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EARLY KENTUCKY INTRIGUES

REGARDING

THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER.

EARLY KENTUCKY INTRIGUES
REGARDING
THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER.
A THESIS
PRESENTED
TO
THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
IN
THE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE,
IN APPLICATION FOR
THE DEGREE
OF
MASTER IN ARTS.

Louisville, Kentucky, April 1920.

PREFACE.

This paper is involved in a study of the intrigues of Kentuckians for the securing of the Mississippi River as a free waterway for the marketing of their produce and the consequent improvement of the condition of Kentuckians in every way.

The conspiracies of such men as Blount and Burr have not been included because there was no real and vital connexion of Kentuckians with their schemes. The intrigues of Wilkinson after the Spanish treaty of 1795 were not involving Kentucky peculiarly but rather the Southwest, and they would not be properly included here. Evidence of complicity in intrigues on the part of officials of Kentucky in years before the Spanish treaty is utterly wanting.

The conspiracies in the west are interesting but hard to trace, largely because there was very little success.

Henri Reubelt Percy.

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CHAPTER I.
THE SITUATION OF EARLY KENTUCKIANS.

The study of conspiracies in the early history of Kentucky should rest on a comprehension of the situation in which the Kentuckians of that period lived and also of the factors that related their interests to those of the East.

The physical relation of the region to the regions eastward of the mountains was one of isolation. Kentucky was almost like a modern fly-trap: ingress was tolerably simple, but egress was indeed difficult. The transportation of baggage either into the new district or out of it was practically impossible.

The wild, rugged mountain trails were the only means of entrance into Kentucky. The mountain barrier was a most considerable hindrance to travel. The gaps that permitted a very little of travel to those whose bodies were strong and hearts adventurous were hard to find and once found were but beginnings of most arduous ways into a dangerous wilderness barely scratched with animal trails and Indian traces used only for the conveniences of hunting-seasons.

There were two great traces, or rather variations of the same trace, that entered Kentucky. One of these was called Boone's Trace, the other Logan's. Utilizing the Big Road from Philadelphia and Richmond, the former led from

the Watauga river in eastern Tennessee to to the opening in the mountains, known as Moccasin Gap; from this point the trail continued to Cumberland Gap, at which place the "Warrior's Path" was chosen and followed as far as the old Buffalo Trace; on this the pioneers passed until they came to a gap near Berea, and onward to the site of the first fort.

Logan's Trace began near Rockcastle River, having followed Boone's thus far. Thence the trail led west to Crab Orchard Gap, probably through unblazed territory. From the gap the trail ran to the site Logan chose for settlement, near modern Stanford.

Boone's Trace led to the Bluegrass, Logan's to the hinterland of the Falls City region of to-day. Inland settlements were made by preference on account of the greater security against Indians. Later settlements were made on the Ohio. (1)

The Virginia Assembly tried to make passable roads across the mountains. " But the mountain barrier presented too many obstacles to good roads; . . . this fact was one of the . . . causes of separation . . . from Virginia." (2)

(1) Mary Verhoeff, The Kentucky Mountains, etc., (Morton, 1911), pp.79-82.

(2) Ibid., 96.

But the fact of Indian hostility to settlers was another wall that separated Kentuckians from their kinsfolk in Virginia and Carolina. Throughout the Revolutionary War the Kentucky settlers were exposed to Indian ravages incited by the British in the Northwest. Attacking stockades, massacring the families of men who dared to take sites for homes in the open and at some distance from sheltering stockades, stalking salt-makers and small bodies of hunters were common occupation for the Indians. After the peace of 1783 Indian attacks decreased perceptibly, but the horror of the past years was a reminiscence that kept out the timid and the unadventurous from the east; there was no particular enjoyment in taking the chance of Indian quietude while one passed through the narrow gap or along the confusing and unfamiliar trace. Only the most hardy adventurers dared come into Kentucky. The Indians knew quite as well as did the settlers that the traces had to be used by the whites in making entrance into the new district, and this knowledge was used by small bands from almost all tribes frequenting Kentucky for the joys of hunting. Murders on the traces and at the gap were common, and most hardy folk were they who dared cross from motherly

Virginia into the wild region westward. "As a part of Virginia you inhabit a district 500 miles from the seat of government; an intervening wilderness of several hundred miles extent; infested by hostile barbarians, and passible only at particular seasons of the year."(3) This last fact was of considerable importance; for several months in winter there was no crossing at all, and news was very precious to Kentucky settlers after the barrier of winter had been broken enough to permit a messenger or a body of new immigrants to bear word of the events in the east.

There were three very severe hindrances to pioneer transmontane travel, then: the rugged mountains themselves, hundreds of miles across; the constant hostility of the Indians who were likely to pounce upon travelers at any moment and who roamed in large bands during hunting-seasons; and the winter closure of mountain-ways to travel.

There was, of course, no considerable commerce that could have been sent to Virginia and Carolina so long as the war with Britain lasted. Just the sheer inaccessibility constituted the difficulty for many years, at least until peace.

(3) Kentucky Gazette, 1787, August 18, p.3, Vol.8.

The natural way of commerce was circuitous. Even in later days, when roads were built and traces safe for travel, merchandise from the East "was brought from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh and from Baltimore to Wheeling, by wagon, and shipped from these points down the Ohio to Maysville, Covington, and Louisville, whence it was distributed into the interior of the State by means of large canvas-covered vehicles known as road-wagons. In like manner agricultural products were sent back to the Ohio and shipped to New Orleans, whence they finally reached the Eastern States."(4) But this natural way was not safely open to Kentuckians until 1795, even by technical right, and several years later by actual right. The restraining of the right of Kentuckians to this natural way of trade piled up a great energy of intolerance at mere political infringement of right. It was this closed situation in Kentucky that gave a physical basis for the conspiracies of which treatment is made in this paper.

Such were the factors that made for separation of Kentucky from the Eastern States.

There were seven definite factors that made Kentucky a real and vital part of the early nation. In the first place the settlers in Kentucky were in overwhelming majority

(4) Verhoeff, 100f.

natives of Virginia and the border counties of Carolina. A native of Virginia is more than a person born in a lovely country; he is a gentleman who is ready to fight at the least mention of dishonor to the Old Dominion. Pride that is extreme and a sense of connexion with the very best blood of English ancestry dominate the feeling of the Virginian; Kentuckians have always been noted for their affection for their noble connexions. The Virginia blood in Kentuckians to-day is respected above all other; this is a foolish sentiment, perhaps, - but, real.

In the second place, practically all of the leading characters in the State in the early days were veterans of the Revolution, a great number of these having been high officers in the Colonial army. This fact knitted the leadership of Kentucky to the great men of the new nation. (5) Thomas Marshall, as an example, was a peculiarly influential man both with Kentuckians and with President Washington.

