowing the sensitive self-love of his old friend, he was afraid that if he called too soon Mr. Adams would think he meant to exult over him, and that if he delayed his visit beyond the usual period it would be regarded as a slight. He called, however, at length, and found the defeated man alone. One glance at the president satisfied him that he had come too soon. Mr. Adams, evidently unreconciled to the issue of the election, hurried forward in a manner which betrayed extreme agitation; and, without sitting down or asking his visitor to sit, said, in a tremulous voice, "You have turned me out; you have turned me out." Mr. Jefferson, in that suave and gentle tone which fell like balm upon the sore and troubled minds of men, said, "I have not turned you out, Mr. Adams; and I am glad to avail myself of this occasion to show that I have not, and to explain my views on this subject. In consequence of a division of opinion existing among our fellow-citizens, as to the proper constitution of our political institutions, and of the wisdom and propriety of certain measures which have been adopted by our government, that portion of our citizens who approved and advocated one class of these opinions and measures selected you as their candidate for the presidency, and their opponents selected me. If you or myself had not been in existence, or for any other cause had not been selected, other persons would have been selected in our places; and thus the contest would have been carried on, and with the same result, except that the party which supported you would have been defeated by a greater majority, as it was known, that, but for you, your party would have carried their unpopular measures much farther than they did. You will see from this that the late contest was not one of a personal character between John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, but between the advocates and opponents of certain political opinions and measures, and, therefore, should produce no unkind feelings between the two men who happened to be placed at the head of the two parties."

These words did much to restore Mr. Adams to composure for the moment. Both gentlemen took seats, when they conversed in their usual friendly way upon the topics of the hour. We have the testimony of both of them to the correctness of this report. Mr

Jefferson has recorded the interview; and once, when his friend, Edward Coles, repeated to Mr. Adams the story as he had heard it at Monticello, Mr. Adams said to him, "If you had been present and witnessed the scene you could not have given a more accurate account of what passed." The fiery ex-president added, "Mr. Jefferson said I was sensitive, did he? Well, I *was* sensitive. But I never before heard that Mr. Jefferson had given a second thought as to the proper time for making the visit."

Being thus on the old terms with his old friend, Jefferson visited him at this threatening crisis to call his attention to the most obvious means of averting the danger. He has recorded the failure of his attempt: "We conversed on the state of things. I observed to him that a very dangerous experiment was then in contemplation, to defeat the presidential election by an act of Congress declaring the right of the Senate to name a president of the Senate, to devolve on him the government during any interregnum; that such a measure would probably produce resistance by force, and incalculable consequences, which it would be in his power to prevent by negating such an act. He seemed to think such an act justifiable, and observed, it was in my power to fix the election by a word in an instant, by declaring I would not turn out the Federal officers, nor put down the navy, nor sponge out the national debt. Finding his mind made up as to the usurpation of the government by the president of the Senate, I urged it no further, and observed, the world must judge as to myself of the future by the past, and turned the conversation to something else."

Happily the Federalists, admonished by their fears, recovered in time the use of their reason. Hamilton, from the first, opposed the attempt to give the first place to his vigilant New York rival; but this he did merely on the ground that Burr was, if possible, a more terrific being even than Jefferson. Gouverneur Morris, who was a gentleman, as well as a man of *real* ability, placed his own opposition to the nefarious scheme on the right basis: "Since it was evidently the intention of our fellow-citizens to make Mr. Jefferson their president, it seems proper to fulfil that intention." After seven days of balloting, the House of Representatives elected Thomas Jefferson president, and Aaron Burr vice-president.

Thus ended the rule of the Federalists, the first party that ever governed the United States. Never was the downfall of a party

more just or more necessary. Its entire policy was tainted by the unbelief of its leaders in the central principle of the Republican system. Nearly every important thing they did was either wrong in itself, or done for a wrong reason. The only president they ever elected, Mr. Adams, was as interesting and picturesque a character as Dr. Samuel Johnson, and nearly as unfit as Johnson for an executive post; while Hamilton, in whom they put their chief trust, can be acquitted of depravity only by conceding his ignorance and incapacity. Alexander Hamilton had no message for the people of the United States. His "mission," if he had one, was not here. His mind was not continental. He did not know his ground. And like many other unwise, well-intentioned men, he brought opprobrium even upon that portion of truth which he had been able to grasp. Probably there is an ingredient of truth in every heartfelt conviction of an honest mind; and no one can read Hamilton's confidential letters without feeling his sincerity and devotion.

The basis of truth in the convictions of Hamilton and his circle was, that the Intelligence and Virtue of a country *must*, in some way, be got to the top of things, and govern. Jefferson heartily agreed with them in this opinion; and felt it the more deeply, from having discovered that the political system of the Old World had placed a fool on every throne, and hedged him about with a dissolute and ignorant class. Hamilton always assumed that intelligence and virtue of the requisite degree are only to be found among people who possess a certain amount of property; equivalent, say, to a thousand Spanish dollars. Jefferson was for bringing *the whole* of the intelligence and virtue of a community into play by the subsoil plough of general suffrags; recognizing the natural right of every mature person to a voice in the government of his country. If Hamilton had been a wise and able man, he would have had an important part to play in anticipating and warding off the only real danger that has ever menaced republican institutions in America,—ignorant suffrage. Upon *him* would have devolved the congenial task of convincing the American people, seventy years before Tweed and the Carpet-bagger convinced them, that a man of this age who cannot read is not a mature person, but is a child, who *cannot* perform the act of the mind called voting. His had been the task of establishing the truth, that a system of suffrage which admits the most benighted men, and excludes the most enlightened women, is

one which will not conduct this republic honorably or safely down the centuries. He might have helped us in this direction. His "thousand Spanish dollars" belonged to another system, utterly unsuited to this hemisphere; and he did nothing for the United States which time has not undone, or is not about to undo.

He threatened, it seems, to "beat down," the incoming administration; and, indeed, I observe, in the newspapers of the time, that he continued, as long as he lived, to fulminate sonorous inanity against Mr. Jefferson's acts and utterances. But he was never again a power in the politics of America. He bought a few acres of land near the Hudson, not far from what exultant land-agents now speak of as One hundred and Fiftieth Street; where the thirteen trees, which he planted in commemoration of the original thirteen States, are now in a condition of umbrageous luxuriance, pleasing to behold even in a photograph. There he strove, during the pleasant summer weeks, to forget politics in cultivating his garden; and there he awaited the inevitable hour when Jefferson's fanatical course should issue in that anarchy which he had so often foretold, and from which *his* puissant arm would deliver a misguided people.

## CHAPTER LXI.

### THE FIRST REPUBLICAN ADMINISTRATION.

PEACE now fell upon the anxious minds of men. A vast content spread itself everywhere as the news of Jefferson's election was slowly borne in creaking vehicles over the wide, weltering mud of February and March. The tidings from abroad, too, were more and more re-assuring: a convention with Bonaparte was as good as concluded; the Continent was pacificated by being terrified or subdued; and there were good hopes of that peace between Great Britain and France which was to follow before Jefferson had sent in his first message. Bonaparte, so terrible to Europe and to Federalists, seems always, if we may judge from his correspondence, to have cast friendly eyes across the Atlantic. In 1800, it is true, he ordered Fouché to notify "M. Payne," that the police was aware of his ill-conduct, and that, on the first complaint against him, he would be *renvoyé en Amérique, sa patrie*; but in 1801, about the time of Jefferson's inauguration, he assigned to Robert Fulton ten thousand francs for the completion of his experiment with the Nautilus at Brest. Fortunate Jefferson! For the first time in eight years, an American administration could look abroad over the ocean without shame and without fear. Peace at home, peace abroad, safety on the sea!

It becomes a conqueror to conciliate. Only gentle and benevolent feelings occupied the benign soul of Jefferson at this trying period. Those who look over his correspondence of the early weeks of 1801 remark again what a precious, tranquillizing resource he had in nature, and in those "trivial fond records" that employ the naturalist's pen. His letters to philosophical friends, at the time when misguided men were intriguing to rob his country of its right to elect a chief magistrate, were more frequent and more interesting than usual. The bones of the mammoth, the effects of cold on human happiness,



the power of the moon over the weather, the temperature of moonbeams, the question of the turkey's native land, the peculiar rainbows seen from Monticello, and the nature of the circles round the moon, were subjects which had power to lure him from the contemplation of the pitiful strifes around him. Nor did he forget his precious collections of Indian words. He tells one correspondent that he possesses already thirty vocabularies, and that he has it "much at heart to make as extensive a collection as possible of Indian tongues;" wondering to find the different languages so radically different. When, at last, the political struggle was at an end, his first and only thought was to conciliate. He knew the suicidal character of the error which the Federalists had committed; and he was glad of it, because it made his task of restoring parties to good humor so much easier. "Weeks of ill-judged conduct here," he wrote to a friend a few days after the election in the House, "have strengthened us more than years of prudent and conciliatory administration could have done. If we can once more get social intercourse restored to its pristine harmony, I shall believe we have not lived in vain." The leaders of the Federalists, he supposed, were "incorrigible:" they would, doubtless, continue to oppose and denounce; but he hoped to convince the mass of their followers that the accession of the Republican party to power would not reverse all the beneficent laws of nature.

If there is one thing upon which the Tories of America and Great Britain plume themselves more than another, it is their superior breeding, their finer sense of what is due from one person to another in trying circumstances. The public has been frequently informed, that, when the Federalists fell from power in 1801, the "age of politeness passed away." The late Mr. Peter Parley Goodrich lamented the decline of "the good old country custom," of youngsters giving respectful salutation to their elders in passing. It was at this period, he tells us, that the well-executed bow "subsided, first, into a vulgar nod, half ashamed and half impudent, and then, like the pendulum of a dying clock, totally ceased." When Jefferson came in, he adds, rudeness and irreverence were deemed the true mode for democrats; a statement which he illustrates by one of his entertaining anecdotes. "How are you priest?" said a rough fellow to a clergyman. "How are you, democrat?" was the clergyman's retort. "How do you know I am a democrat?" asked the man. "How do

you know I am a priest?" said the clergyman. "I know you to be a priest by your dress." "I know you to be a democrat by your address," said the parson.

This anecdote, Mr. Goodrich assures us, in his humorous manner, is "strictly *historical*." I am afraid it is. And I fear that much of the superior breeding of the gentlemen of the old school, of which we are so frequently reminded, was a thing of bows and observances; which expressed the homage claimed by rank, instead of the respectful and friendly consideration due from man to man.

In taking leave of power in 1801, the "gentlemen's party" revealed the innate vulgarity of the Tory soul. When I say vulgarity, I mean *commonness*, the absence of superiority, which is the precise signification of the word. Congress had acted upon Hamilton's suggestion of dividing the country into judicial districts, with a permanent United States court in each; but they preserved only the shadow of his perfect apparatus of tyranny, — twenty-four district courts in all, with powers not excessive. But when the fangs of a serpent have been extracted, the creature, in its writhing impotence, retains its power to disgust. This increase of the judiciary was believed to be only a device for providing elevated and comfortable places for Federalists, from the vantage-ground of which they could assail with more effect the Republican administration. The measure was not, in itself, a lofty style of politics; but the manner in which the scheme was carried out bears the unquestionable stamp of — commonness.

Mr. Adams's last day arrived. This odious judiciary law had been passed three weeks before; but, owing to the delay of the Senate to act upon the nominations, the judges were still uncommissioned. The gentlemen's party had not the decency to leave so much as *one* of these valuable life-appointments to the incoming administration; nor any other vacancy whatever, of which tidings reached the seat of government in time. Nominations were sent to the Senate as late as nine o'clock in the evening of the 3d of March; and Judge Marshall, the acting secretary of state, was in his office at midnight, still signing commissions for men through whom another administration was to act. But the secretary and his busy clerks, precisely upon the stroke of twelve, were startled by an apparition. It was the bodily presence of Mr. Levi Lincoln of Massachusetts, whom the president elect had chosen for the office of attorney gen-

eral. A conversation ensued between these two gentlemen, which has been recently reported for us by Mr. Jefferson's great-granddaughter: \* —

LINCOLN. I have been ordered by Mr. Jefferson to take possession of this office and its papers.

MARSHALL. Why, Mr. Jefferson has not yet qualified.

LINCOLN. Mr. Jefferson considers himself in the light of an executor, bound to take charge of the papers of the government until he is duly qualified.

MARSHALL (*taking out his watch*). But it is not yet twelve o'clock.

LINCOLN (*taking a watch from his pocket and showing it*). This is the president's watch, and rules the hour.

Judge Marshall felt that Mr. Lincoln was master of the situation; and, casting a rueful look upon the unsigned commissions spread upon the table, he left his midnight visitor in possession. Relating the scene in after-years, when the Federalists had recovered a portion of their good humor, he used to say, laughing, that he had been allowed to pick up nothing but his hat.

While these events were transpiring, Mr. Adams was preparing for that precipitate flight from the capital which gave the last humiliation to his party. He had not the courtesy to stay in Washington for a few hours, and give the *éclat* of his presence to the inauguration of his successor. Tradition reports that he ordered his carriage to be at the door of the White House at midnight; and we know, that, before the dawn of the 4th of March, he had left Washington forever.

That day was celebrated throughout the United States like another 4th of July. Soldiers paraded, bells rang, orations were delivered, the Declaration of Independence was read, and in some of the Republican newspapers it was printed at length. In most towns of any importance a dinner was eaten in honor of the day, the toasts of which figured in the papers, duly numbered, and the precise number of cheers stated which each called forth. Sixteen was evidently considered the proper number for the president. In

\* Domestic Life of Thomas Jefferson, p. 308.

Some instances, if we may believe the party-press, the Federalists paraded their disgust. No one can tell us now whether the great bell of Christ Church in Philadelphia really did "toll all day," when the news of Jefferson's election reached the city; nor whether, on the 4th of March, a ship-owner, on going to the wharf and finding his vessel dressed with flags, flew into a passion, and swore he would sell out his share in her if the flags were not taken in. Nothing is too absurd to be believed of human prejudice.

Of the ceremonies at Washington the records of the time give us the most meagre accounts. Boswell, the father of interviewing, had no representative in America then; and journalism was content to print little more than the inaugural address. It is only from the accidental presence of an English traveller that we know in what manner Mr. Jefferson was conveyed to the Capitol that morning. He had no establishment in Washington. "Jack Eppes," his son-in-law, was completing somewhere in Virginia the purchase of four coach-horses, — price, \$1,600, — with which the president elect hoped to contend triumphantly with the yellow mud of Washington. But, as neither horses nor coach had yet arrived, he went to the Capitol in his usual way. "His dress," as our traveller, John Davis, informs us, "was of plain cloth, and he rode on horseback to the Capitol without a single guard or even servant in his train, dismounted without assistance, and hitched the bridle of his horse to the palisades." In composing the inaugural address (fitter to be read on the Fourth of July than the Declaration of Independence), he evidently put his heart and strength into the passages which called upon estranged partisans to be fellow-citizens once more: —

"Every difference of opinion is not a difference of principle. We have called by different names brethren of the same principle. We are all Republicans: we are all Federalists. If there be any among us who would wish to dissolve this Union, or to change its republican form, let them stand undisturbed as monuments of the safety with which error of opinion may be tolerated where reason is left free to combat it. I know, indeed, that some honest men fear that a republican government cannot be strong, — that this government is not strong enough. But would the honest patriot, in the full tide of successful experiment, abandon a government

which has so far kept us free and firm, on the theoretic and visionary fear that this government, the world's best hope, may by possibility want energy to preserve itself? I trust not. I believe this, on the contrary, the strongest on earth. I believe it the only one where every man, at the call of the laws, would fly to the standard of the law, and would meet invasions of the public order as his own personal concern."

In 1801 this was theory. In 1861 it was fact.

Happy, indeed, was the change which that day came over the aspect of American politics. No longer was the spectacle exhibited of the government pulling one way, and the people another. The people of the United States ruled the United States; and they were served by men who owned their rightful mastery. That element which resisted the Stamp Act, and declared independence, was uppermost again. "Old Coke" and Algernon Sidney were in the ascendent. The hard hand that held the plough, the thick muscle that wielded the hammer, the pioneer out on the deadly border-line between savage and civilized man, and all the mighty host of toiling men, gained something of dignity and self-esteem by the change. The old Whig chiefs, who for two or three years past had been avoided, reviled, cut, by their juniors and inferiors, could look up again, and exchange glad salutations. The old men of the ante-Revolution time were coming into vogue once more, and Jefferson used all the prestige of his office in their behalf.

A graceful act of manly homage (like king Hal's greeting to "old Sir Thomas Erpingham" on the morning of Agincourt\*) was that letter which President Jefferson, amid the hurry and distraction of his first days of power, found time to write to Samuel Adams, then verging upon fourscore, past service, but not past love and veneration. It was so good and gentleman-like in Jefferson to *think* of the old hero at such a time; and it was becoming in Virginia thus again, as in the great years preceding the Revolution, to greet congenial Massachusetts. And how gracefully the president acquitted himself: "I addressed a letter to you, my very dear and ancient friend, on the 4th of March; not, indeed, to you by name, but through the medium of some of my fellow-citizens, whom occa

\* Henry V., act iv. scene 1.



sion called on me to address. In meditating the matter of that address, I often asked myself, 'Is this exactly in the spirit of the patriarch, Samuel Adams? Is it as *he* would express it? Will he approve of it?' I have felt a great deal for our country in the times we have seen, but individually for no one so much as yourself. When I have been told that you were avoided, insulted, frowned upon, I could but ejaculate, 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do!' I confess I felt an indignation for you which for myself I have been able, under every trial, to keep entirely passive. However, the storm is over, and we are in port. The ship was not rigged for the service she was put on. We will show the smoothness of her motions on her Republican tack." And he goes on to tell the old man how intent he is upon restoring harmony in the country, — an object to which he is ready to "sacrifice every thing but principle." "How much I lament," concluded the president, "that time has deprived me of your aid. It would have been a day of glory which should have called you to the first office of the administration. But give us your counsel, my friend, and give us your blessing!" We can imagine the radiant countenance of this venerable man, so august in his poverty and isolation, as he held this letter in his palsied hand, and slowly gathered its contents.

Dr. Priestley, too, who had been an object of envenomed attack, and menaced with expulsion under the Alien Law, received cordial recognition, and a warm invitation to visit the seat of government. "I should claim the right to lodge you," said the president, "should you make such an excursion." He evidently felt it a public duty to atone, in some degree, for the inhospitality with which the United States had appeared to treat the first man eminent in original science who ever emigrated to the western continent. "It is with heartfelt satisfaction," he wrote to him, "that in the first moments of my public action I can hail you with welcome to our land, tender to you the homage of its respect and esteem, cover you under the protection of those laws which were made for the good and wise like you, and disdain the legitimacy of that libel on legislation, which, under the form of a law, was for some time placed among them."

Before Dr. Priestley had the pleasure of reading these lines, he had enjoyed the greater one of knowing, that, among President Jefferson's first acts, was the pardoning of every man in the country



who was in prison under the Sedition Law. Jefferson used to say that he considered that law "a nullity as absolute and palpable as if Congress had ordered us to fall down and worship a golden image." The victims of the Alien Law were beyond his reach; but some of them, who could be fitly consoled by epistolary notice, Kosciuszko, Volney, and others, received friendly letters from the president.

A gallant, high-bred act it was in Jefferson not to shrink from the odium of recognizing the claim which Thomas Paine had to the regards of a Republican president. The ocean, for some years past, had not been a safe highway for a man whom both belligerents looked upon as an enemy; and Paine had, in consequence, expressed a wish for a passage home in a naval vessel. The first national ship that sailed for France after Mr. Jefferson's inauguration carried a letter from the president to Mr. Paine, offering him a passage in that vessel on its return. "I am in hopes," he wrote, "that you will find us returned generally to sentiments worthy of former times. In these it will be your glory to have steadily labored, and with as much effect as any man living." This must have been comforting to a man who, having been first driven from England, then threatened with expulsion from France, and warned by the Sedition Law from entering the United States, might have been truly described, before the 4th of March, 1801, as "the man without a country." Enriched though he had been by the gratitude of America, he had been living in Paris for some time past in poverty and squalor, his American property being little productive in the absence of the owner. Mr. Jefferson's letter found him the occupant of "a little dirty room, containing a small wooden table and two chairs." An old English friend, who visited him not long after he had received it, described Paine's abode, which he had much trouble to find, as being the dirtiest apartment he ever sat down in. "The chimney-hearth was a heap of dirt," he adds: "there was not a speck of cleanliness to be seen. Three shelves were filled with pasteboard boxes, each labelled after the manner of a minister of foreign affairs, — *Correspondance Britannique, Française*, etc. In one corner of the room stood several huge bars of iron, curiously shaped, and two large trunks; opposite the fireplace, a board covered with pamphlets and journals, having more the appearance of a dresser in a scullery than a sideboard."

The occupant of this doleful room, then sixty-five years of age, soon came down stairs dressed in a long flannel gown, and wearing in his haggard face an expression of the deepest melancholy. His conversation showed that he was in full sympathy with the little band of Frenchmen whom Bonaparte had not dazzled out of their senses. He had dared even to translate and print Jefferson's Inaugural Address, "by way of contrast," as he said, "with the government of the First Consul." But he had lost all hope of France. "This is not a country," he said, "for an honest man to live in: they do not understand any thing at all of the principles of free government, and the best way is to leave them to themselves. You see, they have conquered all Europe, only to make it more miserable than it was before. Republic! Do you call *this* a republic? Why, they are worse off than the slaves at Constantinople; for there they expect to be bashaws in heaven by submitting to be slaves here below. But here they believe neither in heaven nor hell, and yet are slaves by choice! I know of no republic in the world except America, which is the only country for such men as you and me. I have done with Europe and its slavish politics." He gave his visitor Mr. Jefferson's letter to read, and said he meant soon to avail himself of its offer. "It would be a curious circumstance," he added, laughing, "if I should hereafter be sent as secretary of legation to the English Court which outlawed me. What a hubbub it would create at the king's levee to see Tom Paine presented by the American ambassador! All the bishops and women would faint away." His guest frankly told him that the course of events had caused him to change his principles. Paine's answer was, "You certainly have the right to do so, but you cannot alter the nature of things. The French have alarmed all honest men; but, still, truth is truth."

Poor Paine! His errors were, for the most part, those of his age; and they were aggravated by his circumstances, his defective education, and the ardor of his temperament. But his merits, which were real and not small, were peculiarly his own. He loved the truth for its own sake; and he stood by what he conceived to be the truth when all the world around him reviled it. That hasty pamphlet of his which he named *The Age of Reason*, written to alleviate the tedium of his Paris prison, differs from other deistical works only in being bolder and honester. It contains not a position which Frank-

in, John Adams, Jefferson, and Theodore Parker would have dissented from; and, doubtless, he spoke the truth when he declared that his main purpose in writing it was to "inspire mankind with a more exalted idea of the Supreme Architect of the Universe." I think his judgment must have been impaired before he could have consented to publish so inadequate a performance. In a remarkably convivial age, he sang a very good song, and often favored a jovial company, after dinner, with ditties of his own composition. This ever-welcome talent, joined to the vivacity of mind which naturally expends itself in agreeable conversation, made him in his best days the delight of his circle, and lured him, perhaps, into habits that prevented his ripening into happiness and wisdom; for no man can attain welfare who does not obey the physical laws of his being. It becomes us, however, to deal charitably with the faults of a benefactor who wrote *The Crisis* and *Common Sense*, who conceived the planing-machine and the iron bridge. A glorious monument in his honor swells aloft in many of our great towns. The principle of his arch now sustains the marvellous railroad depots that half abolish the distinction between in doors and out.

Nearly every other man whom Jefferson singled out for distinction had suffered, in some special manner, during the recent contests. Madison, after bearing the brunt of many a battle in the House of Representatives, retired at last, almost despairing of the republic, and went home to make a new stand in the legislature of Virginia. His father, too, far advanced in years, needed his constant aid in the management of an extensive estate that only a master's eye could render profitable. Now he was coming back to the seat of government as secretary of state! The declining strength of his father warned him not to leave his home for the inauguration, and the old man died a few days after. The news of Mr. Madison's nomination to the cabinet, and that of his father's death, reached the public at the same time.

This is an interesting sentence in the will of Thomas Jefferson especially to those who know something of the friendship which subsisted between the illustrious democrat and the greatest of his disciples:—

"I give to my old friend, James Madison of Montpelier, my gold-mounted walking-staff of animal horn, as a token of the cordial and

affectionate friendship, which, for nearly now an half-century, has united us in the same principles and pursuits of what we have deemed for the greatest good of our country."

This passage was written in March, 1826, a few months before the death of the testator. The friendship of which it speaks was the controlling influence in the public career of Mr. Madison, and an event of the greatest importance in that of Mr. Jefferson. It made Madison president, and secured to Jefferson the successor best fitted of all living men to continue the Jeffersonian system.

James Madison, born in Virginia in 1751, was the son of James Madison, a wealthy tobacco-planter, a descendant from John Madison, an English gentleman who came to Virginia about the year 1650. The eldest son of a thriving planter, he received an education remarkable for its extent and thoroughness. In those days it was customary for the parish clergyman of Virginia to prepare pupils for college. James Madison had this advantage, and at the age of eighteen went to Princeton College in New Jersey, from which he graduated after a residence of only two years. He continued, however, to reside at Princeton for another year, during which he pursued his studies as a kind of private pupil of the president. He committed at this period an error, from the effects of which he never wholly recovered during all his long life of eighty-five years. Having an insatiable thirst for knowledge, he allowed himself but three hours' sleep, and devoted almost all the rest of the day to study; and even when warned of the folly of this course by the failure of his health, he continued to over-exert himself, although in a less degree.

In the year 1772, when he was twenty-one years of age, he returned to his native State, and there began the study of the law; which he pursued with the same zeal and devotion, without discontinuing his general studies. His biographer tells us that his attention was drawn powerfully at this time to the study of theology, which he continued to investigate until he had satisfied himself respecting its nature and its claims.

The Revolutionary War was impending. Among the subjects of agitation then in Virginia, was the connection between Church and State, which existed in Virginia as completely as in the mother country; so that every denomination except one labored under obvious and serious disadvantages. James Madison, as we have seen,

was among the young men who favored the dissolution of this unnatural tie, and on this issue was elected, in the spring of 1776, a member of the Virginia legislature. Almost the only knowledge we have of his early parliamentary career is derived from an interesting passage in the autobiography of Mr. Jefferson.

“Mr. Madison,” he says, “came into the House in 1776, a new member and young; which circumstances, concurring with his extreme modesty, prevented his venturing himself in debate before his removal to the Council of State in November, 1777. From thence he went to Congress, then consisting of a few members. Trained in in three successive schools, he acquired a habit of self-possession which placed at ready command the rich resources of his luminous and discriminating mind and of his extensive information, and rendered him the first of every assembly afterwards of which he became a member. Never wandering from his subject into vain declamation, but pursuing it closely, in language pure, classical, and copious, soothing always the feelings of his adversaries by civilities and softness of expression, he rose to the eminent station which he held in the great national convention of 1787; and in that of Virginia which followed, he sustained the new constitution in all its parts, bearing off the palm against the logic of George Mason and the fervid declamation of Mr. Henry. With these consummate powers were united a pure and spotless virtue, which calumny in vain attempted to sully.”

This is a noble tribute. So glowing is it, that many persons have thought it exaggerated, and attributed it to the affectionate regard which a good master naturally feels for the chief of his disciples; but this is not the case. I have been assured by the Hon. Nicholas P. Trist, the son-in-law and executor of Mr. Jefferson, that there was no man to whose understanding Mr. Jefferson more sincerely *deferred*, or for whose character he had so complete a respect, as for that of James Madison.

What a change, too, for Albert Gallatin to find himself at the head of the treasury department! We can estimate his services to Republicanism by the singular intensity of the hatred borne him by the Federalists. From 1793, when Pennsylvania elected him to represent her in the Senate of the United States, their aversion, as much as his own merit, had kept his name conspicuous.



Abraham Albert Alphonse de Gallatin was born at Geneva, in Switzerland, in 1761. In the letters of Voltaire, who lived two or three miles from Geneva, there are many allusions to the family of Gallatin, which was one of the most ancient and respectable of Switzerland; and I presume Albert Gallatin must have often seen Voltaire in his boyhood, and perhaps conversed with him. Among the connections of the family was the celebrated Madame de Staël. Graduating from the University of Geneva in 1779, he refused the brilliant offer of a lieutenant-colonelcy in a German regiment, for the express purpose of coming over to America, as Lafayette had done a year or two before, and joining the patriot army under General Washington.

It was in the spring of 1780, that the vessel in which he sailed to America was obliged to put into a harbor on the coast of Massachusetts, and the young enthusiast came on shore. On landing he went to the nearest tavern; and there, to his equal astonishment and delight, he met with some Swiss lately from Geneva, who were acquainted with his family. They were on their way to a settlement in Maine, where they intended to reside. Overjoyed at this coincidence, he joined the party, and went with them to Machias, where he at once enlisted in a company of volunteers about to march to the defence of a threatened point; and he was soon appointed to command a post of some importance, garrisoned by a body of militia and Indians. Being the son of a wealthy family, he had brought with him a little money, something less than a thousand dollars; and his troops being in need of the most indispensable supplies, he advanced the greater part of his money for their relief, receiving in return an order on the treasury of the United States. At the end of the campaign, being in Boston, and having spent all the rest of his cash, he presented his order for payment, and was informed that the treasury was empty. He was obliged to sell his order for one-third of its value; so, for his six hundred dollars, he received two hundred.

The war ended, he looked about him for employment, and found it at Harvard College, where he taught French during the year 1783. On coming of age he received from Switzerland his share of his father's estate, with which he went to Virginia and bought a tract of land in the western part of the State. It was there that he had his celebrated interview with General Washington, which he often related, and which was published some years ago in a literary journal.



It occurred in a log-house, fourteen feet square, consisting of one room, which was furnished with a bed, a pine table, and a bench or two. General Washington, who owned large tracts of land in that region, had invited some of the settlers and hunters acquainted with the country, to meet him at this log-hut, for the purpose of talking over and settling upon the best pass for a road through the Alleghany Mountains. Attracted by curiosity to see so celebrated a person, Gallatin was present.

When General Washington came in (Mr. Gallatin used to say) he took his seat at the pine table; and all the hunters of the country stood up around it, except a few who found seats upon the bed. The general questioned them, and noted down their replies upon paper. He was very particular in his inquiries, and continued his questioning for some time after the young Swiss thought he had discovered, not only the best pass, but the only one available for the purpose. Being a little impatient at the apparent indecision of the general, he suddenly interrupted him, without reflecting upon the impropriety of his conduct, and said, —

“Oh, it is plain enough! such a place (mentioning the one in his mind) is the most practicable.”

The people present stared at the young man with much surprise, marvelling at his boldness in giving his opinion before the general had asked it. Washington paused, laid down his pen, lifted his eyes from the paper, and looked sternly at the young foreigner, evidently offended, but uttered not a word. He resumed his inquiries, and continued to question the hunters for some time longer, when he suddenly stopped, and, throwing down his pen, said to the stranger, —

“You are right, sir.”

In commenting upon this scene, Mr. Gallatin used to say, —

“It was so on all occasions with General Washington. He was slow in forming an opinion, and never decided until he knew he was right.”

The warlike Indians of Western Virginia prevented his settling the lands he had purchased; and he went to reside upon a farm in Pennsylvania, on the banks of the Monongahela, not far from Pittsburg. There, besides carrying on a farm, he founded the glass manufacture, which has since grown to such proportions, that, at the present time, about one-half of all the glass used in the United States is made within a few miles of the spot where Albert Gallatin began it about 1790.

He was soon drawn into public life. Upon the division of parties during Washington's first term, Albert Gallatin sided with Jefferson and the Democracy, and made himself conspicuous by the boldness and decision with which he advocated Democratic principles. The whole country rang with his name in 1793, when, after having been elected a United States senator by the legislature of Pennsylvania, his right to the seat was denied by the Federal senators. The Constitution requires that a senator, if not a native of the United States, must have been a citizen for nine years. The question was this: Did Gallatin's citizenship begin on the day he landed in Massachusetts, *thirteen* years before, or did it begin on the day he swore allegiance to the republic in 1785, which was only *eight* years before. After a debate of eight weeks, the Senate decided, by a strict party vote of fourteen Federalists to twelve Democrats, that his citizenship began when he took the oath. This affair was really beneficial to Albert Gallatin, because the Democratic party deemed that he had been the subject of an outrage. They regarded him as an injured man.

At the time of the whiskey insurrection, though he sympathized warmly with the insurrectionists, he opposed all violent measures, and was greatly instrumental in bringing the affair to a peaceful conclusion. The great period of his life began in 1795, when the people of Western Pennsylvania elected him to the House of Representatives, where he distinguished himself by the vigor of his opposition to Federal measures.

His enemies were again inconsiderate enough to confer upon him the distinction of an outrage. In February, 1799, when he was exerting every faculty in opposition to the Alien Law, the majority held a caucus, and resolved to make no answer whatever to any thing that might be said against either the Alien or the Sedition Law. Gallatin rose in the House to urge their repeal. For a short time he was heard in contemptuous silence. Then honorable members began to converse, laugh, talk, cough, move about; and made at last so loud a noise, that, as Jefferson remarked at the time, the speaker must have had the lungs of an auctioneer to be heard. Perhaps he may have thought of this scandalous scene when he sent to the Senate, two years after, the name of Albert Gallatin for secretary of the treasury.

Levi Lincoln, the new attorney-general, had a taste in common

with the president. He loved science. Another remarkable qualification was, that he was a distinguished Massachusetts lawyer, — at the head of the bar of that State for several years, — and yet *not* a Federalist. These two facts, if we may believe the controversial writings of the day, bore to one another the relation of cause and effect.

Henry Dearborn of Maine, whom Mr. Jefferson appointed secretary of war, had been a veritable hero of romance. In 1775 he was a village doctor. For three years the sign of Dr. Dearborn had hung out in a hamlet of New Hampshire, when a horseman on a panting steed brought the news of the battle of Lexington. Before the sun had set that day, the young doctor, splendid with the glow of perfect health and the elastic grace of twenty-four, led sixty men toward Cambridge, sixty-five miles distant, which he reached soon after sunrise on the day following. At Bunker Hill he was a captain; but, as there was nothing to do there but load and fire, he took a musket, and made one of his company, loading and firing with the rest as long as they had any thing to put into their guns. He went with Arnold's thousand men on that march through an untrodden wilderness to join Montgomery in an attack upon Quebec. The wonder was, that a man of them escaped starvation. Captain Dearborn had with him a magnificent dog, the favorite of all the company, and to himself most dear; but he could not resist the entreaties of starving comrades, and gave him up, at length, to some soldiers, who took the dog to their quarters, and divided his flesh, with fine Yankee self-control, among the men who could least help themselves, who were nearest perishing. "They ate every part of him," wrote his master, "not excepting his entrails; and, after finishing their meal, they collected the bones and carried them to be pounded up, and to make broth for another meal." The only other dog attached to the expedition, a small one, had been privately killed and eaten before. Men sacrificed their "old breeches" made of moosehide; boiled them long, and then cut them into slices, and broiled them on the coals. A barber's powder-bag was made into soup at last. It excited the wonder of the doctor-captain to see men keep up with their company until they were so near exhaustion that they would breathe their last four or five minutes after sitting down. Dearborn himself gave out at length, and lay in a hut for ten days at the point of death. But he rallied, trudged after the army, and went to the assault at the head of his command.

In this spirit and in this manner Henry Dearborn served till the surrender of Cornwallis, which he witnessed. On General Washington's staff, as quartermaster-general, he acquired that familiarity with military business which made him at home in the office in which Mr. Jefferson placed him. President Washington had appointed him marshal of the district of Maine, and the people had elected him twice to the House of Representatives. He was a large, handsome man, of erect, graceful, military bearing; a striking figure in the circles of the city that was rising in the primeval wilderness. He was, perhaps, the only public man in the country who united all the qualities desirable for his post; being a soldier, a Republican, a man of science, and a man of business.

