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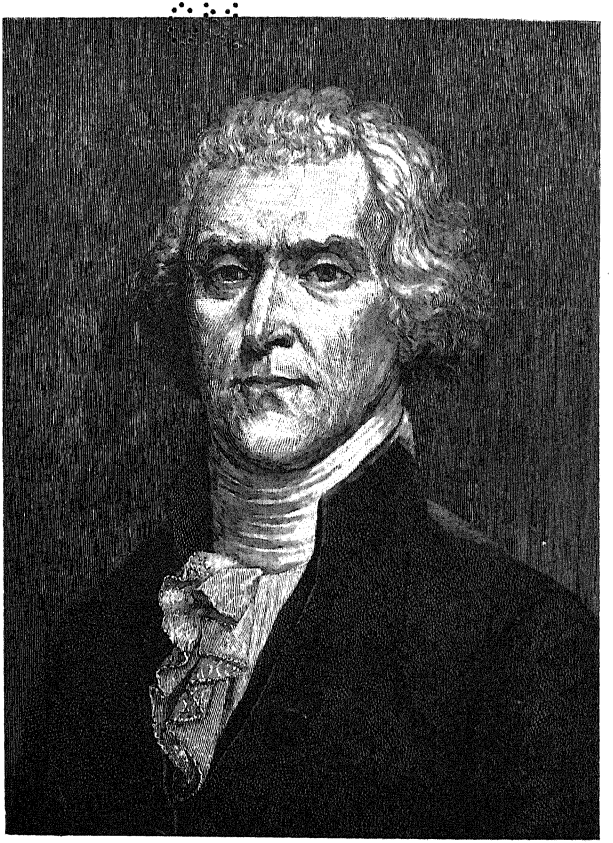

Th Jefferson

"MAKERS OF AMERICA"

THOMAS JEFFERSON

BY

JAMES SCHOULER, LL.D.

AUTHOR OF "HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES UNDER THE CONSTITUTION"

NEW YORK
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NOTE.

FOR materials to illustrate the present brief sketch, little is available which has not already been presented in the three large volumes of Mr. Randall's faithful biography, and the extensive array of Jefferson's writings long ago officially published. But there still remains opportunity to present the services and character of our illustrious and many-sided statesman in a somewhat new aspect. With this latter object chiefly in view, I have used freely the ampler materials of my History of the United States in sketching his later political career, so long the subject of bitter controversy.

It has been a source of great pleasure to me, in this modest literary diversion, to receive soon after the publishers' first announcement of their project, letters from Jefferson's latest descendants, strangers personally to me and residents of a

distant State, expressing their fullest confidence in my undertaking. The abundant love and solicitude which this great son of Virginia sent coursing far down through his blood posterity should afford a lasting token of the tenderness of his nature.

J. S.

MAY 1, 1893.

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LIFE OF THOMAS JEFFERSON.

CHAPTER I.

PARENTAGE AND EARLY CHILDHOOD.

1743–1757.

THOMAS JEFFERSON, of Monticello, was born and bred, lived, died, and was finally buried on the paternal acres. This can rarely be said of an American. He gained world-wide renown in his day, not only as a leader of creative skill in revolutionary and republican politics, but also as the friend of science, philosophy, and the arts. Yet his dearest environments were remote from the great cities, and he travelled abroad only to love home the better. Few men of his times ever soared for improvement in so many different directions, or dipped with so congenial a disposition into the future. Books and men were his constant sources of information; the savants of Europe were his frequent guests and correspondents; and planning for his fellow-countrymen a seminary of learning far in advance of his age, he essayed before he died to lift his simple market-town to the level of a university seat.

Charlottesville, still the county site and abode of advanced education, nestles to this day dreamily

among the beautiful hills of the Blue Ridge in obstinate seclusion; and that rendezvous of Albemarle produce, like Albemarle County itself, was mapped off in the central wilderness of the Old Dominion, and commenced the stern struggle for political existence not far from the very year when its most conspicuous child was born upon the estate of an original settler and patentee. The whole picturesque country of midland Virginia which lies near the eastern slope of the Blue Ridge, where the Rivanna, a tributary of the James River, takes its rise, has been peopled for a century and a half by an Anglo-American race devoted to farming, — that pursuit with which Jefferson all his life proudly claimed a personal connection. Nearly its whole white population continues of native stock and homogeneous to this very day. But in the backgammon of life throughout the solid South the checkers were always of two distinct colours. In this mountainous vicinity, prior to the Civil War, the black race comprised the labouring class, though slavery existed only in its mildest form, and popular sentiment inclined — towards the close of the eighteenth century at least — to voluntary emancipation.

Here luxury never flourished. There were a few large proprietors, to be sure; but the rich equipages and profusion, the costly plate, the sable retinue, the coaches of state drawn by six horses and decked out with three mounted postilions, — that style of living which tradition assigns to the first families in the colonial age of Virginia, — should be associated rather

with the tobacco lords of much earlier settlements about the tide-water region of the Chesapeake, accessible to commerce. But wherever the Virginia colony extended its population, there long flourished a sort of recognized gentry, the basis of whose importance consisted in large landed freeholds, after the fashion of the mother country, with negroes thrown in besides, to make the chattel wealth show off for more than its actual worth. Washington, after his marriage with a rich widow, and Madison as well as Jefferson, furnish notable examples of this aristocratic distinction among settlements remote from the sea; and the landed aristocracy of Virginia were throughout the last century, and far into the present, the natural leaders in native politics.

Among the lowland gentry more particularly, the wastefulness of the prevalent methods of cultivation was rarely figured or improved upon. Tobacco crops were raised under an overseer's personal direction, and the staple found a foreign market, handled by middlemen who had their own living to make. Commissions and transportation charges were piled upon usurious advances. Meantime the barons of the soil, polished, accomplished, and hospitably inclined, and many of them quite well educated, spent their days in visiting one another on horseback, and hunting bears, deer, and small game together. They were loyal to the Crown and to the Established Church of the colony. Quite a social gulf separated the Carters, Fairfaxes, Lees, Randolphs, and others from the

common colonists. The epitome of the British squire became thus as indigenous as possible on the soil of our earliest colony.

The undulating soil of this Albemarle region, whose chief richness lies in the valleys and river bottoms, has yielded periodical crops, — not in tobacco especially, or what we commonly class as Southern staples, but in wheat, corn, and oats, — American farm products such as were always associated in sense with free labour. The Blue Ridge farmer was never a paragon of thrift, and good lands have run frequently to waste for want of top-dressing and an opportunity to recuperate. Manufactures, of course, could not flourish hereabouts so long as skilled artisans and mechanics were repelled by the deadly nightshade of slavery; and though times perhaps are changing for the better, we still find the Albemarle capitalist who sets up for a manufacturer occupied chiefly in mending broken ploughs and wagons, advertising repairs as his specialty.

Monticello, or "Little Mountain" (a name of Jefferson's own coinage for a height belonging to his patrimony), lies about three miles easterly from Charlottesville, on the old county road. Charlottesville, when wide awake, boasts a population of about four thousand souls, white and black. Hiring a livery-carriage, — for the hotel is without one, — and leaving behind the Blue Ridge and this shambling but highly respectable county town with its medley of

brick buildings, new and dilapidated, its unpaved streets, bad drainage, and street cars drawn by mules on the main highway to and from the University, we are soon in an open country of surprising loveliness. The modest Italian crest is visible in front for a considerable part of the ride; being a hemispherical hill to the left of the landscape, shouldered on the right by the higher Carter's Mountain. The painted dome of the mansion-house which Jefferson built peers invitingly through the trees which fringe the horizon. Delightful, no doubt, must be this road in early summer; but in the springtime its stiff red soil, soaked by the streamlets which percolate the banks, and run discoloured as though from some hidden slaughter-pen, so befouls the carriage, which rolled out of the town in bright condition, that our negro driver to little purpose fords the creek on the homeward ride, so as to clear the wheels of mud, instead of taking the usual bridge.

But the private road up Monticello, when reached, is clean and dry in comparison. Entering the latter at an unoccupied porter's lodge of modern erection, we boldly throw open the double gates, — after ringing a bell to summon the overseer farther on, — and proceed on our ride towards the summit through a natural growth of forest trees. About midway we pass the family burial-lot, close to the road, which Congress has recently protected by a substantial fence of high iron spikes; providing, in addition, a new granite obelisk to the statesman in place of the

original one, which vandals and relic-hunters had chipped and carried off piecemeal long ago. Strange is it that pilgrims, even in their venerating mood, should incline so to theft and sacrilege; but respect for property is one of the restraints which social acquaintance fortifies, and wherever we roam the savage instinct asserts itself to appropriate at pleasure, if not watched or interfered with.

On the summit, which is half a mile from the county road, we reach the famous mansion-house. The carriage stops, met by the overseer in the owner's absence, and the visitor walks over the sloping lawn, confronted in the basement of the edifice by a row of negro dwellings, connected with the main house by a subterranean passage. In fact, the whole ingenious substratum of slaves' and servants' quarters on either side of the hill, while harmonizing with the general plan, is tastefully concealed from the upper lawn, where graceful and rolling ramparts offer nothing to the vision but what is picturesque and pleasing. Except, in fact, for a brick pavilion or two still remaining, no building is here beheld but the compact and commodious mansion which fills the central foreground; all the rest is a horizon of landscape scenery.

Monticello house, like the mind which planned it, was the first in Virginia, if not in all these thirteen colonies, to relieve the English imitative model by something of the daintiness and delicacy of French and Italian art. Windows and piazzas of various

shapes and patterns are discerned at different points. Solid and sombre brick walls are lightened in effect by white trimmings and green blinds, while the small red cupola which marks the apex of the building consisting of but one lofty balustraded story, gives vivacity and a pleasing finish to the pile. Arched piazzas may be seen on either side opening upon a terraced walk, and the entrance to the house both in the front and rear is by a spacious portico ornamented by long steps and lofty pillars, like the approach to some Grecian temple. A noble front hall, nearly square, into which open the private apartments of the house, through glass doors or otherwise, makes the central attraction of the interior. Here no doubt geniality was generated while the original host was alive; and yet the deeper inspiration of these interior arrangements must have been to invite the outside enjoyment of books, conversation, and natural scenery. The details of the premises have altered much in minor respects since Jefferson's death; yet unquestionably the mansion which he modelled and remodelled in the course of a long life stands substantially as he left it.

The pure air of this mountain top is wholesome and bracing; the lawn about the premises is tastefully sloped, and the views in every direction are enchanting. Nature maintains herself superior to the ravages of time in such a situation, and the chance tourist feels a thrill of that pleasure which must have vibrated through the whole atmosphere when this

generous abode was in its glory. But of all the outside points of observation, none interests the traveller so much as that from the northeast portico, which constitutes the main entrance to the house. A diagram still traceable on its high ceiling displays the points of the compass; and here one may sit at ease, gazing down into the broad and tranquil valley whose circumference stretches as far as the eye can reach towards the coast-line of the vast Virginia plain. Were one particular space in the extensive foreground a lake, (Jefferson used to say,) and a small hill in shape and size resembling the chief Egyptian pyramid a volcano, the scene would be perfect.

A spot of peculiar interest lies closer still to the foot of Monticello in this easterly direction, — Shadwell, still a post-office hamlet, though nearly destitute of dwellings. Peaceful Shadwell is distant about a mile and a half beyond the entrance gates of Monticello, on the same county road which we took from Charlottesville. There, on a gentle slope, not far from the winding Rivanna, was visible, as late as the middle of this century, if not later, the rubbish of plaster and chimney bricks and the ruinous foundations of a once ample farmhouse which was accidentally burned to the ground in that distant epoch when King George was trying to tax these colonies.

Upon this latter mansion-site, where sheep and cattle browse silently when the meadow grass is green, was born the third President of the United States, —

in the humbler wooden dwelling which his father had erected after the usual colonial pattern, with great ground rooms, guest-chambers, and outside chimneys; and his own boyhood was spent close to the fields of rustling corn. Jefferson dwelt always upon the paternal acres, but not in the same continuous habitation. Monticello, a forest-covered height in his father's day, and a wild possession, though part of the original purchase, was to Jefferson's youth a remote attainment. But the time came when he could look down; and thus, after all, will the American build finally to suit the scope of his own ambition and character, rather than conform to the plans of an evanescent ancestry and extend the original foundations. Yet Shadwell, gazing to the hills for daily strength, retains a sylvan beauty of its own, with which any commoner who founds a family rather than a personal career of distinction may well content himself. Near this humpy and overgrown hollow of ruin, as the last memorial of his own origin to mark the spot, a few old locust and sycamore trees sway gently in the breeze, — survivors of an avenue which the young heir planted here on his twenty-first birthday, while he still occupied the homestead.

Thomas Jefferson was the first-born son and the third of ten children, six of whom were daughters, two sons perishing in infancy. All were the issue of a single marriage which lasted some nineteen years, their parents being Peter and Jane Jefferson, of Shadwell. The birthday of Thomas was the 2d of April,

1743, old style. Sixty years later, while President of the United States, he suppressed information on that point, because he wished to put an end to the official birthday celebrations, which had begun under his two predecessors, after the custom of European monarchs; nor in the memoir which he composed in his final retirement, and which described his course of life up to the time when he first entered Washington's cabinet, does he seem to have thought it of sufficient consequence to give this date to the public. But in his father's Book of Common Prayer — which was a sacred possession — he kept a complete family record for many years in his own neat handwriting; and here the date of his own birth was entered with those of his brothers and sisters.

The fusion of Saxon self-reliance with gentle pedigree conduces strongly to mental and moral greatness. In the veins of Thomas Jefferson flowed this mingled blood, as in those other familiar instances of Shakespeare and Goethe. His father's sterling worth and sincerity first raised the Jefferson name to something like distinction, while his mother was of proud colonial pedigree. The marriage of Peter Jefferson and Jane Randolph was a sensible one, — he a bachelor in the thirties who had made a fair position in life, and she with the clinging admiration of nineteen.

The Jeffersons, though of good yeoman stock and among the earliest of the Virginia settlers, had been previously unconspicuous. The missing link of our American families which attain high celebrity is apt

to be at the great-grandfather; and the most illustrious of this Jefferson stock left his genealogy with perfect frankness short of that shadowy ancestor. One, however, who bore the Jefferson surname had, he knew, been Secretary of the Virginia Company; and tradition ran that the Jeffersons came originally from Wales, and from the vicinity of Mount Snowdon. Out of respect, no doubt, to the latter legend, Peter Jefferson named the first estate which he owned on the James River after that lofty British peak. But Jane Randolph, his wife, was the oldest daughter of Isham Randolph, of Dungeness, Adjutant-General of Virginia; and the Randolphs, as all Virginian blue-bloods were well aware, held their heads with good reason among the highest in the colony, — their family tree ramifying from Turkey Island, near the mouth of the James, where the first American progenitor of that family, the son of an English cavalier, settled about 1660, his wife being the daughter of a baronet. These Randolphs boasted of connections in the mother country, by blood and alliance, with warriors, scholars, peers of the realm, and with royalty itself. "They trace their pedigree," writes Thomas Jefferson in his memoir, "far back in England and Scotland," to which, he added, less incredulous perhaps than indifferent, "let every one ascribe the faith and merit he chooses."

Easy in his own circumstances and social position, and finely educated, the son could afford to antagonize his maternal relations and the Old Dominion aristoc-

racy when he came into public life. He, from his higher plane, worked for the common people of Virginia. To such a mind, filled with the ideals of an age of social transition, man was the gold, and rank but the guinea's stamp; and well it is when that noble sentiment of the peasant bard can be expressed with no gall of envy. But the father, though liberal, too, in his social inclinations, was brought up under more fixed conditions. His aim in life was to found a family; and, uneducated himself, or rather self-educated, he, like a true Anglo-Saxon, cherished the wish to give his babes a better bringing up than his had been. His course of life befitted the end. Leaving in early manhood the eastern tide-water region of Virginia, where aristocratic tastes were chiefly fostered, he sought the mountain table-lands of the interior, far enough off for a pioneer life, and by becoming a great proprietor insured public consideration. The trails of hostile Indians were still fresh on the neighbouring hills when Peter Jefferson arrived at what became presently the county of Albemarle. Here, by the Rivanna, in 1735, he patented one thousand acres of land, and proceeded to establish himself in influence, after the customary mode of the colony. Wheat was the staple he chiefly cultivated. About thirty slaves were employed on his estate; and these he trained with patience to be farm-hands and mechanics adapted to a new country. Their number did not greatly increase on his estate with his subsequent fortunes.

From modest beginnings, Peter Jefferson rose to local dignity and an easy fortune. It was not for one like him to turn from the sunshine of the colonial aristocracy. His manly traits and probity won him the esteem and personal friendship of Virginians high in the social sphere, who had the penetration to appreciate his intrinsic worth. The Randolphs in particular bestowed upon him much more than their condescension. Colonel William Randolph, a scion of that extensive family, became his bosom friend, taking out his own patent in the virgin soil of Albemarle for a tract next to Jefferson's of more than double the extent. When Peter Jefferson wished a better building-site than his own domain could furnish, his genial patron sold him the spot he desired for a dwelling-house, and indeed a good lot of four hundred acres out of his own reservation, and all for the jovial price (which the deed recited) of a big bowl of arrack punch. It was not long after that Peter strengthened his connection still further by marrying into the family of his friend's uncle, — as we have already mentioned, — erecting before the nuptials his weather-boarded house, and calling the whole purchase "Shadwell," out of compliment to his young bride.[1] The names of his two Virginia estates in-

[1] "Shadwell" was the name of the parish in London where Jane Randolph was born. "Snowdon," we have seen, was the name bestowed upon Peter Jefferson's estate on the James River This marriage took place either in 1738 or 1739. Jefferson s memoir gives the latter year, and Randall's biography the former.

dicate that the mind of the elder Jefferson dwelt somewhat upon blood and lineage.

Colonel Randolph does not appear to have actually settled upon his midland domain. Probably he viewed it rather as a distant investment. "Edgehill" he called the estate, in honour of his fighting ancestors; but his home, as before, remained at "Tuckahoe," — a plantation on the James River, a few miles above Richmond. His Albemarle purchase increased, no doubt, the consequence of his friend, who was near by to superintend it; and, knowingly or not, he laid a delicate train for uniting the two adjoining tracts by a marriage alliance in a generation not remote. This true-hearted gentleman died in 1745; and Peter Jefferson, at his last request, went down to Tuckahoe to settle the estate as executor, and to serve as guardian of Thomas Mann Randolph, the infant son. There he sojourned with his family for seven years, faithfully and without recompense performing the duties of his trust; and the earliest recollection of his own son Thomas was the family exodus from Shadwell, when, a child of two years, he was carried on a pillow by a mounted domestic.

Every year now added dignity to Peter Jefferson's life. Like Washington, — his junior by years, — he had made surveying his profession. The royal government employed him, together with a college professor, to run the boundary-line at North Carolina. Afterwards, with the same co-operation, he published the first map of the Virginia colony, with

fair pretensions to accuracy. Other distinctions awaited his return to Shadwell. He was made colonel of the militia in Albemarle County, and a delegate shortly after to the House of Burgesses, — local honours both of the highest grade. Still earlier in his life among these mountain highlands, and when the county was first set off, he had been commissioned one of the original justices of the peace and was county surveyor beside.

Gigantic of stature, and so strong (as the story runs) that he could "head" or set upright at one time two hogsheads of tobacco weighing nearly a thousand pounds apiece, — one who, when on duty running the remote boundary line at the southern frontier of his colony, bore hardships of hunger and exposure under which attendants of the expedition sank exhausted, — a man grave, slow, taciturn of speech, not easily acquainted with, but proving upon acquaintance well worth knowing, — Colonel Jefferson met death just as his fame and influence seemed entering the meridian. In 1757 this pioneer of what seemed then the far west of Virginia expired at Shadwell in the fiftieth year of his age; too young, of course, for confirming his steadily growing reputation, but old enough to have founded a remarkable family. How many such Americans have helped create a new centre of civilized life. He left a competence behind him, but to the last remained one of Nature's noblemen, unpretending in dress and demeanour. Not indifferent to adventitious aids, he relied most upon self-respect

for eliciting the respect of others. While most grandees of the Virginia colony were Tories in politics, he was a Whig, and even as a magistrate he inclined to the popular side. Through life he retained a dislike to be waited on; and his favourite maxim was the sturdy plebeian one, — "Never have others do for you what you can do for yourself."

CHAPTER II.

A WARD'S EDUCATION.

1757–1765.

WHEN his father died, Thomas Jefferson was fourteen years of age, — a period of childhood when orphanage rarely fails to impress the oldest son with a precocious sense of responsibility. While gentle and delicate in many ways, the youth showed indications already of a strong and vigorous character. The best qualities of each parent blended in his veins, besides the ample endowment of sound physique which they had bestowed upon him together. Something of a disrelish for privilege and adventitious aids he inherited more especially from his father, with the habit of sturdy self-reliance; popular sympathies, too, and an experimental tendency in dealing with all immediate problems. This was tempered by the cheerful humour which his mother transmitted to him, and that gentle tact and suavity of manner, united with an air of easy consequence, which only pedigree and good breeding can confer. What in the father had been a fretting dislike of being waited on, broadened out in the son — who was more to the manor born — into a distaste rather for ceremonious etiquette on public occasions, and such needless pomp as hav-

ing a mounted servant in his rear when he rode horseback. Ideality and the picturesque habit gave glow to the schemes on which his mind was intent, though, perhaps, he was too practical to be pronounced imaginative. This he inherited on his mother's side; and from her, too, came his refinement of taste, his delicate and almost squeamish appetite, — so different from the beefy Briton type which was loyally colonial, — and, so far as we can determine, that passionate delight in music which made him a virtuoso with the violin of no mean order. Slimness of form was another maternal gift; for he owed to his father his large bones, his stature (when full grown, of over six feet two), and a compact and sinewy frame capable of remarkable endurance. The same masculine parent had taught him to study Nature, and to take delight in out-of-door sports, to paddle and swim the Rivanna, ride a horse gracefully, hunt for game with his gun, and climb the neighbouring hills fleet-footed. A bias, finally, to figures and the minute details of calculation, to plans, account-books, estimates, and recorded observations, came naturally to the thrifty surveyor's son, trained as he had been from the cradle to take his established place as a landed country gentleman.

A cheerful and vivacious woman, by all accounts fully up to the standard of superficial accomplishments which fashion then prescribed for her sex, and an excellent housekeeper withal (the crown of qualifications for a Virginian wife), Jefferson's

widowed mother brought up her brood of young children as a wise matron should, training her six daughters to homespun tastes, and fitting them to become good wives and mothers like herself. She lived long enough to see the elder of her two sons a pillar of the Continental Congress when independence was red in the horizon.

Impressed with the prevalent idea among the Virginia gentry, of preferring male issue and the first-born son, and little imagining what share his blood-offspring would have in eradicating the principle, Peter Jefferson had willed to his younger son Randolph, now scarcely more than a baby, his earlier estate on the James River, known as "Snowdon," while to Thomas he left the prouder inheritance of "Shadwell." On this latter domain, and in the plain farmhouse endeared to her by the cooings and twitterings of conjugal life, Tom's mother, as dower tenant, still kept up the family home; but this was more for his sisters and little brother than for himself, for to the young proprietor it was little else than a resting-place in vacation time. Preparation for a profession and the sterner duties of life now took strong hold of him in bereavement. Already had his education commenced: first, in an English school at Tuckahoe, and, after the return to Shadwell, in the family of a Scotch clergyman by the name of Douglass, who drilled his pupil in the first rudiments of the Latin tongue. Colonel Jefferson, though a self-made man, appreciated the dignity of liberal culture, and

left dying directions which the son remembered all his life with the tenderest gratitude. Often was the latter heard to say, when distinguished for his scholarly attainments, that if he had to decide between the pleasure derived from the classical education which his father left him and that from his patrimony, he would decide in favour of the former.

Thomas's guardian sent him, soon after the father's death, to a famous boarding-school, about fourteen miles from Shadwell, which was kept by Rev. James Maury, a cultured clergyman of the Established Church. No better training-school for the classics appears to have existed in those times in Virginia's whole province; and with the grind of Latin and Greek our youth's preparation for a college career commenced in earnest. Schoolmates here and companions recalled the fatherless child in after years as noted for scholarship, industry, and shyness; a keen fellow enough when once started in the sports, yet always reluctant to ask a holiday. After all, the cost of classical education in those colonial days could not have been very great; for £20 a year settled board and instruction in full at this renowned institution, where expenses were higher than the average. The Church of England establishment in this Virginia colony drew over from the mother country many clergymen, college graduates, and scholars, who eked out the produce of their glebes and tithes by taking the planters' sons for pupils; and of these both Douglass and Maury were men of enlightened theology, averse to intolerance.

Still eager to take his responsible place in life with as little delay as possible, our young hero is seen striving in the first place to get to college, and next to get through it. To his guardian, in January, 1760, he complains that he loses much time at his boarding-school by company which detains him from his studies. The young proprietor of Albemarle County is courted, no doubt, by mere idle acquaintances; and perhaps his mother and sisters, with that solicitous affection peculiar to such relationship, drive over oftener than is necessary, to bring goodies and ascertain that Tom is not studying himself to death. But this same year, at all events, the son and brother took his first stride, by entering college in an advanced class when only seventeen years of age; and two years later, by another stride, he left the college curriculum behind, to enter upon professional studies.

Williamsburg, the capital of the Virginia Colony and the seat of William and Mary College, was a town whose traditionary repute of colonial grandeur and a vice-regal court requires some grains of allowance. A shabby village of about a thousand inhabitants, black and white, contained the only public buildings in the colony worth mentioning. One of these was the Capitol, with a pediment too high and a disproportionate portico, yet the most pleasing piece of architecture in all Virginia; another, the college piles, which Jefferson once likened to brick-kilns

roofed over. Earliest among American institutions of higher learning, except Harvard, William and Mary College suffered sadly from the precarious influence of royalty and the mother church, at whose joint footstool it bent. Of the two most illustrious matriculates yet on its rolls, Monroe left the classic barracks, while an undergraduate, to draw sword against the sovereign patron; while Jefferson, though an alumnus, did more indirectly in various ways than any other man to destroy the foundations of its prestige. Besides collegians, Williamsburg boasted in 1760 a few rich residents; and these, with royal dignitaries, the lawyers and big wigs of the courts in term time, and those borough gentry who came from all parts of the colony to play at parliament, as the king would have them, were rolled together at a certain season of the year into a sort of court society, bright and even brilliant, and which could hardly escape being a little dissipated, besides, while a royal governor so accomplished as Fauquier shone out as the conspicuous star.

Behold now our lank and raw-boned student with the sandy hair, — of whom it has been well said that he grew in good looks with his years, so as to be homely when young, comely in his prime, and handsome in old age, — welcomed heartily within the inner circle of this *soi disant* court. Little, indeed, of the college curriculum or of his college classmates seems to have impressed him in comparison with the intimacy he quickly formed with three men, all much

older, of strong and dissimilar characters, only one of whom could be termed, in a proper sense, his instructor, and he, as there is ground to suspect, not in full sympathy with the college faculty. These three men were Prof. William Small, of William and Mary; George Wythe, a distinguished lawyer; and Governor Fauquier, already mentioned. To Small, in particular, Jefferson ascribes a plastic influence, with an emphasis which we might well discount to the credit of boyish inexperience, had he not penned the fervid tribute in old age. "It was my great good fortune," he declares, "and what probably fixed the destinies of my life," that this one person happened then to be on the staff of his Alma Mater. A Scotchman born, and known in later life as Dr. Small of Birmingham, the friend of Darwin, this excellent instructor sojourned but briefly in America, — leaving William and Mary, in fact, about the same time as did his young adorer, and recrossing the ocean. Professor of mathematics when Jefferson entered college, he temporarily took, besides, the vacant chair in philosophy, and gave for the first time in that institution regular instruction in ethics, rhetoric, and polite literature. Upon the mind of this favourite pupil, who soon became the companion of his daily walks, Small poured the full light of liberal methods. Jefferson caught from him the ardour of applied science, at the loss very likely of some of those devout lessons he had learned at his mother's knee, and acquired those habits of intellectual induction and experiment from

which he never quite departed. For though in his political creed Jefferson might become a man of intuitions, all intuitions were in favour of liberty.

Maternal relatives, who moved among the lowland grandees, had given our collegian an easy entrance to the Governor's drawing-rooms; his violin (in great demand) and personal attractiveness did more for him. Under the wing of his most serviceable professor, he soon made a fourth and listening guest at Fauquier's own table. It was proof of his innate strong sense that such flattering favour did not turn the youth's head. Fauquier, though polished and well-bred, besides an accomplished scholar and patron of the arts, was a hardened gambler; but though it was said of him that he made gambling fashionable in the province he ruled, Jefferson never took a hand at such sport in his life, nor even knew one card from another. Small corresponded with his young protégé afterward from over the water; but when it came to the outbreak of the Revolution, their politics diverged. And though Wythe's association with Jefferson ripened into the longest and most useful intimacy of the three, it proved in time that the junior, both in legislation and politics, gained power to direct his own teacher.

Jefferson's first year at college was idle, as often occurs when one works hard to get there. The attractions of society allured him from his books, and he spent somewhat heavily upon dress and fine horses. A handsome and spirited steed was always a favourite

indulgence with Jefferson; and in jaunty youth, when his riding-horse was brought to the door, he would not mount until he had found the creature's coat so well groomed and glossy that it would not soil his white cambric handkerchief. In sending to his guardian the account of his first year's expenditure at college, the ward censured his own extravagance, and resolved to turn the next year another leaf. With that purpose in view, he discarded miscellaneous company, hung up the violin, and "sporting the oak," — as the college phrase goes, — bent himself to the mastery of his tasks with a zeal that was truly astonishing. Fifteen hours a day, so the story runs, was his habitual course of study during this second year; the only physical exercise he took to offset such mental overwork being a sharp run about twilight to a particular stone, about a mile distant from the town, and back again. He gained the end he had immediately in view, and graduated from William and Mary at the age of nineteen, having compassed the college course in half the customary time.

Jefferson left college with the fame of a prodigy, — indeed, of a profound and accomplished scholar for one so young. He developed a decided taste for both mathematics and the classics, — studies which he faithfully cultivated all his life. It is not in hurried and heterogeneous cram that true scholarship is attained; but when the temporary gorge of knowledge subsides into a lasting appetite, the intellectual life is assured. Jefferson's insatiate passion to finish his

preparatory period showed strength of character, and, indeed, of body besides; and the work which would have ruined many youths in health did him really no harm. Habitual thought and sympathy turned in a practical direction; the new and adaptable absorbed his best time and energies; but literature remained through life a solace and a recreation. In Greek and Latin he read, as do few men of action in our later day, the most difficult authors during the spare hours he could snatch from official toil. As for mathematics, he made the ready use of fluxions in his own private estimates. In English composition he acquired almost insensibly so attractive a style of expression — pellucid as a lake, picturesque and choice in the use of words, and warm because of his heart's earnestness — as easily to grow into the best penman of his age in all America. This skill he displayed in drafting a statute in the briefest phrase possible, or in composing great popular documents, or in graceful and stimulating private letters; and all this in the neatest of chirography, that needed no amanuensis. Of liberal studies, however, Jefferson relished ethics and metaphysics the least; for his bent was towards concrete facts, and not abstractions. Indeed, he was wont to deride ethics as a science; holding to the theory that man is destined for society, and that his moral life should be regulated with that object in view. The thirst for science which Professor Small implanted was perhaps, however, the most striking result of his brief college training. So intently did he

fasten upon new ideas, new discoveries, that his correspondence anticipated various practical inventions of the future; and it might almost be said that with extending arms he reached forward to the nineteenth century. But whatever he might invent, he had none of the nineteenth century disposition to appropriate the gain to himself, but made the whole world patentee.

All this development of early tendencies might seem to have marked Jefferson for an educator. But the habit of self-discipline was the choicest gain of his college life; stem-winding, as it were, in his mechanism, no extraneous key was ever needful to set and keep him going. There is nothing like having the battle of life in view to nerve youth to its most giant efforts. Politics and the profession of law interested, as they would most naturally, a man born to county influence and activity. Coke upon Littleton, and the black bread of the common law were next the Spartan fare which our college graduate digested. For five ensuing years — a space more than double what he had allowed for that universal dip which makes collegiate training — he pursued professional studies between Williamsburg and his Shadwell home; serener now, we fancy, in the thought that he was narrowing the edge to fit his blade for use. The friendship and personal supervision of the last of his strange table coterie promised much for his advancement in active life; for George Wythe, in whose office he now hung up his hat as a law student, was

the pride of such later intellects as John Marshall and Henry Clay, and a pattern of that happy type of sound and honourable lawyer which carries sobriety into the public service when duty calls, and sacrifices emolument to the general good. Jefferson styled this inflexible patriot, after an intimacy of forty years, "the Cato of his country, without the avarice of the Roman." He directed Jefferson's professional studies in these years, led him into practice, and continued until death his affectionate friend.