In the third place, the continued presence of British troops in the Northwest, contrary to the agreement at Paris, made bad blood between British and Kentuckians of much longer duration than between British

(5) Thomas Speed, The Political Club, (Morton, 1894), 48-110.

and Easterner. Fourthly, the fact that the British had incited Indians to attack Kentuckians in most cruel fashion was a matter of long and bitter reminiscence, and made to live by the very presence of the British troops in the Northwest.

In the fifth place, the presence of representatives of Kentucky District in the Virginian Assembly kept a legislative unity of feeling alive in the hearts of Kentuckians; and the very great consideration paid to problems involving Kentucky intensified this feeling. The Assembly was slow, but it was aware that Kentucky District existed and needed assistance, which was given.

In the sixth place, even the few traders who got their goods through the Spanish toils at New Orleans or the more who made trips of investigation thither were obliged to return to Kentucky by way of the ocean and by Philadelphia to the traces again. Contact with the East was maintained, and news of important nature sifted through to the settlers by this mean.

In the last place, a great number of the settlers were possessed of a genuine culture and refinement; they were not just uncouth backwoodsmen with little sense of elegance. The professions of law, medicine,

and ministry were held in high repute and were represented by men of no mean ability. Honor and propriety in social, governmental, and moral matters were strictly guarded; indeed, there was a struggle to maintain them, but they were maintained. The great mass of the people were of real personal worth, and possessed the essentials of such. Loyalty, morality, refinement were ardently upheld by persons thoroughly capable and worthy of upholding them. (6)

(6) Ibid., also W.H.Safford, Blennerhassett Papers, (Cincinnati, Clarke, 1891), 60-61.

CHAPTER II. THE FIRST STAGE OF
THE MISSISSIPPI QUESTION FOR KENTUCKY DISTRICT.

Article VIII of the preliminary treaty arranged in November of 1782 between England and the American colonies says, "The navigation of the river Mississippi, from its source to the ocean, shall forever remain free and open to the subjects of Great Britain and the citizens of the United States." (7) The same article is placed in the Definitive Treaty of Peace of 1783. But Spain retained by her treaty with Britain and the other parties possession of the land on both sides of the lower Mississippi from latitude 31⁰ to the sea; on the west bank, of course, possessing the right indefinitely to the source. This fact of Spanish possession of the lower Mississippi was of embarrassing consequences to the people of Kentucky. Commerce was not a considerable problem for them just after the peace, but it was seen by many leaders in the District to be a great question in the immediate future.

The genesis of the movement of prominent Kentuckians toward a demand for autonomy of the District came in November of 1784. Many of the great men of the future State had but recently arrived, but men of worth were indeed quickly recognized and trusted in those days. Rumors reached Colonel Benjamin Logan to the
(7) See Senate Documents, Vol. 48, (61st Congress,
2nd Session), Treaties, Conventions, etc., 1776-1909.

effect that a powerful body of Cherokees were about to invade the district. On his own responsibility he issued a call for a meeting of the officers of the several military organizations in the district, to be held at Danville, for consultation. This meeting of officers expressed itself in favor of going right into the Indians' territory to fight; but no one was authorized to order the expedition. Questions of legality for calling out the militia, money for provisions, funds for ammunition, pay for officers and men were also embarrassing. The movement was abandoned. But a circular address to the people was issued by Logan, recommending that all militia companies elect one representative each to meet at Danville on December 27, 1784, to take up some questions of self-defence.

Now, he had no constitutional right to act thus; and there was, at the same time, nothing to hinder his calling such a meeting. The militia was under the control of the Virginia Assembly, and Colonel Logan was one of the appointees of that body; George Rogers Clark was his senior officer.

The meeting called by Logan was held and conducted decorously. It was first stated at this meeting that, although many obstacles to an effective defence of the district could be removed by suitable action by the Virginia

Assembly, there was in the nature of the situation nothing but a complete autonomy as a member of the Confederation that could enable Kentuckians to secure their proper security and rightful progress. Since many objected, however, to making an application to the Assembly for independence, the delegates earnestly recommended to Kentuckians that at their regular time for electing members of the Assembly - which time was in the next April - they should choose delegates to meet at Danville in May for the purpose of considering and deciding the question of applying for separation from Virginia. (8)

Such a convention as recommended was formed in May 1785; it expressed itself as favoring the sending an application for separation; but deeming it best to proceed surely, it recommended a new election by the people in July, that the new convention could assemble in August. (9) A memorial to the Virginia Assembly, which was never sent, and an address to people of Kentucky, which was a carefully reasoned document and which was sent, were drawn. The composer of the latter document was a mere spectator and no member of the convention; but he was destined to speedy

(8) T.M.Green, Spanish Conspiracy, (Cincinnati, 1891), p.55f.

(9) Ibid., 58. Also, Humphrey Marshall, History of Kentucky, (Frankfort, 1832), I, 200.

prominence in Kentucky history. His name was James Wilkinson. His recent residence had been Philadelphia, but in the past fall he had brought his family to live in Lexington. A veteran officer of the Revolutionary Army, his fortune depleted by the accidents of the times, he had come West for fortune and a new home.

The August Convention assembled as suggested. Wilkinson had a seat in that body. The memorial of the preceding assembly was ignored, and in its stead a new one was ordered drawn and forwarded to the Assembly. Wilkinson was the author of this memorial. It was more demand than petition.

In January of 1786 the General Assembly of Virginia passed an act recognizing the justice of the Kentuckians' demand, and providing for an election in the ensuing August of representatives to a fifth convention at Danville, to be held on the fourth Monday of September, and for determining "whether it be expedient for, and the will of, the good people of the said district, to be erected into an independent State", on conditions particularly specified. One of the conditions was the assent of the Congress of the United States to such an act on the part of Virginia and on the part of Kentucky District. (10)

(10) Green, 61. Also in W.W.Hening, The Statutes At Large, XII, 37-40.

Wilkinson is said to have disliked this restriction regarding Congressional approval. He argued instant action. And as a candidate for the convention of September he publicly stated that the people should demand of their representatives a vote for immediate separation without taking the legal course prescribed by the legislature.(11) Humphrey Marshall was chosen by the moderates to oppose Wilkinson on such action. Wilkinson was actually seeking to have the convention vote for independence from Virginia and without the passage of any act of admission into the Confederation of States. Wilkinson was abashed by the speech of Marshall, we are told. But Wilkinson was elected from his section of country, nevertheless. Marshall says a crooked election was perpetrated. But one cannot be too sure of such, since there was always a rather bitter personal and possibly religious difference between the men.(12)

It must be borne in mind that the whole Confederation was in ill repute during these days. Marshall covers up this fact as best he can; but the powerlessness and inefficiency of the government at Philadelphia was a source

(11) Marshall, I, 242.

