Theodore Roosevelt

A Trapper Chased by the Blackfeet Indians.

(From a drawing by Paxson.)

DAKOTA EDITION

THE WINNING OF THE WEST

AN ACCOUNT OF THE EXPLORATION AND SETTLEMENT OF OUR COUNTRY FROM THE ALLEGHANIES TO THE PACIFIC

BY

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THE WINNING OF THE WEST

CHAPTER I

INTRIGUES AND LAND SPECULATIONS—THE TREATIES OF JAY AND PINCKNEY, 1793–1797

THROUGHOUT the history of the winning of the West what is noteworthy is the current of tendency rather than the mere succession of individual events. The general movement, and the general spirit behind the movement, became evident in many different forms, and if attention is paid only to some particular manifestation we lose sight of its true import and of its explanation. Particular obstacles retarded or diverted, particular causes accelerated, the current; but the set was always in one direction. The peculiar circumstances of each case must always be taken into account, but it is also necessary to understand that it was but one link in the chain of causation.

Such events as Burr's conspiracy, or the con-

quest of Texas, cannot be properly understood if we fail to remember that they were but the most spectacular or most important manifestations of what occurred many times. The Texans won a striking victory and performed a feat of the utmost importance in our history; and, moreover, it happened that at the moment the accession of Texas was warmly favored by the party of the slaveholders. Burr had been Vice-President of the United States, and was a brilliant and able man, of imposing personality, whose intrigues in the West attracted an attention altogether disproportionate to their real weight. In consequence, each event is often treated as if it were isolated and stood apart from the general current of western history; whereas in truth each was but the most striking or important among a host of others. The feats performed by Austin and Houston and the other founders of the Texan Republic were identical in kind with the feats merely attempted, or but partially performed, by the men who, like Morgan, Elijah Clark, and George Rogers Clark, at different times either sought to found colonies in the Spanish-speaking lands under Spanish authority, or else strove to conquer these lands outright by force of arms. Boon settled in Missouri when it was still under the Spanish Government, and himself accepted a Spanish commission. Whether Missouri had or had not been ceded first by Spain

to France and then by France to the United States early in the present century, really would not have altered its final destiny, so far at least as concerns the fact that it would ultimately have been independent of both France and Spain, and would have been dominated by an English-speaking people; for when once the backwoodsmen, of whom Boon was the forerunner, became sufficiently numerous in the land they were certain to throw off the yoke of the foreigner; and the fact that they had voluntarily entered the land and put themselves under this yoke would have made no more difference to them than it afterwards made to the Texans. So it was with Aaron Burr. His conspiracy was merely one, and by no means the most dangerous, of the various conspiracies in which men like Wilkinson, Sebastian, and many of the members of the early Democratic societies in Kentucky, bore a part. It was rendered possible only by the temper of the people and by the peculiar circumstances which also rendered the earlier conspiracies possible; and it came to naught for the same reasons that they came to naught, and was even more hopeless, because it was undertaken later, when the conditions were less favorable.

The movement deliberately entered into by many of the Kentuckians in the years 1793 and 1794, to conquer Louisiana on behalf of France, must be treated in this way. The leader in this

movement was George Rogers Clark. His chance of success arose from the fact that there were on the frontier many men of restless, adventurous, warlike type, who felt a spirit of unruly defiance toward the home government and who greedily eyed the rich Spanish lands. Whether they got the lands by conquest or by colonization, and whether they warred under one flag or another was to them a matter of little moment. Clark's career is of itself sufficient to prove the truth of this. He had already been at the head of a movement to make war against the Spaniards, in defiance of the Central Government, on behalf of the western settlements. On another occasion he had offered his sword to the Spanish Government, and had requested permission to found in Spanish territory a State which should be tributary to Spain and a barrier against the American advance. He had thus already sought to lead the Westerners against Spain in a warfare undertaken purely by themselves and for their own objects, and had also offered to form, by the help of some of these Westerners, a State which should be a constituent portion of the Spanish dominion. He now readily undertook the task of raising an army of Westerners to overrun Louisiana in the interests of the French Republic. The conditions which rendered possible these various movements were substantially the same, although the immediate causes, or

occasions, were different. In any event, the result would ultimately have been the conquest of the Spanish dominions by the armed frontiersmen, and the upbuilding of English-speaking States on Spanish territory.

The expedition which, at the moment, Clark proposed to head, took its peculiar shape from outside causes. At this period Genet was in the midst of his preposterous career as Minister from the French Republic to the United States. The various bodies of men who afterwards coalesced into the Democratic-Republican party were frantically in favor of the French Revolution, regarding it with a fatuous admiration quite as foolish as the horror with which it affected most of the Federalists. They were already looking to Jefferson as their leader, and Jefferson, though at the time Secretary of State under Washington, was secretly encouraging them, and was playing a very discreditable part toward his chief. The ultra admirers of the French Revolution not only lost their own heads, but turned Genet's as well, and persuaded him that the people were with him and were ready to oppose Washington and the Central Government in the interests of revolutionary France. Genet wished to embroil America with England, and sought to fit out American privateers on the seacoast towns to prey on the English commerce, and to organize on the Ohio River an

armed expedition to conquer Louisiana, as Spain was then an ally of England and at war with France. All over the country Genet's admirers formed Democratic societies on the model of the Jacobin Clubs of France. They were, of course, either useless or noxious in such a country and under such a government as that of the United States, and exercised a very mischievous effect. Kentucky was already under the influence of the same forces that were at work in Virginia and elsewhere, and the classes of her people who were politically dominant were saturated with the ideas of those doctrinaire politicians of whom Jefferson was chief. These Jeffersonian doctrinaires were men who, at certain crises, in certain countries, might have rendered great service to the cause of liberty and humanity; but their influence in America was, on the whole, distinctly evil, save that, by a series of accidents, they became the especial champions of the westward extension of the nation, and in consequence were identified with a movement which was all-essential to the national well-being.

Kentucky was ripe for Genet's intrigues, and he found the available leader for the movement in the person of George Rogers Clark. Clark was deeply embittered, not only with the United States Government, but with Virginia, for the Virginia Assembly had refused to pay any of the debts he had

contracted on account of the State, and had not even reimbursed him for what he had spent.[1] He had a right to feel aggrieved at the State's penuriousness and her indifference to her moral obligations; and just at the time when he was most angered came the news that Genet was agitating throughout the United States for a war with England, in open defiance of Washington, and that among his plans he included a western movement against Louisiana. Clark at once wrote to him, expressing intense sympathy with the French objects and offering to undertake an expedition for the conquest of St. Louis and upper Louisiana, if he was provided with the means to obtain provisions and stores. Clark further informed Genet that his country had been utterly ungrateful to him, and that as soon as he received Genet's approbation of what he proposed to do, he would get himself "expatriated." He asked for commissions for officers, and stated his belief that the creoles would rise, that the adventurous Westerners would gladly throng to the contest, and that the army would soon be at the gates of New Orleans.[2]

Genet immediately commissioned Clark as a major-general in the service of the French Republic, and sent out various Frenchmen—Michaux,

[1] Draper MSS., J. Clark to G. R. Clark, December 27, 1792.

[2] *Ibid.*, letter of George Rogers Clark, February 5, 1793; also February 2d and February 3d.

La Chaise, and others—with civil and military titles, to co-operate with him, to fit out his force as well as possible, and to promise him pay for his expenses. Brown, now one of Kentucky's representatives at Philadelphia, gave these men letters of introduction to merchants in Lexington and elsewhere, from whom they got some supplies; but they found they would have to get most from Philadelphia.[1] Michaux was the agent for the French Minister, though nominally his visit was undertaken on purely scientific grounds. Jefferson's course in the matter was characteristic. Openly, he was endeavoring in a perfunctory manner to carry out Washington's policy of strict neutrality in the contest between France and England, but secretly he was engaged in tortuous intrigues against Washington and was thwarting his wishes, so far as he dared, in regard to Genet. It is impossible that he could have been really misled as to Michaux's character and the object of his visits; nevertheless, he actually gave him a letter of introduction to the Kentucky Governor, Isaac Shelby.[2] Shelby had shown himself a gallant and capable officer in warfare against both the Indians and the tories, but he possessed no

[1] Draper MSS., Michaux to George Rogers Clark, undated, but early in 1793.

[2] State Department MSS., Jefferson Papers, Series I., vol. v., p. 163.

marked political ability, and was entirely lacking in the strength of character which would have fitted him to put a stop to rebellion and lawlessness. He hated England, sympathized with France, and did not possess sufficient political good sense to appreciate either the benefits of the Central Government or the need of preserving order.

Clark at once proceeded to raise what troops he could, and issued a proclamation signed by himself as Major-General of the Armies of France, Commander-in-Chief of the French Revolutionary Legions on the Mississippi. He announced that he proposed to raise volunteers for the reduction of the Spanish posts on the Mississippi and to open the trade of that river, and promised all who would join him from one to three thousand acres of any unappropriated land in the conquered regions, the officers to receive proportionately more. All lawful plunder was to be equally divided according to the customs of war.[1] The proclamation thus frankly put the revolutionary legions on the footing of a gang of freebooters. Each man was to receive a commission proportioned in grade to the number of soldiers he brought to Clark's band. In short, it was a piece of sheer filibustering, not differing materially from one of Walker's filibustering attempts in Central America sixty years later, save that at this time Clark had

[1] Marshall, ii., 103.

utterly lost his splendid vigor of body and mind and was unfit for the task he had set himself. At first, however, he met with promises of support from various Kentuckians of prominence, including Benjamin Logan.[1] His agents gathered flat-boats and pirogues for the troops and laid in stores of powder, lead, and beef. The nature of some of the provisions shows what a characteristic backwoods expedition it was; for Clark's agent notified him that he had ready "upwards of eleven hundred weight of Bear Meat and about seventy or seventy-four pair of Veneson Hams." [2]

The Democratic societies in Kentucky entered into Clark's plans with the utmost enthusiasm, and issued manifestoes against the Central Government which were, in style, of hysterical violence, and, in matter, treasonable. The preparations were made openly, and speedily attracted the attention of the Spanish agents, besides giving alarm to the representatives of the Federal Government and to all sober citizens who had sense enough to see that the proposed expedition was merely another step toward anarchy. St. Clair, the Governor of the Northwestern Territory, wrote to Shelby to warn him of what was being done,

[1] Draper MSS., Benjamin Logan to George Rogers Clark, December 31, 1793.

[2] *Ibid.*, John Montgomery to George Rogers Clark, January 12, 1794.

and Wayne, who was a much more formidable person than Shelby or Clark or any of their backers, took prompt steps to prevent the expedition from starting by building a fort near the mouth of the Ohio, and ordering his lieutenants to hold themselves in readiness for any action he might direct. At the same time the Administration wrote to Shelby telling him what was on foot, and requesting him to see that no expedition of the kind was allowed to march against the domains of a friendly power. Shelby, in response, entered into a long argument to show that he could not interfere with the expedition, and that he doubted his constitutional power to do anything in the matter; his reasons being of the familiar kind usually advanced in such cases, where a government officer, from timidity or any other cause, refuses to do his duty. If his contention as to his own powers and the powers of the General Government had been sound, it would logically have followed that there was no power anywhere to back up the law. Innes, the Federal judge, showed himself equally lukewarm in obeying the Federal authorities.[1]

Blount, the Governor of the Southwestern Territory, acted as vigorously and patriotically as St. Clair and Wayne, and his conduct showed in marked contrast to Shelby's. He possessed far

[1] *American State Papers*, Foreign Relations, i., 454, 460; Marshall, ii., 93.

too much political good sense not to be disgusted with the conduct of Genet, which he denounced in unmeasured terms. He expressed great pleasure when Washington summarily rebuked the blatant French envoy. He explained to the Tennesseeans that Genet had as his chief backers the disappointed office-hunters and other unsavory characters in New York and in the seacoast cities, but that the people at large were beginning to realize what the truth was, and to show a proper feeling for the President and his Government.[1] Some of the Cumberland people, becoming excited by the news of Clark's preparation, prepared to join him, or to undertake a separate filibustering attack on their own account. Blount immediately wrote to Robertson directing him to explain to these "inconsiderate persons" that all they could possibly do was to attempt the conquest of West Florida, and that they would "lay themselves liable to heavy Pains and Penalties, both pecuniary and corporal in case they ever returned to their injured country." He warned Robertson that it was his duty to prevent the attempt, and that the legal officers of the district must proceed against any of the men having French commissions, and must do their best to stop the movement; which, he said, proceeded

[1] Robertson MSS., Blount's letter, Philadelphia, August 28, 1793.

"from the Machenations no doubt of that Jacobin Incendiary, Genet, which is reason sufficient to make every honest mind revolt at the Idea." Robertson warmly supported him, and notified the Spanish commander at New Madrid of the steps which he was taking; at which the Spaniards expressed great gratification.[1]

However, the whole movement collapsed when Genet was recalled early in 1794, Clark being forced at once to abandon his expedition.[2] Clark found himself out of pocket as the result of what he had done; and as there was no hope of reimbursing himself by Spanish plunder, he sought to obtain from the French Government reimbursement for the expenses, forwarding to the French Assembly, through an agent in France, his bill for the "Expenses of Expedition ordered by Citizen Genet." The agent answered that he would try to secure the payment; and after he got to Paris he first announced himself as hopeful; but later he wrote that he had discovered that the French agents were really engaged in a dangerous conspiracy against the western country, and he finally had to admit that the claim was disallowed.[3]

[1] Robertson MSS., Blount to Robertson, January 18, 1794; letter from Portello, New Madrid, January 17, 1794.

[2] Blount MSS., Blount to Smith, April 3, 1794.

[3] Draper MSS., Clark's accounts, August 23, 1794; Fulton to Clark, Nantes, November 16, 1794; *ibid.*, Paris, April 9 and 12, 1795.

With this squabble between the French and Americans the history of the abortive expedition ends.

The attempt, of course, excited and alarmed the Spaniards, and gave a new turn to their tortuous diplomacy. In reading the correspondence of the Spanish Governor, Baron Carondelet, both with his subordinates and with his superiors, it is almost amusing to note the frankness with which he avows his treachery. It evidently did not occur to him that there was such a thing as national good faith, or that there was the slightest impropriety in any form of mendacity when exercised in dealing with the ministers or inhabitants of a foreign State. In this he was a faithful reflex of his superiors at the Spanish Court. At the same time that they were solemnly covenanting for a definite treaty of peace with the United States they were secretly intriguing to bring about a rebellion in the western States; and while they were assuring the Americans that they were trying their best to keep the Indians peaceful, they were urging the savages to war.

As for any gratitude to the National Government for stopping the piratical expeditions of the Westerners, the Spaniards did not feel a trace. They had early received news of Clark's projected expedition[1] through a Frenchman who came to the

[1] Draper MSS., Spanish Documents, Carondelet to Alcudia, March 20, 1794.

Spanish agents at Philadelphia; and when the army began to gather they received from time to time from their agents in Kentucky reports which, though exaggerated, gave them a fairly accurate view of what was happening. No overt act of hostility was committed by Clark's people, except by some of those who started to join him from the Cumberland district, under the lead of a man named Montgomery. These men built a wooden fort at the mouth of the Cumberland River, and held the boats that passed to trade with Spain, one of the boats that they took being a scow loaded with flour and biscuit sent up-stream by the Spanish Government itself. When Wayne heard of the founding of this fort he acted with his usual promptness, and sent an expedition which broke it up and released the various boats. Then, to stop any repetition of the offence, and more effectually to curb the overbearing truculence of the frontiersmen, he himself built, as already mentioned, a fort at Massac, not far from the Mississippi. All this, of course, was done in the interests of the Spaniards themselves and in accordance with the earnest desire of the United States authorities to prevent any unlawful attack on Louisiana; yet Carondelet actually sent word to Gayoso de Lemos, the Governor of Natchez and the upper part of the river, to persuade the Chickasaws secretly to attack this fort and destroy it.

Carondelet always had an exaggerated idea of the warlike capacity of the Indian nations, and never understood the power of the Americans, nor appreciated the desire of their Government to act in good faith. Gayoso was in this respect a much more intelligent man, and he positively refused to carry out the orders of his superior, remonstrating directly to the Court of Spain, by which he was sustained. He pointed out that the destruction of the fort would merely encourage the worst enemies of the Spaniards, even if accomplished; and he further pointed out that it was quite impossible to destroy it; for he understood fully the difference between a fort garrisoned by Wayne's regulars and one held by a mob of buccaneering militia.[1]

It was not the first time that Gayoso's superior knowledge of the Indians and of their American foes had prevented his carrying out the orders of his superior officer. On one occasion Carondelet had directed Gayoso to convene the southern Indians, and to persuade them to send deputies to the United States authorities with proposals to settle the boundaries in accordance with the wishes of Spain, and to threaten open war as an alternative. Gayoso refused to adopt this policy, and persuaded Carondelet to alter it, showing that

[1] Draper MSS., Spanish Documents, Manuel Gayoso de Lemos to the Duc de Alcudia, Natchez, September 19, 1794.

it was necessary above all things to temporize, that such a course as the one proposed would provoke immediate hostilities, and that the worst possible line for the Spaniards to follow would be one of open war with the entire power of the United States.[1]

Of course, the action of the American Government in procuring the recall of Genet and putting a stop to Clark's operations lightened for a moment the pressure of the backwoodsmen upon the Spanish dominions; but it was only for a moment. The Westerners were bent on seizing the Spanish territory; and they were certain to persist in their efforts until they were either successful or were definitely beaten in actual war. The acts of aggression were sure to recur; it was only the form that varied. When the chance of armed conquest under the banner of the French Republic vanished, there was an immediate revival of plans for getting possession of some part of the Spanish domain through the instrumentality of the great land companies.

These land companies possessed on paper a weight which they did not have in actual history. They occasionally enriched, and more often impoverished, the individual speculators; but in the actual peopling of the waste lands they counted for little in comparison with the steady stream of

[1] Draper MSS., De Lemos to Carondelet, December 6, 1793.

pioneer farmers who poured in, each to hold and till the ground he in fact occupied. However, the contemporary documents of the day were full of details concerning the companies; and they did possess considerable importance at certain times in the settlement of the West, both because they in places stimulated that settlement, and because in other places they retarded it, inasmuch as they kept out actual settlers, who could not pre-empt land which had been purchased at low rates from some legislative body by the speculators. The companies were sometimes formed by men who wished themselves to lead emigrants into the longed-for region, but more often they were purely speculative in character, and those who founded them wished only to dispose of them at an advantage to third parties. Their history is inextricably mixed with the history of the intrigues with and against the Spaniards and British in the West. The men who organized them wished to make money. Their object was to obtain title to or possession of the lands, and it was quite a secondary matter with them whether their title came from the United States, England, or Spain. They were willing to form colonies on Spanish or British territory, and they were even willing to work for the dismemberment of the western territory from the Union, if by so doing they could increase the value of lands which they sought to acquire.

American adventurers had been in correspondence with Lord Dorchester, the Governor-General of Canada, looking to the possibility of securing British aid for those desirous of embarking in great land speculations in the West. These men proposed to try to get the Westerners to join with the British in an attack upon Louisiana, or even to conduct this attack themselves in the British interests, believing that with New Orleans in British hands the entire province would be thrown open to trade with the outside world and to settlement; with the result that the lands would increase enormously in value, and the speculators and organizers of the companies, and of the movements generally, grow rich in consequence.[1] They assured the British agents that the western country would speedily separate from the eastern States, and would have to put itself under the protection of some foreign state. Dorchester considered these plans of sufficient weight to warrant inquiry by his agents, but nothing ever came of them.

Much the most famous, or, it would be more correct to say, infamous, of these companies were those organized in connection with the Yazoo

[1] Canadian Archives, Dorchester to Sydney, June 7, 1789; Grenville to Dorchester, May 6, 1790; Dorchester to Beckwith, June 17, 1790; Dorchester to Grenville, September 25, 1790. See Brown's *Political Beginnings*, 187.

lands.[1] The country in what is now middle and northern Mississippi and Alabama possessed, from its great fertility, peculiar fascinations in the eyes of the adventurous land speculators. It was unoccupied by settlers, because as a matter of fact it was held in adverse possession by the Indians, under Spanish protection. It was claimed by the Georgians, and its cession was sought by the United States Government, so that there was much uncertainty as to the title, which could in consequence be cheaply secured. Wilkinson, Brown, Innes, and other Kentuckians had applied to the Spaniards to be allowed to take these lands and hold them, in their own interests, but on behalf of Spain, and against the United States. The application had not been granted, and the next effort was of a directly opposite character, the adventurers this time proposing, as they could not hold the territory as armed subjects of Spain, to wrest it from Spain by armed entry after getting title from Georgia. In other words, they were going to carry on war as a syndicate, the military operations for the occupation of the ceded territory being part of the business for which the company was organized. Their relations with the Union were doubtless to be determined by the course of events.

[1] The best and most thorough account of these is to be found in Charles H. Haskin's *The Yazoo Land Companies*.

This company was the South Carolina Yazoo Company. In 1789 several companies were formed to obtain from the Georgia Legislature grants of the western territory which Georgia asserted to be hers. One, the Virginia Company, had among its incorporators Patrick Henry, and received a grant of nearly 20,000 square miles, but accomplished nothing. Another, the Tennessee Company, received a grant of what is now most of northern Alabama, and organized a body of men, under the leadership of an adventurer named Zachariah Cox, who drifted down the Tennessee in flat-boats to take possession, and repeated the attempt more than once. They were, however, stopped, partly by Blount and partly by the Indians. The South Carolina Yazoo Company made the most serious effort to get possession of the coveted territory. Its grant included about 15,000 square miles in what is now middle Mississippi and Alabama; the nominal price being $67,000. One of the prime movers in this company was a man named Walsh, who called himself Washington, a person of unsavory character, who, a couple of years later, was hung at Charleston for passing forged paper money in South Carolina. All these companies had hoped to pay the very small prices they were asked for the lands in the depreciated currency of Georgia; but they never did make the full payments or

comply with the conditions of the grants, which therefore lapsed.

Before this occurred the South Carolina Yazoo Company had striven to take possession of its purchase by organizing a military expedition to go down the Mississippi from Kentucky. For commander of this expedition choice was made of a Revolutionary soldier named James O'Fallon, who went to Kentucky, where he married Clark's sister. He entered into relations with Wilkinson, who drew him into the tangled web of Spanish intrigue. He raised soldiers and drew up a formal contract, entered into between the South Carolina Yazoo Company and their troops of the Yazoo Battalion—over five hundred men in all, cavalry, artillery, and infantry. Each private was to receive two hundred and fifty acres of "stipendiary" lands and the officers in proportion, up to the lieutenant-colonel, who was to receive six thousand. Commissions were formally issued, and the positions of all the regular officers were filled, so that the invasion was on the point of taking place.[1] However, the Spanish authorities called the matter to the attention of the United States, and the Federal Government put a prompt stop[2]

[1] *American State Papers*, Indian Affairs, i., James O'Fallon to the President of the United States, Lexington, September 25, 1790, etc.

[2] Draper MSS., Spanish Documents, Carondelet to Alcudia, January 1, 1794, and May 31, 1794.

to the movement. O'Fallon was himself threatened with arrest by the Federal officers and had to abandon his project.[1] He afterwards re-established his relations with the Government and became one of Wayne's correspondents[2]; but he entered heartily into Clark's plans for the expedition under Genet and, like all the other participators in that wretched affair, became involved in broils with Clark and every one else.[3]

In 1795, the land companies, encouraged by the certainty that the United States would speedily take possession of the Yazoo territory, again sprang into life. In that year four—the Georgia, the Georgia-Mississippi, the Tennessee, and the upper Mississippi—companies obtained grants from the Georgia Legislature to a territory of over thirty millions of acres, for which they paid but five hundred thousand dollars, or less than two cents an acre. Among the grantees were many men of note—congressmen, senators, even judges. The grants were secured by the grossest corruption, every member of the Legislature who voted for them, with one exception, being a stockholder in some one of the companies, while the procuring of the cessions was undertaken by James Gunn,

[1] Draper MSS., Clark and O'Fallon Papers, anonymous letter to James O'Fallon, Lexington, March 30, 1791, etc.

[2] *Ibid.*, Wayne to O'Fallon, September 16, 1793.

[3] *Ibid.*, De Lemos to Carondelet, December 23, 1793.

one of the two Georgia Senators. The outcry against the transaction was so universal throughout the State that at the next session of the Legislature, in 1796, the acts were repealed and the grants rescinded. This caused great confusion, as most of the original grantees had hastily sold out to third parties, the purchases being largely made in South Carolina and Massachusetts. Efforts were made by the original South Carolina Yazoo Company to sue Georgia in the Federal courts, which led to the adoption of the Constitutional provision forbidding such action. When, in 1802, Georgia ceded the territory in question, including all of what is now middle and northern Alabama and Mississippi, to the United States for the sum of twelve hundred and fifty thousand dollars, the National Government became heir to these Yazoo difficulties. It was not until 1814 that the matter was settled by a compromise, after interminable litigation and legislation.[1] The land companies

[1] *American State Papers*, Public Lands, ii., pp. 99, 101, 111, 165, 172, 178; Haskin's *Yazoo Land Companies*. In Congress, Randolph, on behalf of the ultra States'-rights people, led the opposition to the claimants, whose special champions were Madison and the northern democrats. Chief-Justice Marshall in the case of Fletcher *vs.* Peck, decided that the rescinding act impaired the obligation of contracts, and was therefore in violation of the Constitution of the United States; a decision further amplified in the Dartmouth case, which has determined the national policy in regard to public contracts. This decision was followed by the passage of the

were more important to the speculators than to the actual settlers of the Mississippi; nevertheless, they did stimulate settlement in certain regions, and therefore increased by just so much the western pressure upon Spain.

Some of the aggressive movements undertaken by the Americans were of so loose a nature that it is hard to know what to call them. This was true of Elijah Clark's company of Georgia freebooters in 1794. Accompanied by large bodies of armed men, he on several occasions penetrated into the territory southwest of the Oconee. He asserted at one time that he was acting for Georgia and in defence of her rights to the lands which the Georgians claimed under the various State treaties with the Indians, but which by the treaty of New York had been confirmed to the Creeks by the United States. On another occasion he entitled his motley force the Sans-culottes, and masqueraded as a major-general of the French army, though the French Consul denied having any connection with him. He established for the time being a little independent government, with blockhouses and small wooden towns, in the middle of the unceded hunting-grounds, and caused great alarm to the Spaniards. The frontiersmen

Compromise Act by Congress in 1814, which distributed a large sum of money obtained from the land sales in the territory, in specified proportions among the various claimants.

sympathized with him, and when he was arrested in Wilkes County the Grand Jury of the county ordered his discharge, and solemnly declared that the treaty of New York was inoperative and the proclamation of the Governor of Georgia against Clark, illegal. This was too much for the patience of the Governor. He ordered out the State troops to co-operate with the small Federal force, and Clark and his men were ignominiously expelled from their new government and forced to return to Georgia.[1]

In such a welter of intrigue, of land speculation, and of more or less piratical aggression, there was imminent danger that the West would relapse into anarchy unless a firm government were established, and unless the boundaries with England and Spain were definitely established. As Washington's administration grew steadily in strength and in the confidence of the people the first condition was met. The necessary fixity of boundary was finally obtained by the treaties negotiated through John Jay with England, and through Thomas Pinckney with Spain.