Omnivorous still in his thirst for knowledge, but with steadier concentration of purpose, Jefferson kept up those tremendous working habits which remain a marvel to most, but of which others are incredulous. The common run of mankind seldom imagine how strong a steel spring may be coiled up in one who cherishes a precocious ambition for manly life with a precocious sense of responsibility. Rising punctually in winter when his bedroom clock pointed at five o'clock, and in summer as early as the hands could be distinguished, he commenced his studies; retiring not later than ten in the winter, and in the summer an hour earlier. He did not neglect distinguished company while at Williamsburg, but at drowsy Shadwell he was usually master of his time; and there, within their own environment, his good mother and sisters helped him live by rule, well content, we dare say, as women-folk usually are, to have the object of their darling pride safe at home. Twilight was the

favourite time for assimilating the mental food of the day in a sort of solitary pastime; he would paddle his canoe across the stream, or scour the road on horseback at a heroic gallop, or foot it up the toilsome steep of Monticello, — already his young lordship's favourite haunt, and the site whereon he meant to build a stately mansion when he became of age, having set his workmen to clear the trees somewhat at the top with that end in view.

Fortunately for the plans of conglomerate self-instruction which were his own crude invention, Thomas showed himself a youth of simple tastes. He was not even a tobacco-smoker. He was blessed, moreover, by inheritance with good digestion, sunny humour, and a vigorous constitution which could bear many a strain for learning's sake. When the puny Madison, inspired by his older friend's example, made a like systematic assault upon omniscience while a college student at Princeton, he nearly killed himself in the effort. Noble zeal lights up the dullest folio pages; and it was no small relief to that drudgery of reading by the square foot, which the sages of the law then exacted, that Jefferson loved music so fondly, and could draw strains of dainty melody from his unobtrusive companion to suit the lonely mood. No piano or organ figured in the American back-country in these days; but Jefferson sang well, and his sister Jane, who was fond of music like himself, joined him in the new songs and Sunday psalmody.

Coke upon Littleton, in the antiquated text,

furnished the uninviting banquet for colonial law-students in these times; and though berating "the old dull scoundrel" in the hours when he longed, like all youths, to be off on a frolic, Jefferson learned, as time went on, to really love this sturdy exponent of our common law, with his Whig principles and tenacious grasp of individual freedom, — freedom, one might say, which English jurisprudence concedes through a judicious use of technicalities. He liked less Blackstone of later vogue, with his honeyed style, which (as he used to say), though making the law more attractive for study, sent our younger race of lawyers sliding backward into Toryism. Hard as any one will find it to condense Coke, Jefferson made common-place books and abridgments for his own convenience. He pondered over the cruelty of early codes; and in his notes he went back to old Bracton and the fountain-head of English law, for he disdained to be superficial. French, Latin, Greek, and other liberal studies he kept up with equal pace, in the conviction that rotation in daily tasks was of itself a recreation.

But all was not work and no play with Jefferson, for youth has its effervescent spirits, however sombre the main purpose. Journeying to and fro between the Blue Ridge and the capital, he had taken part in many a gay frolic at hospitable mansion-houses by the way; and on the earliest of these occasions, just before entering college, he made the acquaintance of a happy-go-lucky fellow, somewhat older than himself,

who had lately failed in trade, and was about to take another cast for a livelihood. His spirits were abundant; and by his rollicking stories and mimicry, his fiddling, dancing, and practical jokes, he kept the young folks of the company in constant mirth. This was Patrick Henry, whose presage of immortality began about the time that he knocked up his new acquaintance, soon after the latter had matriculated at Williamsburg, to tell him that he had come to town to get a lawyer's license, — having, in fact, studied for his new profession only about six weeks.

At the Christmas holiday season in 1762, Jefferson packed his law books in his trunk to spend the winter in reading them at home; as usual visiting seats of Virginia hospitality on the way. While the days at Shadwell resembled one another like two peas, many an inquiring message did he send through his college friend, John Page, to the Williamsburg girls, one of whom, Rebecca Burwell, was the especial favourite of his fancy. She had shown encouragement by presenting him with a watch-paper cut and painted by her own fair hands. But Jefferson's suit on his return did not prosper; and he seems to have inclined to negotiate for delay until his studies were finished. Woman, and a belle of high spirits most particularly, permits no prudent procrastination to be suggested except on her own side; and the fair "Belinda," whose vision had blurred the page of his daily tasks, punished her level-headed lover, as many a woman has done, by suddenly marrying another.

This unsuccessful venture turned Jefferson's mind to beginning a nest, as his father had done, before choosing the mate. Reaching majority in April, 1764, he celebrated that event, after the fashion of English squires, such as colonial Virginia copied, by planting that avenue of trees near the dwelling-house whose weather-worn survivors are its latest landmark. He now took up the county dignities which fell to his heritage. He became a justice of the peace and parish vestryman. With an eye to local schemes of public benefit, he set on foot a subscription and procured an act of the legislature for removing obstructions and making the Rivanna navigable, so that produce could be sent down to the seaboard.

Though far from handsome at this period, as we have already intimated, Jefferson was of most engaging manners and appearance. His complexion was ruddy, his skin delicate, his teeth sound and regular; his deep-set hazel eyes beamed with tender expression. His manners, earnest, vivacious, and sympathetic, not only captivated the young, but made him a singular favourite with men much older than himself. To the abstemiousness of his habits we have alluded before; but it was something to say of one who belonged to the class known as gentlemen, that he refrained through life from quarrels such as in these times were settled by the code, neither bestowing a personal indignity nor receiving one. His whole bearing and disposition bespoke the simple, refined,

and gentle associations among which he had been brought up. Placid of expression, he grew to be firm and tenacious of purpose, even where he seemed for the moment to yield to others.

Jefferson was tender in all his family relations; and of his sisters, Jane, the eldest, was his most precious companion. The two were congenial in tastes, fond of music, and earnestly intelligent. Jane died the year after her brother came of age, and Shadwell had no longer the same charm for him. His second sister had already married; and the third was united in 1765, and only two months before Jane's last illness, to her brother's most intimate friend, Dabney Carr. The latter was a gifted young Virginian and schoolmate, recently admitted to the bar. He, like Jefferson, was destined to political distinction; but his untimely death, just as the day-star of revolution was rising, suggests to various minds a parallel to young Josiah Quincy, whose death in the sister colony of Massachusetts occurred but two years later under corresponding circumstances. Both were strong orators, prescient of coming events, whose memory inspired when action was denied them; and each in his own State emblazoned a family name illustrious in posterity.

While Jefferson lived in his summer home, the two inseparable comrades used to make their daily tour to the top of Monticello, where they read or talked in burning words of the coming years. Young Thomas gave the name to this hill, which he now owned, — a

name as unique then, in America, as the character into which he was fast shaping. Under a favourite oak, midway to the summit, they had arranged a rustic seat; the spot was mutually dear to them, and they agreed that whichever of them died first, the other should bury him there. Jefferson fulfilled the compact in 1773, on his friend's sudden decease; and thus originated the burial-lot at Monticello. More than this, he received Carr's widowed wife (his sister Martha) into his own household, adopting the six young children as his own.

The marriage of this sister in 1765, and more still, the death of his beloved Jane, loosened considerably the attachment of the young proprietor to his father's homestead. The task of clearing the hill-top now increased to a passion. Meantime he commenced keeping a garden book, to which was added, as time went on, farm books, pocket-expenditure books, fee books, and registers of special matters; always methodizing minute transactions of passing interest, and experimenting boldly and habitually upon his farm, so as to rotate his crops, raise new varieties, and keep the soil from exhaustion. He acquired a remarkable habit of jotting down details with microscopic fidelity, and then tabulating, comparing, and utilizing them. This curious precision in details grew into a settled trait of character. He would gather information, too, from books and from all sorts of men on whatever subject they could impart knowledge, and then generalize with

vivid intelligence. The pen — that silent servant — became his almost inseparable companion; and in the same neat hand that challenged an oppressive King on his fellow-countrymen's behalf, he would enter the pennies he paid for his shoe-strings or dropped into a beggar's hat. In his garden book were preserved, with illustrating diagrams, the several dates when certain esculents were planted, sprouted, and ripened for the table; he recorded the temperature and state of the weather three times a day during a long space of busy years; and all this not from mere idle curiosity, but in the hope of reaching some of the hidden truths of Nature. So singular a manifestation of character reminds one of Dr. Johnson's famous postulate, that the truly strong mind is the mind that equally embraces things both great and small. Jefferson's disparagers were wont, in the days of party strife, to ridicule his statistics and his breakfast-table science; but to the habit itself he owed, unquestionably, much of his remarkable success in mature life as an economic administrator and marshal of the people. In the earlier stages of his career, at all events, and before he sacrificed for public station, such methods advanced, besides, his pecuniary fortunes.

CHAPTER III.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND MARRIAGE.

1766–1774.

JEFFERSON'S preparation for an active career lasted considerably beyond the year of his majority. He did not hurry post-haste for a license to practise law, like Patrick Henry, but broadened his studies in various directions, working very hard, and yet allowing himself for the space he had curtailed at his own choice from his college career. It suited his own plans better, perhaps, now that the sole member of its faculty whom he idolized had departed, to let William and Mary alone, and block out his own programme for mental acquisition, free from all outer dictation. A strong impulse to self-improvement is half the equipment of a liberal education; and in the judicious Wythe, whose business office served for the headquarters of a student who came and went as he chose, Jefferson found an unfailing friend and counsellor. Under such flattering auspices he was admitted to the bar in 1767, about the time of his twenty-fourth birthday.

This was the era of Great Britain's fatal experiment in taxing her American colonies, and stirring local events presaged the grand strife for independence. The British declaratory act, which asserted

the right of Parliament to tax these distant subjects, — that right to shear the wolf, as opponents at home who denied not the abstract theory so aptly styled it, — reached Virginia about the time that Jefferson entered manhood; and the addresses and remonstrances which followed within a few years, now bold and now respectful, drew all the intelligent men of the colony, and the lawyers more particularly, into an eager and prolonged discussion of America's political relations with the mother country, and the fundamental rights of external citizens. Jefferson's young heart throbbed with excitement, like those of contemporaries in our other colonies who stood on the threshold of responsible existence: it is in such breasts, undefiled by worldly strife, that the well-spring of patriotism leaps in crystal purity. The law-student left his dog's-eared tomes and his patron's office one memorable day in 1765, while the course of study occupied him at Williamsburg, and stood at the lobby entrance of the House of Burgesses, high-shouldered among the throng, to listen to a debate which had sprung up on the Stamp Act, and the spirited resolutions which his acquaintance, Patrick Henry, now launched into public life as a rural member, had just drawn hastily off and introduced. These resolutions claimed in forcible terms for our translated colonists the full rights of British subjects, including the right to levy taxes exclusively by their own representative assemblies. Opposed in debate by the whole Tory aristocracy of this legislature, while cautious conserva-

tives dreaded his plain speech, he broke out into that historical passage where, interrupted in his allusions to Cæsar and Charles the First by loud cries of "Treason! treason!" he finished his sentence with his flashing eye fixed on the Speaker, "and George the Third may profit by their example." The warning fell on his listeners like a near thunderbolt dying away in distant rumbles. Jefferson could never forget the scene.

Strange that the friend with whom we have jested lightly, and whom we have even pitied for his idle follies, may tower into a splendid exemplar when some supreme occasion has struck his deepest chord and ours, revealing his true fibre. But men are grand only in grand moments. "They were great indeed," wrote Jefferson from his later recollection of Henry's talents as a popular orator, at this moment displayed for the first time. "He appeared to me to speak as Homer wrote."

There was no gallery for spectators at that time in the House of Burgesses; nor, indeed, had there hitherto been need of one. But times were changing; and these little colonial legislatures, which so long had served scarcely more than to register the royal pleasure, became in these days the rallying-points against oppression for an aroused popular constituency. Jefferson's long tarrying as a student in this little capital town proved of public benefit as events were tending; for thus early did he familiarize himself with the principles of the great controversy which

was to set the new continent against the old, and measure, moreover, the capacity of his fellow-leaders of opinion, among whom he was soon to be seated. Patrick Henry, the older friend of Jefferson, became from this very hour of his fame the lion of revolution in Virginia and the darling of his fellow-citizens.

Jefferson had been talking of a trip to Europe, by way of a last polish to his education; but after the Stamp Act (though that hateful measure was soon repealed) we hear no more of it. Mr. Parton, one of his biographers, suggests that, with his moderate fortune, Jefferson could not have afforded the journey. However that may be, the young heir extended his knowledge of the world more moderately, in the spring of 1766, by a tour northward as far as New York City, leaving for the first time, at the age of twenty-three, the limits of his native colony. He travelled in a one-horse chaise; and a prime object of his curious quest was to learn inoculation for the small-pox: for among the other accomplishments which Jefferson acquired in life was that of a very tolerable surgeon and physician, so that on his own estate he would splinter a wound in an emergency or set a negro's broken leg. At Philadelphia he was vaccinated by Dr. Shippen; and in New York City he formed a first acquaintance with Elbridge Gerry, of Massachusetts, then a young traveller like himself, and a fellow-lodger at the same house, but yearning in sympathy for the coming years of high public achievement.

Thus qualified for the activities of life beyond most young Americans of this colonial age, Jefferson entered the bar under favouring auspices. He had friends among the foremost lawyers in the Old Dominion; he was familiarly known at the capital of the colony; and for the first few years of his practice at least, he relished the keen contests of counsel quite as heartily as most men of fortune and attainments. Contrary, moreover, to the impressions which so many have derived, he succeeded well in the strict career of his profession; continuing, in fact, a figure in the Virginia colonial courts until about the time they were closed by the Revolution. He practised before the highest tribunals, where Patrick Henry, with his extremely short preparation for the bar, could hardly have appeared so early. Mr. Randall, a most trustworthy biographer, produces Jefferson's own fee-books to show that he was, in 1767, employed in not less than sixty-eight cases before the chief court of the province, increasing his work from that date to 1772, when they numbered as high as one hundred and fifty-four; after which date the figures began to diminish, and in 1774 he turned over his law business to his kinsman, Edmund Randolph,[1] thenceforth devoting his energies to his farm and the public service. During that brief period Jefferson had been retained besides in many other cases as attorney or counsel; his pro-

[1] The same Randolph who entered Washington's Cabinet as Attorney-General, and left it under a cloud, after having succeeded Jefferson as Secretary of State.

fessional profit through the whole term of active practice reaching an average of what in money we should now denominate three thousand dollars a year. This was doing remarkably well for a young lawyer at so eminent a bar; for the rate of fees was then very low; and probably only a few of the older and long-recognized luminaries of the Virginia bar, such as Wythe, Pendleton, Peyton and John Randolph, and Nicholas, could have made a better showing, — men with whom he was often associated or opposed in controversy during this period.

It is, after all, a sordid scale of comparison, though a very common one, which gauges the abilities of conspicuous barristers by their fees, thus strengthening the popular impression, which is usually formed in envious ignorance of such matters, that lawyers are mercenaries of human knowledge, grasping all they can get. No profession has furnished such personal sacrifices for the public good as that of the law; and of that sacrificing number was Jefferson. His chief ability and his strongest inclinations as a professional man lay in the less lucrative lines allied to legislation. He became successful, and eminently so, as a codifier and reviser of statutes, and a reformer of practice in the courts. Such work requires, besides erudition and skill in minute details, breadth of vision and a mastery of clear expression. In all such qualities Jefferson showed supereminence; and his revision of the laws of Virginia, his reports of decisions, his notes on Virginia, his opinions on law questions while Secre-

tary of State, and his handling of various matters while President, — such as the New Orleans Batture case, — all show the calibre, not of a technical practitioner alone, with the routine of the courts at his fingers' ends, but of one with that broader conception of laws and human relations which, under a Roman system at least, is wont to dignify him with the title of jurist.

But Jefferson, we imagine, though taking up his vocation with great ardour, as most young lawyers do, had no sustained relish for the wages of litigiousness. His parallel studies, moreover, and the bent of his whole genius, tended rather in the direction of establishing new institutions than in groping over the meshes of old ones. He disliked the continuous chess-play of intellects, where victory is the prime object of pursuit; for no case could interest him greatly unless just apparently upon its merits. Tangled titles and inheritances, and imprudent British liabilities besides, made the Virginia gentry of that day a choice vintage among professional clients. It is indeed amazing to observe how much litigation this province bore in proportion to its wealth and population, with a judicial system which borrowed too closely from the mother country. A lawyer like Jefferson must have wished to prune away some of the excrescences, to lop off items of fees and taxable costs, to reduce artificial pleadings, all of which to his thorough-paced brethren were as sacred almost by precedent as the fountain of justice. He practised

sedulously at first among rich fellow-counsel, for he needed the income; but as soon as he felt himself independent enough to pursue more benevolent aims, he transferred his business once and for all. A man may be a great lawyer in the true sense of the term without remaining a constant practitioner.

Jefferson's rapid rise in the profession during his seven years of active practice was the more phenomenal, since he was never renowned for his oratory. The same may be said of his success in public life. He was never brilliant in forensic or popular discussion. He shone rather on paper and in private conversation. As an advocate he developed a difficulty with his voice, which would become husky and inarticulate after he had spoken for a little while. So, too, his habits of mathematical conciseness, both in substance and expression, in thought and statement, made all extended controversy over a subject where the points had once been fully stated on each side — and particularly all fluency of utterance for mere effect — quite wearisome to him. But he appreciated all truly great oratory on great occasions; and in essentials he showed himself an able and accomplished, and moreover a sagacious and discriminating lawyer. In the palmy days of his practice there is no question that some of the foremost of the patrician families of the colony, together with royal councillors and officers of the Crown, figured upon the list of his clients. In Virginia the practice of the law was at this colonial era a highly aristocratic one, and for that

very reason, perhaps, his soul rebelled secretly against it. Wythe was a man of independent circumstances; Jefferson nearly so; and notwithstanding the peculiar circumstances of Patrick Henry's admission, which we have noticed, the usual standard of training and qualifications at the Virginia bar appears to have been an exacting one. In every respect but padding out a bad cause with abundant verbiage and having the gift of eloquence at command, Jefferson managed his cases skilfully; and even when on his feet he was not confused, as contemporaries recall him, nor driven from his habitual serenity and hopefulness of temper. No man who measured intellects with him knew better how to use legal authorities and estimate the force and limitation of a precedent. Learnedness in the law makes no man great who cannot subject immediate facts to the test of fundamental principles; and in such processes Jefferson was easily proficient, for he saw the relations of things from many sides, and was strongly sympathetic. His grandson asked an old man who in his youth had often heard the great leader of Democracy make arguments in court, how he ranked as an advocate. "Well," replied the old man, "it is hard to tell, because he always took the right side." Jefferson's temperament must have needed a lawsuit he really believed in; and to such he would do full justice. Legislation and legislative reform interested him, nevertheless, with their humane and comprehensive sweep, more intensely, on the whole, than any mere individual combat of plaintiff

and defendant. And he once defined a lawyer — meaning, of course, one of the hackneyed and mercantile kind — as a person whose trade it is to contest everything, concede nothing, and talk by the hour.

Jefferson was chosen in 1769 a representative of his county of Albemarle in the House of Burgesses. Law and politics may be made congenial in combination when the people readily select their foremost men to represent them. Such was the case in all the American colonies at the period we are considering; and throughout the South it has usually remained so. But one cannot serve long two such exacting masters in earnest without sacrificing in the one direction or in the other. Jefferson accepted his public trust seriously from the very commencement. He was willing that of the two pursuits his court practice should be the sufferer; for, as he was not ashamed to confess, he valued earnestly the esteem and applause of his fellow-men. "When I first entered on the stage of public life," he wrote long afterward, "I came to a resolution never to engage, while in public life, 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."

The colonial troubles that were culminating with Great Britain made this a grand season of opportunity for young statesmanship. The House of Burgesses in this eldest of the old thirteen colonies convened

after due interval in May, 1769. It was the first session called by Lord Botetourt, the new successor of Jefferson's friend, Governor Fauquier, who had now been dead for two years. King George and his ministry held to the stubborn purpose of taxing the American colonies; the Stamp Act had been repealed; but the next effort in the programme, as the Crown explained to Parliament, was "to raise a revenue from the colonies without giving them any offence." Instead of that obnoxious imposition, in other words, which had come home to American subjects as a personal humiliation over each individual transaction, a levy on a few imported articles, such as glass, tea, and paper, was now to be attempted through the custom-house, its burden being delicately diffused by such means through the usual channels of consumption. A sapient change in theory; but it was the principle of arbitrary taxation, and not the method, that America had objected to.

In a colonial legislature were to be witnessed many of the scenes of the home Parliament in miniature. Among the ceremonial forms usual at this period was that of resolutions and an address, at the outset of business, in response to the opening speech of the king's viceregent. Polished courtesies were in order on this new Virginia occasion; and Jefferson, brought forward by his personal friends among the older members, who knew something of his skill with the pen, encountered upon his entrance to public life a compliment and a rebuff together. The resolutions

customary, as heads for an address, were drawn by him and presented, and the House of Burgesses accepted them. But when placed on the committee with Pendleton, Nicholas, and others, to prepare an address, his seniors, much to his chagrin, put aside the draft which he had diligently worked upon, finding it too terse to please them, and adopted one more florid and resonant, which Nicholas furnished to order. Many a statesman has begun his distinguished career with a personal mortification, such as posterity might the least have expected to hear recounted.

Colonel Washington, of Braddock's Field renown, first chosen to the Burgesses when Braddock's Field was fresh, had returned to this House, modest and taciturn of speech, but impressive in action. Richard Henry Lee, Patrick Henry, and Peyton and Richard Randolph were also in their accustomed seats, with Nicholas and Cary besides. Peyton Randolph was the unanimous choice for Speaker, an office he had filled before, and was sure to fill again, for he presided with admirable dignity. Despite the opening interchange of cordial civilities, the Burgesses soon struck upon a reef. Counter resolutions on Virginia's behalf met those which the British Parliament had lately passed in compliance with the king's new policy of experimenting upon American consumption; and the Burgesses boldly reasserted the exclusive right of the colonies to tax themselves in their own legislatures. Massachusetts was oppressed, and the oppression of one colony was declared the oppression of all. Lord

Botetourt, not an unamiable man in his politics, proceeded promptly to do as his king desired; to rebuke such disloyal utterances, he dissolved the House without waiting even to be officially notified of its resolutions. But the members met the next day in the long room of the tavern at Williamsburg, and formed a non-importation league among themselves, to last as long as Parliament should insist upon its new legislation for raising a revenue in America without American consent. Among the signers to this instrument of association were Jefferson and Washington. The members of the dissolved House then returned to their several counties, and were all re-elected except some of the very few who had withheld their signatures.

Thus did the pulse of Virginia beat in strong unison with the spirit of common resistance to royal oppression, whose heaviest hand was laid upon the distant colony of Massachusetts. But the four years which followed that spirited session of 1769 were in the Chesapeake region years of popular lull and inactivity. Jefferson was now in the full tide of his professional practice, and much absorbed in private concerns; for public life as yet occupied but a trifling share of his attention.

In February, 1770, the dwelling-house at Shadwell, in which he was born, and where he had continued to reside with his mother, his unmarried sisters, and little brother, caught fire, and was burned to the ground. He

himself was absent when the accident occurred. A fire, once under headway in such a remote hamlet, usually did clean work, and there was of course no insurance in those days to indemnify. All of Jefferson's earlier papers, in consequence, and almost every book he owned, perished in the flames; though, as the sable messenger from Shadwell assured his master with a sheepish grin when he brought the bad news, his fiddle was saved. Jefferson, fortunately, had already begun the erection of a new and statelier mansion for himself on the summit of his favourite Monticello. Thither he moved soon after the fire, occupying for some time a small building with a single room, which served later as one of the pavilions. The rest of his family took temporary shelter in an overseer's house at Shadwell; and the old paternal homestead was never rebuilt. It must have been hard work, and costly too, to rear an edifice on Monticello's isolated crest. The owner had to superintend the work as his own architect, — changing the plans from time to time, as new ideas would occur to him, — and to no slight extent as his own builder besides, or rather as the trainer and personal director of a few dull-witted labourers, mostly black, who had not one scintilla of skill. With bricks to be burned and lumber to be dressed about the premises, — with the rudest tools and equipments ordered from Williamsburg, and even such simple furnishings as window-sashes brought by a sluggish sailing-vessel all the way from London, — it was not strange that the work of erection went on

slowly and fitfully. Gradually developing year by year, like Jefferson himself, and affected by the vicissitudes of a public career that sent him journeying to Europe and back again, Monticello shaped itself by degrees into the image and embodiment of his own maturing character. Into this stately mansion on the heights, with its peaceful pleasure-dome, its dainty vistas, and its horizon of undulating landscape, entered little by little his whole artistic spirit, the soul of his young romance and tender sentiment, and withal a liberal share of his entire fortune.

Hither was it that Jefferson brought his beautiful bride immediately after the wedding festivities of New Year's, 1772, at her father's house, journeying with her for many miles in the dead of winter, through powdery snow-drifts, quite unusual in that latitude; and after taking the last stretch on horseback together, as they found themselves compelled to do, they reached the pavilion (the only part of the house then habitable) late at night, with the fires all out, the servants in their distant quarters, and only a half-emptied bottle of wine on the shelf to serve for their needful repast and fuel. Jefferson's tell-tale account-book discloses how much he paid the clergyman and the musicians when that nuptial knot was tied; but of the courtship which preceded the ceremony we know very little, except that the violin which was saved from Shadwell's ruins performed its last good service, and in dulcet alliance with her own harpsichord carried the fair one's heart against all rivals. Martha

Skelton, a young widow of twenty-three when Jefferson married her, was a graceful and attractive woman, well-educated for her day, an accomplished household provider, and, like her lover, very fond of music. Her father, John Wayles, whose estate in Charles-City County was proudly styled "The Forest," had figured long among the affluent gentry of Virginia's legal profession; and, dying soon after the present marriage, he left an estate which, when divided up, gave to Martha, his youngest daughter, a portion almost equal to her new husband's fortune, thus doubling the ease of their married circumstances. But slaves and landed estates in Virginia were of deceptive value; and in selling off property of his own to pay the share of debt with which his wife's inheritance came incumbered, Jefferson involved his own patrimony, and the various transactions in paper money which followed, during a long period of depreciation in the course of our Revolutionary War, left him comparatively poor.

Jefferson, if not the wisest of calculators in private money matters, was a better one, at any rate, than the average Virginian householder, whose ambition used to be, as the saying went, to add to his estate a child and a new tract of land year by year. American investments and financiering were mostly confined in these days to one's own colony; and of all these American colonies Virginia has learned the saddest lesson in political economy. For here existed no great middle class of money-makers, no manufactures,

no commerce, no large towns, no citizen capitalists embarked in trade and the acquisition of personal wealth. Public spirit went into politics, despising business. Nor was it enough that rich soil here ran to waste through exhausting tobacco crops and unsystematic cultivation; but Virginia planters, as high-souled and hospitable a race as ever breathed, were preyed upon by middlemen and transporters when sending their produce to the distant British market; paying heavy prices, in addition, for the needful commodities which came back to them in exchange. Jefferson was one of the rare Virginians who studied his figures and made careful estimates. He took advice from every one, and managed his acres, as long as he could supervise them in person, so as to rotate his crops, and make one farm produce while others were resting; he experimented constantly, so that no good idea should escape him. He cultivated wheat, and not tobacco. He invested little or nothing in slave labour, beyond keeping up such families as came to him by inheritance or marriage; and he was clear-sighted beyond his times concerning the economic disadvantages of the prevailing system, as well as its social ills and inhumanity. One of his earliest efforts in the House of Burgesses, on entering public life, was the introduction of a bill to give owners the right, which the laws did not then concede, of manumitting their slaves. It was defeated; nor was such a right ever conferred by Virginian legislation, in fact, until the British yoke was fairly shaken off, for British

cupidity at this period favoured negro slavery in all the staple-raising colonies of America.

Many have assumed that Jefferson was a visionary in common affairs because he was a philosopher; and political enemies told absurdly ridiculous stories of him all his life, which had no foundation. He was not a theorist, but an experimenter; and all his experiments he conducted in a practical direction, with a close study of results. So long as he had leisure for devoting himself to his own private affairs, he prospered pecuniarily. Stock-jobbing, of course, and the monetary markets, he never meddled with. Without any other principle of investment than that which consists of joining acres to acres in his own colony and State, he contrived before he was thirty years old to more than double the handsome estate he had derived from his father; and his regular receipts yielded about five thousand dollars a year, of which three fifths came from his profession. From nineteen hundred acres, he became the proprietor of five thousand acres all paid for. Such were his circumstances when he married; and the losses endured later by discharging the incumbrances on his wife's inheritance were in a large sense a patriotic sacrifice. His economies at this same period of life were quite as striking as his power to accumulate. "He carried his accomplished and wealthy wife," says Randall, "to a residence which would not be too large or too elegant in any particular for the porter's lodge of a

modern fine establishment. He drove as yet but two horses and a phaeton, though the grandees drove six, and the middlemen four." And if, with his head full of Ossian, Pope's grotto, his own early bereavements, and youthful thoughts of marriage, we find him devising some very fanciful improvements for his grounds, he, at all events, never carried them out.

Jefferson's first married years were tranquil and delightful, and it is a pleasure to trace his domestic course of life, through the pages of his garden-book, as he sat watching the work which went on about him, or summing up the results of his solitary morning rides. We see him generalizing with his pen on the loads brought by a workman's wheelbarrow, or drawing up careful contracts for his overseers, with the humane stipulation inserted that they shall never bleed a negro. In 1772 Martha was born, the eldest child of his happy marriage. She lived a long and healthy life, and together with one other daughter best known as Maria, who also married in due time, preserved a noble line from extinction. But Jefferson was unfortunate in his offspring; and out of six children that were born to him, five of whom were girls, only these two survived even the period of nurture. The youngest daughter of them all, who lived two years, was of exquisite fibre, ethereal more than earthly; she was fond of music, and so delicately attuned, as tradition relates, that a false note brought tears to her eyes.

CHAPTER IV.

MORNING OF REVOLUTION.

1773-1775.

In revolutionary times each year grows into an epoch, and young men reach rapidly the stature of giants. The burning in Narragansett Bay of the "Gaspee," that British naval vessel whose officers had been so intolerably severe in enforcing the obnoxious revenue laws against our colonists, provoked Parliament to a singular retaliation. Death was denounced against all who should presume henceforth to molest in any manner the king's craft or those who manned them. Not they alone, from admiral to midshipman, who wore the gilt buttons as symbols of British sovereignty, but oaken ribs, the deck, the ropes, and rigging of a royal frigate were thereby declared as inviolate to the profane touch of the king's subjects as the very ark of the Israelites. A court of inquiry was furthermore ordered in Rhode Island for the "Gaspee" offenders, with power to send them to England for trial and sentence.

This new denouncement against colonial rights, which grew out of the Rhode Island incident, was even more alarming than the imposition of taxes without representative consent; for that took only

one's property from him arbitrarily, while this exposed his liberty and his very life to hazard, regardless of the time-honoured safeguards of our criminal law. In Virginia the feeling against deportation to the mother country for trial was so intense and strong that when the House of Burgesses reassembled in 1773, Henry, Lee, Jefferson, and others held a conference, which resulted in resolutions proposing a Committee of Correspondence and Inquiry, to concert with the other colonies.[1]

Dabney Carr, of whose youthful relationship with Jefferson we have spoken, moved these resolutions with an earnest speech on the 12th of March;[2] they were his last tribute to the patriot cause, for he died soon after. With the eloquent support of Patrick Henry and Richard Henry Lee, they passed by a vote

[1] As proposed in Virginia, the primary object of such a committee was to obtain and disseminate authentic information, at the earliest moment, of hostile acts and proceedings of Parliament and the British Crown; co-operation in consequence of such information being, of course, secondary. Jefferson always claimed for Virginia the honour of originating those famous Committees of Correspondence between the legislatures of the different colonies which did so much to harmonize and consolidate American resistance. The record shows, however, that the Massachusetts Provincial Assembly had appointed such a committee as early as 1770. But the work of the Massachusetts Committee, which was peculiar, appears to have attracted little notice in the other colonies, while Virginia's proposal, in 1773, led directly to the Revolution.

[2] At the request, it is said, of his friend and brother-in-law Jefferson, who had been asked to present them.

nearly unanimous. Lord Dunmore, who had now succeeded Lord Botetourt as Governor, dissolved the Burgesses immediately, after his predecessor's example. But Virginia's Committee of Correspondence had already been selected, with Peyton Randolph at the head and Jefferson at the foot; it met the very next day, and sent circulars to all the other colonial legislatures of America, asking them to constitute similar committees; and thus was co-operative revolution set in motion.