(12) Ibid., 243. Also, Green, 65.

of chagrin to a great number of genuine and patriotic Americans of that day is a fact beyond dispute. The Virginia Assembly was also slow; but there was ground for confidence in that body, because it did have consideration for Kentucky and had been kind and watchful. Besides, the Assembly was partly Kentuckian in its composition.

But the Convention called for September did not meet on time. Colonel Clark was preparing an expedition against the hostile tribes on the Wabash. Clark had called the militia to rendezvous early in September; about one thousand men assembled; this number, however, was not enough. A council of war was gathered, and this body decided that some of the officers should return to their respective sections, get together all deserters and delinquents, and march with them to Vincennes to which place Clark and Logan with the men already mobilized should proceed at once. The officers accordingly set out to their neighborhoods for increasing the forces. But Clark, apparently on the sudden, decided to divide the force he already had, took one part and plunged into the Wabash country, and ordered Logan into what is now Ohio to attack and disperse hostile tribes there with the remainder of the men.

This action of Clark involved him and his

command in the first conspiracy of the colonial Kentuckians.

The action against the Wabash Indians and against the tribes of Ohio was proper and authorized. But Clark exceeded his authority when, after his unsuccessful campaign having returned to Vincennes, he commenced to levy recruits, appoint officers, and impress provisions for a scheme of his own.(13) Some Spanish traders were deprived of their property, and what could not be used for the purposes of the army was sold for money. Boats carrying goods of the traders from Vincennes to New Orleans were seized; one valued at \$10,000 and belonging to Spaniards was taken.(14) It is stated that evidence pointed to the probability that Clark was going to use Vincennes as a base of attack upon Spaniards at St. Louis and the Natchez.(15) That there were Kentuckians who looked on Spain as "unjust, cruel, and oppressive" is certain; and that Clark's action in seizing Spanish property in and near Vincennes was considered just retaliation and for that specific purpose is evidenced by a letter of that year to the Governor of Georgia from a Louisvillian.who was much con-

(13) Secret Journals of Congress, LV,310, gisted in Green, 69f.

(14) St. Clair Papers, II, 21, also in Green, 71.

(15) Ibid., 72.

cerned regarding the Spanish position and activity.(16)

It is important that at this time there were probably five separate schemes to relieve Western embarrassment because of the Spaniards' possession of the Mississippi. There were some Kentuckians who sought a separate organization "of a New Republic, independent of the United States, and closely allied with Spain". Others were desirous of annexing Kentucky to Louisiana and thus submitting Kentucky to Spanish domination; there is not much evidence of this scheme's popularity. A third scheme was involved in a project to get France interested again in Louisiana, that that nation might procure the retrocession of Louisiana to herself, and then extend her protection to the inhabitants of Kentucky. A fourth idea was for inducing Congress "to show preparation for war, and by alarming (the Spaniards') apprehensions, extort from the Cabinet of Madrid what it persisted in refusing". A fifth scheme is altogether in line with that in which Clark was apparently engaged; war should be begun against Spain, "as affording a pretext for seizing on New Orleans".(17) Whatever basis there may be for believing these all existed in a definite

(16) Secret Journals of Congress, given in full in Appendix A, of Green.

(17) Safford, 64.

form or power, it is certain that some very real plans of action existed at the time. The separating of fancy and actuality is rather difficult; but the five samples I have mentioned suffice to show the variety of Kentucky thinking in this period regarding the one common need, the navigation of the Mississippi.

That such a notion as I have mentioned as probable basis for Clark's action prevailed in Kentucky is reasonably sure. The letter of the Louisvillian to the Governor of Georgia plainly states that Kentuckians of the time were "exasperated against both Spaniards and Congress". This note desired information in regard to the attitude of the Governor of Georgia toward a settlement of Kentuckians in the region lying on the Mississippi and involving the Natchez; it was asked if he would countenance the move and would give them "the land to settle it agreeably to the laws of your state." The bearer of this note passed through the Bluegrass en route to Georgia and showed it or permitted it to fall temporarily into the hands of up-state leaders. The information of this note was in all probability forwarded to the officials of the new government of Virginia under Randolph. It is certain that at this time the Virginia

governor was apprised by private communication from Kentucky that "General George Rogers Clark had undertaken without authority to raise recruits, nominate officers, and impress provisions in the District of Kentucky for the defence of the Post of Vincennes, and had for that purpose also seized the property of Spanish subjects contrary to the laws of nations". (18) The bearer of the note which was seen by Bluegrass Kentuckians was a paid messenger; this is evidenced by the fact that in the Secret Journals of Congress a copy of a promissory note is to be found, stating that Clark and the writer of the missive sent to the Georgian Governor would each pay the bearer ten pounds, and that several other men would pay less amounts to the same purpose. (19) About this time an anonymous circular letter was issued supporting the project for a wresting of Louisiana settlements from the Spaniards. And James Madison told Congress about this time that "incendiary efforts (were) on foot in the western country against the Spaniards." (20) All of this evidence points to the fact that Clark's plan was known by many people, and also there is a strong implication

(18) Virginia Calendar State Papers, IV, 322, note, quoted by Brown in Political Beginnings of Ky., p. 82.

(19) Secret Journals of Congress, IV, 318.

(20) Madison Papers, L, 598.

that the men who saw the letter in the Bluegrass saw to it that the news got eastward, even to the Congress of the colonies.

I think it highly probable also that the region of the Bluegrass was settled by a type of men differing temperamentally and by education from the men of the Falls settlements. Clark as a type of the latter section was much different from Thomas Marshall, as a type of the Bluegrass gentlemen. Certainly Clark did nothing that was really different from the whole exploit of the Northwest in the Revolutionary days. His method of doing things was that of the pioneer; the method of the future was to be that of deliberation and expert political tactics. That the Bluegrass was hostile to Clark is evidenced from the fact that in a letter which several prominent Kentuckians sent Randolph it is said, "We lament that the unfortunate habits to which General Clark is addicted oblige us to observe that we consider him utterly unqualified for business of any kind." (21) There is a letter of that year, which tells of Clark's being "eternally drunk, and yet full of design." (22) This combination of

(21) Green, 78.

(22) Ibid., 72, note.

statement is probably true. It seems, however, that the rough manner and life of Clark constituted only a small part of the reason for the Bluegrass men's repudiating him; it was the habit of diving into wild schemes of territorial gain that was the undesirable one.

Clark's scheme did not go far, however; the governor of Virginia sent word of the withdrawal of his commission as colonel of Kentucky militia.

* * * * *

CHAPTER III. THE SECOND STAGE OF THE MISSISSIPPI QUESTION FOR KENTUCKY DISTRICT.