Jay's treaty aroused a perfect torrent of wrath throughout the country, and nowhere more than in the West. A few of the coolest and most intelligent men approved it, and rugged old Humphrey Marshall, the Federalist Senator from

[1] Steven's *Georgia*, ii., 401.

Kentucky, voted for its ratification; but the general feeling against it was intense. Even Blount, who by this time was pretty well disgusted with the way he had been treated by the Central Government, denounced it, and expressed his belief that Washington would have hard work to explain his conduct in procuring its ratification.[1]

Yet the Westerners were the very people who had no cause whatever to complain of the treaty. It was not an entirely satisfactory treaty; perhaps a man like Hamilton might have procured rather better terms; but, taken as a whole, it worked an immense improvement upon the condition of things already existing. Washington's position was undoubtedly right. He would have preferred a better treaty, but he regarded the Jay treaty as very much better than none at all. Moreover, the last people who had a right to complain of it were those who were most vociferous in their opposition. The anti-Federalist party was on the whole the party of weakness and disorder, the party that was clamorous and unruly, but ineffective in carrying out a sustained policy, whether of offence or of defence, in foreign affairs. The people who afterwards became known as Jeffersonian Republicans numbered in their ranks the extremists who had been active as the founders of Democratic societies in the French interest,

[1] Blount MSS., Blount to Smith, August 24, 1795.

and they were ferocious in their wordy hostility to Great Britain; but they were not dangerous foes to any foreign government which did not fear words. Had they possessed the foresight and intelligence to strengthen the Federal Government the Jay treaty would not have been necessary. Only a strong, efficient central government, backed by a good fleet and a well-organized army, could hope to wring from England what the French party, the forerunners of the Jeffersonian Democracy, demanded. But the Jeffersonians were separatists and States'-rights men. They believed in a government so weak as to be ineffective, and showed a folly literally astounding in their unwillingness to provide for the wars which they were ready to provoke. They resolutely refused to provide an army or a navy, or to give the Central Government the power necessary for waging war. They were quite right in their feeling of hostility to England, and one of the fundamental and fatal weaknesses of the Federalists was the Federalist willingness to submit to England's aggressions without retaliation; but the Jeffersonians had no gift for government, and were singularly deficient in masterful statesmen of the kind imperatively needed by any nation which wishes to hold an honorable place among other nations. They showed their governmental inaptitude clearly enough later on when they came into

power, for they at once stopped building the fleet which the Federalists had begun, and allowed the military forces of the nation to fall into utter disorganization, with, as a consequence, the shameful humiliations of the War of 1812. This war was in itself eminently necessary and proper, and was excellent in its results, but it was attended by incidents of shame and disgrace to America for which Jefferson and Madison and their political friends and supporters among the politicians and the people have never received a sufficiently severe condemnation.

Jay's treaty was signed late in 1794 and was ratified in 1795.[1] The indignation of the Kentuckians almost amounted to mania. They denounced the treaty with frantic intemperance, and even threatened violence to those of their own number, headed by Humphrey Marshall, who supported it; yet they benefited much by it, for it got them what they would have been absolutely powerless to obtain for themselves—that is, the possession of the British posts on the lakes. In 1796, the Americans took formal possession of these posts, and the boundary line in the Northwest as nominally established by the treaty of Versailles became in fact the actual line of demarcation between the American and the British

[1] *American State Papers*, Foreign Relations, i., 479, 484, 489, 502, 519, etc.

possessions. The work of Jay capped the work of Wayne. Federal garrisons were established at Detroit and elsewhere, and the Indians, who had already entered into the treaty of Greeneville, were prevented from breaking it by this intervention of the American military posts between themselves and their British allies. Peace was firmly established for the time being in the Northwest, and our boundaries in that direction took the fixed form they still retain.[1]

In dealing with the British the Americans sometimes had to encounter bad faith, but more often a mere rough disregard for the rights of others, of which they could themselves scarcely complain with a good grace, as they showed precisely the same quality in their own actions. In dealing with the Spaniards, on the other hand, they had to encounter deliberate and systematic treachery and intrigue. The open negotiations between the two governments over the boundary ran side by side with a current of muddy intrigue between the Spanish Government on the one hand and certain traitorous Americans on the other, the leader of these traitors being, as usual, the arch scoundrel, Wilkinson.

The Spaniards trusted almost as much to Indian intrigue as to bribery of American leaders;

[1] *American State Papers*, Indian Affairs, i., 573; Foreign Relations, i., *passim*; etc.

indeed, they trusted to it more for momentary effect, though the far-sighted among them realized that in the long run the safety of the Spanish possessions depended upon the growth of divisional jealousies among the Americans themselves. The Spanish forts were built as much to keep the Indians under command as to check the Americans. The Governor of Natchez, De Lemos, had already established a fort at the Chickasaw Bluffs, where there was danger of armed collision between the Spaniards and either the Cumberland settlers under Robertson or the Federal troops. Among the latter, by the way, the officer for whose ability the Spaniards seemed to feel an especial respect was Lieutenant William Clark.[1]

The Chickasaws were nearly drawn into a war with the Spaniards, who were intensely irritated over their antagonism to the Creeks, for which the Spaniards insisted that the Americans were responsible.[2] The Americans, however, were able to prove conclusively that the struggle was due, not to their advice, but to the outrages of marauders from the villages of the Muscogee confederacy. They showed by the letter of the Chickasaw chief, James Colbert, that the Creeks had them-

[1] Draper MSS., Spanish Documents, Carondelet to Don Luis de las Casas, June 13, 1795; De Lemos to Carondelet, July 25, 1793.

[2] *American State Papers*, Foreign Relations, i., 305, etc.

selves begun hostilities early in 1792 by killing a Chickasaw, and that the Chickasaws, because of this spilling of blood, made war on the Creeks, and sent word to the Americans to join in the war. The letter ran: "I hope you will exert yourselves and join us so that we might give the lads a Drubbeen for they have encroached on us this great while not us alone you likewise for you have suffered a good dale by them I hope you will think of your wounds." [1] The Americans had "thought of their wounds" and had aided the Chickasaws in every way, as was proper; but the original aggressors were the Creeks. The Chickasaws had entered into what was a mere war of retaliation; though when once in they had fought hard, under the lead of Opiamingo, their most noted war chief, who was always friendly to the Americans and hostile to the Spaniards.

At the Chickasaw Bluffs and at Natchez there was always danger of a clash; for at these places the Spanish soldiers were in direct contact with the foremost of the restless backwoods host, and with the Indians who were most friendly or hostile to them. Open collision was averted, but the Spaniards were kept uneasy and alert. There were plenty of American settlers around Natchez, who were naturally friendly to the American Gov-

[1] Blount MSS., James Colbert to Robertson, February 10, 1792.

ernment; and an agent from the State of Georgia, to the horror of the Spaniards, came out to the country with the especial purpose of looking over the Yazoo lands, at the time when Georgia was about to grant them to the various land companies. What with the land speculators, the frontiersmen, and the Federal troops, the situation grew steadily more harassing for the Spaniards; and Carondelet kept the advisers of the Spanish Crown well informed of the growing stress.

The Spanish Government knew it would be beaten if the issue once came to open war, and, true to the instincts of a weak and corrupt power, it chose as its weapons delay, treachery, and intrigue. To individual Americans the Spaniard often behaved with arrogance and brutality; but they feared to give too serious offence to the American people as a whole. Like all other enemies of the American Republic, from the days of the Revolution to those of the Civil War, they saw clearly that their best allies were the separatists, the disunionists, and they sought to encourage in every way the party which, in a spirit of sectionalism, wished to bring about a secession of one part of the country and the erection of a separate government. The secessionists then, as always, played into the hands of the men who wished the new Republic ill. In the last decade of the eighteenth century the acute friction was not

between North and South, but between East and West. The men who, from various motives, wished to see a new republic created, hoped that this republic would take in all the people of the western waters. These men never actually succeeded in carrying the West with them. At the pinch the majority of the Westerners remained loyal to the idea of national unity; but there was a very strong separatist party, and there were very many men who, though not separatists, were disposed to grumble loudly about the shortcomings of the Federal Government.

These men were especially numerous and powerful in Kentucky, and they had as their organ the sole newspaper of the State, the Kentucky *Gazette.* It was filled with fierce attacks, not only upon the General Government, but upon Washington himself. Sometimes these attacks were made on the authority of the *Gazette;* at other times they appeared in the form of letters from outsiders, or of resolutions by the various Democratic societies and political clubs. They were written with a violence which, in striving after forcefulness, became feeble. They described the people of Kentucky as having been "degraded and insulted," and as having borne these insults with "submissive patience." The writers insisted that Kentucky had nothing to hope from the Federal Government, and that it was nonsense to chatter about

the infraction of treaties, for it was necessary, at any cost, to take Louisiana, which was "groaning under tyranny." They threatened the United States with what the Kentuckians would do if their wishes were not granted, announcing that they would make the conquest of Louisiana an ultimatum, and warning the Government that they owed no eternal allegiance to it and might have to separate, and that if they did there would be small reason to deplore the separation. The separatist agitators failed to see that they could obtain the objects they sought—the opening of the Mississippi and the acquisition of Louisiana—only through the Federal Government, and only by giving that Government full powers. Standing alone, the Kentuckians would have been laughed to scorn not only by England and France, but even by Spain. Yet with silly fatuity they vigorously opposed every effort to make the Government stronger or to increase national feeling, railing even at the attempt to erect a great Federal city as "unwise, impolitic, unjust," and "a monument to American folly." [1] The men who wrote these articles, and the leaders of the societies and clubs which inspired them, certainly made a pitiable showing; they proved that they themselves were only learning, and had not yet

[1] Kentucky *Gazette*, February 8, 1794; September 16, 1797; etc.

completely mastered, the difficult art of self-government.

It was the existence of these western separatists, nominally the fiercest foes of Spain, that in reality gave Spain the one real hope of staying the western advance. In 1794, the American agents in Spain were carrying on an interminable correspondence with the Spanish Court in the effort to come to some understanding about the boundaries.[1] The Spanish authorities were solemnly corresponding with the American envoys, as if they meant peace; yet at the same time they had authorized Carondelet to do his best to treat directly with the American States of the West so as to bring about their separation from the Union. In 1794, Wilkinson, who was quite incapable of understanding that his infamy was heightened by the fact that he wore the uniform of a Brigadier-General of the United States, entered into negotiations for a treaty, the base of which should be the separation of the Western States from the Atlantic States.[2] He had sent two confidential envoys to Carondelet. Carondelet jumped at the chance of once more trying to separate the West from the East; and under Wilkinson's directions

[1] *American State Papers*, Foreign Relations, i., 443, etc.; letters of Carmichael and Short to Gardoqui, October 1, 1793; to Alcudia, January 7, 1794, etc.

[2] Draper MSS., Spanish Documents, Carondelet to Alcudia, July 30, 1794.

he renewed his efforts to try by purchase and pension to attach some of the leading Kentuckians to Spain. As a beginning, he decided to grant Wilkinson's request, and send him twelve thousand dollars for himself.[1] De Lemos was sent to New Madrid in October to begin the direct negotiations with Wilkinson and his allies. The funds to further the treasonable conspiracy were also forwarded, as the need arose.

Carondelet was much encouraged as to the outcome by the fact that De Lemos had not been dispossessed by force from the Chickasaw Bluffs. This shows conclusively that Washington's administration was in error in not acting with greater decision about the Spanish posts. Wayne should have been ordered to use the sword and to dispossess the Spaniards from the east bank of the Mississippi. As so often in our history, we erred not through a spirit of over-aggressiveness, but through a willingness to trust to peaceful measures instead of proceeding to assert our rights by force.

The first active step taken by Carondelet and De Lemos was to send the twelve thousand dollars to Wilkinson, as the foundation and earnest of the bribery fund. But the effort miscarried. The money was sent by two men, Collins and Owen, each of whom bore cipher letters to Wilkinson,

[1] Draper MSS., De Lemos to Alcudia, September 19, 1794.

including some that were sewed into the collars of their coats. Collins reached Wilkinson in safety, but Owen was murdered, for the sake of the money he bore, by his boat's crew while on the Ohio River.[1] The murderers were arrested and were brought before the Federal judge, Harry Innes. Owen was a friend of Innes, and had been by him recommended to Wilkinson as a trustworthy man for any secret and perilous service. Nevertheless, although it was his own friend who had been murdered, Innes refused to try the murderers on the ground that they were Spanish subjects—a reason which was simply nonsensical. He forwarded them to Wilkinson at Fort Warren. The latter sent them back to New Madrid. On their way they were stopped by the officer at Fort Massac, a thoroughly loyal man, who had not been engaged in the intrigues of Wilkinson and Innes. He sent to the Spanish commander at New Madrid for an interpreter to interrogate the men. Of course, the Spaniards were as reluctant as Wilkinson and Innes that the facts as to the relations between Carondelet and Wilkinson should be developed, and, like Wilkinson and Innes, they preferred that the murderers should escape rather than that these facts should come to light. Accordingly, the interpreter did not

[1] Draper MSS., letters of Carondelet to Alcudia, October 4, 1794; and of De Lemos to Carondelet, August 28, 1795.

divulge the confession of the villains, all evidence as to their guilt was withheld, and they were finally discharged. The Spaniards were very nervous about the affair, and were even afraid lest travellers might dig up Owen's body and find the dispatches hidden in his collar; which, said De Lemos, they might send to the President of the United States, who would of course take measures to find out what the money and the ciphers meant.[1]

Wilkinson's motives in acting as he did were, of course, simple. He could not afford to have the murderers of his friend and agent tried, lest they should disclose his own black infamy. The conduct of Judge Innes is difficult to explain on any ground consistent with his integrity and with the official propriety of his actions. He may not have been a party to Wilkinson's conspiracy, but he must certainly have known that Wilkinson was engaged in negotiations with the Spaniards, so corrupt that they would not bear the light of exposure, or else he would never have behaved toward the murderers in the way that he did behave.[2]

[1] Draper MSS., letter of De Lemos.

[2] Marshall, ii., 155; Green, p. 328. Even recently defenders of Wilkinson and Innes have asserted, in accordance with Wilkinson's explanations, that the money forwarded him was due him from tobacco contracts entered into some years previously with Miro. Carondelet, in his letters above quoted, however, declares outright that the money was advanced to begin negotiations in Kentucky, through Wilkinson and

Carondelet, through De Lemos, entered into correspondence with Wayne about the fort built by his orders at the Chickasaw Bluffs. He refused to give up this fort; and as Wayne became more urgent in his demands, he continually responded with new excuses for delay. He was enabled to tell exactly what Wayne was doing, as Wilkinson, who was serving under Wayne, punctually informed the Spaniard of all that took place in the American army.[1] Carondelet saw that the fate of the Spanish-American province which he ruled hung on the separation of the western States from the Union.[2] As long as he thought it possible to bring about the separation, he refused to pay heed even to the orders of the Court of Spain, or to the treaty engagements by which he was nominally bound. He was forced to make constant demands upon the Spanish Court for money to be used in the negotiations; that is, to bribe Wilkinson and his fellows in Kentucky. He succeeded in placating the Chickasaws, and got from them a formal cession of the Chickasaw Bluffs, which was a direct blow at the American pretensions. As with all Indian tribes, the

others, for the pensioning of Kentuckians in the interests of Spain and the severance of the Western States from the Union.

[1] Draper MSS., Spanish Documents, Carondelet to Alcudia, November 1, 1793.

[2] *Ibid.*, Carondelet to Alcudia, September 25, 1795.

Chickasaws were not capable of any settled policy and were not under any responsible authority. While some of them were in close alliance with the Americans and were warring on the Creeks, the others formed a treaty with the Spaniards and gave them the territory they so earnestly wished.[1]

However, neither Carondelet's energy and devotion to the Spanish Government nor his unscrupulous intrigues were able for long to defer the fate which hung over the Spanish possessions. In 1795, Washington nominated as Minister to Spain Thomas Pinckney, a member of a distinguished family of South Carolina statesmen, and a man of the utmost energy and intelligence. Pinckney finally wrung from the Spaniards a treaty which was as beneficial to the West as Jay's treaty, and was attended by none of the drawbacks which marred Jay's work. The Spaniards at the outset met his demands by a policy of delay and evasion. Finally, he determined to stand this no longer, and, on October 24, 1795, demanded his passports, in a letter to Godoy, the "Prince of Peace." The demand came at an opportune moment; for Godoy had just heard of Jay's treaty. He misunderstood the way in which this was looked at in the United States, and feared lest, if not counteracted, it might throw

[1] Draper MSS., De Lemos to Carondelet, enclosed in Carondelet's letter of September 26, 1795.

the Americans into the arms of Great Britain, with which country Spain was on the verge of war. It is not a little singular that Jay should have thus rendered an involuntary but important additional service to the Westerners who so hated him.

The Spaniards now promptly came to terms. They were in no condition to fight the Americans; they knew that war would be the result if the conflicting claims of the two peoples were not at once definitely settled one way or the other; and they concluded the treaty forthwith.[1] Its two most important provisions were the settlement of the southern boundary on the lines claimed by the United States and the granting of the right of deposit to the Westerners. The boundary followed the thirty-first degree of latitude from the Mississippi to the Chattahoochee, down it to the Flint, thence to the head of the St. Mary's, and down it to the ocean. The Spanish troops were to be withdrawn from this territory within the space of six months. The Westerners were granted for three years the right of deposit at New Orleans; after three years, either the right was to be continued or another equivalent port of deposit was to be granted somewhere on the banks of the Mississippi. The right of deposit carried with it the

[1] Pinckney receives justice from Lodge, in his *Washington*, ii., 160. For Pinckney's life, see the biography by Rev. C. C. Pinckney, p. 129, etc.

right to export goods from the place of deposit free from any but an inconsiderable duty.[1]

The treaty was ratified in 1796, but with astonishing bad faith the Spaniards refused to carry out its provisions. At this time Carondelet was in the midst of his negotiations with Wilkinson for the secession of the West, and had high hopes that he could bring it about. He had chosen as his agent an Englishman, named Thomas Power, who was a naturalized Spanish subject, and very zealous in the service of Spain.[2] Power went to Kentucky, where he communicated with Wilkinson, Sebastian, Innes, and one or two others, and submitted to them a letter from Carondelet. This letter proposed a treaty, of which the first article was that Wilkinson and his associates should exert themselves to bring about a separation of the western country and its formation into an independent government wholly unconnected with that of the Atlantic States; and Carondelet, in his letter, assured the men to whom he was writing that, because of what had occurred in Europe since Spain had ratified the treaty of October 27th, the treaty would not be executed by his Catholic Majesty. Promises of favor to the western people

[1] *American State Papers*, Foreign Relations, i., 533, etc.; Pinckney to Secretary of State, August 11, 1795; to Godoy (Alcudia), October 24, 1795; copy of treaty, October 27th, etc.

[2] Gayarré, iii., 345; Wilkinson's *Memoirs*, ii., 225.

were held out, and Wilkinson was given a more substantial bribe, in the shape of ten thousand dollars, by Power. Sebastian, Innes, and their friends were also promised a hundred thousand dollars for their good offices; and Carondelet, who had no more hesitation in betraying red men than white, also offered to help the Westerners subdue their Indian foes—these Indian foes being at the moment the devoted allies of Spain.

The time had gone by, however, when it was possible to hope for success in such an intrigue. The treaty with Spain had caused much satisfaction in the West, and the Kentuckians generally were growing more and more loyal to the Central Government. Innes and his friends, in a written communication, rejected the offer of Carondelet. They declared that they were devoted to the Union and would not consent to break it up; but they betrayed curiously little surprise or indignation at the offer, nor did they in rejecting it use the vigorous language which beseemed men who, while holding the commissions of a government, were proffered a hundred thousand dollars to betray that government.[1] Power, at the close of 1797, reported to his superiors that nothing could be done.

Meanwhile, Carondelet and De Lemos had per-

[1] *American State Papers*, Miscellaneous, i., 928; deposition of Harry Innes, etc.

sisted in declining to surrender the posts at the Chickasaw Bluffs and Natchez, on pretexts which were utterly frivolous.[1] At this time the Spanish Court was completely subservient to France, which was hostile to the United States, and the Spaniards would not carry out the treaty they had made until they had exhausted every device of delay and evasion. Andrew Ellicott was appointed by Washington Surveyor-General to run the boundary; but when, early in 1797, he reached Natchez, the Spanish representative refused, point-blank to run the boundary or evacuate the territory. Meanwhile, the Spanish Minister at Philadelphia, Yrujo, in his correspondence with the Secretary of State, was pursuing precisely the same course of subterfuge and delay. But these tactics could only avail for a time. Neither the Government of the United States nor the western people would consent to be balked much longer. The negotiations with Wilkinson and his associates had come to nothing. A detachment of American regular soldiers came down the river to support Ellicott. The settlers around Natchez arose in revolt against the Spaniards and established a Committee of Safety, under protection of the Americans. The population of Mississippi was very mixed, including criminals fleeing from

[1] *American State Papers*, Foreign Relations, ii., 20, 70, 78, 79; report of Timothy Pickering, January 22, 1798, etc.

justice, land speculators, old settlers, well-to-do planters, small pioneer farmers, and adventurers of every kind; and, thanks to the large tory element, there was a British and a smaller Spanish party; but the general feeling was overwhelmingly for the United States. The Spanish Government made a virtue of necessity and withdrew its garrison, after for some time preserving a kind of joint occupancy with the Americans.[1] Captain Isaac Guyon, with a body of United States troops, took formal possession of both the Chickasaw Bluffs and Natchez in 1797. In 1798, the Spaniards finally evacuated the country,[2] their course being due neither to the wisdom nor the good faith of their rulers, but to the fear and worry caused by the unceasing pressure of the Americans. Spain yielded, because she felt that not to do so would involve the loss of all Louisiana.[3] The country was organized as the Mississippi Territory in June, 1798.[4]

There was one incident, curious rather than

[1] B. A. Hinsdale, *The Establishment of the First Southern Boundary of the United States*. Largely based upon Ellicott's Journal. Both Ellicott and the leaders among the settlers were warned of Blount's scheme of conquest and land speculation and were hostile to it.

[2] Claiborne's *Mississippi*, p. 176. He is a writer of poor judgment; his verdicts on Ellicott and Wilkinson are astounding.

[3] Gayarré, 413, 418; Pontalba's *Memoir*, September 15, 1800.

[4] *American State Papers*, Public Lands, i., 209.

important, but characteristic in its way, which marked the close of the transactions of the western Americans with Spain at this time. During the very years when Carondelet, under the orders of his government, was seeking to delay the execution of the boundary treaty, and to seduce the Westerners from their allegiance to the United States, a Senator of the United States, entirely without the knowledge of his Government, was engaged in an intrigue for the conquest of a part of the Spanish dominion. This Senator was no less a person than William Blount. Enterprising and ambitious, he was even more deeply engaged in land speculations than were the other prominent men of his time.[1] He felt that he had not been well treated by the United States authorities, and, like all other Westerners, he also felt that the misconduct of the Spaniards had been so great that they were not entitled to the slightest consideration. Moreover, he feared lest the territory should be transferred to France, which would be a much more dangerous neighbor than Spain, and he had a strong liking for Great Britain. If he could not see the territory taken by the Americans under the flag of the United States, then he wished to see them enter into possession of it under the standard of the British King.

In 1797, he entered into a scheme which was in

[1] Clay MSS., Blount to Hart, March 13, 1799, etc.

part one of land speculation and in part one of armed aggression against Spain. He tried to organize an association with the purpose of seizing the Spanish territory west of the Mississippi, and putting it under the control of Great Britain in the interests of the seizers. The scheme came to nothing. No definite steps were taken, and the British Government refused to take any share in the movement. Finally, the plot was discovered by the President, who brought it to the attention of the Senate, and Blount was properly expelled from the Upper House for entering into a conspiracy to conquer the lands of one neighboring power in the interest of another. The Tennesseeans, however, who cared little for the niceties of international law, and sympathized warmly with any act of territorial aggression against the Spaniards, were not in the least affected by his expulsion. They greeted him with enthusiasm and elected him to high office, and he lived among them the remainder of his days, honored and respected.[1] Nevertheless, his conduct in this instance was indefensible. It was an unfortunate interlude in an otherwise honorable and useful public career.[2]

[1] Blount MSS., letter of Hugh Williamson, March 3, 1808, etc.

[2] General Marcus J. Wright, in his *Life and Services of William Blount*, gives the most favorable view possible of Blount's conduct.

CHAPTER II

THE MEN OF THE WESTERN WATERS, 1798–1802

THE growth of the West was very rapid in the years immediately succeeding the peace with the Indians and the treaties with England and Spain. As the settlers poured into what had been the Indian-haunted wilderness it speedily became necessary to cut it into political divisions. Kentucky had already been admitted as a State in 1792; Tennessee likewise became a State in 1796. The Territory of Mississippi was organized in 1798, to include the country west of Georgia and south of Tennessee, which had been ceded by the Spaniards under Pinckney's treaty.[1] In 1800, the Connecticut Reserve, in what is now northeastern Ohio, was taken by the United States. The Northwestern Territory was divided into two parts; the eastern was composed mainly of what is now the State of Ohio, while the western portion was called Indiana Territory, and was organized with W. H. Harrison as Governor, his capital being at Vincennes.[2] Harrison had been Wayne's

[1] Claiborne's *Mississippi*, p. 220, etc.

[2] *Annals of the West*, by Thomas H. Perkins, p. 473. A valuable book, showing much scholarship and research. The

aide-de-camp at the fight of the Fallen Timbers, and had been singled out by Wayne for mention because of his coolness and gallantry. Afterwards he had succeeded Sargent as Secretary of the Northwestern Territory when Sargent had been made Governor of Mississippi, and he had gone as a Territorial delegate to Congress.[1]

In 1802, Ohio was admitted as a State. St. Clair and St. Clair's supporters struggled to keep the Territory from statehood, and proposed to cut it down in size, nominally because they deemed the extent of territory too great for governmental purposes, but really, doubtless, because they distrusted the people and did not wish to see them take the government into their own hands. The effort failed, however, and the State was admitted by Congress, beginning its existence in 1803.[2] Congress made the proviso that the State constitution should accord with the Constitution of the United States, and should embody the doctrines contained in the Ordinance of 1787.[3] The rapid

author has never received proper credit. Very few indeed of the western historians of his date showed either his painstaking care or his breadth of view.

[1] Jacob Burnett, in *Ohio Historical Transactions*, Part II., vol. i., p. 69.

[2] Atwater, *History of Ohio*, p. 169.