The news of the Boston Port Bill reached the reassembled Burgesses of Virginia at the time of its spring session in 1774. Patrick Henry was by this time the great popular leader of the colony, and the sceptre of legislation passed speedily from the conservatives of the Old Dominion, whose names had stood for lineage and respectability, — men like the Pendletons, the Blands, and the Randolphs, — to a band of bolder spirits, chief among whom were the two Lees, Mason, Jefferson, and Henry himself. Such is the usual course in popular revolutions; the old set ushers in with dignity, but the new set gives the impulse. Of all the thirteen colonies, Massachusetts led in active rebellion, for her oppression from the Crown was greatest; but to Virginia's honour it should be remembered that, with little of royal persecution to complain of on her own behalf, she led in the generous assertion, without which unity and a successful resistance would have been scarcely possible, that any attack by royalty on the rights of one American

colony was an attack upon them all. In this becoming spirit did the Virginia House of Burgesses adopt a resolution which set the first day of June, when Boston was to be handcuffed and fettered for a warning example, as a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer. Once more did the royal governor punish the disloyal reflection upon his sovereign by dissolving the Assembly; this time with a curt message of half-a-dozen lines. The dispersed legislators met once more in the Apollo room of the tavern; and reaffirming their principle that the oppression of one of these colonies was the oppression of all, advised their Committee of Correspondence to confer with those of the other colonies as to the expediency of holding a general annual Congress. They further agreed that a convention should be held at Williamsburg, on the 1st of August, to ascertain the result of this inquiry, and if opinion should appear favourable, to appoint their own delegates to such a Congress.

All this was in May; and so fairly did the clergy of these colonies bear their patriotic part, that the day when the Boston Port Bill went into effect was a day that nerved brave souls to action. Well may the sovereign power that punishes unmercifully dread the influence of the spectacle on those who witness it afar off with indignant pity. The Williamsburg Convention, like those of like pattern in other colonies, led to the contemplated action. Jefferson was chosen to it by the freemen of Albemarle, whose county meeting asserted the inherent right of self-

government so defiantly, in advance of all others, that the source of its inspiration can hardly be doubted. A sudden sickness prevented this young delegate from presenting his credentials at the capital among the rest; but he sent forward to his colleagues two copies of an instrument which he had hastily prepared, whose sentiments, as he hoped, would be those of the Convention in instructing its delegates to Congress. The language was bold and startling; too much so, indeed, to please the majority at Williamsburg; for the unequal pace with which men moved in the same patriotic direction required no little prudence, as Jefferson soon found out, to keep front and rear together. Peyton Randolph, the chairman of the Convention, laid his copy on the table of that body; the other copy, sent to Patrick Henry, Jefferson never heard from. Discarded silently, as a basis of instructions, the Convention, nevertheless, had the paper printed in pamphlet form, as a "Summary View." In England, with some interpolations by Edmund Burke, it was widely read and circulated; and the honour of a document so revolutionary in its ideas procured Jefferson's name an insertion among the proscriptions contained in a bill of attainder, which Parliament finally suppressed.

If any one still questions whether Jefferson could have been author of the great Declaration of 1776, let him study the recital of fundamental rights in this earlier and more impassioned production. The in-

structions adopted by the Williamsburg Convention were quite brief in comparison with those which this young rebel had drawn up, and doubtless served better their immediate purpose, being expressive of dutiful allegiance to the king, and fastening their complaints diplomatically upon the acts attempted in Massachusetts by General Gage, that "despotic viceroy." They left the king free to make disavowal of his agent's acts. Jefferson's document, on the contrary, ranged over the justifying ideas of revolution, as though to lead his countrymen to resistance. These colonies, as it argued, were already rightfully independent of Great Britain, since subjects who emigrated to a new country, there to establish new societies of their own, possessed the natural right of expatriation for themselves and their posterity. It recounted the whole story of wrongs inflicted by British "usurped power" to keep these colonies tributary. And to the headstrong king advice was given in stinging words, as from one free-born citizen to another. "Let those flatter who fear; it is not an American art. . . . Open your breast, Sire, to liberal and expanded thought. Let not the name of George the Third be a blot on the page of history. . . . The great principles of right and wrong are legible to every reader; to pursue them requires not the aid of many counsellors. The whole art of government consists in the art of being honest. Only aim to do your duty, and mankind will give you credit where you fail." Bold language this, in the seventh decade of the

eighteenth century, for a liege subject and a commoner's son to hold toward his sovereign. The illusion of divinity in kings was fading in this hemisphere before America drew the sword.

The Williamsburg Convention of 1774 was the germ of revolutionary government in Virginia. General delegates to a Continental Assembly were chosen with the concurrence of Committees of Correspondence in the other colonies. Philadelphia was the place, and September 5 the date fixed upon for the first annual Congress of these colonies. Virginia's delegates made a strong list in combination: Peyton Randolph, Richard Henry Lee, George Washington, Patrick Henry, Richard Bland, Benjamin Harrison, and Edmund Pendleton.

Jefferson's name was not on this earliest roll. Prudential and politic reasons must be balanced in making up seven such delegates at large for the first time. Jefferson, moreover, though of precocious influence as a statesman, still ranked among the youngest. It was the tide-water region which had the great traditional hold upon Virginians when public influence was concerned; and Patrick Henry, whose home was about midway towards the Blue Ridge, represented the constituency whose location was farthest to the westward. Without Patrick Henry, certainly, no roll of Virginia names could have been sufficient; for it was to him, as Jefferson has willingly conceded, that the fellow-citizens of this colony were chiefly

indebted for the unity which prevailed among them. Never forgetting, however, his plain origin and deficient education, this son of the soil liked to put on his hunting-shirt and go into the woods to talk familiarly with common men round a fire; he appealed to the people in all his eloquence and conversation by the force of a native sympathy. His torrent of language and the glow of his imagery were wonderful, as the more cultivated who heard him on great occasions acknowledged; yet Patrick Henry appears to have been little of a logician, and it was hard for the intelligent of his audiences to tell afterwards what he had said that so moved them.

The second Virginia Convention met March 2, 1775, at Richmond; and it was here, during its eventful session in a modest meeting-house, and shortly before the fight at Lexington, that Henry made that immortal harangue whose closing sentence — "Give me liberty or give me death" — is familiar still to American school-boys. When the orator sat down, with pale face and glaring eyes, "terrible to look upon," his hearers, it was said, felt sick with excitement. This speech supported a resolution, introduced by himself, for arms and defence; the burden of both being, in view of the events which hastened in Masachusetts to a climax, — "We must fight." To the old and moderate leaders of the Convention — to Bland, Pendleton, and Harrison of the Congressional delegates, and to Nicholas and even to Wythe, who was a rebel at many points —

this seemed precipitate; they hesitated to take the plunge; but Henry's resolutions were eloquently supported by Richard Henry Lee, while Jefferson, Mason, and Page, progressive men, pressed to the same conclusion. Henry's resolutions passed by a decided majority; and a plan of efficient defence was promptly reported, to which the Convention agreed on the 25th of March.

This Richmond Convention chose to the second Continental Congress the same delegates who had represented the colony in the first; but a vacancy being anticipated in the list, Jefferson was chosen the substitute. That vacancy soon occurred; for when Lord North's "conciliatory proposition" to the colonies reached the royal governor, he convened the House of Burgesses on the 1st of June to take it into consideration. Peyton Randolph withdrew from Congress to take his usual place as presiding officer of the colonial legislature, and Jefferson prepared at once to replace him. But before setting out for Philadelphia, the new delegate succeeded, with Randolph's own aid and countenance, in carrying through the House of Burgesses an answer which should harmonize in spirit with the sentiment already entertained in Congress. Virginia's response accordingly was spirited, as became her position as the oldest of these colonies: it rejected the proposals of the British ministry as merely changing in effect the form of oppression; and such, meantime, was the drift of continental events, — for Lexington had long since

been fought, — that Lord Dunmore, unable to hold the Virginia rebels any longer in check, had fled already for shelter to the guns of a British frigate.

Jefferson, in his Memoir, makes mention of the skilful and judicious management by which all resistants to royal oppression among his fellow-citizens were kept so well united as to bring Virginia firm-faced into the vanguard of revolution. The bolder spirits that now controlled slackened somewhat their pace, that these others who agreed with them on general principle might catch up. Nothing liberal in policy, however, had a chance for success until the royal government was ousted from authority; for the colonial mind, so Jefferson observes, was circumscribed by a habitual belief at this time that it was a liege duty to be subordinate to the mother country in all matters of government. The king's council, which checked in Virginia the representative body or Burgesses, like another House of Lords, held their places at royal will, and served in humble submission. The governor, who had a negation on the colonial laws, held by the same tenure, and still more devotedly; and finally, the royal veto shut out all hope of amelioration.

CHAPTER V.

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

1775–1776.

JEFFERSON left Williamsburg and the House of Burgesses for Philadelphia on the eleventh day of June, 1775, to take his seat in the Continental Congress. Travelling in his phaeton, with two spare horses, and having to pay guides for their assistance part of the way, as his pocket-memorandum shows, he spent ten tedious days on the journey before reaching his distant destination. The differences of exchange, from pistareen to guinea, he jotted down minutely in his little book as he crossed the line from Virginia to Maryland and from Maryland to Pennsylvania. At the Quaker City, of rectangular pattern, he took temporary lodgings with one Ben Randolph, a carpenter, on Chestnut Street; and on the 21st of June, the day after his arrival, he joined the honourable delegates of the thirteen colonies, whose assembling place was the plain brick building known as Carpenters' Hall.

Congress had been about six weeks in session when this young Virginian took his seat among so many elders.[1] His fame as the author of the "Summary

[1] Thomas Jefferson appears to have been the youngest member but two in this body. He was thirty-two years old;

View" had preceded him; and he brought, as a further claim to public confidence and distinction, Virginia's answer to Lord North's "Conciliatory Proposition," which was likewise of his own composition. Besides "the reputation of a masterly pen," Jefferson's attainments in science and the modern languages made him at once a prodigy among these contemporaries, about half of whom had been college-bred, but very few given to general accomplishments. "Duane says that Jefferson is the greatest rubber-off of dust that he has met with," writes the astonished John Adams in his diary this same year; "that he has learned French, Italian, and Spanish, and wants to learn German." Scholarship in these stirring times could have been of little consequence in such a body without strong and sound convictions on the questions uppermost, and the sympathy which co-operates. That harmonious feeling which was already cementing together the two leading colonies of America, Massachusetts and Virginia, soon produced the most remarkable personal friendship of the age. Adams and Jefferson were marked for one another. "Though a silent member in Congress," wrote the former when recalling the first recollections of his younger associate, "he was so prompt, frank, explicit, and decisive upon

but Edward Rutledge was twenty-six, and John Jay less than thirty. Neither John Adams nor Patrick Henry had reached the prime of life. Benjamin Franklin, seventy-one years of age, was the oldest among the delegates, as well as the most distinguished in civil experience.

committees and in conversation, — not even Samuel Adams was more so, — that he soon seized upon my heart."

Jefferson had reached Philadelphia in stirring times. It was on the very day of his arrival, as one biographer reminds us, that Washington received his commission from Congress; and before taking his seat on the 21st, Jefferson saw, most likely, his revered fellow-citizen ride away on his long journey, under escort, after reviewing the Philadelphia troops. The news of Bunker Hill came to Philadelphia that same 21st of June before night, — tidings that stirred one's blood, and set the great heart of this representative assembly throbbing with a new pulsation.

Virginians must have been welcomed to influence in such a body. Five days after he had taken his seat, the youth who had rebuked his king was placed with John Dickinson, of Pennsylvania, upon a committee, already previously appointed, for drawing up a statement of the causes of taking up arms. Jefferson prepared the draft, as had been commonly expected, but Dickinson thought it too strong; and to indulge the scruples of the latter, who as a delegate hesitated constantly from a vain hope of reconciliation with the mother country, his colleagues gave him the paper to work upon. He drafted the whole document anew, preserving of Jefferson's composition only the last four and a half paragraphs. The committee approved and reported; Congress in early July

accepted the report; and the address, when promulgated, was hailed with thunderous approval throughout the colonies. Read from pulpits, in market-places, and amid artillery salute at the head of our continental armies, the document was long praised and remembered as one of the best and most popular that ever emanated from that body which forged the destinies of America. But while Dickinson gave to that paper the suppressed and forbearing statement of grievances which might suit the times a little longer, the glow of the document was found in Jefferson's peroration, which fortunately remained as he wrote it.

Strange is it, that long after bloodshed and the contention of arms have been actually entered upon, men should still cherish the idea that victory means only to wipe out the temporary wrong, leaving opportunities to inflict injury as before. Such, however, was the prevalent belief when the American Revolution opened, as it is of all revolutions, indeed, whose real basis is popular. Our ancestors drew the sword, it has well been observed, not to vindicate "natural rights," but as British subjects, in every sense of the word, who merely attempted to redress the practical wrongs inflicted by a lawful but unjust sovereign to whom they owed allegiance. And yet, one should add, unless revolution can reserve some radical change in view, as the last ideal resort, such a cause will not long be found worth fighting for. For that radical change in some future contingency the Jeffersonian paragraphs of this address by Congress prepared well the public

mind by language whose exhortation was union, unserried ranks, and a firm purpose until hostilities should cease on the part of the aggressor, and all danger, furthermore, of renewing them. A single word, when italicized, brings out the pregnant possibility in the very breath of a disclaimer. "Lest this declaration should disquiet the minds of our friends and fellow-subjects in any part of the empire, we assure them that 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, or induced us to excite any other nation to war against them." Such is the language of revolution, from the very same pen which in a twelvemonth wrote out a counterpart. And thus, too, are men carried on together by the strong undercurrent while they are most loudly protesting. Yet so little of the vanity of authorship attached to Jefferson, and of so much greater consequence did he habitually deem it that associates should work harmoniously together, that he never, save by a statement made for posthumous effect, challenged Dickinson's long fame as composer of the entire address.

Once again, in course of the earliest session he attended, was Jefferson's talent for composition called into exercise: this time in drafting a reply to Lord North's "Conciliatory Proposition," on behalf of Congress, such as he had already framed for the Virginia House of Burgesses. This latter document

resembled much the former, though amplified and statelier in tone; his colleagues of the committee were satisfied with it; and their report being adopted by Congress on the last day of July, the British ultimatum was solemnly rejected, and war went on.

Six weeks at Philadelphia as a chance substitute — for Congress adjourned on the 1st of August — had made for young Jefferson a continental renown, and when he returned to his constituency, the Convention of Virginia chose him third on its list of seven delegates for the next momentous year; Patrick Henry and Washington, who were reserved for other honours, declining a re-election.

Congress met once more at Philadelphia in September, 1775. Men's minds, the ensuing winter, tended inevitably to independence, for bloodshed blotted gradually from the horizon all other alternatives but abject submission. Jefferson's nature was in full sympathy with the irresistible movement. To a Tory kinsman of Virginia, one of the Randolphs, who had lately sailed for England, he wrote, November 29, in language not unlike what he had penned to him about three months before: "Believe me, dear sir, there is not in the British Empire a man who more cordially loves a union with Great Britain than I do. But, by the God that made me, I will cease to exist before I yield to a connection on such terms as the British Parliament propose; and in this I think I speak the sentiments of America. We want neither

inducement nor power to declare and assert a separation. It is will, alone, which is wanting; and that is growing apace under the fostering hand of our king."

Biography views history only in its immediate connection with the individual whose life is under development. Crowding events signalized 1776,—one of those rare years that rise in bold and permanent relief from the table-land of a century. The prospect of conciliation with the mother country was fast fading out. In March Washington with his continental volunteers had expelled the British troops from Boston. Paine's masterly pamphlet, "Common Sense," nerved the American people to their necessary task. The issue of declaring final separation was felt by Whigs, whether ultra or conservative, to be near a solution; and as popular conviction ripened toward such a result, Congress encouraged the old thirteen colonies, and the colonies in turn encouraged Congress, to prepare accordingly.

Jefferson had been absent from Congress all the winter; not idle, however, but busying himself in raising local money and supplies, and in giving to the politics of his province proper impulse and direction. His fond mother died in March after her long widowhood, and domestic affairs at Monticello needed readjustment. In these days, while each colony voted only as a unit in Congress, colleagues often relieved one another. But at length, after an absence of four months and a half, Jefferson resumed his seat at Philadelphia on the 13th of May, in ample time to figure,

with the full confidence of his fellow-members, in the crowning work of the session. Upon Peyton Randolph's sudden death, several months earlier, John Hancock of Massachusetts had been fully installed as Speaker. It was on Friday, the 7th of June, that Richard Henry Lee, who headed the list of the Virginia delegates, moved those momentous resolutions for independence which the convention of his colony had transmitted for general action. Congress, after a brief debate, deferred the discussion to July, but meanwhile, that no time should be lost, resolved to appoint a committee to draft the Declaration. Five persons were chosen by ballot for that purpose: Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman, and Robert R. Livingston. Jefferson, having received the highest number of votes, stood at the head of this committee. He was a Virginian, preferable for such a task to his colleague Lee, who now left temporarily for home, for, unlike the latter, he had no personal enemy; he was skilful with the pen, familiar with all the points in controversy, eminently able to make the better reason appear so, and withal the youngest member of the committee, whom others might permit without serious rivalry to take the labouring oar. For reasons such as these, his colleagues — and Adams and Franklin most graciously on their own part — left him free to his own thoughtful expression.

The little writing-desk on which was drawn up America's great charter is still preserved; and Jeffer-

son sat composing it, with pen in hand, in the parlor of a furnished suite occupying the middle story of a new brick house which stood alone on the south side of Market Street, close to Seventh. Here he lodged at the time, a quarter of a mile from Independence Square, taking his meals at the City Tavern. His original draft, as well as the engrossed paper which bears the final signatures of Congress, may still be seen among the archives of the Union. Two or three alterations, verbal and unimportant, were suggested in this draft by Adams and Franklin, colleagues upon his sub-committee to whom Jefferson first showed it separately; after which a fair copy was written out by its original author, reported to the full committee, and from thence unaltered to Congress. Time pressed; for the Lee Resolution of June 7, for declaring these colonies independent, passed Congress in committee of the whole on the 1st of July, the day when discussion was resumed, and twelve colonies voted favourably the following day on its final passage. Next in order was taken up, without adjournment, the drafted document which Jefferson had reported; and for three consecutive days, including the 2d and 4th, the debate took so critical a tone that the author writhed silently in his seat, next to Benjamin Franklin; and to console him, the latter related the amusing story of John Thompson, the hatter, whose signboard had to be shorn down to his own name and the figure of a hat to please his censorious friends.

Congress really improved the text by its severe supervision; for what was lost in fervour of style was gained in dignity. Suppression of feeling, or toning down the first indignant utterances of the heart, adds strength to historical statement, for it manifests the superadded wish to be fair and truthful; but strong emotion, where wrongs are suffered, should be the basis of composition. It was emotion that Jefferson's pen contributed to the Declaration as no other could have done; and to his general structure of the document, its argument, its recital of common injuries, no objection certainly sustained itself. But the rhetoric seemed in some places overloaded, and Congress showed good taste in trimming down. Eighteen suppressions, six additions, and ten alterations appear from Mr. Randall's printed comparison, — changes, however, as a later biographer has properly observed, nearly every one of them for the better. It is remarkable that Parliament was treated in this instrument with studied contempt; its whole indictment was framed against the king, — not, however, on second thought, as a tyrant whose usurpation was without one redeeming trait, but as a tyrant unfit to be the ruler of a free people, which is tyranny enough. Counts were stricken out of doubtful import, — such as charged George III. with inciting treasonable insurrections among us, and with forcing the slave-trade into our markets. That Congress should have expunged the latter passage has been regretted by many; but condemnation of slavery, to be wholly

just, should have been made in some other form of expression; for, by Jefferson's own admissions of colonial sentiment, our American people were not so free from guilt that they could lay the whole blame upon others. Another important change which Congress made in the draft consisted in softening down all passages which seemed to convey a censure on our British brethren; for the idea still haunted the minds of many that we had friends at home worth keeping terms with.

But the splendid preamble of this Declaration and its opening formulary of truths self-evident were retained in almost the very words as originally written. And while the closing passage was remoulded so as to correspond with the highly appropriate language of the Lee Resolution in which Jefferson's committee had been first instructed, here, as in most other changes made in the proposed instrument, Jefferson's eloquent and captivating phraseology rounded off every period, and gave solid symmetry to the whole. In fine, though verbal luxuriances might have been finally pruned away, little was interpolated; and the Declaration of Independence, as the world now knows it, remains almost entirely the composition of its gifted draftsman. Not a ringing phrase or word in it, except possibly in the two closing sentences, clinks of other metal. And so, passing the ordeal of discussion, the instrument which shapes the destinies of this Western hemisphere was signed late in the afternoon of July 4, and soon promulgated to the world.

The regenerating influence of this Declaration of Independence has proved far greater than they could have foreseen who first subscribed it. Thirteen colonies of America, three millions of people, in shaking off the yoke of British allegiance, only began the work of which a single century opens the vista of realization. Independence of Europe and of European patterns of government draws its lengthening train of consequences, and already have the ideas of the new world begun to react upon the old. To Spanish-Americans, to patriots everywhere whose effort has been to establish popular institutions, the instrument drawn by Jefferson serves as the favourite model. State constitutions began to express the same ideas; in one tongue or another its diction has been copied, and its sublime generalization: so that "when in the course of human events" has passed into the familiar caption of monarchy's death-warrant.

Some have derived the best inspiration of this composition from one passage, some from another. To many, its noblest utterance is in the stately preamble, which passed to a final adoption, after leaving its author's writing-table, without the alteration of a single word, — with that recognition, so different from the supercilious disdain of ancient nations, "a decent respect to the opinions of mankind." Others admire most the close of the paper, remodelled from the original draft, yet ending in that terse Jeffersonian pledge for mutual support of "our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honour." But general sentiment

favours most strenuously, as it ought to do, the epitome of self-evident truths with which the main declaration opens. "Glittering generalities," as they were once called in days when Americans themselves faltered in high principle, they have educated the human race to freedom and brotherhood. That "all men are created equal" was not literally intended. Indeed, the very mention of "merciless Indian savages" in another passage of this instrument seems inconsistent with such an idea; and Jefferson himself, in his "Notes on Virginia" a few years after, frankly admitted that he believed the negro race inferior to our own in point of natural capacity. Genius, in any race of men, is the endowment of favoured individuals. The context, however, relieves the vexed phrase of all brutal circumscription. The statement of fundamental truths was, with no important change, the draftsman's own; and his argument, compressed into maxims, led up to the conclusion, expressed with flowing pen as the most self-evident of all, — that for securing the inalienable rights of all men to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness governments are instituted, "deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed," so that whenever one government becomes destructive of these ends, the people have a right to alter, abolish, and substitute another with the same purpose in view. Jefferson's own changes in his manuscript, as he sat composing it, may aid in illuminating its intention, when one seeks to discover it. It was he who

crystallized these "self-evident truths," and John Adams who contended earnestly for them in discussion. Life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, — rights inherent and inalienable, and derived from an equal and independent creation, — such an epitome as this dignified as never before the freedom of the individual in contrast with blind allegiance to a sovereign. From that little germ of fundamentals — first expressed so well, though not necessarily first conceived, in our Declaration — expands by innate force a new conception of government and its popular relations, bursting the shell of old conditions, constantly growing, constantly grander. By this full symbol of political faith British colonial dependence was shivered in the last century; race emancipation followed in the present; and, unless experience belies the text, the next cycle of a hundred years will begin the reign of universal brotherhood. And thus does the compression of a creed give motive impulse when graven upon tablets which haunt the imagination and are not forgotten.

The originality of these abstract truths, aside from their present concrete form, has been better questioned than the power and genuineness inherent in them. Even John Adams in 1822 encouraged the malignant enemies of Jefferson, with whom he had been politically associated, by asserting that there was not an idea in the Declaration of Independence that had not been hackneyed in Congress for two years previous; that its substance was contained in

the journals of Congress in 1774; and that its essence might be found in a pamphlet by James Otis of still earlier date, which was printed before the Continental Congress met at all. Comparison will not bear out that statement; though doubtless the general argument for government as originating in compact and the consent of the governed is one with which American minds had long been familiar, and Locke, the darling of our colonial pioneers, had ably elaborated it. But whether Locke in turn owed nothing to earlier philosophers is another matter; and the real philanthropy of the document is deducible rather from that earlier of Christian sources, the Sermon on the Mount.

Jefferson himself has answered such cavillers with sense and forbearance. "Otis's pamphlet I never saw, and whether I had gathered my ideas from reading or reflection, I do not know. I know only that I turned to neither book nor pamphlet while writing it. I did not consider it as any part of my charge to invent new ideas, and to offer no sentiment which had ever been expressed before. Had Mr. Adams been so restrained, Congress would have lost the benefit of his bold and expressive advocations of the rights of Revolution." And anterior, it might be added, to the resolutions of Congress in 1774, to which John Adams had referred, was Jefferson's own "Summary View" of 1774, already circulating in England, which contained all the ideas of those resolutions worth restating, and assertions of natural

rights on our colonial behalf, far bolder. The originality of the document of 1776 in phraseology and tone of expression rests on grounds even stronger.[1]

There never was a break in the bond once begun that held these thirteen clustering jurisdictions in a common league. Simultaneously with the mutual resolve which dissolved "all political connection" with Great Britain, Congress adopted another for devising a plan of confederation, — Virginia herself having led in the early resolution of May, for making those two aims co-ordinate; and until that confederation, "perpetual" by its own terms, became complete, Congress carried on revolution as the common cause of the united colonies under the credentials of an overruling necessity. The Declaration itself had not declared simply the colonies, but "these united colonies," free and independent States; and its solemn appeal was as "the Representatives of the United States of America in General Congress assembled," and "in the name

[1] For a full summary of the once exciting "Mecklenburg controversy," in 1819, see 3 Randall's Jefferson, Appendix No. 2. Curiously enough, it seems to have escaped the attention of both Jefferson's friends and his critics, over a spurious document claiming to have been issued in North Carolina in 1775, that the points of coincidence in the alleged Mecklenburg declaration relate essentially to the closing language used in the Declaration of 1776, and to the amendments more especially, which Congress made to Jefferson's draft by embodying the phraseology of the Lee Resolution. See 1 Randall, 142, 172, for comparison.

and by the authority of the good people of these colonies." Such an establishment, in the strict sense of the term, as a sovereign State never for a moment existed in this whole broad belt of Anglo-America, — save, possibly, when Rhode Island and North Carolina during the brief space of 1789 isolated themselves by their own stubborn dissent from the more perfect union of our later constitution.

In the eternal secrecy which shrouds this Congress of the Revolution, — a deliberative and representative body, yet an anomalous one, — little of its clashing influences can ever be revealed to the world. But of the fierce though brief debates of 1776, most memorable of them all, we gain some momentary glimpses. Jefferson, no doubt, sat a silent spectator, for the most part if not altogether, while the battle went on in the closed chamber; yet his pulse beat calmly enough for the usual precise details of weather and temperature to go into his private record-book. John Adams was the great champion of the Declaration on the floor, fighting fearlessly for every word of it; and no other pen, it has well been observed, has done half so much as Jefferson's to impress posterity with the magnitude of his colleague's splendid services on that eventful occasion. "He was the Colossus of that debate," was the fixed tribute of this gifted pen through all the bitter rivalries and alienation that followed in later years.

Of some other historical colleagues in this Congress Jefferson has left characteristic impressions.

Hancock he hardly knew; but Samuel Adams, the stern Boston Puritan, he has well styled in his own figurative speech, the "Palinurus of the Revolution." "He was truly," says Jefferson, "a great man, wise in counsel, fertile in resources, immovable in his purposes, and had, I think, a greater share than any other member in advising and directing our measures in the Northern war." "As a speaker," he adds, "he could not be compared with his living colleague and namesake;" but, although not of fluent elocution, he was "so rigorously logical, so clear in his views, abundant in good sense, and master always of his subject, that he commanded the most profound attention whenever he arose in an assembly by which the froth of declamation was heard with sovereign contempt."

Dickinson, it is known, led debate on the loyal and timorous side; and though honestly devoted to the popular cause, as war went on, he alone of all the delegates in the present Congress refused his name to the charter. Of Franklin we know that his influence was great and even transcendent in this body; but when he spoke it was in brief and pithy utterances, and he gave momentum to great measures chiefly by the weight of great years and experience and honourable character, and that consummate tact and appreciation for others, rooted in true benevolence, which distinguished him above all Americans of his times. · No man in all the colonies had served so long in posts of influence, nor given the Crown such offence by his final defection. But Franklin was one of those

who addressed himself to carrying his measure, not to winning fame by rhetorical display. With such conduct in a deliberative assembly Jefferson could heartily sympathize. "I served," said he in later life, "with General Washington in the legislature of Virginia before the Revolution, and during it with Dr. Franklin in Congress. I never heard either of them speak ten minutes at a time, nor to any but the main point which was to decide the question. They laid their shoulders to the great points, knowing that the little ones would follow of themselves."

CHAPTER VI.

VIRGINIA'S REFORMER AND LEGISLATOR.

1776–1779.

JEFFERSON touched the orb of continental deliberations as lightly as a winged Mercury; but wherever he touched he left his footprint. We shall see him again in this confederate Congress for a brief episode, leaving a new landmark behind on his departure; but for the next few years his private concerns confined him to Virginia, and to the especially congenial task of adapting his own proud Commonwealth to the exigencies of revolution.

He had been rechosen to Philadelphia, notwithstanding his expressed wish to surrender his seat; and this, too, with the Virginia delegation reduced in number to five. But domestic reasons made it imperative for him to be nearer home; he left Philadelphia on the 2d of September, 1776, resigning his seat, and journeyed homeward to Monticello. Congress this same month made him the offer of a mission to France, to co-operate with Franklin and Silas Deane in soliciting arms and alliance; but this also he declined. On the seventh day of October, in the same year, and on the first day of its session, he took his seat in the Virginia House of Delegates, and with great zeal entered promptly upon the work of State reform.

Posterity need not feel surprised that Jefferson's fame in federal politics should have cast into the shade his more contracted work in his native State. Nor is it strange that one who made so little personal renown as a debater among a people of all others given over to discussion should have failed of proper appreciation as a legislator. With Jefferson, legislation was a business for achieving results; and that same plastic touch which during his two presidential terms is known to have kept the two houses of Congress in genial accord with the Executive, derived its delicacy from a local experience which oblivion has long since curtained. How to lead deliberative bodies to efficient action, and how to shorten what he used to call "the morbid rage of debate," was his constant solicitude. "Why," he was once asked, "can you sit in silence, hearing so much false reasoning which a word should refute?" "To refute, indeed, is easy," was his answer; "but to silence is impossible." In measures brought forward by himself he took, as he said, the labouring oar; but in general he was willing to listen.

With ideas as a legislative leader so self-denying, and with rare and excessive modesty in claiming his personal part in any work where others were called upon to co-operate with him, Jefferson chose for the next few years a field comparatively restricted for results, while the great strife for transatlantic liberty surged on at a distance. Reform was his aim, and its leading operations twofold: First, the municipal

law of the State needed adaptation to the new and expanded conditions of republican life and liberty; next, the whole civil and criminal code required revision.

Jefferson was thirty-three years of age when he entered with high aspirations the lower branch of Virginia's General Assembly, by this time an independent legislature. Here was found a set of able coadjutors, some of them more youthful still, who aided strenuously the passage of those liberal measures of which he himself was chief mover and draftsman. George Mason was of such collaborators the foremost: a gallant and philanthropic gentleman, whose forceful oratory was spiced with cynicism. Wythe followed in the footsteps of his former disciple, abandoning congressional life, until presently he ascended the bench, and as judicial administrator in a State he made the name of chancellor venerable, like Kent of a later generation. Patrick Henry, who was governor, leaned always to liberal measures. All these were fixed in State service; but of all Jefferson's helpers in the present task none followed him so faithfully and with so growing a grasp of continental needs as did Madison, the sober-minded, whose companionship here begun in the legislature was the companionship of a lifetime. But Madison was still very young, inexperienced in public service, and excessively modest; not yet conspicuous in debate, his usefulness came afterward, while his elder friend was abroad, in marshalling the tardier measures.

The first blow Jefferson struck was at the British excrescence of entails. He reported his bill, a sweeping one, on the 14th of October, to abolish that prop of an artificial aristocracy which kept lands tied up from alienation. In doing so, he raised against himself for the first time a large and influential host of local enemies, some of them blood relatives on his mother's side; but his onset was successful. The bill passed after a three weeks' struggle; and with its twin measure, the statute of descents, whose record came later, laid fungus feudalism on its back. The wail of the first-born was heard long after, attributing to such levelling principles of Jefferson the gradual decay of Virginia's first settlements. But the real evil was that Jefferson's levelling could not go far enough. He and his reforming set would have rooted out slavery from the State by a gradual plan, such as various Northern States successfully pursued; but here their efforts were balked, and reformation taught but half its lesson.