Early in 1787 John Marshall wrote to Kentucky "the first news of Jay's project of ceding to Spain the navigation of the Mississippi. . . . The news thus communicated was corroborated from other sources, and particularly by advices from the committees in Western Pennsylvania. It greatly alarmed all who appreciated the vital importance to Kentucky and its people of an unobstructed navigation of the Mississippi."(23) The idea of Jay was that for

(23) Brown, 79.

twenty-five years the United States should permit Spain to control the lower Mississippi, but that it was to be distinctly understood by Spain that the time specified covered no more concession than a purely temporary control of the river by Spain, and that it should be further understood that at the end of the specified period the control of the lower Mississippi should revert in right to the United States and the river should be a free river for both the citizens of the United States and the subjects of whatever country possessed the territory lying on the two sides of the lower Mississippi; in short, there underlay the whole agreement the one supreme fact that the United States should always be considered to have an inalienable right to the navigation of the great river without hindrance or caprice of any other nation. Jay was really playing a safe game, but the Kentuckians took alarm at the superficial meaning of the news received: they read it that he was merely backing down on the great needs of the west.

On August 18, 1787 appeared a factor in Kentucky life that was destined to have a tremendous influence in the shaping of the fortunes and activities of the inhabitants. The first number of the Lexington

"Kentucky Gazette" was issued on that day at Lexington by John Bradford. His opening remark is of considerable importance. He says, "I consider this country as being yet in an infant state, harassed by the most savage enemies, having no profitable trade, and being drained of money by its present intercourse with the Eastern parts of America". A farmer in the same number asks, "1st. By what profitable means can a new State support Government, defend itself from the savages, and pay its quota of the foederal and state debt, without a free trade down the Mississippi? Secondly, What probable prospects can a new State have of obtaining a trade down the Mississippi; and what profits can we derive from such a trade?"

It is significant that Bradford was thinking of the "Eastern parts of America". He seems to put that region over against Kentucky which is in a constant danger of savages, without trade, and drained of money. He seems to think of Kentucky as already separate from those Eastern parts.

Concurrently, there is an evident feeling of connexion between Kentucky and all things western. On page 4 of the first issue the

Gazette contains this item:

"Colonel Benjamin Logan received an express from Colonel J. Robinson, commanding officer of the settlements on Cumberland (North Carolina) containing the following intelligence. That he was informed by express from the chief of the Chicasaw nation and also by some Indians who had escaped from that country, that the Creek, Checamaga, and some other tribes of Indians, had in a Grand Council held at Mobile declared War against the settlements on Cumberland River, and were to invade that country in the course of the present month, with all the force they could raise. . . . Colobel Robinson wrote in the most pressing manner for assistance from this country; urging that unless immediately reinforced, that whole country was in imminent danger of falling a sacrifice to the superior force of the Enemy, an attack from whom they daily expected as the sign of large parties had been discovered within a few miles of Nashville."

In just what position the Kentuckians were placed in this juncture is illustrated by a statement made in the same issue on page 3:

"(Being a part of Virginia merely) subjects you to the incursions of a savage enemy, who after murdering your friends, and destroying

your property, fly out of the limits of the District, and are protected by the law. Yes, my Countrymen, the Laws forbid your taking any effectual measures against them. They forbid your marching an expedition into their country. Considering this mode of warfare, what is this in fact, but to bid you sit still, and receive the stroke of the tomahawk. . . . consequences which flow from this disposition of things (the distance and actual separation from Virginia), as their only source, and not from any thing that Virginia hath done, or omitted to do."

Thus there was a spirit of loyalty to the mother-state; and yet a conviction had come that the District was really a separate entity and entitled to its own self-protection by its own government.

The spirit of loyalty was further evidenced by the editor of the Gazette when in the issues of October 20 and 27 and November 3, he printed even thirds of the Constitution of the United States, recently framed by the delegates at Philadelphia, and printed in the Pittsburgh Gazette, from which Bradford secured his copy. There is no doubt in my mind that this publication of the Constitution, which was later accepted, had a very great

influence in keeping Kentucky in line with the cause of a Federal Union.

A most interesting piece of information is given in the first November issue of the Gazette (24) as follows:

"Copy of a Letter written by Captain Sullivan, to his Excellency, Don Diego Gordoque, his Catholic Majesty's Minister Plenipotentiary to the United States of America, extracted from the Columbia Herald, of the 6th Inst. printed at Charleston, South Carolina, the editor of which asserts that it was taken from an original copy in the author's own writing.

"State of Georgia, Frontier of the Creek Nation, 1st of March 1787.

"May it please your Excellency,

"Having waited thus far in expectation of permission to join the Spanish troops in South America, and having expressed to your Excellency an ardent inclination to obtain the mere honor of serving in any Spanish regiment as a volunteer; which requisitions as they were not complied with in due time I beg leave to decline the acceptance of any rank or degree in the service of his Catholic Majesty. The annals of history must have informed your Excellency, that many nations have had abundant reason to deplore the impolicy of those whom they had invested with the powers of

government, in slighting the proffered services of men whose bent naturally leads to tactical pursuits and to war. . . Being a soldier of fortune, as I profess, . . . and having studied from my infancy the science of arms, practical war is now my pursuit, as a profession most congenial with my principles and disposition; and thousands of Americans (officers of the late war) pant for an opportunity to serve this country. The banks of the Ohio and Mississippi are actually alive with the first American characters of this stamp. . . and called upon from thence to my heroic brethren of the army. . . honour, virtue, and the bias of an antient intercourse and former habits incline me to assist them. From the Watches to the Kaskaskies - from Pittsburg to St. Mary's river, they are prepared to pour forth with the greatest ease 50,000 veterans in arms, in defence of their commercial rights, throughout the navigable rivers of the southern parts of this empire. . . The grain is actually germinating, sown by the pride, avarice, and folly of a certain eastern power, which the pure air of liberty working at the root, and the laws of nature, superior to the narrow policy of any foreign court, must finally and very speedily raise into a host of myrmidons, the children of Enachim; the sons of the earth irresistible in this land. . . . A very in-

considerable time must inevitably call forth to trial the mighty energy of the Ohio and Mississippi; and incidents and events are gradually teeming into birth which will shortly open a spacious field for a daring spirit to explore. . . The states of Georgia, Franklin, and Kentucke, confederated, the counties of Bourbon, &., in the Natches; the settlements on Cumberland, Kaskaskies, and the Wabash, and the governments of Pittsburg, Westmoreland, &, abound with the seeds of war; nor will any obstruction from New Orleans to the Blaise, impede the overwhelming inundation preparing to pour down along the waters of the Mississippi, into the Bay of Mexico. The torrent will be irresistible; and the crop is actually in the ground; the harvest is ready for the hook and the hook for the harvest; the reaper has introduced his sickle, combustibles are laid in a pile; nay, the very brand is already applied, and the fire only requires to be fanned. The permission of Congress will not be solicited on this occasion. In Congress this people are not represented. . . The Americans are amphibious animals. Tillage and commerce are their elements. Both they will have or perish.

