CHAPTER V - THE VIRGINIAN DYNASTY

I have spoken of Jefferson's election as if it had been a direct act of the people; and morally it was so. But in the actual proceedings there was a certain hitch, which is of interest not only because it illustrated a peculiar technical defect in the original Constitution and so led to its amendment, but because it introduces here, for the first time, the dubious but not unfascinating figure of Aaron Burr.

Burr was a politician of a type which democracies will always produce, and which those who dislike democracy will always use for its reproach. Yet the reproach is evidently unjust. In all societies, most of those who meddle with the government of men will do so in pursuit of their own interests, and in all societies the professional politician will reveal himself as a somewhat debased type. In a despotism he will become a courtier and obtain favour by obsequious and often dishonourable services to a prince. In an old-fashioned oligarchy he will adopt the same attitude towards some powerful noble. In a parliamentary plutocracy, like our own, he will proceed in fashion with which we are only too familiar, will make himself the paid servant of those wealthy men who finance politicians, and will enrich himself by means of "tips" from financiers and bribes from Government contractors. In a democracy, the same sort of man will try to obtain his ends by flattering and cajoling the populace. It is not obvious that he is more mischievous as demagogue than he was as courtier, lackey, or parliamentary intriguer. Indeed, he is almost certainly less so, for he must at least in some fashion serve, even if only that he may deceive them, those whose servant he should be. At any rate, the purely self-seeking demagogue is certainly a recurrent figure in democratic politics, and of the self-seeking demagogue Aaron Burr was an excellent specimen.

He had been a soldier not without distinction, and to the last he retained a single virtue--the grand virtue of courage. For the rest, he was the Tammany Boss writ large. An able political organizer, possessed of much personal charm, he had made himself master of the powerful organization of the Democratic party in New York State, and as such was able to bring valuable support to the party which was opposing the administration of Adams. As a reward for his services, it was determined that he should be Democratic candidate for the Vice-Presidency. But here the machinery devised by the Convention played a strange trick. When the votes of the Electoral College came to be counted, it was found that instead of Jefferson leading and yet leaving enough votes to give Burr the second place, the votes for the two were exactly equal. This, under the Constitution, threw the decision into the hands of the House of Representatives, and in that House the

Federalists still held the balance of power. They could not choose their own nominee, but they could choose either Jefferson or Burr, and many of them, desiring at the worst to frustrate the triumph of their great enemy, were disposed to choose Burr; while Burr, who cared only for his own career, was ready enough to lend himself to such an intrigue.

That the intrigue failed was due mainly to the patriotism of Hamilton. All that was best and worst in him concurred in despising the mere flatterer of the mob. Jefferson was at least a gentleman. And, unfairly as he estimated him both morally and intellectually, he knew very well that the election of Jefferson would not be a disgrace to the Republic, while the election of Burr would. His patriotism overcame his prejudices. He threw the whole weight of his influence with the Federalists against the intrigue, and he defeated it. It is the more to his honour that he did this to the advantage of a man whom he could not appreciate and who was his enemy. It was the noblest and purest act of his public career. It probably cost him his life.

Jefferson was elected President and Burr Vice-President, as had undoubtedly been intended by the great majority of those who had voted the Democratic ticket at the elections. But the anomaly and disaster of Burr's election had been so narrowly avoided that a change in the Constitution became imperative. It was determined that henceforward the votes for President and Vice-President should be given separately. The incident had another consequence. Burr, disappointed in hopes which had almost achieved fulfilment, became from that moment a bitter enemy of Jefferson and his administration. Also, attributing the failure of his promising plot to Hamilton's intervention, he hated Hamilton with a new and insatiable hatred. Perhaps in that hour he already determined that his enemy should die.

Jefferson's inauguration was full of that deliberate and almost ceremonial contempt of ceremony in which that age found a true expression of its mood, though later and perhaps more corrupt times have inevitably found such symbolism merely comic. It was observed as striking the note of the new epoch that the President rejected all that semi-regal pomp which Washington and Adams had thought necessary to the dignity of their office. It is said that he not only rode alone into Washington (he was the first President to be inaugurated in the newly built capital), dressed like any country gentleman, but, when he dismounted to take the oath, tethered his horse with his own hands. More really significant was the presence of the populace that elected him--the great heaving, unwashed crowd elbowing the dainty politicians in the very presence chamber. The President's inaugural address was full of a generous spirit of reconciliation. "We are all Republicans," he said, "we are all Federalists." Every difference of

opinion was not a difference of principle, nor need such differences interfere with "our attachment, to our Union and to representative government."