The first easy victory in the General Assembly was not the only one. At this same session Jefferson, who served on various committees, brought in a bill defining citizenship, which conferred upon foreigners the right to be naturalized after a two years' residence, and expressly recognized the natural right of expatriation as claimed in his pamphlet of 1774. This act he pushed through later; and other bills which were reported, for removing the seat of government, for reorganizing the judiciary, and for punishing treason without the

old incident of corruption of blood, received more or less of his creative assistance. And finally a bill for the complete revision of the laws which he had introduced early in the session, was passed on the 24th of October; and on November 5, by a joint vote of the two Houses, the committee appointed to execute the work consisted of himself, Edmund Pendleton, Wythe, Mason, and Thomas L. Lee.

This last occupation kept Jefferson fully employed after the legislature had adjourned. Naturally, as patron and author of the important measure, he became chairman of the committee. He was named first in the resolution appointing them, and his name appeared first signed to the report which they subsequently made when the work was done; but in his own writings he has never once mentioned that his place was at the head.

The members of this committee met in January, 1777, at Fredericksburg (a central and convenient point for most of them), to map out their work and allot the several portions. Mason and Lee, who were not lawyers, excused themselves. Lee died soon afterward, and Mason resigned. Their vacancies remained unfilled, and the three remaining commissioners proceeded with the task, allotting to each a certain portion. To Jefferson was apportioned the common law and British statutes down to the fourth year of James I. (1607), when the colony was founded; to Wythe the British statutes from that date

to 1776; to Pendleton the colonial statutes. Jefferson had evidently the heaviest burden, and his share included descents and the criminal law. Having finished as leisure might permit their several tasks, the three met again at Williamsburg, in February, 1779, to compare their work. Together they went critically over the whole, sentence by sentence, weighing every word, until every part was conjointly agreed upon, and then returned to their homes, that each might have fair corrected copies of his portion. Pendleton's part had been insufficiently done, by copying the retained text as it stood before; and to assimilate its plan and execution to the other portions, Jefferson and Wythe divided the work between themselves with Pendleton's permission, and went all over it again, hewing out redundant words and simplifying the general expression. The whole body of British and colonial statutes and laws of Virginia, as thus compressed, was reported by the two chief compilers, Pendleton's concurrence being signified by proxy. One hundred and twenty-six bills, which, as printed by the House, covered but ninety folio pages closely printed, made this Virginia revision a model of admirable brevity and clearness, not less than of accuracy.

Jefferson's Memoir indicates his discriminating taste, as a codifier, in balancing the merit of adjudicated comment against new textual phraseology. "I thought it material," he observes, "not to vary the diction of the ancient statutes by modernizing it, nor to give rise to new questions by new expressions. The

text of these statutes had been so fully explained and defined, by numerous adjudications, as scarcely even now to produce a question in our courts." But at the same time he thought it would be also useful in all new drafts to discourage the style of the later British statutes and of the Virginia Assembly; "which from their verbosity, their endless tautologies, their involutions of case within case, and parenthesis within parenthesis, and their multiplied efforts at certainty, by *saids* and *aforesaids*, by *ors* and by *ands*, to make them more plain, are really rendered more perplexed and incomprehensible, not only to common readers, but to the lawyers themselves." This remark touches a professional foible which unhappily did not disappear with the colonial age; for many lawyers to this day would keep justice coiled up in hieroglyphical expressions which impose upon the vulgar. One cannot toss off a statute like an epigram; and rarely enough are the canons of literary taste invoked in the language of legislation. But — to cite a single instance — Jefferson, in drawing the Virginia statute of descents, showed the master hand in one of the dryest and most technical of legal subjects, and without a pattern to guide him. It was a simple composition, comprehensive, concise, perspicuous; the only important one, perhaps, among novel American enactments of the age, which in the course of a century of continuous experience gave rise over its meaning to but a single controversy, and that by no means for its disparagement. By that act the canons of descent

pre-existing, which Virginia derived from the English law, were utterly demolished, and a scheme based upon new principles took their place. Adopted precisely as Jefferson drew it up, it embraces eighteen clauses, and occupies on the statute-book little more than a page.

About the time the report of the revision was presented, Jefferson and Wythe left the legislature for other scenes. Of the one hundred and twenty-six separate bills which comprised their work, some had been introduced and passed already; as for instance the act which prohibited the slave-trade. The Virginia code was never acted upon as one harmonious whole; but bills were taken from the mass and passed from time to time as public exigencies permitted. It was not until after the general peace of 1785 that the main body of the work was taken up systematically for legislative discussion. None of the revisers were then present to advocate or to explain their work. Jefferson was abroad, and both of his colleagues were on the bench; but by Madison's unwearied efforts most of the bills were put upon their final passage with little alteration.

The reformation of the criminal code embodied in this revision was hindered somewhat longer. In that reformation Jefferson bore the leading part. All five members of the committee had agreed, at their first conference, to confine the death-penalty to the two chief offences of treason and murder, abolishing, besides, the revolting practice of drawing and quartering.

All other felonies were made punishable by confinement and hard labour, except a few, to which, against Jefferson's personal wishes, the old Hebrew principle of retaliation was applied. Though imperfect in this latter respect, the reform was quite too humane for British-born citizens to adopt at once. When brought forward in 1785, it was lost by a single vote; nor did the public mind of Virginia ripen fully enough to bear the change until eleven years later, when a new bill passed the legislature imbued with the choicest spirit of the original one. It is worthy of remembrance that generations before Romilly, Mackintosh, and Brougham could carry in the mother country a similar reform, — when, within a single year, nearly ninety human beings were sentenced at the Old Bailey to the gallows for stealing, counterfeiting, robbery, or riot, — our youthful codifier sought to persuade his imitating Commonwealth to reduce the death-penalty to its most appropriate limits. "Cruel and sanguinary laws," so ran his preamble, "defeat their own purpose by engaging the benevolence of mankind to withhold prosecutions, to smother testimony, or to listen to it with bias, when, if the punishment were only proportional to the injury, men would feel it their inclination, as well as their duty, to see the laws observed."[1]

It is a rare art which can warm up a preamble into sententious argument, and make a dull fiat of legis-

[1] Jefferson's private summary of criminal legislation, with copious notes and references and a literal translation of Anglo-Saxon laws, has been preserved.

lation its own impressive advocate; but Jefferson turned all such "whereas" phrases into opportunities, and made the dumb statute plead for liberal ideas. One recalls Plato's observation, that every decree should have its lofty prelude. No preamble more splendid do the annals of legislation furnish than that which he prefixed to his bill for establishing religious freedom; albeit such phrases were judiciously suppressed as intimated that religious belief lies wholly independent of the will. Toleration needs no better plea than in the closing words of this preamble: "that truth is great, and will prevail if left to herself; that she is the proper and sufficient antagonist to error, and has nothing to fear from the conflict unless by human interposition disarmed of her natural weapons, free argument and debate; errors ceasing to be dangerous when it is permitted freely to contradict them." We need not regard the draft of this preamble as unexceptionable; and still less that passage in the "Notes on Virginia" which Jefferson injected for final effect, whose force is marred by one or two phrases irreverently written. The shaft flies too far when toleration merges into careless scepticism: religious freedom is good, but not equally so is freedom from religion.

Jefferson at this time of life, we are forced to surmise, overestimated, as freethinkers are apt to do, the evil of religious bias. Children (as he presently expressed himself in his "Notes on Virginia") should not have the Bible put into their hands at an age

when their minds are not matured for religious inquiry, but should be taught the facts of history instead. But what history, so far as the distant past is concerned, rests on a surer basis? The mind which is not roused when young to religious inquiry is never likely to inquire with earnestness at all. Religion or irreligion, meanwhile, operates the springs of human conduct; nor is it mental assent, but humble faith that we have to deal with. God's law compels the will, like the law of human authority; we may acknowledge it or not, but its obligations remain imposed, though the range of their enforcement be veiled from us. And of Christianity, at least, the essence of all faith is loyalty to a divine exemplar. How tame a part, then, must mental equipoise play in an equation so momentous.

Toleration, disestablishment, the voluntary remission of public worship to voluntary support, charge and surcharge the atmosphere of our modern American life. Jefferson's bill for religious freedom thus proved the harbinger of brighter days, when government on these Western shores should leave conscience to its legitimate spiritual empire. The change thus invoked startled Europe, as well it might; for this was the first legislative mandate of the kind in Christendom. Vane, Sidney, and others, to be sure, had plead in earlier times the cause of religious toleration; Penn, Calvert, and Roger Williams had practised on such a principle in founding three of our thirteen colonies: but Virginia, in the early plenitude of her independent power, not only tolerated by this statute

but declared her protection of the rights of conscience against all further persecution, annoyance, or attempt to impose a civil disability. And in the concluding clause of this celebrated enactment we see expressed in the framer's words the just confidence that its policy would prove durable. For knowing well that "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."

Jefferson as a reformer meant to eradicate every fibre of ancient or future aristocracy after the British model, and found in this oldest of American States a government truly republican and adapted to overspread the Western continent. Four of the bills passed or reported while he was in the legislature kept this idea most prominently in view: (1) The repeal of the laws of entail, which "would prevent the accumulation and perpetuation of wealth in select families, and preserve the soil of the country from being daily more and more absorbed in mortmain." (2) The abolition of primogeniture and the unequal partition of inheritances, "removing those feudal and unnatural distinctions which made one member in every family rich and all the rest poor." (3) The restoration of the rights of conscience, relieving the dissenters who were comparatively poor from taxation for the support

of an Anglican establishment, which at this time was the church of the rich, and did little missionary work except condescendingly. (4) A bill for general education, which would qualify the people to take their part intelligently as individuals in the new drama of self-government. "And all this," adds the reformer, "would be affected without the violation of a single natural right of any one individual citizen."

We, who find liberal machinery broadly exhibited and running without friction, are apt to consider too lightly the formidable difficulties under which it was established. Think of the solid barricade of prejudice and inveterate habit, not less than the phalanx of active bigotry through which reform must force its way; of the opprobrium and social ostracism, of the incubus of wealth and influence, which choke, if they can, all fame which does not filter through the regular channels. Popularity itself is no sufficient recompense for the loss of friends in one's own private circle, unless the cause itself be inspiring. Against the bill for religious freedom even Washington's towering name helped the inertia. And the fourth of Jefferson's schemes for placing Virginia on the pinnacle of independent greatness miscarried altogether. His educational bill proposed a systematic plan, with elementary schools for all children rich and poor; colleges or high schools for superior youth; and ultimately a university grade for teaching the sciences in their highest scope. This scheme, worked out with his usual full detail, the legislature

never acted upon. And well might its author have apprehended such a result, for there was no strong middle class in the Commonwealth to support so splendid an endowment. Planters and the landed gentry of Virginia who placed their own children under private tutors felt no concern in taxing themselves to maintain county common-schools for the meaner inhabitants. Common education is an outgrowth of self-government and the democratic spirit; while kings and the wealthy aristocracy have set the first example of munificence in respect of higher seminaries. Disappointed in his earlier and broader expectations, we shall see Jefferson finishing his long experience at its latest epoch as the founder for his State of a university.

In other respects than education, Virginia proved herself more than half a century behind her innovating son. Her heart was set too much on the fabric of perishing grandeur. Co-leader with Massachusetts through the Revolution, she wasted already the patrimony of her glorious renown. Some of the noblest sons of the State, like Jefferson, Wythe, and Mason, wished at this time for emancipation; and in a bill drawn and offered by Jefferson, which passed in 1778 without opposition, the importation of slaves by sea or land was forbidden, and all slaves so imported were proclaimed free. This act did Virginia honour; and it was one of the very first which followed the assumption of her independent Statehood. Enthu-

siasm exhausted itself, however, in preliminaries, as it often will. In his "Notes on Virginia," prepared but two years after the report of the revisers, Jefferson coupled with religious freedom and the other alterations of the code, emancipation of all after-born slaves, as one of the changes he had contemplated but could not realize. "The bill," says he, "reported by the revisers did not itself contain that proposition; but an amendment containing it was prepared, to be offered to the legislature whenever the bill should be taken up." And he proceeds to give the elaborate details intended, which would have placed the young negro offspring with their parents for nurture, and then, after educating them carefully at the public expense according to the capacity of each, transplanted them to form some independent colony of their own under gentle supervision. And while unreservedly expressing his disbelief that the two races could mingle in harmony under co-equal conditions of freedom, he pictured in glowing colours the ruin to morals and industry with which slavery cursed already the master race. "And can the liberties of a nation," he adds, "be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are of the gift of God? That they are not to be violated but with his wrath? Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just; that his justice cannot sleep forever."

Once more in his Memoir, written in 1821, when Virginia had returned wholly to her idols, he com-

mented in the same prophetic strain on the final failure of his scheme: "It was found that the public mind would not yet bear the proposition, nor will it bear it even at this day. Yet the day is not distant when it must bear and adopt it, or worse will follow. Nothing is more certainly written in the book of fate than that these people are to be free. Nor is it less certain that the two races cannot live in the same government. Nature, habit, opinion, have drawn indelible lines of distinction between them."

In an interval of forty years these Cassandra-like prophecies had been repeated, and another forty years' interval saw the pillars of State shaken over the prophet's grave. Who will say that Jefferson was not a far-sighted reformer? "The first half," remarks an intelligent son of Virginia, "has now been fulfilled; whether the rest was forecasted with an equal prescience only the inscrutable future can decide." And against the estimated cost of deportation, which appalled his fellow-citizens while Jefferson was alive, he sets the far more appalling losses inflicted upon Virginia by the Civil War. Nor as yet, one may add, have the books of the negro problem in America been finally balanced.[1]

Jefferson's labouring oar in the Virginia legislature was by no means confined to these broader channels. He was engaged on various special committees and

[1] See the valuable pamphlet, "Thomas Jefferson as a Legislator," by R. G. H. Kean, Esq., of Lynchburg, which the author has found quite serviceable in the present chapter.

various subjects of immediate importance. There were journeyings often, during these industrious years, between Williamsburg and Monticello, for his sick wife needed his attendance. A son, his only one, was born in May, 1777, and lived but seventeen days. Jefferson's domestic ties were tender; yet the hope of male offspring had not constrained him from striking the first blow at the root of unequal inheritances; and, comforting the afflicted mother, he went on with his share of the revision, resolved that in time no aristocracy should flourish among his fellow-citizens but that of talents and virtue. But of all the reforms of this period for which he laboured so indefatigably, he gloried in none so greatly as the act for religious freedom. That triumph, though arriving late, cheered his heart while sojourning far away in Europe; and his authorship of that act was one of the three achievements which he asked to have inscribed after death upon his monument.

CHAPTER VII.

GOVERNOR IN WAR TIMES.

1779–1781.

In 1779, before he had presented the report of the Virginia codifiers as their chairman, Jefferson was chosen governor of the State. He was the second incumbent of the office, following Patrick Henry, who had served for three continuous terms, which was all that the new Constitution permitted. At this period, following the expulsion of the Crown officials, and for many years to come, the chief magistrate was chosen annually by the legislature; and Jefferson found a competitor on this occasion in his college friend John Page, who was well-born and owned a plantation with the largest house upon it in all Virginia. Fame and conspicuous service carried the day in spite of all personal prejudice; but Jefferson's majority was a very slight one, and he had perilous difficulties before him.

Jefferson began his executive incumbency on the 1st of June, at the age of thirty-six. To be governor of Virginia in the gloomiest stage of the Revolutionary War was no post for politicians to envy. He was not deficient in vigour nor personal courage; but his mission was rather to impart ideas, to stir the impulses

to such a struggle, than to guide onward its bloody campaigns. A mind susceptible to impressions, sympathetic, and fond of profound experimentation, circumstances, and mighty ones, wrought speedily into a statesman, a diplomatist, and a political organizer, a man of gentle mould who in ordinary peace times would have figured quite as likely as a philosopher, a philanthropist, or one of our higher educators in the applied sciences. To the profession of arms Jefferson was never bred, and he had little relish for it. War was felt to be a present necessity; but all wars were hateful to him in theory, and the absorption of war powers by civil magistrates a dangerous temptation to tyranny. When the idea was broached but just before in the legislature to concentrate in Patrick Henry, his predecessor, the classical functions of dictator, no citizen of the State more decidedly opposed it.

We, who have lived through civil war, may recall men trained to law and philanthropy who raised regiments, hurried troops to the front, and provided with rare energy and foresight for all the emergencies of a military strife averse to the whole tenour of their past experience. But it is one thing for a State Executive to supply men and resources for the battles which our trained generals are fighting afar off, and another to conduct affairs through the wild chaos of panic and disorder while the invader is present and an impoverished soil is overrun by hostile armies. At such a crisis a governor of mere civilian tastes

and experience will not easily give confidence; and if ill success attends the operations which are carried on within the jurisdiction by military commanders independently of him, he is sure to be blamed for it. Jefferson took the helm at this unfortunate juncture of affairs. Had the seat of revolutionary conflict remained at the North as under Patrick Henry's rule, he might have retired with equal applause. But the scene shifted, and Jefferson's popularity for the first and only time suffered that partial eclipse to which all public leadership is liable.

The early glow of the Revolution had now faded out, and through all the trying and tedious years which followed the challenge of independence, it taxed the whole resources of these colonies to make that challenge good. On the second day of Jefferson's service as governor, Virginia ratified in full form the French alliance treaties, declaring them binding on that Commonwealth, — a sovereign sanction of what Congress had actually negotiated, but a token none the less that the union of these States was still of imperfect force. That French alliance, while failing as yet to offset the British strength, infused into the public mind a false sense of security, making patriotic sacrifice proportionally the harder; and George III., meanwhile, was more stubbornly resolved than ever to use all the means in his power to crush his rebellious subjects. If accession to France was inevitable, then, at least, that accession would be made of as little avail to her as possible. A soil that could not

be subdued might at all events be ravaged. Possibly, too, if some colonies were torn forever from the mother country, others might be reconquered.

With these desperate designs in view, the foe shifted the seat of war from New England to the Southern provinces, whose vast area was thinly populated and ill defended in comparison. Georgia and the two Carolinas once subjugated, the next move was toward the important region of the Chesapeake. It was a distracted vigilance that the young civilian governor had to exercise as the war drew nigh to the borders of his native State. Cornwallis must be fought in North Carolina, and kept from advancing victoriously; Gates and then Greene had to be strengthened in opposing him. This was simply in self-defence; besides which Washington's army had to be recruited, where the Virginia veterans were already serving. The Indians gave solicitude on the Western border; and here once more in Albemarle County were thousands of British and German prisoners. On the side of the ocean the Chesapeake was a wide and open door to molestation; and even before Jefferson was inaugurated the predatory warfare had begun. A British fleet would land troops on the shore to ravage, plunder, and burn to their hearts' content, with nothing but the feeblest resistance of the local militia to keep them from advancing inland.

Virginia was quite unprepared at this time to maintain a close contest with the British forces single-handed. She had no money, and had pressed her

credit to the utmost to raise funds abroad. The Chesapeake presented a long line of seaboard, with numerous navigable rivers as the grand arteries of trade and agricultural products, of which the James was chief. A forty-gun ship might ascend this latter river as far as Jamestown, while a small naval fleet of the enemy stationed off the capes could blockade the entire entrance. With such a rendezvous, it was easy to detach a frigate or two with marauding troops on board to make havoc, before a military force could be concentrated at the point attacked. Virginia had but four armed vessels, mounting sixty-two guns in all; and as for efficient fortifications, none whatever. Her militia were raw and undisciplined; and her fighting strength had been drained off to swell the continental armies elsewhere. East of the Blue Ridge, so great was the present scarcity of arms in the State, that if all the able-bodied freemen now left behind had been summoned together, scarcely one in five of them would have found a musket. Slaves, by Jefferson's later computation, stood as twenty-seven to thirty in the Commonwealth, when compared with the free inhabitants; and this afforded another disadvantage in time of war; for though these simple children of Nature were never used by the British invaders to fight for their own freedom, such crafty inducements were held out to desert for what proved only to be a change of masters, that a constant watch had to be kept up on the plantations to prevent their running away.

The Old Dominion did not lack war resources of a certain description. She had raw soldiers, horses, and provisions; and these she gave so generously to the continental cause as to have generated the false impression that her supply was still abundant. The truth dawned slowly on the British mind that her remaining defensive strength was very little. When this had been discovered, however, by one predatory raid after another, the invader flung himself upon her boldly. This proved ultimately, after all, the happiest circumstance for America; for Virginia trapped the bitter adversary, when a superior naval force in the fleet of allied France sealed up the British frigates at the entrance of Chesapeake Bay, and Washington bore down upon the army of Cornwallis with his continental veterans, leaving no avenue of escape by land.

Jefferson's executive incumbency saw no such happy culmination of the long Revolutionary strife; but what he had to endure was the period of humiliating and almost resistless invasion. The year 1779, and indeed his first term of office, passed with general satisfaction, and he was chosen a second time. In April, 1780, the capital of the State was transferred from Williamsburg to Richmond, agreeably to an act of the legislature which Jefferson had promoted earlier; and now the stern trial of Virginia and her present governor began. Savannah and Georgia had been subdued by an overwhelming force. Operations in South Carolina,

after a temporary suspension for a season, now recommenced. A British fleet and army invested Charleston in the spring of 1780, and on the 12th of May that city capitulated. This alarming event aroused Virginia to agonized endeavour; for unless the British armies could be checked as they moved northward through North Carolina, the Old Dominion must soon bear the full shock of war. The legislature energetically provided supplies on parchment, authorizing drafts and the impressment of needful stores, and placing twenty thousand militia at the disposal of the Executive. But money and arms were wanting. The leading women of the State gave rings and jewels to aid the cause; Jefferson's fair wife setting a noble example of self-sacrifice. Among the first impressments of horses and wagons were those of the governor himself. Gates passed through Richmond in early July on his way to take command at the South; and for the next six weeks every man, musket, horse, and wagon that the executive could hire, buy, borrow, or impress was bestowed upon him. That general's disastrous defeat at Camden occurred in the very midst of these intense endeavours, shattering, as we so well know, a reputation which had begun to measure its stature jealously against the fair preeminence of Washington.

Jefferson's judgment has been blamed for stripping thus his own State to help on a campaign waged elsewhere. Virginia (it has truly been observed), while forward in the rescue of her sisters, exposed her own

bosom to the adversary. But whatever his course in this respect, Jefferson maintained full accord with that other son of Virginia, the commander-in-chief, whose advice he constantly sought, and always with deference. Both believed at the time that Virginia's only chance of escaping devastation lay in strengthening Gates and checking the advance of Cornwallis's army in North Carolina. Jefferson still sent forward his supplies and reinforcements. As events coursed, however, the next blow was struck from another quarter; for Sir Henry Clinton, who directed the British operations from New York, now despatched reinforcements directly to the mouth of the James. The fleet entered Hampton Roads on the 23d of October, and disembarked opposite Norfolk; but after a few weeks of inactivity the expedition returned. The month of December gave Virginians a breathing-space; but if by this time their stripped and defenceless condition was the subject of anxious correspondence with Washington, the enemy more than half suspected it.

On the last day of the old year, at eight in the morning, Richmond received the startling intelligence that a fleet of twenty-seven sail had entered the capes of Virginia. This fleet bore Arnold the betrayer and a force under him numbering from sixteen hundred to two thousand men. But whether friend or foe, and whither bound, the messenger could not tell. The governor at once sent General Nelson of the State militia with full power to summon aid in the neigh-

bouring country. The legislature was now in session, within two days of its adjournment; but not until January 2, 1781, did the further intelligence arrive that the fleet was British and had already entered the James.

Acting on this general advice, the governor instantly ordered out the militia, intrusting orders to the country members who were just departing for their homes; for on this same day the legislature very hastily adjourned and scattered. By the afternoon of the 4th it was learned that the enemy had landed at a point twenty-five miles distant. The removal of the public stores to a place of safety on the opposite bank of the river had already begun. Jefferson now mounted his horse to urge on the work, having sent his wife and young children to the Tuckahoe estate in that vicinity for safety. Not a member of the council or assembly remained at the capital to aid the executive; for each had hurried away on public duty or to look after his own household. After a broken night Jefferson assisted his family to a safer place of refuge, and then galloped along the river-bank to resume once more the transfer of the State property. Pushing on to a point opposite Richmond, his wearied horse sank dying on the road, and he had to carry the saddle and bridle on his own back until he reached a farmhouse, where he borrowed an unbroken colt to continue the journey. He reached a little town, and saw the enemy already in possession of Richmond and in full view on the opposite bank. After remaining there long enough to do what little he might for the safety of the public

stores, Jefferson rode on to the headquarters of Baron Steuben, the ranking continental officer, who had command in Virginia under Washington's orders.

Arnold's stay in Richmond was, fortunately, a short one. Remaining only twenty-three hours, he commenced his retreat on the 6th, with pillage and the plunder of private property. Very little of public value had been left within his reach to destroy. After three days' absence from the capital, Jefferson presently returned, and affairs began to settle into something of their former routine.

But this eventful year of 1781, up to the month of October when Cornwallis and his forces finally surrendered, kept Virginia incessantly annoyed, while contending armies and their several commanders ranged up and down the States. The last and losing struggle for British supremacy was fought out within the jurisdiction of this first colonial settlement; Washington leading finally in person the French and American combination on the soil of his native State. Meanwhile a Virginia governor could do little more than rally the militia and lend a soul to operations which others had the responsibility of conducting.

Jefferson pursued active and spirited measures, but it was no longer possible to keep the weight of the war at a distance. Cornwallis and Tarleton, long held at bay in North Carolina, at length swept over the border; and the enemy's plan was to subdue Virginia and make a Southern conquest complete. Virginia's

legislature soon went scurrying from place to place, to keep clear of the enemy. In the course of a brief session in March it conferred anew upon the Executive ample parchment powers for procuring what it was practically impossible to raise. The depreciation of State paper-money was already about ninety to one; and even impressment was scarcely more than a nominal resource. Hastening each adjournment this year as an enemy was thought to approach, the legislature met again on the 7th of May; and threatened for the third time, they adjourned until the 24th of the month to meet at Charlottesville.

Even to these mountain fastnesses did the tide of war and ravage penetrate. Tarleton's mounted dragoons galloped westward in early June, to capture or disperse the dignitaries of the State government. The alarm reached the home of Jefferson about daybreak on the 4th of June. The legislature at Charlottesville adjourned hastily, to meet on the 7th at Staunton, west of the Blue Ridge; but hardly had they done so before the troopers came clattering into the little town, and several of the members were captured on their flight. Tarleton had already despatched a special band to Monticello, under Captain McLeod, to seize the person of the governor. The plan failed, however; for Jefferson, forewarned in season, sent his family by carriage to a friend's house, safely distant, and followed them on horseback, by a mountain path, a few moments before McLeod's dragoons surrounded the mansion. The enemy remained at Monticello

less than a day, and in pursuance of Tarleton's orders refrained from wanton pillage. But Cornwallis behaved far differently while quartering for ten days upon Jefferson's other estate at Elk Hill. He destroyed the growing crops of corn and tobacco; ruined the fences; ransacked all the barns; carried off such horses as were fit for service, cutting the throats of the colts; and finally kidnapped and conveyed away thirty slaves, to consign them carelessly to pestilence and death.

Jefferson's second term had already constitutionally expired on the 2d of June. He meant to decline a re-election; but the legislature, with its precarious quorum, refrained from choosing a successor when it should have done so. He retained constantly the good-will and approbation of all the chief continental officers in command, — of Washington, Greene, Steuben, and Lafayette; but now that, through the stress of invasion, little authority remained but martial law enforced under their direction, it was not strange if some dissatisfaction was felt in this latest turn of events by the young governor's fellow-citizens. Murmuring is the chronic vent of despondency; and none inculpate more clamorously than those who would clear a secret imputation of fault from their own breasts. The flying legislature, which rallied for a new stand at Staunton on the 7th of June, became panic-stricken by a false alarm, and in three days dispersed again; but not without some harsh invec-

tives, from Jefferson's political opponents, upon his official conduct. One honest but impulsive member of the House proposed a legislative inquest. The challenge was promptly accepted by Jefferson's friends; no vote was taken, no arraignment made, but a day of hearing at the next session was unanimously agreed upon. Unanimously elected to that body by his Albemarle constituents in the autumn, Jefferson took his seat with the single object of meeting and refuting the charges against him. Happily, by the time fixed for the hearing, the American arms were victorious, and the spirit of censoriousness was quenched. On the 19th of December, 1781, the late governor rose in his place and avowed himself ready to meet any charges or inquiries touching his late official conduct. No one replied; the accuser himself was absent. He then read the objections to his course, which had been summarized, and his own responses in writing. Nearly every member present was silently cognizant of the truths as he stated them in defence. The House of Delegates at once, and by a unanimous vote, passed a resolution exonerating Jefferson from all censure, and thanking him for his "impartial, upright, and attentive administration." The Senate concurring in substance, the resolution stood unanimously adopted by both Houses on the very day prescribed for the inquiry. As for an impeachment, — as the hasty and informal accusation was sometimes called during the party heats of a later age, — Jefferson's conduct was never impeached at

all; and Jefferson's acquittal of blame was finally complete when George Nicholas, his chief accuser, made acknowledgment by published letter that he had acted hastily and in the wrong.

Meanwhile, under the pressure of invasion, the Virginia legislature had chosen a new governor, Jefferson's refusal to serve a third term having been well understood. The choice made was according to his own desire, and a man whose military habits and experience might impart full confidence, — Gen. Thomas Nelson, the commander of the State militia, a man of wealth, talents, and energy. Nelson took the field, using without stint the arbitrary powers confided to him: drafting men for service, and impressing the needful supplies for their subsistence and transportation. Commanding the State troops in person at the siege of Yorktown, he ordered his own house bombarded within the British lines, — the most valuable in the town. Yet, patriotic and self-sacrificing as he showed himself in many ways, he made an unpopular governor; he resigned from office before his term had half ended, and, like Jefferson, sought a vindication from the body which had elected him.

It is an odious task flaying an impoverished State, whether one dallies with the knife or applies it boldly. Jefferson took no pleasure in the retrospect of this, the most painful period of his whole public life. His heart was humane and sensitive, and shrunk from the calamities of necessary war. As a revolutionist his

happier share of the work consisted in laying the broad foundations of a new government for the people. And in recounting later the events of these two unsatisfactory years, he coupled his election as governor with the contemporaneous honour of being chosen one of the visitors of William and Mary College, where he succeeded in effecting some changes for the better before Williamsburg ceased to be the seat of government. Already in the legislature had he tried to liberalize the charter of his seminary, and to enlarge its sphere into a State university; but religious jealousies were found insuperable, and war postponed the whole task to await the leisure of his old age.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONGRESS AND THE ORDINANCE OF FREEDOM.

1781–1784.

THESE were not yet the days of popular government and of fierce party struggles, where sensitiveness to public criticism becomes regarded as a sort of cowardice. Jefferson learned when he grew older to bear the storm of calumny and vituperation without wincing, as the Indian brave bears torture. He loved his domestic circle while yet it remained to him; he cared little for official honours at all except for the opportunity of being useful to his fellow-citizens; he wished popularity to attend good efforts; and the misgiving that as governor he had fallen short of expectation was deeply mortifying to his sensitive nature.

He turned disdainfully from the legislature where he had appeared as an apologist for his official conduct. That its vindication was unanimous did not heal the wound, nor had the unanimity with which his county returned him to that body to face his accusers. The sting of being put upon the defensive was deep enough; and though arraigned in reality before no other bar than that of public opinion, the arraignment was such as tempted him to forswear

public service forever. He had had enough of its empty honours. Nothing would evermore separate him from his farm, his family, and his books. No slave was so wretched as the minister of a commonwealth.

Thus, in his morbid state of sensibility, did he exaggerate the injustice done him, the loss of public sympathy, and even the infirmity of his physical health. He would not so much as attend any further sessions of the legislature to which he had been elected. Madison, his most devoted friend, hinted his disapproval through others as gently as possible; Monroe, another genuine admirer, remonstrated directly with a blunt sincerity which was characteristic of him; but all expostulation was in vain. Congress with delicate grace associated him very promptly with plenipotentiaries already abroad to treat for peace; but this appointment he declined, because it came before he had vindicated his official conduct, and because too of domestic reasons unexplained. His wife in truth was by this time in declining health, and needed his soothing attentions to prolong existence a little further while the flame burned feebly in the socket. The horrors of the British invasion had impressed deeply into her nature his own anxieties, making his grief the greater. When Arnold approached Richmond, she fled with an infant child in her arms, who soon after sickened and died. Tarleton's raid upon Monticello and the ghastly havoc which Cornwallis left at Elk Hill, her

family inheritance, shattered what little strength remained.