"John Sullivan, late Captain
"4th reg. American light dragoons. "

Manifest destiny, the wrongs of Spain in her dealing with the northern settlers, the lack of

representation in the affairs of Congress are made to stand out in clear relief here.

Right away a "lover of peace", as he styled himself, wrote in the Gazette, "I cannot pretend to know the motives which have urged to the publication of a letter which can be considered in no other light than a torch of war. I depends entirely upon the intentions of Spain with respect to us, whether Captain Sullivan is to be viewed as a patriotic soldier or a successor to Macedonia's madman and the Swede. If Spain has actually laid the plan or discovered a fixed intention to rob us of the just rights which have been asserted before Congress in our behalf, the writer of that letter is a magnanimous hero and calls for our admiration. If no such inimical intentions have appeared, we are obliged to consider him as a mere soldier of fortune."(25)

In the preceding month the Gazette printed this statement:

"Extracts from the journals of a Convention begun and held for the district of Kentucky, at Danville in the county of Mercer, on the 17th day of September, 1787.

"Resolved by the Representatives of the good people of the district of Kentucky in Convention

(25) Ibid., Number XIV, for November 10, 1787.

assembled, that it is expedient for, and the will of the same, that the said district be erected into a separate and independent State, on the terms and conditions specified, in the two acts of the Assembly, one entitled 'an Act concerning the erecting the district of Kentucke into an Independent State', the other entitled, 'an Act making further provision for the erection of the district of Kentucke into an Independent State'. " (26)

Thus there were many currents of influence in the air. All kinds of projects were on foot, and every type of humanity seemed back of them. But there seems to be a strong direction given all movements by the ideal of constitutional and proper action toward setting up a firm established state.

It must be remembered that James Wilkinson went in the spring of 1787 to New Orleans on his first commercial venture. On March 1, 1788, the Gazette makes a note of the fact that Wilkinson had got back to Kentucky on the preceding Sunday. His influence was about to have a very great leverage on Kentucky affairs.

The year 1788 was indeed momentous for the Union in America. In April and May the first two states accepted the constitution, and then by the end of the year eleven of the

thirteen states had ratified. New York and Virginia were the last two, of the eleven.

A very interesting controversy was carried on in Kentucky for many years over the action of John Brown, the representative of Kentucky District, who voted against the Constitution. But such patriots as Patrick Henry and William Grayson had strenuously opposed the new Constitution. It is indeed significant to note that the ground of their objection was that it would ruin the West. James Monroe had doubted if the navigation of the Mississippi could be had under the new Government. And the Kentucky representatives in the Virginia Convention largely shared these fears and followed the lead of Henry.(27) It is to be expected in the study of Kentucky history that the leaders in political affairs will be found to have been skeptical of the Federal Government, although genuinely loyal.

It should be noted here, also, that there was a great deal of dissatisfaction in Kentucky over the delay of the Confederation Congress to consider the application of Kentucky to the union. "Under date of July 10, 1788 Brown (had) explained to (Judge) Muter the causes that had defeated the Kentucky application, and expressed his belief that the simultaneous admission of Vermont or Maine would be

(27) Brown, 152.

insisted on by the Eastern States as a condition coupled with Kentucky's admission." (27) The slavery question was perplexing the statesmen of the East; Kentuckians had not felt the power of that incipient strife, and were impatient. The fact that the Confederation Congress refused to finish the matter but rather turned over the decision regarding Kentucky to the new Congress of the Federal United States, was not understood with sympathy by Kentuckians. They felt that the weakness of the Union was but being illustrated by its inexcusable laziness.

On April 18, 1789 Wilkinson advertised in the Gazette for hands to conduct his boats to New Orleans. (29)

On May 23 a certain "Valerius" wrote a letter in the Gazette as follows: "Whereas some gentlemen of this district have advanced a doctrine from the Federal Constitution, by which they endeavor to make their hearers believe, that a separation of the district from the eastern part of the state, is necessary, in order to secure to us, the free navigation of the Mississippi River: They found their doctrine in the following clauses: 'He, the President, shall have power, with the advice and consent of the Senate, to

(28) Brown, 156.

(29) Gazette, Vol. II, Number XXXIV.

make treaties, provided two thirds of the Senate present concur'. Art.2,sec.2. And that treaties so made, 'shall be the supreme law of the land', Art.6. From hence they insinuate that as the power of making commercial treaties, is vested in the President and Senate; the district ought to be erected into an independent state; by which means we shall have two members in the Senate, which they say would be a considerable weight in settling commercial treaties in favor of this country. . . (But) . . . the free navigation of the Mississippi is a constitutional right, and secured to us by the Federal Government, we all know that the free navigation of said river is ceded to the United States by the definitive treaty: In which the states of Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and all the territory on the north west side of the Ohio, are deeply interested. We claim it by said treaty, to the middle thereof, as a territorial right." (30)

This excerpt shows the nervousness of men in Kentucky over the working of the Federal Constitution.

In April of 1789 Dorchester of Canada wrote Lord Sydney from Quebec: "In a late convention, held at Danville, it has been proposed by those who are gained over to the Spanish views to throw themselves under the protection of that power. But the general result of the private councils among
(30) Ibid., Vol. II, No.XXXIX.

them is said to be to declare independence of the Federal Union, take possession of New Orleans and look to Great Britain for such assistance as might enable them to accomplish these designs." (31) Dr. Connolly, a former resident of Louisville, but deprived, in the Revolutionary War, of his properties there, made a visit to Kentucky in 1788. It is probable that he made discoveries of plots and plans while here that gave a basis for the opinions expressed in the Dorchester letter. Marshall says that Connolly visited Wilkinson and other men while in Kentucky. (32) It is not altogether probable that Connolly had a narrow escape from the fury of Kentuckians at his presence as a British subject; this tale is credited by some. Connolly also reported that the "people were thinking of bargaining for this outlet down the St. Lawrence." (33) He referred to the plan of Kentuckians' shipping their produce out by the St. Lawrence. But there is not one indication in the Gazette or in any other source I have consulted that would support such a scheme. It would have been most impracticable and almost impossible. It would also have indicated a rather despairing attitude on the part of Kentuckians toward the situation; such was not true.

On May 30, 1789, there appeared in the Gazette

(31) From a copy of the Canadian Archives, pub. 1890 and printed in full in Appendix, Green.

(32) Marshall, I, 347.