Such liberality was the more conspicuous by contrast with the petty rancour of his defeated rival, who not only refused to perform the customary courtesy of welcoming his successor at the White House, but spent his last hours there appointing Federalists feverishly to public offices solely in order to compel Jefferson to choose between the humiliation of retaining such servants and the odium of dismissing them. The new President very rightly refused to recognize nominations so made, and this has been seized upon by his detractors to hold him up as the real author of what was afterwards called "the Spoils System." It would be far more just to place that responsibility upon Adams.

The most important event of Jefferson's first administration was the Louisiana Purchase. The colony of Louisiana at the mouth of the Mississippi, with its vast hinterland stretching into the heart of the American continent, had, as we have seen, passed in 1762 from French into Spanish hands. Its acquisition by the United States had been an old project of Jefferson's. When Secretary of State under Washington, he had mooted it when settling with the Spanish Government the question of the navigation of the Mississippi. As President he revived it; but before negotiations could proceed far the whole situation was changed by the retrocession of Louisiana to France as part of the terms dictated by Napoleon to a Spain which had fallen completely under his control. The United States could not, in any case, have regarded the transfer without uneasiness, and to all schemes of purchase it seemed a death-blow, for it was believed that the French Emperor had set his heart upon the resurrection of French Colonial power in America. But Jefferson was an excellent diplomatist, at once conciliatory and unyielding: he played his cards shrewdly, and events helped him. The Peace of Amiens was broken, and, after a very brief respite, England and France were again at war. Napoleon's sagacity saw clearly enough that he could not hope to hold and develop his new colony in the face of a hostile power which was his master on the sea. It would suit his immediate purpose better to replenish his treasury with good American dollars which might soon be urgently needed. He became, therefore, as willing to sell as Jefferson was to buy, and between two men of such excellent sense a satisfactory bargain was soon struck. The colony of Louisiana and all the undeveloped country which lay behind it became the inheritance of the American Federation.

Concerning the transaction, there is more than one point to be noted of importance to history. One is the light which it throws on Jefferson's personal qualities. Because this man held very firmly an abstract and reasoned theory of the State, could define and defend it with extraordinary lucidity and logic, and

avowedly guided his public conduct by its light, there has been too much tendency to regard him as a mere theorist, a sort of Girondia, noble in speculation and rhetoric, but unequal to practical affairs and insufficiently alive to concrete realities. He is often contrasted unfavourably with Hamilton in this respect: and yet he had, as events proved, by far the acuter sense of the trend of American popular opinion and the practical requirements of a government that should command its respect; and he made fewer mistakes in mere political tactics than did his rival. But his diplomacy is the best answer to the charge. Let anyone who entertains it follow closely the despatches relating to the Louisiana purchase, and observe how shrewdly this supposed visionary can drive a good bargain for his country, even when matched against Talleyrand with Bonaparte behind him. One is reminded that before he entered politics he enjoyed among his fellow-planters a reputation for exceptional business acumen.

Much more plausible is the accusation that Jefferson in the matter of Louisiana forgot his principles, and acted in a manner grossly inconsistent with his attitude when the Federalists were in power. Certainly, the purchase can only be defended constitutionally by giving a much larger construction to the powers of the Federal authority than even Hamilton had ever promulgated. If the silence of the Constitution on the subject must, as Jefferson had maintained, be taken as forbidding Congress and the Executive to charter a bank, how much more must a similar silence forbid them to expend millions in acquiring vast new territories beyond the borders of the Confederacy. In point of fact, Jefferson himself believed the step he and Congress were taking to be beyond their present powers, and would have preferred to have asked for a Constitutional Amendment to authorize it. But he readily gave way on this to those who represented that such a course would give the malcontent minority their chance, and perhaps jeopardize the whole scheme. The fact is, that "State Rights" were not to Jefferson a first principle, but a weapon which he used for the single purpose of resisting oligarchy. His first principle, in which he never wavered for a moment, was that laid down in the "Declaration"--the sovereignty of the General Will. To him Federalism was nothing and State Sovereignty was nothing but the keeping of the commandments of the people. Judged by this test, both his opposition to Hamilton's bank and his purchase of the Louisiana territory were justified; for on both occasions the nation was with him.