In bestowing the great places of the government, Jefferson evidently had it in view to exalt and stimulate the intellectual side of human nature, then under a kind of ban in Christendom. Every member of his cabinet was college-bred; and every man of them was in some peculiar way identified with knowledge. Madison was, above all things else, a student of constitutional science as well as of constitutional law. Gallatin, the founder of the glass manufacture of Pittsburg, was accomplished in the science of his day, eminently an intellectualized person. Dearborn, a graduate of Harvard, had also been admitted to one of the learned professions. Robert Smith of Maryland, secretary of the navy, a graduate of Princeton, after long eminence at the bar and in public life, died president of the Agricultural Society and provost of the University of Maryland. Gideon Granger of Connecticut, post-master-general, a graduate of Yale, a lawyer of learning and high distinction, fought through the Connecticut legislature the liberal school-fund to which that State is so much indebted. He was noted, all his life, as the intelligent and public-spirited friend of every thing high and advanced. It was he who promoted internal improvements in a manner to which the strictest constructionist could not object, by giving a thousand acres of land for the benefit of the Erie Canal. Chancellor Livingston, whom Mr. Jefferson invited to his cabinet and induced to go as minister to France, was the most liberal patron science had yet found in America. A graduate of King's College in New York, he spent his leisure and his income in promoting science, art, and agriculture. It was his intelligent faith and his liberal outlay of money that enabled Robert Fulton to carry out

John Fitch's idea of a steamboat. James Monroe, the least learned of the men whom Jefferson advanced, could give a glorious reason why he was not a graduate of a college. The battle of Lexington called him away from William and Mary to the camp at Cambridge.

Let it be noted, then, as an interesting fact in political history, that the first Democratic administration paid homage to the higher attainments of man, and sought aid from the class farthest removed from the uninstructed multitude. If Jefferson had not done this from principle, he would have done it from calculation; because, knowing the people as he did, he was aware that the farther they get from bowing down to fictitious distinctions, the more alive they become to those which are real. At the same time, he did not over-value learning. "It is not by his reading in Coke-Littleton," he wrote to the brother of Robert Smith, "that I am induced to this proposition (offering him the Navy Department), though that also will be of value in our administration; but from a confidence that he must, from his infancy, have been so familiarized with naval things, that he will be perfectly competent to select proper agents and to judge of their conduct." From that day to this, as often as Mr. Jefferson's example has been followed in this particular, the people of the United States have been gratified. What appointments more popular than those of Irving, Goodrich, Hawthorne, Bancroft, Kennedy, and Curtis?

An American president usually has something to do besides managing the affairs of the public. After making the first arrangements, Jefferson went home for a month to put his own affairs in train for a long absence, to select books for removal, and give time for the members of his cabinet to remove to Washington. The city was miserably incomplete and unprovided. Only ten months had passed since Philadelphians, going by the office of the secretary of state, had read on a placard the official notice of the removal of the government to the tract of wilderness which had been despoiled of its primeval beauty, and named after the Father of his Country. These were the words they read: "Notice.—The office of the Department of State will be removed this day from Philadelphia. All letters and applications are therefore to be addressed to that department at the city of Washington from this date, 28th May, 1800." The day before, President Adams began his journey toward the new capital, going "by way of Lancaster and Fredericksburg."



When Mrs. Adams joined him, she was ill-advised enough to go by Baltimore; and a nice time she had of it. Between Baltimore and Washington, the forest had not a break. Soon after leaving Baltimore, her coachman lost his way, went eight or nine miles wrong, then tried to get back through the forest to the right road, and wandered two hours without finding a creature of whom to ask a question; until, at last, a straggling negro came along, whom they hired as a guide. Washington she discovered to be all promise and no performance; every thing begun and nothing finished; no bells in the presidential mansion; no fence about it; the grand staircase not up; and the great rooms unfurnished. She used the unplastered east room that winter for drying clothes.

If the president's house was in such a condition, we may conclude, that, if the president and cabinet meant to be comfortable, they must lend a hand to the work themselves. They were going to live in a city of huts and small unfinished houses, with here and there a marble palace rising above the trees, and a great street of rich yellow clay piercing the forest, three miles long, a hundred feet wide, and two feet deep, — “the best city in the world for a future residence,” as Gouverneur Morris remarked to one of his fair correspondents. “We want nothing here,” said he, “but houses, cellars, kitchens, well-informed men, amiable women, and other little trifles of this kind, to make our city perfect.”

Besides sending many a load of books and other articles by way of beginning, Jefferson kept a wagon going pretty frequently between Monticello and Washington during the whole of his presidency. Before leaving home he wrote curiously minute directions for his steward, Mr. Edmund Bacon. His heart was set upon restoring and enlarging a mill for grinding the grain of the region round about: *that* must be pushed to completion. Then there were fences to be made, fields to be cleared, a new variety of corn to be tried, charcoal to be burned, the garden to be levelled, pork to be bought, the nailery to be kept going, clothing to be provided, groves to be thinned, shrubs to be pruned, the building to continue. Concerning all these labors, Mr. Jefferson left precise instructions, and kept them in mind at all times. Take this brief passage of his last orders in April, 1801, as a specimen of the kind of directions he frequently gave while he was apparently absorbed in affairs of state: —



“I have hired all the hands belonging to Mrs. and Miss Dangerfield for the next year. They are nine in number. Moses the miller is to be sent home when his year is up. With these will work in common, Isaac, Charles, Ben, Shepherd, Abram, Davy, John, and Shoemaker Phill; making a gang of seventeen hands. Martin is the miller, and Jerry will drive his wagon. Those who work in the nailery are Moses, Wormly, James Hubbard, Barnaby, Isbel's Davy, Bedford John, Bedford Davy, Phill Hubbard, Bartlet, and Lewis. They are sufficient for two fires, five at a fire. I am desirous a single man, a smith, should be hired to work with them, to see that their nails are well made, and to superintend them generally; if such an one can be found for a hundred and fifty or two hundred dollars a year, though I would rather give him a share in the nails made, say one-eighth of the price of all the nails made, deducting the cost of the iron: if such a person can be got, Isbel's Davy may be withdrawn to drive the mule-wagon, and Samson to join the laborers. There will then be nine nailers, besides the manager, so that ten may still work at two fires; the manager to have a log-house built, and to have five hundred pounds of pork. The nails are to be sold by Mr. Bacon, and the accounts to be kept by him; and he is to direct at all times what nails are to be made. The toll of the mill is to be put away in the two garners made, which are to have secure locks, and Mr. Bacon is to keep the keys. When they are getting too full, the wagons should carry the grain to the overseer's house, to be carefully stowed away. In general, it will be better to use all the bread-corn from the mill from week to week, and only bring away the surplus. Mr. Randolph is hopper-free and toll-free at the mill. Mr. Eppes, having leased his plantation and gang, they are to pay toll hereafter. Clothes for the people are to be got from Mr. Higginbotham, of the kind heretofore got. I allow them a best striped blanket every three years. This year eleven blankets must be bought, and given to those most in need, noting to whom they are given. The hirelings, if they had not blankets last year, must have them this year. Mrs. Randolph always chooses the clothing for the house-servants; that is to say, for Peter Henings, Burwell, Edwin, Critta, and Sally. Colored plaids are provided for Betty Brown, Betty Henings, Nance, Ursula, and indeed all the others. The nailers, laborers, and hirelings may have it, if they prefer it to cotton. Wool is given for stockings to those who will have it spun and knit.

for themselves. Fish is always to be got from Richmond, and to be dealt out to the hirelings, laborers, workmen, and house-servants of all sorts, as has been usual. Six hundred pounds of pork is to be provided for the overseer, five hundred pounds for Mr. Stewart, and five hundred pounds for the superintendent of the nailery, if one is employed; also about nine hundred pounds more for the people, so as to give them half a pound apiece once a week. This will require, in the whole, two thousand or two thousand five hundred pounds. After seeing what the plantation can furnish, and the three hogs at the mill, the residue must be purchased. In the winter a hogshead of molasses must be provided and brought up, which Mr. Jefferson (merchant at Richmond) will furnish. This will afford to give a gill apiece to everybody once or twice a week."

No interest of his plantation was too trifling to escape his attention. He did not disdain to remind Mr. Bacon that "the old garden pales" wanted patching up, nor omit to designate the two men most fit for the job. When all else had been provided for, he adds by way of postscript, that, as "these rains have possibly spoiled the fodder you had agreed for, you had better see it, and, if injured, look out in time for more." And yet another word: If Mr. Bacon would prefer to "take his half beef *now*," he might kill an animal for the purpose, and send the other half to the house or to Mr. Randolph's.

A man does not govern a commonwealth the worse for having been trained in a homely school like this. Such training, of course, would not be sufficient; but, even of itself, it would bring an intelligent mind nearer the secret of genuine statesmanship than Bonaparte's military school or Pitt's parliamentary arena.

Early in May the members of the administration were in Washington, and Mr. Jefferson addressed himself to the task which his countrymen had assigned him.

## CHAPTER LXII.

### JEFFERSON PRESIDENT.

ONE thing only is indisputable with regard to the administration of Thomas Jefferson, from 1801 to 1809: it satisfied the people of the United States. The proof of this is not merely that he was re-elected by a vastly increased majority; nor that the Federalists, once so powerful and so confident, were reduced in the House to twenty-seven, and in the Senate to one less than half a dozen; nor that the legislatures of Vermont, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Georgia, the Senate of New York, and the House of Delegates of Virginia, requested him to stand for a third term; nor that, at last, fourteen States out of seventeen were ranged in the Republican line, and Jefferson himself thought the opposition was getting too weak for the country's good. These were remarkable facts, but they were only a part of his triumph. At the end of eight years, without an effort of his own, without so much as the expression of a preference, he handed over the government to the man of all others in the world whom he would have chosen for a successor; and that man, at the end of his eight years, passed it on to another of Jefferson's disciples and allies, under whom opposition died, only to live again when Federalism started into a semblance of life in the messages of John Quincy Adams. Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe were three men and one system. The era of good feeling in Monroe's time, which would have come in Madison's but for the war of 1812, was the completion of Jefferson's success. It is this twenty-four years of public content that renders an inquiry into the conduct of President Jefferson interesting.

For, as all readers know, there are two ways of explaining it. To republicans, indeed, it requires no explanation. It is of the essence of their faith, that there is nothing occult or mysterious in the art

of government, but that it consists in doing right. Their simple conviction is, — and they desire the Coming Party to ponder well the truth, — that the old Democratic party ruled the United States for sixty years for no other reason than that, on every leading issue except one, — the extension of slavery, the rock on which it struck and went to pieces, — the old Democratic party was right. The other theory is, that Mr. Jefferson and his successors were wonderfully skilful and perfectly unscrupulous in flattering what the polite Federalists used to style the Mob. Readers remember, perhaps, Tom Moore's verses on this subject, written soon after his visit to Washington, in which, putting into rhyme the gossip and sniff of Federalist drawing-rooms, he spoke of President Jefferson as

“That inglorious soul,  
Which creeps and winds beneath a mob's control,  
Which courts the rabble's smile, the rabble's nod,  
And makes, like Egypt, every beast its god.”

This was the Federalists' opinion better expressed; and they used to point to Aaron Burr's skill in political management as a proof of its correctness. Aaron Burr, however, was too knowing a politician ever to waste time upon the dozen loafers in each ward of New York who alone could then be justly called rabble; and his skill, such as it was, did not prevent his own downfall and hopeless ruin. America had no rabble. America has no rabble. Except in a few large cities, there is no considerable class that even bears any outward resemblance to a rabble; and never has that class been important in a general election. The voters that kept the Tweeds in power were, for the most part, well-meaning, industrious men, whom a Tweed could reach through their prejudices, their vanity, and their interest, but who could not be reached by honest men because education had opened no road to their minds accessible to disinterested intelligence. But let me recall the leading traits of Mr. Jefferson's administration, with a view to getting light upon the question, whether he satisfied the people of his time by doing right, or by adroitly pretending to do right.

He was faithful to the party that elected him.

As soon as his election was known, some of his friends urged him to conciliate the Federalists by appointing a few of their leaders to office. His answer was, No — the mass of the party, being Republi-

can at heart, will be conciliated by a consistent adherence to Republican principles; and, as to the chiefs, they cannot be conciliated! Besides, every office in the country in the gift of the president was already filled by a Federalist; for that party, said he, had at an early period adopted the principle of "excluding from office every shade of opinion that was not theirs;" and he thought it only right that all vacancies should be given to Republicans, until there should be at least as many of them in office as Federalists. He meant, as he said early in his first term, to "sink Federalism into an abyss from which there should be no resurrection for it." He accomplished this purpose; and his clear adherence both to the men and principles of his own party was among the means which he employed.

But he would not appoint men to office merely because they were conspicuous partisans.

The notorious Callender was a case in point. He was a scurrilous, fertile, forcible writer of the day, who had been prosecuted under the Sedition Law, and so made a dirty martyr of. Republicans had been compelled to give him aid and comfort in his distress, because he was the victim of a law they abhorred. Upon the triumph of the Republican party, he came to Jefferson, asking as a reward for party services the Richmond post-office, worth fifteen hundred dollars a year. Jefferson relieved his necessities with money, but refused him the place, simply because he was unfit for it, and thus gained one of the most implacable and indecent vituperators a public servant ever had. George Rogers Clarke, too, a hero whom he revered, he often longed to employ, as the most skilful manager of all Indian affairs the country possessed. But he did not. The reason was, Whiskey. He gave General Clarke's brother a commission and an appointment; but not the man who had aided to give his country liberty, only to become himself a slave. Nor did Thomas Paine realize his joke of shocking the bishops and old ladies of the English court by going as secretary of legation to London. Jefferson gave him a safe passage home in a man-of-war, received him with honor at the White House, with cordiality at Monticello, and exchanged philosophic news with him; but did not send him to do what he could not do, — *represent* a clean, sober, orderly people in a foreign land. And when it became apparent that Chancellor Livingston's growing deafness rendered him an inefficient minister at the court of Napoleon, Jefferson risked losing the sup-

port of the State of New York, first, by sending Monroe to help him, and afterwards by recalling him. But the most remarkable case was that of John Randolph, the sharp-tongued leader of the Republican party in the House of Representatives. He was suggested by a friend for the English mission. Mr. Jefferson was silent. Mr. Madison also waived the subject. Then the friend pressed his claims, and other members of the House added solicitations. The president withheld the appointment. John Randolph went into opposition, in which his single small talent shone like a thin, keen rapier in the sun. The only objection to his appointment was, that he was ludicrously unfit for a post requiring patience, prudence, self-control, industry, and address.

Jefferson took great care to get the right man for the right place.

In fact, a ruler of men, whether he is a private or a public person, has but two duties to perform, — to select the right assistants, and to treat them so as to get out of them the best service they have in them. That is the whole art of governing, and Jefferson knew it. "There is nothing," he wrote to a friend in May, 1801, "I am so anxious about as making the best possible appointments." But how difficult the task in a country so extensive as the United States, where personal knowledge is impossible! His chief reliance seems to have been upon the unsolicited recommendation of men in whom he had confidence. Thus, he wrote to Nathaniel Macon of North Carolina very early in his first year: "In all cases when an office becomes vacant in your State, I shall be much obliged to you to recommend the best characters." Jefferson was curiously happy in his appointments; and the reason was, that he never slighted this chief duty, and was, from the first, on his guard against the recommendations of thoughtless, unprincipled good-nature. He would have made more successes of this kind even than he did, but for the inadequate compensation attached to the most important posts; which limits a president's choice to a few individuals exceptionally circumstanced. Many of his letters offering appointments show how much he lamented his inability to offer "due remuneration."

He would not give an appointment to a relative.

At the first view, this seems unjust to the honorable and capable families who were related to the president. It has the air of court-ing cheap and easy popularity, and it is open to the objection of pitching the note too high for the limited range of human nature.



But his convictions on the point were clear and strong; and Professor Tucker records that he acted on this principle throughout life in the administration of trusts. Thus, as rector of the University of Virginia, he opposed the appointment of a nephew to a professorship, though he was well qualified for the place; dreading lest it should open a door to the system which has made universities and church endowments in other lands mere appendages to the estates of governing families. He was nobly seconded in his resolution by his own kindred. Imagine his delight on receiving from one of them, George Jefferson, a few days after his inauguration, a letter spontaneously declining to be a candidate for a Federal office to which his neighbors and friends desired to recommend him. "The public," wrote the president, "will never be made to believe that an appointment of a relative is made on the ground of merit alone, uninfluenced by family views; nor can they ever see with approbation offices, the disposal of which they intrust to their presidents for public purposes, divided out as family property." He owned that the rule bore hardly upon a president's relations; but the public good, he thought, required the sacrifice, for which their share in the public esteem might be considered some compensation. "I could not be satisfied," said he, "until I assured you of the increased esteem with which this transaction fills me for you."

His two sons-in-law did not suffer from the rule, since their neighbors kept them both in the House of Representatives. Here, again, the president showed his nice regard for the mental integrity of others. In his intercourse with these gentlemen, it was a thing understood between them, that measures pending in their House were not to be a topic of conversation; and if, by chance, conversation took that turn, "I carefully avoid," says Jefferson, "expressing an opinion on them in their presence, that we may all be at our ease." The rule, happily, did not exclude friends; and he thus had the pleasure of appointing to the place of commissioner of loans at Richmond the beloved comrade of his youth, John Page.

But he would not exempt friends from the operation of a good rule.

It was an old opinion of his, which now became a rule of his administration, that a foreign minister should not remain abroad more than seven or eight years. He drew this opinion from his own experience. "When I returned from France," he once explained,

“after an absence of six or seven years, I was astonished at the change which I found had taken place in the United States in that time. No more like the same people: their notions, their habits and manners, the course of their commerce, so totally changed, that I, who stood in those of 1784, found myself not at all qualified to speak of their sentiments, or forward their views, in 1790.” Hence the rule. But it excluded from the public service two of his oldest friends, David Humphreys and William Short, both of whom had served under him as secretary of legation before attaining the rank of plenipotentiary which they then held. Humphreys had been absent from home eleven years, and Short seventeen years. One of Jefferson’s first acts was to recall Humphreys; which he soon followed by declining to transfer Short to Paris, where he felt the need of just such a tried and vigilant minister. “Your appointment,” he wrote to Mr. Short, “was impossible after an absence of seventeen years. Under any other circumstances, I should never fail to give to yourself and the world proofs of my friendship for you and of my confidence in you.”

He turned no man out of office because he was opposed to him in politics.

And yet he did, during the first two years of his first term, remove twenty-six Federalists, and appoint Republicans in their stead. After that, there were scarcely any removals; and Republicans were only appointed to vacancies created by death or resignation. And now with regard to those twenty-six. The result of the presidential election of 1800 was known in Washington on the 12th of December, a little less than three months before the end of Mr. Adams’s term. During that interval some valuable life-offices fell vacant, twenty-four judgeships were created, and several places held during the president’s pleasure were vacated. Mr. Adams hastened to fill these offices, from that of chief justice of the Supreme Court to postmaster, leaving not one of them to his successor. Such was the primitive condition of the political mind in 1801, that Republicans regarded this conduct as the last degree of indecency, and Jefferson shared the feeling. Indeed, for so placid and placable a gentleman, he was highly indignant; and two or three years passed before he could “heartily forgive” his old friend Adams for yielding, in so unworthy a manner, to the “pressure” of his partisans. He resolved not to regard those appointments; which, he said, Mr

Adams knew he was not making for himself, but for a successor. "This outrage on decency," he wrote to his old colleague, General Knox, who had written to congratulate him on his election, "should not have its effect except in the life-appointments, which are irremovable; but, as to the others, I consider the nominations as nullities, and will not view the persons appointed as even candidates for their office, much less as possessing it by any title meriting respect." These offices were sixteen in number. Their incumbents were all removed during the first year, and Republicans appointed to fill them. The other ten removals, most of which occurred in the second year, were for three causes: 1, Official misconduct; 2, "Active and bitter opposition" (to use the president's own words) "to the order of things which the public will has established." There was a third reason for removal, which the president thus explained: "The courts being so decidedly Federal and irremovable, it is believed that Republican attorneys and marshals, being the doors of entrance into the courts, are indispensably necessary as a shield to the Republican part of our fellow-citizens, which, I believe, is the main body of the people." Accordingly, although the expiration of the Alien and Sedition Laws rendered the Federal courts less dangerous to freedom than they had been, four or five of these officials were removed.

The outcry caused by this moderate exercise of the president's power cannot be imagined by readers of the present day. Jefferson, indeed, stood between two fires, — the Federalists shrieking with most vigorous unanimity as each head dropped into the basket; and the Republican host muttering remonstrance that the decapitating instrument worked so slowly. The denunciation of the Federalists he could not avoid; but he showed much tact in reconciling his own partisans to this moderate course. To mere partisans, he would show how much better it was to have an able Federalist passive and acquiescent *in office*, and all his circle of friends quiet for his sake, than, by turning him out of office, to convert him and his family into vigilant, embittered opponents. To men, who, like himself, desired to see the whole body of citizens restored to good humor, his appeal was to their sense of the just and the becoming. The Tammany Society of Baltimore deputed a young member, who was going to Monticello, to make known to the president the discontent of the society at seeing so many Federalists still in office. The following conversation is reported by the deputy: —

PRESIDENT. I should be very glad to gratify my friends in Baltimore by turning the Federalists out of office, and filling their places with men of my own party. But there is an obstacle in the way which I cannot remove, — a question which I have not been able to solve. Perhaps you can do this for me.

YOUNG TAMMANY. I despair of solving any problem that puzzles Mr. Jefferson, but I desire to hear what it is.

PRESIDENT. Well, sir, we are Republicans, and we are contending for the extension of the right of suffrage. Is it not so?

YOUNG TAMMANY. Yes, sir.

PRESIDENT (who had not read his Plato for nothing). We would not, therefore, put any restraint upon the right of suffrage as it already exists?

YOUNG TAMMANY (unwarned by the fate of those who sought wisdom from Socrates). By no means, sir.

PRESIDENT. Tell me, then, what is the difference between denying the right of suffrage, and punishing a man for exercising it by turning him out of office?

The deputy could not answer this question. "I had to leave him where I found him," he used to say in telling the story. The president held firmly to his course, unmoved by the execrations of Federalists and the remonstrances of Republicans. At a moment in his second year, when the opposition was vituperative beyond all previous experience, he wrote to a member of his cabinet: "I still think our original idea as to office is best; that is, to depend for the obtaining a just participation on deaths, resignations, and delinquencies. This will least effect the tranquillity of the people, and prevent their giving in to the suggestion of our enemies, that ours has been a contest for office, not for principle." I wish he could have gone one step farther, and admitted the right of every officeholder to pass his leisure hours exactly as he chose. I wish he had *not* added: "To these means of obtaining a just share in the transaction of the public business shall be added one other, to wit, removal for electioneering activity, or open and industrious opposition to the principles of the present government, legislative and executive. Every officer of the government may vote at elections according to his conscience; but we should betray the cause committed to our care were we to permit the influence of official patron-

age to be used to overthrow that cause." We must always beware of demanding too much of human nature. But I *wish* he could have said, "Rail on, Federalist postmasters and Hamiltonian collectors! Mount the stump! Berate the administration! You are not *my* servants, nor the administration's servants, but the servants of the people. It is only *my* concern to see that you do faithfully the duty of your places. After office-hours, you differ in no respect from citizens engaged in the ordinary pursuits of private life." It is easy to be wise for other people; nor have we a victorious party at our back to make wisdom difficult; and who could have foreseen such an abuse of the precedent as infuriate Jackson made in 1829? No man.

Jefferson reduced the patronage of the government to the minimum.

The strongest organization on earth is, as we all know, the Roman Catholic Church. Viewed merely *as* an organization, it has but one defect, — there is no provision in itself for limiting its expansion, and preventing its becoming an insupportable burden. And this grievous fault belongs to all the ancient governments, whether ecclesiastical or secular. When Louis XIV. passed a few weeks at Versailles, accommodation had to be provided in the palace for three thousand persons; and I have myself possessed an octavo volume of four hundred pages which was filled with the mere catalogue of the servants of George III., stating only their titles, duties, and salaries. Burke's Reform Bill abolished six hundred court offices, without making a gap in the mighty host large enough to attract the notice of a disinterested public. Nobody appears to have missed any of them. This tendency of governments to become excessive is so strong, constant, and insidious, that no head of a government will ever resist it unless the ambition that controls him is something nobler than personal. Jefferson was one of those who gave this best proof of a disinterested love of right principles. Every office in his control that was not necessary was suppressed; and the whole apparatus of government — military, naval, judicial, executive — was reduced in quantity. We might sum up his policy in this particular in a sentence: The men you *do* employ, pay adequately; make it worth the ablest men's while to serve the government, but employ no two men to do one man's work.

Thus, while no branch of the public service was increased in cost



or in importance, most departments were diminished. Mr. Gallatin co-operated heartily with the president in reducing the extensive corps of officials which Colonel Hamilton had created. In 1802 the office of commissioner of internal revenue and that of superintendent of stamps were suppressed; which only whetted the president's appetite for further reductions. "It remains," he wrote to Gallatin, "to amalgamate the comptroller and auditor into one, and reduce the register to a clerk of accounts; and then the organization will consist, as it should at first, of a keeper of money, a keeper of accounts, and the head of the department." Details do not concern us now: it is the spirit of the administration which I desire to exhibit. "Let us deserve well of our country," he concluded, "by making *her* interests the end of all our plans, and not our pomp, patronage, and irresponsibility." It is this disinterested spirit, which shines from all the documents, the correspondence, the hasty notes, of the president and his cabinet, that renders the administration of Jefferson so remarkable. Bitter John Randolph conceded *this* merit to Jefferson. "I have never seen," said he in 1828, "but one administration, which, seriously and in good faith, was disposed to give up its patronage, and was willing to go farther than Congress, or even the people themselves, so far as Congress represents their feelings, desired; and that was the first administration of Thomas Jefferson. He, sir, was the only man I knew, or ever heard of, who really, truly, and honestly, not only said, *Nolo episcopari*, but actually refused the mitre."

He endeavored to simplify the apparatus and the operations of government, so that the rural member of Congress and his constituents might understand them.

His heart was much set on this, particularly in the finances, which, he thought, Hamilton had purposely complicated. What we can now all see was merely a defect of Hamilton's mind (or the inevitable failure of a third-rate man in a first-rate place), Jefferson, stung by his calumnious vituperation, and alarmed at the pernicious tendency of his influence, regarded as intentional mystification. He thought that Hamilton began by puzzling the president and Congress, and ended by getting the finances into such a snarl that he could not "unravel" them himself. Thus he explained his meaning to Mr. Gallatin: "Hamilton gave to the debt, in the first instance, in funding it, the most artificial and mysterious form he



could devise. He then moulded up his appropriations of a number of scraps and fragments, many of which were nothing at all, and applied them to different objects in reversion and remainder, until the whole system was involved in an impenetrable fog; and, while he was giving himself the airs of providing for the payment of the debt, he left himself free to add to it continually, as he did, in fact, instead of paying it." Jefferson's idea was to let the money received into the treasury form one mass, from which all payments should be made, only giving precedence to such claims as involved the honor of the nation: that is, reserve, first, the interest of the public debt; next, any portion of the principal of the debt due within the year; then pay the expenses of the year; and finally, if there is any money left, discharge part of the debt payable at pleasure. This was his idea, which he desired the secretary to "approach by every tack which previous arrangements force upon us;" until the finances should be "as clear and intelligible as a merchant's books; so that every member of Congress, and every man of any mind in the Union, should be able to comprehend them, to investigate abuses, and consequently to control them."

He abolished court etiquette, and every usage that resembled it.

Any one who passed an hour at the head-quarters of a commanding general during the late war had an opportunity of discovering that court etiquette originated in necessity. So many people desire access to the officer in command of a large force in active service, that unless he is hedged about by rules, usages, sentinels, aides-de-camp, he would, not merely be useless as an officer, but he would soon be destroyed. Kingship began in generalship. The king was once the ablest man in defending his people, who were always menaced by other barbarians. The first time an ancient border chief told one of his tribe to answer questions for him while he devoured his dinner, or persuaded two or three to stand guard over him with their clubs while he caught an hour's sleep between two fights, court etiquette began. It was the invention of "Divine Right," that exaggerated the necessary regulations of a camp into a system of adulation and semi-worship. How absurd, how oppressive, how impious, how ridiculous, it had become in the last century, we can still partly see by the relics of it that remain. We know how it "riled" the generous mind of Thackeray (who was no democrat) to see Prince Albert attended in shooting by a gentleman-equerry to

hand the prince his gun, when it had been loaded by a servant, and give it back to the servant after it had been discharged. This trifle represents the system which was founded on the assumption that the king, and the class whom the king honored, were of an essence or blood superior to others, as the Brahmin is supposed to be innately and eternally superior to the pariah. It all grew out of the theory, that the king is the divinely designated master. Jefferson regarded himself as the chosen servant of the people of his country, entitled, if he was faithful to his trust, to the honor due from all the worthy to all the worthy, and to no more. His person, his time, his house, could justly claim the protection which is the right and necessity of all men engaged in affairs numerous and important, and no more.

Accordingly the weekly levee was at once abolished. On two days in the year, the 4th of July and the 1st of January, when houses and hearts are usually open in the United States, he opened his to all who chose to visit him. On other days he was accessible to visitors on the terms and conditions which his duties imposed: all were welcome who had claims upon his attention or regard, except so far as the superior claim of the whole people restricted him. Some of the Federalists in Washington, we are told, hit upon an expedient to balk the president's intention of abolishing the levee. On the usual day, at the usual hour, — two in the afternoon, — ladies and gentlemen began to arrive at the president's house, attired in the manner customary at the levees. The president was not at home. He was enjoying his regular two hours' ride on horseback, which nothing but absolute necessity could make him forego. When he returned at three o'clock, and learned that the great rooms were filled with company waiting to see him, he guessed their object, and frustrated it gracefully, and with perfect good-humor, by merely going among them, all accoutred as he was, booted, spurred, splashed with mud, riding-whip in hand, and greeting them as though the conjunction of so many guests were merely a joyous coincidence. They, in their turn, caught the spirit of the joke, and the affair ended happily. But it was the last of the levees.

In the great matter of dinners, he adopted, or rather he continued, the style of Old Virginia, which proved to be to him a grievous, if not a ruinous burden, as it had been to many a wealthier planter.

The Virginia style was simply: Come one, come all, come again, keep coming, and bring your friends. In President Washington's time, the business of entertaining members of Congress, officers of the government, and distinguished strangers, had been assumed by the four members of the cabinet; and it became so oppressive, Jefferson tells us, that "it was among the motives for their retirement." Their successors, he adds, profited by the experiment, and lived altogether as private individuals, leaving to the president the whole burden of that representative hospitality supposed then to be incumbent upon the head of a government. In Washington, too, the president was then the only man who had a house large enough for the entertainment of a dozen people at dinner, or fifty persons in the evening; and hence there could be little social life in the place, unless the president kept open house. Shut out from all the world, ill-lodged and ill-attended, the circle of officials, the foreign legations, and members of Congress, could only meet in an agreeable manner at the president's mansion. To the last year of Jefferson's second term, Washington was still only a spoiled wilderness. Francis Jackson, the English plenipotentiary, described it, in 1809, as more resembling Hampstead Heath than any place he had ever seen; consisting of scattered houses, intersected with heath, forest, and gravel-pits. He declares that he started a covey of partridges "about three hundred yards from the House of Congress." In such circumstances, what could a hospitable Virginian do but convert his residence into a general rendezvous and free club?

All would have gone well but for the dinners, to which the salary was fatally inadequate. We get an insight into the way of life at the White House from the recollections of Edmund Bacon of Kentucky (Jefferson at Monticello, p. 113), who was, for twenty years, Mr. Jefferson's manager. He visited Washington several times, and always lived at the White House during his stay, dining daily at the president's table. There were eleven servants in the house from Monticello, he tells us, besides a French cook, a French steward, and an Irish coachman. "When I was there," Mr. Bacon reports, "the president's house was surrounded by a high rock wall, and there was an iron gate immediately in front of it, and from that gate to the Capitol the street was just as straight as a gun-barrel. Nearly all the houses were on that street." This is Mr. Bacon's recollection of the dinners:—

“Mr. Jefferson often told me that the office of vice-president was far preferable to that of president. He was perfectly tired out with company. He had a very long dining-room, and his table was chock-full every one of the sixteen days I was there. There were Congressmen, foreigners, and all sorts of people, to dine with him. He dined at four o'clock, and they generally sat and talked until night. It used to worry me to sit so long; and I finally quit when I got through eating, and went off and left them. The first thing in the morning there was to go to market. Mr. Jefferson's steward was a very smart man, well educated, and as much of a gentleman in his appearance as any man. His carriage-driver would get out the wagon early in the morning, and Lamar would go with him to Georgetown to market. I have all my life been in the habit of getting up about four o'clock in the morning, and I went with them very often. Lamar told me that it often took fifty dollars to pay for what marketing they would use in a day.”

At these dinners, which so wearied the soul of Mr. Bacon, there was no etiquette except that which would have been observed at the table of any private person of the time. Mr. Jefferson, however, as his friend Professor Tucker, reports, was well aware of the sensitiveness of self-love, and was most careful never to wound it. At his more public dinners, if he found that he could not recall the name of a member of Congress who was present, he would give a sign to his secretary to go into the next room, where the president would join him to get the information desired.

The system of precedence was abolished.

This was settled at a cabinet meeting early in the first term, when the whole barbarous code of precedence was swept away. These Rules were substituted: 1. Residents to pay the first visit to strangers; and among strangers, whether native or foreign, first comers call first upon later comers. To this rule there was allowed one exception: “Foreign ministers, from the necessity of making themselves known, pay the first visit to the secretary of state, which is returned.” 2. “When brought together in society, all are perfectly equal, whether foreign or domestic, titled or untitled, in or out of office.” The president amplified these rules thus: “The families of foreign ministers, arriving at the seat of government, receive the first visit from those of the national ministers, as from all other residents

Members of the legislature and of the judiciary, independent of their offices, have a right as strangers to receive the first visit. No title being admitted here, those of foreigners give no precedence. Difference of grade among the diplomatic members gives no precedence. At public ceremonies to which the government invites the presence of foreign ministers and their families, a convenient seat or station will be provided for them, with any other strangers invited, and the families of the national ministers, each taking place as they arrive, and without any precedence. To maintain the principle of equality, or of *pêle mêle*, and prevent the growth of precedence out of courtesy, the members of the executive will practise at their own houses, and recommend an adherence to, the ancient usages of the country, of gentlemen in mass giving precedence to the ladies in mass, in passing from one apartment where they are assembled into another."

All this, with the friendly, humane usages that grew out of it, or were akin to it, agreeable as it was to most persons, shocked some ladies, and offended all men who owed their importance solely to rank or office. Mr. Jackson, English minister in 1809, being a gentleman of sense and good-humor, was amused and pleased, during his first conference with President Madison (which proved to be very long), when a "negro servant brought in some glasses of punch and a seed-cake," just as might have been done in a farm-house of the day; but his wife lamented that her husband, after having been accustomed "to treat with the civilized governments of Europe," should have to negotiate with the "savage democrats" of America. It so chanced that the British minister from 1803 to 1809, with whom Jefferson had most to do, Merry by name but not by nature, was a fanatic of etiquette; and it appears, that, previous to his presentation to the president, he had not heard of the business-like manner in which the affairs of the White House were conducted. He was stunned at the manner of his reception. It made an impression upon his mind which neither explanation nor the lapse of years could even soften, much less obliterate. And, really, when we consider that he had passed his life at courts where the nod, the smile, the frown, the glance, the tone, the silence, the presence, the absence, of the head of the government, were matters of importance, to be noted, recorded, transmitted, and weighed, we ought not to laugh at this Mr. Merry as we do. Besides, as Mr. Jefferson remarks, "Poo



Merry had learned nothing of diplomacy but its suspicions, without head enough to distinguish when they were misplaced." Nevertheless, he comes down to us borne on a billow of laughter, and he remains to this day one of the stock-jests of Washington. Thus he recounted his woes, three years after the event, to Mr. Josiah Quincy of Massachusetts, the ablest Federalist in Congress and one of the worthiest:—

"I called on Mr. Madison, who accompanied me officially to introduce me to the president. We went together to the mansion-house. I being in full official costume, as the etiquette of my place required on such a formal introduction of a minister from Great Britain to the president of the United States. On arriving at the hall of audience, we found it empty; at which Mr. Madison seemed surprised, and proceeded to an entry leading to the president's study. I followed him, supposing the introduction was to take place in the adjoining room. At this moment Mr. Jefferson entered the entry at the other end, and all three of us were packed in this narrow space, from which, to make room, I was obliged to back out. In this awkward position my introduction to the president was made by Mr. Madison. Mr. Jefferson's appearance soon explained to me that the general circumstances of my reception had not been accidental, but studied. I, in my official costume, found myself at the hour of reception he had himself appointed, introduced to a man as president of the United States, not merely in an undress, but ACTUALLY STANDING IN SLIPPERS DOWN AT THE HEELS, and both pantaloons, coat, and under-clothes indicative of utter slovenliness and indifference to appearances, and in a state of negligence actually studied. I could not doubt that the whole scene was prepared and intended as an insult, not to me personally, but to the sovereign I represented."