[3] The question of the boundaries of the northwestern States is well treated in *The Boundaries of Wisconsin*, by Reuben G. Thwaites, the Secretary of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

settlement of southeastern Ohio was hindered by the fact that the speculative land companies, the Ohio and Scioto associations, held great tracts of territory which the pioneers passed by in their desire to get to lands which they could acquire in their own right. This was one of the many bad effects which resulted from the Government's policy of disposing of its land in large blocks to the highest bidder, instead of allotting it, as has since been done, in quarter sections to actual settlers. [1]

Harrison was thoroughly in sympathy with the Westerners. He had thrown in his lot with theirs; he deemed himself one of them, and was accepted by them as a fit representative. Accordingly, he was very popular as Governor of Indiana. St. Clair in Ohio and Sargent in Mississippi were both extremely unpopular. They were appointed by Federalist administrations, and were entirely out of sympathy with the western people among whom they lived. One was a Scotchman, and one a New Englander. They were both high-minded men, with sound ideas on governmental policy, though Sargent was the abler of the two; but they were out of touch with the Westerners. They distrusted the frontier folk, and were bitterly disliked in return. Each committed the fundamental fault of trying to govern the Terri-

[1] Mr. Eli Thayer, in his various writings, has rightly laid especial stress on this point.

tory over which he had been put in accordance with his own ideas, and heedless of the wishes and prejudices of those under him. Doubtless each was conscientious in what he did, and each, of course, considered the difficulties under which he labored to be due solely to the lawlessness and the many shortcomings of the settlers. But this was an error. The experience of Blount when he occupied the exceedingly difficult position of Territorial Governor of Tennessee showed that it was quite possible for a man of firm belief in the Union to get into touch with the frontiersmen and to be accepted by them as a worthy representative; but the virtues of St. Clair and Sargent were so different from the backwoods virtues, and their habits of thought were so alien, that they could not possibly get on with the people among whom their lot had been cast. Neither of them in the end took up his abode in the Territory of which he had been Governor, both returning to the East. The code of laws which they enacted, prior to the Territories possessing a sufficient number of inhabitants to become entitled to Territorial Legislatures, were deemed by the settlers to be arbitrary and unsuited to their needs. There was much popular feeling against them. On one occasion St. Clair was mobbed in Chillicothe, the then capital of Ohio, with no other effect than to procure a change of capital to Cincinnati. Finally, both

Sargent and St. Clair were removed by Jefferson early in his administration.

The Jeffersonian Republican party did very much that was evil, and it advocated governmental principles of such utter folly that the party itself was obliged immediately to abandon them when it undertook to carry on the government of the United States, and only clung to them long enough to cause serious and lasting damage to the country; but on the vital question of the West and its territorial expansion the Jeffersonian party was, on the whole, emphatically right, and its opponents, the Federalists, emphatically wrong. The Jeffersonians believed in the acquisition of territory in the West, and the Federalists did not. The Jeffersonians believed that the Westerners should be allowed to govern themselves precisely as other citizens of the United States did, and should be given their full share in the management of national affairs. Too many Federalists failed to see that these positions were the only proper ones to take. In consequence, notwithstanding all their manifold shortcomings, the Jeffersonians, and not the Federalists, were those to whom the West owed most.

Whether the Westerners governed themselves as wisely as they should have, mattered little. The essential point was that they had to be given the right of self-government. They could not be kept

in pupilage. Like other Americans, they had to be left to strike out for themselves and to sink or swim according to the measure of their own capacities. When this was done it was certain that they would commit many blunders, and that some of these blunders would work harm not only to themselves, but to the whole nation. Nevertheless, all this had to be accepted as part of the penalty paid for free government. It was wise to accept it in the first place, and, in the second place, whether wise or not, it was inevitable. Many of the Federalists saw this; and to many of them—the Adamses, for instance, and Jay and Pinckney—the West owed more than it did to most of the Republican statesmen; but as a whole, the attitude of the Federalists, especially in the Northeast, toward the West was ungenerous and improper, while the Jeffersonians, with all their unwisdom and demagogy, were nevertheless the western champions.

Mississippi and Ohio had squabbled with their Territorial governors much as the old Thirteen Colonies had squabbled with the governors appointed by the Crown. One curious consequence of this was common to both cases. When the old Colonies became States, they in their constitutions usually imposed the same checks upon the executive they themselves elected as they had desired to see imposed upon the executive appointed

by an outside power. The new Territories followed the same course. When Ohio became a State it adopted a very foolish constitution. This constitution deprived the executive of almost all power, and provided a feeble, short-term judiciary, throwing the control of affairs into the hands of the legislative body, in accordance with what were then deemed Democratic ideas. The people were entirely unable to realize that, so far as their discontent with the governor's actions was reasonable, it arose from the fact that he was appointed not by themselves, but by some body or person not in sympathy with them. They failed to grasp the seemingly self-evident truth that a governor, one man elected by the people, is just as much their representative and is just as certain to carry out their ideas as is a legislature, a body of men elected by the people. They provided a government which accentuated, instead of softening, the defects in their own social system. They were in no danger of suffering from tyranny; they were in no danger of losing the liberty which they so jealously guarded. The perils which threatened them were lawlessness, lack of order, and lack of capacity to concentrate their effort in times of danger from within or from an external enemy; and against these perils they made no provision whatever.

The inhabitants of Ohio Territory were just as bitter against St. Clair as the inhabitants of Missis-

sippi Territory were against Sargent. The Mississippians did not object to Sargent as a northern man, but, in common with the men of Ohio, they objected to governors who were eastern men and out of touch with the West. At the end of the eighteenth century, and during the early years of the nineteenth, the important fact to be remembered, in treating of the Westerners, was their fundamental unity, in blood, in ways of life, and in habits of thought. They were predominantly[1] of southern, not of northern blood; though it was the blood of the Southerners of the uplands, not of the low coast regions, so that they were far more closely kin to the Northerners than were the seaboard planters. In Kentucky and Tennessee, in Indiana and Mississippi, the settlers were of the same quality. They possessed the same virtues and the same shortcomings, the same ideals and the same practices. There was already a considerable eastern emigration to the West, but it went as much to Kentucky as to Ohio, and almost as much to Tennessee and Mississippi as to Indiana. As yet the Northeasterners were chiefly engaged in filling the vacant spaces in New England, New York, and Pennsylvania. The great flood of eastern emigration to the West, the flood

[1] Prof. Frederick A. Turner, of the University of Michigan, deserves especial credit for the stress he has laid upon this point.

which followed the parallels of latitude, and made the Northwest like the Northeast, did not begin until after the War of 1812. It was no accident that made Harrison, the first Governor of Indiana and long the typical representative of the Northwest, by birth a Virginian, and the son of one of the Virginian signers of the Declaration of Independence. The Northwest was at this time in closer touch with Virginia than with New England.

There was as yet no hard-and-fast line drawn between North and South among the men of the western waters. Their sense of political cohesion was not fully developed, and the same qualities that at times made them lose their ideas of allegiance to the Union at times also prevented a vivid realization on their part of their own political and social solidarity; but they were always more or less conscious of this solidarity, and, as a rule, they acted together.

Most important of all, the slavery question, which afterwards rived in sunder the men west of the Alleghanies as it rived in sunder those east of them, was of small importance in the early years. West of the Alleghanies slaves were still to be found almost everywhere, while almost everywhere there were also frequent and open expressions of hostility to slavery. The Southerners still rather disliked slavery, while the Northerners did not as yet feel any very violent antagonism to it. In the

Indiana Territory there were hundreds of slaves, the property of the old French inhabitants and of the American settlers who had come there prior to 1787; and the majority of the population of this Territory actually wished to reintroduce slavery, and repeatedly petitioned Congress to be allowed the reintroduction. Congress, with equal patriotism and wisdom, always refused the petition; but it was not until the new century was well under way that the anti-slavery element obtained control in Indiana and Illinois. Even in Ohio there was a considerable party which favored the introduction of slavery, and though the majority was against this, the people had small sympathy with the negroes, and passed very severe laws against the introduction of free blacks into the State, and even against those already in residence therein.[1] On the other hand, when Kentucky's first constitutional convention sat, a resolute effort was made to abolish slavery within the State, and this effort was only defeated after a hard struggle and a close vote. To their honor be it said that all of the clergymen—three Baptists, one Methodist, one Dutch Reformed, and one Presbyterian—who were members of the constitutional convention, voted in favor of the abolition of slavery.[2] In Tennessee no such effort was made,

[1] *Ohio*, by Rufus King, pp. 290, 364, etc.

[2] John Mason Brown, *Political Beginnings of Kentucky*, 229. Among the men who deserve honor for thus voting against

but the leaders of thought did not hesitate to express their horror of slavery and their desire that it might be abolished. There was no sharp difference between the attitudes of the northwestern and the southwestern States towards slavery.

North and South alike, the ways of life were substantially the same; though there were differences, of course, and these differences tended to become accentuated. Thus, in the Mississippi Territory the planters, in the closing years of the century, began to turn their attention to cotton instead of devoting themselves to the crops of their brethren farther north; and cotton soon became their staple product. But as yet the typical settler everywhere was the man of the axe and rifle, the small pioneer farmer who lived by himself, with his wife and his swarming children, on a big tract of wooded land, perhaps three or four hundred acres in extent. Of these three or four hundred acres he rarely cleared more than eight or ten; and these were cleared imperfectly. On this clearing he tilled the soil, and there he lived in his rough log-house with but one room, or at most two and a loft.[1]

slavery was Harry Innes. One of the Baptist preachers, Gerrard, was elected Governor over Logan four years later—a proof that Kentucky sentiment was very tolerant of attacks on slavery. All the clergymen, by the way, also voted to disqualify clergymen for service in the legislatures.

[1] F. A. Michaux, *Voyages* (in 1802), pp. 132, 214, etc.

The man of the western waters was essentially a man who dwelt alone in the midst of the forest on his rude little farm, and who eked out his living by hunting. Game still abounded everywhere, save in the immediate neighborhood of the towns; so that many of the inhabitants lived almost exclusively by hunting and fishing, and, with their return to the pursuits of savagery, adopted not a little of the savage idleness and thriftlessness. Bear, deer, and turkey were staple foods. Elk had ceased to be common, though they hung on here and there in out-of-the-way localities for many years; and by the close of the century the herds of bison had been driven west of the Mississippi.[1] Smaller forms of wild life swarmed. Gray squirrels existed in such incredible numbers that they caused very serious damage to the crops, and at one time the Kentucky Legislature passed a law imposing upon every male over sixteen years of age the duty of killing a certain number of squirrels and crows every year.[2] The settlers possessed horses and horned cattle, but only a few sheep, which were not fitted to fight for their own existence in the woods, as the stock had to. On the other hand, slab-sided, long-legged hogs were the most plentiful of domestic animals, ranging in great, half-wild droves through the forest.

[1] Henry Ker, *Travels*, p. 22.

[2] Michaux, 215, 236; Collins, i., 24.

All observers were struck by the intense fondness of the frontiersmen for the woods and for a restless, lonely life.[1] They pushed independence to an extreme; they did not wish to work for others or to rent land from others. Each was himself a small landed proprietor, who cleared only the ground that he could himself cultivate. Workmen were scarce and labor dear. It was almost impossible to get men fit to work as mill-hands, or to do high-class labor in forges even by importing them from Pennsylvania or Maryland.[2] Even in the few towns the inhabitants preferred that their children should follow agriculture rather than become handicraftsmen; and skilled workmen, such as carpenters and smiths, made a great deal of money, so much so that they could live a week on one day's wage.[3]

In addition to farming there was a big trade along the river. Land transportation was very difficult indeed, and the frontiersman's whole life was one long struggle with the forest and with poor roads. The waterways were consequently of very great importance, and the flat-boatmen on the Mississippi and Ohio became a numerous and noteworthy class. The rivers were covered with their

[1] Crèvecœur, *Voyage dans la Haute Pennsylvanie*, etc., p. 265.

[2] Clay MSS., letter to George Nicholas, Baltimore, September 3, 1796.

[3] Michaux, pp. 96, 152.

craft. There was a driving trade between Pittsburg and New Orleans, the goods being drawn to Pittsburg from the seacoast cities by great four-horse wagons, and being exported in ships from New Orleans to all parts of the earth. Not only did the Westerners build river craft, but they even went into shipbuilding; and on the upper Ohio, at Pittsburg, and near Marietta, at the beginning of the present century, seagoing ships were built and launched to go down the Ohio and Mississippi, and thence across the ocean to any foreign port.[1] There was, however, much risk in this trade; for the demand for commodities at Natchez and New Orleans was uncertain, while the waters of the Gulf swarmed with British and French cruisers, always ready to pounce like pirates on the ships of neutral powers.[2]

Yet the river trade was but the handmaid of frontier agriculture. The Westerners were a farmer folk who lived on the clearings their own hands had made in the great woods, and who owned the land they tilled. Towns were few and small. At the end of the century there were some four hundred thousand people in the West; yet the largest town was Lexington, which contained

[1] Thompson Mason Harris, *Journal of Tour*, etc., 1803, p. 140; Michaux, p. 77.

[2] Clay MSS., W. H. Turner to Thomas Hart, Natchez, May, 27, 1797.

less than three thousand people.[1] Lexington was a neatly built little burg, with fine houses and good stores. The leading people lived well and possessed much cultivation. Louisville and Nashville were each about half its size. In Nashville, of the one hundred and twenty houses, but eight were of brick, and most of them were mere log huts. Cincinnati was a poor little village. Cleveland consisted of but two or three log cabins, at a time when there were already a thousand settlers in its neighborhood on the Connecticut Reserve, scattered out on their farms.[2] Natchez was a very important town, nearly as large as Lexington. It derived its importance from the river traffic on the Mississippi. All the boatmen stopped there, and sometimes as many as one hundred and fifty craft were moored to the bank at the same time. The men who did this laborious river work were rude, powerful, and lawless, and when they halted for a rest their idea of enjoyment was the coarsest and most savage dissipation. At Natchez there speedily gathered every species of purveyor to their vicious pleasures, and the part of the town known as "Natchez under the Hill" became a byword for crime and debauchery.[3]

Kentucky had grown so in population, possess-

[1] Perrin Du Lac, *Voyage*, etc., 1801, 1803, p. 153; Michaux, 150.

[2] *Historical Collections of Ohio*, p. 120.

[3] Henry Ker, *Travels*, p. 41.

ing over two hundred thousand inhabitants, that she had begun to resemble an eastern State. When, in 1796, Benjamin Logan, the representative of the old woodchoppers and Indian fighters, ran for governor and was beaten, it was evident that Kentucky had passed out of the mere pioneer days. It was more than a mere coincidence that in the following year Henry Clay should have taken up his residence in Lexington. It showed that the State was already attracting to live within her borders men like those who were fitted for social and political leadership in Virginia.

Though the typical inhabitant of Kentucky was still the small frontier farmer, the class of well-to-do gentry had already attained good proportions. Elsewhere throughout the West, in Tennessee, and even here and there in Ohio and the Territories of Indiana and Mississippi, there were to be found occasional houses that were well built and well furnished, and surrounded by pleasant grounds, fairly well kept; houses to which the owners had brought their stores of silver and linen and heavy, old-fashioned furniture from their homes in the eastern States. Blount, for instance, had a handsome house in Knoxville, well fitted, as beseemed that of a man one of whose brothers still lived at Blount Hall, in the coast region of North Carolina, the ancestral seat of his forefathers for generations.[1]

[1] Clay MSS., Blount to Hart, Knoxville, February 9, 1794.

But by far the greatest number of these fine houses, and the largest class of gentry to dwell in them, were in Kentucky. Not only were Lexington and Louisville important towns, but Danville, the first capital of Kentucky, also possessed importance, and, indeed, had been the first of the western towns to develop an active and distinctive social and political life. It was in Danville that, in the years immediately preceding Kentucky's admission as a State, the Political Club met. The membership of this club included many of the leaders of Kentucky's intellectual life, and the record of its debates shows the keenness with which they watched the course of social and political development, not only in Kentucky, but in the United States. They were men of good intelligence and trained minds, and their meetings and debates undoubtedly had a stimulating effect upon Kentucky life, though they were tainted, as were a very large number of the leading men of the same stamp elsewhere throughout the country, with the doctrinaire political notions common among those who followed the French political theorists of the day.[1]

Of the gentry, many were lawyers, and the law led naturally to political life; but even among the gentry the typical man was still emphatically the big landowner. The leaders of Kentucky life were

[1] *The Political Club*, by Thomas Speed, Filson Club Publications.

men who owned large estates, on which they lived in their great roomy houses. Even when they practised law they also supervised their estates; and if they were not lawyers, in addition to tilling the land they were always ready to try their hand at some kind of manufacture. They were willing to turn their attention to any new business in which there was a chance to make money, whether it was to put up a mill, to build a forge, to undertake a contract for the delivery of wheat to some big flour merchant, or to build a flotilla of flat-boats and take the produce of a given neighborhood down to New Orleans for shipment to the West Indies.[1] They were also always engaged in efforts to improve the breed of their horses and cattle, and to introduce new kinds of agriculture, notably the culture of the vine.[2] They speedily settled themselves definitely in the new country, and began to make ready for their children to inherit their

[1] Clay MSS., Seitz & Lowan to Garret Darling, Lexington, January 23, 1797; agreement of George Nicholas, October 10, 1796, etc. This was an agreement on the part of Nicholas to furnish Seitz & Lowan with all the flour manufactured at his mill during the season of 1797 for exportation, the flour to be delivered by him in Kentucky. He was to receive $5.50 a barrel up to the receipt of $1500; after that it was to depend upon the price of wheat. Six bushels of wheat were reckoned to a barrel of flour, and the price of a bushel was put at four shillings; in reality, it ranged from three to six.

[2] *Ibid.*, "Minutes of meeting of the Directors of the Vineyard Society," June 27, 1800.

homes after them; though they retained enough of the restless spirit which had made them cross the Alleghanies to be always on the lookout for any fresh region of exceptional advantages, such as many of them considered the lands along the lower Mississippi. They led a life which appealed to them strongly, for it was passed much in the open air, in a beautiful region and lovely climate, with horses and hounds and the management of their estates and their interest in politics to occupy their time; while their neighbors were men of cultivation, at least by their own standards, so that they had the society for which they most cared.[1] In spite of their willingness to embark in commercial ventures and to build mills, rope-walks, and similar manufactures,—for which they had the greatest difficulty in procuring skilled laborers, whether foreign or native, from the northeastern States,[2] —and in spite of their liking for the law, they

[1] Clay MSS., James Brown to Thomas Hart, Lexington, April 3, 1804.

[2] *Ibid.*, J. Brown to Thomas Hart, Philadelphia, February 11, 1797. This letter was brought out to Hart by a workman, David Dodge, whom Brown had at last succeeded in engaging. Dodge had been working in New York at a rope-walk, where he received $500 a year without board. From Hart he bargained to receive $350 with board. It proved impossible to engage other journeymen workers, Brown expressing his belief that any whom he chose would desert a week after they got to Kentucky, and Dodge saying that he would rather take raw hands and train them to the business than take out such hands as offered to go.

retained the deep-settled belief that the cultivation of the earth was the best of all possible pursuits for men of every station, high or low.[1]

In many ways, the life of the Kentuckians was most like that of the Virginia gentry, though it had peculiar features of its own. Judged by Puritan standards, it seemed free enough; and it is rather curious to find Virginia fathers anxious to send their sons out to Kentucky so that they could get away from what they termed "the constant round of dissipation, the scenes of idleness, which boys are perpetually engaged in" in Virginia. One Virginia gentleman of note, in writing to a prominent Kentuckian, to whom he wished to send his son, dwelt upon his desire to get him away from a place where boys of his age spent most of the time galloping wherever they wished, mounted on blooded horses. Kentucky hardly seemed a place to which a parent would send a son if he wished him to avoid the temptations of horse flesh; but this particular Virginian at least tried to provide against this, as he informed his correspondent that he should send his son out to Kentucky mounted on an "indifferent Nag," which was to be used only as a means of locomotion for the journey, and was then immediately to be sold. [2]

[1] Clay MSS., William Nelson to Colonel George Nicholas, Caroline, Va., December 29, 1794.

[2] *Ibid.*, William Nelson to Nicholas, November 9, 1792.

The gentry strove hard to secure a good education for their children, and in Kentucky, as in Tennessee, made every effort to bring about the building of academies where their boys and girls could be well taught. If this was not possible, they strove to find some teacher capable of taking a class to which he could teach Latin and mathematics; a teacher who should also "prepare his pupils for becoming useful members of society and patriotic citizens." [1] Where possible, the leading families sent their sons to some eastern college, Princeton being naturally the favorite institution of learning with people who dwelt in communities where the Presbyterians took the lead in social standing and cultivation.[2]

All through the West there was much difficulty in getting money. In Tennessee, particularly, money was so scarce that the only way to get cash in hand was by selling provisions to the few Federal garrisons.[3] Credits were long, and payment

[1] Shelby MSS., letter of Toulmin, January 7, 1794; Blount MSS., January 6, 1792, etc.

[2] Clay MSS., *passim;* letters to Thomas Hart, October 19, 1794; October 13, 1797, etc. In the last letter, by the way, written by one John Umstead, occurs the following sentence: "I have lately heard a piece of news, if true, must be a valuable acquisition to the Western World, viz. a boat of a considerable burden making four miles and a half an hour against the strongest current in the Mississippi River, and worked by horses."

[3] *Ibid.*, Blount to Hart, Knoxville, March 13, 1799.

made largely in kind; and the price at which an article could be sold under such conditions was twice as large as that which it would command for cash down. In the accounts kept by the landowners with the merchants who sold them goods, and the artisans who worked for them, there usually appear credit accounts in which the amounts due on account of produce of various kinds are deducted from the debt, leaving a balance to be settled by cash and by orders. Owing to the fluctuating currency, and to the wide difference in charges when immediate cash payments were received as compared with charges when the payments were made on credit and in kind, it is difficult to know exactly what the prices represent. In Kentucky currency, mutton and beef were fourpence a pound in the summer of 1796, while four beef tongues cost three shillings, and a quarter of lamb three-and-sixpence. In 1798, on the same account, beef was down to threepence a pound.[1] Linen cost two-and-fourpence, or three shillings a yard; flannel, four to six shillings; calico and chintz about the same; baize, three shillings and ninepence. A dozen knives and forks were eighteen shillings, and ten pocket handkerchiefs, two pounds. Worsted shoes were eight shillings a pair, and buttons were a shilling

[1] Clay MSS., account of James Morrison and Melchia Myer, October 12, 1798.

a dozen. A pair of gloves were three-and-ninepence; a pair of kid slippers, thirteen-and-sixpence; ribbons were one-and-sixpence.[1] The blacksmith charged six shillings and ninepence for a new pair of shoes, and a shilling and sixpence for taking off an old pair; and he did all the iron work for the farm and the house alike, from repairing bridle bits and sharpening coulters to mounting "wafil irons" [2]—for the housewives excelled in preparing delicious waffles and hot cakes.

The gentry were fond of taking holidays, going to some mountain resort, where they met friends from other parts of Kentucky and Tennessee, and from Virginia and elsewhere. They carried their negro servants with them, and at a good tavern the board would be three shillings a day for the master and a little over a shilling for the man. They lived in comfort and they enjoyed themselves; but they did not have much ready money. From the sales of their crops and stock and from their mercantile ventures they got enough to pay the blacksmith and carpenter, who did odd jobs for them, and the eastern merchants from whom they got gloves, bonnets, hats, and shoes, and the

[1] Clay MSS., Account of Mrs. Marion Nicholas with Tillford, 1802. On this bill appears also a charge for Hyson tea, for straw bonnets, at eighteen shillings; for black silk gloves, and for one *Æsop's Fables*, at a cost of three shillings and ninepence.

[2] *Ibid.*, Account of Morrison and Hickey, 1798.

cloth which was made into dresses by the womankind on their plantations. But most of their wants were supplied on their own places. Their abundant tables were furnished mainly with what their own farms yielded. When they travelled they went in their own carriages. The rich men, whose wants were comparatively many, usually had on their estates white hired men or black slaves whose labor could gratify them; while the ordinary farmer, of the class that formed the great majority of the population, was capable of supplying almost all his needs himself, or with the assistance of his family.

The immense preponderance of the agricultural, land-holding, and land-tilling element, and the comparative utter insignificance of town development, was highly characteristic of the western settlement of this time, and offers a very marked contrast to what goes on to-day in the settlement of new countries. At the end of the eighteenth century the population of the western country was about as great as the population of the State of Washington at the end of the nineteenth, and Washington is distinctly a pastoral and agricultural State, a State of men who chop trees, herd cattle, and till the soil, as well as trade; but in Washington great cities, like Tacoma, Seattle, and Spokane, have sprung up with a rapidity which was utterly unknown in the West a century ago. Nowadays when new States are formed the urban

population in them tends to grow as rapidly as in the old. A hundred years ago there was practically no urban population at all in a new country. Colorado, even during its first decade of statehood, had a third of its population in its capital city. Kentucky, during its first decade, did not have much more than one per cent. of its population in its capital city. Kentucky grew as rapidly as Colorado grew, a hundred years later; but Denver grew thirty or forty times as fast as Lexington had ever grown.

In the strongly marked frontier character no traits were more pronounced than the dislike of crowding and the tendency to roam to and fro, hither and thither, always with a westward trend. Boon, the typical frontiersman, embodied in his own person the spirit of loneliness and restlessness which marked the first venturers into the wilderness. He had wandered in his youth from Pennsylvania to Carolina, and, in the prime of his strength, from North Carolina to Kentucky. When Kentucky became well settled in the closing years of the century, he crossed into Missouri, that he might once more take up his life where he could see the game come out of the woods at nightfall, and could wander among trees untouched by the axe of the pioneer. An English traveller of note who happened to encounter him about this time has left an interesting account of the meeting. It was on the Ohio, and Boon was in a canoe, alone

with his dog and gun, setting forth on a solitary trip into the wilderness to trap beaver. He would not even join himself to the other travellers for a night, preferring to plunge at once into the wild, lonely life he so loved. His strong character and keen mind struck the Englishman, who yet saw that the old hunter belonged to the class of pioneers who could never themselves civilize the land, because they ever fled from the face of the very civilization for which they had made ready the land. In Boon's soul the fierce impatience of all restraint burned like a fire. He told the Englishman that he no longer cared for Kentucky, because its people had grown too easy of life; and that he wished to move to some place where men still lived untrammelled and unshackled, and enjoyed uncontrolled the free blessings of nature.[1] The isolation of his life and the frequency with which he changed his abode brought out the frontiersman's wonderful capacity to shift for himself, but it hindered the development of his power of acting in combination with others of his kind. The first comers to the new country were so restless and so intolerant of the presence of their kind, that as neighbors came in they moved ever westward. They could not act with their fellows.

Of course, in the men who succeeded the first

[1] Francis Bailey's *Journal of a Tour in Unsettled Parts of North America in 1796 and 1797*, p. 234.

pioneers, and who were the first permanent settlers, the restlessness and the desire for a lonely life were much less developed. These men wandered only until they found a good piece of land, and took up claims on this land not because the country was lonely but because it was fertile. They hailed with joy the advent of new settlers and the upbuilding of a little market town in the neighborhood. They joined together eagerly in the effort to obtain schools for their children. As yet, there were no public schools supported by government in any part of the West, but all the settlers with any pretension to respectability were anxious to give their children a decent education. Even the poorer people, who were still engaged in the hardest and roughest struggle for a livelihood, showed appreciation of the need of schooling for their children; and wherever the clearings of the settlers were within reasonable distance of one another, a log school-house was sure to spring up. The school-teacher boarded around among the different families, and was quite as apt to be paid in produce as in cash. Sometimes he was a teacher by profession; more often he took up teaching simply as an interlude to some of his other occupations. School-books were more common than any others in the scanty libraries of the pioneers.

The settlers who became firmly established in the land gave definite shape to its political career.