Jefferson's inconsistency, therefore, if inconsistency it were, brought him little discredit. It was far otherwise with the inconsistency of the Federalists. For they also changed sides, and of their case it may be said that, like Milton's Satan, they "rode with darkness." The most respectable part of their original political creed was their nationalism, their desire for unity, and their support of a strong central authority. Had this been really the dominant sentiment of their connection, they

could not but have supported Jefferson's policy, even though they might not too unfairly have reproached him with stealing their thunder. For not only was Jefferson's act a notable example of their own theory of "broad construction" of the Constitution, but it was perhaps a more fruitful piece of national statesmanship than the best of Hamilton's measures, and it had a direct tendency to promote and perpetuate that unity which the Federalists professed to value so highly, for it gave to the States a new estate of vast extent and incalculable potentialities, which they must perforce rule and develop in common. But the Federalists forgot everything, even common prudence, in their hatred of the man who had raised the people against them. To injure him, most of them had been ready to conspire with a tainted adventurer like Burr. They were now ready for the same object to tear up the Union and all their principles with it. One of their ablest spokesmen, Josiah Quincey, made a speech against the purchase, in which he anticipated the most extreme pronouncements of the Nullifiers of 1832 and the Secessionists of 1860, declared that his country was not America but Massachusetts, that to her alone his ultimate allegiance was due, and that if her interests were violated by the addition of new Southern territory in defiance of the Constitution, she would repudiate the Union and take her stand upon her rights as an independent Sovereign State.

By such an attitude the Federalists destroyed only themselves. Some of the wiser among them left the party on this issue, notably John Quincey Adams, son of the second President of the United States, and himself to be raised later, under somewhat disastrous circumstances, to the same position. The rump that remained true, not to their principles but rather to their vendetta, could make no headway against a virtually unanimous nation. They merely completed and endorsed the general judgment on their party by an act of suicide.

But the chief historical importance of the Louisiana purchase lies in the fact that it gave a new and for long years an unlimited scope to that irresistible movement of expansion westward which is the key to all that age in American history. In the new lands a new kind of American was growing up. Within a generation he was to come by his own; and a Westerner in the chair of Washington was to revolutionize the Commonwealth.

Of the governing conditions of the West, two stand out as of especial importance to history.

One was the presence of unsubdued and hostile Indian tribes. Ever since that extraordinary man, Daniel Boon (whose strange career would make an epic for which there is no room in this book), crossed the Alleghanies a decade before the beginning of the Revolution and made an opening for the white race into the rich

valleys of Kentucky, the history of the western frontier of European culture had been a cycle of Indian wars. The native race had not yet been either tamed or corrupted by civilization. Powerful chiefs still ruled great territories as independent potentates, and made peace and war with the white men on equal terms. From such a condition it followed that courage and skill in arms were in the West not merely virtues and accomplishments to be admired, but necessities which a man must acquire or perish. The Westerner was born a fighter, trained as a fighter, and the fighting instinct was ever dominant in him. So also was the instinct of loyalty to his fellow-citizens, a desperate, necessary loyalty as to comrades in a besieged city--as, indeed, they often were.

The other condition was the product partly of natural circumstances and partly of that wise stroke of statesmanship which had pledged the new lands in trust to the whole Confederacy. The Westerner was American--perhaps he was the first absolutely instinctive American. The older States looked with much pride to a long historical record which stretched back far beyond the Union into colonial times. The Massachusetts man would still boast of the Pilgrim Fathers. The Virginian still spoke lovingly of the "Old Plantation." But Kentucky and Tennessee, Ohio and Indiana were children of the Union. They had grown to statehood within it, and they had no memories outside it. They were peopled from all the old States, and the pioneers who peopled them were hammered into an intense and instinctive homogeneity by the constant need of fighting together against savage nature and savage man. Thus, while in the older settlements one man was conscious above all things that he was a New Englander, and another that he was a Carolinian, the Western pioneer was primarily conscious that he was a white man and not a Red Indian, nay, often that he was a man and not a grizzly bear. Hence grew up in the West that sense of national unity which was to be the inspiration of so many celebrated Westerners of widely different types and opinions, of Clay, of Jackson, of Stephen Douglas, and of Abraham Lincoln.