It is just possible that Mr. Jefferson thought, that morning, of the time when Gouverneur Morris kicked his heels four months in London waiting for the promised answer of the British government to as reasonable and urgent a communication from President Washington as one government ever made to another, and then had to leave England without getting it. Possibly, also, it *did* happen to occur to his memory, that Mr. Adams had been kept vainly waiting three years in England for a reply to the same proposals. Perhaps, too, he remembered the period when he was himself presented to



the king of England by Mr. Adams, and the king froze to them both; an example which was followed by the "king's friends," and society generally, so that it required courage for a courtier to show them any thing more than cold civility at an evening party. And this, while they were only asking the king to stay the bloody ravages of the Indians by giving up the seven posts within the boundaries of their country. He *may*, too, have thought of the time when he, as secretary of state, would send an important communication to the British minister at Philadelphia, and wait many months for an answer; but if *he* failed to answer a letter within three or four days, he would be "goaded" by a second. Perhaps he thought the time had come to show the Federalists that he did not accept Great Britain at her own valuation, and did not believe she was fighting the battle of man and liberty against Bonaparte. It may be, too, that he, knowing the childish politics of Europe, and what ridiculous importance was attached there to trifles, may have paused before ringing for a pair of shoes not down at the heels, and wondered if his old slippers, duly reported to Bonaparte, might not drive another nail into the bargain for Louisiana, just concluded by Mr. Livingston and Mr. Monroe, to the great joy of president and people. All these thoughts *may* have flitted through the president's mind, and held back his hand from the bell-rope; but, in all probability, he had no thoughts of the kind, and only wore the clothes he usually did while at work.

A few weeks after arrived in Washington the young Irish poet, Thomas Moore, who had crossed the Atlantic in the same ship with Mr. and Mrs. Merry. To him, also, the affronted Briton related his sorrows, and even exhibited the president clad in the same style. Mr. Merry presented Mr. Moore to the president at the White House. "I found him," the poet records, "sitting with General Dearborn, and one or two other officers, and in the same homely costume, comprising slippers and Connemara stockings, in which Mr. Merry had been received by him, much to that formal minister's horror, when waiting on him in full dress to deliver his credentials. My single interview with this remarkable person was of very short duration; but to have seen and spoken to the man who drew up the Declaration of Independence was an event not to be forgotten. The poet did not approve of the president, and said so in several satirical stanzas and poems in his next publication; at which Mr

Jefferson was amused and even surprised, for he had not before heard of this new light in literature. Mr. Randall relates a pleasing incident to show how little he had come to regard the stings and arrows of outrageous politics. A few years after his retirement, a granddaughter placed in his hands Moore's *Irish Melodies*, as the book of the season, which was having a great run on both sides of the ocean. The young lady, curious and expectant, watched him as he opened the work and turned over the leaves. Said Jefferson, "This is the little man who satirized me so." Reading on, he was won by the flowing music and patriotic feeling of the verse. "Why" he said at length, "he *is* a poet after all;" and ever after, even to the end of his life, he was fond of reading certain favorites among the poems of Thomas Moore.

But poor Merry's troubles were not yet at an end. He and his wife dined one day at the White House; and, when dinner was announced, the president offered his arm to the lady nearest him at the moment, Mrs. Madison — not to Mrs. Merry, who was on the other side of the room! Insult upon insult! "Poor Merry" made such an outcry at this in Washington, that Mr. Madison deemed it best to explain the circumstances to Monroe, the American minister in London, that he might be prepared to meet Merry's version. Mr. Merry did relate his grievances to the English minister for Foreign Affairs; who, however, forbore to mention it to Monroe. If he had, Monroe was ready for him; for, besides being fully alive to the humor of the affair, he had seen, a few weeks before, in an official London drawing-room, the wife of an under-secretary of state accorded precedence over his own. Mrs. Merry went no more to the White House, and her husband only went when official duty compelled. But nothing could tire the placable good-nature of Jefferson. Some time after, desirous to restore social intercourse, he caused Mr. Merry to be informally asked whether he and his wife would accept an invitation to a family dinner at the president's house; and receiving, as he understood, an affirmative intimation, Mr. Jefferson sent the invitation, written with his own hand. Merry rose to his opportunity. He wrote to the secretary of state, asking whether the president of the United States had invited him as a private gentleman or as British plenipotentiary; for, if as a private gentleman, he must obtain the king's permission before he could accept; if in his official character, he must have an

assurance that he would be treated with the respect due to it, Madison, with short civility, waived the solution of this problem, and the matter dropped. But it was not till 1809 that British interests in America were confided to abler hands.

Some other points of public etiquette were now settled on rational principles once and forever. The fussy incompetents recently in power had been concerned to know the relation which the president sustained to the governors of States, — precisely how much more exalted a president was than a governor, the exact degree of deference a governor should show a president, and the forms in which deference should be expressed. In July, 1801, the governor of Virginia asked the president to indicate the etiquette which he thought should regulate the communications between the State governments and the general government. His reply in substance was: Let there be *no* special etiquette. Between president and governor, each being the supreme head of an independent government, no difference of rank can be admitted. They are equals. Let us continue then, as in General Washington's time, to write freely, just as public business requires, and with no more ceremony than obvious propriety and convenience dictate. "If it be possible," he said, "to be certainly conscious of any thing, I am conscious of feeling no difference between writing to the highest and lowest being on earth."

The two miles of tenacious yellow mud that lay "straight as a gun-barrel" between the White House and the Capitol assisted to reconcile all but the extreme Federalists to a change in the mode of intercourse between the president and Congress. Hitherto the president had opened Congress by a speech, framed on the model of a king of England's speech, and delivered it to both Houses assembled in the Senate Chamber. He had been wont to ride to and from the Capitol in a coach and six, which was followed by coaches and four bearing members of the government and others, the whole forming a considerable procession. When the president had retired, the Houses separated, and each appointed a committee to prepare an address in reply. Of late years these addresses had furnished the pretext for long and impassioned debates on party politics, lasting one, two, and even three weeks, the minority always striving to reduce the eulogy of the address to the minimum. When, after this desperate struggle, an address had been agreed upon, the House

voting it rode in such state as members could command to the abode of the president, and stood around him in a solemn semicircle, while one of their number read to him what he had already read fifty times for himself, besides fifty columns of debate upon it. Then the president read a short, formal acknowledgment of the address, after which the members returned to their chamber, and began the business of the session.

Federalist gentlemen discovered, on the morning of December 8, 1801, that this fine opportunity for oratorical display and partisan recrimination was not to be afforded them. Scene: the Senate Chamber; the chairman in his revolving chair; members in their seats. Enter a young gentleman, Meriwether Lewis perhaps, private secretary to the president, bearing a mass of documents, and a note from the president to the vice-president:—

“SIR, — The circumstances under which we find ourselves at this place rendering inconvenient the mode heretofore practised, of making by personal address the first communications between the legislative and executive branches, I have adopted that by message, as used on all subsequent occasions through the session. In doing this, I have had principal regard to the convenience of the legislature, to the economy of their time, to their relief from the embarrassment of immediate answers on subjects not yet fully before them, and to the benefits thence resulting to the public affairs. Trusting that a procedure founded on these motives will meet their approbation, I beg leave through you, sir, to communicate the enclosed copy, with the documents accompanying it, to the honorable the Senate, and pray you to accept for yourself and them the homage of my high regard and consideration.”

Thus the present usage was established, to the great content of all rational beings. He was himself well pleased with the first results of the experiment. “Our winter campaign,” he wrote to Dr. Rush, “has opened with more good-humor than I expected. By sending a message, instead of making a speech, at the opening of the session, I have prevented the bloody conflict to which the making an answer would have committed them.”

Other changes of this nature were these: He discontinued the practice of assigning a frigate for the conveyance of ministers across

the ocean. He declined to write official letters of condolence to the widows or families of deceased officers. He would not have his birthday celebrated by the usual balls; and, to prevent this, refused to let the date of his birth be communicated. He would not deny himself any innocent pleasure, such as attending the races near Washington, from any false ideas of official dignity. He refused to appoint days of fasting or thanksgiving, on the ground that to do so would be indirectly to assume an authority over religious exercises, which the Constitution has expressly forbidden. A recommendation from the chief magistrate, he thought, would carry with it so much authority, that any person or sect disregarding it would suffer some degree of odium. "Fasting and prayer," said he, "are religious exercises; the enjoining them an act of discipline." "And does the change in the nature of the penalty make the recommendation less a *law* of conduct for those to whom it is directed?" He declined to make any thing resembling an official tour or progress, or to receive while travelling attentions directed to his office. To secularize and to republicanize the government *completely*, remaining himself a plain American citizen,—these were among the objects which he steadily pursued and which he accomplished.

He was resolved not to be a personage. He *would be* Thomas Jefferson, and nothing else. Pleasing anecdotes are those which Mr. Randall relates in illustration of this point, particularly that one in which the president figures as the thoughtful and affectionate grandfather to his namesake, Thomas Jefferson Randolph, who stopped at Washington a few days on his way to attend the scientific lectures at Philadelphia. The president came into his room one day, had him unpack his trunk, took pencil and paper, and made a list of things he still lacked, saying, "You will need this and this at Philadelphia;" and then going about among the stores of Washington with the lad, and buying the articles required; finishing the performance by asking to see his pocket-book, and handing it back to him much better furnished than when he had taken it. That story, too, of the president carrying the rough Kentuckian over a river on his horse is interesting. This Kentuckian, sitting solitary on the bank of a swollen stream, let the gay young men of the president's party all pass on and flounder across the river, without making known his desire. Last of all rode the president. Him the rough wayfarer addressed, and Mr. Jefferson took him up behind



without ado. Being asked why he selected that particular individual of the party, the Kentuckian replied, "I reckon a man carries Yes or No in his face. The young chaps' faces said, No; the old man's said, Yes." And one day, in his daily ride near Washington, the president fell into conversation with a stranger. Politics becoming a topic, he had the pleasure of hearing, not only his measures roundly denounced, but his character most indecently reviled. "Do you know Mr. Jefferson personally?" he asked. "No, nor do I want to." "But is it fair play to believe and repeat such stories, and then not dare to meet the subject of them face to face, and trust to your own senses?" "I will never shrink from meeting Mr. Jefferson if he comes in my way." "Will you go to his house tomorrow, and be introduced to him, if I will meet you there?" He consented, and Jefferson galloped on. Instantly it occurred to the traveller, that it was the president himself with whom he had been conversing. But he kept his appointment, appearing at the hour, attired in his best. "I have called, Mr. Jefferson," said he, "to apologize for having said to a stranger"— Here the president, laughing, broke in and finished the sentence—"hard things of an imaginary personage who is no relation of mine." The stranger tried to get in his apology; but the president laughed it down, insisted on his staying to dinner, and made a friend of him and all his family.

He declined to receive presents while in office.

But he made one exception. In 1806 he received a present of a bust of the new Emperor of Russia, Alexander, with whom he had much friendly intercourse during his second term. He thus acknowledged the receipt of this work: "I had laid down as a law for my conduct while in office, and hitherto scrupulously observed, to accept of no present beyond a book, a pamphlet, or other curiosity of minor value; as well to avoid imputation on my motives of action, as to shut out a practice susceptible of such abuse. But my particular esteem for the character of the Emperor places his image, in my mind, above the scope of law. I receive it, therefore, and shall cherish it with affection. It nourishes the contemplation of all the good placed in his power, and of his disposition to do it."

An instance of his scrupulousness with regard to deriving personal advantage from his office has only lately come to light. A private letter of his to General Muhlenberg, collector at Philadel-



phia, concerning a purchase of wine, was found, a few years ago, by a descendant of that officer, and sent to Mr. Greeley for publication. If I were a collector, I would have it printed, framed, and hung up in my custom-house. It is dated February 6, 1803:—

“DEAR SIR,—Mons. d’Yrujo, the Spanish minister here, has been so kind as to spare me two hundred bottles of Champagne, part of a larger parcel imported for his own use, and consequently privileged from duty; but it would be improper for me to take the benefit of that. I must therefore ask the favor of you to take the proper measures for paying the duty; for which purpose I enclose you a bank-check for twenty-two and a half dollars, the amount of it. If it could be done without mentioning my name, it would avoid ill-intended observations, as in some such way as this, ‘By duty paid on a part of such a parcel of wines not entitled to privilege,’ or in any other way you please. The wine was imported into Philadelphia probably about midsummer last. Accept assurances of my great esteem and respect.

“TH. JEFFERSON.

“GENERAL MUHLENBERG.”

It would be absurd to praise such an act as this, because it was simply right. Nor ought it to be within the choice of any public officer, of any grade whatever, to do otherwise. It will doubtless, before many years have passed, be an impeachable offence for any man holding a public office to accept so much as a free ride on a horse-car. This is a point that comes home to the suffering sons of Manhattan, who remember that a system of plunder which reached an average of ten millions a year began in aldermen pocketing bundles of cigars and quires of note-paper in the old corporation “tea-room.”

He used the prestige and the opportunities of his office for the public advantage.

His introduction of better breeds of domestic animals into Virginia is a case in point. With the aid of Mr. Livingston, minister at Paris, after a long course of manœuvring and trouble, he managed to get six merino sheep as far on their way to Albemarle as Fredericksburg, half for himself, half for Madison, and all for Virginia; and wrote to his manager to go with Mr. Madison’s head

man to get them home. The two managers, when they caught sight of these animals, so renowned at the time throughout the country, were wofully disappointed. "The sheep were little bits of things," reports Mr. Bacon; "and Graves said he would not give his riding-whip for the whole lot." Their instructions were to divide them by tossing up for the first choice. "So," says Mr. Bacon, "I put my hand into my pocket, and drew out a dollar, and said, 'Head or tail?' I got the best buck. He was a little fellow, but his wool was as fine almost as cotton. When I got home, I put a notice in the paper at Charlottesville, that persons who wished to improve their stock could send us two ewes, and we would keep them until the lambs were old enough to wean, and then give the owners the choice of the lambs, and they leave the other lamb and both of the ewes. We got the greatest lot of sheep, more than we wanted, — two or three hundred, I think; and in a few years we had an immense flock. People came long distances to buy our full-blooded sheep. At first we sold them for fifty dollars, but they soon fell to thirty and twenty; and, before I left Mr. Jefferson, merino sheep were so numerous, that they sold about as cheap as common ones."

Next he imported some of the broad-tailed sheep from Barbary, which made splendid mutton, but would not thrive in Virginia. He introduced also a superior kind of Guinea pigs. Himself, Mr. Madison, and General Dearborn joined in importing six hogs of a kind which Mr. Bacon tells us were called Calcutta hogs; black and white, short-legged, long-bodied, easily kept, and not given to rooting, — a very great success in every respect. "Mr. Jefferson," remarks Mr. Bacon, "didn't care about making money from his imported stock. His great object was to get it widely scattered over the country, and he left all these arrangements to me. I told the people to bring three sows, and when they came for them they might take two and leave one. In this way he soon got a large number of hogs, and the stock was scattered over that whole country."

His neighbors derived benefit even from his salary, which, to the imagination of primitive Virginia, seemed inexhaustible. A larger mill was among the urgent wants of the neighborhood, Mr. Bacon relates; and the people thought, that, "as Mr. Jefferson had a large salary, he was better able to build it than anybody else." He undertook the work, since "he was always anxious to benefit the com-

munity as much as possible;" and Mr. Bacon, assisted by an engineer from the North, superintended the construction. In his homely, excellent way, the manager relates the hopeful rise of the structure, "built of rock," four stories high, with "four run of stone," and a dam and race that cost a thousand dollars; and he tells us what minute directions Mr. Jefferson kept sending from Washington about it, and how he preferred it to all the works in progress on his estate. The mill complete, grain came in, in surprising quantities, until eleven thousand bushels were stored, awaiting their turn to be ground. Coopers, millers, and teamsters were all in full activity; when, alas! in the midst of a great freshet, Mr. Bacon saw the dam swept away by the torrent of waters. "I thought we were ruined," he says: "I never felt worse. I did not know what we should do." Mr. Jefferson being at home at the time, Bacon hurried off to the mountain-top to convey to him the dreadful news. There he met the lord of the mansion just from the breakfast-table, calm as a May morning. He asked, "Have you heard from the river?" "Yes, sir," replied the doleful manager: "I have just come from there with very bad news. The mill-dam is all swept away." "Well, sir," said Mr. Jefferson, with perfect serenity of manner, "we can't make a new dam this summer; but we will get Lewis's ferry-boat, with our own, and get the hands from all the quarters, and boat in rock enough in place of the dam to answer for the present; and, next summer, I will send to Baltimore and get ship-bolts, and make a dam that the freshet can't wash away." Which was done. "You never saw his countenance ruffled," Mr. Bacon observes. "No odds what happened, it always maintained the same expression."

How eagerly he availed himself of his opportunities for increasing the sum of knowledge, his letters exhibit; and the fact is part of the history of that age. It was his thought that sent Meriwether Lewis and William Clarke up the Missouri to its sources in the Rocky Mountains, across those mountains to the Columbia River, and down the Columbia until huge waves rolling in from the ocean and tossing high their light canoes notified them that they had reached the Pacific. Counting from the time when Captain John Smith sailed up the Chickahominy in search of the South Sea, the world had waited two hundred years for this exploration. Never was a piece of work of that kind better done or better chronicled; for it

was Jefferson who selected the two heroes that conducted it. Captain Lewis was the son of one of his most valued Albemarle neighbors. Lieutenant Clarke was the brother of that General George Rogers Clarke who held back the Indians from joining in the war of the Revolution; and both of them were such masters of all frontier arts, that the perilous expedition of two years, four months, and ten days, was one joyous holiday-excursion to them. Returning to St. Louis laden with spoils and trophies, Captain Lewis, besides his journals and other official results, sends off exultingly to the president "sixty-seven specimens of earths, salts, and minerals, and sixty specimens of plants." It was Jefferson, too, who set on foot the two exploring expeditions of Lieutenant Zebulon Montgomery Pike, whose name lives in that of the peak which he discovered, and and in those of ten counties of the United States. Pike was the first American who explored the Upper Mississippi beyond the Falls of St. Anthony; noting the sites of the cities now rising on its banks, and shaking hands on the way with "Monsieur Dubuque," who was working the lead-mines, and lording it over a wide domain. Lieutenant Pike was the first American to explore the valley of the Arkansas. He said truly, in one of his letters, that the regions which he had traversed were little more known to the world than the wilds in the interior of Africa. In seventy years we behold them populous, and more familiar to our knowledge than the next county.

It was Jefferson who encouraged Astor to attempt his scheme of North-western trade,—a scheme which was as feasible as it was audacious, and which only the war of 1812 frustrated. It is interesting to observe, in view of the present importance of the Western silver-mines, that, in 1808, the secret of their existence, "seventeen hundred miles from St. Louis," was confided to the president, who, however, considering the menacing attitude of Spain, could only give verbal encouragement to the exploration sought. He jocularly writes to Gallatin: "I enclose for your information the account of a silver-mine to fill your treasury." As for the bones of the mammoth, he had enough of them at last, and kept the Philosophical Society, of which he was still the president, abundantly supplied with objects of curiosity and investigation. And was there ever such an indefatigable recorder? Among his papers is a leaf thus entitled: "Statement of the vegetable market of Washington during

a period of eight years, wherein the earliest and latest appearance of each article within the whole eight years is noted." One small page suffices, but it is complete: the list embraces thirty-seven articles. He could tell at a glance that the earliest appearance of "sprouts" was on the 22d of February, and the latest, May 20; and that the extremes of the strawberry season were May 8 and July 9. He refutes Dickens's satire of red-tape. In a minute or two he could put his hand upon any letter or document, any entry or memorandum, of the tens of thousands which he possessed; and of all this myriad mass of details he was the master, not the slave.

He preserved perfect harmony in his cabinet during the whole of both terms.

One reason was this: there was not an egotist among them. The pugnacious traits, such as vanity, jealousy, personal ambition, and the other commonplace forms of self-love, were extinguished, or, at least, subordinated in them all. "Our administration," wrote Jefferson once, "now drawing to a close, I have a sublime pleasure in believing will be distinguished as much by having placed itself above all the passions which could disturb its harmony as by the great operations by which it will have advanced the well-being of the nation." All of them were modernized persons. The masters of the past were, of necessity, soldiers and men of the soldierly spirit. The masters of our modern world are educated men of business. These five gentlemen, Jefferson, Madison, Gallatin, Dearborn, and Robert Smith, were all of this description; for Dearborn was only a soldier while his country was invaded; just as the most peaceful citizen becomes warlike when attacked by a ruffian. The military type of man, valuable as it was and is, was not represented in the cabinet at all. It is also true, that the Jeffersonian theory of government is precisely the one that tasks the intellect and stirs the passions least, because it excludes even from consideration seven-tenths of the questions which usually most perplex governments, its chief object being to protect *rights*, not interests. Interests are complex; rights are simple. The tariff question is a puzzler if you view it as affecting existing interests; but if you put the case thus: Has an American citizen a *right* to buy a pair of Sunday trousers, London made, for four dollars, instead of paying twenty-two for the Broadway article?—the case is within finite comprehension. Ralph Waldo Emerson and John G. Whittier go to Washington



demanding to be protected, at home and abroad, in their *right* to the product of their lifetime's arduous and noble toil. Pirate publisher meets them there with the thieves' natural plea: Stolen books are cheaper than books honestly paid for. Republican government waives all that complicated nonsense out of hearing, and considers but two points, both easy: 1, Does the Constitution give us jurisdiction? 2, Is the demand of these ornaments of their country just? How adapted to human capacity such questions! A way-faring man, unless a book-peddler, need not err therein.

But there never was a time when the politics of the world were so difficult as then. "Every country but one," as Jefferson said, "demolished; a conqueror roaming over the earth with havoc and destruction, a pirate spreading misery and ruin over the face of the ocean. Indeed, my friend, ours is a bed of roses. And the system of government which shall keep us afloat amidst this wreck of the world will be immortalized in history." It was a bed of roses, because the simple aim of the republican administration was to have nothing whatever to do with this prodigious and astounding broil, except to sell refreshing provisions to both combatants, and pick up any thing in the way of a Louisiana or so that might get loose in the contest.

But, after all, it is the Arnold who makes the Rugby; it is the Fellenberg who renders possible the "self-governing college," so pleasingly revealed to us by Mr. Robert Dale Owen; and it was the large, benign, commanding intelligence of the chief which alone could have united and exalted a group of men to the height maintained by this peerless administration. Washington, Adams, and Madison, all had dissension in their cabinets. Jefferson alone had none. He gave them his confidence without reserve. "If I had the universe to choose from," he said to them all in 1801, "I could not change one of my associates to my better satisfaction;" and in 1809, he said the same, with only a change of tense. Nor did any thing like a serious difference of opinion ever arise among them. "All matters of importance or difficulty," he once wrote, "are submitted to all the heads of departments composing the cabinet, sometimes by the president consulting them separately and successively, as they happen to call upon him; but, in the greatest cases, by calling them together, discussing the subject maturely, and finally taking the vote, in which the president counts himself but as one. So



that, in all important cases, the executive is in fact a Directory, which certainly the president might control; but of this there never was an example, either in the first or the present administration."

In his use of the pardoning power, he was governed by principles that rendered that absurd relic of Divine Right comparatively harmless.

These principles are two in number. In a letter to Edmund Randolph, of 1808, he stated them both: 1. To entitle a criminal to the remission of a penalty, "extraordinary and singular considerations are necessary;" otherwise, the pardon of the criminal would be "to repeal the law" that condemned him. 2. "The opinion of the judges who sat in the cause I have ever required as indispensable to ground a pardon."

He submitted to the outrages of the press.

We are now too familiar with this policy to appreciate either its novelty or its difficulty in the early years of the present century. Jefferson both believed and proved that a public man, fit for his place and doing his duty, cannot be injured by a hostile press. This truth we now all know, and have seen it tested many times; but in 1801 it was a discovery. Nor was there then in Christendom one government besides that of the United States strong and able enough to permit freedom of the press. Bonaparte's, of course, was not. Pitt's was not. Nor was there a government in all Europe where the idea of a free press could be entertained. And what made Jefferson's triumph the more remarkable was, that the Federalists were the "vocal class." It was they who filled most pulpits, wrote most books, edited most papers, presided in most courts, pleaded most causes, and taught in most colleges. They were denominated the educated class. Education, at that day, did not mean the acquisition of knowledge, but of scholarship; which, while it cultivates the communicating talents, may leave the prejudices intact, and is compatible with the last degree of mental servility and narrowness. A man may become a genuine scholar and remain a Jesuit. The Federalist leaders, too, were exasperated beyond mortal endurance. Their self-love was torn all to pieces. They had predicted their own speedy return to power: they saw their minority dwindling at every election. They foretold anarchy: they saw universal order and general content. They had prophesied

financial chaos : they saw every obligation of the government met, its debt steadily diminished, its credit perfect, its only embarrassment a surplus. They had expected a suppression of the navy : they now saw, for the first time, the navy put to its legitimate use in terminating the piracies of the Algerines. They had dreaded an expulsion from office of all their adherents : they saw the right of opinion respected, and no man disturbed in his place, except for a reason that did not include his political creed. They had predicted a reign of loafers and scallawags : they saw the great offices filled with men who were both refined by scholarship and enlarged by knowledge. They had foretold a base subserviency to France : they saw the president win from France the most valuable acquisition that one country ever gained from another since the creation, and this without bloodshed. They had predicted insult and rash hostility to Great Britain : they saw the moment come when, with universal acclamation, Jefferson could have had a war with England, and yet he held back the conflict for another four years, every month of which made that conflict less unequal.

It is not in mortals to behold with equanimity such brilliant and triumphant wisdom in the career of a person against whom they are publicly committed. The leading Federalists seem to have been equally puzzled and indignant. C. C. Pinckney could only attribute the strengthening hold Jefferson had of the public confidence to "the infatuation of the people." John Quincy Adams thought that Jefferson's success was owing to an unaccountable run of good luck. "Fortune," said he, "has taken a pleasure in making Jefferson's greatest weaknesses and follies issue more successfully than if he had been inspired with the profoundest wisdom." (This in 1804. Before Mr. Jefferson went out of office Adams was a Republican.) Gouverneur Morris, the jovial and witty aristocrat, set it down, Froude-fashion, to the natural baseness of merchants and traders. It was a favorite fiction of the class of Tories represented by Morris, that the counting-room is the centre and resort of all that is sordid and contemptible. But Morris did not despair of the republic. "When the people," said he, "have been long enough drunk, they will get sober ; but while the frolic lasts, to reason with them is useless. Their present leaders take advantage of their besotted condition, and tie their hands and feet ; but if this prevents them from running into the fire, why should we, who are their friends,

complain?" Fisher Ames thought it was all a piece of impudent, reckless imposture, which just happened to succeed. "Never before," wrote he, "was it attempted to play the fool on so great a scale." Hamilton solved the enigma with the utmost ease, in his old manner; his central, immutable principle being this, Man is an ass. In his usual high-stepping style, he remarks, "Mankind are forever destined to be the dupes of bold and cunning imposture." Old John Adams, "nursing his wrath to keep it warm," fulminated comparative history, but thought the people would open their eyes at last. "If," said he, "the talents, the policy, the address, the power, the bigotry and tyranny, of Archbishop Laud and the court of Charles the First were not able to destroy or discredit sound principles in 1630 or 1635, there is little cause of apprehension for them from the feeble efforts of the frivolous libertines who are combining, conspiring, and intriguing against them in 1802."

How instructive is all this! How eloquent it is against intrusting the rights of a nation to the custody of a class!

If the uppermost men of the opposition wrote thus in their confidential correspondence, we can imagine the tone and style of the party press. The falsehoods which had been accumulating for three presidential elections, with the new atrocities of Callender and others, formed a mass of calumny from which the mildest and the fiercest county editor could draw every week the slanders most congenial to his disposition. They did so. The State courts gave members of the administration a fair means of redress, and some of them appear to have thought of bringing suits for libel. Jefferson avowed their right to do so; but said he, in various forms of expression, "Let us prove to the world that an administration which has nothing to conceal has nothing to fear from the press." It is the means which the press has of giving publicity to events which makes it one of the great powers of the modern world. When it utters falsehood, the party injured is itself. "I admit," he wrote to an old friend in 1808, "that restraining the press to truth, as the present laws do, is the only way of making it useful. But I have thought it necessary first to prove that it can never be dangerous." Again, in his second inaugural, he spoke of the importance to mankind of this experiment to ascertain whether a government that did no act which it would be unwilling the whole world should witness could be written down. "The experiment has been tried,"

said he. "You have witnessed the scene; our fellow-citizens looked on, cool and collected; they saw the latent source from which these outrages proceeded; they gathered around their public functionaries; and, when the Constitution called them to the decision by suffrage, they pronounced their verdict, honorable to those who had served them, and consolatory to the friend of man, who believes he may be trusted with the control of his own affairs."

Such were some of the preliminary and minor excellences of this unique administration. Of themselves, they would not have carried it far. We are familiar with the theological student of tradition, who advertised for a home in a family where a pious example would be considered an equivalent for his board. Of similar absurdity we might accuse the head of a nation who should expect to satisfy the people by being a virtuous, attentive, and rational man. That, indeed, is highly desirable; but it was for something else that the people assigned to Mr. Jefferson quarters in their **White House at Washington.**

## CHAPTER LXIII.

### THE ALGERINE PIRACIES.

How rapidly the face of the world changes in these modern times! As recently as 1794, it was a common occurrence for such a letter as the following to be read out in church at seaport towns, like Boston, Salem, Newburyport, where, perhaps, the writer had been known from his boyhood, and where his family still lived: —

“I was captured on the 18th of October by an Algerine corsair, and stripped of every thing. On arriving at Algiers, I was conducted to the dey’s house; and in the morning was sent to the slaves’ bagnio, and there received an iron shackle round my leg, and a chain of twenty pounds, and three loaves of coarse bread for twenty-four hours, and some water, and was immediately put to hard labor. My situation is so deplorable, that to mention but a small part of it would require much longer time than I am allowed.” \*

And the great cost of ransoming a captured brother and fellow-citizen must have been most discouraging to a congregation acquainted only with simple manners and frugal habits, — codfish for Saturday’s dinner, baked beans on Sunday, and a best coat worn for twenty years. Here is the bill sent to Mr. Jefferson, plenipotentiary at Paris, in 1786, for the first American crews ever captured by the Barbary pirates: —

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| For 3 captains, \$6,000 each . . . . . | \$18,000 |
| 2 mates, \$4,000 each. . . . .         | 8,000    |
| 2 passengers, \$4,000 each. . . . .    | 8,000    |
| 14 seamen, \$1,400 each . . . . .      | 29,600   |
|  | \$53,600 |
| For custom, 11 per cent . . . . .      | 5,896    |
|  | \$59,496 |

\* History of Newburyport, by Mrs. E. Vale Smith, p. 146.

If *he* was appalled at such a demand (Congress only empowered him to offer two hundred dollars a man), what must have been the feeling of a Newburyport family in average circumstances, on learning that the release of a father, husband, brother, son, depended on their raising six thousand hard dollars! Many a homestead was deeply mortgaged, and many sold, to procure the money, which sometimes reached Algiers or Tripoli only to find the object of compassion in a captive's grave. Nor did the price materially decline during the next ten years. In 1794 we find supercargoes quoted at four thousand dollars, cabin passengers at four thousand, and cabin-boys at fourteen hundred. Business, it is true, could always be done on more favorable terms if the ransom was paid in guns, powder, sail-cloth, rope, fast-sailing schooners, and naval stores generally; but against this Jefferson, from first to last, set his face, though all the other powers complied. Two Moors would sometimes be taken in exchange for one Christian, and a single Turk was regarded as equivalent to half a dozen Christian dogs; but it was necessary first to catch your Turk. This traffic in Christians was very profitable. In 1786 the number of captives in Algiers alone was officially reported to Mr. Jefferson at twenty-two hundred; and during the early autumn of 1793 ten American vessels were taken by the Barbary corsairs, for the release of the crews of which a collection was taken in every church in New England on Thanksgiving Day of that year. People gave liberally (one gentleman subscribed four thousand dollars, "enough to redeem a master or supercargo"); but it was not till the general ransom by Congress, in 1796, that the poor fellows saw their homes again. A million dollars it cost the government to buy that shameful peace, and another million during the four years of Mr. Adams's term to keep the peace, a large part of which was paid to the pirates in naval stores and ammunition. It is hard to believe that one item in this account was officially described as "a frigate to carry thirty-six guns, for the Dey of Algiers." But it was even so. The bill that Congress paid for her construction, equipment, and navigation to Algiers, amounted to \$99,727; and she went crammed with a hundred thousand dollars' worth of powder, lead, timber, rope, shells, canvas, and other means of piracy. One hundred and twenty-two captives, however, came home in that year, — 1796, — among whom were ten who had been in slavery for eleven years.



And how can we sufficiently admire the impudence of those corsairs? A man-of-war, one would think, went very far in merely saluting their flag; but that was only a small part of the infamy. The pirates returned the salute, and then demanded *from* the man-of-war one barrel of powder for every gun they had fired! Every power seems to have conceded this, as a matter of course, until the American consul in 1798 refused. The conversation that occurred on this subject between the Bey of Tunis and Consul William Eaton is a curiosity of negotiation. The consul endeavored, at first, to pass it over as something too trifling for a sovereign prince to regard.

BEY. However trifling it may appear to you, to me it is important. Fifteen barrels of powder will furnish a cruiser, which may capture a prize, and net me a hundred thousand dollars.

CONSUL. The concession is so degrading, that our nation will not yield to it. Both honor and justice forbid; and we do not doubt that the world will view the demand as they will the concession.

BEY. You consult your honor, I my interest; but, if you wish to save your honor in this instance, give me fifty barrels of powder annually, and I will agree to the alteration.

CONSUL. We shall not expend a thought upon a proposition which aims at making us tributary. We will agree to pay for the powder you burned in the salute.

BEY (*addressing his minister in Turkish*). These people are Cheribeenas (Persian merchants). They are so hard there is no dealing with them

In a spirit not unlike this, the Dey of Algiers said, in 1793, taking the tone of an injured being, "If I make peace with everybody, what shall I do with my corsairs? What shall I do with my soldiers? They would take off my head for want of other prizes, not being able to live upon their miserable allowance." In 1801, when Mr. Jefferson came to the presidency, the time had arrived, he thought, to place the intercourse of the United States and the Barbary Powers on a different footing.

The practice of electing to the presidency a man grown gray in the

service of the public had this advantage: An intelligent and patriotic person, while serving in subordinate stations, acquires a great deal of special knowledge, gets a particular insight into weak places in the system of which he is a part, and perfects in his mind schemes of change or reform. He has often said to himself, "If I were president, I would recommend such a plan, or adopt such a measure." Of all this knowledge, experience, and reflection, the country derives the benefit, if the tried servant of the State happens to be one of those rarely-gifted men who possess the strength to execute, in the presence of mankind, what they have meditated in seclusion.

From the beginning of the national part of his public life, Jefferson's attention had been, of necessity, drawn to this fell business of capturing Christians for ransom. To the reams of despatches and reports which he wrote on the subject as plenipotentiary in Paris, he was obliged to add annual quires as secretary of state in Philadelphia. Frustration followed frustration, until at length, when he was no longer in office, the government, in its extreme desire to procure the release of men wearing out their lives in bondage, yielded to the pirates' demands, and got the captives home at the prodigious cost of money and dignity just named. But now he was president. The Federalists had availed themselves of the transient delusion of the people in 1797, with regard to the intentions of the French government, to create a navy; which Jefferson immediately reduced by putting all but six vessels out of commission. His first important act as president was to despatch four of the six,—three frigates and a sloop,—to the Mediterranean to overawe the pirates, and cruise in protection of American commerce. Thus began the series of events which finally rendered the commerce of the world as safe from piracy in the Mediterranean as it was in the British Channel. How brilliantly Decatur and his gallant comrades executed the intentions of the government, and how, at last, the tardy naval powers of Europe followed an example they ought to have set, every one is supposed to know. Commodore Decatur was the Farragut of that generation. There was something really exquisite in Jefferson's turning the infant navy of the infant nation to a use so legitimate, but also so unexpected and so original. What in 1785 he had urged the combined naval

powers to attempt, he was enabled to begin to effect in 1805 by the confidence of Congress and the valor of a few heroes. There is something peculiarly pleasing in the spectacle of a peace-man's making a successful fight, when that fight is clearly forced upon him by an essential difference in the grade of civilization between himself and his enemy, — the only justification of a war that will stand modern tests.