The county was throughout the West the unit of division, though in the North it became somewhat mixed with the township system. It is a pity that the township could not have been the unit, as it would have rendered the social and political development in many respects easier, by giving to each little community responsibility for, and power in, matters concerning its own welfare; but the backwoodsmen lived so scattered out, and the thinly settled regions covered so large an extent of territory, that the county was at first in some ways more suited to their needs. Moreover, it was the unit of organization in Virginia, to which State more than to any other the pioneers owed their social and governmental system. The people were ordinarily brought but little in contact with the Government. They were exceedingly jealous of their individual liberty, and wished to be interfered with as little as possible. Nevertheless, they were fond of litigation. One observer remarks that horses and lawsuits were their great subjects of conversation.[1]

The vast extent of the territory and the scantiness of the population forced the men of law, like the religious leaders, to travel about rather than stay permanently fixed in any one place. In the few towns there were lawyers and clergymen who had permanent homes; but as a rule both rode

[1] Michaux, p. 240.

circuits. The judges and the lawyers travelled together on the circuits to hold court. At the shire-town all might sleep in one room, or at least under one roof; and it was far from an unusual thing to see both the grand and petit juries sitting under trees in the open.[1]

The fact that the Government did so little for the individual and left so much to be done by him, rendered it necessary for the individuals voluntarily to combine. Huskings and house-raisings were times when all joined freely to work for the man whose corn was to be shucked or whose log cabin was to be built, and turned their labor into a frolic and merry-making, where the men drank much whisky and the young people danced vigorously to the sound of the fiddle. Such merry-makings were attended from far and near, offering a most welcome break to the dreariness of life on the lonely clearings in the midst of the forest. Ordinarily, the frontiersman at his home drank milk or water; but at the taverns and social gatherings there was much drunkenness, for the men craved whisky, drinking the fiery liquor in huge draughts. Often the orgies ended with brutal brawls. To the outsiders the craving of the backwoodsman for whisky was one of his least attractive traits. It must always be remembered,[2]

[1] Atwater, p. 177.

[2] Perrin Du Lac, p. 131; Michaux, 95, etc.

however, that even the most friendly outsider is apt to apply to others his own standards in matters of judgment. The average traveller overstated the drunkenness of the backwoodsman, exactly as he overstated his misery.

The frontiersman was very poor. He worked hard and lived roughly, and he and his family had little beyond coarse food, coarse clothing, and a rude shelter. In the severe winters they suffered both from cold and hunger. In the summers there was sickness everywhere, fevers of various kinds scourging all the new settlements. The difficulty of communication was so great that it took three months for the emigrants to travel from Connecticut to the Western Reserve, near Cleveland, and a journey from a clearing, over the forest roads, to a little town not fifty miles off was an affair of moment, to be undertaken but once a year.[1] Yet, to the frontiersmen themselves, the life was far from unattractive. It gratified their intense love of independence; the lack of refinement did not grate on their rough, bold natures; and they prized the entire equality of a life where there were no social distinctions, and few social restraints. Game was still a staple, being sought after for the flesh and the hide, and of course all the men and boys were enthralled by the delights of the chase.

[1] *Historical Collections of Ohio*, p. 120; Perrin Du Lac, p. 143.

The life was as free as it was rude, and it possessed great fascinations, not only for the wilder spirits, but even for many men who, when they had the chance, showed that they possessed ability to acquire cultivation.

One old pioneer has left a pleasant account of the beginning of an ordinary day's work in a log cabin.[1] "I know of no scene in civilized life more primitive than such a cabin hearth as that of my mother. In the morning, a buckeye back-log, a hickory forestick, resting on stone and irons, with a johnny-cake, on a clean ash board, set before the fire to bake; a frying pan, with its long handle resting on a split-bottom turner's chair, sending out its peculiar music, and the tea-kettle swung from a wooden lug pole, with myself setting the table or turning the meat, or watching the johnny-cake, while she sat nursing the baby in the corner and telling the little ones to hold still and let their sister Lizzie dress them. Then came blowing the conch-shell for father in the field, the howling of old Lion, the gathering round the table, the blessing, the dull clatter of pewter spoons and pewter

[1] Drake's *Pioneer Life in Kentucky*. This gives an excellent description of life in a family of pioneers, representing what might be called the average frontiersman of the best type. Drake's father and mother were poor and illiterate, but hardworking, honest, God-fearing folk, with an earnest desire to do their duty by their neighbors and to see their children rise in the world.

basins, the talk about the crop and stock, the inquiry whether Dan'l [the boy] could be spared from the house, and the general arrangements for the day. Breakfast over, my function was to provide the sauce for dinner; in winter, to open the potato or turnip hole, and wash what I took out; in spring, to go into the field and collect the greens; in summer and fall, to explore the truck patch, our little garden. If I afterwards went to the field my household labors ceased until night; if not, they continued through the day. As often as possible mother would engage in making pumpkin pies, in which I generally bore a part, and one of these more commonly graced the supper than the dinner table. My pride was in the labors of the field. Mother did the spinning. The standing dye-stuff was the inner bark of the white walnut, from which we obtained that peculiar and permanent shade of dull yellow, the butternut [so common and typical in the clothing of the backwoods farmer]. Oak bark, with copperas as a mordant, when father had money to purchase it, supplied the ink with which I learned to write. I drove the horses to and from the range, and salted them. I tended the sheep, and hunted up the cattle in the woods."[1] This was the life of the thrifty pioneers, whose children more than held their own in the world. The

[1] Drake's *Pioneer Life in Kentucky*, pp. 90, 111, etc., condensed.

shiftless men, without ambition and without thrift, lived in laziness and filth; their eating and sleeping arrangements were as unattractive as those of an Indian wigwam.

The pleasures and the toils of the life were alike peculiar. In the wilder parts the loneliness and the fierce struggle with squalid poverty, and with the tendency to revert to savage conditions, inevitably produced for a generation or two a certain falling off from the standard of civilized communities. It needed peculiar qualities to ensure success, and the pioneers were almost exclusively native Americans. The Germans were more thrifty and prosperous, but they could not go first into the wilderness.[1] Men fresh from England rarely succeeded. The most pitiable group of emigrants that reached the West at this time was formed by the French who came to found the town of Gallipolis, on the Ohio. These were mostly refugees from the Revolution, who had been taken in by a swindling land company. They were utterly unsuited to life in the wilderness, being gentlemen,

[1] Michaux, p. 63, etc.

[2] Parkinson's *Tour in America, 1798–1800*, pp. 504, 588, etc. Parkinson loathed the Americans. A curious example of how differently the same facts will affect different observers may be gained by contrasting his observations with those of his fellow-Englishman, John Davis, whose trip covered precisely the same period; but Parkinson's observations as to the extreme difficulty of an Old Country farmer getting on in the backwoods regions are doubtless mainly true.

small tradesmen, lawyers, and the like. Unable to grapple with the wild life into which they found themselves plunged, they sank into shiftless poverty, not one in fifty showing industry and capacity to succeed. Congress took pity upon them and granted them twenty-four thousand acres in Scioto County, the tract being known as the French grant; but no gift of wild land was able to ensure their prosperity. By degrees they were absorbed into the neighboring communities, a few succeeding, most ending their lives in abject failure.[1]

The trouble these poor French settlers had with their lands was far from unique. The early system of land sales in the West was most unwise. In Kentucky and Tennessee the grants were made under the laws of Virginia and North Carolina, and each man purchased or pre-empted whatever he could, and surveyed it where he liked, with a consequent endless confusion of titles. The National Government possessed the disposal of the land in the Northwest and in Mississippi; and it avoided the pitfall of unlimited private surveying; but it made little effort to prevent swindling by land companies, and none whatever to people the country with actual settlers. Congress granted great tracts of lands to companies and to individuals, selling to the highest bidder, whether or not he intended personally to occupy the country. Public sales

[1] Atwater, p. 159; Michaux, p. 122, etc.

were thus conducted by competition, and Congress even declined to grant to the men in actual possession the right of pre-emption at the average rate of sale, refusing the request of settlers in both Mississippi and Indiana that they should be given the first choice to the lands which they had already partially cleared.[1] It was not until many years later that we adopted the wise policy of selling the National domain in small lots to actual occupants.

The pioneer, in his constant struggle with poverty, was prone to look with puzzled anger at those who made more money than he did, and whose lives were easier. The backwoods farmer or planter of that day looked upon the merchant with much the same suspicion and hostility now felt by his successor for the banker or the railroad magnate. He did not quite understand how it was that the merchant, who seemed to work less hard than he did, should make more money; and, being ignorant and suspicious, he usually followed some hopelessly wrong-headed course when he tried to remedy his wrongs. Sometimes these efforts to obtain relief took the form of resolutions not to purchase from merchants or traders such articles as woollens, linens, cottons, hats, or shoes, unless the same could be paid for in articles grown or manufactured by the farmers themselves. This

[1] *American State Papers*, Public Lands, i., 261; also pp. 71, 74, 99, etc.

particular move was taken because of the alarming scarcity of money, and was aimed particularly at the inhabitants of the Atlantic States. It was, of course, utterly ineffective.[1] A much less wise and less honest course was that sometimes followed of refusing to pay debts when the latter became inconvenient and pressing.[2]

The frontier virtue of independence and of impatience of outside direction found a particularly vicious expression in the frontier abhorrence of regular troops, and advocacy of a hopelessly feeble militia system. The people were foolishly convinced of the efficacy of their militia system, which they loudly proclaimed to be the only proper mode of national defence.[3] While in the actual presence of the Indians the stern necessities of border warfare forced the frontiersmen into a certain semblance of discipline. As soon as the immediate pressure was relieved, however, the whole militia system sank into a mere farce. At certain stated occasions there were musters for company or regimental drill. These training days were treated as occasions for frolic and merry-making. There

[1] Marshall, ii., 325.

[2] The inhabitants of Natchez, in the last days of the Spanish dominion, became inflamed with hostility to their creditors, the merchants, and insisted upon what were practically stay laws being enacted in their favor.—Gayarré and Claiborne.

[3] Marshall, ii., 279.

were pony races and wrestling matches, with unlimited fighting, drunkenness, and general uproar. Such musters were often called, in derision, cornstalk drills, because many of the men, either having no guns or neglecting to bring them, drilled with cornstalks instead. The officers were elected by the men, and when there was no immediate danger of war they were chosen purely for their social qualities. For a few years after the close of the long Indian struggle there were here and there officers who had seen actual service and who knew the rudiments of drill; but in the days of peace the men who had taken part in Indian fighting cared but little to attend the musters, and left them more and more to be turned into mere scenes of horseplay.

The frontier people of the second generation in the West thus had no military training whatever, and though they possessed a skeleton militia organization, they derived no benefit from it, because their officers were worthless, and the men had no idea of practising self-restraint or of obeying orders longer than they saw fit. The frontiersmen were personally brave, but their courage was entirely untrained, and being unsupported by discipline, they were sure to be disheartened at a repulse, to be distrustful of themselves and their leaders, and to be unwilling to persevere in the face of danger and discouragement. They were

hardy, and physically strong, and they were good marksmen; but here the list of their soldierly qualities was exhausted. They had to be put through a severe course of training by some man like Jackson before they became fit to contend on equal terms with regulars in the open or with Indians in the woods. Their utter lack of discipline was decisive against them at first in any contest with regulars. In warfare with the Indians there were a very few of their number, men of exceptional qualities as woodsmen, who could hold their own; but the average frontiersman, though he did a good deal of hunting and possessed much knowledge of woodcraft, was primarily a tiller of the soil and a feller of trees, and he was necessarily at a disadvantage when pitted against an antagonist whose entire life was passed in woodland chase and woodland warfare. These facts must all be remembered if we wish to get an intelligent explanation of the utter failure of the frontiersmen when, in 1812, they were pitted against the British and the forest tribes. They must also be taken into account when we seek to explain why it was possible but a little later to develop out of the frontiersmen fighting armies which, under competent generals, could overmatch the red coat and the Indian alike.

The extreme individualism of the frontier, which found expression for good and for evil both in its governmental system in time of peace and in its

military system in time of war, was also shown in religious matters. In 1799 and 1800 a great revival of religion swept over the West. Up to that time the Presbyterian had been the leading creed beyond the mountains. There were a few Episcopalians here and there, and there were Lutherans, Catholics, and adherents of the Reformed Dutch and German churches; but, aside from the Presbyterians, the Methodists and Baptists were the only sects powerfully represented. The great revival of 1799 was mainly carried on by Methodists and Baptists, and under their guidance the Methodist and Baptist churches at once sprang to the front and became the most important religious forces in the frontier communities.[1] The Presbyterian Church remained the most prominent as regards the wealth and social standing of its adherents, but the typical frontiersman who professed religion at all became either a Methodist or a Baptist, adopting a creed which was intensely democratic and individualistic, which made nothing of social distinctions, which distrusted educated preachers, and worked under a republican form of ecclesiastical government.

The great revival was accompanied by scenes of intense excitement. Under the conditions of a vast wooded wilderness and a scanty population

[1] McFerrin's *History of Methodism in Tennessee*, 338, etc.; Spencer's *History of Kentucky Baptists*, 69, etc.

the camp-meeting was evolved as the typical religious festival. To the great camp-meetings the frontiersmen flocked from far and near, on foot, on horseback, and in wagons. Every morning at daylight the multitude was summoned to prayer by sound of trumpet. No preacher or exhorter was suffered to speak unless he had the power of stirring the souls of his hearers. The preaching, the praying, and the singing went on without intermission, and under the tremendous emotional stress whole communities became fervent professors of religion. Many of the scenes at these camp-meetings were very distasteful to men whose religion was not emotional and who shrank from the fury of excitement into which the great masses were thrown, for under the strain many individuals literally became like men possessed, whether of good or of evil spirits, falling into ecstasies of joy or agony, dancing, shouting, jumping, fainting, while there were widespread and curious manifestations of a hysterical character, both among the believers and among the scoffers; but though this might seem distasteful to an observer of education and self-restraint, it thrilled the heart of the rude and simple backwoodsman, and reached him as he could not possibly have been reached in any other manner. Often the preachers of the different denominations worked in hearty unison; but often they were sundered by bitter jealousy and distrust.

The fiery zeal of the Methodists made them the leaders; and in their war on the forces of evil they at times showed a tendency to include all non-Methodists—whether Baptists, Lutherans, Catholics, or infidels—in a common damnation. Of course, as always in such a movement, many even of the earnest leaders at times confounded the essential and the non-essential, and railed as bitterly against dancing as against drunkenness and lewdness, or anathematized the wearing of jewelry as fiercely as the commission of crime.[1] More than one hearty, rugged old preacher, who did stalwart service for decency and morality, hated Calvinism as heartily as Catholicism, and yet yielded to no Puritan in his austere condemnation of amusement and luxury.

Often men backslid, and to a period of intense emotional religion succeeded one of utter unbelief and of reversion to the worst practices which had been given up. Nevertheless, on the whole, there was an immense gain for good. The people received a new light, and were given a sense of moral responsibility such as they had not previously possessed. Much of the work was done badly or was afterwards undone, but very much was really accomplished. The whole West owes an immense debt to the hard-working frontier preachers, sometimes Presbyterian, generally Methodist or Bap-

[1] *Autobiography of Peter Cartwright, the Backwoods Preacher.*

tist, who so gladly gave their lives to their labors and who struggled with such fiery zeal for the moral well-being of the communities to which they penetrated. Wherever there was a group of log cabins, thither some Methodist circuit-rider made his way, or there some Baptist preacher took up his abode. Their prejudices and narrow dislikes, their raw vanity and sullen distrust of all who were better schooled than they, count for little when weighed against their intense earnestness and heroic self-sacrifice. They proved their truth by their endeavor. They yielded scores of martyrs, nameless and unknown men who perished at the hands of the savages or by sickness or in flood or storm. They had to face no little danger from the white inhabitants themselves. In some of the communities most of the men might heartily support them, but in others, where the vicious and lawless elements were in control, they were in constant danger from mobs. The Godless and lawless people hated the religious with a bitter hatred, and gathered in great crowds to break up their meetings. On the other hand, those who had experienced religion were no believers in the doctrine of non-resistance. At the core, they were thoroughly healthy men, and they fought as valiantly against the powers of evil in matters physical as in matters moral. Some of the successful frontier preachers were men of weak frame, whose intensity of con-

viction and fervor of religious belief supplied the lack of bodily powers; but as a rule the preacher who did most was a stalwart man, as strong in body as in faith. One of the continually recurring incidents in the biographies of the famous frontier preachers is that of some particularly hardened sinner who was never converted until, tempted to assault the preacher of the Word, he was soundly thrashed by the latter, and his eyes thereby rudely opened through his sense of physical shortcoming to an appreciation of his moral iniquity.

Throughout these years, as the frontiersmen pressed into the West, they continued to fret and strain against the Spanish boundaries. There was no temptation to them to take possession of Canada. The lands south of the lakes were more fertile than those north of the lakes, and the climate was better. The few American settlers who did care to go into Canada found people speaking their own tongue, and with much the same ways of life; so that they readily assimilated with them, as they could not assimilate with the French and Spanish creoles. Canada lay north, and the tendency of the backwoodsman was to thrust west; among the southern backwoodsmen, the tendency was south and southwest. The Mississippi formed no natural barrier whatever. Boon, when he moved into Missouri, was but a

forerunner among the pioneers; many others followed him. He himself became an official under the Spanish Government, and received a grant of lands. Of the other frontiersmen who went into the Spanish territory, some, like Boon, continued to live as hunters and backwoods farmers.[1] Others settled in St. Louis, or some other of the little creole towns, and joined the parties of French traders who ascended the Missouri and the Mississippi to barter paint, beads, powder, and blankets for the furs of the Indians.

The Spanish authorities were greatly alarmed at the incoming of the American settlers. Gayoso de Lemos had succeeded Carondelet as Governor, and he issued to the commandants of the different posts throughout the colonies a series of orders in reference to the terms on which land grants were to be given to immigrants; he particularly emphasized the fact that liberty of conscience was not to be extended beyond the first generation, and that the children of the immigrant would either have to become Catholics or else be expelled, and that this should be explained to settlers who did not profess the Catholic faith. He ordered, moreover, that no preacher of any religion but the Catholic should be allowed to come into the provinces.[2] The Bishop of Louisiana complained

[1] *American State Papers*, Public Lands, ii., 10, 872.

[1] Gayarré, iii., 387.

bitterly of the American immigration and of the measure of religious toleration accorded to the settlers, which, he said, had introduced into the colony a gang of adventurers who acknowledged no religion. He stated that the Americans had scattered themselves over the country almost as far as Texas and corrupted the Indians and creoles by the example of their own restless and ambitious temper; for they came from among people who were in the habit of saying to their stalwart boys, "You will go to Mexico." Already the frontiersmen had penetrated even into New Mexico from the district around the mouth of the Missouri, in which they had become very numerous; and the bishop earnestly advised that the places where the Americans were allowed to settle should be rigidly restricted.[1]

When the Spaniards held such views it was absolutely inevitable that a conflict should come. Whether the frontiersman did or did not possess deep religious convictions, he was absolutely certain to refuse to be coerced into becoming a Catholic; and his children were sure to fight as soon as they were given the choice of changing their faith or abandoning their country. The minute that the American settlers were sufficiently numerous to stand a chance of success in the conflict it was certain that they would try to throw off the yoke

[1] Gayarré, iii., 408.

of the fanatical and corrupt Spanish Government. As early as 1801 bands of armed Americans had penetrated here and there into the Spanish provinces, in defiance of the commands of the authorities, and were striving to set up little bandit governments of their own.[1]

The frontiersmen possessed every advantage of position, of numbers, and of temper. In any contest that might arise with Spain they were sure to take possession at once of all of what was then called Upper Louisiana. The immediate object of interest to most of them was the commerce of the Mississippi River and the possession of New Orleans; but this was only part of what they wished, and were certain to get, for they demanded all the Spanish territory that lay across the line of their westward march. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the settlers on the western waters recognized in Spain their natural enemy, because she was the power who held the mouth and the west bank of the Mississippi. They would have transferred their hostility to any other power which fell heir to her possessions, for these possessions they were bound one day to make their own.

A thin range of settlements extended from the shores of Lake Erie on the north to the boundary of Florida on the south; and there were outposts

[1] Gayarré, iii., 447.

here and there beyond this range, as at Fort Dearborn, on the site of what is now Chicago; but the only fairly well-settled regions were in Kentucky and Tennessee. These two States were the oldest, and long remained the most populous and influential, communities in the West. They shared qualities both of the Northerners and of the Southerners, and they gave the tone to the thought and the life in the settlements north of them no less than the settlements south of them. This fact, of itself, tended to make the West homogeneous and to keep it a unit with a peculiar character of its own, neither northern nor southern in political and social tendency. It was the middle West which was first settled, and the middle West stamped its peculiar characteristics on all the growing communities beyond the Alleghanies. Inasmuch as west of the mountains the northern communities were less distinctively northern and the southern communities less distinctively southern than was the case with the eastern States on the seaboard, it followed naturally that, considered with reference to other sections of the Union, the West formed a unit, possessing marked characteristics of its own. A distinctive type of character was developed west of the Alleghanies, and for the first generation the typical representatives of this western type were to be found in Kentucky and Tennessee.

The settlement of the Northwest had been begun under influences which in the end were to separate it radically from the Southwest. It was settled under governmental supervision, and because of and in accordance with governmental action; and it was destined ultimately to receive the great mass of its immigrants from the northwest; but as yet these two influences had not become strong enough to sunder the frontiersmen north of the Ohio by any sharp line from those south of the Ohio. The settlers on the western waters were substantially the same in character north and south.

In sum, the western frontier folk, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, possessed in common marked and peculiar characteristics, which the people of the rest of the country shared to a much less extent. They were backwoods farmers, each man preferring to live alone on his own freehold, which he himself tilled and from which he himself had cleared the timber. The towns were few and small; the people were poor, and often ignorant, but hardy in body and in temper. They joined hospitality to strangers with suspicion of them. They were essentially warlike in spirit, and yet utterly unmilitary in all their training and habits of thought. They prized beyond measure their individual liberty and their collective freedom, and were so jealous of governmental control

that they often, to their own great harm, fatally weakened the very authorities whom they chose to act over them. The peculiar circumstances of their lives forced them often to act in advance of action by the law, and this bred a lawlessness in certain matters which their children inherited for generations; yet they knew and appreciated the need of obedience to the law, and they thoroughly respected the law.

The separatist agitations had largely died out. In 1798 and 1799 Kentucky divided with Virginia the leadership of the attack on the Alien and and Sedition laws; but her extreme feelings were not shared by the other Westerners, and she acted not as a representative of the West, but on a footing of equality with Virginia. Tennessee sympathized as little with the nullification movement of these two States at this time as she sympathized with South Carolina in her nullification movement a generation later. With the election of Jefferson, the dominant political party in the West became in sympathy with the party in control of the nation, and the West became stoutly loyal to the National Government.

The West had thus achieved a greater degree of political solidarity, both as within itself and with the nation as a whole, than ever before. Its wishes were more powerful with the East. The pioneers stood for an extreme Americanism, in

social, political, and religious matters alike. The trend of American thought was toward them, not away from them. More than ever before, the Westerners were able to make their demands felt at home, and to make their force felt in the event of a struggle with a foreign power.

CHAPTER III

THE PURCHASE OF LOUISIANA; AND BURR'S CONSPIRACY, 1803–1807

A GREAT and growing race may acquire vast stretches of scantily peopled territory in any one of several ways. Often the statesman, no less than the soldier, plays an all-important part in winning the new land; nevertheless, it is usually true that the diplomatists who, by treaty, ratify the acquisition, usurp a prominence in history to which they are in no way entitled by the real worth of their labors.

The territory may be gained by the armed forces of the nation, and retained by treaty. It was in this way that England won the Cape of Good Hope from Holland; it was in this way that the United States won New Mexico. Such a conquest is due, not to the individual action of members of the winning race, but to the nation as a whole, acting through her soldiers and statesmen. It was the English navy which conquered the Cape of Good Hope for England; it was the English diplomats that secured its retention. So it was the American army which added New Mexico to

the United States; and its retention was due to the will of the politicians who had set that army in motion. In neither case was there any previous settlement of moment by the conquerors in the conquered territory. In neither case was there much direct pressure by the people of the conquering races upon the soil which was won for them by their soldiers and statesmen. The acquisition of the territory must be set down to the credit of these soldiers and statesmen, representing the nation in its collective capacity; though in the case of New Mexico there would of course ultimately have been a direct pressure of rifle-bearing settlers upon the people of the ranches and the mud-walled towns.

In such cases it is the government itself, rather than any individual or aggregate of individuals, which wins the new land for the race. When it is won without appeal to arms, the credit, which would otherwise be divided between soldiers and statesmen, of course accrues solely to the latter. Alaska, for instance, was acquired by mere diplomacy. No American settlers were thronging into Alaska. The desire to acquire it among the people at large was vague, and was fanned into sluggish activity only by the genius of the far-seeing statesmen who purchased it. The credit of such an acquisition really does belong to the men who secured the adoption of the treaty by which it was

acquired. The honor of adding Alaska to the national domain belongs to the statesmen who at the time controlled the Washington Government. They were not figureheads in the transaction. They were the vital, moving forces.

Just the contrary is true of cases like that of the conquest of Texas. The Government of the United States had nothing to do with winning Texas for the English-speaking people of North America. The American frontiersmen won Texas for themselves, unaided either by the statesmen who controlled the politics of the Republic or by the soldiers who took their orders from Washington.

In yet other cases the action is more mixed. Statesmen and diplomats have some share in shaping the conditions under which a country is finally taken; in the eye of history they often usurp much more than their proper share; but in reality they are able to bring matters to a conclusion only because adventurous settlers, in defiance or disregard of governmental action, have pressed forward into the longed-for land. In such cases the function of the diplomats is one of some importance, because they lay down the conditions under which the land is taken; but the vital question as to whether the land shall be taken at all, upon no matter what terms, is answered not by the diplomats, but by the people themselves.

It was in this way that the Northwest was won from the British, and the boundaries of the Southwest established by treaty with the Spaniards. Adams, Jay, and Pinckney deserve much credit for the way they conducted their several negotiations; but there would have been nothing for them to negotiate about had not the settlers already thronged into the disputed territories or strenuously pressed forward against their boundaries.

So it was with the acquisition of Louisiana. Jefferson, Livingston, and their fellow statesmen and diplomats concluded the treaty which determined the manner in which it came into our possession; but they did not really have much to do with fixing the terms even of this treaty; and the part which they played in the acquisition of Louisiana in no way resembles, even remotely, the part which was played by Seward, for instance, in acquiring Alaska. If it had not been for Seward, and the political leaders who thought as he did, Alaska might never have been acquired at all; but the Americans would have won Louisiana in any event, even if the treaty of Livingston and Monroe had not been signed. The real history of the acquisition must tell of the great westward movement begun in 1769, and not merely of the feeble diplomacy of Jefferson's administration. In 1802 American settlers were already clustered here and there on the eastern fringe of the vast region

which then went by the name of Louisiana. All the stalwart freemen who had made their rude clearings, and built their rude towns, on the hither side of the mighty Mississippi, were straining with eager desire against the forces which withheld them from seizing with strong hand the coveted province. They did not themselves know, and far less did the public men of the day realize, the full import and meaning of the conquest upon which they were about to enter. For the moment the navigation of the mouth of the Mississippi seemed to them of the first importance. Even the frontiersmen themselves put second to this the right to people the vast continent which lay between the Pacific and the Mississippi. The statesmen at Washington viewed this last proposition with positive alarm, and cared only to acquire New Orleans. The winning of Louisiana was due to no one man, and least of all to any statesman or set of statesmen. It followed inevitably upon the great westward thrust of the settler-folk—a thrust which was delivered blindly, but which no rival race could parry until it was stopped by the ocean itself.