But this was not to take place until the loyalty of the West had first been tried by a strange and sinister temptation.

Aaron Burr had been elected Vice-President coincidently with Jefferson's election as President; but his ambition was far from satisfied. He was determined to make another bid for the higher place, and as a preliminary he put himself forward as candidate for the Governorship of New York State. It was as favourable ground as he could find to try the issue between himself and the President, for New York had been the centre of his activities while he was still an official Democrat, and her favour had given him his original position in the party. But he could not hope to succeed without the backing of those Federalist malcontents who had nearly made him President in 1800. To conciliate them he bent all his energies and

talents, and was again on the point of success when Hamilton, who also belonged to New York State, again crossed his path. Hamilton urged all the Federalists whom he could influence to have nothing to do with Burr, and, probably as a result of his active intervention, Burr was defeated.

Burr resolved that Hamilton must be prevented from thwarting him in the future, and he deliberately chose a simple method of removing him. He had the advantage of being a crack shot. He forced a private quarrel on Hamilton, challenged him to a duel, and killed him.

He can hardly have calculated the effect of his action: it shocked the whole nation, which had not loved Hamilton, but knew him for a better man than Burr. Duelling, indeed, was then customary among gentlemen in the United States, as it is to-day throughout the greater part of the civilized world; but it was very rightly felt that the machinery which was provided for the vindication of outraged honour under extreme provocation was never meant to enable one man, under certain forms, to kill another merely because he found his continued existence personally inconvenient. That was what Burr had done; and morally it was undoubtedly murder. Throughout the whole East Burr became a man marked with the brand of Cain. He soon perceived it, but his audacity would not accept defeat. He turned to the West, and initiated a daring conspiracy which, as he hoped, would make him, if not President of the United States, at least President of something.

What Burr's plan, as his own mind conceived it, really was it is extremely difficult to say; for he gave not only different but directly opposite accounts to the various parties whom he endeavoured to engage in it. To the British Ambassador, whom he approached, he represented it as a plan for the dismemberment of the Republic from which England had everything to gain. Louisiana was to secede, carrying the whole West with her, and the new Confederacy was to become the ally of the Mother Country. For the Spanish Ambassador he had another story. Spain was to recover predominant influence in Louisiana by detaching it from the American Republic, and recognizing it as an independent State. To the French-Americans of Louisiana he promised complete independence of both America and Spain. To the Westerners, whom he tried to seduce, exactly the opposite colour was given to the scheme. It was represented as a design to provoke a war with Spain by the invasion and conquest of Mexico; and only if the Federal Government refused to support the filibusters was the West to secede. Even this hint of hypothetical secession was only whispered to those whom it might attract. To others all thought of disunion was disclaimed; and yet another complexion was put on the plot. The West was merely to make legitimate preparations for the invasion of Mexico and Florida in the event of certain disputes then pending with

Spain resulting in war. It was apparently in this form that the design was half disclosed to the most influential citizen and commander of the militia in the newly created State of Tennessee, Andrew Jackson, the same that we saw as a mere school-boy riding and fighting at Hanging Rock.

Jackson had met Burr during the brief period when he was in Congress as representative of his State. He had been entertained by him and liked him, and when Burr visited Tennessee he was received by Jackson with all the hospitality of the West. Jackson was just the man to be interested in a plan for invading Mexico in the event of a Spanish war, and he would probably not have been much shocked--for the West was headstrong, used to free fighting, and not nice on points of international law--at the idea of helping on a war for the purpose. But he loved the Union as he loved his own life. Burr said nothing to him of his separatist schemes. When later he heard rumours of them, he wrote peremptorily to Burr for an explanation. Burr, who, to do him justice, was not the man to shuffle or prevaricate, lied so vigorously and explicitly that Jackson for the moment believed him. Later clearer proof came of his treason, and close on it followed the President's proclamation apprehending him, for Burr had been betrayed by an accomplice to Jefferson. Jackson at once ordered out the militia to seize him, but he had already passed westward out of his control. The Secretary for War, who, as it happened, was a personal enemy of Jackson's, thinking his connection with Burr might be used against him, wrote calling in sinister tone for an account of his conduct. Jackson's reply is so characteristic of the man that it deserves to be quoted. After saying that there was nothing treasonable in Burr's communications to him personally, he adds: "But, sir, when proofs showed him to be a Treator" (spelling was never the future President's strong point), "I would cut his throat with as much pleasure as I would cut yours on equal testimony."