## CHAPTER LXIV.

### LOUISIANA PURCHASED.

THE acquisition of Louisiana was, also, the completion of much which Jefferson had meditated years before. He may have heard Dr. Franklin repeat, in 1784, the remark which the acute old man once made to Mr. Jay, "I would rather agree with the Spaniards to buy at a great price the whole of their right on the Mississippi, than sell a drop of its waters. A neighbor might as well ask me to sell my street-door." Whether he heard it or not, his public acts and utterances show that he agreed with Dr. Franklin. As secretary of state in 1790, when there appeared some danger of Great Britain seizing New Orleans, he gave it as his official opinion to President Washington, that, rather than see Louisiana and Florida added to the British Empire, the United States should brave the risks of joining actively in the general war then supposed to be impending. But not less averse to the French possessing it, he warned them also, in the same year, to let it alone. The French minister in Philadelphia was supposed to have indulged a dream of planting a new colony of his countrymen somewhere within the vast and vague Louisiana that was once all their own. The secretary of state gave him Punch's advice, DON'T. He caused it to be softly intimated to him after his return to France, through the American minister there, that such a project could not be advantageous to France, and would not be pleasing to the United States. France, he owned, might sell a few more yards of cloth and silk in that country; but, said he, the Count de Moustier did not take into consideration "what it would cost France to nurse and protect a colony there till *it should be able to join its neighbors*, or to stand by itself, and then what it would cost her to get rid of it." And there was something else the Count did not think of. "The place being

ours," added Mr. Jefferson, "their yards of cloth and silk would be as freely sold as if it were theirs." This in 1790, twelve years before there there was any expectation of the place being ours.

The war-cloud of 1790 blew over, and the Spaniards remained in possession. Trouble enough they gave the government during the rest of Jefferson's tenure of office. Holding both Florida and Louisiana, they sometimes stirred up the Creeks to war, they always interposed obstacles to the free outlet of the products of Kentucky, and they occasionally threatened to close the mouth of the river altogether to American commerce. In many a vigorous despatch, Jefferson remonstrated with the Spanish government, warning them that a spark might kindle a flame in the breasts of "our borderers," which could not be controlled. "In such an event," he wrote in 1791, "Spain cannot possibly gain; and what may she not lose?" Next year he demanded a frank and complete concession of the right to navigate the river; appealing, finally, to the law of nature, written on the heart of man in the deepest characters, that the ocean is free to all men, and the rivers to all who inhabit their shores. The treaty was concluded; but there was never a year thereafter in which the Kentuckians were not in feud, more or less violent, with the Spanish authorities at New Orleans. There were times when only the strong, instinctive regard for law and decorum which marks men who own no laws but of their own making, prevented "our borderers" from seizing New Orleans, and setting the Spaniards floating down toward the sea.

Jefferson had not been president two months before Louisiana became again a subject of anxious concern with him. A despatch from Rufus King, American minister in London, dated March 29, 1801, contained an intimation of startling import. It was whispered about, he said, in diplomatic circles, that Spain had ceded Louisiana and Florida to France! Can it be true? Some weeks later Mr. King, who felt all the import of such a change, conversed with Lord Hawksbury on the subject, using as a text Montesquieu's remark, "It is happy for the commercial powers that God has permitted Turks and Spaniards to be in the world, since of all nations they are the most proper to possess a great empire with insignificance." "We are contented," said Mr. King, "that the Floridas should remain in the hands of Spain, but should not be willing to see them transferred, except to ourselves." By Floridas he meant

Louisiana and Florida. Lord Hawksbury proved on this occasion that he perfectly divined Bonaparte's object. He said in June, 1801, what Bonaparte avowed in April, 1803, that the acquisition of Louisiana was the beginning of an attempt to undo the work of the Seven Years' War. During all the rest of the year 1801, we see Mr. Madison writing anxiously to the American ministers in Paris, London, and Madrid: How is it about this rumored cession of Louisiana? Inquire. Send us information.

Those gentlemen inquired diligently. Mr. King, in December, 1801, was all but sure the cession had been made, and sent what he believed to be a true copy of one of the treaties involving the cession. Mr. Livingston had "broken the subject" to two of Bonaparte's ministers. Both denied that the province had been ceded. One of them, in reply to an intimation that the United States would buy it, said, "None but spendthrifts satisfy their debts by selling their lands;" adding, after a pause, "but it is not ours to give" Talleyrand also (December, 1801) declared that the cession had only been talked of. In March, 1802, when Mr. Livingston had been several months in Paris, he was still unable to get official information of a treaty which had then been in existence a year. But he had no serious doubts. "It is a darling object with the First Consul," he wrote to Mr. Madison, March, 24, "who sees in it a means to gratify his friends and to dispose of his armies. There is a man here who calls himself a Frenchman, by the name of Francis Tatergem, who pretends to have great interest with the Creek nations. He has been advanced to the rank of a general of division. He persuades them that the Indians are extremely attached to France, and hate the Americans; that they can raise twenty thousand warriors; that the country is a paradise. I believe him to be a mere adventurer, but he is listened to."

This news, confirmed from many quarters and inferred from many facts, was alarming indeed. Nor could it be longer confined to official circles. Kentucky was in a flame. The president was deeply stirred; for he was as well aware as Rufus King that the new master of the mouth of the Mississippi was not a person whom an eloquent despatch could intimidate. The Spaniards had retained Louisiana on sufferance: the United States could have it at any time from *them*; but the French would be likely to hold their ancient possession with a tighter clutch, and not content themselves



with two or three trading-posts in a fertile territory large enough for an empire. Jefferson, from the hour when the intelligence reached him, had only this thought: The French must not have New Orleans; no one but ourselves must own our own street-door. He had been a year in pursuit of his object before the public suspected that the peace of Amiens was only a truce; and he was prepared to join the next coalition against Bonaparte, rather than not accomplish it. So far was Mr. Livingston from anticipating Jefferson's scheme, that he, as he himself reports, "on all occasions declared, that, as long as France conforms to the existing treaty between us and Spain, the government of the United States does not consider herself as having any interest in opposing the exchange." These words were written January 13, 1802. The despatches which he received from Washington in May must have surprised him, for they notified him that the government of the United States was resolved to prevent the exchange.

Besides the formal and official despatches which Mr. Madison wrote on the subject, the president himself addressed to Mr. Livingston one of those letters of fire which he occasionally produced when his whole soul was set upon accomplishing a purpose. On the one hand, the United States *could* not let the French control the mouth of the Mississippi; on the other, the president felt that a conflict with Napoleon would finally necessitate an "entangling alliance" with Great Britain. The one chance, he thought, of avoiding both these giant evils lay in an appeal to the reason of Napoleon, for whose understanding he had then some respect. This powerful letter, though directed to the American minister, was evidently aimed at the intellect of the First Consul. He began by saying, that, of all the nations in the world, France was the one with which the United States had the fewest points of probable collision, and the most of a communion of interests; and for this reason we had ever esteemed her our *natural* friend, viewing her growth as our own, her misfortunes ours. BUT —

"There is on the globe one single spot, the possessor of which is our natural and habitual enemy. It is New Orleans, through which the produce of three-eighths of our territory must pass to market; and from its fertility it will ere long yield more than half of our whole produce, and contain more than half our inhabitants

France, placing herself in that door, assumes to us the attitude of defiance. Spain might have retained it quietly for years. Her pacific dispositions, her feeble state, would induce her to increase our facilities there, so that her possession of the place would be hardly felt by us; and it would not, perhaps, be very long before some circumstance might arise which might make the cession of it to us the price of something of more worth to her. Not so can it ever be in the hands of France: the impetuosity of her temper; the energy and restlessness of her character, placed in a point of eternal friction with us; and our character, which, though quiet, and loving peace and the pursuit of wealth, is high-minded, despising wealth in competition with insult or injury, enterprising and energetic as any nation on earth, — these circumstances render it impossible that France and the United States can continue long friends when they meet in so irritating a position. They, as well as we, must be blind if they do not see this; and we must be very improvident if we do not begin to make arrangements on that hypothesis. The day that France takes possession of New Orleans fixes the sentence which is to restrain her forever within her low-water-mark. It seals the union of two nations, who, in conjunction, can maintain exclusive possession of the ocean. From that moment we must marry ourselves to the British fleet and nation. We must turn all our attentions to a maritime force, for which our resources place us on very high ground; and having formed and connected together a power which may render re-enforcement of her settlements here impossible to France, make the first cannon which shall be fired in Europe the signal for tearing up any settlement she may have made, and for holding the two continents of America in sequestration for the common purposes of the United British and American nations.”

His conclusion was, that it was for the most obvious interest of both nations for France to cede Louisiana to the United States; but if that could not be, then, at least, the island of New Orleans and Florida, making the Mississippi River the boundary between the possessions of the two countries. “But still,” added the president, “we should consider New Orleans and the Floridas no equivalent for the risk of a quarrel with France produced by her vicinage.” At this time the rumor prevailed that Florida also had been ceded to

France, which proved to be not the case, much to the cost of the United States a quarter of a century later.

It happened that an ancient French friend of Jefferson's, M. Dupont de Nemours, a republican exile of the Revolution, was going home, in the spring of 1802, after a long residence in the United States, to spend the evening of his life in his native country. To him the president intrusted this letter open, urging him, before sealing it, to possess himself thoroughly of its contents, in order that he might aid in "informing the wisdom of Bonaparte" and enlightening the circle that surrounded him. "In Europe," wrote Jefferson to this republican statesman and author, "nothing but Europe is seen;" a remark nearly as true in 1873 as it was in 1802. "But," he continued, "this little event, of France's possessing herself of Louisiana, which is thrown in as nothing, as a mere make-weight in the general settlement of accounts, — this speck which now appears as an almost invisible point in the horizon, — is the embryo of a tornado which will burst on the countries on both sides of the Atlantic, and involve in its effects their highest destinies." He asked another service of this friend, who was not less a friend to the United States than to the president. Talleyrand, Minister for Foreign Affairs, was at this moment, if we may believe M. Thiers, the minister who could do most to soothe the blinding passions of Napoleon, and dispose him to a reasonable view of things. But Talleyrand was supposed to be out of humor with the United States, on account of the explosion of 1797, commonly called the X Y Z affair; when it was a point of party tactics with the Federalists to maintain that Talleyrand was the person who "struck" the American envoys for twelve hundred thousand francs. The president requested M. Dupont to endeavor to talk Talleyrand out of this ill-humor, by assuring him that the people who spread abroad that story had been consigned to private life, while those now in power were "precisely those who disbelieved it, and saw nothing in it but an attempt to deceive our country." He had even another request, so intent was he upon this vital business. He begged M. Dupont to deliver the letter to Chancellor Livingston with his own hands, and to charge Madame Dupont, if any accident happened to him, to deliver it with her own hands.

The letter and Mr. Madison's despatches reached Mr. Livingston n due time. M. Dupont could not do much toward "informing the

wisdom of Bonaparte." He did himself the honor of detesting Bonaparte and all his works; refused to serve under him when office was offered; and at last, when the tyrant returned from Elba, the old man, past seventy-five then, despairing of his country, declared he would no longer be exposed to pass, in a day, from one master to another, *comme une courtisane ou un courtisan*, took ship for the United States, and spent the rest of his life on his son's farm in Delaware.

Nor can it be said that Mr. Livingston made much impression upon Bonaparte's wisdom. Bonaparte had no wisdom to inform. He was fully resolved upon his scheme of colonizing Louisiana on a grand scale: the ships were designated, and officers were appointed. The expedition was to consist of two ships-of-the-line, "several frigates," three thousand troops, and three thousand workmen. Bernadotte was first thought of for governor of the colony; but the appointment finally fell to Lieutenant-General Victor, who afterwards bore the ridiculous title of Duc de Bellune, and survived all that histrionic pageant nearly long enough to see its mimicry mimicked in our own day. Mr. Livingston could make no head against the infatuation of the First Consul. He wrote an "essay," of which he had twenty copies printed, and extracted from Talleyrand a promise to "give it an attentive perusal." But he could not so much as prevail upon him to submit the case to his master. It would be "premature," said the minister; "for the French government has determined to take possession first." Mr. Livingston felt the uselessness of all attempts to prevent the departure of the fleet. "There never was," he wrote to Mr. Madison, September 1, 1802, "a government in which less could be done by negotiation than here. There is no people, no legislature, no counsellors. One man is every thing. He seldom asks advice, and never hears it unasked. His ministers are mere clerks; and his legislature and counsellors are parade officers. Though the sense of every reflecting man about him is against this wild expedition, no one dares to tell him so."

The whole twenty-eight volumes of the correspondence of Napoleon, recently given to the world, might be cited in proof of Mr. Livingston's remarks; but the man never appears to have lived in quite such a tumult of business and passion as during that year and a half of "peace." In turning over the other volumes, the reader hears, from first to last, the steady roll of the drum, the rattle of mus-

ketry, the thunder of cannonade, the short, sharp word of command; and he marks everywhere an assumption that fighting is the chief end of man, to which all other pursuits are immeasurably inferior. But in these two volumes of the year X, vulgarly styled 1802, there is such a rush of projects and topics demanding notice of the head of the nation, that we cannot discover a gap large enough to admit a modest and polite old gentleman, hard of hearing, with a request that the First Consul would please to be so good as to relinquish his Louisiana scheme, and cede all those uncounted and unknown square miles to a country, which, according to Talleyrand, was of no more account in general politics than Genoa. Suppose it was on the 4th of May that Mr. Livingston desired a hearing. That day, in the lingo of the Revolution, which Bonaparte still employed, was called Floréal 14, An X. It was a busy day, indeed, with the First Consul; for he was disposing the minds of men to view his next step toward an imperial throne, without an unmanageable excess of consternation. How sweetly this great histrionic genius discoursed to the Council of State that morning! "In all lands, force yields to civic qualities. Bayonets fall before the priest who speaks in the name of Heaven, and before the man whose learning inspires respect. I have said to military men who had scruples, that a military government could never prevail in France until the nation had become brutalized by fifty years of ignorance. Soldiers are only the children of the citizens. The army, it is the nation." Turn over a few leaves, and you catch him scolding Berthier for not pushing the conscription vigorously enough. "*Recruiting*," he adds, "*is the first and most important concern of the nation.*" Meanwhile, we see him thanking the Senate for a new proof of their confidence, in having made him First Consul for ten years longer. "You judge that I owe a new sacrifice to the people. I shall make it if the will of the people commands that which your suffrage authorizes."

This new lease of absolute power brought with it a world of urgent business, in the intervals of which there was nothing too high for him to meditate and no detail too trifling for him to rule. It was a case of *one mind* trying to govern a country, instead of *all the mind in it*, which alone is competent to the task. If a general fights a duel, it is the First Consul who exiles him to that dread Siberia of the French of that age, "thirty leagues from Paris." A soldier kills himself for love: it is the First Consul who issues an



Order of the Day on the subject: "A soldier should know how to bear up under the grief and melancholy of the passions: there is as much true courage in enduring anguish of mind with constancy as in standing firm under the steady fire of a battery." A young lady is attentive to the poor during an epidemic; and it is still the First Consul who sends her twenty thousand francs, and a note telling her what a good girl she is.

In his strong desire to accomplish the purpose of his government, Mr. Livingston had recourse, like many other anxious diplomatists, to Joseph Bonaparte. Joseph told him that his brother was his own counsellor, but at the same time an affectionate brother, to whom he had access at all times, and whose attention he could call to any subject. He assured the American minister that his brother had read with attention the essay, or memoir, upon Louisiana, which Mr. Livingston had prepared. Perhaps he had. One thing is certain: the First Consul held to his purpose. The expedition was delayed, but not abandoned. December 19, 1802, Victor was ordered to despatch a member of his staff to Washington to notify the French minister there that the French government was about to take possession of Louisiana; and February 3, 1803, there was an order given (8 Correspondence, 199) showing that the expedition was still under sailing-orders, and soon to depart. Livingston despaired of getting New Orleans by negotiation. His earnest "notes" to Talleyrand remained unnoticed. His opinion was this: If we want New Orleans, we must seize it first, and negotiate afterwards. To Madison he wrote in November, 1802: Nothing can now prevent the sailing of the expedition; it will be off in twenty days; two and a half millions of francs are appropriated to it. Fortify Natchez, strengthen all the upper posts.

All these efforts on the part of the administration to solve this problem by peaceful methods were unknown to the people of the United States. Kentucky saw the right of deposit denied by a foolish Spanish governor, and heard rumors of the French expedition, which magnified it four times, making its three thousand troops and three thousand workmen, "twenty thousand troops." The press and stump of Kentucky, it is said, began to utter words like these: "The Mississippi is ours by the law of nature, by the authority of numbers, and by the right of necessity. If Congress cannot give it to us, we must take it ourselves. No protection, no allegiance!"



The Federalists were not backward to take up this promising cry: "The French troops are already at sea," said Gouverneur Morris: "their arrival should be anticipated; it is time to come to an open rupture." With all his own fine patience, the president bore in silence, for a whole year, the outcry of the Kentuckians and the misinterpretation of the Federalists. But only a few days of the new year, 1803, had passed before he perceived the necessity of some measure which the people could know, discuss, and observe. He wrote to his old friend, Monroe, January 10:—

"I have but a moment to inform you that the fever into which the Western mind is thrown by the affairs at New Orleans (denying the right of deposit), stimulated by the mercantile and generally the Federal interest, threatens to overbear our peace. . . . I shall to-morrow nominate you to the Senate for an extraordinary mission to France. . . . Pray work night and day to arrange your affairs for a temporary absence, perhaps for a long one."

Two months later Mr. Monroe was travelling post-haste from Havre to Paris, charged with the president's fullest instructions, authorized to give two millions of dollars, if he could do no better, for the island of New Orleans alone, and empowered by Congress to pay cash down on the conclusion of the bargain. X Y Z was not forgotten. Ready money might still have a certain weight in Paris, the president thought, when he recommended the appropriation.

How changed the situation in April, 1803, from the time when the president stunned Mr. Monroe with the announcement of his nomination! For some months, as we see so plainly in his Correspondence, Bonaparte had been working himself up to the point of breaking the peace of Amiens; fuming about Malta, about the assaults of the London press, about the Count D'Artois wearing the decorations of the old monarchy at a dress-parade in England, and all those other silly half-pretexts which he afterwards enumerated while urging his minister of war to take every man from the villages which a merciless conscription could extort. At length, February 19, 1803, there fell from his pen, while he was writing his imitation-message to his sham legislature, the taunt, once so familiar to all the world, "In England, two parties contend for power. One has made peace with us, and seems decided to maintain it. The

other has sworn implacable hate against France. While this struggle lasts, it is but prudence on our part to have five hundred thousand men ready to defend and avenge ourselves. However the intrigue in London may issue, no other people will be drawn into the contest; and the government says with just pride, *ALONE ENGLAND CANNOT TO-DAY HOLD HER OWN AGAINST FRANCE!*" The very next day the order went to the Louisiana expedition at Dunkirk: Don't sail till further orders. George III. was prompt enough with his retort. He read Bonaparte's message about February 23; and on March 8 he sent to the House of Commons the lumbering message in twenty lines, that gave Napoleon Bonaparte the pretext he longed for, and began the war that ended at — Sedan. The king merely acquainted his faithful Commons, that, as considerable military preparations were going on in France, England, too, must begin to think of "additional measures of precaution." Bonaparte continued the contest by storming at the English ambassador in the Tuileries, at a Sunday reception, in the sight and hearing of the whole diplomatic corps, two hundred in number. In a word, both parties meant war; and war they had, to their hearts' content.

A month passed of intensest preparation on both sides. Bonaparte's plan was to invade England, — a thing of immense difficulty and vast expense. He wanted money, and dared not press the French people further at the beginning of a war. On Easter Sunday, April 10, in the afternoon, after having taken conspicuous part in the revived ceremonies of the occasion (Mr. Monroe being still many leagues from Paris, but expected hourly), the First Consul opened a conversation with two of his ministers upon Louisiana. One of these ministers, who reports the scene, was that old friend of Jefferson's, Barbé-Marbois, for whom, twenty-six years before, he had compiled his Notes on Virginia, — a gentleman ten years resident at Philadelphia, where he married the daughter of a governor of Pennsylvania. The other minister had served in America under Rochambeau during the Revolutionary War.

"I know," said the First Consul, speaking with "passion and vehemence, — "I know the full value of Louisiana, and I have been desirous of repairing the fault of the French negotiator who abandoned it in 1763. A few lines of a treaty have restored it to me, and I have scarcely recovered it when I must expect to lose it. But, if it escapes from me, it shall one day cost dearer to those who oblige me

to strip myself of it than to those to whom I wish to deliver it. The English have successively taken from France, Canada, Cape Breton, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and the richest portions of Asia. They shall not have the Mississippi, which they covet. I have not a moment to lose in putting it out of their reach: I think of ceding it to the United States. I can scarcely say that I cede it to them, for it is not yet in our possession. If, however, I leave the least time to our enemies, I shall only transmit an empty title to those republicans whose friendship I seek. They only ask of me one town in Louisiana: but I already consider the colony as entirely lost; and it appears to me, that, in the hands of this growing power, it will be more useful to the policy, and even to the commerce of France, than if I should attempt to keep it."

He paused to hear the opinion of the two ministers. Barbé-Marbois said, in a long discourse, The province is as good as gone. Let the Americans have it. The other said at great length, No: there is still a chance of our being able to keep it; it will be time to give up so precious a possession when we must. The three continued to converse on the subject till late at night, and the master broke up the conference without announcing his decision. The ministers remained at St. Cloud. At daybreak Barbé-Marbois received a summons to attend the First Consul in his cabinet. Despatches had arrived from England, showing that the king and ministry were entirely resolved upon war, and were pushing preparations with extraordinary vigor. When M. Marbois had read these, Bonaparte resumed the subject of the evening's conversation:—

"Irresolution and deliberation," he said, "are no longer in reason. I renounce Louisiana. It is not only New Orleans that I will cede: it is the whole colony, without any reservation. I renounce it with the greatest regret. To attempt obstinately to retain it would be folly. I direct you to negotiate this affair with the envoys of the United States. Do not even await the arrival of Mr. Monroe: have an interview this very day with Mr. Livingston. But I require a great deal of money for this war, and I would not like to commence it with new contributions. If I should regulate my terms according to the value of those vast regions to the United States, the indemnity would have no limits. I will be moderate, in consideration of the necessity in which I am of making a sale; but keep this to yourself. I want fifty millions of francs, and for less than that sum I

will not treat: I would rather make a desperate attempt to keep those fine countries. To-morrow you shall have your full powers."

The deed was done. The rest was merely the usual cheapening and chaffering that passes between buyer and seller when the commodity has no market-price. Mr. Monroe's arrival was well timed, for Mr. Livingston had lost all faith in the possibility of getting New Orleans by purchase, and was unprepared even to consider a proposition for buying the whole province. He evidently thought that the French ministers were all liars together; and he looked upon this sudden change of tone, after so many months of neglect or evasion, as a mere artifice for delay. "If Mr. Monroe agrees with me," said Livingston to Talleyrand, a day or two before Monroe's arrival, "we shall negotiate no further on the subject, but advise our government to take possession. The times are critical; and, though I do not know what instructions Mr. Monroe may bring, I am perfectly satisfied they will require a precise and prompt notice. I am fearful, from the little progress I have made, that my government will consider me a very indolent negotiator." Talleyrand laughed. "I will give you a certificate," said he, "that you are the most importunate one I have yet met with."

But Mr. Livingston soon discovered that all had really changed with regard to Louisiana. On the day after Monroe's arrival, while sitting at dinner with him and other guests, Livingston espied M. Barbé-Marbois strolling about in his garden. During the interview that followed, business made progress. Marbois took the liberty of telling a few diplomatic falsehoods to the American minister. Instead of the "fifty millions," which, in his *History of Louisiana*, he says Napoleon demanded, he told Mr. Livingston that the sum required was one hundred millions. He represented the First Consul as saying, "Well, you have charge of the treasury: make the Americans give you one hundred millions, pay their own claims, and take the whole country." Mr. Livingston was aghast at the magnitude of the sum. After a long conversation, Marbois dropped to sixty millions; the United States to pay its own claimants, which would require twenty millions more. "It is in vain to ask such a thing," said Livingston: "it is so greatly beyond our means." He thought, too, that his government would be perfectly satisfied with New Orleans and Florida, and had no disposition to extend across the river."

Then it was that Mr. Monroe, fresh from Washington, and knowing the full extent of the president's wishes, knowing his aversion to the mere proximity of the French, came upon the scene with decisive and most happy effect. In a few days all was arranged. M. Barbé-Marbois's offer was accepted. Twenty days after the St. Cloud conference, and eighteen days after Mr. Monroe's arrival, the convention was concluded which gave imperial magnitude and completeness to the United States, and supplied Napoleon with fifteen millions of dollars to squander upon a vain attempt to invade and ravage another country. M. Marbois relates, that, as soon as the three negotiators had signed the treaties, they all rose and shook hands. Mr. Livingston gave utterance to the joy and satisfaction of them all.

"We have lived long," said he, "but this is the noblest work of our whole lives. The treaty which we have just signed has not been obtained by art nor dictated by force, and is equally advantageous to the two contracting parties. It will change vast solitudes into flourishing districts. From this day the United States take their place among the powers of the first rank. The United States will re-establish the maritime rights of all the world, which are now usurped by a single nation. The instruments which we have just signed will cause no tears to be shed: they prepare ages of happiness for innumerable generations of human creatures. The Mississippi and Missouri will see them succeed one another and multiply, truly worthy of the regard and care of Providence, in the bosom of equality, under just laws, freed from the errors of superstition and bad government."

Bonaparte was so well pleased with the bargain, that he gave M. Marbois one hundred and ninety-two thousand francs of the proceeds. Sixty millions, he said, was a pretty good price for a province of which he had not taken possession, and might not be able to retain twenty-four hours. He also said, "This accession of territory strengthens forever the power of the United States; and I have just given to England a maritime rival that will sooner or later humble her pride." Strange to relate, the British government expressed approval of the cession. All the world, indeed, rejoiced or acquiesced in it, excepting alone the irreconcilable fag-end of the Federalist party, who, from the first rumor of the purchase to the voting of the last dollar necessary to complete it, opposed the acquisition.

One of the Federalist members, Josiah Quincy of Massachusetts



objected to it on grounds that were elevated and patriotic. Looking into the future with wise but only mortal forecast, he dreaded so vast an increase to the territory out of which many slave-States could be made. His son relates, that, during the happiest years of the Era of Good Feeling under Monroe, he would say, "You and I may not live to see the day; but, before that boy is off the stage, he will see this country torn in pieces by the fierce passions that are now sleeping." Both father and son lived to "see the day;" and the father, in 1864, his ninety-second year and his last, must have clearly seen that slavery, which vitiated all our politics, spoiled every measure, and injured every man, was an evanescent thing. Slavery passed, but Louisiana remains. "If slavery is not wrong," Mr. Lincoln said, in that homely, vivid way of his, "nothing is wrong." It was *so* wrong, that, while it lasted, nothing in America could be quite right, except war upon it.

One consideration embarrassed the president amid the relief and triumph of this peaceful solution of a problem so alarming. He, a strict constructionist, had done an act unauthorized by the Constitution. He owned and justified it thus: "The Constitution has made no provision for our holding foreign territory, still less for incorporating foreign nations into our Union. The executive, in seizing the fugitive occurrence which so much advances the good of their country, have done an act beyond the Constitution. The legislature, in casting behind them metaphysical subtleties, and risking themselves like faithful servants, must ratify and pay for it, and throw themselves on their country for doing for them unauthorized, what we know they would have done for themselves had they been in a situation to do it. It is the case of a guardian, investing the money of his ward in purchasing an important adjacent territory; and saying to him when of age, I did this for your good; I pretend to no right to bind you; you may disavow me, and I must get out of the scrape as I can; I thought it my duty to risk myself for you. But we shall not be disavowed by the nation; and their act of indemnity will confirm and not weaken the Constitution, by more strongly marking out its lines." He proposed that the case should be met by an additional article to the Constitution. It is to be regretted that this was not done; for, let us travel as far away as we will from the strict Jeffersonian rule, to strict construction we must come back at last, if it takes a century of heroic struggle to reach it.



It was like Jefferson, when he had won Louisiana, to think first of offering the governorship to Lafayette. It had to remain a thought only. Upon re-considering the situation, he deemed it best not to gratify a sentiment by an act which might be construed as a reflection upon the seller. Andrew Jackson, who was then getting tired of serving as judge of the Supreme Court of Tennessee, was strongly urged for the place; and *because* he had been urged, and *because* he would have liked the appointment, he refrained from calling upon the president when he was in Washington in April, 1804. So I gathered in Nashville from a yellow and musty letter of the learned judge, — which was, perhaps, the worst-spelled and most ungrammatical letter a judge of a supreme court ever wrote. He said, that, if he should call upon the president, it would be regarded as “the act of a courteur;” and, therefore, he “traviled on, enjoying his own feelings.” He confessed, too, that the governor of Louisiana ought to be acquainted with the French language. People can forgive bad spelling when it expresses sentiments so honorable; and happy the president when the expectants of office behave in so **considerate a manner.**

## CHAPTER LXV.

### DOWNFALL OF AARON BURR.

NOT long after Jefferson had entered into possession of Louisiana, rumors reached him that Aaron Burr, for many years his political ally, and recently his associate in the government, was rousing the western country to wrest the province from the United States, and annex it to some vaguely imagined empire of Mexico. Burr's scheme need not detain us here. It is only as a curious illustration of the party ferocity of that time that I recall attention to it for a moment. In recent times we have had nothing resembling the blind, malignant fury of party passion which raged in the breasts of men, otherwise reasonable, during the decline of the Federalists. As that party grew smaller, it seemed as if the whole sum of bitterness which had been diffused in the brimming cup of 1800, remained in the lees and dregs at the bottom of the vessel. Jefferson did not exaggerate when, on sending his nephew to school at Philadelphia, during the second term of his presidency, he told him that the more furious Federalists were little more sane than the patients of Bedlam, who needed medical more than moral counsel.

"Be a listener only," he continued. "Keep within yourself, and endeavor to establish with yourself the habit of silence, especially on politics. In the fevered state of our country no good can ever result from any attempt to set one of these fiery zealots to rights, either in fact or principle. They are determined as to the facts they will believe, and the opinions on which they will act. Get by them, therefore, as you would by an angry bull: it is not for a man of sense to dispute the road with such an animal. You will be more exposed than others to have these animals shaking their horns at you because of the relation in which you stand to me. Full of political venom, and willing to see me and to hate me as a chief in the

antagonist party, your presence will be to them what the vomit-grass is to the sick dog, a nostrum for producing ejaculation. Look upon them exactly with that eye, and pity them as objects to whom you can administer only occasional ease."

Persons familiar with the politics of that period will recognize the truth of this picture. Jefferson might well place it among the first objects of his administration to allay the fury of a party spirit; for at that time the bloody code of the duellist was still despotic in political circles, and political estrangements were only too apt to result in tragedies that desolated families and appalled society. Duels more groundless, and, I may say, more devilish, than some which took place in the United States during the first few years of the present century, have seldom occurred out of Ireland. Consider, for example, the incredible ferocity of the duel between De Witt Clinton and John Swartwout in 1802, when Swartwout, after the fifth exchange of shots, and while the surgeon was extracting from his leg the second ball, stood firmly at his post, and demanded a written apology or another fire.

Less known, but perhaps more remarkable, was the duel which occurred on the same spot between the eldest son of Alexander Hamilton and George Eacker. I have often thought, that, among the many reasons which induced Alexander Hamilton to submit to the barbarous custom of duelling, was the very fact, that his own son had recently done so, and in circumstances similar to those of his own fatal encounter. For although the quarrel between Philip Hamilton and his antagonist appeared to originate in a common theatre brawl, yet, in reality, such was not the case: the two young men belonged to opposite political parties, and their dispute originated in hostile political feeling.

On Friday evening, November 21, 1801, a play was performed in the only theatre then existing in the city of New York. In one of the stage boxes, with a party of friends, sat Mr. George I. Eacker, a young lawyer of some note in the town, a member of the Republican party, then in the first year of its possession of the national government. He was twenty-seven years of age. On the Fourth of July preceding he had delivered the oration at the Democratic celebration of the day, in the course of which he had probably spoken of the Federal magnates with the freedom usual on such occasions at that period. Mr. Eacker was a perfectly respectable

and honorable gentleman; certainly he was entitled to be treated with respect in public by his juniors. In the course of the evening, he heard loud conversation behind him, accompanied with derisive laughter; and, upon looking round, he observed that it came from two well-known young men, Philip Hamilton and a Mr. Price. It was evident to Mr. Eacker that these young gentlemen were talking about *him*, and laughing at him. Philip Hamilton, at this time, was twenty years of age, a recent graduate from Columbia College, and just entering upon the study of the law. Price, the son of a respectable gentleman of the city, was somewhat noted for his dissolute habits and roystering ways.

Mr. Eacker at first took no notice of their behavior. At the end of the play, while the audience were waiting for the after-piece to begin, the two merry young blades crowded into the box occupied by Eacker and his friends, where they at once began to make sarcastic remarks upon the Fourth of July oration before alluded to, and it was but too evident that their observations were intended to be heard by the person who was the subject of them. Eacker's patience giving way, he rose from his seat for the purpose, as he said, of remonstrating with the young men. As he stepped into the lobby, and at a moment when his back was turned toward his assailants, he exclaimed, speaking to himself, —

“It is too abominable to be publicly insulted by a set of d—d rascals.”

Both men instantly asked, “Whom do you call d—d rascals?”

Mr. Eacker, wishing to avoid a disturbance in so public a place, said to the two young scapegraces, —

“I live at No. 50, Wall Street, where I am always to be found.”

“Your place of residence,” said young Hamilton, “has nothing to do with it.”

Upon which the young men rushed at one another, or, at least, they appeared to be about to do so, when one of their friends got between them, and compelled them to keep the peace. Eacker urged his assailants to make less noise, and proposed that they should go to a certain tavern near by, where they could discuss the matter more conveniently. To the tavern they went; and on the way they continued to converse in a hostile tone. When they reached the tavern, both the young men insisted upon Mr. Eacker's naming the individual to whom he had applied the word rascal.

"Did you come into the box on purpose to insult me?" Eacker demanded.

"That is nothing to the purpose," replied one of the young men. "We insist upon your particularizing the person you meant to distinguish by the appellation of rascal."

Mr. Eacker again asked: "Did you mean to insult me?"

"We insist upon a direct answer," repeated the angry youths.

"Well, then," said Eacker, justly indignant at their conduct, "you are *both* rascals."

Upon this the young men, who must have been greatly under the influence of drink, went roaring out of the tavern into the street.

"Gentlemen," said Eacker, "you had better make less noise: I shall expect to hear from you."

"That you shall," said they.

Mr. Eacker immediately returned to his box in the theatre. A few minutes after, he received the briefest possible note from Mr. Price, challenging him to mortal combat. Before the evening closed, a challenge reached him also from young Hamilton. Eacker replied to the person who brought the last note, that he had already received a message from Mr. Price, which he had accepted, and was therefore "engaged to him." After fulfilling that engagement, he added, he should be prepared to receive a communication from Mr. Hamilton.

On Sunday afternoon, between twelve and one o'clock, at the usual duelling-ground on the shores of the Hudson, Eacker and Price met, accompanied by their seconds. They exchanged shots three times, without doing one another any harm, when the seconds interposed, and advised them to make up their quarrel. Both the men, however, insisted on a fourth shot, agreeing that afterwards they would shake hands and be friends. They fired a fourth time without effect; whereupon the jovial Price observed, "Eacker is such a *lath* of a fellow, that I might shoot all day to no purpose."

Amid the laughter occasioned by this lively sally, the antagonists fulfilled their promise by shaking hands, and both parties returned to New York. Instantly on the arrival of Eacker in the city, he sent word to Philip Hamilton's friend, that, having disposed of Mr. Price, he was now ready to receive a communication from Mr. Hamilton, which could be transmitted to the friend whom he named. The two seconds met. They had a long conversation together, both of them endeavoring to hit upon some expedient for accommodating

the absurd difficulty. There was a great deal of running to and fro that afternoon and evening, and many long consultations with those who were learned in the art of duelling. Young Hamilton knew well that he had been in the wrong, and yet, after the events at Hoboken that afternoon, had not the courage to say so; and, considering the state of public feeling at that time, such a confession would probably have blasted his prospects for life. All that he could be persuaded to do was, to send a message to Eacker, "requiring an explanation of the expressions which he had made use of to Mr. Hamilton at the theatre on Friday night."