(33) Carl Fish, American Diplomacy, (N.Y., 1919), 68.

the following information: "The following account given of the settlement lately made on the Mississippi by some travellers who have just arrived from that place:

"The country thereabouts by no means answers the description given of it by Colonel Morgan in his advertisement; it is a flat level country for 40 to 60 miles to the N.W. of the Mississippi, and is now all under water, by the overflowing of that river, except some inconsiderable heights or pine knobs. The most of those who have gone to settle there are dissatisfied, and numbers have already gone down to the Natches, and it is thought they will abandon the place in a short time." (34)

This excerpt deals with the settlement of New Madrid which Gardoqui interested Morgan in sometime in 1788. "Gardoqui . . . was busily engaged in carrying forward his scheme of colonization. Col. George Morgan, a soldier of the Revolution, had conceived himself greatly injured by the Government, in rejecting what he believed a meritorious claim, and smarting under his disappointment, resolved to avail himself of the opportunity of placing himself beyond the limits of the United States, and by securing a liberal grant of the Spanish Crown, to restore his broken fortunes in the fertile valley of the Mississippi. Having applied to Gardoqui, he obtained the conveyance of

(34) Gazette, Vol. II, No. XL.

a vast tract of land, situated some seventy miles below the mouth of the Ohio, upon which he stipulated to place a large number of families, and subsequently laid out the town of New Madrid. D'Argès had already informed Charles de Grandpré, Governor of Natches, to have preparation made for the reception of fifteen hundred and eighty-two families which were expected soon to arrive from Kentucky, to take possession of their promised bounties." (35) "Gardoqui. . . without the knowledge of Miro, and, therefore, without concert of plan, had conceived the project of settling Louisiana by emigration from the United States. By this means he hoped to draw to the interest of the Spanish Crown the people of Kentucky, which should result in her secession from the Union, with other districts then similarly disaffected. To Pierre d'Argès, Gardoqui committed the execution of his scheme. By authority of the Cabinet at Madrid, he invited the inhabitants of Kentucky, and those dwelling along the Cumberland, to remove to West Florida, and the Florida district of Lower Louisiana, and place themselves under the protection of Spain. Liberal grants of land with extensive privileges were offered to all who desired to better their condition; and as a greater inducement to those owning property, slaves, stock, and farming utensils, and provisions for two years, were to be admitted free; while a duty of twenty-

(35) Safford, 70.

five per cent. was levied upon property imported into the colony for trade or consumption.

"But the plan of the Spanish representative threatened a collision with that of Miro. Both were ambitious of the favor at court, with which the success of their undertakings would be rewarded; and hence they desired to keep as a secret the means which the object was to be effected.

"In a dispatch addressed by Miro on the 8th of January, 1733, to Valdès, the Minister and Secretary of State for the department of the Indies, writing of the plans of D'Argès, he says, 'I fear that they may clash with Wilkinson's principal object. In the first place, D'Argès, having presented himself here with very little prudence and concealment, it may turn out, that Wilkinson, in Kentucky, being made aware of the mission of this agent, may think we are not sincere, and that, endeavoring to realize his project without him, we use him, merely as a tool to facilitate the operations of D'Argès. Under the impression that D'Argès may reap the whole credit of the undertaking, in case of success, it may happen that he will counteract them; for this reason I have been reflecting for many days, whether it could not be proper to communicate to D'Argès Wilkinson's plans, and to Wilkinson the mission of D'Argès, in order to unite them, and to dispose them to work in concert. But I dare

not do so, because D'Argès may consider that the great projects of Wilkinson may destroy the merit of his own, etc.' " (36)

"Spain had her double plan; for Miro's hopes were in Wilkinson, and Gardoqui, as he said, reposed unbounded confidence in Morgan and the colony at New Madrid. England, through Connolly, had certainly committed some to the scheme of her protectorate. France had her agents to cultivate popular approval of the scheme under which she might, by friendly concession on the part of Spain, resume possession of New Orleans, smoothing all resentments by guaranteeing to the Americans a free right of navigation, and to the Spaniard perfect security against American intrusion into the territory west of the Mississippi." (37)

"The delivering up of Kentucky into his Majesty's hands, which is the main object to which Wilkinson has promised to devote himself entirely, would forever constitute this province a rampart for the protection of New Spain. . . . The Western people would no longer have any inducement to emigrate, if they were put in possession of a free trade with us." (38)

Wilkinson was a Spaniard in his allegiance; he was not a traitor to the United States, but

(36) Safford, 68.

(37) Brown, 190-191.

(38) Safford, 69.

rather an agent in the service of Spain. That he definitely took the oath of allegiance to the Catholic Majesty of Spain is most clearly evident. His activities were directed toward the winning of Kentucky to the Spanish domination. Because his efforts were confined largely to political influence that was carefully camouflaged with earnest solicitation for the welfare of his fellow-Kentuckians, there is no great outstanding incident that proves his shadowy dealing with the interests of the United States as represented by the embarrassed state of Kentucky. The memorial which he sent to the Spanish Secretary conclusively proves both his being a subject of the Spanish king and that he was intriguing against the interests of the United States. This fact is in diametrical opposition to his claim in the Memoirs.(39)

Kentuckians had no high respect for the Spaniards. From the time of Clark's confiscatory procedure at and near Vincennes until the treaty of 1795 was really put into effect by Spain, the westerners looked on the Spaniards with contempt

(39) W. R. Shepherd, "Wilkinson and the Beginning of the Spanish Conspiracy", in American Historical Review, vol.ix,(New York, 1904),pp.490-506.

Also, James Wilkinson, Memoirs of My Own Time, (Philadelphia, 1816), II, 113.

and no good feeling. The Gazette printed from time to time news from New Orleans or points midway between that city and Kentucky. One item says, "News arriving of several of our vessels which had attempted to trade on the Mississippi, being seized by the Spaniards and their cargoes confiscated." (40) Another says, "It was currently reported in town on Friday evening that the English had taken New Orleans from the Spaniards; the account is said to have come by a gentleman who is arrived from that place by land and who says he was present when the English took possession, which account seems to be confirmed by another gentleman who has just arrived from the same place by way of Philadelphia, and who says etc." (41). Again, "As a concurring circumstance. . . . it has been reported here that the British court had solicited Congress for liberty to march an army through part of the United States territory to the Floridas." (42)

These excerpts are quoted to exhibit the eagerness with which Kentuckians drank in any news from the mouth of the Mississippi. The fact of English interference is not the greater part of the meaning, but just the fact that something is hoped for that will change the intolerable condition of things.

(40) Gazette, Vol. II, No. XXXV.

(41) Ibid., IV, XVIII.

(42) Ibid., IV, XIX.

CHAPTER IV. THE MISSISSIPPI
QUESTION FOR THE NEW STATE OF KENTUCKY.

Wilkinson had been made a commander in the United States Army before the new state received its formal admission into the Union. Thomas Marshall said he recommended Wilkinson to Washington for this position that Wilkinson might be kept out of the opportunities for great mischief.(43) The activity of Wilkinson was concerned with the army for several years. His conspiring did not involve Kentucky as a state.