Louisiana was added to the United States because the hardy backwoods settlers had swarmed into the valleys of the Tennessee, the Cumberland, and the Ohio by hundreds of thousands; and had hardly begun to build their raw hamlets on the banks of the Mississippi, and to cover its waters

with their flat-bottomed craft. Restless, adventurous, hardy, they looked eagerly across the Mississippi to the fertile solitudes where the Spaniard was the nominal, and the Indian the real, master; and with a more immediate longing they fiercely coveted the creole province at the mouth of the river.

The Mississippi formed no barrier whatsoever to the march of the backwoodsmen. It could be crossed at any point; and the same rapid current which made it a matter of extreme difficulty for any power at the mouth of the stream to send reinforcements up against the current would have greatly facilitated the movements of the Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee levies down-stream to attack the Spanish provinces. In the days of sails and oars a great river with rapid current might vitally affect military operations if these depended upon sending flotillas up- or down-stream. But such a river has never proved a serious barrier against a vigorous and aggressive race, where it lies between two peoples, so that the aggressors have merely to cross it. It offers no such shield as is afforded by a high mountain range. The Mississippi served as a convenient line of demarcation between the Americans and the Spaniards; but it offered no protection whatever to the Spaniards against the Americans.

Therefore the frontiersmen found nothing seri-

ous to bar their farther march westward; the diminutive Spanish garrisons in the little creole towns near the Missouri were far less capable of effective resistance than were most of the Indian tribes whom the Americans were brushing out of their path. Towards the south the situation was different. The Floridas were shielded by the great Indian confederacies of the Creeks and Choctaws, whose strength was as yet unbroken. What was much more important, the mouth of the Mississippi was commanded by the important seaport of New Orleans, which was accessible to fleets, which could readily be garrisoned by water, and which was the capital of a region that, by backwoods standards, passed for well settled. New Orleans, by its position, was absolute master of the foreign trade of the Mississippi valley; and any power in command of the seas could easily keep it strongly garrisoned. The vast region that was then known as Upper Louisiana—the territory stretching from the Mississippi to the Pacific—was owned by the Spaniards, but only in shadowy fashion, and could not have been held by any European power against the sturdy westward pressure of the rifle-bearing settlers. But New Orleans and its neighborhood were held even by the Spaniards in good earnest; while a stronger power, once in possession, could with difficulty have been dislodged.

It naturally followed that for the moment the

attention of the backwoodsmen was directed much more to New Orleans than to the trans-Mississippi territory. A few wilderness lovers, like Boon, a few reckless adventurers of the type of Philip Nolan, were settling around and beyond the creole towns of the North, or were endeavoring to found small buccaneering colonies in dangerous proximity to the Spanish commanderies in the Southwest. But the bulk of the western settlers as yet found all the vacant territory they wished east of the Mississippi. What they needed at the moment was, not more wild land, but an outlet for the products yielded by the land they already possessed. The vital importance to the Westerners of the free navigation of the Mississippi has already been shown. Suffice it to say that the control of the mouth of the great Father of Waters was of direct personal consequence to almost every tree-feller, every backwoods farmer, every land owner, every townsman, who dwelt beyond the Alleghanies. These men did not worry much over the fact that the country on the farther bank of the Mississippi was still under the Spanish flag. For the moment they did not need it, and when they did, they knew they could take it without the smallest difficulty. But the ownership of the mouth of the Mississippi was a matter of immediate importance; and though none of the settlers doubted that it would ultimately be theirs, it

was yet a matter of much consequence to them to get possession of it as quickly as possible, and with as little trouble as possible, rather than to see it held, perhaps for years, by a powerful hostile nation and then to see it acquired only at the cost of bloody and, perchance, checkered warfare.

This was the attitude of the backwoods people as with sinewy, strenuous shoulder they pressed against the Spanish boundaries. The Spanish attitude, on the other hand, was one of apprehension so intense that it overcame even anger against the American nation. For mere diplomacy, the Spaniards cared little or nothing; but they feared the Westerners. Their surrender of Louisiana was due primarily to the steady pushing and crowding of the frontiersmen, and the continuous growth of the western commonwealths. In spite of Pinckney's treaty the Spaniards did not leave Natchez until fairly drowned out by the American settlers and soldiers. They now felt the same pressure upon them in New Orleans; it was growing steadily and was fast becoming intolerable. Year by year, almost month by month, they saw the numbers of their foes increase, and saw them settle more and more thickly in places from which it would be easy to strike New Orleans. Year by year the offensive power of the Americans increased in more than arithmetical ratio as against Louisiana.

The more reckless and lawless adventurers from time to time pushed southwest, even towards the borders of Texas and New Mexico, and strove to form little settlements, keeping the Spanish governors and intendants in a constant fume of anxiety. One of these settlements was founded by Philip Nolan, a man whom rumor had connected with Wilkinson's intrigues, and who, like many another lawless trader of the day, was always dreaming of empires to be carved from, or wealth to be won in, the golden Spanish realms. In the fall of 1800, he pushed beyond the Mississippi, with a score or so of companions, and settled on the Brazos. The party built pens or corrals, and began to catch wild horses, for the neighborhood swarmed not only with game, but with immense droves of mustangs. The handsomest animals they kept and trained, letting the others loose again. The following March these tamers of wild horses were suddenly set upon by a body of Spaniards, three hundred strong, with one field-piece. The assailants made their attack at daybreak, slew Nolan, and captured his comrades, who for many years afterwards lived as prisoners in the Mexican towns.[1] The menace of such buccaneering movements kept the Spaniards alive to the

[1] Pike's letter, July 22, 1807, in Natchez *Herald;* in Colonel Durrett's collection; see Coues's edition of Pike's *Expedition*, lii.; also Gayarré, iii., 447.

imminent danger of the general American attack which they heralded.

Spain watched her boundaries with the most jealous care. Her colonial system was evil in its suspicious exclusiveness towards strangers; and her religious system was marked by an intolerance still almost as fierce as in the days of Torquemada. The Holy Inquisition was a recognized feature of Spanish political life; and the rulers of the Spanish-American colonies put the stranger and the heretic under a common ban. The reports of the Spanish ecclesiastics of Louisiana dwelt continually upon the dangers with which the oncoming of the backwoodsmen threatened the Church no less than the State.[1] All the men in power, civil, military, and religious alike, showed towards strangers, and especially towards American strangers, a spirit which was doubly unwise; for by their jealousy they created the impression that the lands they so carefully guarded must hold treasures of great price; and by their severity they created an anger which, when fully aroused, they could not well quell. The frontiersmen, as they tried to peer into the Spanish dominions, were lured on by the attraction they felt for what was hidden and forbidden; and there was enough danger in the path to madden them, while there was no exhibition of a strength sufficient to cow them.

[1] Report of Bishop Peñalvert, November 1, 1795, Gayarré.

The Spanish rulers realized fully that they were too weak effectively to cope with the Americans, and as the pressure upon them grew ever heavier and more menacing, they began to fear not only for Louisiana, but also for Mexico. They clung tenaciously to all their possessions; but they were willing to sacrifice a part, if by so doing they could erect a barrier for the defence of the remainder. Such a chance was now seemingly offered them by France.

At the beginning of the century Napoleon was First Consul; and the France over which he ruled was already the mightiest nation in Europe, and yet had not reached the zenith of her power. It was at this time that the French influence over Spain was most complete. Both the Spanish King and the Spanish people were dazzled and awed by the splendor of Napoleon's victories. Napoleon's magnificent and wayward genius was always striving after more than merely European empire. As throne after throne went down before him he planned conquests which should include the interminable wastes of snowy Russia, and the sea-girt fields of England; and he always dreamed of yet vaster, more shadowy triumphs, won in the realms lying eastward of the Mediterranean, or among the islands and along the coasts of the Spanish Main. In 1800, his dream of eastern conquest was over, but his lofty ambition was plan-

ning for France the re-establishment in America of that colonial empire which a generation before had been wrested from her by England.

The need of the Spaniards seemed to Napoleon his opportunity. By the bribe of a petty Italian principality he persuaded the Bourbon King of Spain to cede Louisiana to the French, at the treaty of San Ildefonso, concluded in October, 1800. The cession was agreed to by the Spaniards on the express pledge that the territory should not be transferred to any other power; and chiefly for the purpose of erecting a barrier which might stay the American advance, and protect the rest of the Spanish possessions.

Every effort was made to keep the cession from being made public, and owing to various political complications it was not consummated for a couple of years; but meanwhile it was impossible to prevent rumors from going abroad, and the mere hint of such a project was enough to throw the West into a fever of excitement. Moreover, at this moment, before the treaty between France and Spain had been consummated, Morales, the Intendant of New Orleans, deliberately threw down the gage of battle to the Westerners.[1] On October 16, 1802, he proclaimed that the Americans had forfeited their right of deposit in New Orleans. By Pinckney's treaty this right had

[1] Gayarré, iii., 456.

been granted for three years, with the stipulation that it should then be extended for a longer period, and that if the Spaniards chose to revoke the permit so far as New Orleans was concerned, they should make some other spot on the river a port of free entry. The Americans had taken for granted that the privilege, when once conferred, would never be withdrawn; but Morales, under pretence that the Americans had slept on their rights by failing to discover some other spot as a treaty port, declared that the right of deposit had lapsed, and would not be renewed. The Governor, Salcedo,—who had succeeded Gayoso when the latter died of yellow fever, complicated by a drinking-bout with Wilkinson,—was not in sympathy with the movement; but this mattered little. Under the cumbrous Spanish colonial system, the Governor, though he disapproved of the actions of the Intendant, could not reverse them, and Morales paid no heed to the angry protests of the Spanish Minister at Washington, who saw that the Americans were certain in the end to fight rather than to lose the only outlet for the commerce of the West.[1] It seems probable that the

[1] Gayarré, iii., 576. The King of Spain, at the instigation of Godoy, disapproved the order of Morales, but so late that the news of the disapproval reached Louisiana only as the French were about to take possession. However, the reversal of the order rendered the course of the further negotiations easier.

Intendant's action was due to the fact that he deemed the days of Spanish dominion numbered, and, in his jealousy of the Americans, wished to place the new French authorities in the strongest possible position; but the act was not done with the knowledge of France.

Of this, however, the Westerners were ignorant. They felt sure that any alteration in policy so fatal to their interests must be merely a foreshadowing of the course the French intended thereafter to follow. They believed that their worst fears were justified. Kentucky and Tennessee clamored for instant action, and Claiborne offered to raise in the Mississippi territory alone a force of volunteer riflemen sufficient to seize New Orleans before its transfer into French hands could be effected.

Jefferson was President, and Madison Secretary of State. Both were men of high and fine qualities who rendered, at one time or another, real and great service to the country. Jefferson in particular played in our political life a part of immense importance. But the country has never had two statesmen less capable of upholding the honor and dignity of the nation, or even of preserving its material well-being when menaced by foreign foes. They were peaceful men, quite unfitted to grapple with an enemy who expressed himself through deeds rather than words. When

stunned by the din of arms they showed themselves utterly inefficient rulers.

It was these two timid, well-meaning statesmen who now found themselves pitted against Napoleon and Napoleon's minister, Talleyrand—against the greatest warrior and lawgiver and against one of the greatest diplomats of modern times; against two men, moreover, whose sodden lack of conscience was but heightened by the contrast with their brilliant genius and lofty force of character—two men who were unable to so much as appreciate that there was shame in the practice of venality, dishonesty, mendacity, cruelty, and treachery.

Jefferson was the least warlike of presidents, and he loved the French with a servile devotion. But his party was strongest in precisely those parts of the country where the mouth of the Mississippi was held to be of right the property of the United States; and the pressure of public opinion was too strong for Jefferson to think of resisting it. The South and the West were a unit in demanding that France should not be allowed to establish herself on the lower Mississippi. Jefferson was forced to tell his French friends that if their nation persisted in its purpose, America would be obliged to marry itself to the navy and army of England. Even he could see that for the French to take Louisiana meant war with the United States sooner or later;

and as above all things else he wished peace, he made every effort to secure the coveted territory by purchase.

Chancellor Robert R. Livingston, of New York, represented American interests in Paris; but at the very close of the negotiation he was succeeded by Monroe, whom Jefferson sent over as a special envoy. The course of the negotiations was at first most baffling to the Americans.[1] Talleyrand lied with such unmoved calm that it was impossible to put the least weight upon anything he said; moreover, the Americans soon found that Napoleon was the sole and absolute master, so that it was of no use attempting to influence any of his subordinates, save in so far as these subordinates might, in their turn, influence him. For some time it appeared that Napoleon was bent upon occupying Louisiana in force and using it as a basis for the rebuilding of the French colonial power. The time seemed ripe for such a project. After a decade of war with all the rest of Europe, France in 1802 concluded the Peace of Amiens, which left her absolutely free to do as she liked in the New World. Napoleon thoroughly despised a repub-

[1] In Henry Adams's *History of the United States*, the account of the diplomatic negotiations at this period between France, Spain, and the United States, is the most brilliant piece of diplomatic history, so far as the doings of the diplomats themselves are concerned, that can be put to the credit of any American writer.

lic, and especially a republic without an army or navy. After the Peace of Amiens he began to treat the Americans with contemptuous disregard, and he planned to throw into Louisiana one of his generals with a force of veteran troops sufficient to hold the country against any attack.

His hopes were in reality chimerical. At the moment, France was at peace with her European foes, and could send her ships of war and her transports across the ocean without fear of the British navy. It would, therefore, have been possible for Napoleon without molestation to throw a large body of French soldiers into New Orleans for some years against American attack, and might even have captured one or two of the American posts on the Mississippi, such as Natchez; but the instant it had landed in New Orleans the entire American people would have accepted France as their deadliest enemy, and all American foreign policy would have been determined by the one consideration of ousting the French from the mouth of the Mississippi. To the United States, France was by no means as formidable as Great Britian, because of her inferiority as a naval power. Even if unsupported by any outside alliance, the Americans would doubtless in the end have driven a French army from New Orleans, though very probably at the cost of one or two preliminary rebuffs. The West was stanch in support of Jefferson and Madi-

son; but in time of stress it was sure to develop leaders of more congenial temper, exactly as it actually did develop Andrew Jackson a few years later. At this very time the French failed to conquer the negro republic which Toussaint l'Ouverture had founded in Hayti. What they thus failed to accomplish in one island, against insurgent negroes, it was folly to think they could accomplish on the American continent, against the power of the American people. This struggle with the revolutionary slaves in Hayti hindered Napoleon from immediately throwing an army into Louisiana; but it did more, for it helped to teach him the folly of trying to carry out such a plan at all.

A very able and faithful French agent in the meanwhile sent a report to Napoleon, plainly pointing out the impossibility of permanently holding Louisiana against the Americans. He showed that on the western waters alone it would be possible to gather armies amounting in the aggregate to twenty or thirty thousand men, all of them inflamed with the eager desire to take New Orleans.[1] The Mississippi ran so as to facilitate the movement of any expedition against New Orleans, while

[1] Pontalba's *Memoir*. He hoped that Louisiana might, in certain contingencies, be preserved for the French, but he insisted that it could only be by keeping peace with the American settlers, and by bringing about an immense increase of population in the province.

it offered formidable obstacles to counter-expeditions from New Orleans against the American commonwealths lying farther up-stream. An expeditionary force sent from the mouth of the Mississippi, whether to assail the towns and settlements along the Ohio, or to defend the creole villages near the Missouri, could at the utmost hope for only transient success, while its ultimate failure was certain. On the other hand, a backwoods army could move down-stream with comparative ease; and even though such an expedition were defeated, it was certain that the attempt would be repeated again and again, until, by degrees, the mob of hardy riflemen changed into a veteran army, and brought forth some general like "Old Hickory," able to lead to victory.

The most intelligent French agents on the ground saw this. Some of Napoleon's ministers were equally far-sighted. One of them, Barbé Marbois, represented to him in the strongest terms the hopelessness of the undertaking on which he proposed to embark. He pointed out that the United States was sure to go to war with France if France took New Orleans, and that in the end such a war could only result in victory for the Americans.

We can now readily see that this victory was certain to come even had the Americans been left without allies. France could never have defended

the vast region known as Upper Louisiana, and sooner or later New Orleans itself would have fallen, though it may well be only after humiliating defeats for the Americans and much expenditure of life and treasure. But as things actually were, the Americans would have had plenty of powerful allies. The Peace of Amiens lasted but a couple of years before England again went to war. Napoleon knew, and the American statesmen knew, that the British intended to attack New Orleans upon the outbreak of hostilities if it were in French hands. In such event Louisiana would have soon fallen; for any French force stationed there would have found its reinforcements cut off by the English navy, and would have dwindled away until unable to offer resistance.

Nevertheless, European wars, and the schemes and fancies of European statesmen, could determine merely the conditions under which the catastrophe was to take place, but not the catastrophe itself. The fate of Louisiana was already fixed. It was not the diplomats who decided its destiny, but the settlers of the western States. The growth of the teeming folk who had crossed the Alleghanies and were building their rude, vigorous commonwealths in the northeastern portion of the Mississippi basin, decided the destiny of all the lands that were drained by that mighty river. The steady westward movement of the

Americans was the all-important factor in determining the ultimate ownership of New Orleans. Livingston, the American minister, saw plainly the inevitable outcome of the struggle. He expressed his wonder that other Americans should be uneasy in the matter, saying that for his part it seemed as clear as day that no matter what trouble might temporarily be caused, in the end Louisiana was certain to fall into the grasp of the United States.[1]

There were many Americans and many Frenchmen of note who were less clear-sighted. Livingston encountered rebuff after rebuff, and delay after delay. Talleyrand met him with his usual front of impenetrable duplicity. He calmly denied everything connected with the cession of Louisiana until even the details became public property, and then admitted them with unblushing equanimity. His delays were so tantalizing that they might well have revived unpleasant memories of the famous X Y Z negotiations, in which he tried in vain to extort bribe-money from the American negotiators[2]; but Livingston, and

[1] Livingston to Madison, September 1, 1802. Later, Livingston himself became uneasy, fearing lest Napoleon's wilfulness might plunge him into an undertaking which, though certain to end disastrously to the French, might meanwhile cause great trouble to the Americans.

[2] Jefferson was guilty of much weak and undignified conduct during these negotiations, but of nothing weaker and more petty than his attempt to flatter Talleyrand by pre-

those he represented, soon realized that it was Napoleon himself who alone deserved serious consideration. Through Napoleon's character, and helping to make it great, there ran an imaginative vein which at times bordered on the fantastic; and this joined with his imperious self-will, brutality, and energy to make him eager to embark on a scheme which, when he had thought it over in cold blood, he was equally eager to abandon. For some time he seemed obstinately bent on taking possession of Louisiana, heedless of the attitude which this might cause the Americans to assume. He designated as commander of his army of occupation, Victor, a general as capable and brave as he was insolent, who took no pains to conceal from the American representatives his intention to treat their people with a high hand.

Jefferson took various means, official and unofficial, of impressing upon Napoleon the strength of the feeling in the United States over the matter; and his utterances came as near menace as his pacific nature would permit. To the great French conqueror, however, accustomed to violence and to the strife of giants, Jefferson's somewhat vacillating attitude did not seem impressive; and the one course which would have impressed Napoleon

tending that the Americans disbelieved his admitted venality, and were indignant with those who had exposed it. See Adams.

was not followed by the American President. Jefferson refused to countenance any proposal to take prompt possession of Louisiana by force or to assemble an army which could act with immediate vigor in time of need; and as he was the idol of the southwesterners, who were bitterly anti-federalist in sympathy, he was able to prevent any violent action on their part until events rendered this violence unnecessary. At the same time, Jefferson himself never for a moment ceased to feel the strong pressure of Southern and Western public sentiment; and so he continued resolute in his purpose to obtain Louisiana.

It was no argument of Jefferson's or of the American diplomats, but the inevitable trend of events, that finally brought about a change in Napoleon's mind. The army he sent to Hayti wasted away by disease and in combat with the blacks, and thereby not only diminished the forces he intended to throw into Louisiana, but also gave him a terrible object lesson as to what the fate of these forces was certain ultimately to be. The attitude of England and Austria grew steadily more hostile, and his most trustworthy advisers impressed on Napoleon's mind the steady growth of the Western-American communities, and the implacable hostility with which they were certain to regard any power that seized or attempted to hold New Orleans. Napoleon could not afford to ham-

per himself with the difficult defence of a distant province, and to incur the hostility of a new foe, at the very moment when he was entering on another struggle with his old European enemies. Moreover, he needed money in order to carry on the struggle. To be sure, he had promised Spain not to turn over Louisiana to another power; but he was quite as incapable as any Spanish statesman, or as Talleyrand himself, of so much as considering the question of breach of faith or loss of honor if he could gain any advantage by sacrificing either. Livingston was astonished to find that Napoleon had suddenly changed front, and that there was every prospect of gaining what for months had seemed impossible. For some time there was haggling over the terms. Napoleon at first demanded an exorbitant sum; but having once made up his mind to part with Louisiana his impatient disposition made him anxious to conclude the bargain. He rapidly abated his demands, and the cession was finally made for fifteen millions of dollars.

The treaty was signed in May, 1803. The definition of the exact boundaries of the ceded territory was purposely left very loose by Napoleon. On the east, the Spanish Government of the Floridas still kept possession of what are now several parishes in the State of Louisiana. In the far West the boundary lines which divided Upper

Louisiana from the possessions of Britain on the north and of Spain on the south led through a wilderness where no white man had ever trod, and they were of course unmapped, and only vaguely guessed at.

There was one singular feature of this bargain, which showed, as nothing else could have shown, how little American diplomacy had to do with obtaining Louisiana, and how impossible it was for any European power, even the greatest, to hold the territory in the face of the steady westward growth of the American people. Napoleon forced Livingston and Monroe to become the reluctant purchasers, not merely of New Orleans, but of all the immense territory which stretched vaguely northwestward to the Pacific. Jefferson, at moments, felt a desire to get all this western territory; but he was too timid and too vacillating to insist strenuously upon anything which he feared Napoleon would not grant. Madison felt a strong disinclination to see the national domain extend west of the Mississippi; and he so instructed Monroe and Livingston. In their turn, the American envoys, with solemn fatuity, believed it might impress Napoleon favorably if they made much show of moderation, and they spent no small part of their time in explaining that they only wished a little bit of Louisiana, including New Orleans and the east bank of the lower Mississippi. Livingston

indeed went so far as to express a very positive disinclination to take the territory west of the Mississippi at any price, stating that he should much prefer to see it remain in the hands of France or Spain, and suggesting, by way of apology for its acquisition, that it might be re-sold to some European power! But Napoleon saw clearly that if the French ceded New Orleans it was a simple physical impossibility for them to hold the rest of the Louisiana territory. If his fierce and irritable vanity had been touched he might, through mere wayward anger, have dared the Americans to a contest which, however disastrous to them, would ultimately have been more so to him; but he was a great statesman, and a still greater soldier, and he did not need to be told that it would be worse than folly to try to keep a country when he had given up the key-position.

The region west of the Mississippi could become the heritage of no other people save that which had planted its populous communities along the eastern bank of the river. It was quite possible for a powerful European nation to hold New Orleans for some time, even though all Upper Louisiana fell into the hands of the Americans; but it was entirely impossible for any European nation to hold Upper Louisiana if New Orleans became a city of the United States. The Westerners, wiser than their rulers, but no wiser than Napoleon at the last,

felt this, and were not in the least disturbed over the fate of Louisiana, provided they were given the control of the mouth of the Mississippi. As a matter of fact, it is improbable that the fate of the great territory lying west of the upper Mississippi would even have been seriously delayed had it been nominally under the control of France or Spain. With the mouth of the Mississippi once in American hands it was a physical impossibility in any way to retard the westward movement of the men who were settling Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee.

The ratification of the treaty brought on sharp debates in Congress. Jefferson had led his party into power as the special champion of States' rights and the special opponent of National Sovereignty. He and they rendered a very great service to the nation by acquiring Louisiana; but it was at the cost of violating every precept which they had professed to hold dear, and of showing that their warfare on the Federalists had been waged on behalf of principles which they were obliged to confess were shams the moment they were put to the test. But the Federalists of the Northeast, both in the Middle States and in New England, at this juncture behaved far worse than the Jeffersonian Republicans. These Jeffersonian Republicans did indeed by their performance give the lie to their past promise, and thereby emphasize the unworthiness of their conduct in years

gone by; nevertheless, at this juncture they were right, which was far more important than being logical or consistent. But the northeastern Federalists, though with many exceptions, did as a whole stand as the opponents of national growth. They had very properly, though vainly, urged Jefferson to take prompt and effective steps to sustain the national honor, when it seemed probable that the country could be won from France only at the cost of war; but when the time actually came to incorporate Louisiana into the national domain, they showed that jealous fear of western growth, which was the most marked defect in northeastern public sentiment until past the middle of the present century. It proved that the Federalists were rightly distrusted by the West; and it proved that at this crisis, the Jeffersonian Republicans, in spite of their follies, weaknesses, and crimes, were the safest guardians of the country because they believed in its future and strove to make it greater.

The Jeremiads of the Federalist leaders in Congress were the same in kind as those in which many cultivated men of the East always indulged whenever we enlarged our territory, and in which many persons like them would now indulge were we at the present day to make a similar extension. The people of the United States were warned that they were incorporating into their number men who

were wholly alien in every respect, and who could never be assimilated. They were warned that when they thus added to their empire, they merely rendered it unwieldy and assured its being split into two or more confederacies at no distant day. Some of the extremists, under the lead of Quincy, went so far as to threaten dissolution of the Union, because of what was done, insisting that the Northeast ought by rights to secede because of the injury done it by adding strength to the South and West. Fortunately, however, talk of this kind did not affect the majority; the treaty was ratified and Louisiana became part of the United States.

Meanwhile, the creoles themselves accepted their very rapidly changing fates with something much like apathy. In March, 1803, the French Prefect Laussat arrived to make preparations to take possession of the country. He had no idea that Napoleon intended to cede it to the United States. On the contrary, he showed that he regarded the French as the heirs, not only to the Spanish territory, but of the Spanish hostility to the Americans. He openly regretted that the Spanish Government had reversed Morales's act in taking away from the Americans the right of deposit; and he made all his preparations as if on the theory that New Orleans was to become the centre of an aggressive military government.

His dislikes, however, were broad, and included the Spaniards as well as the Americans. There was much friction between him and the Spanish officials; he complained bitterly to the home government of the insolence and intrigues of the Spanish party. He also portrayed in scathing terms the gross corruption of the Spanish authorities. As to this corruption, he was borne out by the American observers. Almost every high Spanish official was guilty of peculation at the expense of the government, and of bribe-taking at the expense of the citizens.

Nevertheless, the creoles were far from ill-satisfied with Spanish rule. They were not accustomed to self-government, and did not demand it; and they cared very little for the fact that their superiors made money improperly. If they paid due deference to their lay and clerical rulers they were little interfered with; and they were in full accord with the governing classes concerning most questions, both of principle or lack of principle, and of prejudice. The creoles felt that they were protected, rather than oppressed, by people who shared their tastes, and who did not interfere with the things they held dear. On the whole, they showed only a tepid joy at the prospect of again becoming French citizens.