The gentleman who conveyed this ridiculous message said, that, if Mr. Eacker desired to consult his friends before giving an answer, he would retire for a short time to enable him to do so. Mr. Eacker accepted the proposal, and asked for fifteen minutes. The messenger returning at the end of that time, Eacker at first endeavored to give his answer verbally, but, after some hesitation, took from his pocket a written paper, which he read as follows:—

"The expressions I made use of towards Mr. Hamilton at the theatre on Friday night last were produced by his conduct on that occasion: I thought them applicable then, and I think so still."

This closed the door to an accommodation, and the meeting was appointed for Monday. Young Hamilton being still convinced (as his friends afterwards avowed and published) that he had been in the wrong, determined to receive the fire of his antagonist, and then discharge his pistol in the air,—precisely as his father resolved to do three years after, and with precisely the same results. The men were placed. The signal was given. Mr. Eacker fired, and inflicted a mortal wound. Young Hamilton could not carry out his intention, for the shock of his wound discharged his pistol before he could raise it into the air. The wounded youth was immediately rowed across the river, and taken to a house near the shore, to which his parents and friends were speedily summoned. It appeared that the ball had entered the right side just above the hip, passed completely through the body, and lodged in the left arm. There is a letter in the New York Historical Magazine, written by one of his young friends a day or two after the event, which contains an affecting description of the scene round his bed:—



“ All the physicians in town were called for, and the news spread like a conflagration. At the theatre I was informed of it about nine o'clock Monday evening. I immediately ran to the house near the State's prison, from whence I was told they dare not remove him. Picture to yourself the emotions which must have assailed me on my arrival at his room, to which I was admitted as his old college class-mate! On a bed without curtains lay poor Phil, pale and languid, his rolling, distorted eyeballs darting forth the flashes of delirium. On one side of him, on the same bed, lay his agonized father; on the other, his distracted mother; around him numerous relatives and friends, weeping and fixed in sorrow. Blanched with astonishment and affright was the countenance, which, a few minutes before, was illumined by the smile of merriment. I could continue in the room but a very short time. Returning home, I quickened my pace almost unconsciously, hoping to escape the image as well as the reality of what I had witnessed.”

Strange coincidence! Three years later, near the same place, surrounded by nearly the same company, lay the father of this ill-starred youth, dying from a similar wound, received in a similar encounter, on the same spot! The young man lingered through the night in great agony, and died about five o'clock on the following morning. His father was so overcome by his grief, at the funeral, that he had to be supported to the grave between two of his friends.

The hapless youth, whose life was thus suddenly extinguished, appears to have been chiefly noted for the gayety of his disposition, which made him a favorite with his young friends. It was thought a fine thing then for a young man to be dissolute. People foolishly regarded it as a proof of spirit; and, consequently, few thought the less of “Phil Hamilton” for being “a gay boy about town.” This is another proof that the world is both wiser and better than it was sixty years ago. We now know that dissipation in a young man is not an indication of “spirit,” but an absolute proof of the want of it. Dull, indeed, must be the *youth* who needs artificial aid to gayety and merriment.

The standing of Aaron Burr in the Republican party was destroyed many months before his duel with General Hamilton, and it was destroyed by calumny. True it is that the man had no right to a place in the party at all; for his political convictions, if he had

any, and the natural bias of his mind, were anti-Republican. Nevertheless, the specific charge that destroyed him was false. The charge was, that, during the existence of the tie in 1801, he had intrigued with the Federalists to be elected to the first place in the government, instead of the second. This was not only morally improbable, but physically impossible; but the accusation sufficed, in the peculiar circumstances of the time and place, to deprive him of the confidence of his party.

In January, 1804, the year of the presidential election, and six months before the duel, he sought an interview with Mr. Jefferson, and conversed with him at great length upon his own position. He frankly told the president, that, in his opinion, it would be for the interests of the Republican party that he should not attempt to secure a renomination to the vice-presidency. It would divide the party, he thought; but, if he were to retire voluntarily, it would be said that he shrunk from the public condemnation.

"My enemies," said he, "are using your name to destroy me; and something is necessary from you to prevent it, and deprive them of that weapon, — some mark of favor from you, which will declare to the world that I retire with your confidence."

Mr. Jefferson replied, that as he had never interfered with the election of 1800, nor with the choice of candidates, so in the election then coming on, he was observing the same line of conduct: he held no councils with anybody respecting it, nor suffered any one to speak to him on the subject, as he believed it to be his duty to leave himself to the free discussion of the public.

"I do not," continued the president, "at this moment know, nor have ever heard, who were to be proposed as candidates for the public choice, except so far as can be gathered from the newspapers."

Mr. Jefferson did not respond favorably to Colonel Burr's request to be appointed to one of the great offices in the president's gift. Politics make strange bedfellows. Without liking or ever implicitly trusting Colonel Burr, he had been connected with him for many years by party ties; and Burr had certainly contributed materially to the success of the Republican party in 1800. He had lived on terms of perfect civility with the vice-president, but no more. On this occasion, he distinctly enough declined to nominate Burr to the office which, doubtless, both of them had in their minds at the time, — that of minister to France. Colonel Burr left the matter with

the president for further consideration. The subject, however, was never renewed between them.

Burr pursued his destiny. Defeated in a contest for the governorship of New York, he challenged to mortal combat his old rival at the bar and constant opponent in politics, Alexander Hamilton, whom he must have regarded as the chief cause of his late failure. That fatal duel on the 11th of July, 1804, made him a fugitive and a wanderer on the face of the earth. He returned, however, to Washington, where he completed with credit his term of service as vice-president, and then entered upon that career of western adventure and conspiracy which ended in his total ruin.

In the spring of 1806, before taking the irretrievable step, being in the city of Washington, he again applied to the president for an appointment. He claimed, and justly claimed, that he had assisted to place the present administration in power. He added, that he could do Mr. Jefferson much harm, but he wished to be on different grounds with him. He was now disengaged from all particular business, was willing to engage in something, and should be in town some days, if the president should have any thing to propose to him.

The president had nothing to propose to him. Mr. Jefferson replied, —

“I have always been sensible that you possessed talents which might be employed greatly to the advantage of the public; and, as to myself, I have a confidence, that, if you were employed, you would use your talents for the public good. But you must be sensible that the public have withdrawn their confidence from you; and in a government like ours it is necessary to embrace in its administration as great a mass of public confidence as possible, by employing those who have a character with the public of their own, and not merely a secondary one through the executive.”

“If we believe a few newspapers,” said Burr, “it may be supposed that I have lost the public confidence; but you know how easy it is to engage newspapers in any thing.”

“I do not refer,” rejoined the president, “to that kind of evidence of your having lost the public confidence, but to the late presidential election, when, though in possession of the office of vice-president, there was not a single voice heard for your retaining it. As

to any harm you can do me, I know no cause why you should desire it; but, at the same time, I fear no injury which any man can do me. I have never done a single act, or been concerned in any transaction, which I fear to have fully laid open, or which could do me any hurt if truly stated."

Burr remained in Washington for a month after this interview, during which he dined with the president; and, when he was about to depart, he called to take leave. Soon after he directed his course westward, and was seen in Washington no more.

A year passed. The disappearance from the scene of his former activity of so remarkable a person as Colonel Burr was, of itself, provocative of curiosity. But in September, 1806, the president began to receive intimations of strange and suspicious movements in the western country, in which Burr seemed to be the chief person concerned. He deemed it best to send to the Ohio George Graham, a confidential clerk in the War-Office, who was directed to ascertain the nature and object of these movements. Graham directed his course to Blennerhassett Island, where a few conversations with the credulous lord of the isle made him acquainted with the general purport of the scheme. Meanwhile Mr. Jefferson received from General Wilkinson unquestionable proofs that an irregular and lawless project of some kind was on foot, of which Aaron Burr was the ruling spirit. A short proclamation shattered the scheme in an instant, and made the adventurer a fugitive in the Alabama forests. He was arrested, and brought to Richmond for trial.

And now the Federalists gave another proof of what I have before deliberately asserted, that, of all the parties that ever rose to power in a free country, this one, composed chiefly of the educated portion of the people, was the most destitute of political morality. What could Aaron Burr have done against the Federalists that he had not done? He had actively opposed them from the first year of their existence as a party. He had been one of the principal means of their expulsion from power. He had resisted their overtures to reconciliation. He had slain their leader. And now he had engaged in a scheme, which, though it might have stopped short of treason, was known to be improper and unlawful. Nevertheless, no sooner had he reached Richmond a prisoner, than the Federalists

took him up, affected to sympathize with him as a martyr, extolled, caressed, and *fêted* him. John Marshall, chief justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, — even he, a man punctiliously just when politics were not involved, accepted an invitation to a dinner given in honor of Aaron Burr, and which he was expressly informed Aaron Burr was to attend. The judge dined in company with the man whom he knew he was about to try on a capital charge. Federalists in New York made a pretence of retaining a briefless barrister, named Washington Irving, himself a Federalist, who went to Richmond, ostensibly to take part in the trial, but really to employ in behalf of the prisoner the most elegant pen of America. The long list of able advocates who assisted Burr did so quite as much for party as for professional reasons.

Luther Martin, then the head of the Maryland bar, made no secret that the motive which actuated him was political. This strange, and now almost forgotten character, was born in New Jersey, in 1744; and, after graduating at Princeton, wandered off to Maryland, where he taught school, studied law, and was admitted to practice. Very early in his career he became a man of distinction; for he served in Congress during the Revolutionary War; and by the time he was forty years of age, he was, beyond all comparison, the head of the bar in the State of Maryland. At a time when learning was the prime requisite for success at the bar, and the quality held in most respect both by the profession and the people, he was admitted to be the most learned of lawyers. At what period of his life he fell under the slavery of drink, no one has recorded. But we know that before he was fifty years of age the habit was fixed, and had made serious depredations on his character and talents.

When young Roger Taney, in 1795, came up to Annapolis to study law, and visited the court where the three judges still wore long scarlet cloaks, and sat in a solemn row in three great chairs on a lofty platform, he was all curiosity to see the great Luther Martin, then near the height of his reputation. Great was the disappointment of the youth. He saw before him a coarse-looking, dirty, and ill-dressed man, who had come into court under the influence of liquor. His attire was a distressing mixture of the gay and the unclean. He wore ruffles at his wrists, bordered with costly lace, although they had long ago gone out of fashion; and those ruffles,

conspicuously broad, were ruffled and dirty. His voice, always harsh, cracked when he was much excited; his arguments were full of digressions; and, as he indulged in constant repetition, his speeches were usually very long. He was really a very good scholar, and wrote with classical correctness; but he seemed to take a barbarous pleasure in using such words as *catch* for caught, and *sat* for sat. At a table, too, his manners were coarse and disgusting.

With all these obvious and offensive faults, which constantly grew upon him, he held his place at the head of his profession for at least twenty years. The late Chief-justice Taney explains this mystery:—

“He was a profound lawyer. He never missed the strong points of his case; and, although much might have been generally better omitted, everybody who listened to him would agree that nothing could be added. He had an iron memory, and forgot nothing that he had read; and he had read a great deal on every branch of law, and took pleasure in showing it when his case did not require it. Many years after I came to the bar, when I was engaged in an important case on the same side with Mr. Shaaff, and Mr. Martin was opposed to us, Mr. Shaaff and myself went over the case together very carefully; and when we had done with the examination, he said, ‘I think the case is with us, and I see nothing in it to be afraid of; *but I am always afraid of Martin.*’ Yet Mr. Shaaff ranked then with the foremost men in Maryland.”

The greatest of Luther Martin’s professional triumphs was at the trial of Judge Chase of the Supreme Court, in 1805, at Washington. Judge Chase was a violent, arrogant man, who, it was charged, had allowed his prejudices as a politician to influence his decisions as a judge. The impeachment created universal interest, and attracted a great multitude of people from all parts of the country. Aaron Burr, the vice-president, presided; and the Senate Chamber was fitted up in grand style, with places for the foreign ambassadors, members of the House of Representatives, and other spectators. The senators sat in a great semicircle on each side of the vice-president, and the temporary galleries were draped with blue cloth; the whole presenting a scene that must have been striking in the extreme. A special interest was imparted to the



trial by the situation of Colonel Burr. His duel with Hamilton had occurred a few months before; two indictments for murder were hanging over his head; and he had been for months a fugitive from justice. But he bore himself on this occasion with a coolness and dignity that excited universal admiration. He conducted the trial, as an editor of the day remarked, "with the dignity and impartiality of an angel, but with the rigor of a devil."

The working man of this trial, he whose exertions decided its issue, was Luther Martin. He was not only a friend and fellow-citizen of Judge Chase; but he sympathized with him in politics to the uttermost. Martin was an infuriate Federalist, or, as Jefferson called him, "a Federal bull-dog;" and he threw himself into the defence with a mixture of coolness and impetuosity, of passionate ardor and quiet dexterity, altogether peculiar to himself. Every specification he sifted to the bottom, and exhausted every argument tending to refute it. For four weeks, during which the trial lasted, he was always in his place, prompt, indefatigable, vigilant. It was unquestionably he who secured the judge's acquittal. Many of the charges were distinctly proved; but on no one of them was he condemned by a two-thirds vote, which the laws require. He was at once convicted and acquitted.

Two years after Aaron Burr himself was on trial at Richmond. He remembered the great services of Luther Martin, and secured his assistance for his own defence. Into this service Martin entered with a zeal due more to his hatred of Jefferson than to his love of Burr; and for six months he abandoned all his other cases, and devoted himself—heart, soul, and purse—to the deliverance of his client. He became one of Burr's sureties; and took the opportunity to declare, in open court, that he was glad to have this opportunity to give a public proof of his confidence in Colonel Burr's honor, and of his conviction that he was an innocent man. The vehemence of some of his harangues at that trial, as well as their indecency, was most remarkable. On one occasion he said that the president and his cabinet were "bloodhounds, hunting Burr with a keen and savage thirst for blood." His fury against Jefferson was such as to excite the suspicion in the president's mind that he was one of Burr's accomplices. The truth is, however, that strong drink tends to destroy all soundness and moderation of judgment; and at this time there never was a waking hour when he was not under the influence of it.

It was this unconcealed political character of the trial, as well as the great number and great ability of the counsel for the defence, that induced the president to take that active part in directing the trial which surprises to this day the readers of his correspondence. It so happened, too, that George Hay, the attorney-general of Virginia, who conducted the prosecution, was very far from being the peer of the great lawyers on the other side. It was at Jefferson's own request that the brilliant William Wirt lent to the prosecution the aid of his respectable character and effective declamation. Almost daily Jefferson assisted the prosecution by letters to the attorney-general. It had been more dignified, perhaps, and more proper, if he had held himself aloof from all such interference. Nothing, however, can be more evident than that the object which Martin and his colleagues had nearest their hearts was, not to save Aaron Burr, but to damn Thomas Jefferson; and human beings are so constituted, that they do not usually submit to be destroyed without an effort to prevent it. Hence he gave to his friend, George Hay, the benefit of his legal knowledge. He was also convinced that the mind of the chief justice was so warped by political prejudice, that he was disqualified from giving impartial decisions. The judge's dining with Burr before the trial was an act which the judge himself afterward regretted. Nor can I believe that John Marshall, in his later years, would have sustained an opinion which he threw out in the course of this trial, that the president could himself be compelled to appear in the court as a witness. Jefferson's reply to this appears unanswerable.

"As to our personal attendance at Richmond," he wrote, "I am persuaded the Court is sensible that paramount duties to the nation at large control the obligation of compliance with their summons in this case, as they would, should we receive a similar one to attend the trials of Blennerhasset and others in the Mississippi territory, those instituted in St. Louis and other places on the western waters, or at any place other than the seat of government. To comply with such calls would leave the nation without an executive branch, whose agency, nevertheless, is understood to be so constantly necessary, that it is the sole branch which the Constitution requires to be always in function."

The course of public events produced a decisive commentary on this passage of the president's letter. Two days after it was written occurred the attack upon the American frigate Chesapeake in Chesapeake Bay by an English vessel of war, which roused the indignation of the whole country to a degree never surpassed before or since. The mere absence of the president from the seat of government at that moment might have precipitated the two countries into war, for which an immense majority of the people were prepared.

Burr was acquitted on technical grounds. He left the court, however, covered with an opprobrium which still clings to his name. The report of the trial satisfied every reasonable mind, that, in arresting the scheme and the schemer, the president had done an act which he could not have omitted without grievous fault. The conduct of the Federalists, during the trial of Burr, would have filled up the measure of their ruin, if a new issue had not arisen that withdrew public attention from it, and gave to the combative side of human nature a certain prominence that is highly favorable to reactionary ideas. The region of the brain where Toryism has its seat lies chiefly behind the ears.

## CHAPTER LXVI.

### THE EMBARGO.

JEFFERSON'S constitutional aversion to war, and his known preference for peaceful methods of proceeding, gave to the anti-Christians of his day a fruitful theme of vituperation. It is amusing to read the expressions of scorn to which eminent churchmen gave utterance, when they spoke of Jefferson's principle of exhausting every expedient known to the diplomatist's art before entertaining the thought of war. "There is just now," wrote Gouverneur Morris, when he heard of Monroe's appointment, "so much *philosophy* among our rulers, that we must not be surprised at the charge of pusillanimity. And our people have so much of the mercantile spirit, that, if other nations will keep their hands out of our pockets, it will be no trifling insult that will rouse us. Indeed, it is the *fashion* to say, that, when injured, it is more honorable to wait in patience the uncertain issue of negotiation than promptly to do ourselves right by an act of hostility." These are light words; but the spirit which they breathe has desolated many and many a fair province, and shrouded in hopeless gloom millions upon millions of homes. All that hideous, groundless contest between Bonaparte and George III., which added sensibly to the burden of every honest family throughout the whole extent of Christendom; which did harm to every man, and good to no man,—all sprang from the spirit which the jovial Morris expressed in this gay letter to John Parish.

In the effort to keep the United States out of that contest, Jefferson gave a brief access of strength to the anti-Christian party. The outrages of the English captains were, indeed, most hard to bear; and the question whether or not they *ought* to be borne, was one upon which the wisest men might well differ. All the Old Adam, and some of the New, rises and swells within us when we read, even

at the distance of seventy years, of the *Leander* firing upon a coasting vessel near Sandy Hook, and killing one of her crew. The president felt both the wrong and the indignity of the act. He ordered the *Leander* and her two companions out of the waters of the United States. He called upon the civil and military officers to arrest the offending captain if found within their jurisdiction. He warned all persons against giving aid to the vessels of the squadron. But he did something more difficult than such acts as these. When the treaty reached his hands, early in 1807, which Monroe and Pinckney, after a long and difficult negotiation, had concluded with England, discovering that it contained no renunciation of the impressment claim, and no adequate concession of the rights of neutrals, he would not submit it to the Senate, but sent it back to London for revision, — to the sore mortification of Monroe. The more monstrous outrage upon the Chesapeake followed, rousing the whole people to a degree seldom equalled since America was settled. The English ship *Leopard* poured broadsides into the unprepared and unsuspecting Chesapeake within hearing of the post we now call Fortress Monroe, killed three men, wounded eighteen, and carried away four sailors charged with desertion from the British navy, — three Americans and one Englishman. The Englishman was hanged; and the three Americans were pardoned, on condition of returning to service.

Parties ceased to exist. "I had only to open my hand," wrote Jefferson once, "and let havoc loose." Only a president with such a deep hold upon the confidence of the people could have kept the peace; nor could any but a Jefferson have done it, because, at such a time, the chief of the state is apt to be himself possessed by the universal feeling. He is a fellow-citizen, as well as president. But this benignant spirit remained true to itself. "If ever," he wrote in 1812, "I was gratified with the possession of power and of the confidence of those who had intrusted me with it, it was on that occasion when I was enabled to use both for the prevention of war toward which the torrent of passion was directed almost irresistibly, and when not another person in the United States less supported by authority and favor could have resisted it." Nor was his conduct wanting in "spirit." He instantly sent a frigate to England with a demand for reparation. He forbade the naval vessels of Great Britain all access to the harbors of the United States, except those

in distress and those bearing despatches. Two thousand militia were posted on the coast to prevent British ships from obtaining supplies. Every vessel in the navy was made ready for active service, and every preparation for war within the compass of the administration was pushed forward with vigor. He privately notified members of Congress to be ready to respond to his summons on the instant of the frigate's return from England. Decatur, commanding at Norfolk, was ordered to attack with all his force if the British fleet, anchored in the outer bay, should attempt to enter the inner. And the fur-resounding noise of all these proceedings called home from every sea the merchant vessels of the United States.

He expected war, and meant, if it could not be prevented honorably, to make the most of it. He intended, as we see by his confidential letters to Madison, to swoop upon England's commerce, and to avail himself of the occasion to bring Spain to terms. Your peaceable gentlemen, if you absolutely force them to a fight, sometimes lay about them in an unexpected manner. Thus, we find the president, on the cool summit of Monticello, in August, 1807, writing upon the Spanish imbroglio to Mr. Madison: "As soon as we have all the proofs of the Western intrigues, let us make a remonstrance, and demand of satisfaction; and, if Congress approves, we may in the same instant make reprisals on the Floridas, until we get satisfaction for that and for spoiliations, and a settlement of boundary. I had rather have war against Spain than not, if we go to war against England. Our Southern defensive force can take the Floridas, volunteers for a Mexican army will flock to our standard, and rich pabulum will be offered to our privateers in the plunder of their commerce and coasts. Probably Cuba would add itself to our confederation." It is evident that he intended to make this war pay expenses, and to come out of it with troublesome neighbors removed farther off. All his letters of that summer show the two trains of thought: First, let us have no war, if we can properly avoid it; secondly, if we must have war, the conflict could not come at a better time than when England has a Bonaparte upon her hands, and we have a Spain to settle with.

Partial reparation was made for the outrage upon the Chesapeake, and formal "regrets" were expressed that it should have occurred; but the claim to board American vessels and carry off deserters was re-affirmed by royal proclamation. No American ship was safe from



violation, no American sailor was safe from impressment. In meeting this new aspect of the case, Jefferson took another leaf from Franklin's book. In the Stamp-Act times, before the Revolution, Dr. Franklin was always an advocate for the peaceful remedy of non-intercourse; and this had been a favorite idea of Jefferson's when he was secretary of state. In 1793, when the allied kings tried to starve France into an acceptance of the Bourbons by excluding supplies from all her ports, he deemed it "a justifiable cause of war." But he wrote to Madison that he hoped Congress, instead of declaring war, "would instantly exclude from our ports all the manufactures, produce, vessels, and subjects of the nations committing the aggression, during the continuance of aggression." The embargo of 1807, which kept all American vessels and produce safe at home, was conceived in the same spirit and had the same object. That object was, to use Jefferson's own words, "TO INTRODUCE BETWEEN NATIONS ANOTHER UMPIRE THAN ARMS." He thought that Great Britain, so dependent then upon American materials and supplies, could not do without them as long or as easily as we could do without the money they brought.

But this policy was putting human nature to a test which only a very few of our race are wise and strong enough to bear. The embargo, of course, was passed by large majorities and hailed with enthusiasm: it was striking back, in a new and easy way. But when commerce came to a stand, when ships and men were idle, when produce was of little value, and nothing could be done in the way of remedy but to *wait*, then the embargo was regarded in a different light. New England suffered most, not because it lost most, but because it was more immediately dependent upon commerce than the other States. Nor did the educated class in New England give moral support to the president in this interesting endeavor to introduce between nations "another umpire than arms."

The inference which he drew from the power of New England in finally breaking down the embargo is worthy of note. He attributed it to the township system, which he valued most highly, and strove long to introduce into Virginia. "How powerfully," he wrote in 1816, "did we feel the energy of this system in the case of the embargo! I felt the foundations of the government shaken under my feet by the New England township. There was not an individual in those States whose body was not thrown, with all its

momentum, into action; and, although the whole of the other States were known to be in favor of the measure, yet the *organization* of this little selfish minority enabled it to overrule the Union. What could the unwieldy counties of the Middle, the South, and the West do? Call a county meeting; and the drunken loungers at and about the court-houses would have collected, the distances being too great for the good people and the industrious generally to attend. As Cato, then, concluded every speech with the words, *Carthago delendum est*, so do I every opinion with the injunction, **DIVIDE THE COUNTIES INTO WARDS.**"

But the embargo lasted to the end of his term. To the end of his days, he believed, that, if it had been faithfully observed by the whole people, it would have saved the country the war of 1812, and procured, what that war did not procure, an explicit renunciation of the claim to board and search. The two great powers of Europe gave it their approval, — Napoleon Bonaparte and the Edinburgh Review. There was then living in a secluded village of Massachusetts a marvellous boy of thirteen, famous in his county for the melodious verses which he had been writing for four or five years past, some of which had been published in the county paper, and one had been spoken with applause at a school exhibition. This wonderful boy, hearing dreadful things said on every side of the embargo, wrote a poem on the subject, which was published in Boston, in 1808, with this title, "The Embargo; or, Sketches of the Times. A Satire. Together with the Spanish Revolution and other Poems. By WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT." That the father of Bryant, and the other ruling spirits of New England, should have refused their support to the embargo, is almost of itself enough to show that the system was too far in advance of the time to be long effectual. But it answered the purpose of delay; which, in the peculiar circumstances, was an immense advantage. "If," said the president once, "we can delay but for a few years the necessity of vindicating the laws of nature on the ocean, we shall be the more sure of doing it with effect. The day is within my time as well as yours, when we may say by what laws other nations shall treat us on the sea. And we will say it."

How many things were settled, how many happily begun, during these eight years! At the president's recommendation, the term of residence before naturalization was restored from fourteen years to

five. He tried, but failed, to procure a recession of the District of Columbia to Virginia and Maryland, — a district which the government needs as much as it does Terra del Fuego. The policy was settled, so far as brilliant precedent could settle it, of paying off public debt with all the rapidity that the country can reasonably bear. A great public debt exaggerates the importance, the magnitude, and the complexity of government; and it is a Jeffersonian principle, that government should be as small a thing as it can be without sacrifice of its desirable efficiency. During these eight years, the ocean ports were fortified to a degree, that, at least, enabled the government to slam the door in an enemy's face, and keep it shut during the next war; a successful contest was carried on in a distant sea; the militia were re-organized and re-armed; the western posts were widely extended; taxes were sensibly diminished; thirty-three millions of the old debt were extinguished; and the only pecuniary embarrassment the administration ever experienced was a surplus, always increasing, for which there was no suitable or legal outlet. Every act and every word of the administration was a proclamation of welcome to all the world! All the world came thronging to these western shores, bringing with them power, wealth, hope, resolve, and all the stuff, material and immaterial, of which empire is made. When Jefferson came into power in 1801, that man was a wonder to his friends who had seen the nearest of the western lakes; when Jefferson retired in 1809, Astor was busy with his expedition to found a town on the Pacific coast.

The general policy of the government with regard to the Indians was then established as it has since remained. Jefferson had more Indian business than all the other presidents put together. To "extinguish" their titles by fair purchase, to introduce among them the arts of civilization, to accustom them to depend more upon agriculture and less upon hunting, and to push them gently back over the Mississippi in advance of the coming pioneer, — these were among the objects which he desired most to promote. He was not sanguine of speedy results. That is an amusing passage in his second Inaugural, in which he explains the hinderances in the way of the Indian's improvement, and, at the same time, gives some of his white brethren a box on the ear. Habit, custom, pride, prejudice, and ignorance, he says, all hold the Indians back; but, in addition to these internal foes to progress, there were among them

“crafty and interested individuals who feel themselves something in the present order of things, and fear to become nothing in any other.” These were the medicine-men; who “inculcate a sanctimonious reverence for the customs of their ancestors; that whatsoever they did, must be done through all time; that reason is a false guide, and to advance under its counsel, in their physical, moral, or political condition, is perilous innovation; that their duty is to remain as their Creator made them, ignorance being safety, and knowledge full of danger. In short, my friends, among them is seen the action and counteraction of good sense and bigotry: they, too, have their anti-philosophers, who find an interest in keeping things in their present state, who dread reformation, and exert all their faculties to maintain the ascendancy of habit over the duty of improving our reason and obeying its mandates.” This is an exact description of the arts and arguments employed, four or five years after, by the Prophet, brother of Tecumseh, in rousing the **Ohio tribes to war upon the white men.**

## CHAPTER LXVII.

### CORRESPONDENCE WITH MRS. ADAMS.

THE last two years of Mr. Jefferson's second term were laborious and troubled; and the old longing for home, rest, and tranquillity gained full possession of him. The precedent of retiring at the end of eight years had not then acquired the force of law, and he could unquestionably have been elected to a third term. But eight years of the presidency is enough for any man. General Washington himself in eight years exhausted his power to render good service in that office; and Jefferson never for a moment had a thought but to retire at the end of his second term. During his presidency, one sad, irreparable breach had been made in the circle upon which he relied for the solace of his old age. His younger daughter, Maria, Mrs. Eppes, died at Monticello, in 1804. He stood then upon the pinnacle of his career. Triumph of every kind had followed his endeavors, and a great majority of the people gave him heartfelt approval. It was then that this blow fell. "My loss," he wrote to his oldest friend, John Page, "is great indeed. Others may lose of their abundance; but I, of my want, have lost even the half of all I had."

Among the letters of condolence which reached him on this occasion was one from Mrs. Adams, which led to the most interesting correspondence of these years. The president, without knowing it, had given the deepest offence to this gifted lady; but when the intelligence reached her secluded home on the Massachusetts coast, of the death of the lovely girl whom she had taken to her arms in London eighteen years before, and had cherished ever since as a friend, her tenderness proved stronger than her resentment, and she was moved irresistibly to write to the bereaved father. She told him she would have done so before if he had been only the private

inhabitant of Monticello; but reasons of various kind<sup>s</sup> had withheld her pen, until the powerful feelings of her heart burst through the restraint. She recalled the incidents of her acquaintance with his daughter; and, after distantly alluding to the recent estrangement between the families, expressed "the sincere and ardent wish," that he might find comfort and consolation in this day of his sorrow and affliction. This, she said, was the desire of "her who *once* took pleasure in subscribing herself his friend."

In his acknowledgment, after due recognition of her goodness to his daughter and to himself, he frankly told her what had given him personal offence in the conduct of Mr. Adams: "I can say with truth, that one act of Mr. Adams's life, and one only, ever gave me a moment's personal displeasure. I did consider his last appointments to office as personally unkind. They were from among my most ardent political enemies, from whom no faithful co-operation could ever be expected, and laid me under the embarrassment of acting through men whose views were to defeat mine, or to encounter the odium of putting others in their places. It seems but common justice to leave a successor free to act by instruments of his own choice. If my respect for him did not permit me to ascribe the whole blame to the influence of others, it left something for friendship to forgive; and after brooding over it for some little time, and not always resisting the expression of it, I forgave it cordially, and returned to the same state of esteem and respect for him which had so long subsisted."

She replied with great spirit and ability, without a whisper to her husband of what was transpiring. General Washington, she said, had left no vacancies for his successor to fill; and she was sure that Mr. Adams, in the last appointments, had meant no disrespect to *his* successor; nor, indeed, had it been certain, until after many of them had been made, that Mr. Jefferson was to be his successor. That point disposed of, she opened her heart as to the causes of offence which Mr. Adams had against *him*. One of these was his remission of the fine of Callender, condemned under the Sedition Law for a libel upon President Adams. Besides: "One of the first acts of your administration was to liberate a wretch who was suffering the just punishment of his crimes for publishing the basest libel, the lowest and vilest slander, which malice could invent or calumny exhibit, against the character and reputation of your predecessor; of



him, for whom you professed a friendship and esteem, and whom you certainly knew incapable of such complicated baseness. The remission of Callender's fine was a public approbation of his conduct." Upon this she expanded with eloquence. But Mr. Jefferson had done more than remit the fine. He had given Callender fifty dollars, and complimented him upon his writings. "This, sir," she added, "was the sword that cut asunder the Gordian knot, which could not be untied by all the efforts of party spirit, by rivalry, by jealousy, or any other malignant fiend." There was one other act of his administration, she said, which she considered "personally unkind," and which his own mind would easily suggest to him; but, "as it affected neither character nor reputation, she forbore to state it."

He replied to this fine burst of a wife's loyal indignation with something of her own warmth and point. "I do not know," said he, "who was the particular wretch alluded to; but I discharged every person under punishment or prosecution under the Sedition Law, because I considered, and now consider, that law to be a nullity as absolute and as palpable as if Congress had ordered us to fall down and worship a golden image; and that it was as much my duty to arrest its execution at every stage as it would have been to rescue from the fiery furnace those who should have been cast into it for refusing to worship the image. It was accordingly done in every instance, without asking what the offenders had done, or against whom they had offended, but whether the pains they were suffering were inflicted under the pretended Sedition Law." He showed her, too, that his compliment to Callender had been written before that writer's homely truth had lapsed into coarse libel, and that the gifts of money were bestowed to relieve his destitution, not reward his scurrility. But there was another act of personal unkindness to which Mrs. Adams had referred. "I declare, on my honor, madam," said he, "I have not the least conception what act was alluded to."

In her reply, which betrayed a mind only slightly mollified, she told him what this act was. The wife had spoken in the previous letters; but it was now the mother's turn: "Soon after my eldest son's return from Europe, he was appointed by the district judge to an office in which no political concerns entered. Personally known to you, and possessing all the qualifications, you yourself being judge

which you had designated for office, as soon as Congress gave the appointments to the president you removed him. This looked so particularly pointed, that some of your best friends in Boston at that time expressed their regret that you had done so."

This was news to Mr. Jefferson. He had sinned without knowing it. With a patient consideration not usual in the head of a state, nor even possible to one not gifted with a genius for toil, he entered into a minute statement respecting the appointment of the commissioners of bankruptcy in Boston; showing her that the former commissioners, of whom John Quincy Adams was one, had not been removed by an act of the president, but discontinued by a change in the law. "Had I known," he added, "that your son had acted, it would have been a real pleasure to me to have preferred him to some who were named in Boston, in what was deemed the same line of politics." This last letter, all kindness and benignity, was a distinct proffer of reconciliation to the whole family.

"I hope," said he in conclusion, "you will see these intrusions on your time to be, what they really are, proofs of my great respect for you. I tolerate with the utmost latitude the right of others to differ from me in opinion, without imputing to them criminality. I know too well the weakness and uncertainty of human reason to wonder at its different results. Both of our political parties, at least the honest part of them, agree conscientiously in the same object, — the public good; but they differ essentially in what they deem the means of promoting that good. One side believes it best done by one composition of the governing powers; the other by a different one. One fears most the ignorance of the people; the other the selfishness of rulers independent of them. Which is right, time and experience will prove. We think that one side of this experiment has been long enough tried, and proved not to promote the good of the many; and that the other has not been fairly and sufficiently tried. Our opponents think the reverse. With whichever opinion the body of the nation concurs, that must prevail. My anxieties on this subject will never carry me beyond the use of fair and honorable means, of truth and reason; nor have they ever lessened my esteem for moral worth, nor alienated my affections from a single friend who did not first withdraw himself. Whenever this has happened, I confess I have not been insensible to it, yet have ever kept myself open to a return of their justice. I conclude with sin-

ere prayers for your health and happiness, that yourself and Mr. Adams may long enjoy the tranquillity you desire and merit, and see in the prosperity of your family what is the consummation of the last and warmest of human wishes."

When a poisoned arrow has rankled long in living flesh, the wound cannot heal as soon as the arrow is withdrawn. This noble-minded lady accepted her correspondent's personal explanations, but she could not help giving him a little lecture about the very great importance of appointing the right men to office. The arrow was withdrawn; but time, the all-healer, had to perform his part before the reconciliation could be complete. Time began upon it at once. Soon after she had "closed this correspondence" with one of those admonitory prayers by which pious souls sometimes bestow a parting slap, she gave the letters to her husband to read. The old man was still under a cloud of obloquy, and perhaps not reconciled to that sudden change in his way of life which had occurred four years before. In the year 1800, his grandson tells us, the letters addressed to him might be counted by thousands; but after his retirement to Quincy, he received about two letters a week. He could not but be pleased to learn from Mr. Jefferson's letters that his good-will was still an object of desire with the chief of the nation. When he had read the packet of letters all through, he wrote upon the last one these words: "Quincy, November 19, 1804. 'The whole of this correspondence was begun and conducted without my knowledge or suspicion. Last evening and this morning, at the desire of Mrs. Adams, I read the whole. I have no remarks to make upon it at this time and in this place. J. ADAMS.'" Time did the rest, with the help of John Quincy Adams. It was all right between them in 1812; and the letters they exchanged during the rest of their lives are among the most interesting the world possesses.