But after this Spanish influence there came the French. "Early in 1793, the contagion of French attachment manifested itself in the United States by the establishment of the Democratic Society in Philadelphia, in too close imitation of the disorganizing clubs which had disseminated anarchy and destruction throughout the beautiful kingdom of France."(44)

The British and the French had locked horns again, and the action of the British toward the United States in regard to the Northwest still kept the Kentuckians apprehensive.

In May of 1791, the year before Kentucky was made a state, James O'Fallon was creating a sentiment for war by westerners against the

(43) Marshall, I, 380.

(44) Butler, 222.

Indians, and his activities extended even to the actual organizing of a military force for the purpose of proceeding against them without authority from the Federal Government. That the situation was severe and rightly provoking to Kentuckians is evidenced by a dispatch sent by Washington to the Gazette for publication. He spoke thus:

"By the President of the United States of America, A PROCLAMATION. Whereas it hath been represented to me that James O'Fallon is levying an armed force in that part of the State of Virginia which is called Kentucky, disturbs the public peace and sets at defiance the treaties of the United States with the Indian tribes. . . it is my earnest desire that those who have incautiously associated themselves with the said James O'Fallon, may be warned of their danger, . . . all persons shall be prosecuted with utmost rigor of the law.

- "George Washington." (45)

In 1790 General Harmer had proceeded against the Indians with a force of the regular army and been ignominiously defeated. In 1791 General St. Clair, who was governor of the Northwest Territory, led a better army of regulars against the Indians, but was put to utter rout by them. It was in this failure that Wilkinson began to resume his fame as a soldier of the United States. "Lieu-
(45) Gazette, IV, XXXVI.

tenant Colonel Commandant Wilkinson was instantly ordered to rush forward with the first battalions, etc."(46) In July of the same year Levi Todd placed this advertisement in the Gazette: "Volunteers are wanted for an expedition which will start the twentieth inst. for the Ohio under command of General Wilkinson, upon the same principle of the late one under etc."(47) This expedition was carried out with no better success, but Wilkinson won honor in spite of the defeat. Major General St. Clair sent him a message containing this sentence: "I am directed to present to you the thanks of the publick, in the name of the President of the United States, for the zeal, perseverance, and good conduct manifested by you in the command of the expedition against L'Anguille."(48)

But the Kentuckians were not satisfied with having a fellow-citizen honored in a series of Federal defeats. There was a general depression in the state. There was little confidence in the power of the United States government. Wilkinson himself had to write to Lexington with an appeal for patience, and he urged further confidence in the government. "I am impelled by a sense of duty, to make known to the public, through the medium of your press, that the National Government had adopted the most beneficent plan, to the

(46) Gazette, IV, XXI.

(47) Ibid., IV, XLIII.

(48) Ibid., V, X.

payment of the levies and the militia, employed in the late expedition under Major General St. Clair, and for their comfortable accomodation to their respective homes. I have deemed this exposition of facts necessary to counteract and efface the prejudices which have been established by the distressful condition of the Levies in their passage through Kentucky. . . A conclusion which from the calamitous issue of the campaign it was not in the power of general St. Clair to remedy. . . every immediate source of comfort and accomodation being in truth exhausted."(49) Thus there was a most alarming inability on the part of the government to supply provisions and money to the troops. This was enough to distract the Kentuckians, especially when they saw the disgruntled, shabby troops in passage through the country.

This condition of affairs continued through more than a year of the State's life. On December 18, 1792 Wilkinson wrote from Fort Washington, "The occasion is of such moment and the consequences may prove so injurious to the United States, that I must conjure the good people of Kentucky to exert themselves for the apprehension of these Deserters."(50) Thus the army was falling to pieces for lack of confidence and accommodation. And thus the Federal Government was held in light

(49) Ibid., V, XX.

(50) Ibid., VI, XV.

esteem for power, ability to pay, discipline, and ability to effect anything significant with the army.

Coupled with the ignominious conduct of the Federal generals was the rightly suspected instigation of the Northwest Indians by the British, General Wayne, the third general in the Northwest, was instructed by the Secretary of War in 1794 to carry operations into British territory, or territory still held wrongfully by the British at the rapids of the Maumee; an option of necessity was the sole condition. And Dorchester of the Canadian administration had made a speech to the Indians, with the effect that they made their stand near the British fort. And Wayne's report of the victory he gained over the Indians at Fallen Timbers contained the statement that the opposing force was made up of hostile Indians and " a considerable number of volunteers and militia of Detroit." (51) The Kentuckians had never liked the British; they distrusted them and detested their cruel methods. Their distrust of the strength of the Federal military department did not, accordingly, cause them to fall into the lap of the Canadian powers.

The British connexion with the Indians was particularly disgusting and revolting to

(51) Fish, 83-84.

Kentuckians. " . . . this course of British measures came home most feelingly to the people of Kentucky, who felt it raising the Indian tomahawk against them and their helpless women and children. Is it then to be wondered at, if amidst these causes of aggravation, the Kentuckians felt keenly against the English, and as warmly for their enemies, the people of France? In addition to this powerful cause of natural excitement, was to be added the no less agitating sentiment of national gratitude for the people who had so signally befriended us in the period of our weakness, and when all the power of Great Britain was brought to bear on these comparatively infant colonies. Many of the revolutionary officers who had removed to Kentucky, as Scott and Hardin, Anderson and Croghan, Shelby and Clark, with numerous followers, had fought side by side with the French in our own armies; and all had fought against the British and their auxiliaries, the Indians. In consequence of this state of public sentiment, Democratic societies were readily established at Georgetown, Paris, and Lexington, on the model of the one at Philadelphia. In regard to (Washington's policy), the society at Lexington came to the following violent resolution upon the subject of the navigation of the Missis-

issippi: 'that the right of the people on the waters of the Mississippi, to the navigation, was undoubted; and that it ought to be peremptorily demanded of Spain, by the government of the United States.'"(52)

"Genêt, about the 1st of November, 1793, sent four persons of the names of La Chaise, Charles Delpeau, Mathurin, and Gignoux, to Kentucky, with orders to engage men in an expedition against New Orleans and the Spanish possessions."(53) "These foreign agents proceeded in the piratical attempt from the bosom of a neutral and friendly nation, to raise two thousand men under French authority, and to distribute French commissions among the citizens of Kentucky; to purchase cannon, powder, boats, and whatever was deemed necessary for a formidable expedition."(54)

The governor of the State, Isaac Shelby, was warned by Washington of the intrigues of Genêt, and Shelby returned to Washington an expression of utmost loyalty and stated that he deemed it his personal duty to prevent any evidence of sympathy with such an improper attempt. Not long afterward, however, the President received a letter from Shelby that

(52) Butler, 222.