The whole conspiracy fizzled out. Burr could get no help from any of the divergent parties he had attempted to gain. No one would fight for him. His little band of rebels was scattered, and he himself was seized, tried for treason, and acquitted on a technical point. But his dark, tempestuous career was over. Though he lived to an unlovely old age, he appears no more in history.

Jefferson was re-elected President in 1804. He was himself doubtful about the desirability of a second tenure, but the appearance at the moment of a series of particularly foul attacks upon his private character made him feel that to retire would amount to something like a plea of guilty. Perhaps it would have served his permanent fame better if he had not accepted another term, for, owing to circumstances for which he was only partly to blame, his second Presidency appears in history as much less successful than his first.

Its chief problem was the maintenance of peace and neutrality during the colossal struggle between France under Napoleon and the kings and aristocracies of Europe who had endeavoured to crush the French Revolution, and who now found themselves in imminent peril of being crushed by its armed and amazing child.

Jefferson sincerely loved peace. Moreover, the sympathy for France, of which he had at one time made no disguise, was somewhat damped by the latest change which had taken place in the French Government. Large as was his vision compared with most of his contemporaries, he was too much soaked in the Republican tradition of antiquity, which was so living a thing in that age, to see in the decision of a nation of soldiers to have a soldier for their ruler and representative the fulfilment of democracy and not its denial. But his desire for peace was not made easier of fulfilment by either of the belligerent governments. Neither thought the power of the United States to help or hinder of serious account, and both committed constant acts of aggression against American rights. Nor was his position any stronger in that he had made it a charge against the Federalists that they had provided in an unnecessarily lavish fashion for the national defence. In accordance with his pledges he had reduced the army. His own conception of the best defensive system for America was the building of a large number of small but well-appointed frigates to guard her coasts and her commerce. It is fair to him to say that when war came these frigates of his gave a good account of themselves. Yet his own position was a highly embarrassing one, anxious from every motive to avoid war and yet placed between an enemy, or rather two enemies, who would yield nothing to his expostulations, and the rising clamour, especially in the West, for the vindication of American rights by an appeal to arms.

Jefferson attempted to meet the difficulty by a weapon which proved altogether inadequate for the purpose intended, while it was bound to react almost as seriously as a war could have done on the prosperity of America. He proposed to interdict all commerce with either of the belligerents so long as both persisted in disregarding American rights, while promising to raise the interdict in favour of the one which first showed a disposition to treat the United States fairly. Such a policy steadily pursued by such an America as we see to-day would probably have succeeded. But at that time neither combatant was dependent upon American products for the essentials of vitality. The suppression of the American trade might cause widespread inconvenience, and even bring individual merchants to ruin, but it could not hit the warring nations hard enough to compel governments struggling on either side for their very lives in a contest which seemed to hang on a hair to surrender anything that might look like a military advantage. On the other hand, the Embargo, as it was called, hit the Americans themselves very

hard indeed. So great was the outcry of the commercial classes, that the President was compelled to retrace his steps and remove the interdict. The problem he handed over unsolved to his successor.

That successor was James Madison, another Virginian, Jefferson's lieutenant ever since the great struggle with the Federalists and his intimate friend from a still earlier period. His talents as a writer were great; he did not lack practical sagacity, and his opinions were Jefferson's almost without a single point of divergence. But he lacked Jefferson's personal prestige, and consequently the policy followed during his Presidency was less markedly his own than that of his great predecessor had been.