In the sacred seclusion of his mountain home Jefferson did not remain idle; for now he engaged himself in preparing his celebrated "Notes on Virginia." Statistics concerning the American Confederacy had been ordered by the King of France; and M. de Marbois, Secretary of the French legation at Philadelphia, had in consequence addressed Jefferson a list of twenty-three questions designed for drawing out such information as pertained to his Commonwealth. Jefferson's answers were not confined to dry official facts, but he lavished upon this production the full wealth of information, official and unofficial, which he had been gathering for years, interspersed with descriptions and profound reflections of his own. He furnished, in fine, not a mere document, but a volume of good literature, cast in the mould of a catechism. In doing so he pleased an essential ally of the United States, and a people whose polish and scientific attainments attracted him very strongly. No book of semi-official statistics, perhaps, was ever made more captivating. Jefferson knew well the moral configuration of the State which his own father had mapped out in its geographical features. In 1784 a few copies with additions were privately printed in Paris by Jefferson's order while he was minister to France; and the demand for the book, at home and abroad, led to its formal publication, thus establishing him presently as an author and scientist of no mean attainments.

In these "Notes on Virginia" Jefferson took up the defence of his countrymen in a spirited manner against French naturalists like Buffon and Abbé Raynal, who were then expatiating upon the false theory that animals, and the human race besides, degenerated upon the soil of the New World; and he brought an arithmetical argument to bear, quite characteristic of him, against their postulate that America had not produced "one man of genius in a single art or a single science."

It was on the 6th of September, 1782, and one month after the birth of her last child, that Jefferson mourned the death of his true and gentle wife; and young widower though he now was, with daughters of tender age to be educated, he never sought to mate again. Over the long suspense he had suffered near her sick-chamber, administering her medicine to the last, nursing, soothing, and watching in her last illness as tenderly as a woman, besides gathering the little children and his orphaned wards, the Carrs, to give them their daily tasks, — Jefferson in his own person drew the veil of delicacy. For nearly a year the only letter he appears to have written at all was one which he penned to Monroe, in the midst of these anxieties, to answer its painful imputations. His deepest grief was shared by no one. Solitary excursions on horseback for many weeks followed the incessant vigils at her bedside.

But friends who sympathized respectfully at a dis-

tance felt that the current of political disinclination was turning; and in about two months from his bereavement Congress, upon their hint, called Jefferson once more to join the commissioners across the seas. "The reappointment," says Madison, "was agreed to unanimously, and without a single adverse remark." Jefferson received the news almost with eagerness on the 25th of November; he accepted instantly, and, closing his affairs at Monticello, repaired in the course of about three weeks to Philadelphia to procure instructions. In the midst of the tedious delays in departing, now because of ice and now because of hovering British cruisers, arrived the intelligence, in February, 1783, that the preliminaries of peace were already arranged; and when the welcome news was confirmed, Jefferson received his countermand, and in May went home again.

But in the new change of scenes he had now shaken off the stupor of mind which succeeded his wife's death, as well as his morbid disrelish for public service. His State Legislature elected him the next month to the Continental Congress; and in November, 1783, we find him a member of that body, just at the close of the war, reporting in person at Trenton after the humiliating flight from Philadelphia, and adjourning the same month with his fellow-members to Annapolis. This was the session of Congress distinguished by Washington's resignation of his military commission; and little as we may connect Jefferson with the legislature of the Confederacy, in all the

years of its prolonged existence, we see him figuring in the foreground of its second dramatic scene. With his youthful friend and fellow-signer of the Declaration Gerry for an associate, he served as chairman of the committee which arranged that affecting ceremonial immortalized upon Trumbull's canvas. He drew up the impressive order of proceedings; and even the felicitous response of Mifflin, the President of Congress, to General Washington has been, without denial, ascribed to his pen.

Jefferson's re-entrance into Congress, though for a brief period, was fortunate in bringing about the establishment of our coinage system, — the most perfect, it is no exaggeration to say, that the world has ever experienced. The happy idea of applying the decimal notation of money, in place of the arbitrary pounds, shillings, and pence to which we had been habituated as British subjects and which we could not easily dismiss, originated two years earlier with Gouverneur Morris, who was assisting his celebrated kinsman, Robert Morris, in the supervising of continental finances. His able report to Congress, though sound in the main, proposed in the penny a unit too minute and impracticable for ordinary use; but as a member of the committee to which the subject was referred in 1784, Jefferson rescued the leading idea from its false excrescence by proposing the dollar as the true unit, with its decimal divisions and subdivisions down to the copper hundredth or cent, and with its further multiple of a

ten-dollar gold-piece. Jefferson and Morris discussed their several views in print, and after a postponement the committee agreed to report the plan of the former, and it was adopted the next year. To Morris, therefore, belongs the honour of proposing the decimal system; while Jefferson gains rightfully a new claim, which he never made, to popularity as father of the American dollar. He stood all his life for a still broader reform against the stolid force of British habits; he wished the decimal system applied to all the weights and measures as well as to money. Congress has express power, under our present Constitution, to regulate this subject as well as the other; and some day, when a new statesman leads American opinion who can educate, this other change will come about, and the wonder will then be that it did not come earlier.

Another service, and one of momentous import, associates Jefferson with the famous Ordinance of the Northwestern Territory. That great tract north of the Ohio River, out of which were afterward carved those five free States, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin, had been tendered by Virginia for the benefit of the whole Confederacy, in January, 1781; Jefferson while governor of the State transmitting the resolution of its legislature to that effect. The formalities of a transfer had been hitherto delayed; but a deed of cession, bearing date March 1, 1784, was now executed by the Virginia delegates in Congress, with Jefferson at the head. The Confederacy ac-

cepted the gift, without admitting Virginia's claim to sole ownership of that region, but anxious to encourage by so sisterly an example the relinquishment of all such territorial claims to the unsettled West for the benefit of the whole Union.

A few days afterward a committee of Congress, with Jefferson as chairman, prepared a plan for the temporary government of the common Western territory. The draft of their report in Jefferson's handwriting is still among the public archives. The whole wilderness of the Mississippi basin to the eastern bank of that great river, our remotest barrier, was brought into contemplation. This report proposed, accordingly, that whatever domain might vest in the United States at any time by the cession of individual States and by Indian purchase should be formed into distinct States, subject each to a temporary government until the population sufficed for establishing a permanent local constitution on the basis of self-government; after which, upon the assent of Congress, given as the articles of Confederation required, such State, with not less than twenty thousand inhabitants, should be admitted on an equal footing with the original States.

Ten temporary States, by a single division of this great area between the thirty-first and forty-seventh parallels, with names and boundaries ready made, made too much for immediate legislation. And one may smile at some of the fanciful appellatives which Jefferson's report laboured to bestow so prematurely

upon these unborn daughters of the Union. Usage, to be sure, had already dignified such sentimental names as Virginia, Carolina, and even Pennsylvania; but American citizens of our own later time will agree that Michigan sounds better than Michigania, Illinois than Illinoia; and as for Assenisipia, Metropotamia, Polypotamia, and Pelisipia, one willingly consigns them to classical lore and the apothecary shop. In most respects, however, the scheme proposed for these future States was only crude in having to conform to the imperfect plan of union which then existed. Canada or other external colonies might have joined the old thirteen, to be sure, on terms prescribed; but for new States erected from within, these early Articles of Union made no distinct provision. In Jefferson's plan one traces, therefore, the first lines of the method upon which the sublime experiment of State propagation has since proceeded, — at this early date almost a usurpation, but sanctioned and fully provided for in our ampler charter of 1787.

In each of the new States to be thus erected from the common soil the government was to be republican in form, and slavery was not to exist in any of them after the year 1800. This last fundamental article was the historical one. In all other material portions, except for the romantic names, Jefferson's report was adopted in April; but the clause which ordained freedom was stricken out for want of a majority of States in its favour. Every member from the Northern States voted for it; all but two from the South (Jefferson

and Williamson) voted against it. Jefferson's two colleagues arrayed Virginia on the negative side of the question in spite of him; Williamson divided the vote of North Carolina; New Jersey lost its chance of expression by having but one delegate present; and both Delaware and Georgia by having no delegates at all. Only six States of the thirteen, in consequence, voted to retain the clause of Jefferson's plan which prohibited slavery.

Defeat under such qualifying circumstances could not be final and decisive. At a more favourable opportunity, three years later, and while Jefferson himself was abroad, the slavery restriction was renewed in another form, and with reference to the territory northwest of the Ohio alone. That world-renowned Ordinance of 1787 passed with the aid of Jefferson's Virginia friends, while the framers of a new federal constitution were in session at Philadelphia. The last glorious achievement of the expiring Continental Congress, it was reaffirmed afterward by the first Congress of the new Union, and approved by our first immortal President. No wonder that Nathan Dane and Rufus King, men from antislavery States, should have derived lustre from the part they took in preparing and promoting a measure so noble. A tier of energetic States thus erected in the Mississippi Valley gave freedom the vital preponderance in due time by their powerful example. But even here, as in the fundamental verities of our Declaration of Independence, Jefferson's name first blazons the record. He gave the earliest

impulse to congressional regulation, in the common domain, for excluding and forever prohibiting slavery. Freedom, which the Ordinance of 1787 established as partial only and by way of compromise, his earlier ordinance would have made the boon of our whole territorial jurisdiction, south of the Ohio River as well as north. When, about midway in this nineteenth century, the struggle of hostile systems began in earnest, the party of freedom marched to political victory, baptized by the name of the national party he had once founded, and organized upon the simple platform of the Ordinance of 1787, or territorial exclusion, reaffirmed in its new adaptation as Jefferson's Ordinance. Well would it have been for his own infatuated State and section in that generation, had they but accepted the instruction of their greatest of political prophets.

CHAPTER IX.

MINISTER TO FRANCE.

1784–1789.

On the 7th of May, 1784, Congress resolved to send a third minister plenipotentiary to Europe to join Dr. Franklin and John Adams, who were already there, in negotiating commercial treaties. Jefferson received the appointment; and leaving Annapolis on the 11th of the same month, he set out for Boston, from whose port he sailed, quietly and unostentatiously, on Monday the 5th of July, while one of those hundred civic orators was holding forth at Faneuil Hall. This was probably the only visit to New England that Jefferson ever made; and before taking passage in the tardy merchant-vessel he found time to extend his tour to New Hampshire and Vermont in quest of information regarding the commerce of the Middle and Eastern States; receiving conspicuous attentions for his scholarship from Harvard and Yale, and honoured in Boston and elsewhere as a public character, though hardly, it would seem, as author of the Declaration.

On the 6th of August the new plenipotentiary reached Paris, crossing the British Channel after a smooth and delightful ocean voyage. He called at once on Dr. Franklin at his pleasant abode in the

suburban village of Passy; and the two wrote John Adams, who was then at The Hague, to come and join them. He did so; and the three ministers, after drafting together a commercial treaty based upon the late instructions of Congress, undertook to interest continental powers on the subject. But though a liberal and original treaty, full of humane proposals for alleviating the evils of war and shipwreck and far in advance of the times, negotiation could make but little progress among the European powers. A distant multitude of successful rebels, who but yesterday were obscure colonists under the British rule, and whose commerce had hitherto been carried on under the British flag, could hardly hope for a footing yet as preceptors of international law to the proudest of earth's sovereigns. Our dishonoured debts were better known than our resources; the feebleness of our bond of union better than its strength. Toward friendly commercial intercourse under the stipulations of a treaty, "Old Frederick of Prussia," as Jefferson was wont to style him, — of all the European crowned heads the only one that held a brain, — inclined most cordially; and with him, at length, an arrangement was concluded. Denmark and Tuscany also entered into negotiations; but the other powers appearing indifferent, our ministers did not think it proper to press them. Even the friendly Count de Vergennes, astute diplomatist that he was, thought it better to leave French intercourse as it already stood, trusting all future changes to reciprocal legislation. To his

mind, evidently, the third minister sent over by Congress to gain commercial advantages was superfluous.

Franklin, who was now aged and infirm, having in the spring of 1785 obtained leave to return home, Congress commissioned Jefferson on the 10th of March to succeed him as minister to France. He witnessed that memorable scene when the benevolent philosopher left Passy on the 12th of July to be conveyed to the coast in the queen's own travelling-litter, and attended by the homage, profound and sincere, of the whole French people. No man was more admirably adapted than Franklin to cement his country in sympathy with its first great ally and friend by a personal popularity; and Jefferson felt that the task was not an easy one to prevent such influence from being missed. "You replace Dr. Franklin, I hear," said the Count de Vergennes to him, when the new appointment was announced. "I succeed; no one can replace him," was the graceful reply.

In its broad auspices for America's future, our new selection for this post was most fortunate. Franklin and Jefferson had strong traits in common, and their congenial affinities made the one the fit introducer of the other. Their school of political thought was alike; they had shared as actors together in great events; their mutual confidence was genuine. Both loved France; both sympathized with France beyond most Anglo-Americans; both inclined in conversation to aphorisms and pointed repartee such as the French delight in; both laid claims to high regard in polished

French society, by the stores they disclosed of a fresh and distant experience, and by their skill in diversifying dry politics with discourse upon natural philosophy. If Franklin's scientific reputation was the greater because he drew down lightning from the skies, — an agent as yet too fearful and mysterious to be harnessed to man's activities, — Jefferson could warm man's genius into invention by his enthusiastic spirit, while in the classic, literary, and artistic direction his range far excelled his predecessor's. On animal anatomy he confuted Buffon, the great French naturalist, to his face; his "Notes on Virginia," which got into public circulation almost by an accident, interested the savants by its compendious facts and speculative discussions; while his bill for religious freedom was a torch to the public aspiration. Two such Americans in succession, then, at the court of France might well have intensified the tide of revolution which led on to democracy. Franklin's sturdy simplicity had been set in contrast against the splendid but licentious prodigality of the old courtly France which was now passing away. Jefferson, still young enough to be plastic and impressionable, felt the rising influence of that speculative and philosophic spirit which, audacious and unvenerating, resolved all human problems into faith in man's perfectibility.

Jefferson as a diplomat was faithful and industrious. All fair-minded contemporaries have admitted the excellence of his work; but very little could be prac-

tically accomplished as to the specific measures which employed him. Most of our American commerce, just after the war, had struck into the familiar track of British intercourse. His duties at Paris were confined accordingly to a few objects: to bringing in American whale-oils, salted fish, and salted meats on better terms; to retrieving Virginian tobacco from the monopoly of a French money-ring, to which belonged the king himself and Jefferson's personal friend Robert Morris; and to bringing in the rice of South Carolina upon equal terms with that of Piedmont, Egypt, and the Levant. In these efforts, seconded by the zealous influence of Lafayette, whose life for half a century proved the strongest link that bound America in permanent sympathy with this country, he succeeded as fairly as could be expected, and found the French court disposed to befriend and indulge America wherever its own selfish interests were unconcerned. The Count de Vergennes had the reputation of exceeding slipperiness among the slippery diplomatists from other courts who most surrounded him. But "as he saw," says Jefferson, "that I had no indirect views, practised no subtleties, meddled in no intrigues, pursued no concealed object, I found him as frank, as honourable, as easy of access to reason, as any man with whom I had ever done business; and I must say the same for his successor, Montmorin, one of the most honest and worthy of human beings."

Wherever any of his fellow-countrymen were in distress, as happened often in these early entangle-

ments of our independent commerce, Jefferson bestowed his best zeal, tact, and solicitation to relieve them; and it was remarked that he took up promptly every proper case which came to his notice, not like an official who was doing a favour and might therefore await his leisure, but with the urgent persistency of an attorney, or rather, one should say, of a deeply interested friend. One topic that profoundly stirred his sympathy related to the Barbary Powers, those scourgers of civilization, who still held the keys to the Mediterranean and forced Christendom to render tribute. The only alternatives to their lawless inflictions at the penalty of an enormous ransom were perpetual tribute, war, or the cessation of all commerce under the flag through and adjacent to the Straits of Gibraltar. The great maritime powers of Europe — England, France, Spain, and the States-General — submitted to the first disgraceful expedient, and expected the United States to do the same. But Jefferson, disdaining such degradation, drew up presently a noble plan for associating against these corsair countries the powers that had been robbed by them, and scourging the offenders into decency, so as to guarantee a permanent peace without price. This plan Jefferson submitted in detail to the diplomatic corps at Versailles; but the power of the American Confederacy, never adequate even to internal administration in times of peace, was now dwindling rapidly, and Europe went on paying its tribute in the accustomed way. Jefferson, again far in advance of the civilized

age, found his later opportunity in the new century, as we shall see, when he became President.

But Jefferson's correspondence during these years shows him still more earnestly engaged in semi-official and gratuitous labours for the benefit of his fellow-citizens at home. He interested himself on behalf of Ledyard, the traveller, for the exploration of northwestern America. How did his impressionable mind gather in the whole hoard of knowledge that Europe had accumulated, in order to scatter the information far and wide for his own country's advantage; observing vigilantly and minutely every advance in science and the useful arts about him with this latter end in view. Astronomy, agriculture, mechanical discoveries, language, the fine arts, mingle with the epistolary comments upon current politics, whale-oil, and foreign society, which flowed from a pen never more facile, fluent, and fervid than just at present. He describes a screw-propeller which a Parisian has just invented, suggesting parenthetically that a screw under water might work better. He sees muskets constructed on the novel and admirable principle of making all the parts adjustable. He mentions the astounding success of the Watts steam-engine, just put in operation, by means of which "a peck and a half of coal performs as much work as a horse in a day;" and when on a visit to London he makes a special inspection of one of these engines at work. He praises a French machine "for copying letters at a single stroke," which he has turned to his

own personal use. He writes to the President of William and Mary College announcing Herschel's discoveries of double stars; and being dubbed a Doctor of Laws about this time, he keeps Harvard and Yale informed of the curious books and learned conjectures that he comes across. The metal platinum he considers in its adaptability to the specular telescope; and musician still, — albeit that a fracture in his right wrist, unskilfully treated by a Paris surgeon, put an end about this time to his violin performances, — we find him greatly delighted in the metronome, and scouring about to find the latest style of a tongue to fit a friend's harpsichord. Many were the commissions he executed for his native State: from new lamps for Richard Henry Lee, and rare volumes for the private collections of Madison, Wythe, and Monroe, to an artistic model for the Richmond capitol and the employment of Houdon at Virginia's instance upon his celebrated statue of Washington. He expended the most generous efforts to interest the planting States in olive culture, giving a passing suggestion of cotton as "a precious resource;" and he crossed the Alps to gather specimens of the Lombardy rice and study its modes of preparation, so that South Carolina, by improving her home production, might edge in a supply of what was then the standing dish of France in the penitential season.[1] In short, whatever

[1] American rice, like American salted beef, was not prepared daintily enough for these European markets; and Jefferson studied assiduously how these faults might be overcome by his countrymen.

topics he might choose to handle in his letters were treated on all occasions with a vigour of language and shrewdness of observation which make the correspondence piquant and readable to this very day. Had not Jefferson been a statesman, he might certainly have set the fashion for modern journalism.

In March, 1786, Jefferson crossed the Channel to aid his colleague, John Adams, at London, in some pending business. He spent about seven weeks in England at this time, visiting with his older friend some of the celebrated places, interesting himself in ornamental gardens and the mechanical arts, and gaining what useful information he might in a desultory way. But his heart did not go out warmly to the surroundings as it had done in France, and that fact was ominous of future public results. Both he and Adams felt like intruders upon a company whose disposition was indeed freezingly disdainful. Society gave the two ministers the cold shoulder. Their repeated efforts to negotiate for American commerce proved a mortifying failure. Nothing could have been more ungracious than the royal behaviour when Jefferson was presented at court; King George turned his back upon his late rebellious subjects, and the hint was not lost upon the circle in attendance. His minister for foreign affairs more courteously evaded a business interview without directly declining it, until Jefferson, tired of his false excuses, took a polite leave and went back to congenial Paris. "That nation hates us," he

wrote of England; "their ministers hate us, and their king more than all other men." Their interest was their ruling passion. They considered our trade important to them; but this they thought they could pocket without concession, and, so convinced, they would make no terms of commerce. These views, though harsh, were such as Adams entertained, and we may believe them accurate.

This was an age of upheaval in continental politics; and it was impossible that one of Jefferson's sympathetic feelings should perceive and not be profoundly affected. French frenzy for human brotherhood and French scepticism in religion moved him somewhat from his moorings; but he never lapsed into the follies and exaggerations of the French Democracy. His own philosophy of the rights of men, though sincere and liberal, had been taught in an earlier and a different school. There was nothing fickle or capricious in his attitude toward events; and moreover his bias was too practical to admit of his ever being carried far by innate ideas apart from their adaptiveness to the immediate environment. With French habits of expression and grace of manners, an inclination to generalize and epitomize, fondness for novelties in art, science, and philosophy, affection for young men, a delicacy of taste which reached down to wines and cookery, Jefferson seemed born to infuse Parisian influence into our sturdy Saxon society; but he was withal a true-born Anglo-American. His tastes continued simple, though bereavement had driven him

from home; he could not chase the passing excitement with that free abandonment characteristic of a Frenchman, who can be a voluptuary one day, and a tiger the next; he did not lose his head, to use the common phrase. In religion he was no cynic nor derider, like atheists of the Voltaire school. It was because he had such implicit faith in liberty, equality, and fraternity that he questioned the binding force of creeds. There was nothing in him of the libertine; and regularly in his correspondence at this period of unusual temptation we see him disapproving of the sensuality and the lax marital virtue which was becoming so fashionable about him, reiterating constantly the idea that America was the true home for Americans, tranquil domestic love infinitely preferable to loose and intriguing pursuits of pleasure, rural surroundings far better than life in the great cities. He questioned the utility of sending American youths to Europe for an education at all, and still more decidedly the propriety of keeping them there to acquire a fondness for European luxury and dissipation and a contempt for the plainness of social intercourse in their own country. "It appears to me," he wrote from abroad, "that an American coming to Europe for education loses in his knowledge, in his morals, in his health, in his habits, and in his happiness. I had entertained only doubts on this head before I came to Europe; what I see and hear since I came here proves more than I even suspected."

What Jefferson learned chiefly by actual contact

with the European courts was to hate kings and a privileged aristocracy most heartily. The dazzle and luxury which surrounded him could not blind him to the deplorable condition of the great commune; and the truth of Voltaire's observation recurred continually to his mind, that every man in France must be the hammer or the anvil. His mind ran to comparisons with the favoured lot of the common people in America. "In spite of the mildness of their governors," he wrote at this time, "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, more accursed, in every circumstance of human existence, than the most conspicuously wretched individual of the whole United States." Nor was he enamoured of the royal specimens of monarchy which met his penetrating gaze. His hatred of hereditary rulers increased with each new threatening episode in Parisian events. "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? If the kings ever meddle, it is to do harm."

Though Jefferson was remarkably careful all his life not to send shafts at religious feeling by a jest or a sophism, but regarded such subjects as sacred to each individual conscience, it would not be strange if in

this gay and mocking society of philosophers a young widower living in the polluted atmosphere of the French capital should have come closer in life and thought than ever again to scepticism in religion. It was to these years that the very few flippant and irreverent passages to be found in all of Jefferson's writings — such as the "twenty Gods or no God" argument of his "Notes on Virginia" — are mostly to be traced. A more consoling and appropriate epitaph, one thinks, might have been culled from the Scriptures and Christian poetry than that Greek verse from the Iliad which Jefferson inscribed in marble upon his consort's grave; and more judicious advice given to a young nephew than to divest his mind of all bias over the Bible, and, applying his own measurement of reason, question boldly if need be even the existence of a God, — as though eighteen centuries had not established the truths of Christianity sufficiently to put the burden of proof upon its opponents! But the devoutness of his tender years, the knowledge of hymns, ritual, and Scripture lessons taught at his mother's knee never quite departed from him. We shall see him more conservative again in thought, more reverent, as the years roll on, reticent though he always remained as to his religious belief; and it is certain that he never imbibed French infidelity in its full extent, nor scoffed at religion or morality, nor forsook his higher ideals of life to pander to the fleshly passions.

Jefferson's domestic life more than anything else reveals the real refinement of his nature. Tenderly

devoted to his wife and to her memory, and never replacing her lost companionship, he was both father and mother to the young daughters she left behind. From his re-entrance into the Continental Congress after her death began a series of family letters, addressed first to his children and later to his sons-in-law and grandchildren, of which — so proud were they of the correspondence — whole archives have been preserved. These letters were full of tender confidences and advice; and not a bitter or censorious word is to be found throughout their long files. The atmosphere of his home life was suffused with love and serenity through all the later acerbities of politics. To Jefferson's parental afflictions we have alluded already. His only son died when less than a month old; three daughters followed early to the grave, — the youngest, angelic in her sensibilities, soon after he landed in France. Jefferson had taken with him Martha, his eldest child, leaving the two others behind; but this latest death made him very anxious to have her last remaining sister with him. Little Polly, or Mary, as she was called (known when she grew up as Maria), clung childishly to her Virginia aunt, and stratagem was employed to get her on board the vessel which sailed for England, whence by the offices of good Abigail Adams she was restored to her father's arms. The experiment of educating these two young girls abroad proved unsatisfying to him, and for their sake particularly he desired to get home again. Martha, who was placed at an excellent convent school, wrote

her father a gravely composed letter reciting her wishes to be allowed to take the veil and withdraw from earthly scenes. The gentleness with which he brought her tuition to an end and drew her mind from its precocious purpose without ever a word on the subject the daughter has since related.

This last incident illustrates an important trait of Jefferson which was manifest in every relation of life, — a quick and ready tact, which, appreciating any collision of a purpose with his own, set itself to work to accomplish the desired end without wounding and, wherever his authority justified, without discussion. To use a phrase which others have applied to him, he, like the patriot Hampden, took things habitually by the soft handle. He received advice with patience and good humour, avoided personal quarrels, sought out the harmonies of other men in conversation, and yet maintained his original purpose, unless he saw fit reason to change it. This arose in the main from a kindly and sympathetic nature, tolerant of the frailties which perpetually contaminate man's good intentions, but conscious nevertheless of noble aspirations, and possessed of the courage of leadership. But contrasting, as it did so greatly, with the rash, impetuous, irritable, and often overbearing disposition of his contemporary John Adams, this trait in Jefferson, which was part of his nature, has been confounded sometimes by his personal enemies with that artful duplicity, associated peculiarly with French diplomacy, which covers up intrigue with polite manners, — as

though that, too, as well as his politics and religion, were imbibed abroad. Had Jefferson's aims in life been base, immoral, self-aggrandizing, hypocritical, instead of liberal, philanthropic, and sincere, the charge might carry more weight.

Jefferson was naturally fond of children, quick and painstaking to observe their wants and inclinations, and even feminine in the delicacy with which he guided them by education and discipline. It is related of him upon good authority that no child or grandchild of his ever received a harsh or angry word from him on one solitary occasion, and that no member of his family saw him exhibit passion but barely twice during his whole life. For Martha and Maria he purchased and provided so carefully while they were in Paris that not even a pair of shoestrings, it was said, would he allow his confidential servant to buy for them; and they in return, aware of his solicitude to gratify them, were unwilling to purchase the most trifling things without consulting his taste, which to them was infallible. "They venerated him," Martha was wont to say, "as wiser and better than other men; he seemed to them to know everything, even the thoughts in their minds, all their untold wishes; they wondered they did not fear him, yet they did not any more than they did companions of their own age."

Jefferson's sojourn abroad was at the outbreak of the French Revolution. He witnessed at Paris some

of those stirring scenes which Carlyle has pictured so vividly, but with false insight. He saw the assembly of Notables convened by King Louis at Versailles on the 22d of February, 1787, — that first appeal to the people to press taxation like liege subjects, and fill up the deep deficit of misrule, court favouritism, and prodigal luxury. He marked the strong pressure instead for reforms in administration; the loud clamour of the people for assembling the States-General; royalty's reluctant assent; the ominous gathering of the irresistible third estate of France, swayed by the matchless Mirabeau; the call, dismissal, and recall of Necker, the financier; the bread processions in turbulent Paris; the Swiss Guards about the Versailles palace; the downfall of the Bastille; and those momentary harbingers of harmonious government when the ill-starred Louis, under Lafayette's escort, showed himself to the huzzaing multitude with the new national cockade on his hat.

Jefferson took a conspicuous and trusted part in some of these stupendous events, maintaining at the same time the discretion of an accredited envoy. His establishment, which he kept up in style sufficient to consume his large salary, — not ostentatiously, but with liberal and easy hospitality, — became the natural headquarters of French officers who had served in the American war. With these and the purest of the patriots — foremost among whom was Lafayette, their leader, who patterned himself after his revered Washington — Jefferson kept up very cordial relations;

while his vivacious intercourse with the diplomats of other European powers, who were constantly prying into court secrets and comparing notes together, gave him good knowledge of what was going on. There were members of the king's ministerial circle who hoped for some stable settlement with the French people arranged with the personal assistance of a minister so popular. In fact, soon after the States-General had resolved itself into a National Assembly, and the situation seemed most opportune, Jefferson urged most strenuously an immediate compromise on a constitutional basis which the king was thought ready to grant: freedom of the person, of conscience, of the press, with inviolate trial by jury; a representative legislature, to meet annually, originating laws and maintaining the exclusive right to tax and appropriate; a responsible ministry. But the popular party wavered, and all France was soon swept into the fierce current.

The power of self-control under strong pressure of provocation is essential to the true conduct of a revolution. Anglo-Americans have admirably succeeded by its possession where nations of more headlong susceptibilities fail. Jefferson, though deeply interested in the problem here developing, was not carried away by the illusions of inflamed and misguided zeal. France did not convert him; he would have Americanized France, or rather have seen her people happy as soon as possible under a duly constrained monarchy, which suited best the immediate situation, and which he al-

ways continued to think the king, so far as Marie Antoinette, his haughty consort, might not sway him, would have administered faithfully as long as he lived. Jefferson's mission ceased at this interesting point. He had for more than a year been soliciting leave to return home temporarily for private arrangements. His friend John Adams had already departed, to become the Vice-President of these regenerated United States, whose new government went into effect in the spring of 1789. Leave of absence reached Jefferson the last of August in that same year, and on the 26th of September he left Paris for Havre, not considering his departure, as it really proved, a final one. Crossing the Channel for the last time, he took passage with his two daughters in an English sailing-vessel, which reached Norfolk on the 23d of November; and before the year ended they were once more domesticated at Monticello.

Jefferson while abroad remained an American in every fibre, as his correspondence shows. But of France, when recounting long after the incidents of his foreign experience, he praised its pre-eminence among the nations of the earth. "A more benevolent people," he records, "I have never known, nor greater warmth and devotedness in their select friendships. . . . Their eminence, too, in science, the communicative dispositions of their scientific men, the politeness of the general manners, the ease and vivacity of their conversation, give a charm to their society, to be found nowhere else." In short, as he concluded, if put to

the test, like the generals with Themistocles after the battle of Salamis, his first choice of a country to live in was certainly his own America, but his second would be France.

In his more immediate anticipations of the French Revolution Jefferson of course was disappointed, like all other ardent and liberal spirits the world over. But in its broader and more remote results he saw, we may still believe, the prophetic trend of that momentous conflict. "As yet," he wrote in 1821, to sum up the record of progress to that date, "we are but in the first chapter of its history. The appeal to the rights of man, which has been made in the United States, was taken up by France, first of the European nations. From her the spirit has spread over those of the South. The tyrants of the North have allied, indeed, against it; but it is irresistible."

CHAPTER X.

SECRETARY OF STATE.

1790–1794.

On his way home from Norfolk, and while paying a visit to his brother-in-law, Mr. Eppes, Jefferson received by express messenger a letter from President Washington, dated at New York, which tendered him the office of Secretary of State. Madison had sounded him already on the subject of entering the Cabinet, most probably at Washington's personal instance. Jefferson regarded the proffer with real regret; his wish had been to return presently to Paris and watch the course of the new European struggle against oppression. In his immediate reply he expressed his unwillingness to the proposed transfer as strongly as his sense of duty and his reverent and affectionate feelings towards Washington personally would permit. The President again wrote in January, Madison having in the meantime visited Monticello and disabused Jefferson's mind concerning some of the duties of the new Secretaryship; whereupon Jefferson accepted his appointment. Very delicately in these days did the office seek the man; and no administration of this Republic ever moved with such elevated dignity as the first, for all the appointments of our peerless President were his own.

Jefferson reached New York City, the first temporary seat of federal authority, on the 21st of March, 1790, a full year after the constitutional government had taken legitimate effect. Washington's administration was already organized and in fair working order. Congress had re-assembled for business; but its first session of splendid and efficient legislation was over. During the interval of Jefferson's stay at Monticello, his elder daughter, Martha, had been wedded happily to one of the Tuckahoe Randolphs, the grandson of his father's life-long friend; and while passing through Philadelphia he paid a pious visit to the venerable Franklin, who was lying on a bed of sickness from which he never again rose.