(53) Ibid., 224.

(54) Ibid., 224.

showed a change of mind and purpose, apparently, and Marshall says the President was disturbed by Shelby's action. But there is no evidence whatever that could be construed as necessarily saddling upon Shelby a complicity in the Genet intrigues.(55) La Chaise and Delpeau both sent the governor personal letters, and they contain matter that could under one construction be supposed to indicate a previously friendly assurance of consideration regarding the scheme in hand. (56) Henderson thinks the "purpose of these presumptuous letters is obviously to take the measure of the governor and learn from him the exact nature of his official disposition towards the proposed undertaking." (57) Shelby's position is thus stated by his second letter: "I have great doubts even if they do attempt to carry their plan into execution - provided they manage their business with prudence - whether there is any legal authority to restrain or punish them, at least before they have actually accomplished it. For if it is lawful for any one citizen of this State to leave it, it is equally so for any number of them to do it. It is also lawful for them to carry with them any quantity of provisions, arms,

(55) Marshall, II, 94-106. Also, American State Papers, II, 39, quoted in Butler, 225.

(56) Marshall, II, 99.

(57) Archibald Henderson, "Isaac Shelby and the Genet Mission," in the Mississippi Valley Historical Review, VI (1920), p.457.

and ammunition; and if the act is lawful in itself, there is nothing but the particular intention with which it is done that can possibly make it unlawful, but I know of no law which inflicts a punishment on intention only, or any criterion by which to decide what would be sufficient evidence of that intention, if it was a proper subject of a legal censure. I shall upon all occasions, be averse to the exercise of any power which I do not consider myself as being clearly and explicitly invested with, much less would I assume power to exercise it against men who I consider as friends and brethren, in favor of a man whom I view as an enemy and a tyrant."(58) Henderson sums up the position of the governor thus: "I can find no law which empowers me to stop this expedition. If you wish it stopped legally, pass a national law that will cover the case. Moreover, I decline to call out the state militia to suppress by force an enterprise which may never materialize into action; for premature or ill-advised action will agitate and inflame public sentiment in this state. If you want me to suppress the enterprise by force, command me to do so under the constitution and I will carry out such constitutional command. My personal sympathies are whole-heartedly on the side of France and bitterly against Spain. I warn you now of this significant circumstance; the people on the western waters are

aroused against Spain and are uncompromising in their demands for such negotiation with Spain as will lead to the opening of the Mississippi river." (59) It seems to me that Shelby was more than sympathetic with the French project; he was really biassed in favor of it, even in his official position. He thought of two things in his position: the United States government and the interests of Kentucky in regard to the Mississippi river. If the United States government stood between the success of Kentuckians in getting what they desired in the matter of river-rights, then the United States would have to be abandoned; Kentucky's interests came first. If the expedition under Clark could bring about what Kentucky wanted, there was not one thing Shelby would do to hinder the project in hand.

The fact that an "act in addition to the act for the punishment of certain crimes against the United States" was brought before Congress does not make sure the possible intention of Shelby to get Congress awake to the situation in which Kentucky existed in relation to the Mississippi, and produce action in negotiation for the said river. I do not think Shelby was altogether so subtile as Henderson makes him

(59) Henderson, 464f.

out to be, perhaps. Shelby was just a plain, blunt Kentuckian, combining the qualities of Clark and Brown, open dare-devil and sly politician. What Shelby meant was that Kentucky and the securing of the Mississippi as her very own were more important than Kentucky and her membership in the Federal Union. The right of the state was of greater importance than the integrity of the Union.

Conflicting motives and sentiments shot through the being of the old governor. Love of his adopted state and her interests, esteem for the country that had helped America get free from the British yoke, lukewarm pride in the establishment of the American Union, and most cordial hatred of the British found place at the same time in his heart. He was not traitor to his nation, but he plainly and genuinely stated that he would be loyal to the interests of his state rather than to the interests of the Federal government, if a test demanding a choice should come.

The action of George Rogers Clark in this intrigue was true to form. The old dash was present, and the old method was just as evident as in the notable attack on Vincennes in the Revolution. Yet, there was added, perhaps, a bit of bitterness against Virginia and some of

the gentlemen of the Bluegrass; the commission from Virginia had been taken away because of personal animosity, without doubt.

The purposes of Genêt were delightful to Clark. The irregularity of the method was just to his liking. He accepted the proffered commission in the French army, and began recruiting men for the service of France. His correspondence with the French diplomat, Genêt, is preserved in the Draper Collection (60) and is indeed voluminous. There was no sly planning, no covert propaganda; Clark went at things in his own style, not taught by the lesson of the Spanish confiscations in Indiana. The letter of La Chaise to the Democratic society at Lexington shows the work of Clark, when he mentions the fact that had not unforeseen causes intervened, "two thousand brave Kentuckians" would have "put an end to the Spanish despotism on the Mississippi." (61) "The superceding of Mr. Genêt, at the request of the President of the United States, and the subsequent disapproval of his acts by the French general, produced an abandonment of this last and only intrigue of France with the people of Kentucky." (62)

In 1794 the British and Americans got together in a make-shift treaty. The treaty of the following year, between the United States and

(60) Annual Report of the American Historical Association, for year 1896, Vol. I, pp. 930-1107.

(61) Marshall, II, 125.

(62) Butler, 227.

Spain was really the basis for a better relationship between England and America as well. Article IV of this treaty with Spain reads, " . . . agreed that the navigation of the said river, in its whole breadth from its source to the ocean, shall be free only to his subjects and the citizens of the United States." (63) This treaty was tardily put into effect, but the leverage of a statement of the Spanish authorities was felt to be considerable. This was a very great cause of confidence in the Union on the part of Kentuckians. The Government of Philadelphia had accomplished in treaty just what they had feared it would let slip because of the necessities of diplomacy. The interests of Kentucky were directly met.

The conspiracies of Blount (64) and the later schemes of Wilkinson were not of any great importance for Kentucky. The great thing sought by Kentucky was won by the treaty, and although there was not an immediate realization of the benefits, yet the Federal Government had

(63) Senate Documents, Volume 48, in 61st Congress, 2nd Session, 1909-10: Treaties, Conventions, etc., of 1776-1909-, in loco.

(64) Report of the Committee of the House of Representatives of the U.S. app't'd to prepare and report Articles of Impeachment vs. William Blount.

taken the position of Kentucky. The quelling of the Indians and the gaining of the treaty were two very great acts accomplished by the United States government. Respect of the Indians had been won, and treaties with them had been secured. Kentucky shared in the benefit of these treaties as well as in the Spanish agreement. Consequently, there was no longer the old spirit of rebellion against undesired authority from the East; it was now to advantage to blong to that section of the continent. The Kentuckians were content with what they had and were loyal supporters of the United States government in its plans for the future.

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-End-