## CHAPTER LXVIII.

### RETIREMENT FROM THE PRESIDENCY.

JEFFERSON'S final release from public life, after a nearly continuous service of forty-four years, was now at hand. During the last years of his presidency he had lost in some degree "the run" of his private affairs, — a fact which any one will understand who has ever been absorbed for a long time in concerns of magnitude and difficulty not personal. Every one who has ever put his whole heart into writing a book or conducting a periodical understands it. Groceries elude the sweep of vision that takes in all the affairs and interests of a great country or a great subject; and no man can easily subside from the triumph of an important measure or the rapture of a "good number," to that exact consideration which monthly accounts demand. Little by little, the mind floats away from all that detail, until, at last, a kind of real inability to grasp it takes the place of former vigilant attention; which is only another way of saying that a president should be, if convenient, a married man. A few months before his retirement it occurred to him to look into his affairs, and see how he was coming out on the 4th of March, 1809. To his consternation and horror, he found that there would be a most serious deficit. His plantations had only yielded four or five thousand dollars a year, at the best; but the embargo, by preventing the exportation of tobacco, had cut his private income down two-thirds. "Nothing," he wrote to his merchant in Richmond, "had been more fixed than my determination to keep my expenses here within the limits of my salary; and I had great confidence that I had done so. Having, however, trusted to rough estimates by my head, and not being sufficiently apprised of the outstanding accounts, I find, on a review of my affairs here as they will stand on the 3d of March, that I shall stand three or four months' salary behindhand.

In ordinary cases, this degree of arrearage would not be serious; but on the scale of the establishment here it amounts to seven or eight thousand dollars, which being to come out of my private funds will be felt by them sensibly." He requests his correspondent to arrange a loan for him at a Richmond bank, and urges him to lose no time. "Since I have become sensible of this deficit," he added, "I have been under an agony of mortification, and therefore must solicit as much urgency in the negotiation as the case will admit. My intervening nights will be almost sleepless, as nothing could be more distressing to me than to leave debts here unpaid, if, indeed, I should be permitted to depart with them unpaid, of which I am by no means certain."

Such is the price, or rather a very small part of the price, which citizens of the United States have often had to pay for the privilege of serving their country. The privilege is worth the price; but it is not safe to put the price so high that only a very great or a very little man can find his account in paying it. Poverty and abuse, — a Tweed will undertake a city on those terms. So will a Jefferson. But Jeffersons do not grow on every bush; and Tweeds can be had on most wharves of any extent. The loan was effected, however; and Mr. Jefferson was thus enabled to get home to Monticello without danger of being arrested for debt upon the suit of a Federalist with a taste for a sensation.

Captain Bacon, with two great wagons each drawn by six mules and one drawn by four horses, came from Monticello. He left Washington with his wagons loaded, on the 3d of March, leaving Mr. Jefferson behind to attend the inauguration of his successor, and to close up his various affairs of business and friendship. From every quarter of the country came testimonials of grateful regard from Republicans; and Federalists, to the last, bestowed upon him the homage of their hate and apprehension. Josiah Quincy was relieved by his departure. "Jefferson is a host," he wrote in his diary during one of the last embargo debates; "and, if the wand of the magician is not broken, he will yet defeat the attempt. But I hope his power is drawing to an end in this world." All things end at last. Captain Bacon's train of wagons moved away; and a remarkable procession indeed must have arrested the attention of passers-by as it moved in sight, heaped high with boxes and shrub

bery, and eleven colored servants stowed away in convenient spots on the various summits, followed by the president's four-horse carriage. In this last vehicle rode Mr. Bacon, and thus caught some of the roadside "ovations" intended for another. The worthy manager was nearly three weeks in getting home through the mud and storm of a cold, dismal spring; so that Mr. Jefferson overtook him at Culpeper Court-House, though he did not start till the wagons had been a week on the road.

"On our way home," Bacon reports, "it snowed very fast, and when we reached Culpeper Court-House it was half-leg deep. A large crowd of people had collected there, expecting that the president would be along. When I rode up, they thought I was the president, and shouted and hurrahed tremendously. When I got out of the carriage, they laughed very heartily at their mistake. There was a platform along the whole front of the tavern, and it was full of people. Some of them had been waiting a good while, and drinking a good deal; and they made so much noise, that they scared the horses, and Diomedé backed, and trod upon my foot, and lamed me so that I could hardly get into the carriage the next morning. There was one very tall old fellow, that was noisier than any of the rest, who said he was bound to see the president,— 'Old Tom,' he called him. They asked me when he would be along; and I told them I thought he would certainly be along that night, and I looked for him every moment. The tavern was kept by an old man named Shackelford. I told him to have a large fire built in a private room, as Mr. Jefferson would be very cold when he got there; and he did so. I soon heard shouting, went out, and Mr. Jefferson was in sight. He was in a one-horse vehicle,—a phaeton,—with a driver, and a servant on horseback. When he came up, there was great cheering again. I motioned to him to follow me; took him straight to his room, and locked the door. The tall old fellow came and knocked very often, but I would not let him in. I told Mr. Jefferson not to mind him, he was drunk. Finally the door was opened, and they rushed in and filled the room. It was as full as I ever saw a bar-room. He stood up, and made a short address to them. Afterwards some of them told him how they had mistaken me for him. He went on next day, and reached Monticello before we did."

But not till he had encountered another snow-storm, still more



violent. "As disagreeable a snow-storm as I was ever in," wrote Jefferson. During the last three days of the journey he was glad to abandon his phaeton and take to one of his horses. On reaching Monticello, he found that his sixty-six years had not sensibly lessened the vigor of his frame; for this rough journey had done him no harm which a night's rest could not repair.

## CHAPTER LXIX.

### AT MONTICELLO.

AFTER his retirement from the presidency, in 1809, Jefferson lived seventeen years. He was still the chief personage of the United States. Between himself and the president there was such a harmony of feeling and opinion, that the inauguration of Madison did little more than change the signature to public documents. Madison consulted him on every important question; and Jefferson, besides writing frequently and at length, rode over to Orange every year, when the president was at home, and spent two or three weeks at his house. When there was dissension in the cabinet, it was Jefferson who restored harmony. Monroe was in ill-humor because Madison had been preferred before himself by the nominating caucus. It was Jefferson who healed the breach, and thus prevented one in the Republican party. During the gloom of 1815, many Republicans desired a candidate for the presidency of more executive energy than Mr. Madison was then supposed to have; and Jefferson was himself solicited from many quarters to accept a nomination. He said, with convincing power, "What man can do will be done by Mr. Madison." In the same year the president proposed that he should return to the office of secretary of state, and Monroe become secretary of war; but he pleaded his sixty-nine years as an excuse for declining the invitation.

The success in public life of these two men, Madison and Monroe, whose early education he had assisted, as well as the bright career which his nephews and sons-in-law were enjoying, induced other young men to seek his advice and assistance. "A part of my occupation," he wrote to General Kosciuszko in 1810, "and by no means the least pleasing, is the direction of the studies of such young men as ask it. They place themselves in the neighboring village,

and have the use of my library and counsel, and make a part of my society. In advising the course of their reading, I endeavor to keep their attention fixed on the main objects of all science, the freedom and happiness of man. So that coming to bear a share in the councils and government of their country, they will keep ever in view the sole objects of all legitimate government."

Monticello overflowed with guests during all these years. The circle of those who had a right to seek its hospitality was very large, and many foreigners of distinction felt their American experience incomplete until they had paid a pilgrimage to the author of the Declaration of Independence. But these were but a small portion of the throng of guests whom the custom of the country brought to Monticello during the summer months. His daughter, Mrs. Randolph, said once that she had been obliged to provide beds for as many as fifty inmates; and Mr. Randall tells us of one friend who came from abroad with a family of six persons, and remained at Monticello ten months. It fell to the manager, Mr. Edmund Bacon, to keep the mountain-top supplied with sustenance for this crowd of people, and the animals that carried and drew them. Mr. Bacon did not enjoy it, and he has since availed himself of an opportunity to relieve his mind.

"After Mr. Jefferson returned from Washington," he relates, "he was for years crowded with visitors, and they almost ate him out of house and home. They were there all times of the year; but about the middle of June the travel would commence from the lower part of the State to the Springs, and then there was a perfect throng of visitors. They travelled in their own carriages, and came in gangs, the whole family, with carriage and riding horses and servants; sometimes three or four such gangs at a time. We had thirty-six stalls for horses, and only used about ten of them for the stock we kept there. Very often all of the rest were full, and I had to send horses off to another place. I have often sent a wagon-load of hay up to the stable, and the next morning there would not be enough left to make a hen's-nest. I have killed a fine beef, and it would all be eaten in a day or two. There was no tavern in all that country that had so much company. Mrs. Randolph, who always lived with Mr. Jefferson after his return from Washington, and kept house for him, was very often greatly perplexed to entertain them. I have

known her many and many a time to have every bed in the house full. I finally told the servant who had charge of the stable to only give the visitors' horses half allowance. Somehow or other Mr. Jefferson heard of this: I never could tell how, unless it was through some of the visitors' servants. He countermanded my orders. One great reason why Mr. Jefferson built his house at Poplar Forest, in Bedford County, was that he might go there in the summer to get rid of entertaining so much company. He knew that it more than used up all his income from the plantation and every thing else; but he was so kind and polite that he received all his visitors with a smile, and made them welcome. They pretended to come out of respect and regard to him; but *I think* that the fact that they saved a tavern-bill had a good deal to do with it with a good many of them. I can assure you I got tired of seeing them come, and waiting on them."

Such was the custom of old Virginia; and a very bad, cruel custom it was. All this, too, at a period when non-intercourse and war had reduced the income of Virginia planters two-thirds, and when Mr. Jefferson had a Washington debt of many thousand dollars to provide for. But, among this multitude of visitors, there were a large number whose company he keenly enjoyed; nor would he permit his guests to rob him of his working-hours. From breakfast to dinner, he let them amuse themselves as best they could while he toiled at his correspondence and rode over his farms. From dinner-time he gave himself up to social enjoyment. I may well speak of his correspondence as toil. One thousand and sixty-seven letters he received in one year, which was not more than the average. After his death, there were found among his papers twenty-six thousand letters addressed to him, and copies of sixteen thousand written by him.

To complete his character as a personage, it should be mentioned that the Federalists still bestowed upon him the distinction of an animosity such as, perhaps, virtuous men never before entertained for one of their number. I look with wonder upon the publications spread out before me at this moment, issued during the time of non-intercourse and war, Jefferson being the theme. Here are two octavo volumes of vituperation, entitled "Memoirs of the Hon. Thomas Jefferson," published in New York several months after his retirement, and opening thus: "The illustrious Dr. Robertson, in a letter

to Mr. Gibbon, gave it as his opinion that an historian ought to write as if he were giving evidence upon oath." Eight hundred and thirty-eight pages of innocent and tedious falsehood naturally follow this noble sentiment; and they end with a prophecy, that nothing would go well in the United States until the people had turned the Republicans out of office, and placed their affairs in the hands of "that man who more than any other resembles the Father of his Country," — General Charles Cotesworth Pinckney. The clergy of New England continued to revile the greatest Christian America has produced in terms surpassing in violence those which the clergy of Palestine applied to the Founder of Christianity. He was an "atheist," Dr. David Osgood of Massachusetts remarked, and no better than "the race of demons," to whose service he had been devoted. By race of demons, this "last of the New England popes" meant the people of France. Young Edward Payson of Portland signalized his entrance into public life by delivering a Fourth of July oration, in which he observed that Jefferson, Madison, Gallatin, and their colleagues, were men of a character so vile, that "the most malicious ingenuity can invent nothing worse than the truth." The orator of twenty-three was as innocent as a lamb in saying this; for he was merely echoing what he had heard constantly asserted from his youth up, by the men whom he held in veneration, — the clergy of Connecticut and the professors in Yale College. In 1809 appeared a second edition of William Cullen Bryant's *Embargo*, with a certificate to the effect, that "Mr. Bryant, the author," had arrived, in the Month of November, 1808, at the age of fourteen years. A doubt had been intimated in the *Monthly Anthology*, whether a youth of thirteen could have been the author of this poem. The reader may be gratified to see a few lines from the earliest volume of a poet who has since, in so many ways, both served and honored his country. In this poem, too, lives the judgment of educated New England upon Mr. Jefferson's attempt to keep his country out of the maniac fight between Bonaparte and the coalition of kings; for this boy, gifted as he was, could only be a melodious echo of the talk he had heard in his native village: —

"Curse of our nation, source of countless woes,  
From whose dark womb unreckoned misery flows:  
Th' *Embargo* rages, like a sweeping wind,  
Fear lowers before, and famine stalks behind.

What words, O Muse! can paint the mournful scene  
 The saddening street, the desolated green?  
 How hungry laborers leave their toil and sigh,  
 And sorrow droops in each desponding eye!

“ See the bold sailor from the ocean torn,  
 His element, sink friendless and forlorn!  
 His suffering spouse the tear of anguish shed,  
 His starving children cry aloud for bread!  
 On the rough billows of misfortune tost,  
 Resources fail, and all his hopes are lost;  
 To foreign climes for that relief he flies,  
 His native land ungratefully denies.

“ In vain mechanics ply their curious art,  
 And bootless mourn the interdicted mart;  
 While our sage *Ruler's* diplomatic skill  
 Subjects our councils to his sovereign will;  
 His grand ‘restrictive energies’ employs,  
 And wisely regulating trade destroys.

“ The farmer, since supporting trade is fled,  
 Leaves the rude joke, and cheerless hangs his head  
 Misfortunes fall, an unremitting shower,  
 Debts follow debts, on taxes, taxes pour.  
 See in his stores his hoarded produce rot,  
 Or sheriff's sales his produce brings to nought;  
 Disheartening cares in thronging myriads flow,  
 Till down he sinks to poverty and woe.

“ Ye who rely on Jeffersonian skill,  
 And say that fancy paints ideal ill,  
 Go, on the wing of observation fly,  
 Cast o'er the land a scrutinizing eye:  
 States, counties, towns, remark with keen review  
 Let *facts* convince, and own the picture true!

“ When shall this land, some courteous angel, say  
 Throw off a weak and erring ruler's sway?  
 Rise, injured people, vindicate your cause,  
 And prove your love of liberty and laws;  
 Oh, wrest, sole refuge of a sinking land,  
 The sceptre from the slave's imbecile hand!  
 Oh, ne'er consent obsequious to advance,  
 The *willing vassal* of imperious France!  
 Correct that suffrage you misused before,  
 And lift your voice above a Congress oar



" And thou, the scorn of every patriot's name,  
 Thy country's ruin, and her council's shame !  
 Poor servile thing ! derision of the brave !  
 Who erst from Tarlton fled to Carter's cave ;  
 Thou who, when menaced by perfidious Gaul,  
 Didst prostrate to her whiskered minion fall ;  
 And when our cash her empty bags supplied,  
 Didst meanly strive the foul disgrace to hide ;  
 Go, wretch, resign the presidential chair,  
 Disclose thy secret measures, foul or fair.  
 Go, search with curious eyes for horned frogs,  
 'Mid the wild wastes of Louisianian bogs ;  
 Or, where Ohio rolls his turbid stream,  
 Dig for huge bones, thy glory and thy theme.  
 Go, sean, philosopher, thy . . . charms  
 And sink supinely in her sable arms ;  
 But quit to abler hands the helm of state,  
 Nor image ruin on thy country's fate.

" As Johnson deep, as Addison refined,  
 And skilled to pour conviction o'er the mind,  
 Oh, might some patriot rise ! the gloom dispel,  
 Chase error's mist, and break her magic spell !

" But vain the wish ; for hark ! the murmuring meed  
 Of hoarse applause from yonder shed proceed ;  
 Enter, and view the thronging concourse there,  
 Intent, with gaping mouth, and stupid stare ;  
 While in their midst the supple leader stands,  
 Harangues aloud, and flourishes his hands ;  
 To adulation tunes his servile throat,  
 And sues successful for each blockhead's vote."

The work contains nearly six hundred lines, several of which clearly announce the coming poet ; but in these which I have chosen, it is the Federalist that speaks. The forming poet of the woods appears in a passage where the author of thirteen imagines Commerce starting to life again, amid the desolation of the Embargo, when at last the people had expelled from Washington the pimps of France : —

" Thus in a fallen tree, from sprouting roots,  
 With sudden growth a tender sapling shoots,  
 Improves from day to day, delights the eyes  
 With strength and beauty, stateliness and size,  
 Puts forth robuster arms, and broader leaves,  
 And high in air its branching head upheaves."

It is interesting to discover that a poet who solaced his old age by translating Homer had, at thirteen, already begun to pay him the homage of imitation. The boy's prediction was fulfilled seven years later; not through the return of the Federalists to power, but by the treaty of Ghent, which ended the conflict for neutral rights.

Abuse and adulation were equally powerless to disturb the serenity of the lord of Monticello. "I have rode over the plantation, I reckon," reports the worthy Mr. Bacon, "a thousand times with Mr. Jefferson; and when he was not talking, he was nearly always humming some tune, or singing in a low tone to himself." During his annual rides to Poplar Forest, ninety miles distant, he was usually accompanied by his daughter or by one of her children; and he often beguiled the tedium of the journey by singing an old song, alone or with his companion. His daughter, too, had what Mr. Bacon calls *the Jefferson temper*,—all music and sunshine. In the twenty years of his service, he declares that he never once saw her in ill-humor. She was nearly as tall as her father, he tells us, and had his bright, clear complexion and blue eyes; and as she went about the house she seemed always in a happy mood, and was "nearly always humming a tune." The singularly sound health of the father was, no doubt, part of the secret of his festive existence. Mr. Bacon supplies another part of it:—

"Mr. Jefferson was the most industrious person I ever saw in my life. All the time I was with him I had full permission to visit his room whenever I thought it necessary to see him on any business. I knew how to get into his room at any time of day or night. I have sometimes gone into his room when he was in bed; but aside from that, I never went into it but twice, in the whole twenty years I was with him, that I did not find him employed. I never saw him sitting idle in his room but twice. Once he was suffering with the toothache; and once, in returning from his Bedford farm, he had slept in a room where some of the glass had been broken out of the window, and the wind had blown upon him and given him a kind of neuralgia. At all other times he was either reading, writing, talking, working upon some model, or doing something else. Mrs. Randolph was just like her father in this respect. She was always busy. If she wasn't reading or writing, she was always doing something. She used to sit in Mr. Jefferson's room a great

deal, and sew, or read, or talk, as he would be busy about something else. As her daughters grew up, she taught them to be industrious like herself. They used to take turns each day in giving out to the servants, and superintending the housekeeping."

These children were eleven in number, six daughters and five sons; to whom must be added Francis Eppes, a fine lad, the son of Maria Jefferson, to say nothing of a troop of schoolmates that one of the grandsons usually brought over from school at the next village, on Friday afternoons, to join in the sports of Saturday. Jefferson joined heartily in the pleasures of these children, but he was not the less a stickler for industry.

Colonel Thomas Mann Randolph, the father of this numerous brood, was governor of Virginia from 1819 to 1822. I have been favored by the Honorable Nicholas P. Trist with copies of several letters of Colonel Randolph, addressed to himself while he was a cadet in the military academy at West Point. They afford interesting glimpses of the mind so long and intimately associated with Mr. Jefferson's, and they show a spirit different indeed from that exhibited by Virginians of a later day. Here is a passage that exhibits the tone of feeling at Monticello with regard to slavery. Colonel Randolph writes thus to the cadet in November, 1818, concerning what he mildly terms "an accident" that had happened on a plantation not far from Monticello: —

"The overseer for next year had just taken his place, with great unwillingness on the part of the negroes, who were attached to the old one; and their master would gladly have kept him at any salary in reason, but he had resolved on quitting business to go to his own farm. Several of the negroes gave so much displeasure, that they received punishment in the first days from the new commander; among others, a very sensible, lively, and likely young mulatto man, who, it seems, had seriously formed the resolution never to incur the punishment of stripes by any misconduct, and had, in consequence, become the most trustworthy among them according to the testimony of the neighborhood, being the one chosen to go on the road with the wagon always, to haul off grain and bring back supplies. The new overseer, however, could not understand the value of character in a slave, and concluded that fear would be safer security for good

conduct, than any determination to do right, no matter how deliberately made, or how long persisted in, and near becoming a fixed habit. Power seldom reasons well. The young fellow received a few lashes on his bare back for some trifling misdemeanor. Leaving his tools in the field, it is said he hung himself twenty feet from the ground in a tree near his master's door the same night; having first taken leave of all his companions, who did not think seriously enough of his threat to give the alarm, and who, perhaps, felt pleasure at the idea of his running away, because the lost time would be an appeal to interest with the master and overseer on future occasions, manifestly in their favor. The bravery of this fellow seems to have left no room in his mind for such a thought. He had made a resolution; and he marched intrepidly forward in the execution of it, despising pain and not knowing fear.

“What a hideous monster, among the various phenomena of the social state, is our Southern system! Tyranny in the army is mitigated by the reflection that the brave have to submit to the brave only. But the greatest dastard might possibly have the feelings, moral and physical, as well as the comforts, of many a brave man entirely in his power, and dependent upon his caprice. In this particular case, both master and overseer are humane men; and the latter is of proven fortitude, as well as moral worth. The former you know and respect.

“Long ago I have dismissed the man-whip from my slave *manége*. I find, however, that the cane of a corporal must be tolerated yet. But I always scrupulously distinguish, and exempt, manly and moral character, when it shows itself with any steadiness of ray in the sooty atmosphere of our slave discipline. And such exempts never suffer from me any other punishment than privations for little obliquities of conduct. I find use for all my thirty years' experience, with whatever ingenuity it may have given rise to in the time, to keep up sufficient authority, without recurrence to the old mode of government. My only resource is to bring the culprit, if he be a man grown, and had ever displayed moral character at any time, before a magistrate by some contrivance, and to get punishment inflicted by a constable under legal forms. I have found confinement in the county-jail to have an admirable effect on my high-tempered men. And by magnifying a troublesome contumacy into incipient revolt, seasonably detected in the misconduct of an indi-

vidual, I have always succeeded, without any difficulty, in lodging my own there. It convinces them that I do not regard the loss of their time; which consideration, by gratifying their ill-humor, makes them often run away from many masters, very rarely from me, perhaps on account of what I have just mentioned. They know the jail to be the sure fate of runaways, and it is not amiss that they should have a proper distaste for it. I am certain that I have not in thirty years lost one month's work altogether by their running away."

There are other passages in these letters that breathe a similar spirit. He descants in one letter upon Mr. Trist's choice of a military career, and favors him with a translation from the Greek that speaks well for his knowledge of the ancient tongue, and his skill in the use of his own.

"I see," wrote the governor in May, 1821, "no encouragement for a young man to embrace the military profession at this time, yet I sincerely hope the military science will be cultivated by our government; and I would, if I were in Congress, give my vote always to support the army as it has lately been, and to extend the nursery of officers, so absolutely necessary to its honorable existence, in a greater degree than has been hitherto contemplated. The doctrine of the Quakers is womanish, and their hope of making peace as fashionable forever as their dress is absolutely childish. It is the only tenet of theirs which I do not in some degree approve. My historical reading and observation of human nature forbid me to bear with them upon that point with any patience at all. I admire their steady industry, temperance, gravity of deportment, frugality, uniformity of manners, and a thousand other things; but I cannot refrain from ridiculing their thoughtless censure of Nature for having given stings to bees, under the mistaken idea that any weapon at all was necessary to preserve to them the delicious fruits of their incessant toil in summer, upon the preservation of which their existence during winter depends; besides the satisfaction of *producing* (UNFORCED), and the pleasure of enjoying, which insects, much more men, can never cease to feel. The use of arms would be necessary even in a perfectly insulated society; for without them the good would soon become the victims of the bad, who cannot be prevented from increasing their power of mischief by such means

privately, if prohibited publicly, and the discovery would become too late for unarmed hands to avert the calamity. Mennonists would ever become the victims of terrorists, if not protected by those who are both brave and good, who defend peace because they love it.

“Where stood the foremost rank, how fair they lie,  
 The brave and good who for their country die.  
 How wretched he who leaves his native fields  
 To beg the bread a foreign harvest yields !  
 Wandering, with parents in the wane of life,  
 With tender offspring, and a youthful wife ;  
 Despised by those the scanty boon who grant,  
 Subdued by hateful penury and want ;  
 He stains his name, the manly form degrades,  
 Low-minded vice the growing race pervades,  
 A wretch like that no fear of shame assails ;  
 With him no hope of honored line prevails.  
 The land and those we love let *us* defend,  
 Regardless when this anxious life may end.  
 Young men ! in firm array prepare to fight ;  
 Unfelt be fear, disdained be shameful flight ;  
 Let mighty hearts beat high in bosoms strong ;  
 Think not of life while in the hostile throng.”

[“Part of a translation from the Greek of Tyrtæus, made during the late war by T. M. R., not a line of which was ever written before: indeed, the remainder is entirely forgotten, and not likely to be ever recalled.”]

These are agreeable passages, and show the brighter side of a strong and gifted mind. But at this very time, when public honors added distinction to his person and name, he was suffering deeply from the bad system which he hated, and from which he had not strength to escape. Occasionally even he felt himself compelled to eke out the dwindling income of his estate by the sale of some of his slaves. His affairs were fatally disordered at length, and he became a bankrupt.

Mr. Jefferson and his daughter enjoyed long intervals of tranquil happiness. But, living as he did in the midst of slavery, it was impossible for him to avoid his personal share of the harm it wrought to every creature in the United States, even to those who hated it most, and opposed it always; for it made them intense and one-sided. He was an indulgent master, it is true; and he never lost a sense of the folly of a system of labor, of which the laborer got



most of the good, and the master nearly all the evil. "He did not like slavery," remarks Mr. Bacon. "I have heard him talk a great deal about it. He thought it a bad system. I have heard him prophesy that we should have just such trouble with it as we are having now, in 1862." And yet his lifelong contact with slavery appears to have lessened his ability to think rationally concerning it. Long he cherished the dream of colonization, and fancied he saw in Liberia the beginning of a movement that would deliver the negroes of America from slavery, and those of Africa from barbarism. He took it for granted that the two races could not live together, both being free. "We have the wolf by the ears," he wrote in 1820, "and we can neither hold him nor safely let him go. Justice is in one scale, and self-preservation in the other."

When the question arose of extending the area of slavery over Missouri, he showed a strange blending of keenness and dulness of vision; descrying the distant danger most clearly, as aged eyes are apt to do, but blind to the path immediately before him. "This momentous question," he wrote in April, 1820, "like a fire-bell in the night, awakened and filled me with terror." He thought it was "the knell of the Union." Since Bunker Hill, he said, we had never had so ominous a question; and he thanked Heaven that he should not live to see the issue. We now know that his worst forebodings came short of the mighty sum-total of evil and calamity which his country was to endure: first, forty years of an ignoble strife of words, one side insolent and infuriate, the other insincere and timorous; next, four years of carnage; then ten of the beggar-on-horseback's demoralizing sway. But, with all this correctness of prophecy, the aged Jefferson thought the Northern members were wrong in wishing to keep slavery out of those lovely, fertile plains west of the Mississippi. He thought slavery would be weakened by being spread, and its final abolition made easier. Worse than this, he began to think it an evil for Southern youth to attend Northern colleges, "imbibing opinions and principles in discord with those of their own country;" and he was far from discerning that the opposition in the Northern States to the extension of slavery had any basis of disinterested conviction. "The Hartford Convention men," he wrote in 1821, "have had the address, by playing on the honest feelings of our former friends, to seduce them from their kindred spirits, and to borrow their weight into the Federal scale. Desperate of regaining

ing power under political distinctions, they have adroitly wriggled into its seat under the auspices of morality, and are again in the ascendancy from which their sins had hurled them." Much is to be allowed to seventy-eight years. But even at seventy-eight so fine an intelligence as his could not, even for a moment, have shrunk to these limits in an atmosphere congenial with it. To become capable of thus misinterpreting the course of events was part of his share of the penalty of slavery

## CHAPTER LXX

### HIS LABORS TO PROMOTE EDUCATION.

BUT his conduct was wiser than his words; for he spent all his declining years in a singularly persistent endeavor to introduce into Virginia the institutions of New England. When a man finds himself a member of a community in which there is incorporated some all-pervading evil, — like slavery in old Virginia, like ill-distributed wealth in Great Britain now, — there are two ways in which he can attack it. One way is to cry aloud and spare not; place himself distinctly in opposition to the evil; show it no quarter; and take the chance of being a martyr or a conqueror. There are times and places when this heroic system is the only one admissible. The other method of attack is to set on foot measures, the fair working of which will infuse such health and vigor into the sick body politic as will enable it, at length, to cast out the disease. Thus we see that Yale, Harvard, and the common school, have gone far toward rescuing the fine intelligence of New England from the blight of the Mathers and their hideous ideas; and we see the cheap press and the workingmen's lyceums and unions of Great Britain about to break up entail, primogeniture, and the rich preserves of an exclusive army, navy, India, and church. In Virginia no other method but this was even possible to be attempted in Jefferson's time. If he had set free his slaves, and waged open war against slavery, he would not have improved their condition, nor mitigated the malady of which Virginia was dying. His slaves would have become vagabonds, and himself an object of commiseration and derision. He made no such Quixotic attempts to serve his State, but directed his efforts to the gradual removal of what he felt to be the ally and main support of all the evil in the universe, — IGNORANCE. He made this his business during the last sixteen years of his life,

and toiled at it as vigorous men toil for the ordinary objects of ambition.

And happily, as in earlier days when the liberties of his country were menaced he had in Madison a confidential ally, gifted with a parliamentary talent which Nature had denied to himself; so now, when his object was to break up the great deep of Virginia ignorance, he found a most efficient and untiring co-operator in his friend, Joseph C. Cabell, a member of the Senate of Virginia. They entered into a holy alliance to bring their State up to the level demanded by the age. What both had planned in the study, Cabell advocated in the legislature; and when Cabell found the legislature unmanageable, Jefferson would come to his aid with one of his exhaustive, vote-changing letters, which would find its way into a Richmond newspaper, and then go the rounds of the press.

A part of the letters which passed between these lovers of their country have been published in an octavo of five hundred and twenty-eight pages; and most of Jefferson's, long and elaborate as many of them are, were written when a page or two of manuscript cost him hours of painful exertion. Once in 1822, when Cabell had urged him to write a number of letters to influential gentlemen in aid of one of their schemes, he replied, "You do not know, my dear sir, how great is my physical inability to write. The joints of my right wrist and fingers, in consequence of an ancient dislocation, are become so stiffened, that I can write but at the pace of a snail. The copying our report and my letter lately sent to the governor, being seven pages only, employed me laboriously a whole week. The letter I am now writing you" (filling one large sheet) "has taken me two days. A letter of a page or two costs me a day of labor, and of painful labor."

But some of these letters were among the best he ever wrote. In his endeavors to reconcile the people of Virginia to the cost of maintaining a common school in each "ward" of every county, he showed all his old tact and skill. His "ward" was to be "so laid off as to comprehend the number of inhabitants necessary to furnish a captain's company of militia," — five hundred persons of all ages and either sex. The great difficulty was to convince the average planter that he, the rich man of the ward, had an *interest* in contributing to the common school, the teacher of which was to receive a hundred and fifty dollars a year, and "board round." Jefferson met this

objection in a letter that still possesses convincing power. And his argument comes home to the inhabitants of the great cities now rising everywhere, and destined to contain half of the population of this continent. What are they but a narrow rim of elegance and plenty around a vast and deep abyss of squalor, into which a certain portion of the dainty children of the smiling verge are sure to slide at last? How eloquent are these quiet words of Jefferson, when we apply them to our own city! Would that I could give them wings that would carry round the world a passage so simple, so humane, so wise, and so adroit!

“And will the wealthy individual have no retribution? And what will this be? 1. The peopling his neighborhood with honest, useful, and enlightened citizens, understanding their own rights, and firm in their perpetuation. 2. When his descendants become poor, which they generally do within three generations (no law of primogeniture now perpetuating wealth in the same families), their children will be educated by the then rich; and the little advance he now makes to poverty, while rich himself, will be repaid by the then rich to his descendants when become poor, and thus give them a chance of rising again. This is a solid consideration, and should go home to the bosom of every parent. This will be seed sown in fertile ground. It is a *provision for his family* looking to distant times, and far in duration beyond that he has now in hand for them. Let every man count backwards in his own family, and see how many generations he can go, before he comes to the ancestor who made the fortune he now holds. Most will be stopped at the first generation; many at the second; few will reach the third; and not one in the State can go beyond the fifth.”

Like Franklin, he was not content with appealing only to the higher motives. State pride was a chord which he touched with effect. He reminded Virginians, that, before the Revolution, the mass of education in Virginia placed her with the foremost of her sister colonies; but now “the little we have we import, like beggars, from other States, or import their beggars to bestow on us their miserable crumbs.” He pointed to Virginia’s ancient friend and ally, Massachusetts, only one-tenth as large as Virginia, and the twenty-first state in the Union in size. But she has “more

influence in our confederacy than any other State in it." Why? "From her attention to education unquestionably. There can be no stronger proof that knowledge is power and that ignorance is weakness."

He did not live to see a State system of common schools established in Virginia. A scheme of his for maintaining in each county a circulating library was also in advance of that generation, and had no great results in his own day.

But the two conspirators against ignorance had one memorable and glorious triumph. They succeeded in planting on Virginia soil a university, unique in two particulars. In all other American colleges then existing, the controlling influence was wielded by one of the learned professions; and all students were compelled to pursue a course of studies originally prescribed by that one professor for its own perpetuation. In the University of Virginia, founded through the influence and persistent tact of Jefferson, seconded at every stage by the zeal and ability of Cabell, all the professions are upon an equality, and every student is free to choose what knowledge he will acquire, and what neglect. It is a secularized university. Knowledge and scholarship are there neither rivals nor enemies, but equal and independent sources of mental power, inviting all, compelling none. Jefferson's intention was to provide an assemblage of schools and professors, where every student could find facilities for getting just what knowledge he wanted, without being obliged to pretend to pursue studies for which he had neither need nor taste. He desired, also, to test his favorite principle of trusting every individual to the custody of his own honor and conscience. It was his wish that students should stand on the simple footing of citizens, amenable only to the laws of their State and country, and that the head of the faculty should be a regularly commissioned magistrate, to sit in judgment on any who had violated those laws. This part of the scheme he was compelled, at a critical moment, to drop; but he did so only to avoid the peril of a more important failure. But he held to the principle. He would have no espionage upon the students; but left all of them free to improve their opportunities in their own way, provided the laws of the land were not broken, and the rights of others were respected. His trust was in the conscience and good sense of the students, in the moral influence of a superior corps of instructors, and in an elevated public opinion.



Jefferson was forty years in getting the University of Virginia established. Long he hoped that the ancient college of William and Mary could be freed from limiting conditions and influences, and be developed into a true university. As late as 1820 he was still striving for a "consolidation" of the old college with the forming institution in Albemarle. It was already apparent that the want of America was, not new institutions of learning, but a suppression of one-half of those already existing, and the "survival of the fittest," enriched by the spoils of the weak. But William and Mary, like most of the colleges of Christendom, is constricted by the ignorance and vanity of "benefactors," who gave their money to found an institution for all time, and annexed conditions to their gifts which were suited only to their own time. Nothing remained but to create a new institution. In 1794 a strange circumstance occurred, which gave him hopes of attaining his object by a short cut. Several of the professors in the College of Geneva, Switzerland, dissatisfied with the political condition of their canton, united in proposing to Mr. Jefferson to remove in a body to Virginia, and continue their vocation under the protection and patronage of the legislature. On sounding influential members, he discovered that the project was premature, and it was not pressed. The coming of Dr. Priestley, followed by some learned friends of his and other men of science, revived his hopes. A letter to Priestley in 1800 shows that the great outlines of the scheme were then fully drawn in his mind. He told the learned exile that he desired to found in the centre of the State a "university on a plan so broad and liberal and *modern* as to be worth patronizing with the public support, and be a temptation to the youth of other States to come and drink of the cup of knowledge, and fraternize with us." He proposed that the professors should follow no other calling; and he hoped "to draw from Europe the first characters in science by considerable temptations." He asked Dr. Priestley to draw up a plan, and favor him with advice and suggestions. During his presidency, he still embraced opportunities to increase his knowledge of such institutions. After his retirement, the war of 1812 interposed obstacles; but, from the peace of 1815 to the close of his life, the University of Virginia was the chief subject of his thoughts, and the chief object of his labors.