It is worth while to notice here with what views of the new and more perfect Union, as projected and set in operation while he remained abroad, Jefferson entered upon the routine of his present official duties. He and John Adams, of all great sons of the earlier and later epochs, were farthest removed from the scene as the old Confederacy lapsed rapidly into chaos and disorder; and if their views, sometimes compared in friendship, were a little unstable at such a distance, it should not be wondered at; for London and Paris, in those days of slow navigation, were as far from New York or Philadelphia for an interchange of news as they would now be from Japan by steamer and overland rail, supposing the telegraph eliminated. Jefferson, for his own part, while appre-

ciating the advantage of a new federal government which could "walk on its own legs," instead of leaning for support on the State legislatures, had perfect confidence in the capacity of a well-informed people to set things right under one system or the other. He had not believed with Europe and the British press that America was lapsing into anarchy; the separation of such States as Maine, Vermont, and Kentucky he foresaw would come sooner or later. He had sailed from America in 1784 impressed with the idea that a few simple amendments might brace the old Confederacy into the full vigour essential to its maintenance. Not even the Shays insurrection in Massachusetts disturbed his equanimity in that respect; for, applying the arithmetical argument of which he was so fond, an insurrection in one of thirteen States, in the course of eleven years of Union, would amount to but one in any particular State for nearly a century and a half, or less than had happened in any other government upon which the sun ever shone. In a sort of casual and irresponsible way did he thus discourse serenely from Paris upon the clear gain between "a light and a heavy government." He did not wish such tumults punished severely. "The basis of our government being the opinion of the people, the very first object should be to keep that right; and were it left me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter; but I should mean that every man should receive those papers, and be capable of reading them."

Meantime the statesmen who watched to better advantage upon the spot the fatal tendencies of this Confederacy to dismemberment, pushed on the scheme of a constitutional convention; Madison and Hamilton giving unitedly the strongest impulse to the plan, while Washington, as was most judicious, held the force of his preponderating sanction in reserve. Madison kept his distant friend informed of the movement at each successive stage; and after the doors of the secret convention of 1787 had swung open at Philadelphia, revealing the plan of a new composite government under a new constitution, he posted to Jefferson a copy. Jefferson's first impressions were about as much favourable as unfavourable; and most of all he was so disappointed in finding that neither a bill of rights nor rotation in the presidential chair had been provided for, that he declared himself "nearly a neutral." He would have fixed the executive tenure at seven years absolutely, with no right of re-election. Still, however, he liked the idea of a central government going on without recurrence to the States, the separation of executive and judiciary from the legislature upon the Montesquieu principle, and a congress composed of two houses. And he finally aided the adoption of the instrument in his native State, where the division among his political friends was so stubborn and irreconcilable, by declaring his final preference for adoption, with the unconditional proposal of new amendments by way of appeal to the public honour, after the example he had admired in Massachusetts.

His weight thus thrown into the scales at the critical and opportune moment, Jefferson took his stand deservedly among the real supporters, though not the originators, of America's new fundamental charter. Pleased with his course, which evinced sincerity and sound judgment, — and moved, moreover, by feelings of personal esteem and friendship, as well as appreciation for his illustrious public services, — Washington, when taking the helm of administration, to which with rare unanimity he had been called, honoured Jefferson with the first and most dignified place in his official confidence. He chose, too, from his own native State, whence he had taken another cabinet adviser, and where many distinguished men were still so reluctant that reconcilers were considered by him of the greatest consequence. Only one, legitimately absent from American politics for the past five years, could have said, with the new Secretary of State, of the party lines already vanishing: "I am neither Federalist nor anti-Federalist; I am of neither party, nor yet a trimmer between parties."

The first Secretary of State under the present federal government, — for his appointment long antedated his acceptance of the position, — Jefferson encountered his established colleagues of the Cabinet with cheerful good-humour. The constitutional amendments he most desired — all excepting the one long term of presidential tenure — had been duly proposed by Congress to the States, and were in course of final

adoption. He had been pleased while still abroad to see a simple title conferred by Congress upon America's chief magistrate, and, much too sanguine, hoped that the terms Excellency, Honour, Worship, Esquire, and even Mr., would soon disappear from among us. Hamilton's financial plans for funding the public debt absorbed the chief interest of this second session; and not yet comprehending the bearing of that Secretary's cherished schemes of federal aggrandizement, Jefferson obligingly played pacificator to help his fellow-Secretary through the hardest strait of legislation, by making a dinner-party for him and one or two of his own Southern friends, which led to an arrangement by which the pet project of the Treasury for assuming the State revolutionary debts was carried through the two Houses, by a few changes of individual votes, in alliance with the bill for locating the permanent capital on the Potomac.

To Hamilton belongs the lasting honour of founding the national credit of this new Union at the outset upon the firm rock of punctilious good faith. But State credit was not placed by his endeavours on an equally sound basis, his controlling purpose being to make the influence of the old thirteen Commonwealths wholly and forever subsidiary and dependent upon the nation. In the distressful years long after which followed the financial panic of 1837, was felt the baleful influence of State repudiation, and the whole Union was asked to assume once more the aggregate burden of their separate obligations. Hamil-

ton's bias to centralization was made more apparent in the third and final session of Congress, which met December, 1791, in its next temporary abode at Philadelphia. There excise and a national bank were the two chief themes of the Treasury report; and by that time the two profoundest statesmen of Washington's Cabinet bitterly antagonized. From Hamilton's immediate triumph in procuring the sanction of Congress and the Executive to the latter establishment, and to his incidental claim of implied powers under the new Constitution "to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper," dates the new era of political dissension on a national scale.

We shall not enter here into any historical disquisition upon American events or American political parties. Individual biography does not admit of so broad a scope to the narrative; and with the present writer, at least, the historical narrative of these times would be a repetition. It did not take long, after the first polish of personal acquaintance was worn off, for two such representatives of opposing ideas as Jefferson and Hamilton to understand one another; nor, so understanding, for each to oppose the other with all his might. Those two vivacious intellects were typical of all the political strife of the next thirty years to shape the course of the federal government, construe the Constitution, and mould the destinies of this American continent. Hamilton was for repressing popular tendencies, and keeping Democracy

restrained by the strong hand of order and authority; Jefferson was for giving Democracy the freest scope possible, and trusting willingly to the experiment of recognizing public opinion and the common sense as the ultimate repository of power. Hamilton believed in Statecraft, was dazzled by the example of the Cæsars, desired a government whose strength lay in attaching wealth and privilege to its standard; while Jefferson considered that no government on earth could be so strong as that which offered its best advantages to every one, and advanced its standard not so much by fostering as by giving equal opportunities. Hamilton, a waif from the British West Indies, fortuitously placed in New York's aristocratic circle, had no State prepossessions whatever, and looked upon the State establishments as a confusion and incumbrance to continental unity; seeing in them nothing but the absurdity of an entity within an entity, he would have had them reduced, expunged, eradicated, in order that the national government might hold full sway unembarrassed. He was for centralization, for imperialism, for a strong national administration which would pervade every part of this Union; and in theory for a life-long, or even a hereditary, executive or monarch, State governors holding their commissions at the national pleasure, and a Congress constructed as nearly as possible upon the English model of Lords and Commons. Jefferson, native born and bred, and as really as most Virginians of native stock, a loyal son of the oldest and proudest of American commonwealths, be-

lieved States and State rights "a precious reliance;" and though, perhaps, not fully alive to the expanding necessities of a general government endowed with a few such splendid attributes as power over foreign relations, army, navy, and the regulation of all new territories, he apprehended the sublime fitness for this continent of the novel complexity of distributed rather than consolidated functions. Hamilton had a predilection, which possibly Jefferson's ardent imagination exaggerated, for whatever was British; and even British corruption and the insidious attachment of interests as then practised in Parliament and the elections by a British ministry which aimed at success, seemed part of the legitimate science of government. Jefferson's French prepossessions and British antipathy, which Hamilton certainly exaggerated, — believing him imbued with the false and visionary philanthropy, the scepticism, the levelling follies, of the French revolution, a disciple where he had been more nearly an educator of foreign sentiment, — tinctured his own contending views of foreign and domestic policy; he disdained corporate wealth, loved simple equality, simple manners, the open life, and dreaded every avenue which opened to bribery. In short, Hamilton was for re-erecting and re-enacting Europe in America; while Jefferson felt fervent faith that Heaven had reserved this hemisphere for a political destiny and experience of its own, through whose influence the Old World might, perhaps, in time become reorganized. Hamilton believed the free tendencies of

mankind were essentially vicious, and needed domination; while Jefferson believed that human and individual domination had been, in the world's annals of the past, the fatal obstacle to public virtue. Each, in his own political creed, was unquestionably sincere; and abler advocates or administrators of such opposing systems this American world has never seen.

Not only the ideas but the methods of the two Secretaries were strongly in contrast. The one compelled, if he could; the other persuaded. Hamilton was imperious, self-asserting, ready on every emergency with a plan which reached from top to bottom of the controversy, leaving nothing for his followers to suggest; all the odium, as well as all the praise, he was ready to take upon his own shoulders. Except for the limitations of his British temperament and surroundings and an undoubted sense of honour, he might have made a Cæsar or Napoleon, for his instincts were military and his genius lay in commanding. But Jefferson allowed much for the foibles and vanities of other men; far from egotistical himself, he would put forward associates to take their share in the measures of his own suggestion; he carried out his intentions through agencies, conformably to the requirements of a republican government; he was wary, supple, open to the arguments of other men; easily popular, as Hamilton could never become, yet firm of purpose, and an originator. Hamilton, though personally uncorrupt, and valuing fame and glory far beyond all pecuniary gain, believed in the insidious use of public

favours and patronage to attach support; force and interest were to his mind the alternatives of government, and he leaned heavily upon the property class. Jefferson, on the other hand, leaned upon the common people, upon the farmers and landowners, and laboured for a government which would be secure of their enthusiasm because it guarded their liberties.

It is right that posterity should trust in the rectitude of the fathers of our American Constitution, of those who first placed and set in motion the machinery which that Constitution ordained. It is right that we should cherish the belief that, whatever the theoretical preferences of any of them, they were honest and true in desiring to work out the full experiment loyally, and to keep the new system, at all events, from becoming subverted as long as possible. But this was an era of political dogmatizing, political doubts; and the portentous conflict which was preparing across the ocean gave abundant scope to theorists of either school. Jefferson had left France in the full fervour of natural rights and zealous for the world's reformation, and he was amazed and mortified at the preferences he heard expressed by Federalist leaders in New York for British and hereditary government. "An apostate I could not be," he writes of such discussions, "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." Even

his friend John Adams he found abating in the resentment against British forms which the two had cherished in common when dancing their vain attendance in Downing Street. "Purge the British Constitution of its corruption," once observed the Vice-President in the freedom of a dinner-party, "and give to its popular branch equality of representation, and it would be the most perfect constitution ever devised by the wit of man." To which Hamilton replied, after a pause: "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 defects, it is the most perfect government which ever existed."

Politics handles rough tools, and applies stronger epithets than tranquil reflection should warrant. Quick and intuitive in his perceptions, of intense convictions, and strongly emotional, — strong at heart, moreover, at the thought that the new French Revolution, which had so stirred his profound sympathies, should be viewed by leading minds at home through the cold crystal medium of British misconception, for even Adams soon announced publicly his disbelief in it, — Jefferson speedily entered upon the task of writing down the men and the set which surrounded the first President, and bringing public opinion to bear for their eventual discomfiture. He made secret minutes of conversations tending to confirm his suspicions of monarchical designs; indulging at the time no more than his usual recording habit, but preserving the in-

formation thus gathered, and publishing it after the lapse of a quarter of a century, together with other memoranda which pertained to his Cabinet experience, under the name of "The Anas."[1] Beginning in his private letters, moreover, to warn his friends against "a sect among us who believe that the English Constitution is perfect," he presently wrote of Hamilton and the Vice-President as leaders of a British faction, whose efforts, more or less secret, were to draw America toward "that half-way house" of monarchy. "British faction" was a phrase which stung. Hamilton, Knox, Gouverneur Morris, and various Eastern Federalists were the men chiefly impaled by it; and Jefferson in return was widely denounced by them, in these years of party strife and with certainly not better justice, as a false generalizer, a worshipper of France, a philosopher of crude abstractions, a hypocrite, a flatterer of the people, or, as one intelligent Federalist went so far as to style him, a "semi-maniac."

Madison and most Southern statesmen, together

[1] These celebrated "three volumes bound in marble paper" among Jefferson's manuscripts, as he styled them, though subjected before publication to what he called "a calm revisal," are not written in the most dispassionate style; and some of his friends regretted afterward that "The Anas" were ever given to the world. But the author has stated his own reason for publication: he wished to furnish counteracting testimony against contemporary annalists of the period who leaned too strongly to the other side; and in this he has succeeded, though not perhaps fully proving his own case.

with a powerful element in the Middle States, began to draw off from the Federalists, as the new financial projects of the Treasury for consolidating the government developed. Perhaps in their private conferences Jefferson learned from his chief disciple how Hamilton had shown his un-American bent in the secret debates of 1787, and flung away a brilliant opportunity. While following up his National Bank success with other schemes of patronage, such as subsidizing our manufactures, Hamilton found not only that his plans were balked in Congress by a growing opposition, but that the very honour of the administration of his Treasury was assaulted unsparingly. Jefferson instigated much of the opposition, and, as a further means of reaching public sentiment, encouraged Freneau, a spirited writer and a college mate of Madison, to start at Philadelphia an opposition newspaper; the usual journals in the vicinity of the new government, such as Fenno's "Gazette," which followed it obsequiously from New York, having hitherto breathed nothing but heavy incense and adulation. Hamilton, who was omnipresent in anonymous appeals through the federal press, took up his own pen, as the fall elections of 1792 approached, and calling general attention to a clerkship which Freneau held in Jefferson's department, made the scathing assertion that its editor was pensioned by public money at the Secretary of State's disposal, to vilify the administration and disturb the public peace. Freneau made answer for himself that his trifling salary of $250 as a translating clerk did

not affect his opinions in any way as an editor. Jefferson made no public reply; but the gathering antagonism of the two Cabinet officers poured itself out in private recriminations to the President, — then resting at Mount Vernon, but at the urgent solicitation of both rivals consenting to stand as candidate for a second term, — which he tried in vain to compose.

Wearied of all strife over issues less portentous than liberty and union, conscious of the creeping infirmities of old age, sensitive to the growing censoriousness of the press and the rivalries between two younger members of his administration, both of whom from long acquaintance were very dear to him, Washington would have retired from office at the end of his first four years' term; but the whole people still wanted him, and new political parties dared not fledge their wings thus early. Even he, with all his wisdom in things present, failed to apprehend the inevitable tendency of free government to party dissension; and in trying to make advisers co-operate so utterly differing from each other in their views of policy, and withal so able, he had overtaxed his own superb capabilities. Integrity, capacity, and conspicuousness made the criterion by which Washington called men into his administration; but that test soon proved insufficient, for another trait needful to all efficient administration is congeniality of sentiment.

Hamilton's purpose to drive Jefferson from the Cabinet was forestalled by his own opponent. Am-

bitious though Jefferson might have been to lead forward to popular achievements, no American of any age took less personal concern to gain or keep public office. Early in 1792 he had frankly expressed to Washington his intention of vacating the present post when his chief's first term was completed. He had his own delicate perception of the impropriety of warring from within upon the administration; and as the natural leader of those who were opposed to the coercing and consolidating tendencies of the Federalists in power, he sought an independent vantage-ground. When appeared Hamilton's newspaper assault upon the Secretary of State, — which was not so covert in style and expression as to prevent the latter from penetrating the anonymous disguise, — Washington, writing from home to each of his two Cabinet advisers, tried, like an affectionate parent, to compose the strife. The reply of each was characteristic. Jefferson, responding from Monticello, poured out his wounded feelings, though in a passionate strain unusual with him, and renewed his determination to retire the next 4th of March, to which day he looked forward, as he said, "with the longing of a wave-worn mariner." Hamilton, in language scarcely more temperate, reiterated his charge that Jefferson had been a uniform opponent ever since his first entrance into the Cabinet, and that under his auspices a party had been formed in the legislature for subverting the Secretary of the Treasury. Jefferson promised, out of regard to the President's feelings, to abstain from

open controversy until his retirement, after which he would appeal to the country should his own justification require it; but Hamilton, though filial in his expressions, declined for the present to recede from the course which he had already deliberately undertaken.

This correspondence, which is preserved among the printed works of the three distinguished men, brought the Cabinet contest to its climax. But soon after the unanimous re-election of Washington to the Presidency the drift of events changed, and a new impulse to national parties in America was given by the dethronement and execution of Louis XVI., and the war which the new republic of France declared against Great Britain. The line of political cleavage ran substantially as before; but instead of Hamilton's financial plans, the progress of the French Revolution now absorbed our people's attention, and men took sides, for many years, as their sympathies inclined to their former ally or the mother country in the portentous and absorbing struggle which for the next twenty years convulsed all Europe. These two contending champions among foreign powers sought constantly to embroil the United States, each on her own side; and though neutrality was soon discovered to be the true policy of this Union, and neutral commerce our rich reward, nothing, as the course of events compelled, could ever prevail on this side of the ocean, in a genuine sense, until the War of 1812 and the final downfall of Napoleon gave us full

independence of European politics, and completed America's final divorcement from the government systems of the Old World.

The first months of 1793 raised the enthusiasm of our susceptible people to an extravagant pitch, when the news crossed the ocean that France had established a republic of free consent, like ours, whose armies went forth triumphant against the crowned monarchs of Europe. These were the days of civic feasts in Boston and other cities, of oxen roasted whole and cakes stamped "Liberty and Equality," of jail deliveries, and those brotherhood gatherings where the French and American flags were intertwined as emblems of perpetual alliance. But the sickening intelligence that the gentle king, with his consort Marie Antoinette, had been beheaded, set the sober among our citizens reflecting.

Washington had been a second time inaugurated, and the critical foreign situation kept Jefferson at his portfolio, by his chief's request, a little longer. Early in April, and while the President was once more at Mount Vernon, the startling news reached Philadelphia that France had audaciously added Great Britain to her list of belligerents. Repairing immediately to Philadelphia, Washington at once consulted his Cabinet as to what course should be pursued. A new minister, accredited from the French Republic, was already on his way: it was agreed unanimously that he ought to be received. Furthermore our administration determined that a proclamation of

neutrality should issue as between Great Britain and France. Jefferson would have convened Congress in extra session; but in this respect he was overruled, doubtless because the popular delirium, which favoured France unduly at this crisis, was too embarrassing for calm conduct in affairs to risk a corresponding infection in the legislature.

In the fierce and protracted struggle which ensued abroad, — complicated, as the years rolled on, by the dazzling but deceitful ambition of the Great Napoleon, — Great Britain and France began with unequal claims upon American consideration. The former power, sour and unaccommodating ever since these colonies were irrecoverably lost, had entered into no commercial relations with her former subjects. France, on the other hand, had bound the United States so closely by the treaties of 1778, which made her our warlike ally in the Revolution, that, to take their literal phrase, we seemed forever obligated in return to make common cause with her against her future enemies. Jefferson was for ridding our alliance of so disastrous an implication, at the same time preferring France to her adversary in neutral accommodations, while the present unequal condition of foreign relations continued. Hamilton, on the other hand, became the zealous advocate of British interests; on him leaned the British sympathizers among our people, merchants engaged in the British trade, all who looked upon French democracy and French liberalism with abhorrence. He, in the Cabinet, riddled the

legalities of these French treaties, as only an astute lawyer is capable of doing. President Washington was compelled, tacitly at least, to concede their present existence; and it became a cardinal object of American policy during the next eight years to procure a fair commercial treaty from Great Britain; and more than this, in view of the bloody and desperate strife that reddened the Old World's horizon, to readjust our relations with France besides, so as to maintain cordiality and commerce, but no more. Gratitude for succour in the past was so heartily fostered by our people that the folly, the violence, the tyrannous development of the French Revolution could not utterly quench it; yet American interest was plainly to avoid European complications and wars of ambition, and preserve a fair and honourable neutrality. Washington's formulation of such a policy in his Farewell Address was the fruit of the responsible experience which his administration now entered upon.

Jefferson did not remain long enough in the Cabinet to help compass the most difficult points of our present foreign diplomacy. But the next few months were amply occupied by his department in smoothing out the perplexities in which our revolutionary treaties with France involved us, so as to baffle the aggressive and superserviceable zeal of the first minister from the French Republic. Minister or "Citizen" Genet, who landed at Charleston on the 8th of April from a French frigate, brought with him blank army and

navy commissions and letters of marque; and his whole pompous tour of the United States, from the fitting out of privateers under the French flag immediately upon his arrival and before he had brought his credentials to the seat of government, to his sending out the "Little Democrat" to sea from Philadelphia, in defiance of Washington's proclamation, and with a passionate threat to appeal from the President to the people, was a constant trial to executive forbearance. Jefferson's patience with him, though greater than that of his colleagues, could not bear such a strain; and with the concurrence of the whole Cabinet, Washington after four months' endurance requested the recall of this meddlesome minister, who had tried by the force of his own lever upon public opinion to force America into war on the side of France against the wishes of our Executive. Genet was superseded by his own government with a polite disavowal of his conduct; and America, in her efforts to preserve neutrality, gained the chance, at least, of decent self-respect.

At the end of this trying year 1793 Jefferson retired from office, having repeatedly postponed his intention at Washington's urgent request. A new Congress had by this time met and organized at Philadelphia, and his diplomatic correspondence as transmitted to that body elicited the spontaneous tribute of all parties, for in it he had upheld with dignity the chosen policy of neutrality with neither timidity nor needless irritation. He had not, as many of his adversaries

imagined, catered to the follies of the ultra-French partisans, though Genet had tartly insinuated in his letters that the Secretary was one whose intercourse revealed "an official language and a language confidential;" at the same time that the sympathetic tone of his despatches with French popular efforts for self-government was sufficiently traceable to keep him in admirable tone with American sentiment, which at that time resented the harsh and exasperating temper of English diplomacy through the whole trying episode. As a last official document, Jefferson further transmitted to Congress a report on American commerce which he had prepared in compliance with a legislative order. This paper, alike free from passionate and disfiguring comments, supplied valuable statistics of American trade, reciting both the restrictions and advantages to which it was at this time subjected. Free commerce he here considered the ideal commerce for the United States, could but a single nation assent to such mutual relations; but when nations refuse a liberal reciprocity, counter regulations become necessary. "It is not," observes this report, "to the moderation and justice of others we are to trust for fair and equal access to market with our productions, or for our due share in the transportation of them, but to our own means of independence and the firm will to use them."

Jefferson received from President Washington, on retiring, a touching and affectionate tribute to his

integrity and talents; but he never again placed himself in the attitude of counsellor to a Federalist administration. The inevitable drift of our politics was to new dissensions founded upon the irreconcilable views which Hamilton and Jefferson so well represented; and Washington's consummate influence was exerted in vain, for the few remaining years of his life, to keep the intelligent party under whose auspices the constitutional Union had been ushered in co-existent with the new government. Jefferson's sympathies were unreservedly with the opposition, — with those who yearned for a broader democracy. The longer he had continued under the present administration the more profound had been his disgust, liable as was his official stand to constant misconception. Scarcely a phase of financial policy, after Hamilton had first proposed his National Bank, scarcely a phase of the belligerent troubles in the present European war, but had found him advocating one course of action, and Hamilton another. There were but four constitutional advisers who formed originally the so-called Cabinet; and while of that number Hamilton found always a firm supporter in Knox, the Secretary of War, Jefferson could count little upon so slippery a second as Randolph, the Attorney-General, who betrayed already something of that unsteadiness of principle which brought him into disgrace soon after he had succeeded to the vacant portfolio of State. Between the two real advisers, habitually pitted against each other like fighting-

cocks, the grave President had given the preponderance of his preference at each important consultation. Hamilton's resignation, which Washington held at the time of his adversary's departure for a later acceptance, was attended with very different consequences; that Secretary took good care that the remodelling of the Cabinet should elevate his own friends and dependents; and to a remarkable degree for one whose immediate fellow-citizens gave him no support as a constituency, he instigated and even directed the inner councils of his party as long as a Federalist administration was left in power.

CHAPTER XI.

PARTY LEADER AND VICE-PRESIDENT.

1794–1801.

THE political party which Jefferson founded was styled by him "Republican," and to that name he constantly adhered; for though he favoured zealously the modern French philosophy of liberty, equality, and fraternity for all mankind, he had the penetration to discern that neither France nor the American Republic was yet ripe for the experiment of pure sovereignty in the common people. He mistrusted that France herself was already in danger of losing the safe moorings of sagacity. He had promptly warned his friends that Genet must be abandoned; and even in the first flush of French enthusiasm, he would not lend his sanction to the new party style of "Democrat;" nor to those Democratic clubs which flourished in America's chief cities for a short time, after the model of the French Jacobin societies, with revolutionary methods and a fatal tendency to violence and misrule. In France the downfall of Robespierre presently, with his wholesale executions and bloody despotism, involved the final ruin of the Jacobin clubs; while in our own country the Democratic clubs, those feeble imitators, sank in 1794 under the political odium of the whiskey insurrection of Western Penn-

sylvania, which they had abetted, and the stigma of "self-created societies" affixed by Washington's message that year to Congress, — an epithet, we may add, which in its general application showed so imperfect an apprehension of the true basis on which all popular parties in a Republic like ours must eventually rest, that Jefferson would not suffer it to pass unchallenged.

Jefferson had retired from the Cabinet immensely popular, and yet for the time disgusted with public station. On the 16th of January, 1794, he reached his beloved Monticello, and took up once more the renovation of his estate. He was now about fifty years old, resuming domestic cares not as a husband but as a grandfather; his sandy hair had begun to show the first hoar-frost of age; and in the prostrating reaction which followed at once so long a space of public business and excitement, he fancied himself growing old, and his strong constitution already shattered. But this was only a brief fancy. Temperance kept him robust for many years to come, nor could his elastic spirits long desert him. His daughters and grandchildren came to enliven his household with their bright presence; and after a considerable chasm in his private correspondence, during which letters would accumulate unacknowledged, while his own unfrequent epistles to Washington, to Adams, or to Randolph, his successor at the State Department, would describe himself as rotating crops, contemplating the tranquil growth of his lucerne and potatoes, and thoroughly weaned from public affairs, we see his in-

terest in public events gradually reviving in a trenchant though desultory criticism upon the course of federal administration when he wrote to his party friends. He may have given political counsel to Madison and other friends during these intervening months; but if so, it was oral and when visited during the recess of Congress.

These were ill times for continuing an administration upon that lofty plane of unpartisanship which Washington had proposed at the outset of his presidency, — seeking out for his administration distinguished men from all quarters of the Union, with differing views, which his own ascendancy might keep in equilibrium. Except for Monroe, who soon repented his willingness, no more leaders of Jefferson's political tenets would take responsible office under the present administration; and distinguished independents, like Patrick Henry, who had held aloof ever since our Constitution was adopted, were pursued with appointments in vain. John Adams used to say that the refusal of prominent men to serve in Washington's Cabinet after its first organization was broken up, arose from their disinclination to encounter the arrogance and influence of Hamilton. Hamilton, himself retiring at the close of the present year, swayed the inconspicuous men upon whom the President had henceforth to depend with unabated vigour, and continued to dictate most of the policy of the Federalists so long as they dominated in the Union, — nothing, indeed,

but the pertinacious dislike of John Adams, Washington's successor in the supreme magistracy, serving after Jefferson's retirement to baffle and disconcert him.

"From the moment of my retiring from the administration," states Jefferson, when reviewing this period in the preface to his "Anas," "the Federalists got unchecked hold of General Washington. His memory was already sensibly impaired by age; the firm tone of mind for which he had been remarkable was beginning to relax, its energy was abated; a listlessness for labour, a desire for tranquillity had crept on him, and a willingness to let others act and even think for him. Like the rest of mankind, he was disgusted with the atrocities of the French Revolution, and was not sufficiently aware of the difference between the rabble who were used as instruments of their perpetration and the steady and rational character of the American people, in which he had not sufficient confidence."

At the present stage of our American development, when men ambitious of political office not only lay wires for their nomination, but boldly announce their purpose to besiege the citadel of preferment, it is not strange if voters feel sceptical when avowals of a wish for retirement come from the lips of those who forsake public station at the height of their renown and popularity. But such avowals have been made sincerely; and many a man of noble ambition, whose means assure him of a livelihood, has turned his back upon politics, that fickle and exacting mistress, with joy to escape her teasing thraldom. Popular solicita-

tation convincing him that he is missed, the urgent counsel of friends most dear to him, may send him back to the battle after a short respite; but, for the time being, disinclination is stronger than either the hope of public fame or the sense of public duty. Such had been Jefferson's feelings once before, and such were now his feelings again. The misconceptions of high station, environments which he had been powerless to control, disheartened and mortified him. That the attractions of the federal administration did not yet dazzle the minds of American patriots whose passions and affections had first centred in the colony or State, this earlier era supplies repeated instances. Jefferson had left the Continental Congress in 1776, when his fame was brilliant, to make himself useful in State legislation; the ermine of the most permanent dignity which the new Constitution had to offer could be cast aside by Jay and an early successor when diplomacy invited to fresh achievements abroad; and of these two, the former resigned forever the life incumbency of the Chief Justiceship for the precarious honour of Governor in his own State of New York.

The cardinal points of Washington's public policy after Jefferson's retirement from the Cabinet which gave rise to controversy, embraced Jay's treaty with Great Britain, and Monroe's unfortunate mission to France which ended in his recall. Jefferson took his humiliated friend and fellow-citizen into his political protection; and the bitter opposition which Jefferson's

Republican friends made meanwhile to the British treaty, together with the virulence of the party press on both sides, and the zealous support of the Federalists in that unpopular measure, made Washington at length their own, so far as party spirit could have found any possible lodgment in a breast whose deepest beat was for the common good.

All political opposition to the conqueror of American liberties, or to the measures upon which he had once set his deliberate sanction, was in vain; and a few months before the presidential election of 1796, which was to determine the choice of Washington's official successor, — and this partly, as Jefferson has claimed, through the malice and falsehoods of a Virginian neighbour, — a great point was gained for popular effect by the political party which throve upon the idolatries of the age, in the virtual alienation of Washington from one whose friendship and admiration had constantly attended his earlier prime. The alienation was natural enough; for to Washington's pure mind a public action he had once performed appeared so sacred and so conscientiously entered upon that the breath of censure upon it seemed the taint of a personal disloyalty. No decided rupture occurred between these great Virginians; the two met courteously in public at Adams's next inauguration; but their correspondence and private intercourse ceased, and a letter written by Jefferson in 1796 to Mazzei, an Italian revolutionist, and published a year later, which made allusion to the shorn "Samsons in the field,"

was held up by the Federalists to popular execration long after Washington's death, as a sacrilegious affront to Washington's unapproachable person. Jefferson always disclaimed the intention of such an application; and the common voters, at least, refused to censure him.

That Jefferson did not enter into the rhapsodies of his times which magnified the first President into a demigod infallible, is very certain; and that, sincerely or insincerely, he had written from his distant retreat to private friends in Congress with less veneration for Washington's good judgment on some points of policy than for his personal virtues and honesty, is susceptible of proof by more positive testimony than the once celebrated Mazzei letter. Yet we should do Jefferson the justice to add that political differences of opinion never blinded him to the transcendent qualities of Washington's character, which he had known long and intimately enough to appreciate with its possible limitations, which is the best appreciation of all. Of many contemporary tributes which were evoked at the close of the last century by that great hero's death, none bears reading so well in the light of another hundred years as that which Jefferson penned modestly in his private correspondence.

What obituary notice had Hamilton's fertile pen to prepare for the last commemoration of the man "first in peace, first in war," his constant benefactor, to whose patient and paternal solicitude he owed every great opportunity of his life? Some eloquent enco-

mium, perhaps, more emotional even if less discriminating than that of his political rival. Alas! nothing, so far as his voluminous writings make posterity aware, beyond the confession of sublime egotism, at a despondent moment, that in Washington he had lost "an ægis essential" to him.

In the presidential contest of 1796 Jefferson was chosen Vice-President; John Adams, as the candidate of the Federalists, prevailing over him for President by a very close vote in the electoral college. The framers of our Constitution so wise in what they constructed with models to guide them, miscalculated utterly when they agreed upon an expedient for choosing the chief executive which, as they thought, would remit political parties and the people themselves to the background. To say nothing of that false filtration of popular preferences through the medium of electoral colleges chosen for the sole purpose of casting a vote which was sure to be predetermined, the original plan of our Constitution utterly ignored the inevitable tendency of voters under a popular government to select both a President and Vice-President of the same political faith. Two persons were to be voted for, by the electors of the respective States; the person proving to have the greatest number of votes, if a majority, was to be President, and the next highest candidate, Vice-President. The colleges could not designate any one for the second office. That scheme was badly strained

in this first real contention of national parties in 1796 for the Presidency; and in the second struggle, as we shall see, four years later, it was shattered to pieces. On this occasion, then, the candidate of the Federalists for the first office was chosen President, while his rival of the Republican party became necessarily the Vice-President.

There had not been much love lost of late between Hamilton and John Adams; and the one had wounded the pride of the other in the late canvass by trying to induce Federalist electors to give the two candidates of their own party the "double chance," as he called it, of coming in first. Adams was saved by the constancy of his New England friends, who threw away upon Pinckney, the second candidate; but even thus the change of two electoral ballots would have reversed the offices of Adams and Jefferson for the next four years, or else have thrown the presidential contest into the House.