Laussat soon discovered that they were to remain French citizens for a very short time indeed;

and he prepared faithfully to carry out his instructions, and to turn the country over to the Americans. The change in the French attitude greatly increased the friction with the Spaniards. The Spanish home government was furious with indignation at Napoleon for having violated his word, and only the weakness of Spain prevented war between it and France. The Spanish party in New Orleans muttered its discontent so loud that Laussat grew alarmed. He feared some outbreak on the part of the Spanish sympathizers, and, to prevent such a mischance, he not only embodied the comparatively small portion of the creole militia whom he could trust, but also a number of American volunteers, concerning whose fidelity in such a crisis as that he anticipated there could be no question. It was not until December 1, 1803, that he took final possession of the province. Twenty days afterwards he turned it over to the American authorities.

Wilkinson, now commander of the American army,—the most disgraceful head it has ever had —was entrusted with the governorship of all of Upper Louisiana. Claiborne was made Governor of Lower Louisiana, officially styled the Territory of Orleans. He was an honest man, loyal to the Union, but had no special qualifications for getting on well with the creoles. He could not speak French, and he regarded the people whom he gov-

erned with a kindly contempt, which they bitterly resented. The Americans, pushing and masterful, were inclined to look down on their neighbors, and to treat them overbearingly; while the creoles, in their turn disliked the Americans as rude and uncultivated barbarians. For some time they felt much discontent with the United States; nor was this discontent allayed when, in 1804, the Territory of Orleans was reorganized with a government much less liberal than that enjoyed by Indiana or Mississippi; nor even when in 1805 an ordinary territorial government was provided. A number of years were to pass before Louisiana felt itself, in fact no less than in name, part of the Union.

Naturally, there was a fertile field for seditious agitation in New Orleans, a city of mixed population, where the numerically predominant race felt a puzzled distrust for the nation of which it suddenly found itself an integral part, and from past experience firmly believed in the evanescent nature of any political connection it might have whether with Spain, France, or the United States. The creoles murmured because they were not given the same privileges as American citizens in the old States, and yet showed themselves indifferent to such privileges as they were given. They were indignant because the National Government prohibited the importation of slaves into Louisiana, and for the moment even the transfer thither

of slaves from the old States—a circumstance, by the way, which curiously illustrated the dislike and disapproval of slavery then felt, even by an administration under southern control. The creoles further complained of Claiborne's indifference to their wishes; and as he possessed little tact he also became embroiled with the American inhabitants, who were men of adventurous and often lawless temper, impatient of restraint. Representatives of the French and Spanish governments still remained in Louisiana, and by their presence and their words tended to keep alive a disaffection for the United States Government. It followed from these various causes that among all classes there was a willingness to talk freely of their wrongs and to hint at righting them by methods outlined with such looseness as to make it uncertain whether they did or did not comport with entire loyalty to the United States Government.

Furthermore, there already existed in New Orleans a very peculiar class, representatives of which are still to be found in almost every Gulf city of importance. There were in the city a number of men ready at any time to enter into any plot for armed conquest of one of the Spanish-American countries.[1] Spanish America was feeling the stir of unrest that preceded the

[1] Wilkinson's *Memoirs*, ii., 284.

revolutionary outbreak against Spain. Already insurrectionary leaders like Miranda were seeking assistance from the Americans. There were in New Orleans a number of exiled Mexicans who were very anxious to raise some force with which to invade Mexico, and there erect the banner of an independent sovereignty. The bolder spirits among the creoles found much that was attractive in such a prospect; and reckless American adventurers by the score and the hundred were anxious to join in any filibustering expedition of the kind. They did not care in the least what form the expedition took. They were willing to join the Mexican exiles in an effort to rouse Mexico to throw off the yoke of Spain, or to aid any province of Mexico to revolt from the rest, or to help the leaders of any defeated faction who wished to try an appeal to arms, in which they should receive aid from the sword of the stranger. Incidentally, they were even more willing to attempt the conquest on their own account; but they did not find it necessary to dwell on this aspect of the case when nominally supporting some faction which chose to make use of such watchwords as liberty and independence.

Under such conditions, New Orleans, even more than the rest of the West, seemed to offer an inviting field for adventurers whose aim was both revolutionary and piratical. A particularly spectacular

adventurer of this type now appeared in the person of Aaron Burr. Burr's conspiracy attracted an amount of attention, both at home and in the pages of history, altogether disproportioned to its real consequence. His career had been striking. He had been Vice-President of the United States. He had lacked but one vote of being made President, when the election of 1800 was thrown into the House of Representatives. As friend or as enemy he had been thrown intimately and on equal terms with the greatest political leaders of the day. He had supplied almost the only feeling which Jefferson, the chief of the Democratic party, and Hamilton, the greatest Federalist ever possessed in common; for bitterly though Hamilton and Jefferson had hated each other, there was one man whom each of them had hated more, and that was Aaron Burr. There was not a man in the country who did not know about the brilliant and unscrupulous party leader who had killed Hamilton in the most famous duel that ever took place on American soil, and who, by a nearly successful intrigue, had come within one vote of supplanting Jefferson in the presidency.

In New York, Aaron Burr had led a political career as stormy and chequered as the careers of New York politicians have generally been. He had shown himself as adroit as he was unscrupulous in the use of all the arts of the machine man-

ager. The fitful and gusty breath of popular favor made him at one time the most prominent and successful politician in the State, and one of the two or three most prominent and successful in the nation. In the State, he was the leader of the Democratic party, which, under his lead, crushed the Federalists; and as a reward he was given the second highest office in the nation. Then his open enemies and secret rivals all combined against him. The other Democratic leaders in New York, and in the nation as well, turned upon the man whose brilliant abilities made them afraid, and whose utter untrustworthiness forbade their entering into alliance with him. Shifty and fertile in expedients, Burr made an obstinate fight to hold his own. Without hesitation, he turned for support to his old enemies, the Federalists; but he was hopelessly beaten. Both his fortune and his local political prestige were ruined; he realized that his chance for a career in New York was over.

He was no mere New York politician, however. He was a statesman of national reputation; and he turned his restless eyes toward the West, which for a score of years had seethed in a turmoil, out of which it seemed that a bold spirit might make its own profit. He had already been obscurely connected with separatist intrigues in the Northeast; and he determined to embark in similar intrigues on an infinitely grander scale in the West and

Southwest. He was a cultivated man, of polished manners and pleasing address, and of great audacity and physical courage; and he had shown himself skilled in all the baser arts of political managements.

It is small wonder that the conspiracy of which such a man was head should make a noise out of all proportion to its real weight. The conditions were such that if Burr journeyed West he was certain to attract universal attention, and to be received with marked enthusiasm. No man of his prominence in national affairs had ever travelled through the wild new commonwealths on the Mississippi. The men who were founding states and building towns on the wreck of the conquered wilderness were sure to be flattered by the appearance of so notable a man among them, and to be impressed not only by his reputation, but by his charm of manner and brilliancy of intellect. Moreover, they were quite ready to talk vaguely of all kinds of dubious plans for increasing the importance of the West. Very many, perhaps most, of them had dabbled at one time or another in the various separatist schemes of the preceding two decades; and they felt strongly that much of the Spanish domain would and should ultimately fall into their hands—and the sooner the better.

There was thus every chance that Burr would be favorably received by the West, and would find

plenty of men of high standing who would profess friendship for him and would show a cordial interest in his plans so long as he refrained from making them too definite; but there was in reality no chance whatever for anything more than this to happen. In spite of Burr's personal courage he lacked entirely the great military qualities necessary to successful revolutionary leadership of the kind to which he aspired. Though in some ways the most practical of politicians, he had a strong element of the visionary in his character; it was perhaps this, joined to his striking moral defects, which brought about and made complete his downfall in New York. Great political and revolutionary leaders may, and often must, have in them something of the visionary; but it must never cause them to get out of touch with the practical. Burr was capable of conceiving revolutionary plans on so vast a scale as to be fairly appalling, not only from their daring, but from their magnitude. But when he tried to put his plans into practice, it at once became evident that they were even more unsubstantial than they were audacious. His wild schemes had in them too strong an element of the unreal and the grotesque to be in very fact dangerous.

Besides, the time for separatist movements in the West had passed, while the time for arousing the West to the conquest of part of Spanish America had hardly yet come. A man of Burr's

character might perhaps have accomplished something mischievous in Kentucky when Wilkinson was in the first flush of his Spanish intrigues; or when the political societies were raving over Jay's treaty; or when the Kentucky Legislature was passing its nullification resolutions. But the West had grown loyal as the nineteenth century came in. The Westerners were hearty supporters of the Jeffersonian Democratic-Republican party; Jefferson was their idol; they were strongly attached to the Washington administration, and strongly opposed to the chief opponents of that administration, the northeastern Federalists. With the purchase of Louisiana all deep-lying causes of western discontent had vanished. The West was prosperous, and was attached to the National Government. Its leaders might still enjoy a discussion with Burr or among themselves concerning separatist principles in the abstract, but such a discussion was at this time purely academic. Nobody of any weight in the community would allow such plans as those of Burr to be put into effect. There was, it is true, a strong buccaneering spirit, and there were plenty of men ready to enlist in an invasion of the Spanish dominions under no matter what pretext; but even those men of note who were willing to lead such a movement were not willing to enter into it if it was complicated with open disloyalty to the United States.

Burr began his treasonable scheming before he ceased to be Vice-President. He was an old friend and crony of Wilkinson; and he knew much about the disloyal agitations which had convulsed the West during the previous two decades. These agitations always took one or the other of two forms that at first sight would seem diametrically opposed. Their end was always either to bring about a secession of the West from the East by the aid of Spain or some other foreign power; or else a conquest of the Spanish dominions by the West, in defiance of the wishes of the East and of the Central Government. Burr proposed to carry out both of these plans.

The exact shape which his proposals took would be difficult to tell. Seemingly, they remained nebulous even in his own mind. They certainly so remained in the minds of those to whom he confided them. At any rate his schemes, though in reality less dangerous than those of his predecessors in western treason, were in theory much more comprehensive. He planned the seizure of Washington, the kidnapping of the President, and the corruption of the United States Navy. He also endeavored to enlist foreign powers on his side. His first advances were made to the British. He proposed to put the new empire, no matter what shape it might assume, under British protection in return for the assistance of the British fleet in

taking New Orleans. He gave to the British ministers full—and false—accounts of the intended uprising, and besought the aid of the British Government on the ground that the secession of the West would so cripple the Union as to make it no longer a formidable enemy of Great Britain. Burr's audacity and plausibility were such that he quite dazzled the British minister, who detailed the plans at length to his home government, putting them in as favorable a light as he could. The statesmen at London, however, although at this time almost inconceivably stupid in their dealings with America, were not sunk in such abject folly as to think Burr's schemes practicable, and they refused to have anything to do with them.

In April, 1805, Burr started on his tour to the West. One of his first stoppages was at an island on the Ohio, near Parkersburg, where an Irish gentleman named Blennerhassett had built what was, for the West, an unusually fine house. Only Mrs. Blennerhassett was at home at the time; but Blennerhassett later became a mainstay of the "conspiracy." He was a warm-hearted man, with no judgment and a natural tendency towards sedition, who speedily fell under Burr's influence, and entered into his plans with eager zeal. With him Burr did not have to be on his guard, and to him he confided freely his plans; but elsewhere,

and in dealing with less emotional people, he had to be more guarded.

It is always difficult to find out exactly what a conspirator of Burr's type really intended, and exactly how guilty his various temporary friends and allies were. Part of the conspirator's business is to dissemble the truth, and in after-time it is nearly impossible to differentiate it from the false, even by the most elaborate sifting of the various untruths he has uttered. Burr told every kind of story, at one time or another, and to different classes of auditors. It would be unsafe to deny his having told a particular falsehood in any given case or to any given man. On the other hand, when once the plot was unmasked, those persons to whom he had confided his plans were certain to insist that he had really kept them in ignorance of his true intention. In consequence, it is quite impossible to say exactly how much guilty knowledge his various companions possessed. When it comes to treating of his relationship with Wilkinson all that can be said is that no single statement ever made by either man, whether during the conspiracy or after it, whether to the other or to an outsider, can be considered as either presumptively true or presumptively false.

It is, therefore, impossible to say exactly how far the Westerners with whom Burr was intimate were privy to his plans. It is certain that the

great mass of the Westerners never seriously considered entering into any seditious movement under him. It is equally certain that a number of their leaders were more or less compromised by their associations with him. It seems probable that to each of these leaders he revealed what he thought would most attract him in the scheme; but that to very few did he reveal an outright proposition to break up the Union. Many of them were very willing to hear the distinguished Easterner make vague proposals for increasing the power of the West by means which were hinted at with sinister elusiveness; and many others were delighted to go into any movement which promised an attack upon the Spanish territory; but it seems likely that there were only a few men—Wilkinson, for instance, and Adair of Kentucky—who were willing to discuss a proposition to commit downright treason.

Burr stopped at Cincinnati, in Ohio, and at one or two places in Kentucky. In both States many prominent politicians, even United States senators received him with enthusiasm. He then visited Nashville, where he became the guest of Andrew Jackson. Jackson was now major-general of the Tennessee militia; and the possibility of war, especially of war with the Spaniards, roused his hot nature to uncontrollable eagerness.[1] Burr

[1] Adams, iii., 221.

probably saw through Jackson's character at once, and realized that with him it was important to dwell solely upon that part of the plan which contemplated an attack upon the Spaniards.

The United States was at this time on the verge of war with Spain. The Spanish Governor and Intendant remained in New Orleans after the cession, and by their conduct gave such offence that it finally became necessary to order them to leave. Jefferson claimed, as part of Louisiana, portions of both West Florida and Texas. The Spaniards refused to admit the justice of the claim and gathered in the disputed territories armies which, though small, outnumbered the few regular troops that Wilkinson had at his disposal. More than once a collision seemed imminent. The Westerners clamored for war, desiring above all things to drive the Spaniards by force from the debatable lands. For some time Jefferson showed symptoms of yielding to their wishes; but he was too timid and irresolute to play a high part, and in the end he simply did nothing. However, though he declined to make actual war on the Spaniards, he also refused to recognize their claims as just, and his peculiar, hesitating course, tended to inflame the Westerners, and to make them believe that their Government would not call them to account for acts of aggression. To Jackson, doubtless, Burr's proposals seemed quite in keeping with

what he hoped from the United States Government. He readily fell in with views so like his own, and began to make preparations for an expedition against the Spanish dominions — an expedition which in fact would not have differed essentially from the expeditions he actually did make into the Spanish Floridas six or eight years afterward, or from the movement which still later his fellow-Tennesseean, Houston, headed in Texas.

From Nashville, Burr drifted down the Cumberland, and at Fort Massac, on the Ohio, he met Wilkinson, a kindred spirit, who possessed neither honor nor conscience, and could not be shocked by any proposal. Moreover, Wilkinson much enjoyed the early stages of a seditious agitation, when the risk to himself seemed slight; and as he was at this time both the highest military officer of the United States, and also secretly in the pay of Spain, the chance to commit a double treachery gave an added zest to his action. He entered cordially into Burr's plans, and as soon as he returned to his headquarters, at St. Louis, he set about trying to corrupt his subordinates, and seduce them from their allegiance.

Meanwhile, Burr passed down the Mississippi to New Orleans, where he found himself in the society of persons who seemed more willing than any others he had encountered to fall in with his plans. Even here he did not clearly specify his

purposes, but he did say enough to show that they bordered on the treasonable; and he was much gratified at the acquiescence of his listeners. His gratification, however, was over-hasty. The creoles, and some of the Americans, were delighted to talk of their wrongs and to threaten any course of action which they thought might yield vengeance but they had little intention of proceeding from words to deeds. Claiborne, a straightforward and honest man, set his face like a flint against all of Burr's doings.

From New Orleans Burr retraced his steps and visited Wilkinson at St. Louis. But Wilkinson was no longer in the same frame of mind as at Fort Massac. He had tested his officers, to see if they could be drawn into any disloyal movement, and had found that they were honorable men, firm in their attachment to the Union; and he was beginning to perceive that the people generally were quite unmoved by Burr's intrigues. Accordingly, when Burr reached him he threw cold water on his plans, and though he did not denounce or oppose them, he refrained from taking further active part in the seditious propaganda.

After visiting Harrison, the Governor of the Indiana Territory, Burr returned to Washington. If he had possessed the type of character which would have made him really dangerous as a revolutionist, he would have seen how slight was his hope of

stirring up revolt in the West; but he would not face facts, and he still believed he could bring about an uprising against the Union in the Mississippi valley. His immediate need was money. This he hoped to obtain from some foreign government. He found that nothing could be done with Great Britain; and then, incredible though it may seem, he turned to Spain, and sought to obtain from the Spaniards themselves the funds with which to conquer their own territories.

This was the last touch necessary to complete the grotesque fantasy which his brain had evolved. He approached the Spanish Minister first through one of his fellow-conspirators, and then in his own person. At one time he made his request on the pretence that he wished to desert the other filibusters, and save Spain by committing a double treachery, and betraying the treasonable movement into which he had entered; and again he asked funds on the ground that all he wished to do was to establish a separate government in the West, and thus destroy the power of the United States to molest Spain. However, his efforts came to naught, and he was obliged to try what he could do unaided in the West.

In August, 1806, he again crossed the Alleghanies. His first stop of importance was at Blennerhassett's. Blennerhassett was the one person of any importance who took his schemes so

seriously as to be willing to stake his fortune on their success. Burr took with him to Blennerhassett's his daughter, Theodosia, a charming woman, the wife of a South Carolinian, Allston. The attractions of the daughter, and Burr's own address and magnetism, completely overcame both Blennerhassett and his wife. They gave the adventurer all the money they could raise, with the understanding that they would receive it back a hundred-fold as the result of a land speculation which was to go hand in hand with the expected revolution. Then Blennerhassett began, in a very noisy and ineffective way, to make what preparations were possible in the way of rousing the Ohio settlers, and of gathering a body of armed men to serve under Burr when the time came. It was all done in a way that savored of farce rather than of treason.

There was much less comedy, however, in what went on in Kentucky and Tennessee, where Burr next went. At Nashville he was received with open arms by Jackson and Jackson's friends. This was not much to Jackson's credit, for by this time he should have known Burr's character; but the temptation of an attack on the Spaniards proved irresistible. As major-general, he called out the militia of West Tennessee, and began to make ready in good earnest to invade Florida or Mexico. At public dinners he and his friends and Burr

made speeches in which they threatened immediate war against Spain, with which country the United States was at peace; but they did not threaten any attack on the Union, and indeed Jackson exacted from Burr a guarantee of his loyalty to the Union.

From Nashville the restless conspirator returned to Kentucky to see if he could persuade the most powerful of the western States to take some decided step in his favor. Senator John Adair, former companion-in-arms of Wilkinson in the wars against the northwestern Indians, enlisted in support of Burr with heart and soul. Kentucky society generally received him with enthusiasm. But there was in the State a remnant of the old Federalist party, which, although not formidable in numbers, possessed weight because of the vigor and ability of its leaders. The chief among them were Humphrey Marshall, former United States Senator, and Joseph H. Daveiss, who was still district attorney, not having, as yet, been turned out by Jefferson.[1] These men saw—what eastern politicians could not see—the connection between Burr's conspiracy and the former Spanish intrigues of men like Wilkinson, Sebastian, and Innes. They were loyal to the Union; and they felt a bitter

[1] For the Kentucky episode, see Marshall and Green. Gayarré is the authority for what occurred in New Orleans. For the whole conspiracy, see Adams.

factional hatred for their victorious foes, in whose ranks were to be found all the old-time offenders; so they attacked the new conspiracy with a double zest. They not only began a violent newspaper war upon Burr and all the former conspirators, but also proceeded to invoke the aid of the courts and the Legislature against them. Their exposure of the former Spanish intrigues, as well as of Burr's plots, attracted widespread attention in the West, even at New Orleans [1]; but the Kentuckians, though angry and ashamed, were at first reluctant to be convinced. Twice Daveiss presented Burr for treason before the grand jury; twice the grand jury declared in his favor; and the leaders of the Kentucky Democracy gave him their countenance, while Henry Clay acted as his counsel. Daveiss, by a constant succession of letters, kept Jefferson fully informed of all that was done. Though his attacks on Burr for the moment seemed failures, they really accomplished their object. They created such uneasiness that the prominent Kentuckians made haste to clear themselves of all possible connection with any treasonable scheme. Henry Clay demanded and received from Burr a formal pledge that his plans were in no wise hostile to the Union; and the other people upon whom Burr counted most, both in Ohio and Kentucky, hastily followed this example. This immediate

[1] Gayarré, iv., 180.

defection showed how hopeless Burr's plans were. The moment he attempted to put them into execution, their utter futility was certain to be exposed.

Meanwhile Jefferson's policy with the Spaniards, which neither secured peace nor made ready for war, kept up constant irritation on the border. Both the Spanish Governor Folch, in West Florida, and the Spanish General Herrera, in Texas, menaced the Americans.[1] Wilkinson hurried with his little army towards Herrera, until the two stood face to face, each asserting that the other was on ground that belonged to his own nation. Just at this time Burr's envoys, containing his final propositions, reached Wilkinson. But Wilkinson now saw as clearly as any one that Burr's scheme was foredoomed to fail; and he at once determined to make use of the only weapon in which he was skilled,—treachery. At this very time he, the commander of the United States Army, was in the pay of Spain, and was in secret negotiation with the Spanish officials against whom he was supposed to be acting; he had striven to corrupt his own army and had failed; he had found out that the people of the West were not disloyal. He saw that there was no hope of success for the conspirators; and he resolved to play the part of defender of the nation, and to act with vigor against Burr.

[1] Gayarré, iv., 137, 151, etc.

Having warned Jefferson, in language of violent alarm, about Burr's plans, he prepared to prevent their execution. He first made a truce with Herrera in accordance with which each was to retire to his former position, and then he started for the Mississippi.

When Burr found that he could do nothing in Kentucky and Tennessee, he prepared to go to New Orleans. The few boats that Blennerhassett had been able to gather were sent hurriedly downstream lest they should be interfered with by the Ohio authorities. Burr had made another visit to Nashville. Slipping down the Cumberland, he joined his little flotilla, passed Fort Massac, and began the descent of the Mississippi.

The plot was probably most dangerous at New Orleans, if it could be said to be dangerous anywhere. Claiborne grew very much alarmed about it, chiefly because of the elusive mystery in which it was shrouded. But when the pinch came it proved as unsubstantial there as elsewhere. The leaders who had talked most loosely about revolutionary proceedings grew alarmed, as the crisis approached, lest they might be called on to make good their words; and they hastened to repudiate all connection with Burr, and to avow themselves loyal to the Union. Even the creole militia,—a body which Claiborne regarded with just suspicion,—volunteered to come to the defence of the

Government when it was thought that Burr might actually attack the city.

But Burr's career was already ruined. Jefferson, goaded into action, had issued a proclamation for his arrest; and even before this proclamation was issued, the fabric of the conspiracy had crumbled into shifting dust. The Ohio Legislature had passed resolutions, demanding prompt action against the conspirators; and the other western communities followed suit. There was no real support for Burr anywhere. All his plot had been but a dream; at the last he could not do anything which justified, in even the smallest degree, the alarm and curiosity he had excited. The men of keenest insight and best judgment feared his unmasked efforts less than they feared Wilkinson's dark and tortuous treachery.[1] As he drifted down the Mississippi with his little flotilla, he was overtaken by Jefferson's proclamation, which was sent from one to another of the small Federal garrisons. Near Natchez, in January, 1807, he surrendered his flotilla, without resistance, to the acting-governor of Mississippi Territory. He himself escaped into the land of the Choctaws and Creeks, disguised as a Mississippi boatman; but a month later he was arrested near the Spanish border, and sent back to Washington.

Thus ended ingloriously the wildest, most spec-

[1] E. G. Cowles Meade; see Gayarré, iv., 169.

tacular, and least dangerous, of all the intrigues for western disunion. It never contained within itself the least hope of success. It was never a serious menace to the National Government. It was not by any means even a good example of western particularistic feeling. It was simply a sporadic illustration of the looseness of national sentiment, here and there, throughout the country; but of no great significance, because it was in no sense a popular movement, and had its origin in the fantastic imagination of a single man.

It left scarcely a ripple in the West. When the danger was over Wilkinson appeared in New Orleans, where he strutted to the front for a little while, playing the part of a fussy dictator and arresting, among others, Adair, of Kentucky. As the panic subsided, they were released. No Louisianian suffered in person or property from any retaliatory action of the Government; but lasting good was done by the abject failure of the plot and by the exhibition of unused strength by the American people. The creoles ceased to mutter discontent, and all thought of sedition died away in the province.

The chief sufferers, aside from Blennerhassett, were Sebastian and Innes, of Kentucky. The former resigned from the bench, and the latter lost a prestige he never regained. A few of their intimate friends also suffered. But their opponents

did not fare much better. Daveiss and Marshall were the only men in the West whose action toward Burr had been thoroughly creditable, showing alike vigor, intelligence, and loyalty. To both of them the country was under an obligation. Jefferson showed his sense of this obligation in a not uncharacteristic way by removing Daveiss from office; Marshall was already in private life, and all that could be done was to neglect him.

As for Burr, he was put on trial for high treason with Wilkinson as State's evidence. Jefferson made himself the especial champion of Wilkinson nevertheless, the general cut a contemptible figure at the trial, for no explanation could make his course square with honorable dealing. Burr was acquitted on a technicality. Wilkinson, the double traitor, the bribe-taker, the corrupt servant of a foreign government, remained at the head of the American army.

CHAPTER IV

THE EXPLORERS OF THE FAR WEST, 1804–1807

THE far West, the West beyond the Mississippi, had been thrust on Jefferson, and given to the nation, by the rapid growth of the old West, the West that lay between the Alleghanies and the Mississippi. The actual title to the new territory had been acquired by the United States Government, acting for the whole nation. It remained to explore the territory thus newly added to the national domain. The Government did not yet know exactly what it had acquired, for the land was not only unmapped but unexplored. Nobody could tell what were the boundary lines which divided it from British America on the north and Mexico on the south, for nobody knew much of the country through which these lines ran; of most of it, indeed, nobody knew anything. On the new maps the country now showed as part of the United States; but the Indians who alone inhabited it were as little affected by the transfer as was the game they hunted.

Even the northwestern portion of the land defi-

nitely ceded to the United States by Great Britain in Jay's treaty was still left in actual possession of the Indian tribes, while the few whites who lived among them were traders owing allegiance to the British Government. The headwaters of the Mississippi and the beautiful country lying around them were known only in a vague way; and it was necessary to explore and formally take possession of this land of lakes, glades, and forests.

Beyond the Mississippi all that was really well known was the territory in the immediate neighborhood of the little French villages near the mouth of the Missouri. The creole traders of these villages, and an occasional venturous American, had gone up the Mississippi to the country of the Sioux and the Mandans, where they had trapped and hunted and traded for furs with the Indians. At the northernmost points that they reached they occasionally encountered traders who had travelled south or southwesterly from the wintry regions where the British fur companies reigned supreme. The headwaters of the Missouri were absolutely unknown; nobody had penetrated the great plains, the vast seas of grass through which the Platte, the Little Missouri, and the Yellowstone ran. What lay beyond them and between them and the Pacific, was not even guessed at. The Rocky Mountains were not known to exist, so far as the territory newly ac-

quired by the United States was concerned, although under the name of "Stonies" their northern extensions in British America were already down on some maps.