It is not difficult to begin the most arduous enterprise. How

many well-cut corner-stones lie buried in various parts of this continent! We excel in corner-stones. That was a glad and proud day for Albemarle when the corner-stone of the University of Virginia was laid, witnessed by the three neighbors who filled in succession the office of president of the United States, — Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, the last named being president at the time. But it had cost Jefferson some exercise of his tact to get the corner-stone laid just there, within sight of his own abode. Other localities had, of course, their strenuous advocates. If a member of the commission raised an objection on the ground that other places were more salubrious, Jefferson would draw from his pocket a list of persons past eighty then living in the neighborhood. But an institution built and supported by the common treasure should be central! So it must. And Jefferson produced a card cut into the shape of Virginia, upon which the proposed site of the university was indicated by a dot. That the dot was very near the centre of the State could be shown by balancing the card on the point of a pencil. But a place may be geographically central without being near the centre of population. It may indeed. And Jefferson exhibited a piece of board representing Virginia, on which he had written, in his own clear, minute hand, the population of every part of the State; which made it plain to the eye, that, if the population of Virginia had been called upon to revolve, Monticello was the very pivot for the purpose. In short, the corner-stone was laid where the master of Monticello could watch its rising glories from his portico, and ride over every day to the site, five miles distant.

Then came the tug of war. He had subscribed a thousand dollars toward the fund, and his neighbors had multiplied that sum by forty-four. But the main reliance of the founder was upon the legislature of the State, not accustomed to appropriate money for such an object, nor able to appropriate much. Party passions were not extinct; and if, with the majority, Jefferson was a name to conjure with, there was an influential minority who held him in undiminished aversion. Virginia, too, was a declining commonwealth. Nothing was so abundant there as encumbered estates; and many families, who held their heads high, were subsisting on the proceeds of the sale, now and then, of little girls and boys, or "likely" men and women. Money came hard; and Jefferson wanted a great deal more of it to complete his plans than either he or the legislature

had anticipated. "I have been long sensible," he wrote in 1826, "that while I was endeavoring to render our country the greatest of all services, that of regenerating the public education, and placing our rising generation on the level of our sister States (which they have proudly held heretofore), I was discharging the odious function of a physician pouring medicine down the throat of a patient insensible of needing it." He was, also, a connoisseur in architecture, which is not an inexpensive taste. He thought that it became Virginia to erect something grand and noble for an institution that was to bear her name, and invite the flower of the youth of other States. Year after year Mr. Cabell had to renew the struggle in the legislature to get money to go on with. Three hundred thousand dollars were expended in all, and an appropriation of fifteen thousand dollars a year was made toward the support of the institution. The zeal of Cabell was contagious and irresistible. At one critical moment his feelings were wrought to such a pitch, that he dared not remain in the chamber while the vote was taken; and thus he missed a moving scene. The vote that day decided the location. As soon as the result was declared, Mr. B. G. Baldwin, the leader of the party opposed to placing the institution at Charlottesville, rose and made a powerful appeal in behalf of the university. He had contended strenuously for a more western site as long as there was any hope of success; but now that another place had been chosen, he conjured the western members to rise superior to local prejudices, and give the institution a cordial support. "A great part of the House," reports Cabell, "were in tears. Such magnanimity in a defeated adversary excited universal applause."

Mr. Jefferson had now secured the most fascinating occupation for his last years that could have been contrived for him. He was chairman of the board of trustees; and they all seemed to agree with Mr. Madison when he remarked at one of their first meetings, "This is Mr. Jefferson's scheme; the responsibility is his; and it is but fair that he should be allowed to carry it out in his own way." Jefferson's love of construction, his ingenuity as an inventor, his interest in science, his patriotism and benevolence, were all gratified in superintending the formation of the university. Colonel T. J. Randolph has described in a vivid and agreeable manner the joyous activity of his grandfather at this time, — how he would mount his

horse early in the morning, canter down the mountain and across the country to the site, and spend a long day there in assisting at the work; carrying with him a walking-stick of his own invention (now familiar to all), composed of three sticks, which, being spread out and covered with a piece of cloth, made a tolerable seat. He it was who designed the plan and made working-draughts for each detail. He engaged workmen, selected timber, and bought bricks. Carvers of stone whom he caused to be brought from Italy settled in the county, and have living descendants there at this moment. Afterwards, finding his ornate capitals could be cut cheaper in Italy, he had them executed there. It was his object to exhibit to the future students specimens of all the orders of architecture, and edifices that should call to mind several of the ancient triumphs of his favorite art. Occupants of the buildings, it is said, would prefer less grandeur and more convenience, fewer columns and more closets.

The time came for selecting professors. The very first appointment brought a storm about his ears. One of the fugitives from the re-action in European politics of 1793 was Thomas Cooper, a friend of Priestley and a gentleman of note in chemistry and other branches of natural science. Under the Sedition Law, for a harmless paragraph upon President Adams, after a trial in which Judge Chase had not kept up even a decent show of impartiality, the accused was sentenced to pay a fine of four hundred dollars, and to be imprisoned six months. Of course he was a made man from the moment of the ascendancy of the Republican party. As he was reputed to be the first chemist in the United States, the visitors innocently invited him to the chair of chemistry in the new university. Four States were competing for his services. New York, through De Witt Clinton, offered him liberal compensation for that time, — twenty-five hundred dollars a year and fees. Pennsylvania sought him for the university in Philadelphia, offering him a place worth seven thousand a year. New Orleans had invited him, and William and Mary desired him. But when it became known that he had decided for Jefferson and the University of Virginia, the slumbering fury of the year 1800 blazed up again, and an outcry arose so violent as to threaten the existence of a university dependent upon the popular will. It was remembered, too, that Dr. Cooper was a Unitarian, a name of opprobrium even at a time so recent. This was, indeed, a serious consideration; for a religious

prejudice was then one of those blind, resistless forces which were no more amenable to reason than an earthquake or a tornado. There is nothing to be done in the presence of a convulsion of nature but to get out of its way. And it really was of the very first necessity to avoid the appearance of using the university as a means of propagating peculiar opinions. Jefferson bent to a storm he could not brave, and relinquished Cooper to one of the other institutions that desired him. It was a happy riddance. South Carolina obtained him at last, and made a nullifier of him in 1832.

A competent corps of professors were engaged in England; and in March, 1825, the university was opened with forty students, a number which was increased to one hundred and twenty-three before the end of the first term, and to one hundred and seventy-seven at the beginning of the second year.

The institution differs from other American colleges in these particulars: there is no president; all the professors are of equal rank, except that one of their number is elected chairman of the faculty, and performs the usual representative duties. They get from the university a small fixed salary, meant to be sufficient for subsistence. Besides this, every professor receives a small fee from each of the students attending his "school." There are no rewards given by the university and no honors, except a statement of the student's proficiency in each of the "schools" which he attends; and that proficiency is ascertained, not by a system of daily marks, but by an examination which is intended to be thorough and just. "Graduation" signifies only that a student has acquitted himself well in one of the "groups" of schools. A great point is made of the examinations. "Rigorous written examinations," Dr. Charles Venable, the chairman of the faculty, has recently written, "are held periodically in each school, and the diploma of the school is conferred on those students only whose examination-papers come up to a fixed standard. That is, the candidate for graduation must obtain four-fifths (in some of the schools three-fourths) of the values assigned to the questions set in the examinations. No distinctions are made among the graduates. A student either graduates *cum laude* or not at all. In the lower classes of the schools like examinations are held, and certificates of distinction given to those who come up to the standard of three-fourths of the values of the questions set."

Another peculiarity of this institution is the homage it pays to



religion. This is unique. In other colleges it is assumed that students will neither go to church nor attend prayers unless they are compelled to do so. This university, on the contrary, assumes that religion has an attractive power of its own, and leaves it to each student to go to church and attend prayers, or to abstain from so doing. Daily prayers are held, and a service on Sunday is conducted by a clergyman of the vicinity, elected in rotation from the chief denominations of the State; and he is maintained by the voluntary contributions of the inmates of the university. But the dishonor is not put upon him of compelling attendance at his ministrations. Dr. Venable states that the results of this system of freedom are such as might have been expected. "The students," he says, "contribute with commendable liberality to the support of the chaplain, who goes constantly in and out among them as their friend and brother, laboring earnestly in the promotion of Christian activity and all good works. There is always a respectable attendance of student worshippers at morning prayers, a good attendance of students in the Sunday services in the chapel as well as in the churches in the town. There is an earnest Christian activity among the students, which employs itself in the different enterprises of the University Young Men's Christian Association. They keep up six Sunday schools in the sparsely-settled mountain districts of the neighborhood, — five for whites and one for freedmen, with an average attendance on each of thirty pupils. This steady Christian activity is not a thing of to-day or yesterday, but it has been the rule for years."

Dr. Venable bears explicit testimony also to the happy results of Mr. Jefferson's darling system of *trusting* the students, instead of spying them. "I have seen," he says, "the plan of trusting to the students' honor, and of the abolition of all espionage, tested here and in the University of South Carolina. It has also been adopted in most of the Virginia colleges with the best results. Its effects in imbuing the body of the students with the spirit of truth and candor, in giving them the proper scorn for a lie, and in promoting a frank and manly intercourse between the students and professors, cannot be too highly estimated. A student who is known to have been guilty of a violation of his examination pledge, or of any other falsehood in his dealings with the authorities, — things of rare occurrence, — is not permitted by his fellows to remain in the institution."



It is also his opinion, that the university has signally answered the great design of its founder, which was to raise the standard of liberal education in Virginia. The mere fact of keeping its diplomas, so far as is possible to human scrutiny, free from falsehoods, and issuing no diplomas of the kind called honorary, has had a perceptible effect, he thinks, in restoring to parchment a portion of the power it once had to confer honorable distinction.

Like all other institutions of learning in the Southern States, it was subjected to a most severe ordeal during the late war. The number of students had gone on increasing from year to year, until it had reached an average of six hundred and fifty. Then came the rude blast of war, which a Southern student must have been much more or something less than human, not to have obeyed. Abstract truth is usually powerless when father, mother, sisters, brothers, friends, and neighbors are all pulling the other way. Hundreds of alumni (the strength of a university) fell in battle, never doubting that they died for their country and their rights. But during the whole of the four years' struggle, the university was kept open, and only once did the war come near it. In March, 1865, General Sheridan was at Charlottesville with a body of cavalry; but during the few days of his stay in the neighborhood he placed guards around the grounds of the university, and preserved its property uninjured. For the first two or three years after the peace, education being in arrears, and the people, it is said, more hopeful than they are now, the number of students was again nearly five hundred. The Catalogue for 1872 shows three hundred and sixty-five. Virginia, besides bearing up under a great load of debt, has nobly continued the annual appropriation of fifteen thousand dollars; and two citizens of the State, Samuel Miller and Thomas Johnson, have recently given one hundred and forty thousand dollars to found a department of industrial chemistry and engineering.

The present effort of the visitors is to strengthen and widen the basis of the university by an endowment of half a million. That peculiar friendship which once existed between Virginia and Massachusetts, dating back to the time when Massachusetts was stricken in her chief industry, and Virginia was her bountiful helper and consolation, seems to live again in the late exchange of courtesies between the president of Harvard and the chairman of the faculty of the University of Virginia. "I hope," says Dr. Venable, "the many

friends and benefactors of Harvard will wisely concentrate on her the means of fulfilling all her high aspirations." Massachusetts, with her capital to rebuild, and her Harvard to restore, must deny herself at present many pleasures which she would otherwise enjoy. New York will, perhaps, treat herself to the gift of this half million. It is a pleasing evidence of the advance of catholicity of feeling, that Henry Ward Beecher, the representative liberal of the Northern States, the son of a Calvinist and a Federalist, himself always an Abolitionist, should have contributed a thousand dollars to the fund.

The great thing to be desired in the higher education of America is the union of several colleges in each State to form one or two real universities. But probably this can only be done by Nature's own method of strengthening the strong and starving the weak. This university, from the day when Jefferson gave it life, has shown a lusty strength, that marks it as one of the "fittest" which are destined to "survive."

During these last years Mr. Jefferson showed in many other ways that the best solace of declining age is an intelligent and benevolent mind. He watched with deep concern the ceaseless movement of the human soul toward freedom and purity. Dr. Channing became an interesting figure to him; and he hailed with delight the inroads which Channing appeared to be making in what he considered the most pernicious of all priestly devices, the theology of Calvin. It is hard to say which surpassed the other in boiling hatred of Calvinism, Jefferson or John Adams. "I rejoice," writes Jefferson in 1822, "that in this blessed country of free inquiry and belief, which has surrendered its creed and conscience neither to kings nor priests, the genuine doctrine of one only God is reviving; and I trust there is not a *young man* now living in the United States who will not die a Unitarian." He was ever the most sanguine of men. Often, at this period, he spoke of the ancient doctrines with an approach to violence. In thanking Colonel Pickering for sending him one of Dr. Channing's sermons, he wrote thus: "No one sees with greater pleasure than myself the progress of reason in its advances toward rational Christianity. When we shall have done away with the incomprehensible jargon of the Trinitarian arithmetic, that three are one, and one is three; when we shall have knocked down the artificial scaffolding reared to mask from view the simple structure of

Jesus; when, in short, we shall have unlearned every thing taught since his day, and got back to the pure and simple doctrines he inculcated, — we shall then be truly and worthily his disciples; and my opinion is, that, if nothing had ever been added to what flowed purely from his lips, the whole world would at this day have been Christian. . . . Had there never been a commentator, there never would have been an infidel.”

He became even more vehement than this after his eightieth year. He spoke of “the blasphemous absurdity of the five points of Calvin;” of “the hocus-pocus phantasm of a God” created by Calvin, which, “like another Cerberus,” had “one body and three heads;” and declared, that, in his opinion, “it would be more pardonable to believe in no God at all than to blaspheme him by the atrocious attributes of Calvin.” Hence his joy at the triumphs of the young Boston preacher whose boldness and fervor, he heard, were setting free so many human minds from the iron bondage of the past. “In Boston and its neighborhood,” he writes exultingly to Dr. Cooper, “Unitarianism has advanced to so great strength as now to humble this haughtiest of all religious sects, the Presbyterian; inasmuch as they condescend to interchange with them and the other sects the civilities of preaching freely and frequently in each other’s meeting-houses.” But other parts of the country, he owned, were far less enlightened, a threatening cloud of fanaticism being over them, “lighter in some parts, denser in others, but too heavy in all.” “In Rhode Island no sectarian preacher will permit a Unitarian to pollute his desk. In our Richmond there is much fanaticism, but chiefly among the women. They have their night meetings and praying parties where, attended by their priests, and some times by a hen-pecked husband, they pour forth the effusions of their love to Jesus, in terms as amatory and carnal as their modesty would permit them to use to a mere earthly lover. In our village of Charlottesville there is a good degree of religion with a small spice only of fanaticism. We have four sects, but without either church or meeting-house. The court-house is the common temple, one Sunday in the month to each. Here Episcopalian and Presbyterian, Methodist and Baptist, meet together, join in hymning their Maker, listen with attention and devotion to each other’s preachers, and all mix in society with perfect harmony.” The final and complete remedy, he thought, for the “fever of fanaticism” was the diffusion of knowl-

edge; and again he indulges his sanguine humor by predicting that "Unitarianism will, ere long, be the religion of the majority, from north to south."

In matters political he remained to the last what he was in 1800. He could not relish Scott's novels, because they concealed, as he thought, the ugly truth of the past under an alluring guise of the romantic and picturesque. He disliked the robber Norman, loved the industrial Saxon. As for Hume's History of England, and Blackstone's Commentaries, he never ceased to hate them. "They have made Tories," he wrote, "of all England, and are making Tories of those young Americans whose native feelings of independence do not place them above the wily sophistries of a Hume or a Blackstone. These two books, but especially the former, have done more towards the suppression of the liberties of man than all the million of men in arms of Bonaparte and the millions of human lives with the sacrifice of which he will stand loaded before the judgment-seat of his Maker." He said, too, that, while he feared nothing for our liberty from the assaults of force, he *had* fears of the influence of English books, English prejudices, English manners, and their apes and dupes among professional men. He remained a free-trader to the end. The longer he lived the more he felt the necessity of a subdivision of territory, like the town-system of New England, under which each citizen belongs to a *small body of voters*, with whom he can conveniently co-operate, and who can be assembled without delay or difficulty. He would have divided a city of the size of New York into three hundred wards. He also became perfectly aware of the truth, since demonstrated in so many ways and places, that universal suffrage, where a majority of the voters are grossly ignorant, tends to put the scoundrel at the summit of affairs. In commenting upon a new constitution proposed for Spain, he said there was one provision in it "which would immortalize its inventors." That provision disfranchised every man, who, after a certain epoch, could not read and write.

## CHAPTER LXXI.

### VISITORS AT MONTICELLO, AND FAMILY REMINISCENCES.

THE reader may naturally desire to linger a moment longer upon the summit of the little mount, where, for the long period of sixty years, such a joyous, intelligent, and dignified life was lived. Among the visitors who thronged thither during the last years of Mr. Jefferson's life were several persons of note who recorded their recollections. Mr. Randall has gathered from surviving descendants of the family many pleasing reminiscences, and from them also I will borrow a trait or two.

### RECOLLECTIONS OF A GRAND-DAUGHTER.

Books were at all times his chosen companions, and his acquaintance with many languages gave him great power of selection. He read Homer, Virgil, Dante, Corneille, Cervantes, as he read Shakespeare and Milton. In his youth he had loved poetry; but, by the time I was old enough to observe, he had lost his taste for it, except for Homer and the great Athenian tragedies, which he continued to the last to enjoy. He went over the works of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides not very long before I left him (the year before his death). Of history he was very fond; and this he studied in all languages, though always, I think, preferring the ancients. In fact, he derived more pleasure from his acquaintance with Greek and Latin than from any other resource of literature; and I have often heard him express his gratitude to his father for causing him to receive a classical education. I saw him more frequently with a volume of the classics in his hand than with any other book. Still he read new publications as they came out, never missed the new number of a

review, especially of the Edinburgh, and kept himself acquainted with what was being done, said, or thought in the world from which he had retired.

He loved farming and gardening, the fields, the orchards, and his asparagus-beds. Every day he rode through his plantation and walked in his garden. In the cultivation of the last he took great pleasure. Of flowers, too, he was very fond. One of my early recollections is of the attention which he paid to his flower-beds. He kept up a correspondence with persons in the large cities, particularly, I think, in Philadelphia, for the purpose of receiving supplies of roots and seeds both for his kitchen and flower garden. I remember well, when he first returned to Monticello, how immediately he began to prepare new beds for his flowers. He had these beds laid off on the lawn, under the windows; and many a time I have run after him when he went out to direct the work, accompanied by one of his gardeners, generally Wormley, armed with spade and hoe, while he himself carried the measuring-line.

I was too young to aid him, except in a small way; but my sister, Mrs. Bankhead, then a young and beautiful woman, was his active and useful assistant. I remember the planting of the first hyacinths and tulips, and their subsequent growth. The roots arrived labelled, each one with a fancy name. There was "Marcus Aurelius" and the "King of the Gold Mine," the "Roman Empress" and the "Queen of the Amazons," "Psyche," the "God of Love," &c. Eagerly, and with childish delight, I studied this brilliant nomenclature, and wondered what strange and surprisingly beautiful creations I should see arising from the ground when spring returned; and these precious roots were committed to the earth under my grandfather's own eye, with his beautiful grand-daughter Anne standing by his side, and a crowd of happy young faces, of younger grandchildren, clustering round to see the progress, and inquire anxiously the name of each separate deposit.

Then, when spring returned, how eagerly we watched the first appearance of the shoots above ground! Each root was marked with its own name written on a bit of stick by its side; and what joy it was for one of us to discover the tender green breaking through the mould, and run to grandpapa to announce that we really believed Marcus Aurelius was coming up, or the Queen of the Amazons was above ground! With how much pleasure, compounded of our pleas-



ure and his own, on the new birth, he would immediately go out to verify the fact, and praise us for our diligent watchfulness.

Then, when the flowers were in bloom, and we were in ecstasies over the rich purple and crimson, or pure white, or delicate lilac, or pale yellow of the blossoms, how he would sympathize with our admiration, or discuss with my mother and elder sister new groupings and combinations and contrasts! Oh, these were happy moments for us and for him!

It was in the morning, immediately after our early breakfast, that he used to visit his flower-beds and his garden. As the day, in summer, grew warmer, he retired to his own apartments, which consisted of a bed-chamber and library opening into each other. Here he remained until about one o'clock, occupied in reading, writing, looking over papers, &c. My mother would sometimes send me with a message to him. A gentle knock, a call of "Come in," and I would enter, with a mixed feeling of love and reverence, and some pride in being the bearer of a communication to one whom I approached with all the affection of a child, and something of the loyalty of a subject. Our mother educated all her children to look up to her father, as she looked up to him herself, — literally looked up, as to one standing on an eminence of greatness and goodness. And it is no small proof of his real elevation, that as we grew older, and better able to judge for ourselves, we were more and more confirmed in the opinions we had formed of it.

#### ANOTHER GRAND-DAUGHTER'S RECOLLECTIONS.

Cheerfulness, love, benevolence, wisdom, seemed to animate his whole form. His face beamed with them. You remember how active was his step, how lively and even playful were his manners.

I cannot describe the feelings of veneration, admiration, and love that existed in my heart towards him. I looked on him as a being too great and good for my comprehension; and yet I felt no fear to approach him, and be taught by him some of the childish sports that I delighted in. When he walked in the garden, and would call the children to go with him, we raced after and before him, and we were made perfectly happy by this permission to accompany him. Not one of us in our wildest moods ever placed a foot on one of the garden beds, for that would violate one of his rules; and yet I never

heard him utter a harsh word to one of us, or speak in a raised tone of voice, or use a threat. He simply said, "Do," or "Do not." He would gather fruit for us, seek out the ripest figs, or bring down the cherries from on high above our heads with a long stick, at the end of which there was a hook and a little net bag. . . . One of our earliest amusements was in running races on the terrace, or around the lawn. He placed us according to our ages, giving the youngest and smallest the start of all the others by some yards, and so on; and then he raised his arm high with his white handkerchief in his hand, on which our eager eyes were fixed, and slowly counted three, at which number he dropped the handkerchief and we started off to finish the race by returning to the starting-place and receiving our reward of dried fruit, — three figs, prunes, or dates to the victor, two to the second, and one to the lagger who came in last. These were our summer sports with him.

I was born the year he was elected president; and except one winter that we spent with him in Washington, I never was with him during that season until after he had retired from office. During his absences, all the children who could write corresponded with him. Their letters were duly answered; and it was a sad mortification to me that I had not learned to write before his return to live at home, and of course had no letter from him. Whenever an opportunity occurred, he sent us books; and he never saw a little story or piece of poetry in a newspaper suited to our ages and tastes, that he did not preserve it and send it to us; and from him we learned the habit of making these miscellaneous collections by pasting in a little paper book, made for the purpose, any thing of the sort that we received from him or got otherwise.

On winter evenings, when it grew too dark to read, in the half-hour that passed before candles came in, as we all sat round the fire, he taught us several childish games, and would play them with us. I remember that "cross questions," and "I love my love with an A," were two I learned from him; and we would teach some of ours to him. When the candles were brought, all was quiet immediately, for he took up his book to read, and we would not speak out of a whisper lest we should disturb him; and generally we followed his example and took a book; and I have seen him raise his eyes from his own book, and look round on the little circle of readers, and smile, and make some remark to mamma about it. When the snow fell we

would go out as soon as it stopped to clear it off the terraces with shovels, that he might have his usual walk on them without treading in snow.

He often made us little presents. I remember his giving us "Parents' Assistant;" and that we drew lots, and that she who drew the longest straw had the first reading of the book, the next longest straw entitled the drawer to the second reading, the shortest, to the last reading and the ownership of the book. Often he discovered, we knew not how, some cherished object of our desires; and the first intimation we had of his knowing the wish was its unexpected gratification.

#### REMINISCENCES OF ANOTHER GRAND-DAUGHTER.

My grandfather's manners to us, his grandchildren, were delightful. I can characterize them by no other word. He talked with us freely, affectionately, never lost an opportunity of giving a pleasure or a good lesson. He reproved without wounding us, and commended without making us vain. He took pains to correct our errors and false ideas, checked the bold, encouraged the timid, and tried to teach us to reason soundly and feel rightly. Our smaller follies he treated with good-humored raillery, our graver ones with kind and serious admonition. He was watchful over our manners, and called our attention to every violation of propriety. He did not interfere with our education, technically so called, except by advising us what studies to pursue, what books to read, and by questioning us on the books which we did read. I was . . . thrown most into companionship with him. I loved him very devotedly, and sought every opportunity of being with him. As a child I used to follow him about, and draw as near to him as I could. I remember when I was small enough to sit on his knee and play with his watch-chain. As a girl I would join him in his walks on the terrace, sit with him over the fire during the winter twilight, or by the open windows in summer. As a child, girl, and woman, I loved and honored him above all earthly beings. And well I might. From him seemed to flow all the pleasures of my life. To him I owed all the small blessings and joyful surprises of my childish and girlish years. His nature was so eminently sympathetic, that, with those he loved, he could enter into their feelings, anticipate their wishes, gratify their tastes,

and surround them with an atmosphere of affection. I was fond of riding, and was rising above that childish simplicity when, provided I was mounted on a horse, I cared nothing for my equipments, and when an old saddle or broken bridle were matters of no moment. I was beginning to be fastidious, but I had never told my wishes. I was standing one bright day in the portico, when a man rode up to the door with a beautiful lady's saddle and bridle before him. My heart bounded. These coveted articles were deposited at my feet. My grandfather came out of his room to tell me they were mine.

When about fifteen years old, I began to think of a watch, but knew the state of my father's finances promised no such indulgence. One afternoon the letter-bag was brought in. Among the letters was a small packet addressed to my grandfather. It had the Philadelphia mark upon it. I looked at it with indifferent, incurious eye. Three hours after, an elegant lady's watch with chain and seals was in my hand, which trembled for very joy. My Bible came from him, my Shakspeare, my first writing-table, my first handsome writing-desk, my first Leghorn hat, my first silk dress. What, in short, of all my small treasures did not come from him? . . .

My sisters, according to their wants and tastes, were equally thought of, equally provided for. Our grandfather seemed to read our hearts, to see our invisible wishes, to be our good genius, to wave the fairy wand, to brighten our young lives by his goodness and his gifts. But I have written enough for this time; and, indeed, what can I say hereafter but to repeat the same tale of love and kindness?

VISIT OF LIEUTENANT FRANCIS HALL, OF THE BRITISH ARMY,  
IN 1817.

“Having an introduction to Mr. Jefferson, I ascended his little mountain on a fine morning, which gave the situation its due effect. The whole of the sides and base are covered with forest, through which roads have been cut circularly, so that the winding may be shortened at pleasure; the summit is an open lawn, near to the south side of which the house is built, with its garden just descending the brow; the saloon, or central hall, is ornamented with several pieces of antique sculpture, Indian arms, mammoth bones, and other curiosities collected from various parts of the Union. I found Mr.

Jefferson tall in person, but stooping and lean with old age; thus exhibiting the fortunate mode of bodily decay, which strips the frame of its most cumbersome parts, leaving it still strength of muscle and activity of limb. His deportment was exactly such as the Marquis de Chastellux describes it above thirty years ago. 'At first serious, nay, even cold,' but in a very short time relaxing into a most agreeable amenity, with an unabated flow of conversation on the most interesting topics, discussed in the most gentlemanly and philosophic manner. I walked with him round his grounds, to visit his pet trees and improvements of various kinds. During the walk he pointed out to my observation a conical mountain, rising singly at the edge of the southern horizon of the landscape: its distance, he said, was forty miles, and its dimensions those of the greater Egyptian pyramid; so that it accurately represents the appearance of the pyramid at the same distance. There is a small cleft visible on its summit, through which the true meridian of Monticello exactly passes: its most singular property, however, is, that on different occasions it looms, or alters its appearance, becoming sometimes cylindrical, sometimes square, and sometimes assuming the form of an inverted cone. Mr. Jefferson had not been able to connect this phenomenon with any particular season, or state of the atmosphere, except that it most commonly occurred in the forenoon. He observed that it was not only wholly unaccounted for by the laws of vision, but that it had not as yet engaged the attention of philosophers so far as to acquire a name; that of looming being, in fact, a term applied by sailors to appearances of a similar kind at sea. The Blue Mountains are also observed to loom, though not in so remarkable a degree.

"It must be remarkable to recall and preserve the political sentiments of a man who has held so distinguished a station in public life as Mr. Jefferson. He seemed to consider much of the freedom and happiness of America to rise from local circumstances. 'Our population,' he observed, 'has an elasticity by which it would fly off from oppressive taxation.' He instanced the beneficial effects of a free government in the case of New Orleans, where many proprietors who were in a state of indigence under the dominion of Spain have risen to sudden wealth, solely by the rise in the value of land which followed a change of government. Their ingenuity in mechanical inventions, agricultural improvements, and that mass of general information to be found among Americans of all ranks and



conditions, he ascribed to that ease of circumstances which afforded them leisure to cultivate their minds, after the cultivation of their lands was completed. In fact, I have frequently been surprised to find mathematical and other useful works in houses which seemed to have little pretensions to the luxury of learning. 'Another cause,' Mr. Jefferson observed, 'might be discovered in the many court and county meetings which brought men frequently together on public business, and thus gave them habits, both of thinking, and expressing their thoughts on subjects, which in other countries are confined to the privileged few.' Mr. Jefferson has not the reputation of being very friendly to England: we should, however, be aware that a partiality in this respect is not absolutely the duty of an American citizen; neither is it to be expected that the policy of our government should be regarded in foreign countries with the complacency with which it is looked upon by ourselves; but, whatever may be his sentiments in this respect, politeness naturally repressed any offensive expression of them: he talked of our affairs with candor, and apparent good will, though leaning perhaps to the gloomier side of the picture. He did not perceive by what means we could be extricated from our present financial embarrassments, without some kind of revolution in our government. On my replying that our habits were remarkably steady, and that great sacrifices would be made to prevent a violent catastrophe, he acceded to the observation, but demanded if those who made the sacrifices would not require some political reformation in return. His repugnance was strongly marked to the despotic principles of Bonaparte; and he seemed to consider France under Louis XVI. as scarcely capable of a republican form of government, but added that the present generation of Frenchmen had grown up with sounder notions, which would probably lead to their emancipation.

"Mr. Jefferson preferred Botta's Italian History of the American Revolution to any that had yet appeared; remarking, however, the inaccuracy of the speeches. Indeed, the true history of that period seems to be generally considered as lost. A remarkable letter on this point lately appeared in print from the venerable Mr. John Adams, to a Mr. Niles, who had solicited his aid to collect and publish a body of revolutionary speeches. He says, 'Of all the speeches made in Congress from 1774 to 1777, inclusive of both years, not one sentence remains, except a few periods of Dr. Witherspoon, printed in



his works.' His concluding sentence is very strong. 'In plain English, and in a few words, Mr. Niles, I consider the true history of the American Revolution, and the establishment of our present constitutions, as lost forever; and nothing but misrepresentations, or partial accounts of it, will ever be recovered.'

"I slept a night at Monticello, and left it in the morning with such a feeling as the traveller quits the mouldering remains of a Grecian temple, or the pilgrim a fountain in the desert. It would indeed argue a great torpor, both of understanding and heart, to have looked without veneration and interest on the man who drew up the Declaration of American Independence; who shared in the councils by which her freedom was established; whom the unbought voice of his fellow-citizens called to the exercise of a dignity from which his own moderation impelled him, when such an example was most salutary, to withdraw; and who, while he dedicates the evening of his glorious days to the pursuits of science and literature, shuns none of the humbler duties of private life; but, having filled a seat higher than that of kings, succeeds with graceful dignity to that of the good neighbor, and becomes the friendly adviser, lawyer, and physician, and even gardener, of his vicinity. This is the still small voice of philosophy, deeper and holier than the lightnings and earthquakes which have preceded it."

#### VISIT OF DANIEL WEBSTER IN 1824.

"Mr. Jefferson is now between eighty-one and eighty-two, above six feet high, of an ample, long frame, rather thin and spare. His head, which is not peculiar in its shape, is set rather forward on his shoulders; and his neck being long, there is, when he is walking or conversing, an habitual protrusion of it. It is still well covered with hair, which having been once red, and now turning gray, is of an indistinct sandy-color.

"His eyes are small, very light, and now neither brilliant nor striking. His chin is rather long, but not pointed. His nose small, regular in its outline, and the nostrils a little elevated. His mouth is well formed, and still filled with teeth: it is strongly compressed, bearing an expression of contentment and benevolence. His complexion, formerly light and freckled, now bears the marks of age and cutaneous affection. His limbs are uncommonly long, his hands

and feet very large, and his wrists of an extraordinary size. His walk is not precise and military, but easy and swinging. He stoops a little, not so much from age as from natural formation. When sitting, he appears short, partly from a rather lounging habit of sitting, and partly from the disproportionate length of his limbs.

“His dress when in the house is a gray surtout coat, kerseymerestuff waistcoat, with an under-one faced with some material of a dingy red. His pantaloons are very long and loose, and of the same color as his coat. His stockings are woollen, either white or gray; and his shoes of the kind that bear his name. His whole dress is very much neglected, but not slovenly. He wears a common round hat. His dress when on horseback is a gray straight-bodied coat, and a spencer of the same material, both fastened with large pearl buttons. When we first saw him he was riding; and, in addition to the above articles of apparel, wore round his throat a knit white woollen tippet in the place of a cravat, and black-velvet gaiters under his pantaloons. His general appearance indicates an extraordinary degree of health, vivacity, and spirit. His sight is still good, for he needs glasses only in the evening. His hearing is generally good, but a number of voices in animated conversation confuse it.

“Mr. Jefferson rises in the morning as soon as he can see the hands of his clock, which is directly opposite his bed, and examines his thermometer immediately, as he keeps a regular meteorological diary. He employs himself chiefly in writing till breakfast, which is at nine. From that time till dinner he is in his library, excepting that in fair weather he rides on horseback from seven to fourteen miles. Dines at four, returns to the drawing-room at six, when coffee is brought in, and passes the evening till nine in conversation. His habit of retiring at that hour is so strong, that it has become essential to his health and comfort. His diet is simple, but he seems restrained only by his taste. His breakfast is tea and coffee, bread always fresh from the oven, of which he does not seem afraid, with sometimes a slight accompaniment of cold meat. He enjoys his dinner well, taking with his meat a large proportion of vegetables. He has a strong preference for the wines of the Continent, of which he has many sorts of excellent quality, having been more than commonly successful in his mode of importing and preserving them. Among others we found the following, which are very rare in this country, and apparently not at all injured by transportation, — L'Ed-

nau, Muscat, Samian, and Blanchette de Limoux. Dinner is served in half Virginian, half French style, in good taste and abundance. No wine is put on the table till the cloth is removed.

“In conversation Mr. Jefferson is easy and natural, and apparently not ambitious: it is not loud, as challenging general attention, but usually addressed to the person next him. The topics, when not selected to suit the character and feelings of his auditor, are those subjects with which his mind seems particularly occupied; and these, at present, may be said to be science and letters, and especially the University of Virginia, which is coming into existence almost entirely from his exertions, and will rise, it is to be hoped, to usefulness and credit under his continued care. When we were with him, his favorite subjects were Greek and Anglo-Saxon, historical recollections of the times and events of the Revolution, and of his residence in France from 1783-4 to 1789.”

#### VISIT OF THE DUKE OF SAXE-WEIMAR IN 1825.

“President Jefferson invited us to a family dinner; but as in Charlottesville there is but a single hackney-coach, and this being absent, we were obliged to go the three miles to Monticello on foot.

“We went by a pathway, through well-cultivated and enclosed fields, crossed a creek named Rivanna, passing on a trunk of a tree cut in a rough shape and without rails; then ascended a steep hill overgrown with wood, and came, on its top, to Mr. Jefferson’s house, which is in an open space, walled round with bricks, forming an oblong whose shorter sides are rounded; on each of the longer sides are portals of four columns.

“The unsuccessful waiting for a carriage, and our long walk, caused such a delay, that we found the company at table when we entered; but Mr. Jefferson came very kindly to meet us, forced us to take our seats, and ordered dinner to be served up anew. He was an old man of eighty-six years of age, of tall stature, plain appearance, and long white hair.