Jefferson, who had professed the greatest indifference for public office, though permitting, of course, the use of his name by party friends, was prompt to declare, even before the electoral college met, that he wished his friend Adams to take precedence of him. Nor is it unlikely that he hoped to detach his old revolutionary ally from the British wing of the Federalists by stimulating his secret resentment against Hamilton. Jefferson knew something of Adams's jealous disposition, and had quickly detected Hamilton's unfriendly manœuvre; and while always

sincere and consistent in his politics, he appears to have developed in his new post of Republican leader something more than the simple skill and tact for organizing, — an adroitness, in fact, and an artful cajolery such as justified partly, though by no means to the fullest extent, the reputation he now gained rapidly among political enemies of dissimulation. With tranquil good-humour upon the electoral announcement, he felicitated himself on his escape from the first honours; while Federalists, like Fisher Ames, who deplored the folly of this constitutional plan which placed the chief of a rival party where he would incur no responsibility, predicted, with clear sagacity, that President and Vice-President would now jostle four years like two suns in the meridian, and then the Vice would be first.

John Adams himself appears to have entered upon his new exalted career with a corresponding disposition to conciliate his distinguished friend and rival. It was perhaps but a momentary inclination; for Adams was a man of impulse, and apt to strike out in his own independent direction, leaving counsel to follow. The situation was now very grave with France, and an extraordinary commission of three was to be sent at once to Paris in a last effort to propitiate. Adams, before asking advice, broached his plans very freely to Jefferson; and after expressing the wish that the Vice-President himself might serve upon this diplomatic errand, — which both, however, concluded very quickly would be unbecoming an officer of the

second dignity, — he asked Jefferson to find out whether Madison could be induced to become one of the three envoys. Jefferson consulted Madison, who declined, as he himself had expected; and as for Adams he found the opposition to a Republican appointment so strong among his Cabinet advisers, the remnant of Washington's administration, that he dropped the idea of his own accord, and met Jefferson with embarrassing excuses on the next opportunity. From that time forward, the Vice-President was never consulted upon the plans of this administration.

Diplomatic relations with France made the great national concern of the next four years; and while President Adams, by force of the broader and more generous handling he applied to the delicate topic than the chief advisers of his party would have permitted, gave to his country in the end a solid and honourable settlement, the abrupt and offensive method by which he accomplished the desirable end bred schisms in the Federalist ranks, involving the political ruin of the party at the next presidential election, together with his own. Hamilton, though wiser than his personal followers of British sympathies in many respects, anticipated war nevertheless with the French Republic from the very first; and when he found the American people stirred so opportunely to enthusiastic demonstration against the bribes and insults of Talleyrand and the French Directory, military ambition infected his ardent imagination so strongly, while he found

himself installed the virtual commander-in-chief of the promised struggle, that he could not calmly weigh or approve the chances for pacific negotiations which Adams presently reopened upon his own responsibility when Talleyrand invited them, and then pursued to a successful issue.

Adams's grave error at the outset, in a crisis like the present, was in accepting Washington's Cabinet in its full integrity for his own. He did so, not upon any intimation from Washington that the latter desired it, but in deference to the homage of the age, which seemed to regard any heritage from the illustrious father as a precious one. He did so, we may rest assured, not cheerfully; for he more than once repined privately over this "legacy of secretaries;" but the precedent of a change which it was incumbent upon him to set for the first time he postponed, whether from inattention or reluctance, until it was too late to save his administration at the polls in 1800. A more unsuitable set of co-workers under such a President as himself could not well be conceived. They were second-rate men, promoted to high influence by Washington originally, because the other men he most desired, one after another, refused; as to local residence they were badly distributed; they had very little popular or political following; and the majority, at least, had been taught by habit and early dependence to look to Hamilton rather than Adams for inspiration. Pickering and Wolcott, the ablest and most conspicuous of these counsellors, opposed Ham-

ilton himself inflexibly when it came to a prudent generosity toward Republican opponents; and the former of these, who within narrow and rocky confines, as it were, had all the impetuousness of a mountain torrent, was a British colonial as to foreign prepossessions, and steeped in antipathy to France and the aims of the French Revolution. A war on Britain's side with the French Republic and French philosophy he would have welcomed under any circumstances. In short, Adams's Cabinet, so far from recognizing their humbler functions as his subordinates, acted as though they had been specially placed in authority, as vice-gerents of the first great President, to curb and confine what they chose to consider the erratic tendencies of a successor; and in doing so they gave all the countenance possible to Hamilton's interference in the same condescending direction. President Adams, when he had his own way, forced it in spite of them and by outflanking counsel; whatever might be termed conciliating in his intercourse with his Cabinet consisting mainly in letting men go their own way far enough in the lesser matters to plot and meddle with the patronage, thereby bringing his administration into deeper popular disgrace. By a prodigious effort Adams reconstructed his Cabinet, or nearly did so, calling liberal leaders of the party, like Marshall, into the administration; but by that time the Federalist dissensions had wrought irreparable disaster; and like his distinguished son in later times, this President led his party to rout and ruin when a candidate for

re-election, — a splendid statesman when bold and independent action was needful, but a pronounced failure as a popular politician.

Jefferson presided with tranquil grace over the dignified Senate Chamber, whose members never exceeded thirty-two while the federal abode remained at Philadelphia. It was not until after the momentous elections of 1800 that Congress first assembled on the bank of the Potomac. On the 13th of October, 1797, and during the interval which followed the adjournment of the special session in May, Maria, his younger daughter, was married at home to her half-cousin, John Wayles Eppes, who at a later date and after his father-in-law became President, served as an important member of the House of Representatives. With his usual systematic attention to the business now engaging him, the Vice-President prepared during these four years of irresponsible incumbency his famous parliamentary manual, not without a minute research into the origin and customs of other legislative bodies which he had begun in a commonplace book while a student of law. The Federalists were now strong enough in the Senate to transact the public business on their own responsibility, and an opposition Vice-President was not called upon to give his casting vote. From an assembly already commanding a good party majority, this branch of Congress quickly gave the Federalists, under the immediate impulse of the war spirit against France, a good

two-thirds control, capable of rushing the most imprudent and despotic measures into legislation; and even after the danger of a war was over, which the French Directory with all their gratuitous insults had never dreamed of provoking, the change of political atmosphere in the next House of Representatives, affected very little the character or disposition of the senatorial majority, which still persisted in doing Adams's administration all the mischief possible by its firm, arbitrary, and intolerant procedure utterly in disregard of the public wishes. But all this time, and while preserving his imperturbable demeanour, Jefferson watched with keen scrutiny the course of the public business about him, sending facts and suggestive comments to the presses and politicians of his own party faith, and guiding incessantly the policy of the Republican opposition by his confidential counsel.

It was a proud moment for the Federalist administration when in the spring of 1798 the despatches from our unsuccessful envoys in France revealed the corrupt insolence of Talleyrand and the French Directory. "Millions for defence" was the American response, "but not one cent for tribute." For once in his life was the old revolutionary sage in the President's chair the idol of the people; the familiar Anacreontic music was set to the new verses of "Adams and Liberty" in his honour; his head struck the stars in earnest. But in the always trying moment of unbounded enthusiasm, the Federalists in Congress

pressed too far the favouring opportunity to place rigorous bonds upon their downcast political opponents; and John Adams in his own mental exaltation set his sign manual to enactments of the two Houses which had filled even Hamilton with momentary dismay. The harsh Naturalization Act, the Alien Act, and the Sedition Act — all embraced and proudly clung to by the pedagogues of current politics against every symptom of popular discontent and remonstrance, as though to make the present grasp upon the national citadel perpetually their own — have passed into history as the fatuous folly of a party which forgot that there exists a Nemesis in public opinion.

Jefferson, aided, as events soon proved, by the dispersion of these war-clouds and a friendly and honourable compact which was finally concluded with the French Republic, after polite apologies had taken the sting from the affront, took advantage of this ill-judged experiment upon personal liberty and free speech by formulating a startling State protest against the Alien and Sedition laws. The plan he secretly concerted with Madison, his coadjutor, in the recess; and the latter prepared resolutions which passed the Virginia Legislature about the close of the year, while Jefferson with his own pen drafted resolutions of a still bolder scope, which a few weeks earlier he procured a friend to introduce in the Legislature of Kentucky, and which passed, somewhat softened in expression, with but few dissenting votes. These were the famous Kentucky

and Virginia resolutions [1] upon which Calhoun and his Southern disciples in a later generation, and with disunion aims in view, based certain dogmas of State sovereignty, which only the stronger sword of the Union has dispelled, at terrible cost, in the bloody arbitrament, still remembered, of civil war.

Of these Kentucky and Virginia resolutions, once famous in political discussion, the fairest to be candidly said is that far too much was afterward made of them when Jefferson was in his grave. The Virginia resolutions which Madison prepared were plainly within the scope of legislative denunciation by a State, in pronouncing the Alien and Sedition acts "palpable and alarming infractions of the Constitution," which they certainly were. And as for those of Kentucky, had John Breckenridge, who introduced them, been their actual author, instead of Jefferson, their memory would scarcely have survived the century which buried the brief controversy and the cause of it. It was because Jefferson's name was found long after to honour this method of State remonstrance, that the Kentucky and Virginia protests were brought at length from their dusty archives to be forged into new weapons, not for nullifying federal supremacy alone, but for rupturing and breaking up the whole Union.

It is true that in those early days of constitutional theorizing, and when scarcely a principle of fundamental

[1] See E. D. Warfield's Kentucky Resolutions; 1 Schouler's United States, 423.

law had yet received its exposition, judicially or otherwise, while the Constitution itself enumerated without dogmatizing, Jefferson argued in a strain bolder than either of his colleagues chose at the time to approve.

To take the argument at its utmost, State opposition to unconstitutional acts has not been confined to instances, like those of 1798, where personal liberty is at jeopardy. On what stronger ground stood the "personal liberty" acts of the Northern generation before the war, than that rights of the individual, against doubtful constitutional law at least, shall be shielded to the utmost by State jurisdiction? Jefferson, on the present occasion, did not preach disunion, but decentralization. He meant and he pursued a political resistance for political effect. He ultimately gained his point; and as President soon afterward, and for the rest of his life, he sanctioned the broad supremacy of this Union within its legitimate sphere of action. By his official initiative in more respects than one, he gave a new impulse to the strengthening and extension of national empire. Moreover, we should remember that in these days of the founders the Constitution by its own silence left open many questions of construction, on which men might well differ in argument, which only time, experience, custom, and what we call public policy could eventually decide. The Supreme Court can never be the final arbiter of political questions, exclusive of the other great departments of government; and the Supreme Court had as yet framed no exposition of its own.

The presidential struggle of 1800 was an exciting and desperate one. The vote in the electoral colleges showed a decisive triumph for the Republican party and its candidates. Adams had managed to hold his own with the Federalists, against the intrigues of his personal enemies; but Jefferson and Burr, the two candidates on the Republican side, had the majority of electoral votes. And now, on the first assembling of our Congress in the new capital on the Potomac, the defect of the Constitution was made palpable in providing that electors should vote for two candidates without designating which of them should be preferred as President. Against Adams and Pinckney, their Federalist opponents, Jefferson and Burr were loyally supported together by the Republicans, and received an equal vote. The tie between them, in consequence, prevented for the first time a constitutional choice of President, and devolved the function of selection upon a House controlled by the political opponents of Jefferson and Burr to decide between them.

To the thoroughgoing Federalist leaders, public opinion was but a feather in the presidential scales; and the scheme gained headway in Congress that the defeated party should make capital from their adversaries. Many of the Federalist representatives were not indisposed to bring in the junior above his chief, either upon some bargain for the patronage, or so, at least, as to humiliate their leading opponent, and breed dissensions in his party host. Burr, as it happened, was selfish, profligate, a politician without

firm principles, easily dazzled and led astray by his own ambitious delusions. Hamilton, as a fellow-citizen of New York, understood him thoroughly; and but for his earnest remonstrance with his party friends, the plot might have been consummated: for Burr himself, though cautious of committing himself, was too ready to take the Presidency in breach of honour. The balloting was kept up for a week by the House, in February, 1801, after the formal electoral count, at which Jefferson himself performed the unwelcome duty, as presiding officer, of announcing that there had been no choice. It was not easy for either Jefferson or Burr to win over the majority of the Representatives, voting by States. Caucuses of either party met from time to time; and sick members were brought into the Capitol in their beds to keep the vote of their respective State delegations under control. As days went on, the chance appeared less of electing Burr than of reaching the 4th of March without any choice at all; and for that contingency, singularly enough, the Constitution had made no provision whatever. On the day when this Congress would expire, and the term of the present Executive as well, who would be President of the United States by a legal title? For the Constitution, as it then stood, left no means of designating the new Vice-President, except as the second on the list of candidates after a President had been chosen by the House of the expiring Congress. The spectacle of approaching disaster, to end, perchance, in a new constitutional convention,

or utter dissolution of the Union, brought to their senses the men who had cared so little to respect the people's intended choice; for while deference to the popular will resolves easily such dilemmas, the wish to perplex opponents is uppermost, while the discarded still keep the reins. On the thirty-sixth ballot Jefferson was chosen by the votes of ten States; and Burr became the Vice-President, accordingly, by constitutional operation.

John Adams, in the last stage of the presidential contest, offended Jefferson by his petulant refusal to frown down the machinations of his own Congressional associates. They parted in anger; and the breach widened further when the President proceeded to fill all the offices he could possibly lay hands upon for the advantage of his party. At midnight of March 3, Marshall, the federal Secretary of State, was found with his clerks making out commissions by candle-light; and on the sunrise of March 4, ex-President Adams hastened in his carriage from the wooded Capital, commencing his homeward journey to Massachusetts on a day and at an hour which precluded the decent decorum of giving his attendance at the inaugural ceremonies of his whilom friend and official successor. Alone of all later Presidents, his son, the second Adams, who inherited that honest bitterness of temper, though less irascible, refused his presence at the induction of a successful opponent.

CHAPTER XII.

A REPUBLICAN PRESIDENT.

1801–1809.

It remains open to historical disputation whether Thomas Jefferson came mounted after his usual fashion to attend the inaugural ceremonies of the 4th of March, 1801, and hitched his horse to the palings before entering the unfinished Capitol, or whether he went over on foot from his lodgings, which were not distant, dispensing altogether with dignified aids of locomotion. The veracity of an English traveller and contemporary who described the scene in his book is involved in the dispute. But in either case posterity is taught the same impressive lesson of simplicity that the new President was continually fond of imparting, in his contempt for public spectacles; favoured as he doubtless was, on this first occasion of the kind at the Potomac's bank, by the rustic and primeval aspect of the new federal city. That a large concourse of Jefferson's fellow-citizens attended him to the Capitol, some mounted and some on foot, the newspapers of the day took pains to relate.

To an audience small by comparison with those of later times, the spectators being gathered in the Senate-chamber of our whitened freestone edifice, Jefferson read an address, which, like all productions

of the kind, was prepared for the great concourse of people throughout the Union who waited attentively to see it in print. Friends were delighted by it, and foes reacted from their prejudices.

This inaugural speech was elevated in tone, abundant in captivating phrases, breathing full confidence in this novel American experiment, but modest, nevertheless, as to his own personal merits. Emphasizing his earnest conviction that the strongest of all governments on earth must be that of a people capable of self-rule, he appealed at the same time for unity of political action. Minorities, he said, ought to be generously respected. "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 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."

Federalist leaders whose minds were still set upon the necessity of ruling the common mob by discipline and repressing their innate tendencies, flattered themselves for the moment that the Republican pilot, conscious of his own incapacity, meant to recall them to the helm. But Jefferson meant nothing of the kind. His design was, of course, to harmonize parties; but this he meant to accomplish, not by reconciling the

party chieftains opposed to him, but by drawing persuasively to his own standard, rather, the mass of common voters, hitherto distrustful, who in their own hearts loved liberty. In this he signally succeeded as the quick months went by; for by the time that he stood for a second presidential term, in 1804, he carried more than nine tenths of the electoral vote of the entire Union; and within ten years after his final retirement from office, came "the era of good feeling," when all parties were gathered into this Republican fold, and the American people became the confident masters of their own institutions, as Jefferson meant they should, before parties reorganized for a second stage of Democratic endeavour.

It was impossible that any of Jefferson's appointments to office from among his own party followers could be acceptable to the mortified chieftains of the Federalist faith. Proud, scholarly, disdainful, — those of New York and the East more especially, — these patricians saw no harbinger of good in such plebeian advancement. They had looked upon public office as the endowment of their caste, and could never stoop to solicit it. Like Horace in his ode, they prefaced their appeals for public favour by the assertion, "I hate the vulgar crowd, and keep it off." Indeed they had just forestalled the people's President in the exercise of his delayed functions by crowding all the patronage possible into the brief final months of their discarded rule, straining to the utmost those legal

opportunities which our Constitution still unwisely permits.

They had created a judicial circuit system, wholly superfluous, with a complete outfit of judges, clerks, and marshals, in order to make life incumbencies for their party friends; and President Adams, with a genius for incurring odium, had compliantly filled every national office within the Executive reach by new appointments, so many of which were crowded for confirmation into the final third day of March that when midnight arrived and John Marshall, the retiring Secretary of State, stopped work, he left his desk strewn with commissions still waiting to be officially countersigned. The official terms of many thus appointed would have extended beyond the four years of Jefferson's Presidency. It is the weakest joint of our whole constitutional armour that leaves a discarded Congress and a discarded Federal Executive to carry on the government together for a whole winter's season after the people at the polls have pronounced for an entire change. States at the present day, and the parliamentary governments of Europe, besides, defer to the public will more promptly.

The situation for the victorious Republicans upon Jefferson's accession was a novel and delicate one. For the first time a new national party had been lifted into power, — a party whose members had for the four previous years of strife been jealously ostracized and even removed from office because of their politics. Jefferson resented deeply, as was natural, the midnight

appointments which his personal friend and predecessor had made in outrageous disregard of the people's wishes. Marshall's incomplete commissions were treated as null; and the late Secretary of State, having now slipped on the robes of Chief Justice, asserted in vain that the vested rights of officials whose parchments had not been delivered were in law as inviolable as his own. When a new Congress convened the next winter, with a working Republican majority in both branches, the Circuit Court Act was repealed. Partisanship here retaliated upon partisanship, as it always will. But Jefferson by no means inclined to portioning out the offices as the spoils of a partisan or personal triumph. His general aim was in the executive patronage, to bring about a situation where both parties might share and neither of them monopolize the public places. While those guilty of official misconduct or notoriously inefficient were liable accordingly to removal, — and those, too, whose electioneering activity, or open, persistent, and industrious opposition to Republican principles made them obnoxious, — he refused to disturb good men who differed from him only in political belief and performed their functions diligently. And though some of his party followers would have preferred a clean sweep, he set the example of genuine forbearance. Only about sixteen vacancies were made during the first fourteen months of his administration, after which time there were very few removals at all, and those almost entirely because of the incumbent's misconduct or perverse

opposition. The usual government tenure in these early days was without definite limit of years.

Political adversaries complained, of course, whenever the axe fell at all. "It would have been to me a circumstance of great relief," was Jefferson's reply on one memorable occasion, "had I found a moderate participation of office in the hands of the majority. I would gladly have left it to time and accident to raise them to their just share. But their total exclusion calls for prompter corrections. I shall correct the procedure; but that done, return with joy to that state of things when the only questions concerning a candidate shall be, 'Is he honest? Is he capable? Is he faithful to the Constitution?'"

One should further observe that in the course of his administrative reforms Jefferson's constant effort was to reduce the executive patronage, not to increase it. The Circuit Court repeal was followed by no new judicial erection of life incumbents, and Federalism dominated the United States bench for many years longer. The net expenditure of the Union was reduced, while every honest obligation was provided for. With the entire abolition of the excise taxes, Jefferson got rid of a multitude of petty offices. His economies in the customs and in the war and navy estimates tended in the same direction. Such voluntary surrender of executive patronage finds no ready parallel in our history; for dispensers of place, however disposed to retrench in other respects, seldom retrench the offices. Said bitter John Randolph,

no encomiast of Jefferson, many years later: "He 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."

Jefferson desired success, no doubt, but he sought it by sincere efforts to tranquillize the country. Those he appointed to office were for the most part men of capacity and character, servants of the public who were not inferior to those they superseded, except perhaps, through no fault of their own, in prestige. Idealists such as Paine, who were personally unfit for office, he honoured in other ways. He pointedly refused to appoint his own relatives to office; and his discernment was shown in assigning to each responsible place the man whose talent or special acquirement adapted him for it.

Jefferson's method of appointment indicated the gloved hand, — steadiness of purpose conjoined with delicacy in management; a combination of qualities which always goes far towards securing political success. But beyond this he had the power, in a remarkable degree, of inspiring confidence, and of impressing his ideas upon those with whom he was brought into close relations. His contrast in this respect to Adams, and even to Washington, his only predecessors in civil administration, was notable. No President ever kept such peace in his official household, or sat so peacefully at the head of the council board. All of his earliest advisers remained long in

place: Madison, Gallatin, and Dearborn through the entire administration of eight years; Gallatin and Granger some five years longer. They were men of liberal and cultivated tastes, sympathetic with the President in matters outside the official routine, none of them drones or mere rhetoricians. The two most indispensable offices — the State and the Treasury — were filled by men of conspicuous statesmanship, but without rivalry; and in the other posts sound discretion and industry prevailed: each felt his political dependence upon the chief, but at the same time a perfect security.

"The third administration, which was of eight years," wrote Jefferson in 1811, "presented an example of harmony in a Cabinet of six persons, to which, perhaps, history has furnished no parallel." This harmony was owing, in no slight degree, to the rule with which the new President set out, of making himself a central point for the different branches of the Executive, so as to preserve unity of object and meet the due responsibility for whatever was done. According to Jefferson's plan for practical administration, the ordinary daily business was to be transacted upon consultation between the President and the head of that department alone to which it belonged. For measures of importance or difficulty, consultation with all the heads of departments was needful; and for this he preferred in theory to take their opinions separately, in conversation or in writing, thus leaving his own action free; but he practised the open Cabinet

method of his predecessors without experiencing any ill results. The latter is now the confirmed practice of government, though the word "cabinet" is not to be found in the Constitution. "Yet," said Jefferson, who held firmly to the idea of presidential responsibility, "this does, in fact, transform the Executive into a directory; and I hold the other method to be the more constitutional."

Jefferson's disposition to escape official pomps and meet the people in easier intercourse than had been customary, appeared not at the inaugural ceremonies alone, but continually afterward. Many patricians of the Federalist school had laid great stress upon official formalities for fostering among the people that spirit of loyalty which is akin to reverence, and requires a shrine. But Loyalty had lost her foothold on this continent, and henceforth the true animating spirit of our institutions was to be patriotism and the sympathetic sense of a common brotherhood. Jefferson, ushering in the nineteenth century for these United States, stripped government as much as possible of the false tinsel of externals, and led on from idols to the new ideal of social confidence and self-respect, of a people obeying their best impulses, and obeying while persuading the will of the majority. Things trivial of themselves bent to this new standard of political philosophy. First of all, he abolished levees and courtly drawing-rooms, nor would he suffer society at the federal capital to inflict such entertain-

ments upon him for its own amusement. Departing still further from the example of our two earlier administrations, he refused to have his birthday known or celebrated. On two days of the year, New Year's and the Fourth of July, the doors of the White House were kept open; and the former occasion, which proved the more suitable for the latitude of our Potomac capital, remained ever after its chief festal day. The Republican President and philosopher lived in one corner of the unfinished executive abode, then known as the "Palace," plain in his manners and always accessible to those who called. His salary and personal income he freely spent. He gave official dinners, entertaining public characters after the usual custom, and entertaining them handsomely; but he was heedless of nice questions of procedure in seating his guests. Jefferson's contempt, indeed, of courtly niceties of rank and etiquette caused some trouble in the diplomatic circle which surrounded him; and the new British minister, in particular, whose mind was too gross to take Republican humours lightly, displayed deep umbrage because the President received him in dressing-gown, slippers, and yarn stockings, when he went with gold lace and dress-sword to make his first official call. For Jefferson by this advanced time of life had come to indulge a widower's habits to his full bent; in dress he was careless, often slipshod, like one engrossed in other matters; he combined, too, the fashions of an old and new era, as might meet his own passing fancy. But his Virginian

stock and good-breeding were proof against mediocrity; and men of science, scholarship, and general worth and intelligence remained his most genial companions. He aimed at all times to set the popular fashion by his own delicate consideration for all who were made in God's image and sought self-improvement. With all his zeal for the new experiment of human freedom and equality at this late time of life, Jefferson showed habits, tastes, and general methods still savouring of that eighteenth century conservatism to which he had been educated; for the vigorous vulgarity of the Jackson administration in the course of public affairs was still far off. In short, Jefferson's personification was that of a President who introduced rather than embodied, in its fulness, modern America, modern politics, and our modern Democracy.

The rustic seclusion as yet of our federal capital, so grandly planned but so meanly endowed, made it much the easier for this first Republican President to indulge his simple preferences; and furthermore the White House had no mistress. When Jefferson's only children, his married daughters, now visited him, he enjoyed sitting on the floor and playing with his grandchildren. His younger daughter died during his first presidential term. Shunning grand tours and processions which would have placed him on exhibition, and travelling modestly between Washington and Monticello during the recess of Congress, he breathed the wholesome atmosphere of home and

old friends, while his fame extended far and wide without him.

Captivating manners, wide information, and quick sympathy with human nature — a book which he fully comprehended — must have assured one like Jefferson against contempt. Though free with his pen and freer still in conversation, — for there was red blood in whatever expressions he might apply to men or events, — he was true at heart to his philosophy and a genuine philanthropist. His general scholarship was remarkable for his times, and when a subject occupied his thoughts he investigated deeply. Discursive in conversation, and with a curious tendency to paradox, he would impart striking suggestions, and even enthusiasm. He corresponded well with the eminent *savans* of both continents. At his table he ate sparingly for himself and avoided stimulating liquors, — having, in fact, so long since shown his eclecticism in favour of delicate French wines and French cookery, that Patrick Henry once denounced him upon the stump as one who "abjured his native victuals;" and here he appeared easy and good-tempered, watchful of the moods of his guests, and taking care that the name of none of them should escape him. Not commonplace, therefore, nor with a mind which worked only in political grooves, he well maintained, after his peculiar fashion, the dignity of our most exalted station. He scrupulously avoided gift-taking, not less than nepotism, and on one occasion drew his check to pay the duties on imported

wines which he might have had free of the customs; making at the same time no merit of the action, for it never came to light until long after his death.

Jefferson's originality and his inclination to popular methods were impressed upon Congress at the earliest opportunity. Discontinuing in 1801, when the new legislature convened, the opening spectacle of cavalcade and ovation, with ceremonious address requiring a ceremonious answer, after the British fashion, he sent his message in writing to the two Houses, waiving the formalities of their solemn response. The reason he assigned for doing so was the convenience of Congress; political enemies said it was because he was so poor an orator; but the custom, at all events, has prevailed ever since, as fair and sensible.

But the same plastic touch was here felt in shaping out the public business as had obtained already in the executive branch, and in the general conduct of the party. With a good working majority in both Houses, which the people in their State constituencies took care should not henceforth be wanting, we find for the first time in the history of this Union an administration thoroughly permeating Congress and bringing that huge establishment into full accord. Unlike Washington, who would not, and John Adams, who could not, Jefferson from the start so managed his party friends in each branch of the legislature as to impress upon them his own views, and bring out the measures he most required; for, as he was wont to

say, if the Executive must go its own way and Congress theirs, with no effort to produce harmonious concert, government becomes an affair of chance and not design. The concert so desirable Jefferson thus accomplished, not by overbearing efforts to direct, nor by the insidious bribes of official patronage, but rather by his own sympathetic appreciation of what the public needed, and by his resolution never to secure more at a time than the public would bear. He was not without personal experience as a legislator in guiding the action of legislative bodies; and the presence, besides, of two chief officers in his Cabinet, — Madison of the State department and Gallatin of the Treasury, — both consummate party leaders while in Congress, might help to explain the mystery. Led, and led willingly, the two Houses of Congress most assuredly were; and they trusted more and more implicitly, as these eight years went on, to the Executive inspiration, and rarely, if ever, came in conflict with it. Republican members of Congress had, indeed, for the most part their own reputations to make among their several constituencies, and their rising hopes as individuals depended largely upon their great leader's success.

In fine, the policy of this remarkable administration was at once and steadily successful in winning the people; and the prestige of enthusiasm became irresistible when conjoined with the prestige of success. An Executive, neither the instrument of others nor a betrayer of trusts, we may regard Jefferson as the

genuine personator of that to which France's First Consul presented contemporaneously the counterfeit, — a leader of the common people in the direction of their best desires. American Democracy, in consequence, unlike that of France at this period, made a steady advance because ruled in the person of the wisest and truest Democrat of his times.

Jefferson, like most great administrators, had quite probably his crafty side. A quick discerner of character, he was sensible to every symptom of personal dislike or disaffection; where it proceeded from honest prejudice, no one could have striven with more kindly and assiduous tact to convert the enemy to a friend; but inveterate opposition he put down resolutely, though with rarely an open quarrel. The treacherous and recalcitrant among his associates he quietly thrust out from influence; and whether it were Burr's coquettish slyness or Randolph's conceit, degradation was the punishment inflicted, and the phalanx marched on. To Monroe's sensitiveness, on the other hand, Jefferson was very kind, for he knew that his young friend was honourable.

This Republican administration was greatly favoured at the outset by the foreign situation with France and Great Britain, as its predecessor left it. Following Washington's earlier example with Great Britain, John Adams had at length procured a corresponding adjustment of relations with France, though at the cost of disruption in his party and the bitterest per-

sonal humiliation. This peaceful adjustment gave the United States a rich development of neutral carrying trade during the struggle which shook the thrones of the Old World to their foundations.

Jefferson turned our young navy to good account in the interval, by setting to the civilized world the example of that new policy for dealing with the Barbary Powers, which he had broached in vain when at the Court of France, and once more in Washington's Cabinet. Instead of paying further tribute to them and taking international rights as a purchased concession, he attacked them in their own ports, and scourged them into decency. The United States were the first among Christian nations who thus made reprisal instead of ransom the rule of security to rightful commerce under a national flag against these plunderers of the Mediterranean.

But another, and the most brilliant exploit of Jefferson's whole foreign diplomacy, was in the peaceful acquisition of the vast Louisiana territory. Spain had deeded that domain to France; Napoleon for a brief space set his heart upon using that important acquisition as a means of regaining French influence upon the American continent. But forced to confine his immediate attention to his more pressing task of reorganizing Europe, he sold the domain suddenly to our new Republic, hoping thereby to attach this youngest in the family of nations more strongly to himself in his new war with Great Britain. The famous treaty, which was signed in May, 1803, fixed the purchase

price at the moderate sum of fifteen million dollars, with the further assumption of spoliation claims under the recent convention, — a trifling cost, in comparison with the firm establishment it gave us on this Western continent. By this sudden and in its full extent unexpected acquisition, the United States were indeed placed at the portals of an illustrious career. A stroke of the pen relieved us from the necessity of considering further whether the license of a European sovereign restrained him from shutting up the outlet of our Western commerce at New Orleans, besides excluding us, as he could hitherto have done, from the western bank of the Mississippi. A vast and unexplored territory was ours at once; perpetual immunity from dangerous rivals and neighbours; the sole possession of this river of rivers, with all its tributaries; a true dominating influence in the affairs of the North American continent, and national opportunities for the dim future almost depressing in their sublimity.

The peaceful acquisition of Louisiana on terms so honourable enhanced Jefferson's popularity, particularly in the South and West, and made his re-election to the Presidency triumphant over all opposition. But his conduct of internal affairs, in the mean time, had much to do with his progressive popularity. He had set out to develop not so much an external as an internal policy, and it was upon the latter that he at first and most constantly relied to give Republicanism stability and earn the general gratitude. As inciden-

tal to a sweeping and persistent policy of retrenchment and frugality, many more Federalist opponents were displaced by the abolition of the offices they had filled, than by the appointment of party favourites in their place. Retrenchment was exercised everywhere, — in the abolition of the excise and of the needless circuit courts; in the reduction of diplomatic establishments, which at that date was largely left to the President's discretion; in the consolidation of various revenue offices; and in the reduction of army and navy expenditures. Estimates and economies had always interested a mind curiously delighting in figures and statistics; and Jefferson laboured to simplify American finances so as to render them, to use his own expression, as clear and intelligent as a merchant's books.