The West had passed beyond its first stage of uncontrolled individualism. Neither exploring nor fighting was thenceforth to be the work only of the individual settlers. The National Government was making its weight felt more and more in the West, because the West was itself becoming more and more an important integral portion of the Union. The work of exploring these new lands fell, not to the wild hunters and trappers such as those who had first explored Kentucky and Tennessee, but to officers of the United States Army, leading parties of United States soldiers, in pursuance of the command of the Government or of its representatives. The earliest and most important expeditions of Americans into the unknown country which the nation had just purchased were led by young officers of the regular army.

The first of these expeditions was planned by Jefferson himself and authorized by Congress. Nominally, its purpose was in part to find out the most advantageous places for the establishment of trading stations with the Indian tribes over which our government had acquired the titular suzerainty; but in reality it was purely a voyage

of exploration, planned with intent to ascend the Missouri to its head, and thence to cross the continent to the Pacific. The explorers were carefully instructed to report upon the geography, physical characteristics, and zoölogy of the region traversed, as well as upon its wild human denizens. Jefferson was fond of science, and in appreciation of the desirability of non-remunerative scientific observation and investigation he stood honorably distinguished among the public men of the day. To him justly belongs the credit of originating this first exploring expedition ever undertaken by the United States Government.

The two officers chosen to carry through the work belonged to families already honorably distinguished for service on the western border. One was Captain Meriwether Lewis, representatives of whose family had served so prominently in Dunmore's war; the other was Lieutenant (by courtesy Captain) William Clark, a younger brother of George Rogers Clark.[1] Clark had served with credit through Wayne's campaigns, and had taken part in the victory of the Fallen Timbers.[2] Lewis had seen his first service when he enlisted as a private in the forces which were marshalled to

[1] He had already served as captain in the army; see Coues's edition of the *History of the Expedition*, lxxi.

[2] See his letters, quoted in Vol. V., Chap. v. There is a good deal of hitherto unused material about him in the Draper MSS.

put down the whisky insurrection. Later he served under Clark in Wayne's army. He had also been President Jefferson's private secretary.

The young officers started on their trip, accompanied by twenty-seven men, who intended to make the whole journey. Of this number one the interpreter and, incidentally, the best hunter of the party, was a half-breed; two were French *voyageurs;* one was a negro servant of Clark; nine were volunteers from Kentucky; and fourteen were regular soldiers. All, however, except the black slave, were enlisted in the army before starting, so that they might be kept under regular discipline. In addition to these twenty-seven men there were seven soldiers and nine *voyageurs* who started only to go to the Mandan villages on the Missouri, where the party intended to spend the first winter. They embarked in three large boats, abundantly supplied with arms, powder, and lead, clothing, gifts for the Indians, and provisions.

The starting-point was St. Louis, which had only just been surrendered to the United States Government by the Spaniards, without any French intermediaries. The explorers pushed off in May, 1804, and soon began stemming the strong current of the muddy Missouri, to whose unknown sources they intended to ascend. For two or three weeks they occasionally passed farms

and hamlets. The most important of the little towns was St. Charles, where the people were all creoles; the explorers in their journal commented upon the good temper and vivacity of these *habitants*, but dwelt on the shiftlessness they displayed and their readiness to sink back towards savagery, although they were brave and hardy enough. The next most considerable town was peopled mainly by Americans, who had already begun to make numerous settlements in the new land. The last squalid little village they passed claimed as one of its occasional residents old Daniel Boon himself.

After leaving the final straggling log cabins of the settled country, the explorers, with sails and paddles, made their way through what is now the State of Missouri. They lived well, for their hunters killed many deer and wild turkey and some black bear and beaver, and there was an abundance of breeding water-fowl. Here and there were Indian encampments, but not many, for the tribes had gone westward to the great plains of what is now Kansas to hunt the buffalo. Already buffalo and elk were scarce in Missouri, and the party did not begin to find them in any numbers until they reached the neighborhood of what is now southern Nebraska.

From there onwards the game was found in vast herds and the party began to come upon those characteristic animals of the great plains, which

were as yet unknown to white men of our race. The buffalo and the elk had once ranged eastward to the Alleghanies, and were familiar to early wanderers through the wooded wilderness; but in no part of the East had their numbers ever remotely approached the astounding multitudes in which they were found on the great plains. The curious prong-buck or prong-horned antelope was unknown east of the great plains. So was the blacktail or mule-deer, which our adventurers began to find here and there, as they gradually worked their way northwestward. So were the coyotes, whose uncanny wailing after nightfall varied the sinister baying of the gray wolves; so were many of the smaller animals, notably the prairie dogs, whose populous villages awakened the lively curiosity of Lewis and Clark.

In their notebooks the two captains faithfully described all these new animals and all the strange sights they saw. They were men with no pretensions to scientific learning, but they were singularly close and accurate observers and truthful narrators. Very rarely have any similar explorers described so faithfully not only the physical features, but the animals and plants of a newly discovered land. Their narrative was not published until some years later, and then it was badly edited, notably the purely scientific portion; yet it remains the best example of what such a narrative

should be. Few explorers who did and saw so much that was absolutely new have written of their deeds with such quiet absence of boastfulness, and have drawn their descriptions with such complete freedom from exaggeration.

Moreover, what was of even greater importance, the two young captains possessed in perfection the qualities necessary to pilot such an expedition through unknown lands and among savage tribes. They kept good discipline among the men; they never hesitated to punish severely any wrong-doer; but they were never over-severe; and as they did their full part of the work, and ran all the risks and suffered all the hardship exactly like the other members of the expedition, they were regarded by their followers with devoted affection and were served with loyalty and cheerfulness. In dealing with the Indians they showed good humor and common sense, mingled with ceaseless vigilance and unbending resolution. Only men who possessed their tact and daring could have piloted the party safely among the warlike tribes they encountered. Any act of weakness or timidity on the one hand, or of harshness or cruelty on the other, would have been fatal to the expedition; but they were careful to treat the tribes well and to try to secure their good-will, while at the same time putting an immediate stop to any insolence or outrage. Several times they were in

much jeopardy when they reached the land of the Dakotas and passed among the various ferocious tribes whom they knew, and whom we yet know as the Sioux. The French traders frequently came up-river to the country of the Sioux, who often maltreated and robbed them. In consequence, Lewis and Clark found that the Sioux were inclined to regard the whites as people whom they could safely oppress. The resolute bearing of the new-comers soon taught them that they were in error, and after a little hesitation the various tribes in each case became friendly.

With all the Indian tribes the two explorers held councils, and distributed presents, especially medals, among the head chiefs and warriors, informing them of the transfer of the territory from Spain to the United States and warning them that henceforth they must look to the President as their protector, and not to the King, whether of England or of Spain. The Indians all professed much satisfaction at the change, which, of course, they did not in the least understand, and for which they cared nothing. This easy acquiescence gave much groundless satisfaction to Lewis and Clark, who further, in a spirit of philanthropy, strove to make each tribe swear peace with its neighbors. After some hesitation the tribe usually consented to this also, and the explorers, greatly gratified, passed on. It is needless to say that as soon as they had

disappeared the tribes promptly went to war again; and that in reality the Indians had only the vaguest idea as to what was meant by the ceremonies, and the hoisting of the American flag. The wonder is that Clark, who had already had some experience with Indians, should have supposed that the councils, advice, and proclamations would have any effect of the kind hoped for upon these wild savages. However, together with the love of natural science inculcated by the fashionable philosophy of the day, they also possessed the much less admirable, though entirely amiable theory of universal and unintelligent philanthropy which was embodied in this philosophy. A very curious feature of our dealings with the Indians, not only in the days of Lewis and Clark, but since, has been the combination of extreme and indeed foolish benevolence of purpose on the part of the Government, with, on the part of the settlers, a brutality of action which this benevolent purpose could in no wise check or restrain.

As the fall weather grew cold the party reached the Mandan village, where they halted and went into camp for the winter, building huts and a stout stockade, which they christened Fort Mandan. Traders from St. Louis and also British traders from the North reached these villages, and the inhabitants were accustomed to dealing with the whites. Throughout the winter the party was

well treated by the Indians, and kept in good health and spirits; the journals frequently mention the fondness the men showed for dancing. although without partners of the opposite sex. Yet they suffered much from the extreme cold, and at times from hunger, for it was hard to hunt in the winter weather, and the game was thin and poor. Generally, game could be killed in a day's hunt from the fort; but occasionally small parties of hunters went off for a trip of several days, and returned laden with meat; in one case they killed 32 deer, 11 elk, and a buffalo; in another, 40 deer, 16 elk, and 3 buffalo; 36 deer and 14 elk, etc. The buffalo remaining in the neighborhood during the winter were mostly old bulls, too lean to eat; and as the snows came on most of the antelope left for the rugged country farther west, swimming the Missouri in great bands. Before the bitter weather began the explorers were much interested by the methods of the Indians in hunting, especially when they surrounded and slaughtered bands of buffalo on horseback; and by the curious pens, with huge V-shaped wings, into which they drove antelope.

In the spring of 1805, Lewis and Clark again started westward, first sending down-stream ten of their companions, to carry home the notes of their trip so far, and a few valuable specimens. The party that started westward numbered thirty-

two adults, all told; for one sergeant had died, and two or three persons had volunteered at the Mandan villages, including a rather worthless French "squaw-man," with an intelligent Indian wife whose baby was but a few weeks old.

From this point onwards, when they began to travel west instead of north, the explorers were in a country where no white man had ever trod. It was not the first time the continent had been crossed. The Spaniards had crossed and recrossed it, for two centuries, farther south. In British America Mackenzie had already penetrated to the Pacific, while Hearne had made a far more noteworthy and difficult trip than Mackenzie, when he wandered over the terrible desolation of the Barren Grounds, which lie under the Arctic circle. But no man had ever crossed or explored that part of the continent which the United States had just acquired—a part far better fitted to be the home of our stock than the regions to the north or south. It was the explorations of Lewis and Clark, and not those of Mackenzie in the North or of the Spaniards in the South, which were to bear fruit, because they pointed the way to the tens of thousands of settlers who were to come after them, and who were to build thriving commonwealths in the lonely wilderness which they had traversed.

From the Little Missouri on to the head of the

Missouri proper the explorers passed through a region where they saw few traces of Indians. It literally swarmed with game, for it was one of the finest hunting-grounds in all the world.[1] There were great numbers of sage-fowl, sharp-tailed prairie-fowl, and ducks of all kinds; and swans and tall white cranes; and geese, which nested in the tops of the cottonwood-trees. But the hunters paid no heed to birds, when surrounded by such teeming myriads of big game. Buffalo, elk, and antelope, whitetail and blacktail deer, and bighorn sheep swarmed in extraordinary abundance throughout the lands watered by the upper Missouri and the Yellowstone; in their journals the explorers dwell continually on the innumerable herds they encountered while on these plains, both when travelling up stream and again the following year when they were returning. The antelopes were sometimes quite shy; so were the bighorn; though on occasions both kinds seemed to lose their wariness, and in one instance the journal specifies the fact that, at the mouth of the Yellowstone,

[1] It so continued for three quarters of a century. Until after 1880 the region around the Little Missouri was essentially unchanged from what it was in the days of Lewis and Clark; game swarmed, and the few white hunters and trappers who followed the buffalo, the elk, and the beaver, were still at times in conflict with hunting-parties from various Indian tribes. While ranching in this region I myself killed every kind of game encountered by Lewis and Clark.

the deer were somewhat shy, while the antelope, like the elk and buffalo, paid no heed to the men whatever. Ordinarily all the kinds of game were very tame. Sometimes one of the many herds of elk that lay boldly, even at midday, on the sand-bars or on the brush-covered points, would wait until the explorers were within twenty yards of them before starting. The buffalo would scarcely move out of the path at all, and the bulls sometimes, even when unmolested, threatened to assail the hunters. Once, on the return voyage, when Clark was descending the Yellowstone River, a vast herd of buffalo, swimming and wading, ploughed its way across the stream where it was a mile broad, in a column so thick that the explorers had to draw up on shore and wait for an hour, until it passed by, before continuing their journey. Two or three times the expedition was thus brought to a halt; and as the buffalo were so plentiful and so easy to kill, and as their flesh was very good, they were the mainstay for the explorers' table. Both going and returning this wonderful hunting country was a place of plenty. The party of course lived almost exclusively on meat, and they needed much; for, when they could get it, they consumed either a buffalo, or an elk and a deer, or four deer, every day.

There was one kind of game which they at times found altogether too familiar. This was the griz-

zly bear, which they were the first white men to discover. They called it, indifferently, the grizzly, gray, brown, and even white bear, to distinguish it from its smaller, glossy, black-coated brother with which they were familiar in the eastern woods. They found that the Indians greatly feared these bears, and after their first encounters they themselves treated them with much respect. The grizzly was then the burly lord of the western prairie, dreaded by all other game, and usually shunned even by the Indians. In consequence, it was very bold and savage. Again and again these huge bears attacked the explorers of their own accord, when neither molested nor threatened. They galloped after the hunters when they met them on horseback, even in the open; and they attacked them just as freely when they found them on foot. To go through the brush was dangerous; again and again one or another of the party was charged and forced to take to a tree, at the foot of which the bear sometimes mounted guard for hours before going off. When wounded the beasts fought with desperate courage, and showed astonishing tenacity of life, charging any number of assailants, and succumbing but slowly even to mortal wounds. In one case a bear that was on shore actually plunged into the water and swam out to attack one of the canoes as it passed. However, by this time all of the party had become

good hunters, expert in the use of their rifles, and they killed great numbers of their ursine foes.

Nor were the bears their only brute enemies. The rattlesnakes were often troublesome. Unlike the bears, the wolves were generally timid, and preyed only on the swarming game; but one night a wolf crept into camp and seized a sleeper by the hand; when driven off he jumped upon another man, and was shot by a third. A less intentional assault was committed by a buffalo bull which one night blundered past the fires, narrowly escaped trampling on the sleepers, and had the whole camp in an uproar before it rushed off into the darkness. When hunted, the buffalo occasionally charged; but there was not much danger in their chase.

All these larger foes paled into insignificance compared with the mosquitoes. There are very few places on earth where these pests are so formidable as in the bottom lands of the Missouri, and for weeks and even months they made the lives of our explorers a torture. No other danger, whether from hunger or cold, Indians, or wild beasts, was so dreaded by the explorers as these tiny scourges.

In the plains country the life of the explorers was very pleasant, save only for the mosquitoes and the incessant clouds of driving sand along the river bottoms. On their journey west through these true happy hunting-grounds they did not

meet with any Indians, and their encounters with the bears were only just sufficiently dangerous to add excitement to their life. Once or twice they were in peril from cloud-bursts, and they were lamed by the cactus spines on the prairie, and by the stones and sand of the river bed while dragging the boats against the current; but all these trials, labors, and risks were only enough to give zest to their exploration of the unknown land. At the Great Falls of the Missouri they halted, and were enraptured with their beauty and majesty; and here, as everywhere, they found the game so abundant that they lived in plenty. As they journeyed up-stream through the bright summer weather, though they worked hard, it was work of a kind which was but a long holiday. At nightfall they camped by the boats on the river bank. Each day some of the party spent in hunting, either along the river bottoms through the groves of cottonwoods with shimmering, rustling leaves, or away from the river where the sunny prairies stretched into seas of brown grass, or where groups of rugged hills stood, fantastic in color and outline, and with stunted pines growing on the sides of their steep ravines. The only real suffering was that which occasionally befell some one who got lost, and was out for days at a time, until he exhausted all his powder and lead before finding the party.

Fall had nearly come when they reached the headwaters of the Missouri. The end of the holiday-time was at hand, for they had before them the labor of crossing the great mountains so as to strike the headwaters of the Columbia. Their success at this point depended somewhat upon the Indian wife of the Frenchman who had joined them at Mandan. She had been captured from one of the Rocky Mountain tribes and they relied on her as interpreter. Partly through her aid, and partly by their own exertions, they were able to find, and make friends with, a band of wandering Shoshones, from whom they got horses. Having cached their boats and most of their goods, they started westward, through the forest-clad passes of the Rockies; before this they had wandered and explored in several directions through the mountains and the foot-hills. The open country had been left behind, and with it the time of plenty. In the mountain forests the game was far less abundant than on the plains and far harder to kill; though on the tops of the high peaks there was one new game animal, the white antelope-goat, which they did not see, though the Indians brought them hides. The work was hard, and the party suffered much from toil and hunger, living largely on their horses, before they struck one of the tributaries of the Snake sufficiently low down to enable them once more to go by boat.

They now met many Indians of various tribes, all of them very different from the Indians of the western plains. At this time the Indians, both east and west of the Rockies, already owned numbers of horses. Although they had a few guns, they relied mainly on the spears and tomahawks and bows and arrows with which they had warred and hunted from time immemorial; for only the tribes on the outer edges had come in contact with the whites, whether with occasional French and English traders who brought them goods or with the mixed bloods of the northern Spanish settlements, upon which they raided. Around the mouth of the Columbia, however, the Indians knew a good deal about the whites; the river had been discovered by Captain Gray, of Boston, thirteen years before, and ships came there continually while some of the Indian tribes were occasionally visited by traders from the British fur companies.

With one or two of these tribes the explorers had some difficulty, and owed their safety to their unceasing vigilance, and to the prompt decision with which they gave the Indians to understand that they would tolerate no bad treatment; while yet themselves refraining carefully from committing any wrong. By most of the tribes they were well received, and obtained from them not only information of the route, but also a welcome supply of food. At first they rather shrank from eating

the dogs which formed the favorite dish of the Indians; but after a while they grew quite reconciled to dog's flesh, and in their journals noted that they preferred it to lean elk- and deer-meat, and were much more healthy while eating it.

They reached the rain-shrouded forests of the coast before cold weather set in, and there they passed the winter; suffering somewhat from the weather, and now and then from hunger, though the hunters generally killed plenty of elk, and deer of a new kind, the blacktail of the Columbia.

In March, 1806, they started eastward to retrace their steps. At first they did not live well, for it was before the time when the salmon came upstream, and game was not common. When they reached the snow-covered mountains [1] there came another period of toil and starvation, and they were glad indeed when they emerged once more on the happy hunting-grounds of the great plains. They found their caches undisturbed. Early in July they separated for a time, Clark descending the Yellowstone and Lewis the Missouri, until they met at the junction of the two rivers. The party which went down the Yellowstone at one time split into two, Clark taking command of one division, and a sergeant of the other; they built their own

[1] The Bitter Root range, which they had originally crossed. For the bibliography, etc., of this expedition see Coues's book. The MS. diary of one of the soldiers—Gass—has since been discovered in the Draper collection.

canoes, some of them made out of hollowed trees, while the others were bull boats, made of buffalo-hides stretched on a frame. As before, they revelled in the abundance of the game. They marvelled at the incredible numbers of the buffalo whose incessant bellowing at this season filled the air with one continuous roar, which terrified their horses; they were astonished at the abundance and tameness of the elk; they fought their old enemies the grizzly bears; and they saw and noted many strange and wonderful beasts and birds.

To Lewis there befell other adventures. Once, while he was out with three men, a party of eight Blackfoot warriors joined them and suddenly made a treacherous attack upon them and strove to carry off their guns and horses. But the wilderness veterans sprang to arms with a readiness that had become second nature. One of them killed an Indian with a knife thrust; Lewis himself shot another Indian, and the remaining six fled, carrying with them one of Lewis's horses, but losing four of their own, which the whites captured. This was the beginning of the long series of bloody skirmishes between the Blackfeet and the Rocky Mountain explorers and trappers. Clark, at about the same time, suffered at the hands of the Crows, who stole a number of his horses.

None of the party were hurt by the Indians, but some time after the skirmish with the Black-

feet Lewis was accidentally shot by one of the Frenchmen of the party and suffered much from the wound. Near the mouth of the Yellowstone Clark joined him, and the reunited company floated down the Missouri. Before they reached the Mandan villages they encountered two white men, the first strangers of their own color the party had seen for a year and a half. These were two American hunters named Dickson and Hancock, who were going up to trap the headwaters of the Missouri on their own account. They had come from the Illinois country a year before, to hunt and trap; they had been plundered, and one of them wounded, in an encounter with the fierce Sioux, but were undauntedly pushing forwards into the unknown wilderness towards the mountains.

These two hardy and daring adventurers formed the little vanguard of the bands of hunters and trappers, the famous Rocky Mountain men, who were to roam hither and thither across the great West in lawless freedom for the next three quarters of a century. They accompanied the party back to the Mandan village; there one of the soldiers joined them, a man named Colter, so fascinated by the life of the wilderness that he was not willing to leave it, even for a moment's glimpse of the civilization from which he had been so long exiled.[1]

[1] For Colter and the first explorers of this region, see *The Yellowstone National Park*, by Capt. H. M. Chittenden.

The three turned their canoe up-stream, while Lewis and Clark and the rest of the party drifted down past the Sioux.

The further voyage of the explorers was uneventful. They had difficulties with the Sioux, of course, but they held them at bay. They killed game in abundance, and went down-stream as fast as sails, oars, and current could carry them. In September, they reached St. Louis and forwarded to Jefferson an account of what they had done.

They had done a great deed, for they had opened the door into the heart of the far West. Close to their tracks followed the hunters, trappers, and fur traders who themselves made ready the way for the settlers whose descendants were to possess the land. As for the two leaders of the explorers, Lewis was made Governor of Louisiana Territory, and a couple of years afterwards died, as was supposed, by his own hand, in a squalid log cabin on the Chickasaw trace—though it was never certain that he had not been murdered. Clark was afterwards Governor of the Territory, when its name had been changed to Missouri, and he also served honorably as Indian agent. But neither of them did anything further of note; nor indeed was it necessary, for they had performed a feat which will always give them a place on the honor-roll of American worthies.

While Lewis and Clark were descending the

Columbia and recrossing the continent from the Pacific coast, another army officer was conducting explorations which were only less important than theirs. This was Lieutenant Zebulon Montgomery Pike. He was not by birth a Westerner, being from New Jersey, the son of an officer of the Revolutionary army; but his name will always be indelibly associated with the West. His two voyages of exploration, one to the headwaters of the Mississippi, the other to the springs of the Arkansas and the Rio Grande, were ordered by Wilkinson, without authority from Congress. When Wilkinson's name was smirched by Burr's conspiracy the lieutenant likewise fell under suspicion, for it was believed that his southwestern trip was undertaken in pursuance of some of Wilkinson's schemes. Unquestionably this trip was intended by Pike to throw light on the exact nature of the Spanish boundary claims. In all probability he also intended to try to find out all he could of the military and civil situation in the northern provinces of Mexico. Such information could be gathered but for one purpose; and it seems probable that Wilkinson had hinted to him that part of his plan which included an assault of some kind or other on Spanish rule in Mexico; but Pike was an ardent patriot, and there is not the slightest ground for any belief that Wilkinson dared to hint to him his own disloyalty to the Union.

In August, 1805, Pike turned his face towards the headwaters of the Mississippi, his purpose being both to explore the sources of that river, and to show to the Indians, and to the British fur traders among them, that the United States was sovereign over the country in fact as well as in theory. He started in a large keel-boat, with twenty soldiers of the regular army. The voyage up-stream was uneventful. The party lived largely on game they shot, Pike himself doing rather more hunting than any one else and evidently taking much pride in his exploits; though in his journal he modestly disclaimed any pretensions to special skill. Unlike the later explorers, but like Lewis and Clark, Pike could not avail himself of the services of hunters having knowledge of the country. He and his regulars were forced to be their own pioneers and to do their own hunting, until, by dint of hard knocks and hard work, they grew experts, both as riflemen and as woodsmen.

The expedition occasionally encountered parties of Indians. The savages were nominally at peace with the whites, and although even at this time they occasionally murdered some solitary trapper or trader, they did not dare meddle with Pike's well-armed and well-prepared soldiers, confining themselves to provocation that just fell short of causing conflict. Pike handled them well, and speedily brought those with whom he came into

contact to a proper frame of mind, showing good temper and at the same time prompt vigor in putting down any attempt at bullying. On the journey up-stream only one misadventure befell the party. A couple of the men got lost while hunting and did not find the boat for six days, by which time they were nearly starved, having used up all their ammunition, so that they could not shoot game.

The winter was spent in what is now Minnesota. Pike made a permanent camp where he kept most of his men, while he himself travelled hither and thither, using dog-sleds after the snow fell. They lived almost purely on game, and Pike, after the first enthusiasm of the sport had palled a little, commented on the hard slavery of a hunter's life and its vicissitudes; for on one day he might kill enough meat to last the whole party a week and when that was exhausted they might go three or four days without anything at all.[1] Deer and bear were the common game, though they saw both buffalo and elk, and killed several of the latter. Pike found his small-bore rifle too light for the chase of the buffalo.

At the beautiful falls of St. Anthony, Pike held a council with the Sioux, and got them to make a grant of about a hundred thousand acres in the neighborhood of the falls; and he tried vainly to

[1] Pike's Journal, entry of November 16, 1805.

make peace between the Sioux and the Chippewas. In his search for the source of the Mississippi he penetrated deep into the lovely lake-dotted region of forests and prairies which surrounds the headwaters of the river. He did not reach Lake Itasca; but he did explore the Leech Lake drainage system, which he mistook for the true source.

At the British trading-posts—strong log structures fitted to repel Indian attacks—Pike was well received. Where he found the British flag flying he had it hauled down and the American flag hoisted in its place, making both the Indians and the traders understand that the authority of the United States was supreme in the land. In the spring he floated down-stream and reached St. Louis on the last day of April, 1806.

In July he was again sent out, this time on a far more dangerous and important trip. He was to march west to the Rocky Mountains, and explore the country towards the head of the Rio Grande, where the boundary line between Mexico and Louisiana was very vaguely determined. His party numbered twenty-three all told, including Lieutenant J. B. Wilkinson, a son of the general, and a Dr. J. H. Robinson, whose special business it was to find out everything possible about the Spanish provinces, or, in plain English, to act as a spy. The party was also accompanied by fifty Osage Indians, chiefly women and children, who

had been captured by the Pottawatomies, and whose release and return to their homes had been brought about by the efforts of the United States Government. The presence of these redeemed captives of course kept the Osages in good humor with Pike's party.

The party started in boats, and ascended the Osage River as far as it was navigable. They then procured horses and travelled to the great Pawnee village known as the Pawnee Republic, which gave its name to the Republican River. Before reaching the Pawnee village they found that a Spanish military expedition, several hundred strong, under an able commander named Malgares, had anticipated them, by travelling through the debatable land, and seeking to impress upon the Indians that the power of the Spanish nation was still supreme. Malgares had travelled from New Mexico across the Arkansas into the Pawnee country; during much of his subsequent route Pike followed the Spaniard's trail. The Pawnees had received from Malgares Spanish flags, as tokens of Spanish sovereignty. Doubtless the ceremony meant little or nothing to them; and Pike had small difficulty in getting the chiefs and warriors of the village to hoist the American flag instead. But they showed a very decided disinclination to let him continue his journey westward. However, he would not be denied. Though with perfect good

temper, he gave them to understand that he would use force if they ventured to bar his passage; and they finally let him go by. Later he had a somewhat similar experience with a large Pawnee war-party.

The explorers had now left behind them the fertile, tree-clad country, and had entered on the great plains, across which they journeyed to the Arkansas, and then up that river. Like Lewis and Clark, Pike found the country literally swarming with game; for all the great plains region, from the Saskatchewan to the Rio Grande, formed at this time one of the finest hunting-grounds to be found in the whole world. At one place, just on the border of the plains, Pike mentions that he saw from a hill buffalo, elk, antelope, deer, and panther, all in sight at the same moment. When he reached the plains proper the three characteristic animals were the elk, antelope, and, above all, the buffalo.