“In conversation, he was very lively; and his spirits, as also his hearing and sight, seemed not to have decreased at all with his advancing age. I found in him a man who retained his faculties remarkably well in his old age, and one would have taken him for a man of sixty. He asked me what I had seen in Virginia. I eulogized

all the places that I was certain would meet with his approbation, and he seemed very much pleased. The company at the table consisted of the family of his daughter, Mrs. Randolph, and of that of the professor of mathematics at the university, an Englishman and his wife. I turned the conversation to the subject of the university, and observed that this was the favorite topic with Mr. Jefferson: he entertained very sanguine hopes as to the flourishing state of the university in future, and believed that it, and the Harvard University near Boston, would in a very short time be the only institutions where the youth of the United States would receive a truly classical and solid education. After dinner we intended to take our leave, in order to return to Charlottesville; but Mr. Jefferson would not consent to it. He pressed us to remain for the night at his house. The evening was spent by the fire: a great deal was said about travels, and objects of natural history; the fine arts were also introduced, of which Mr. Jefferson was a great admirer. He spoke also of his travels in France, and the country on the Rhine, where he was very much pleased. His description of Virginia is the best proof what an admirer he is of the beauties of nature. He told us that it was only eight months since he could not ride on horseback; otherwise he rode every day to visit the surrounding country: he entertained, however, hopes of being able to recommence, the next spring, his favorite exercise. Between nine and ten o'clock in the evening the company broke up, and a handsome room was assigned to me.

“The next morning I took a walk round the house, and admired the beautiful panorama which this spot presents. On the left I saw the Blue Ridge, and between them and Monticello are smaller hills. Charlottesville and the university lay at my feet; before me, the valley of the Rivanna River, which farther on makes its junction with the James River; and on my right was the flat part of Virginia, the extent of which is lost in distance; behind me was a towering mill which limited the sight. The interior of the house was plain, and the furniture somewhat of an old fashion. In the entrance was a marble stove, with Mr. Jefferson's bust, by Cerracchi. In the room hung several copies of the celebrated pictures of the Italian school, views of Monticello, Mount Vernon, the principal buildings in Washington, and Harper's Ferry; there were also an oil-painting and an engraving of the Natural Bridge, views of Niagara by Vandelin, a sketch of the large picture by Trumbull representing the surrender

at Yorktown, and a pen-drawing of Hector's Departure by Benjamin West, presented by him to General Kosciuszko; finally, several portraits of Mr. Jefferson, among which the best was that in profile, by Stuart. In the saloon there were two busts, one of Napoleon as First Consul, and another of the Emperor Alexander. Mr. Jefferson admired Napoleon's military tactics, but did not love him. After breakfast, which we took with the family, we bade the respectable old man farewell, and set out upon our return to Charlottesville.

"Mr. Jefferson tendered us the use of his carriage; but I declined, as I preferred walking in a fine and cool morning."

## CHAPTER LXXII.

### LAST YEARS AND DAYS.

THE meeting of Jefferson and Lafayette in 1824 fills a great place in the memoirs of those times. They had labored together in anxious and critical periods, — first when Jefferson was governor of Virginia, and Lafayette commanded the forces defending the State against the inroads of Cornwallis; and afterwards when Jefferson, a tyro in diplomacy, enjoyed the powerful aid of the young and popular nobleman at the court of France. Thirty-six years had passed since that memorable day when Lafayette had brought the leaders of the Revolution to Jefferson's house in Paris, and they had there eaten a sacramental dinner, and afterwards, under the serene influence of the silent master of the feast, arranged a programme upon which it was possible for them to unite. Thirty-six years! Both were old men now, — Jefferson past eighty, Lafayette nearly seventy; but both retained every faculty except those which begin to perish as soon as they are created. Jefferson exulted when he heard of the landing of his ancient friend and colleague. "I hope," said he, "we shall close his visit with something more solid for him than dinners and balls;" and it was Jefferson who proposed that Congress should pay part of the unrecorded and unclaimed debt which the country owed Lafayette for money advanced during the Revolutionary War.

During the heats of August the French republican landed in New York; and as soon as the cool days of September came he moved southward on a pilgrimage to Monticello. They met on one of the fine days of October. Jefferson would have gone some distance to welcome his approaching guest; but the gentlemen in charge of the occasion requested him to remain at his house, while they escorted the Marquis from Charlottesville to the summit of the



mount. A brave cavalcade of the gentlemen of the county, with trumpets sounding, and banners waving in the breeze, accompanied him, and formed about the lawn, while the carriage advanced to the front of the mansion. A great concourse of excited and expectant people were present, gazing intently upon the portico. The carriage drew up; and while an alert little figure with gray hair descended, the front door of the house opened, and the tall, bent and wasted form of Jefferson was seen. The music ceased, and every head was uncovered. The two old men threw themselves into each other's arms, and relieved their feelings by a hearty embrace. The coldest heart was moved, and tears filled the eyes of almost every spectator. They entered the house together, and the assembly dispersed.

During the stay of Lafayette at Monticello, there was a grand banquet given in his honor in the great room of the university, which was attended by President Monroe and the two ex-Presidents, Madison and Jefferson. It was a time of hilarity and enthusiasm such as we can all easily imagine. When Jefferson was toasted, he handed a written speech to a friend to read to the company. I think he meant this address as a kind of farewell to his countrymen, and to the great cause to which his own life and the life of his guest had been devoted, — the supremacy of Right in the affairs of men.

“I will avail myself of this occasion, my beloved neighbors and friends, to thank you for the kindness which now, and at all times, I have received at your hands. Born and bred among your fathers, led by their partiality into the line of public life, I labored in fellowship with them through that arduous struggle, which, freeing us from foreign bondage, established us in the rights of self-government, — rights which have blessed ourselves, and will bless, in their sequence, all the nations of the earth. In this contest we all did our utmost; and, as none could do more, none had pretensions to superior merit.

“I joy, my friends, in your joy, inspired by the visit of this our ancient and distinguished leader and benefactor. His deeds in the War of Independence you have heard and read. They are known to you, and embalmed in your memories and in the pages of faithful history. His deeds in the peace which followed that war are per

haps not known to you ; but I can attest them. When I was stationed in his country, for the purpose of cementing its friendship with ours, and of advancing our mutual interests, this friend of both was my most powerful auxiliary and advocate. He made our cause his own, as in truth it was that of his native country also. His influence and connections there were great. All doors of all departments were open to him at all times : to me only formally and at appointed times. In truth, I only held the nail : he drove it. Honor him, then, as your benefactor in peace, as well as in war.

“My friends, I am old, long in the disuse of making speeches, and without voice to utter them. In this feeble state the exhausted powers of life leave little within my competence for your service. If, with the aid of my younger and abler coadjutors, I can still contribute any thing to advance the institution within whose walls we are now mingling manifestations to this our guest, it will be, as it ever has been, cheerfully and zealously bestowed. And could I live to see it once enjoy the patronage and cherishment of our public authorities with undivided voice, I should die without a doubt of the future fortunes of my native State, and in the consoling contemplation of the happy influence of this institution on its character, its virtue, its prosperity, and safety.

“To these effusions for the cradle and land of my birth, I add, for our nation at large, the aspirations of a heart warm with the love of country ; whose invocations to Heaven for its indissoluble union will be fervent and unremitting while the pulse of life continues to beat ; and, when that ceases, it will expire in prayers for the eternal duration of its freedom and prosperity.”

When Lafayette again visited Monticello, in 1825, to take leave of his venerable friend, the university was open, with a fair prospect of realizing at length the fond hopes of its chief founder. Professors and students gathered about the visitor, and enlivened the table of his illustrious host.

These last years of Mr. Jefferson's life were not wholly passed in such lofty occupations as the founding of a university and the entertainment of a nation's guest. His own estate, always more large than productive, had been diminishing in value for many years. Few men lost more by the Embargo, in proportion to their means, than the author of that measure ; and this was one of the

reasons why he left Washington in 1809 owing twenty thousand dollars. The war of 1812 continued the suspension of commerce, and made tobacco and cotton almost worthless. After the war, Mr. Jefferson relieved himself of his most pressing embarrassments by selling the part of his estate which was most precious to him, and most peculiarly his own, — his library, — the result of sixty years' affectionate search and selection. He offered it to Congress to supply the place of their library burnt by the English soldiers in 1814; and he sedulously schemed to cut down the price so as to silence the murmurs of his old enemies, and prevent the purchase from being an injury to his friends. The committee valued it at twenty-three thousand dollars, about half its cost, and a quarter of its worth. Mr. Bacon had the charge of removing the books to Washington. "There was an immense quantity of them," he tells us, "sixteen wagon-loads. Each wagon was to carry three thousand pounds for a load, and to have four dollars a day for delivering them in Washington. If they carried more than three thousand pounds, they were to have extra pay. There were all kinds of books, — books in a great many languages that I knew nothing about."

And so Mr. Jefferson lost his library just when he needed it most; and Congress did not dare improve the golden opportunity (by merely paying the just value of a unique collection) of giving him substantial relief. His own collection of books had been largely increased in 1807 by his old friend, Chancellor Wythe, bequeathing to him his library. All these accumulations, except a few favorites, he was obliged to part with in his old age.

The hard times of 1819 and 1820, which reduced so many established families to poverty, brought upon Mr. Jefferson also an insupportable burden. He had indorsed for one of his oldest friends and connections to the amount of twenty thousand dollars, in the confident expectation of saving him from ruin. His friend became bankrupt notwithstanding; and the indorser had to take upon his aged shoulders this crushing addition to his already excessive load, — twelve hundred dollars a year in money. One consequence of this misfortune was, that he lost the services of his faithful and competent manager, Edmund Bacon, who had been for some years looking westward, intending to buy land and settle there. "I was sorry," he says, "to leave Mr. Jefferson; but I was

more willing to do it, because I did not wish to see the poor old gentleman suffer, what I knew he must suffer, from the debts that were pressing upon him." They had a sorrowful parting after their twenty years of friendly and familiar intercourse. "It was a trying time to me," Mr. Bacon records. "I don't know whether he shed any tears or not, but I know that I shed a good many. He was sitting in his room, on his sofa, where I had seen him so often; and keeping hold of my hand some time, he said, 'Now let us hear from each other occasionally;' and as long as he lived I heard from him once or twice a year. The last letter I ever had from him was when I wrote him of the death of my wife, soon after I got to Kentucky. He expressed a great deal of sympathy for me; said he did not wonder that I felt completely broken up, and was disposed to move back; that he had passed through the same himself; and only time and silence would relieve me."

Mr. Jefferson's affairs did not mend, though he enjoyed the able and resolute assistance of his grandson and namesake, Thomas Jefferson Randolph; and he resolved, at length, to discharge the worst of his debts, in the fashion of old Virginia, by selling a portion of his lands. But there was nobody to buy. Land sold in the usual way would not bring a third of its value; and consequently he petitioned the legislature to relax the operation of law so far as to allow him to dispose of some of his farms by lottery, as was frequently done when money was to be raised for a public object. The legislature granted his request, though with reluctance. But, in the mean time, it had been noised abroad, all over the Union, that the author of the Declaration of Independence was about to lose that far-famed Monticello with which his name had been associated in the public mind for two generations, the abode of his prime and the refuge of his old age, a Mecca to the republicans of many lands. A feeling arose in all liberal minds that this must not be; and during the spring of 1826, the last of his years, subscriptions were made for his relief in several places. Philip Hone, mayor of New York, raised without an effort, as Mr. Randall records, eight thousand five hundred dollars. Philadelphia sent five thousand, and Baltimore three thousand. The lottery was suspended; and Mr. Jefferson's last days were solaced by the belief that the subscriptions would suffice to free his estate from debt, and secure home and independence to his daughter and her children. He was proud of

the liberality of his countrymen, and proud to be its object. He who had refused to accept so much as a loan from the legislature of his State gloried in being the recipient of gifts from individuals. "No cent of this," said he, "is wrung from the tax-payer. It is the pure and unsolicited offering of love."

There has seldom been a sounder constitution than his, nor one less abused. At eighty-two his teeth were all but perfect, he enjoyed his daily ride on horseback of ten miles, and he was only afraid that life might continue after it had ceased to be a blessing. "I have ever," he wrote to Mr. Adams in 1822, "dreaded a doting old age; and my health has been generally so good, and is now so good, that I dread it still. The rapid decline of my strength during the last winter has made me hope sometimes that I see land. During summer I enjoy its temperature; but I shudder at the approach of winter, and wish I could sleep through it with the dormouse, and only wake with him in spring, if ever." Reduced by an occasional diarrhœa, he alternately rallied and declined during the next three years, but, of course, never quite regained after an attack what he had lost. By his family the decay of his bodily powers was scarcely observed, it was so gradual, until the spring of 1826, when it became more obvious and rapid. It was his habit all his life to be silent with regard to his own sufferings; and now, especially, he concealed from every one the ravages of a disease which, he knew, was about to deliver him from the "doting old age" that he dreaded. His grandson just mentioned, who stood nearer to him at this period than any one except his daughter, was taken by surprise when he heard him say, in March, 1826, that he *might* live till midsummer; and again, when, about the middle of June, he said, as he handed him a paper to read, "Don't delay: there is no time to be lost."

From that day he was under regular medical treatment. He told his physician, Dr. Dunglison of the university, that he attributed his disease to his free use, some years before, of the water of the White Sulphur Springs of Virginia. On the 24th of June he was still well enough to write a long letter in reply to an invitation to attend the fiftieth celebration of the Fourth of July, at Washington.

How sanguine his mind within nine days of his death! "All eyes," he wrote, with trembling hand indeed, but with a heart buoyant and alert, "are opened, or opening, to the rights of man. The



general spread of the light of science has already laid open to every view the palpable truth, that the mass of mankind have not been born with saddles on their backs, nor a favored few booted and spurred, ready to ride them legitimately, by the grace of God." Nothing of him was impaired but his body, even then. But that grew steadily weaker until he lay upon his bed, serene, painless, cheerful, in full possession of his reason, but helpless and dying. He conversed calmly with his family concerning his affairs, in the tone of a person about to set out upon a journey which could not be avoided. He mentioned to his friends a fact of his mental condition that seemed to strike him as peculiar, — that the scenes and events of the Revolutionary period kept recurring to him. The curtains of his bed, he said, were brought over in the first ship that arrived after the peace of 1782; and he related many incidents of those eventful times. Once, while he was dozing, he placed his hands as if he were writing with his right on a tablet held in his left, and murmured, "Warn the committee to be on the alert." When his grandson said that he thought he was a little better, he replied, "Do not imagine for a moment that I feel the smallest solicitude about the result. I am like an old watch, with a pinion worn out here, and a wheel there, until it can go no longer." Upon imagining that he heard a clergyman of the neighborhood in the next room, he said, "I have no objection to see him as a kind and good neighbor;" meaning, as his grandson thought, that he did not desire to see him in his professional character. He repeated on his death-bed a remark which he had made a hundred times before: His calumniators he had never thought were assailing *him*, but a being non-existent, of their own imagining, to whom they had given the name of Thomas Jefferson. Observing a little grandson eight years old in the room, he said with a smile, "George does not understand what all this means." He spoke much of Mr. Madison, who, he hoped, would succeed him as rector of the university. He eulogized him justly as one of the best of men and one of the greatest of citizens.

During the 3d of July he dozed hour after hour, under the influence of opiates, rousing occasionally, and uttering a few words. It was evident that his end was very near; and a fervent desire arose in all minds that he should live until the day which he had assisted to consecrate half a century before. He, too, desired it. At eleven in the evening Mr. N. P. Trist, the young husband of one of his grand-



daughters, sat by his pillow watching his face, and turning every minute toward the slow-moving hands of the clock, dreading lest the flickering flame should go out before midnight. "This is the Fourth?" whispered the dying patriot. Mr. Trist could not bear to say, "Not yet;" so he remained silent. "This is the Fourth?" again asked Mr. Jefferson in a whisper. Mr. Trist nodded assent. "Ah!" he breathed; and an expression of satisfaction passed over his countenance. Again he sunk into sleep, which all about him feared was the slumber of death. But midnight came; the night passed; the morning dawned; the sun rose; the new day progressed; and still he breathed, and occasionally indicated a desire by words or looks. At twenty minutes to one in the afternoon he ceased to live.

At Quincy, on the granite shore of distant Massachusetts, another memorable death-scene was passing on this Fourth of July, 1826.

John Adams, at the age of ninety-one, had been an enjoyer of existence down almost to the dawn of the fiftieth Fourth of July. He voted for Monroe in 1820. His own son was president of the United States in 1826. He used to sit many hours of every day, tranquilly listening to members of his family, while they read to him the new books with which friends in Boston, knowing his taste, kept him abundantly supplied. He, who was a formed man when Dr. Johnson was writing his Dictionary, lived to enjoy Scott's novels and Byron's poetry. His grandson, Mr. Charles Francis Adams, the worthy heir of an honorable name, then a youth of eighteen, used to sit by him, he tells us, for days together, reading to him, "watching the noble image of a serene old age, or listening with unabated interest to the numerous anecdotes, the reminiscences of the past, and the speculations upon the questions of all times, in which he loved to indulge." On the last day of June, 1826, though his strength had much declined of late, he was still well enough to receive and that with a neighbor, the orator of the coming anniversary, who called to ask him for a toast to be offered at the usual banquet. "I will give you," said the old man, "INDEPENDENCE FOREVER!" Being asked if he wished to add any thing to it, he replied, "Not a word." The day came. It was evident that he could not long survive. He lingered, tranquil and without pain, to the setting of the sun. The last words that he articulated were thought to be, "Thomas Jefferson still lives." As the sun sank below the horizon, a noise of

great shouting was heard in the village, and reached even the apartment in which the old man lay. It was the enthusiastic cheers called forth by his toast, — Independence forever. Before the sounds died away he had breathed his last.

The coincidence of the death of these two venerable men on the day associated with their names in all minds did not startle the whole country at once, on the morning of the next day, as such an event now would. Slowly the news of Mr. Adams's death spread over the Northern States, while that of Mr. Jefferson's was borne more slowly over the Southern; so that almost every person heard of the death of one several days before he learned the death of the other. The public mind had been wrought to an unusual degree of patriotic fervor by the celebration of the nation's birth, when few orators had failed to allude to the sole survivors of the body which had declared independence. That one of them should have departed on that day struck every mind as something remarkable. But when it became known that the author of the Declaration and its most powerful defender had both breathed their last on the Fourth of July, the fiftieth since they had set it apart from the roll of common days, it seemed as if Heaven had given its visible and unerring sanction to the work they had done.

Among Mr. Jefferson's papers was found a rough sketch in ink of a stone to mark his grave. He designed it to be an obelisk of granite eight feet high; and he wished it to bear the following inscription, which it does :

HERE WAS BURIED  
 THOMAS JEFFERSON,  
 AUTHOR  
 OF THE DECLARATION OF  
 AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE,  
 OF  
 THE STATUTE OF VIRGINIA  
 FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, AND  
 FATHER OF THE UNIVERSITY  
 OF VIRGINIA.

His remains were placed in the family burial-ground, near the summit of Monticello, on the spot selected nearly seventy years before by Dabney Carr and himself, and where the dust of Carr

had reposed for half a century, awaiting the coming of his friend. His wife lies on one side of him, and his youngest daughter, his fragile and clinging Maria, on the other.

But the utmost efforts of his executor did not suffice to retain even this burial-ground, still less the mansion and estate, in the possession of the family. Thomas Jefferson died more than solvent; but the extreme depression of values in Virginia in 1826 and the few following years, compelled the total sacrifice of the property. The debts were paid to the uttermost farthing; but Martha Jefferson and her children lost their home, and had no means of providing another. These circumstances becoming known, the legislatures of South Carolina and Louisiana each voted to Mrs. Randolph an honorable gift of ten thousand dollars. She lived to the year 1836, when she died suddenly at the age of sixty-three, and her remains were buried close to those of her parents. A large number of her descendants survive to this day.

## CHAPTER LXXIII.

### SUMMARY.

JEFFERSON was among the most fortunate of men. In modern times a person, in order to fulfil the requirements of an eminent career, needs to be so variously equipped and so richly furnished, that few individuals can hold on to the end unless fortune begins by placing them on vantage-ground. A strong father must usually precede the gifted son, and break the road for him. It is not enough, in the realm of the intellect, for the father to conquer leisure for the son, though that is desirable. He must be the beginning of the boy's culture, and save him from the melancholy waste of unlearning in maturity what he had learned in childhood. We find, accordingly, that many of our recent famous names belong to two persons, — father and child; and perhaps this will be more frequently the case as knowledge increases and the standard of attainment rises. We have two Pitts, two Mills, two Macaulays, two Niebuhrs, two Darwins, two Landseers, two Collinses, two D'Israelis, two Beechers, two Bryants, two Arnolds. We have had men, too, whose career was fatally harmed and limited only because they had but one parent, and that one not a father.

On the other hand, no one is more likely to have been ill-born than a person sprung from an ancient family. The marriages which perpetuate an historic house, being usually prompted by considerations of rank and estate, cannot but result, at last, in reducing both the volume and the vivacity of the average brain of the family. This we should infer from the little that is known of the art of breeding superior creatures, if the fact were not plainly exhibited in the quality of existing aristocracies and royal lines. In all literature there can be found no delineations of vulgarity so unmitigated as those with which the masters of modern fiction (from Scott to George

Eliot) favor us when they portray the aristocratic life of Europe. The curious insensibility to every thing elevated and interesting which their ancient families exhibit is merely a natural consequence of a system of pairing with which neither instinct nor science has had any thing to do.

It was Jefferson's happiness to derive from his progenitors the maximum of help with the minimum of hinderance. His stalwart father created for him a peaceful and healthy home in a beautiful land, and provided sufficiently, but not excessively, for his education and training. His father, too, though not a scholar, was a man of sound intelligence and practical ability, who honored learning by word and deed, and marked out for his boy a liberal career. He was also an embodiment of that ancient something in the British people which created parliament, established parishes, invented the jury, extorted Magna Charta, resisted Charles I., brought over William and Mary, passed the Habeas Corpus act, carried the Reform Bill, and disestablished the Irish Church.

The political part of Thomas Jefferson's career in America was the application and development of the ancient Whig principles which his father loved and lived.

His religious tone was also that of most healthy English souls before religion became intense and opinionative. The Jeffersons appear to have been of that good-tempered and sensible class who escaped the anguish and narrowness of the Puritan period, equally incapable of fighting a bishop or stoning a Quaker. To such, religion was never a system or a salvation. It was the supreme decency, the highest etiquette, with the addition of bell-ringing and merry Christmas. That Jefferson was able to attain to a rational and comfortable tone of mind on this distracting subject, without any severe internal conflict, was a happiness he owed to the well-tempered mind of his father, and to the healthy race from which he sprang.

There was a most rare union of good qualities in his bodily constitution. Here was a man capable of lifting a thousand pounds, — the strongest in a county full of the exceptionally strong; but to this prodigious physical power there was joined a dexterity of hand and a firm delicacy of touch beyond those of a woman. His hand writing was as minute as it was strong and clear, and he greatly excelled in the arts and devices that demand the union of strength

and delicacy. The least effeminate of men, he was very feminine in many of his ways, feelings, and tastes. The wild beast was more nearly extirpated in him than in any other human being of whom I have any familiar knowledge. People could live with him many years and not *once* see him angry, ill-humored, irritable, or melancholy. He rose jocund to greet the dawn, and lived a festal life to the going down of the sun, his hours all filled with occupation innocent, elevated, and becoming. The barbaric traits, too, were strangely subdued in him. Who so little vain as he? who less selfish? which of the sons of men has held the troublesome *ego* in juster subjection, while guarding with solicitous and vigilant respect the sensitive self-love of other men? In his private and public life there was the happiest possible mixture of the firm and the tractable. And the special wonder of the case was, that the beast and the savage had been bred out of him and educated out of him without in the least impairing his original vigor and vivacity.

Very different was his serene and sunny good temper from mere animal spirits. There was thought and principle in his good temper. In this great matter of temper, upon which the hourly happiness of our race depends, we find him still the *educated* being. He had reflected much upon the causes of friends' estrangements and the agonizing discords of home. If his observations on this subject were published in a four-page tract, and dropped in every human abode, the happiness of man would be sensibly increased by it. Here, for example, is a passage that might well be engraved on every wedding-present:—

“Harmony in the married state is the very first object to be aimed at. Nothing can preserve affections uninterrupted but a firm resolution never to differ in will, and a determination in each to consider the love of the other as of more value than any object whatever on which a wish had been fixed. How light, in fact, is the sacrifice of any other wish, when weighed against the affections of one with whom we are to pass our whole life. And though opposition, in a single instance, will hardly of itself produce alienation, yet every one has his pouch into which all these little oppositions are put: while that is filling, the alienation is insensibly going on, and when filled it is complete. It would puzzle either to say why, because no one difference of opinion has been marked enough to produce a



serious effect by itself. But he finds his affections wearied out by a constant stream of little checks and obstacles. Other sources of discontent, very common indeed, are the little cross-purposes of husband and wife, in common conversation, — a disposition in either to criticise and question whatever the other says, a desire always to demonstrate and make him feel himself in the wrong, and especially in company. Nothing is so goading. Much better, therefore, if our companion views a thing in a light different from what we do, to leave him in quiet possession of his view. What is the use of rectifying him, if the thing be unimportant; and, if important, let it pass for the present, and wait a softer moment and more conciliatory occasion of revising the subject together. It is wonderful how many persons are rendered unhappy by inattention to these little rules of prudence.”

Such passages as these show us that the excellence to which he had brought the “art of living” was due to something more than a happy commingling of natural ingredients in the composition of mind and body. He was, indeed, most fortunately constituted; but he was also a man who considered his ways, and controlled them. And this it is which alone makes his life of value to us. Jefferson’s temperament few can have; and, if our happiness depended upon inherited qualities, a large number of the human race might justly reproach the constitution of things that brought them into being. But there is no one, let him be as cross-grained as he may by nature, who may not achieve a happiness and make his life a benefaction by acting upon Jefferson’s principles. From the first hour that we get any knowledge of him, we see him a person who never remained content with the gifts of fortune, but turned them to the best account, and pressed forward to worthy achievement. He was an indomitable student always, and a man of better sustained activity than almost any other of his time. There was not an idle bone in his body.

In his public life the same good fortune attended him. He was usually in the thick of events when his presence was of the utmost advantage to himself; but on several occasions he enjoyed those happy absences from the scene of difficulty which have often sufficed to give a public man ascendancy over rivals. These absences were never contrived, and their advantage never could have been fore-

seen. During that buoyant and inspiring period when all hearts were in unison, from the Stamp Act to the Declaration of Independence, circumstances and inclination united to keep him in the van of affairs, and to assign him the kind of work in doing which Nature had formed him to excel. Thus, by an exercise of his talents which we may call slight and accidental, his name was forever associated with the act that began the national life of America. Virginia then summoned him imperatively away to adjust her laws and institutions to the Declaration which he had penned. When, at last, his good fortune seemed to forsake him, and the storm of war broke over Virginia, so long exempt, and swept away civil government and civil governor, then the triumph at Yorktown consigned his mishaps to prompt oblivion, and all men saw in the light of that triumph that he had done whatever was possible by civil methods.

It has been said that a complete man buttons up a good soldier whenever he puts on his waistcoat. This would be true if there were any complete men. But there are not. If Jefferson, when the war broke out, had gone to the field, and kept Arnold from ravaging his native province, and been in at the death of the hunted foe at Yorktown, he would have done a noble and heroic thing; but he would not have been Thomas Jefferson. And, from first to last, there was always in Virginia a redundancy of officers. John Marshall, afterwards chief justice, went all the way from Virginia to head-quarters near New York, alone, on foot, ragged, and destitute; because, after waiting many months, he could not find in Virginia a chance to serve as an officer. In the field Jefferson could only have rendered service that many stood ready to perform; in civil office he did some splendid things which no man in Virginia could have done so well as he.

After the war, during all that anxious and dividing period when the thirteen States lacked the hoop to the barrel, he was honorably absent in France; and again, during the frenzied time of American politics, from 1797 to 1800, he was safe and snug at home, while friend and foe conspired to give prominence and fascination to his name. In the closing years of his life his peace was disturbed by the decline in the value of his estate, and by apprehension for the future of his descendants. But he died without knowing the worst, and the timely generosity of two grateful States saved his daughter from painful embarrassment. He was happier in this than either of the other two of the Republican triumvirate. Monroe died bank-

rupt and dependent. Mrs. Madison knew what it was to want bread.\*

Jefferson needed the happy accidents of his life to atone for his deficiencies as a public man. He was shy; he shrank from publicity; he was not combative; he was no orator; he could not have controlled a public assembly, nor handled a mass-meeting. Nature had not fitted him for an executive office; and if he had lived in peaceful times, and been born subject to the ordinary conditions, he never would have made his way into politics at all. Whether he would have been an artist or a man of science would have depended upon the place and time of his birth; but he would have pursued either of those careers with that blending of passion and plod which distinguishes the man who is doing the precise thing Nature meant him to do.

But having been called into politics, and kept in politics, by the exigencies of his country, and by the proprieties of the place he held in it, he bore himself wonderfully well. He represented the best side of his country in a foreign land, remaining proof against all the seductions of his place to take part with the graceful and picturesque oppressor, instead of the homely, helpless, ill-favored oppressed. Returning home he finds a tone in society, a style in the government, an influence in the air, that first astonished, soon disgusted him, and before long determined him to retire from public life. Circumstances had given to the narrow Scotch intellect of young Hamilton an ascendancy in the unformed, groping politics of the thirteen States to which it was not naturally entitled.

After dwelling long in the political dissensions of that period, and tracing their consequences to the present moment, I feel deeply the truth of Jefferson's remark, that Hamilton was the evil genius of America. He meddled balefully with the metal of American institutions while it was cooling, and so muddled the political system of

\* "In the last days of her life, before Congress had purchased her husband's papers, Mrs. Madison was in a state of absolute poverty; and I think sometimes suffered for the necessaries of life. While I was a servant to Mr. (Daniel) Webster, he often sent me to her with a market-basket full of provisions, and told me, whenever I saw any thing in the house that I thought she was in need of, to take it to her. I often did this, and occasionally gave her small sums from my own pocket, though I had years before bought my freedom of her." — *A Colored Man's Reminiscences of James Madison*, p. 16.

the country, that probably it will never get the shape originally intended till it is recast. At the moment when I am writing these words, the country is striving to rid itself of that miserable fag-end of one of Hamilton's ridiculous ingenuities, — the electoral colleges. Perhaps in 1887, the hundredth anniversary of the constitutional convention, the country may be ripe for a second constitutional convention, which will thoroughly Jeffersonize the general government; making it the simple, strong, and strictly limited agency which the people meant it should be, and desire that it shall be. Why have a written constitution if it is not to be religiously complied with? How safe, how wise, how adapted to our limited human capacity, the simple theory of the general government which Jefferson and Madison defended?

Called to administer the government, we find Jefferson still attended by that strange, and, I may, say startling good luck, that pursued him from the cradle to the grave. A general peace promptly followed his inauguration; and when that peace was broken (an event that brought woe upon the rest of Christendom), it enabled *him* to add to his country the most valuable acquisition which it was possible for it to receive. While Europe shuddered to hear the muttering of the coming storm, three gentlemen in Paris quietly arranged the terms on which the United States were to possess the mouths of the Mississippi, and an empire which the Mississippi drained. But I venture again to affirm, that, much as he was favored by fortune, his merit was equal to his fortune. He rose to every opportunity, and improved to the very uttermost all his chances. Since civil government was founded, never was a government administered with such strict, such single-hearted, such noble-minded, such wise fidelity. Ages hence, when all the nations will be republican and federated, the administration of Jefferson, Madison, Gallatin, and Dearborn will be loved and venerated as the incomparable model, to be aimed at always if never reached.

There was of course some shade to this bright picture of human excellence. Jefferson, too, was a limited and defective person, like all the rest of our race. The first rank among mortals is justly assigned to the discoverers of truth, and the second to those who heroically render new truth available for human use. Toscanelli, who taught Columbus that he could reach the East by sailing to the West, represents the first order of men; and the heroic mariner who

directed his prow westward, and sailed dauntless till a new world had been reached, is the type of the second. Of our own generation, Charles Darwin will probably be regarded by posterity as our first man of the first order, and John Brown as a specimen of the second. It cannot be said that Jefferson belonged to either of these illustrious classes. Nor can we claim for him a place among men of genius, the pets and darlings of mankind, who cheer, amuse, soften, and exalt the care-laden sons of men.

Our faults appear to spring from the same root as our excellencies. A man of very quick, warm sympathies, cool intellect, and good temper is not the person to pioneer a conviction. He is apt to have so clear a sense of the *necessity* which antagonists are under to think just as they do think, that he forbears to assail their opinions. Some readers of Jefferson's letters will feel, that, occasionally, he carried his tolerance of other people's sentiments to a point beyond what courtesy demanded. In writing, for example, to Isaac Story, one of the few New England clergymen who sided with him in politics, he good-naturedly used expressions that seemed to imply a belief which we know he repudiated. This respectable clergyman had sent him some speculations with regard to the transmigration of souls, and improved the occasion to compliment him upon his inaugural address. Jefferson replied, "The laws of nature have withheld from us the means of physical knowledge of the country of spirits; and *revelation* has, for reasons unknown to us, chosen to leave us in the dark as we were. When I was young, I was fond of the speculations which seemed to promise some insight into that hidden country; but observing at length that they left me in the same ignorance in which they had found me, I have for very many years ceased to read or think concerning them, and have reposed my head on that pillow of ignorance which a benevolent Creator has made so soft for us, knowing how much we should be forced to use it. I have thought it better, by nourishing the good passions and controlling the bad, to merit an inheritance in a state of being of which I can know so little, and to trust for the future to Him who has been so good for the past."

And again, at the close of this kind and wise letter, he uses similar language.

"I am happy in your approbation of the principles I avowed on entering on the government. Ingenious minds, availing themselves of the imperfection of language, have tortured the expressions out



of their plain meaning, in order to infer departures from them in practice. If *revealed* language has not been able to guard itself against misinterpretations, I could not expect it."

The complaisance to a clerical friend that prompted the use of the words *revelation* and *revealed* seems to me to have been excessive and needless. Nothing could have been more absurd than for him to obtrude opposition to a belief which so many of the virtuous people of Christendom then cherished; but it was not necessary to lend it support. Very few such instances, however, occur in the nine volumes of his writings which we possess, and *none* occur in his letters to persons whom he might be supposed interested to conciliate. The belief implied in the use of the word *revelation* is one to which no intelligent person can be indifferent; because, if it is true, it is the most important of all beliefs, and, if false, it is the most obstructive and misleading.

I cannot agree with those who think he ought, being an abolitionist, to have emancipated his slaves. There are virtuous and heroic acts, which, when they are done, we passionately admire, but which, at the same time, we have no right to demand or expect. Few persons acquainted with the history and character of John Brown could avoid having some sense of the real sublimity of his conduct; but who can pretend that human affairs admit of being generally conducted on the John Brown principle? If Jefferson, on coming to a clear sense of the iniquity of slavery and the impossibility of inducing Virginia to abolish it, had set his slaves free, and led them forth with his daughter Martha holding his right hand, Maria the left, and the slaves marching behind with their bundles and their children, and he had conducted them to a free territory, and established them as freemen and freeholders, standing by them till they were able to take care of themselves, he would have done one of those high, heroic deeds which contemporaries call Quixotic, and posterity sublime. And if, while the young patriarch was on the march, a mob of white trash had set upon him and killed him, contemporaries might have said it served him right, and centuries hence his name might serve as the pretext for a new religion, and nations contend for the possession of his tomb. But no one has a right to censure him for not having done this, except a person who has given proof, that, in similar circumstances, *he* would have done it. Such individuals — and there are a few such in each generation — seldom censure any one.



We must admit, then, that he belonged neither to the first nor to the second order of human beings. He was not the discoverer of the truths he loved, nor did he promote their acceptance by any of the heroic methods. He did not always avoid the errors to which his cast of character rendered him peculiarly liable.

But the sum of his merit was exceedingly great. He was an almost perfect citizen. He loved and believed in his species. Few men have ever been better educated than he, or practised more habitually the methods of an educated person. He defended the honor of the human intellect when its natural foes throughout Christendom conspired to revile, degrade, and crush it. After Washington, he was the best chief magistrate of a republic the world has ever known; and, in some material particulars, he surpassed Washington. He keenly enjoyed his existence, and made it a benefaction to his kind.

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