For six years at least of this sanguine administration, the annual balance sheet of the Treasury showed a condition of affairs highly prosperous and encouraging. Our neutral commerce expanded so rapidly that the receipts of custom crept constantly upward, — all other modes of raising a revenue by taxation having been speedily dispensed with. The income from the sales of public lands nearly trebled during Jefferson's first term of office. To use his own words, the purse was supplied by economies so as to support the government properly and apply $7,300,000 a year toward reducing the public debt; discontinuing a great part of the former expense on armies and

navies, and yet leaving enough to protect our country and commerce; purchasing the vast Louisiana domain, and yet asking neither a new tax nor another soldier, but providing that this domain should pay for itself before the purchase money fell due. With the annual surplus Gallatin expected to cancel the national debt about the year 1817. If economies fell somewhat short of the estimates, the increase of import revenue beyond all expectation carried the young nation triumphantly in the direction desired, notwithstanding a protracted war with the Barbary Powers.

Meanwhile humanity went hopefully forward to win in our Union the last great victories of this earlier age. New Jersey, following New York in adopting the plan of gradual emancipation, was the last of the old thirteen States to join spontaneously the alliance of freedom. When 1808 arrived, the barrier set by our federal Constitution was passed and the African slave-trade abolished by an act of Congress to which Jefferson set his signature. Gladly would he have seen his native State obey at this time the better inspirations of Revolutionary days, and shake off a social bondage which cursed reciprocally. That might not be; but in his territorial management he employed his philanthropy with good effect upon the Western Indians. Their claims of occupancy were respected, and at the same time extinguished rapidly by fair purchase as openings became needful for Western settlements. In furtherance of a wise policy which experience had slowly developed, specu-

lations of land companies in this broad Mississippi valley were discouraged, and the pioneer bought his farm at a minimum cost by direct purchase from the government. As for the dusky aborigines who chased the buffalo, untamed like themselves, Jefferson longed to reclaim them from the savage state, and lead them, if possible, to civilized pursuits and settlements in fixed habitations. "In truth," he wrote, "the ultimate point of rest and happiness for them is to let our settlements and theirs meet and blend together, to intermix and become one people."

But one more Congressional cycle remained, by March, 1807, to round out a long administration, peaceful, progressive, and constantly popular beyond all precedent. Six years of Jefferson had fixed immutably the republican character of these institutions, and vindicated this new American experiment of self-government. Our people were confident of their strength. The attractive example of honest economy and simplicity in the federal head so penetrated States and municipalities that even parsimony had grown more popular than a squandering munificence.

The time now rapidly approached, when, to judge by existing estimates, the Revolutionary debt would be wholly liquidated as it matured, leaving the national treasury full to overflowing and an annual surplus revenue to be disposed of. Jefferson's annual Message to Congress in 1806 had recommended a policy of internal improvements, with liberal establishments of

science and education, for whose proper scope an amendment of the Constitution would, he thought, be desirable; and the means of carrying out these magnificent projects he hoped to leave to his countrymen as a last bequest of patriotism. But now, suddenly and unexpectedly, the storm area of European war struck our Western coast. Great Britain with her Orders in Council, on the one hand, and Napoleon with his Berlin and Milan decrees, bore down upon our American commerce, already too protuberant for these belligerent powers to respect longer, while it enriched itself at their sacrifice.

The death struggle was coming for the European balance of power, and the chief powers engaged in it had ceased to care for international restraints. The adversaries now fought with whatever weapons might give conquest and supremacy. Each was agreed in the policy of compelling all remaining neutrals like the United States to become allies or tributaries, or else crushing out their rich commerce altogether.

It was in vain, at such a juncture, that our government insisted on treaty rights or the observances of the law of nations, as credentials for maintaining their peaceful pursuits longer on the ocean. Jefferson had already resisted the British right of search and refused a new treaty with Great Britain, which left that pretentious claim outstanding. The outrage of the "Chesapeake," when the crew of an American public vessel were mustered on deck by British naval officers

for the abduction of its seamen as British subjects, made a rankling wound which was not healed by the reparation tardily offered. And worse still were those decrees of pretended retaliation upon one another by the great belligerents, under whose operation our commerce was threatened by the Scylla and Charybdis of confiscation, as it chose to obey the one or the other.

Jefferson's plan for this latter culmination was awaited and implicitly followed by Congress. He proposed an embargo, in the vain hope of bringing either France or Great Britain to terms. The act passed Congress, December, 1807, in secret session, after a debate of scarcely three days in the House and four hours in the Senate. Astonishing, surely, the magical spell which a chief magistrate had laid upon a legislature as free and uncorrupt as ever assembled, when the most rigorous measure ever yet enacted by our national legislature, as affecting private property on the mere anticipation of war, passed thus readily. The forcible detention of our own ships and cargoes in order to avoid sure capture was at first yielded to with comparative loyalty; but the resistance soon became so great in the Eastern States, the seat of American commerce, that Congress in its final session, with the administration, had to beat a precipitate retreat.

That final winter's trial was the sorest of Jefferson's whole life. He had made his last effort to maintain our neutral independence by diplomatic shifts which

avoided war by appealing to the honour or self-interest of European powers with whom we held intercourse. But the experiment failed, and with it the hope of peace and internal development he had so fondly cherished. He had sunk in public estimation, as the wizard long infallible, who fails palpably at length to perform the expected miracle; and sensitive of his loss of popularity, as he had been in earlier times when Governor of Virginia, he left the Executive station in March, weary and disappointed, glad sincerely to escape the cares of office; and yet his success had been sufficient for his permanent fame.

A few words concerning the antagonism which had developed between this administration and the Supreme Court may be here appropriate. Men are often prone to attribute more to a leader of strong character and intellect than he can fairly claim. This is peculiarly a professional foible; and professional men whose political bias has led them to sneer at Jefferson and to despise Madison as no lawyers at all, will laud and magnify Hamilton as the originating genius of our federal Constitution, and Marshall as its prime expounder. But there were State judges before Marshall who had ruled that legislation which comes in conflict with the written instrument of government must fail; and some of Marshall's most famous opinions which deduce implied powers from the federal instrument have failed of their full force.

We would not abate a tithe of the just veneration and renown with which Marshall inspired the American people, after time had confirmed him in that exalted judicial independence from whose height the sea of party strife seems wrinkling in the distance. But Marshall in these earlier days was fresh from party politics, and his first great effort from the bench was to bend the Republican administration to the fulfilment of the ignoble task he had attempted in the State department, against the wishes and choice of the people, to intrench the defeated party in the offices. The effort in *Marbury* v. *Madison* was that of a Chief Justice who felt still the vindictive passions of a Secretary of State.

John Marshall did not come into conflict with Jefferson's administration on great issues of constitutional authority; the collision was rather a political and personal one. Jefferson, Madison, and Marshall were old neighbours and Virginians; each knew the others too well to be extravagant over faults or virtues. The two former as Presidents in turn did not administer the government on the theory of a weak or a dissoluble State compact; and they neither needed help nor endured constraint from the bench for settling this constitutional system into an efficient one. Judicial doctrines of the United States Bank, and of the power to spend the revenues of this Union upon roads and canals, belong in fact to a later epoch. Jefferson had not hesitated to meet the issue too eagerly thrust upon him of suffering his political

foes to retreat into the life offices and make a last barricade of the federal patronage. Marshall was humiliated by the failure of the midnight appointments, and later by the repeal of the act which established the circuit courts. Nor had his partisan resentment wholly passed away, we may well surmise, when Aaron Burr, bankrupt in purse and reputation, came in peril of the gallows after the exposure of his treasonable Western conspiracy during Jefferson's second term. If the President had urged on the prosecution, too eager, as it seemed, to crush the man who had once played treacherously to supplant him, Marshall appeared not less sedulous to protect the culprit. Whether upon sound reasoning or otherwise, the chief justice at Burr's trial so laid down the law, and strained the admission of testimony, that prosecutions for treason against the Union must since have been scarcely worth attempting, on the strength of such a precedent. And while the case was pending he sent a subpœna ordering the President himself to appear at the trial and bring a certain paper with him. What process had the common law ever invoked to subordinate the sovereign to the courts? Jefferson sustained well the dignity of his station as the American chief executive. He gave the summons no notice; he would not go, but informed the district attorney that the paper might be obtained some other way. Marshall was wise enough to press the experiment no further; and our Supreme Court, in a later and wiser generation, has

refused to issue mandates to the President of the United States, when convinced of its own powerlessness to compel obedience.[1]

[1] See Mississippi *v.* Johnson, 4 Wall. 475, and the briefs of counsel which discuss this incident.

CHAPTER XIII.

FOUNDER OF A UNIVERSITY.

1809–1826.

THOUGH harassed and disappointed over the failure of his embargo experiment, when he retired from the Presidency, Jefferson was, after all, too much of a philosopher to take the vexation long to heart. "I have learned to expect," were his own judicious words in his first inaugural address, "that it will rarely fall to the lot of imperfect man to retire from this station with the reputation and the favour which bring him into it." The motives of his embargo were honest, at all events, notwithstanding the bitter aspersions of political enemies at the time; and that curious diplomatic resort evinced the original bent of his mind and his philanthropic distaste for open war. War, as the event proved, was the only adequate means left for vindicating our independence as a nation, and divorcing this hemisphere finally and forever from European domination. Under the calm and logical Madison, Jefferson's next successor, with non-importation as the weapon which Congress now selected for negotiating between France and Great Britain, we soon reached a point where it was impossible to remain, dangerous to advance, but infamous to recede.

Meanwhile the ex-President remained too closely bound to his successor in ties of friendship not to influence the next administration, and too deeply rooted in the hearts of his fellow-countrymen not to regain popularity the moment there was chance for comparison. John Randolph once likened Jefferson's second term to Pharaoh's lean kine, which swallowed up the fat ones; and yet, to correct the simile, it was nearly seven years of plenty to one of famine. But that year of famine had been his last, and it is the final exit which gives applause to an administration or denies it. In the five more years of misery and humiliation to our people before Napoleon's once dazzling star faded in the horizon, thousands of Americans looked back with fond regret upon the earlier and prosperous era of Jeffersonian economies and simplicity, and so, once more, through the hard years of recuperation under Monroe's administration, which followed the inflated prosperity of exhausting war.

To Madison and Monroe, the greatest of Virginia's sons who had followed his Republican lead, Jefferson proved a constant friend. It was a final proof of his firm but delicate management in political affairs that this new Virginia dynasty held the chief magistracy of our Union for twenty-four uninterrupted years. Their own pre-eminent abilities and public desert alone did not secure Madison and Monroe this enviable distinction; but the gentle tact of their chieftain, also, in assuaging their injurious rivalry, and reconciling the

latter to a subordinate station where he might gain by co-operating. Jackson, in after years, a chieftain of very different methods, compelled the Democracy, upon his retirement, to take his favourite for its next candidate; but the dictation did him and the successor injury. Jefferson preferred Madison to Monroe, for immediate promotion, as he should have done, and showed the latter, besides, that his chance lay in work, not rivalry. The sobriety of Madison, a man almost unrivalled in dispassionate debate, his prudence, his logical powers, his sound but conservative statesmanship, his lofty patriotism and remarkable public experience, — all his happy qualifications for supreme office, with just that want of confident enthusiasm, nerve, and fertility of resources, besides, which placed him at disadvantageous contrast with his great predecessor, — are as clear as sunshine; but Monroe is never to be clearly understood by posterity, without allowing that, pure in heart and lofty in aims, as he always was, his sensitive feelings and rash impulsiveness carried him often astray in earlier life, until, after long schooling in the lessons of intellectual patience, he broadened into his best.

On the important measures of the next sixteen years, and more especially through Madison's immediate Presidency, Jefferson was a free and confidential counsellor. The relations, in fact, which bound together in perfect harmony Jefferson and Madison through the last twenty-five years of public activity in

their joint lives, is without a parallel in popular government: so well fitted by differences of age, talent, experience, and temperament, was the one to direct and the other to follow gracefully; Jefferson, with pen or voice, tingeing each expression with the deep feeling which glowed within him, while Madison shrunk from all personalities, and linked calm premises to conclusions as though human passions bent implicitly to reason. The one welcomed, no doubt, the restraints of judicious counsel, and the other that invigoration which comes in glowing moments from prophetic and confident intuition.

During Monroe's administration Jefferson ceased to watch public affairs closely, and seldom gave counsel. But that tranquil "era of good feeling" when parties were amalgamated, he did not believe would long continue. In the angry strife over the Missouri question his bias went insensibly to the South, and the compromise settlement by a geographical line made him almost despondent of the future. "The question sleeps for the present, but is not dead," was his foreboding comment. Yet once and again he tried to rally Virginia to purge her institutions of slavery, and extirpate the curse before it was too late. When, in 1828, President Monroe consulted him upon the plans of the Holy Alliance, proposing that famous announcement which still immortalizes his name, Jefferson's response rang out once more as of old. For in his own remarkable letters, scouring through the symptoms of the future, one might have seen the

germ of the Monroe Doctrine twenty years before. "This question," he now wrote enthusiastically, "is the most momentous which has ever been offered to my contemplation since that of Independence. That made us a nation; this sets our compass, and points the course which we are to steer through the ocean of time opening on us. . . . Our first and fundamental maxim should be, never to entangle ourselves in the broils of Europe; our second, never to suffer Europe to meddle with cis-Atlantic affairs."

As a further illustration of his kindness of heart, Jefferson rescued his perishing friendship with old John Adams, which presidential rivalry had once so nearly wrecked, by laying hold of opportunities, while in and out of office, for renewing their mutual confidences. Through a mutual friend a reconciliation was finally established soon after Jefferson's retirement from office; and the country long enjoyed the glad spectacle of their two venerable ex-Presidents united in brotherly ties and in the substantial support of their successor's policy through the perilous era of a new war with the mother-country. Though never meeting again in person, the intimacy of Adams and Jefferson was kept up for the rest of their lives by correspondence; and a veteran intimacy of patriotic souls more touching was never beheld. Both loved in their later letters to discourse of old Revolutionary events and of religion; and on the latter subject they were soon in close accord.

Jefferson's religious views, indeed, were liable, while he lived, to the grossest misconception. The orthodox clergy of New England had identified him, while politics raged hotly, with all the worst excesses of the French Revolution; they had coupled his name with Tom Paine's, and warned their congregations in 1800 that the election of such a man would be the signal for breaking down the pulpits, burning up Bibles, and enthroning the goddess of reason. To such anathemas of the Puritan priesthood Jefferson made response quite as severe, which he was capable of doing. But in truth his own views clearly receded from French scepticism after his return from Paris. Never a blasphemer nor a scoffer at divine truths, but one rather who inclined to apply scientific methods, imperfect as they must ever continue, to resolving those problems of future existence which are clear only to the eye of faith, Jefferson respected steadily the right of private judgment in the interpretation of creeds. He actually investigated for himself (which is more than the flatterers of science are apt to do), and claimed consistently that religion was a matter which lay between man and his God, evinced, as concerns the world, by each one's daily life. He was no foe to the moralities and decencies of life; but in his own public example singularly pure in his visible relations, attached to the home life, constant to the memory of the wife who had died early, and both a father and mother to the two young daughters. In religious views, during these last years of final retirement from

office, he came into near accord with Priestley, a man whom John Adams also admired for his purity of heart; and he showed much fondness for comparing Christ's teachings with those of the chief pagan philosophers. Rejecting, or rather waiving the points of Scriptural inspiration, like many a New England Unitarian since, Jefferson was certainly not less than a Deist; and more than that, he was well convinced of the loftiness of the Christian system, and of the sublime humanity of its great Founder. While yet President of the United States, he was seen sitting with the Bible in his hands for hours, upon the untimely death of his younger daughter, Maria, whose loss left the world less bright to him; and again, we may observe him cutting out from a Testament the discourses of Christ, and pasting them upon the leaves of a scrap-book in avowed admiration of "the most innocent, the most benevolent, the most eloquent and sublime character that has ever been exhibited to men."

During the last years of his prolonged life, however, Jefferson devoted himself most strenuously to the work of higher education in his State and neighbourhood, renewing the fond affection of his youth. The University of Virginia — "this darling child of his old age," as Mr. Randall so happily terms it — was the fruition of schemes cherished long before by Jefferson, while he was Governor of his State, and developed during his later diplomatic sojourn abroad. He had

postponed the subject necessarily while engrossed in the cares of State, but he had never forgotten it. With the innate pride of a Virginian, Jefferson had long aimed to place the Old Dominion foremost among the whole sisterhood of States in elevating the standards of education, as she already was foremost in years and political influence. As early as 1779 he had introduced into the General Assembly a bill for the wider diffusion of knowledge in the State. Its unit was to be the district school, which had proved so valuable an institution in New England; next in grade were proposed grammar and classical schools still open to all youth; and, crowning the whole, a State university, to which, by a system of public selection, the choicest youth of the lower grades, however poor or humble, might be promoted. That scheme was laid aside, for few Virginians of influence cared for the education of the poorer trash about them; but the connection of popular and higher education in a State as a comprehensive whole, always remained in Jefferson's mind, and to the end of his life he cherished the wish of bringing to light by such processes that genius which lies latent in the common people, and developing it with the full assistance of a liberal education, generously supplied from the public treasury.

Little as New England orthodoxy had sympathized with him personally, Jefferson greatly admired the common-school system of that section of the Union; but he could not persuade his own State to adopt it.

With corresponding ill-success, too, did he strive to impress upon Virginia the compact New England establishment of township governments, those primaries of rugged independence and patriotic self-respect, whose energetic concentration, unlike the diffuse efforts of his own rural neighbours in county meetings, he had experienced not with unmixed displeasure at the time of the embargo. "I felt," he said, "the foundations of the government shaken under my feet by the New England townships. There was not an individual in these States whose body was not thrown with all its momentum into action."

This later age of progressive homogeneousness has seen Virginia launched at length into the gratifying experiment of a comprehensive common-school instruction; while Jefferson's own practical accomplishments were necessarily confined to the more exclusive scope of University education. While Governor of Virginia he had contemplated his own Alma Mater, William and Mary College, as the appropriate seat of supreme learning, and had somewhat earlier tried his hand at broadening its obviously cramped foundations. But while abroad his mind became familiarized with European university methods, from whose comparative study he returned home with ideas which not even Harvard, Yale, or Princeton had yet imported. Hitherto our best type of higher education was British-colonial; we emulated Oxford and Cambridge, but resembled rather Eton, Harrow, Rugby, and the other higher English schools in stan-

dard. Jefferson's educational ideas were eclectic, and embraced whatever was admirable in the continental establishments of learning. Edinburgh and Geneva he praised as "the two eyes of Europe." No longer satisfied with the usual curriculum whose stereotyped course of instruction was confined to Greek and Latin, with a smattering of other liberal studies, his plans embraced a broad classification of useful sciences, adding, as university features, military education, technology, agriculture, and the liberal arts. From the college he expanded into the true university idea of maintaining distinct professional schools, where not only law, theology, and medicine might be taught, but other branches of generous training. So expansive a scheme of higher education he did not expect to realize at once upon the bounty of Virginia; but the bold outlines of such a plan may be seen projected in his correspondence about the close of the war with Great Britain.

Jefferson's more immediate schemes developed from a languishing local seminary at Charlottesville known as the "Albemarle Academy." With the aid of other private subscriptions besides his own, he procured an enlargement of its operations into an institution which was incorporated in 1816 by the name of the "Central College." The Presidential trio of Virginians, Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe, led at once the illustrious list of its board of visitors; and under such powerful auspices an act from the

Virginia legislature was procured, two years later, which appropriated fifteen thousand dollars a year for the support of a State university where all the branches of useful science should be taught. Jefferson's advice swayed the opinions of colleagues only less distinguished than himself, appointed on a commission by the Governor of the State to report a site, a plan of building, and a scheme of instruction to the next legislature. Their report, which Jefferson prepared, was a remarkable one; and acting upon its suggestions, the legislature passed in 1819 the act which founded the "University of Virginia" for the first time as a definite institution, with "Central College" at Charlottesville for its basis.

Of a board of seven visitors appointed by the Executive of the State, under this statute, to supervise and control the affairs of the University, Jefferson was chosen rector; and henceforth, during the last seven years of his life, the venerable statesman, soon to enter the rare cycle of fourscore, became the directing and shaping power of the whole enterprise. His immediate proximity to the site selected, his transcendent fame, and the supreme interest he had manifested in the cause induced the other visitors to leave in his hands almost the entire practical development of this new enterprise.

Not only in devising the entire system of instruction to be pursued, but in planning and erecting the buildings and providing for the material comfort and accommodation of future students and instructors, did

Jefferson's creative skill dominate. It was his policy from the outset to push forward a work of magnificent construction, and rear in his little market town, hitherto attractive only from its salubrious mountain surroundings, an architectural pile which should instantly appeal to the imagination, and attract from abroad such distinguished savants as he proposed inviting presently to fill the chief professorships. The general arrangement of the university buildings was accordingly unique. They occupied three sides of a vast quadrangular lawn fronting inward, the two longest of them being devoted to "pavilions," or professors' houses, with intervening rows of students' apartments more modest in height, and consisting of a single story, faced with colonnades which opened, like all other main aspects of this academic village, upon the grassy enclosure of the great campus. A large rotunda for library and lecture halls rose superbly from the third and intermediate side, approached by long steps and lofty columns and surmounted by a spacious dome. Columns and capitals were chiselled in Italy; fragments of the celebrated Roman ruins seemed visible from various points of view; and the whole structure and arrangement of the vast collegiate quadrangle, open at the lower end, might suggest in sombre red brick St. Peter's with its cloistered approach on either side, except that here, in place of the great Christian edifice itself for a central glory, rose a model of the Roman Pantheon, reduced to one third of its original size, and here adapted to the

temple, not of all the gods, nor of the one living God, but of all sciences. Something of Monticello, too, was in the atmosphere of this unique creation.

These university buildings, still preserved as Jefferson planned and built them, exhibit, like his famed dwelling-house, the combined effects of study and foreign observation, — not always harmonious, to be sure, but with picturesque and delicate effect in bringing the best influences of the Old World to grace the growth of the new. Roman, Tuscan, and mediæval architecture are here cunningly arranged to make their silent impression upon the American youth; and in marble capitals and classic columns, as one saunters to and from his daily recitations, the fragmentary remnants of world-renowned edifices haunt insensibly his imagination. The very ground plans of the buildings and every material estimate and architectural detail, down to the mortar and foundation stones, were the historic product of one constructive mind.

Jefferson gave freely and unstintingly of his time and energy to the cause of the university; which alone, from posterity's standpoint, must prove of incalculable worth. In his correspondence with the great and learned of both hemispheres he advertised the institution far and wide. It was the last fond darling of his enthusiasm. But the immediate cost of the buildings — about three hundred thousand dollars — so far exceeded the general expectation as

to produce great discontent in the State, and threaten the enterprise with failure; and some Virginians went so far as to charge Jefferson and his able coadjutor and confidant, Joseph Carrington Cabell, who served in the legislature, with drawing the State on artfully from one appropriation to another until it foundered in the mire of palpable indebtedness. Indeed these earnest patrons had constant need of their most ingenious skill and resources to establish this new university securely; for against them were arrayed the public sloth and parsimony which counted for cardinal virtues in Southern State administration at that epoch; the powerful opposition of old William and Mary College, and its conservative friends; rival constituencies, jealous of the favour which had exalted Albemarle County to such preference; and, not least of all, that favourite policy which disperses all bounties of a commonwealth for local benefit rather than combine them for one great result, — "the worst of all enemies," as a recent writer has remarked, "to the idea of State universities." By selecting Dr. Cooper, the Unitarian Priestley's friend, for a professional chair, Jefferson so offended the prepossessions of many whose good-will was essential that the obnoxious arrangement had to be cancelled; and even then his adversaries claimed strenuously that the intention was to make this new institution a bulwark of infidelity.

The triumph over formidable opposition here upon the soil of the Old Dominion in what Cabell once called the "holy cause of the University," and the first

triumph of the kind, makes university training the desirable capstone of popular education for every State. Those prosperous commonwealths of the Mississippi Valley, reared upon Virginia's northwestern territorial cession, and endowed severally upon their admission to the Union from the public lands, owe other debts of their own to Jefferson's foresight and philanthropy. And in his own reluctant State, with plans for rearing the youth too comprehensive to be realized in his own generation, Jefferson gave, what few have ever afforded, the fervour and energy of old age. "A system of general instruction," he wrote in 1818, "which shall reach every description of our citizens, from the richest to the poorest, as it was the earliest, so will it be the latest, of all the public concerns in which I shall permit myself to take an interest."

The first rector of the University of Virginia lived long enough to see the institution opened in the spring of 1825, with a fair roll of students for matriculation and a corps of able professors, most of whom he imported from Europe, recognizing that in the world of letters a young Republic must not be self-sufficient. Vicissitudes shared by Virginia herself have kept this institution, perhaps, from making its impression felt throughout the Union; but the oldest and richest of America's institutions have in later times enlarged, one after another, their sphere of activities upon a similar model. All the strong ideas

which Jefferson's university put in force for the first time upon American soil, remain to this day as the founder fixed them, — the distinct schools in which one may specialize his knowledge; the substitution of electives for the routine of a curriculum; the honour system of discipline among students, which sets them to influencing one another and makes a law of liberty; and finally, an even balance between all religious and political sects and parties. In matters of the higher education Jefferson as a close student of comparative systems and an adapter to the American age was much farther in advance of his times than in politics; and hence his fame in that respect has come less rapidly, but it will come at last.[1]

[1] See more fully on this subject Dr. Herbert B. Adams's excellent monograph on "Thomas Jefferson and the University of Virginia."

CHAPTER XIV.

CONCLUSION.

JULY 4, 1826.

No one ever bestowed more generously the coinage of his brain than Thomas Jefferson. Whether in science, politics, or education, he claimed no monopoly, no royalty for himself. Except for that brief period at the bar before public interests engrossed his attention, every product of his genius went into the vast reservoir of human knowledge freely and forever dedicated to the good of the human race. With the periodical income of his farm or his office he was scarcely less liberal. We have seen him at the outset of his married life methodical and calculating as to his private revenues; but long public service, with its vaster concerns, is apt to weaken insensibly, on the one hand, the fibre of personal thrift and alacrity; while, on the other, as though to double the difficulty of economizing, fame and high station bring the strain of lavish entertainment.

Land ownership in Virginia tended in these times to impoverishment, under the faults of her social system, and the crushing exhaustion of two wars. The incumbrance of British debts on his wife's acquisition, and the paper depreciation of our Revolution swept

away in pecuniary sacrifice nearly half of Jefferson's estate. Embargo, non-intercourse, and the War of 1812 created a new oppression, with monetary revulsions, and a ruined market for crops. His unswerving constancy to the cause of American independence cost him heavily. Always disposed, moreover, while in the service of the United States, to spend in politics and hospitality the whole net income from his lands, and every dollar of his official salary, Jefferson left the Presidency owing a debt most of which was incurred during his last two embarrassing years. Prudence and privacy of living, upon his retirement, might soon, under ordinary straits, have restored the equilibrium of his resources; but to add to the maelstrom of European commotions into which neutral America was gradually drawn, Jefferson's unique and conspicuous position left him no real retirement for the remainder of his life. Years after he had left official station, Monticello was overrun with pilgrims, from the illustrious to the impertinent; and in his kindly efforts to meet this constant influx of guests and gazers with a style of entertainment becoming the friend of the people, his debt grew instead of diminishing, since government had ceased contributing to his income. And finally, as though to give the *coup-de-grâce* to his pecuniary misfortunes, Jefferson indorsed heavily for a personal friend, whose sense of honour was greater than his abilities; and in that friend's failure he became hopelessly embarrassed.

Humiliation and sorrow might have clouded these last years of his prolonged life, through which, nevertheless, he was working out his greatest problems of public education; but now from all parts of the Union came proffers of assistance, and a popular subscription relieved the old man from immediate distress, so that he closed his eyes upon the world in peace and gratitude. Such filial assistance has not since been unknown in patriotic instances; and no tribute from a Republic can be more appropriate than these untaxed offerings of the conscience, — the tithe which the prosperous yield spontaneously to the authors of their prosperity. And yet a delusion is apt to attend such contributions, for the strong impulse lasts only while the gaze is fixed in one direction.

Happily for Jefferson he died while the movement on his personal behalf was fresh; and his death, which came after a very brief illness, was gentle and tranquil. The sun of a long life sank serenely, and his farewell to the world was formulated in an affectionate good-night to the family which clustered by his bedside; then on the morning of the 4th of July, 1826, he passed like a child into eternity, unconscious, as it seemed, of what that anniversary owed him. What a memorable celebration of American independence! Hundreds of miles distant, his old comrade of the Revolution, John Adams, passed away before that anniversary sun had set; recalling in his own last conscious articulation the occasion and the companionship. It was one of those rare coinci-

dences which history lends to eloquence and immortal remembrance.

Before he died, Jefferson drew a rough sketch of his own monument as he wished it placed in his cemetery lot. It was a simple obelisk, and bore this epitaph for an inscription: "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 wishes were sacredly followed. In this last and most solemn appeal for fame and recognition we may perceive that Jefferson's most enduring pride was not in party triumphs, nor in honours of public station, nor even in that supreme of our political titles, President of the United States, but in the calmer authorship of great works for the general benefit of posterity and his fellow-men.

Jefferson remains a creative force in American life, — a maker of America. As to his political philosophy, the test may now be compressed into a hypothesis. "If Jefferson was wrong," it has been well observed,[1] "America is wrong; if America is right, Jefferson was right." For his intuitions and his teachings were those of the nineteenth century; and in the nineteenth century's experiment with Democracy, which has thus far been carried forward so splendidly, must lie his vindication or his doom. For while the most

[1] James Parton's Life of Thomas Jefferson, preface.

distinguished contemporaries of his age were for repressing popular tendencies, he led in giving them free and confident scope.

Jefferson's faults of character, which first became manifested after his French experience, — dissimulation, intrigue, adroit management, a certain art of drawing the chair from under a foe instead of striking him down, "a knack of shunning danger," as enemies expressed it, and a disposition to exonerate himself from blame under all circumstances, and even though employing others to detract, may be detected in acts of his later career while the responsible chief and organizer of the Republican party and immersed in political strife. In political methods and temperament he grew to be more of the French than of the English school, — plausible and diplomatic rather than curt and offensive; just as at his table his palate became partial to delicate French viands and cookery. But while in responsible authority, Jefferson threw his meaner weapons aside. He was sound in his native faith; sincere and attached to all followers; remarkably tolerant except toward such as had provoked his revenge, and those he spared not on opportunity. His innermost wish was to be friendly with the great majority, friend of the people; and the love of popularity disposed him in public conduct to temporize. He was an idealist, but enough of a statesman besides to understand that mankind are more won by facts than theories. In general direction he never swerved; he led by flight, drawing the multitude after him, not soaring as the lark

above them. To such a statesman the best attainable for the times is the best; he errs with his age, but he advances it.

Much of Jefferson's remarkable influence was due to his attractive style as a writer. Phrases from his letters and public documents, sometimes fervent, sometimes humorous, circulated through the land like silver coin. He wrote and he talked with warm blood coursing through his veins; and though the shaft might rankle where it was driven, it struck the mark. Vigour, liveliness, and choice felicity of expression marked his style, which was nevertheless scholarly; and while so many of his age modelled their style upon Addison and the "Spectator," sought out the sonorous and balanced their periods laboriously, admitting no word that might not be found in Johnson's dictionary, he preferred rather the figurative, and aimed to make the English vocabulary more copious. His style, like that of every master, was an image of himself, and adaptive he meant it to be to the current American age and institutions.

Jefferson's original character, in short, has most powerfully contributed in forming that of his country. Liberal education, liberal politics, liberal religion; a free press; America for Americans; faith in the simple arts of peace, in science, in material progress, in popular rule, in honesty, in government economies; no kings, no caste, room for the oppressed of all climes; hostility to monopolies, the divorce of gov-

ernment from banks, from pet corporations, and from every form of paternalism; foreign friendship and intercourse without foreign alliances; the gradual propagation of republican ideas on this Western hemisphere while gently forcing Europe out; meagre force establishments, meagre preparations for war in time of peace, a leaning toward militia and State volunteers for defence in emergencies rather than dependence upon national troops and prætorian guards; faith in the indefinite expansion of this Union, and of the practice of self-government upon this continent, to the ultimate exclusion of crowns and monarchs: all this, though others inculcated some of these maxims too, is Jeffersonism, — for Jefferson's inspiration propagated the faith, — and Jeffersonism is modern America.

Jefferson was wont to observe that the people afford the safest repository of power in a government like ours, because the most honest, though at the same time not always the wisest. In that qualification we may trace the fibre of his statesmanship. Demagogues he detested, as must every man of honour. He did not solicit the great host of inexperience to find ideas and opinions for him; he did not flatter ignorance, nor pander to passions, nor lead as though the rule for public leadership were to study symptoms and catch the latest infection; but like one who felt his own talents and attainments to be above the average, he gave the best of his ability to the good of the people, and led as one responsible wherever he was

trusted to lead at all. Acknowledging public opinion as the true fountain-head of authority, he neither fought it stubbornly, nor bent in base subservience; but confident that the impulses of the people were right impulses, and patient of their temporary errors as of his own, he strove to advance permanently their true interests. Such self-respecting statesmanship alone can win in a republic of hearts the meed of lasting gratitude.

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