The myriads of huge, shaggy-maned bison formed the chief feature in this desolate land; no other wild animal of the same size, in any part of the world, then existed in such incredible numbers. All the early travellers seem to have been almost equally impressed by the interminable seas of grass, the strange, shifting, treacherous plains rivers, and the swarming multitudes of this great wild ox of the West. Under the blue sky the yellow

prairie spread out in endless expanse; across it the horseman might steer for days and weeks through a landscape almost as unbroken as the ocean. It was a region of light rainfall; the rivers ran in great curves through beds of quicksand, which usually contained only trickling pools of water, but in times of freshet would in a moment fill from bank to bank with boiling muddy torrents. Hither and thither across these plains led the deep buffalo trails, worn by the hoofs of the herds that had passed and repassed through countless ages. For hundreds of miles a traveller might never be out of sight of buffalo. At noon they lay about in little groups all over the prairie, the yellow calves clumsily frisking beside their mothers, while on the slight mounds the great bulls moaned and muttered and pawed the dust. Towards nightfall the herds filed down in endless lines to drink at the river, walking at a quick, shuffling pace, with heads held low and beards almost sweeping the ground. When Pike reached the country the herds were going south from the Platte towards their wintering grounds below the Arkansas. At first he passed through nothing but droves of bulls. It was not until he was well towards the mountains that he came upon the great herds of cows.

The prairie was dotted over with innumerable antelope. These have always been beasts of the open country; but the elk, once so plentiful in the

great eastern forests, and even now plentiful in parts of the Rockies, then also abounded on the plains, where there was not a tree of any kind, save the few twisted and wind-beaten cotton-woods that here and there, in sheltered places, fringed the banks of the rivers.

Lewis and Clark had seen Mandan horsemen surround the buffalo herds and kill the great, clumsy beasts with their arrows. Pike records with the utmost interest how he saw a band of Pawnees, in similar fashion, slaughter a great gang of elk, and he dwells with admiration on the training of the horses, the wonderful horsemanship of the naked warriors, and their skill in the use of bow and spear. It was a wild hunting scene, such as belonged properly to times primeval. But indeed the whole life of these wild, red nomads, the plumed and painted horse-Indians of the great plains, belonged to time primeval. It was at once terrible and picturesque, and yet mean in its squalor and laziness. From the Blackfeet in the north to the Comanches in the South they were all alike: grim lords of war and the chase; warriors, hunters, gamblers, idlers; fearless, ferocious, treacherous, inconceivably cruel; revengeful and fickle; foul and unclean in life and thought; disdaining work, but capable at times of undergoing unheard-of toil and hardship, and of braving every danger; doomed to live with ever before their

eyes death in the form of famine or frost, battle or torture, and schooled to meet it, in whatever shape it came, with fierce and mutterless fortitude.[1]

When the party reached the Arkansas late in October Wilkinson and three or four men journeyed down it and returned to the settled country. Wilkinson left on record his delight when he at last escaped from the bleak wind-swept plains and again reached the land where deer supplanted the buffalo and antelope and where the cottonwood was no longer the only tree.

The others struck westward into the mountains, and late in November reached the neighborhood of the bold peak which was later named after Pike himself. Winter set in with severity soon after they penetrated the mountains. They were poorly clad to resist the bitter weather, and they endured frightful hardships while endeavoring to thread the tangle of high cliffs and sheer canyons. Moreover, as winter set in, the blacktail deer, upon which the party had begun to rely for meat, migrated to the wintering grounds, and the explorers suffered even more from hunger than from cold. They had nothing to eat but the game, not even salt.

[1] Fortunately, these horse-Indians and the game they chiefly hunted have found a fit historian. In his books, especially upon the Pawnees and Blackfeet, Mr. George Bird Grinnell has portrayed them with a master hand; it is hard to see how his work can be bettered.

The travelling through the deep snow, whether exploring or hunting, was heart-breaking work. The horses suffered most; the extreme toil and scant pasturage weakened them so that some died from exhaustion; others fell over precipices; and the magpies proved evil foes, picking the sore backs of the wincing, saddle-galled beasts. In striving to find some pass for the horses the whole party was more than once strung out in detachments miles apart, through the mountains. Early in January, near the site of the present Canyon City, Pike found a valley where deer were plentiful. Here he built a fort of logs, and left the saddle-band and pack-animals in charge of two of the members of the expedition, intending to send back for them when he had discovered some practicable route.

He himself, with a dozen of the hardiest soldiers, struck through the mountains towards the Rio Grande. Their sufferings were terrible. They were almost starved, and so cold was the weather that at one time no less than nine of the men froze their feet. Pike and Robinson proved on the whole the hardiest, being kept up by their indomitable will, though Pike mentions with gratification that but once, in all their trials, did a single member of the party so much as grumble.

Pike and Robinson were also the best hunters; and it was their skill and stout-heartedness, shown

in the time of direst need, that saved the whole party from death. In the Wet Mountain valley, which they reached in mid-January, 1807, at the time that nine of the men froze their feet, starvation stared them in the face. There had been a heavy snowstorm; no game was to be seen; and they had been two days without food. The men with frozen feet, exhausted by hunger, could no longer travel. Two of the soldiers went out to hunt, but got nothing. At the same time, Pike and Robinson started, determined not to return at all unless they could bring back meat. Pike wrote that they had resolved to stay out and die by themselves, rather than to go back to camp "and behold the misery of our poor lads." All day they tramped wearily through the heavy snow. Towards evening they came on a buffalo, and wounded it; but faint and weak from hunger, they shot badly, and the buffalo escaped—a disappointment literally as bitter as death. That night they sat up among some rocks, all night long, unable to sleep because of the intense cold, shivering in their thin rags; they had not eaten for three days. But they were men of indomitable spirit, and next day, trudging painfully on, they at last succeeded, after another heart-breaking failure, in killing a buffalo. At midnight they staggered into camp with the meat, and all the party broke their four-days' fast. Two men lost their

feet through frost-bite, and had to be left in this camp, with all the food. Only the fact that a small band of buffalo was wintering in the valley had saved the whole expedition from death by starvation.

After leaving this valley Pike and the remaining men of the expedition finally reached the Rio Grande, where the weather was milder and deer abounded. Here they built a little fort over which they flew the United States flag, though Pike well knew that he was in Spanish territory. When the Spanish commander at Santa Fé learned of their presence he promptly sent out a detachment of troops to bring them in, though showing great courtesy, and elaborately pretending to believe that Pike had merely lost his way.

From Santa Fé Pike was sent home by a roundabout route through Chihuahua, and through Texas, where he noted the vast droves of wild horses, and the herds of peccaries. He was much impressed by the strange mixture of new-world savagery and old-world feudalism in the provinces through which he passed. A nobility and a priesthood which survived unchanged from the Middle Ages held sway over serfs and made war upon savages. The Apache and Comanche raided on the outlying settlements; the mixed bloods, and the "tame" Indians on the great ranches and in the hamlets were in a state of peonage; in the

little walled towns, the Spanish commanders lived in half-civilized, half-barbaric luxury, and shared with the priests absolute rule over the people roundabout. The American lieutenant, used to the simplicity of his own service, was struck by the extravagance and luxury of the Spanish officers, who always travelled with sumpter mules laden with delicacies; and he was no less struck with the laxity of discipline in all ranks. The Spanish cavalry were armed with lances and shields; the militia carried not only old-fashioned carbines but lassos and bows and arrows. There was small wonder that the Spanish authorities—civil, military, and ecclesiastical alike—should wish to keep intruders out of the land, and should jealously guard the secret of their own weakness.

When Pike reached home he found himself in disfavor, as was every one who was suspected of having any intimate relations with Wilkinson. However, he soon cleared himself, and continued to serve in the army. He rose to be a brigadier-general and died gloriously in the hour of triumph, when in command of the American force which defeated the British and captured York.

Lewis, Clark, and Pike had been the pioneers in the exploration of the far West. The wandering trappers and traders were quick to follow in their tracks, and to roam hither and thither, exploring on their own accord. In 1807, one of these restless

adventurers reached Yellowstone Lake, and another Lake Itasca; and their little trading stations were built far up the Missouri and the Platte.

While these first rough explorations of the far West were taking place, the old West was steadily filling with population and becoming more and more a coherent portion of the Union. In the treaties made from time to time with the northwestern Indians, they ceded so much land that at last the entire northern bank of the Ohio was in the hands of the settlers. But the Indians still held northwestern Ohio and the northern portions of what are now Indiana and Illinois, so that the settlement at Detroit was quite isolated; as were the few little stockades, or groups of fur traders' huts, in what are now northern Illinois and Wisconsin. The southern Indians also surrendered much territory, in various treaties. Georgia got control of much of the Indian land within her State limits. All the country between Knoxville and Nashville became part of Tennessee, so that the eastern and middle portions of the State were no longer sundered by a jutting fragment of wilderness, infested by Indian war-parties whenever there were hostilities with the savages. The only Indian lands in Tennessee or Kentucky were those held by the Chickasaws, between the Tennessee and the Mississippi; and the Chickasaws were friendly to the Americans.

Year by year the West grew better able to defend itself if attacked, and more formidable in the event of its being necessary to undertake offensive warfare. Kentucky and Tennessee had become populous States, no longer fearing Indian inroads; but able on the contrary to equip powerful armies for the aid of the settlers in the more scantily peopled regions north and south of them. Ohio was also growing steadily; and in the territory of Indiana, including what is now Illinois, and the territory of Mississippi, including what is now northern Alabama, there were already many settlers.

Nevertheless, the shadow of desperate war hung over the West. Neither the northern nor the southern Indians were yet subdued; sullen and angry, they watched the growth of the whites, alert to seize a favorable moment to make one last appeal to arms before surrendering their hunting-grounds. Moreover, in New Orleans and Detroit the Westerners possessed two outposts which it would be difficult to retain in the event of war with England, the only European nation that had power seriously to injure them. These two outposts were sundered from the rest of the settled western territory by vast regions tenanted only by warlike Indian tribes. Detroit was most in danger from the Indians, the British being powerless against it unless in alliance with the formidable tribes that had so long battled against American

supremacy. Their superb navy gave the British the power to attack New Orleans at will. The Westerners could rally to the aid of New Orleans much more easily than to the aid of Detroit; for the Mississippi offered a sure channel of communication, and New Orleans, unlike Detroit, possessed some capacity for self-defence; whereas the difficulties of transit through the Indian-haunted wilderness south of the Great Lakes were certain to cause endless dangers and delays if it became necessary for the Westerners either to reinforce or to recapture the little city which commanded the straits between Huron and Erie.

During the dozen years which opened with Wayne's campaigns, saw the treaties of Jay and Pinckney, and closed with the explorations of Lewis, Clark, and Pike, the West had grown with the growth of a giant, and for the first time had achieved peace; but it was not yet safe from danger of outside attack. The territories which had been won by war from the Indians and by treaty from Spain, France, and England, and which had been partially explored, were not yet entirely our own. Much had been accomplished by the deeds of the Indian-fighters, treaty-makers, and wilderness-wanderers; far more had been accomplished by the steady push of the settler-folk themselves, as they thrust ever westward, and carved states

out of the forest and the prairie; but much yet remained to be done before the West would reach its natural limits, would free itself forever from the pressure of outside foes, and would fill from frontier to frontier with populous commonwealths of its own citizens.

APPENDIX

IT is a pleasure to be able to say that the valuable Robertson manuscripts are now in course of publication, under the direction of a most competent editor in the person of Mr. W. R. Garrett, Ph.D. They are appearing in the *American Historical Magazine*, at Nashville, Tennessee; the first instalment appeared in January, and the second in April, 1896. The *Magazine* is doing excellent work, exactly where this work is needed; and it could not render a better service to the study of American history than by printing these Robertson papers.

After the present volume was in press Mr. Oswald Garrison Villard, of Harvard, most kindly called my attention to the Knox Papers, in the archives of the New England Historical and Genealogical Society, of Boston. These papers are of great interest. They are preserved in a number of big volumes. I was able to make only a most cursory examination of them; but Mr. Villard with great kindness went carefully through them, and sent me copies of those which I deemed important. There are a number of papers referring to matters connected with the campaigns against

the western Indians. The most interesting and valuable is a long letter from Colonel Darke giving a very vivid picture of St. Clair's defeat, and of the rout which followed. While it can hardly be said to cast any new light on the defeat, it describes it in a very striking manner, and brings out well the gallantry of the officers and the inferior quality of the rank and file; and it gives a very unpleasant picture of St. Clair and Hamtranck.

Besides the Darke letter, there are several other manuscripts containing information of value. In Volume XXIII., page 169, there is a letter from Knox to General Harmar, dated New York, September 3, 1790. After much preliminary apology, Knox states that it "has been reported, and under circumstances which appear to have gained pretty extensive credit on the frontiers, that you are too apt to indulge yourself to excess in a convivial glass"; and he then points out the inevitable ruin that such indulgence will bring to the General.

A letter from St. Clair to Knox, dated Lexington, September 4, 1791, runs in part: "Desertion and sickness have thinned our ranks. Still, if I can only get them into action before the time of the levies expires, I think my force sufficient, though that opinion is founded on the calculation of the probable number that is opposed to us, having no manner of information as to the force collected to oppose us." On the 15th, he writes

from Fort Washington about the coming expiration of enlistments and says: "I am very sensible how hazardous it is to approach, under such circumstances, and my only expectation is that the men will find themselves so far engaged that it will be obviously better to go forward than to return, at the same time it precludes the establishment of another post of communication however necessary, but that indeed is precluded also from our decreasing numbers, and the very little dependence that is to be placed upon the militia."

Colonel Winthrop Sargent writes to General Knox from Fort Washington on January 2, 1792. He states that there were fourteen hundred Indians opposed to St. Clair in the battle, and repeats a rumor that six hundred Indians from the Lakes quarrelled with the Miamis over the plunder, and went home without sharing any part, warning their allies that thereafter they should fight their battles alone. Sargent dwells upon the need of spies, and the service these spies would have rendered St. Clair. A few days afterwards he writes in reference to a rumor that his own office is to be dispensed with, protesting that this would be an outrage, and that he has always discharged his duties well, having entered the service simply from a desire to be of use to his country. He explains that the money he receives would hardly do more than equip him, and that

he only went into the army because he valued reputation and honor more than fortune.

The letters of the early part of 1792 show that the survivors of St. Clair's army were torn by jealousy, and that during the winter following his defeat there was much bitter wrangling among the various officers. Wilkinson frequently wrote to Knox giving his estimate of the various officers, and evidently Knox thought very well of him. Wilkinson spoke well of Sargent; but most of the other officers whom he mentions at all he mentions with some disfavor, and he tells at great length of the squabbles among them, his narrative being diversified at times by an account of some other incident such as "a most lawless outrage" by "a party of the soldiery on the person of a civil magistrate in the village of Cincinnati." Knox gives his views as to promotions in a letter to Washington, which shows that he evidently felt a good deal of difficulty in getting men whom he deemed fit for high command, or even for the command of a regiment.

One of the worst quarrels was that of the Quartermaster, Hodgdon, first with Major Zeigler and then with Captain Ford. The Major resigned, and the Captain publicly insulted the Quartermaster and threatened to horsewhip him.

In one letter, Caleb Swan, on March 11, 1792, advises Wilkinson that he had been to Kentucky

and had paid off the Kentucky militia who had served under St. Clair. Wilkinson, in a letter of March 13th, expresses the utmost anxiety for the retention of St. Clair in command. Among the numerous men whom Wilkinson had complained of was Harmar, who, he said, was not only addicted to drink, but was also a bad disciplinarian. He condemned the Quartermaster also, although less severely than most of the other officers.

Darke's letter is worth quoting in full. Its spelling and punctuation are extraordinary, and some of the words can not be deciphered:

"Letter from Col. Darke to George Washington, president of the U. S., dated at Fort Washington, Nineth of Novr. 1791, "(*Knox* Papers, Vol. xxx., p. 12.)

"I take the liberty to Communicate to your Excellency the disagreeable News of our defeat.

"We left fort Washington the Begining of Septr a Jornel of our march to the place of action and the whole proseeding on our march I hoped to have had the honour to inclose to you but that and all other papers cloathing & &c., was Taken by the Indians. this Jornel I know would have gave you pain but thought it not amiss to Give you a State of facts and Give you every Information in my power and had it Ready to Send to you the Very Morning we were actacked.

"We advanced 24 miles from fort Washington and bult a Small fort which we I thought were long

about from thence we advanced along the banks of the Meamme River where the fort was arected 44½ Miles on a Streight Line by the Compass west ¼ north though farther the way the Road went and bult another fort. which we Left on the 23 October and from that time to the 3d Novr Got 31 Miles where we incamped in two Lines about 60 yards apart the Right whing in frunt Commanded by General Butler, the Left in the Rear which I commanded, our piccquets Decovered Some Sculking Indians about Camp in the Night and fired on them. Those we expected were horsstealers as they had Taken Many of our horses near fort Washington, and on the way and killed a few of our Men.

"As Soon as it was Light in the Morning of the 4th Novr the advanced Guards of the Meletia fired the Meletia Being incamped a Small distance in frunt a Scattering fire Soon Commenced The Troops were instandly formed to Reserve them and the pannack Struck Meletia Soon broke in to the Center of our incampment in a few Munites our Guards were drove in and our whole Camp Surrounded by Savages advencing up nere to our Lines and Made from behind trees Logs &c., Grate Havoke with our Men I for Some time having no orders [indevanced?] to pervent the Soldiers from braking and Stil finding the enemy Growing More bold and Coming to the very Mouths of our Cannon and all the brave artilery officers Killed

I ordered the Left whing to Charge which with the assistance of the Gallent officers that were then Left I with deficuaty prevailed on them to do, the Second U S Regt was then the Least disabled the Charge begat with them on the Left of the Left whing I placed a Small Company of Rifelmen on that flank on the Bank of a Small Crick and persued the enemy about four hundred yards who Ran off in all directions but this time the Left flank of the Right whing Gave way and Number of the Indians Got into our Camp and Got possession of the Artilery and Scalped I Sopose a hundred men or more I turned back and beat them quite off the Ground and Got posesion of the Cannon and had it been possible to Get the troops to form and push them we Should then have Soon beat them of the Ground but those that Came from the Lelf whing Run in a huddle with those of the Right the enemys fire being allmost over for Many Munites and all exertions Made by many of the brave officer to Get them in Some order to persue Victory was all in Vain. they would not form in any order in this Confution they Remained until the enemy finding they were not pushed and I dare say Active officers with them and I believe Several of them white they Came on again, and the whole Army Ran toGether Like a Mob at a fair and had it not been for the Gratest Exertions of the officers would have stood there til all killed

the Genl then Sent to me if possible to Get them off that Spot by Making a Charge I found my Endevours fruitless for Some time but at Length Got Several Soldiers together that I had observed behaving brave and Incoraged them to lead off which they did with charged bayonetts Success the whole followed with Grate Rapidity I then endevoured to halt the frunt to Get them in Some order to turn and fire a few Shots but the horse I Rode being Good for little and I wounded in the thigh Early in the Action and having fatigued my Self much was So Stif I could make a poor hand of Running. the Confution in the Retreat is beyound description the Men throughing away their arms not withstanding all the indevour of the few Remaining Brave officers I think we must have Lost 1000 Stand of arms Meletia included. It is impossible to Give any Good account of the Loss of men at this time but from the Loss of officers you may Give Some Gess a list of their Names you have In Closed the Brave and Much to be Lemented G. B. at their Head I have Likewise in Closed you a Small Rough Scetch of the feald of battle. I at this time am Scarcely able to write being worn out with fatigue Not having Slept 6 hours Since the defeat. This fatigue has bean occationed by the Cowardly behaviour of Major John F. Hamtramck, and I am Sorry to say Not the Same exertions of the Govenor that I expected.

Hamtramck was about Twenty four Miles in our Rear with the first U S Regiment Consisting of upwards of 300 effective men and on hearing of our defeat insted of Coming on as his orders was I believe to follow us Retreated back 7 miles to fort Jefferson we knowing of his being on his march after us and was in hopes of Grate Releif from him in Covering the Retreat of perhaps upwards of 200 or 300 wounded men Many of whom might easily bean Saved with that fresh Regiment with whom I should not have bean afraid to have passed the whole Indian army if they had persued as the would have bean worn down with the Chace and in Grate Disorder when we Got to the fort 31 miles in about 9 hours no one having eat any from the day before the action. we found the Garison without more than than one days bred and no meat having bean on half alowence two days there was a Council Called to which I aftar I beleive they had agreed what was to be done was called it was Concluded to march of & Recommence the Retreat at 10 oclock which was begun I think an hour before that time more than 300 wounded and Tired in our Rear the Govenor assured me that he expected provition on every hour I at first Concluded to stay with my Son who was very dangerously and I expected Mortaly wounded but after Geting Several officers dressed and as well provided for as possible and Seing the

Influance Hamtramck had with the Genl about twelve oclock I got a horse and followed the army as I thought from apearences that Major Hamtramck had Influance anough to pervent the Garison from being Supplied with the provition Coming on by Keeping the first Regt as a guard for himself I Rode alone about ten Miles from twelve oclock at night until I overtook the Regiment and the Genl I still kept on until I met the pack horses about daylight Much alarmed at having heard Something of the defeat, the Horse master Could Not prevail on the drivers to Go on with him until I assured then I would Go back with them Lame as I was I ordered the horses to be loaded immediately and I Returned as fast as I could to hault the first Regiment as a guard, and when I met them told them to halt and make fires to Cook immediately as I made Sure they would be sent back with the provitions, but when I met the Govenor and Major Hamtramck I pervailed with Genl St. Clair to order 60 men back only which was all I could possibly get and had the bulock drivers known that was all the guard they were to have they would not have gone on nuther would the horse drivers I believe in Sted of the 120 hors loads Got on all the Rest went back with the army and though the Men had bean So Long Sterving and we then 47 miles from the place of action I could not pervail on them the

Genl and his fammily or [advisers?] to halt for the sterved worn down Soldiers to Cook, nor did they I believe even Kill a bullock for their Releaf I went back to fort Jefferson that Night with the flour beaves &c. where they was No kind of provision but a Miserable Poor old horse and many Valuable officers wound there and perhaps 200 soldiers it was Night when I Got back I Slept not one moment that Night my son and other officers being in Such Distress. the next day I was busy all day—Getting— made to Carry of the wounded officers there being no Medison there Nor any Nourishment not even a quart of Salt but they were not able to bare the Motion of the horses. That Night I Set off for this place and Rode til about 12 oclock by which time my thigh was amassingly Sweld Near as large as my body and So hot that I could feel the warmth with my hand 2 foot off of it I could Sleep none and have Slept very Little Since the wounds begin to Separate and are much easier I am aprehensive that fort Jeferson is now beseiged by the indians as Certain Information has bean Received that a large body were on Sunday night within fifteen miles of it Coming on the Road we Marched out and I am Sorey to Se no exertions to Releive it I Cannot tel whether they have the Cannon they took from us or Not if they have not, they Cannot take it Nor I don't think they Can with for want

of Ball which they have No Grate Number of. They took from us eight pieces of ordenence 130 bullocks, about 300 horses upwards of 200 Tents and a Considerable quantity of flour amunition and all the officers and Soldiers Cloathing and bagage except what they had on I believe they gave quarters to none as most of the Women were Killed before we left the Ground I think the Slaughter far grater than Bradocks there being 33 brave officers Killd Dead on the Ground 27 wounded that we know of and Some Mising exclusive of the Meletia and I know their Cole. and two Captains were Killed I do not think our Loss so Grate as to Strike the Surviving officers with Ideas of despair as it Seems to. the Chief of the Men Killd are of the Levies and indeed many of them are as well out of the world as in it as for the Gallent officers they are much to be Lamented as the behaviour of allmost all of them would have done honour to the first Veterans in the world. the few that escaped without wounds it was Chiefly axedent that Saved them as it is impossible to Say more in their praise than they deserve.

In the few horse officers though they had no horses Good for anything Capt. Truman Lieut. Sedam Debuts Boins and Gleer behaved Like Soldiers. Capt. Snowder is I think Not Calculated for the army and Suliven Quartermaster and Commt is as Grate a poltoon as I ever saw in

the world.[1] Ensign Shambury of the first United States Regiment is as brave Good and determined a Hero as any in the work Lieutenent James Stephenson from Berkeley of the Levies aded to one of the most unspoted and Respectable Carectors in the world in private Life as Good an officer as ever drew breth, his Gallent behavior in Action drew the attention of every officer that was Near him more than any other, There is one Bisel perhaps a volenteer in the Second U S Regiment who Richly deserved preferment for his bravery through the whole action he made the freeest use of the Baonet of any Man I noticed in the Carcases of the Savages. John Hamelton I cant say too much in praise of who was along with the army a packhorse master he picked up the dead mens guns and used them freely when he found them Loaded and when the Indians entered the Camp he took up an ax and at them with it. I am Intirely at a loss to Give you any idea what General St. Clair intends to do. I well know what I would do if I was in his place and would venture to forfet my Life if the Indians have not moved the Cannon farther than the Meamme Towns if I did not Retake them by Going there in three days insted of two months I well know the have Lost many of their braves & warriors and I make no doubt the have Near 100 wounded Their killed I

[1] Written as above.

cannot think Bare any perpotion to ours as they Lay so Concealed but many I know were killd and those the most dareing fellows which has weakened them Grately and I know we were able to beat them and that a violent push with one hundred brave men when the Left whing Returned from persuing them would have turned the Scale in our favor indeed I think fifty would in the Scatered State they were in and five or Six hundred Mounted Riflemen from Conetuck aded to the force we have would Be as Sure of Suchsess as they went many have offer to Go with me a number of officers ofer to Go as privates and I never was Treated with So much Respect in any part of the world as I have bean this day in this wilderness in the time I am offered My Choice of any horse belonging to the town as I Lost all my own horses I shall Se the General in the morning and perhaps be no more Satisfied than I am now. Though I have Spoke of all the officers with that Respect they Richly deserve I cannot in Justice to Capt. Hannah help mentioning him as when all his men were killed wounded and Scatered except four Got a [?] that belonged to Capt. Darkes Company when the Cannon was Retaken the Artilery men being all killed and Lying in heaps about the Peases who he draged away and Stood to the Cannon himSelf til the Retreat and then within a few yards of the enemy Spiked the Gun

with his Baonet Capt. Brack [?] and all the Captains of the Maryland Line I cannot Say too much in their praise. I have taken the Liberty of Writing So perticculer to you as I think no one Can Give a better account nor do I think you will Get an account from any that Saw So much of the action Genl. St. Clair not Being able to Run about as I was if his inclination had been as Grate I hope in the Course of the winter to have the pleasure of Seeing you when I may have it in my power to answer any questions you are pleased to ask Concerning the unfortunate Campain. I

"Have the Honour to be
your Excellencys most obt.
and most humble servent
"Wm. Darke.

"10 Novr. I have prevailed on the Good Genl. to send a Strong party To Carry Supplies to fort Jeferson which I hope will be able to Releve it and as I have polticed wound and the Swelling much Asswaged if I find myself able to Set on hors back will Go with the party as I Can be very warm by Laping myself with blankets "Wm. Darke.

"His Excellency
The President of the United States."

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