Another turn of the war-wheel in Europe had left America with only one antagonist in place of two. Trafalgar had destroyed, once and for all, the power of France on the sea, and she was now powerless to injure American interests, did she wish to do so. England, on the other hand, was stronger for that purpose than ever, and was less restrained than ever in the exercise of her strength. A new dispute, especially provocative to the feelings of Americans, had arisen over the question of the impressment of seamen. The press-gang was active in England at the time, and pursued its victims on the high seas. It even claimed the right to search the ships of neutrals for fugitives. Many American vessels were violated in this fashion, and it was claimed that some of the men thus carried off to forced service, though originally English, had become American citizens. England was clearly in the wrong, but she refused all redress. One Minister, sent by us to Washington, Erskine, did indeed almost bring matters to a satisfactory settlement, but his momentary success only made the ultimate anger of America more bitter, for he was disowned and recalled, and, as if in deliberate insult, was replaced by a certain Jackson who, as England's Ambassador to Denmark in 1804, had borne a prominent part in the most sensational violation of the rights of a neutral country that the Napoleonic struggle had produced.

There seemed no chance of peace from any conciliatory action on the part of Great Britain. The sole chance hung on the new President's inheritance of Jefferson's strong leaning in that direction. But Madison was by no means for peace at any price; and indeed Jefferson himself, from his retreat at Monticello, hailed the war, when it ultimately came, as unmistakably just. For a long time, however, the President alone held the nation back from war. The War Party included the Vice-President Munroe, who had been largely instrumental in bringing about the Louisiana purchase. But its greatest strength was in the newly populated West, and its chief spokesman in Congress was Henry Clay of Kentucky.

This man fills so large a space in American politics for a full generation that some attempt must be made to give a picture of him. Yet a just account of his character is not easy to give. It would be simple enough to offer a superficial description, favourable or hostile, but not one that would account for all his actions. Perhaps the best analysis would begin by showing him as half the aboriginal Westerner and half the Washington politician. In many ways he was very Western. He had a Westerner's pugnacity, and at the same time a Westerner's geniality and capacity for comradeship with men. He had to the last a Westerner's private tastes--especially a taste for gambling--and a Westerner's readiness to fight duels. Above all, from the time that he entered Congress as the fiercest of the "war hawks" who clamoured for vengeance on England, to the time when, an old and broken man, he expended the last of his enormous physical energy in an attempt to bridge the widening gulf between North and South, he showed through many grievous faults and errors that intense national feeling and that passion for the Union which were growing so vigorously in the fertile soil beyond the Alleghanies. But he was a Western shoot early engrafted on the political society of Washington--the most political of all cities, for it is a political capital and nothing else. He entered Congress young and found there exactly the atmosphere that suited his tastes and temperament. He was as much the perfect parliamentarian as Gladstone. For how much his tact and instinct for the tone of the political assembly in which he moved counted may be guessed from this fact: that while there is no speech of his that has come down to us that one could place for a moment beside some of extant contemporary speeches of Webster and Calhoun, yet it is unquestionable that he was considered fully a match for either Webster or Calhoun in debate, and in fact attained an ascendancy over Congress which neither of those great orators ever possessed. At the management of the minds of men with whom he was actually in contact he was unrivalled. No man was so skilful in harmonizing apparently irreconcilable differences and choosing the exact line of policy which opposing factions could agree to support. Three times he rode what seemed the most devastating political storms, and three times he imposed a peace. But with the strength of a great parliamentarian he had much of the weakness that goes with it. He thought too much as a professional; and in his own skilled work of matching measures, arranging parties and moving politicians about like pawns, he came more and more to forget the silent drive of the popular will. All this, however, belongs to a later stage of Clay's development. At the moment, we have to deal with him as the ablest of those who were bent upon compelling the President to war.

Between Clay and the British Government Madison's hand was forced, and war was declared. In America there were widespread rejoicings and high hopes of the conquest of Canada and the final expulsion of England from the New World. Yet the war, though on the whole justly entered upon, and though popular with the

greater part of the country, was not national in the fullest sense. It did not unite, rather it dangerously divided, the Federation, and that, unfortunately, on geographical lines. New England from the first was against it, partly because most of her citizens sympathized with Great Britain in her struggle with Napoleon, and partly because her mercantile prosperity was certain to be hard hit, and might easily be ruined by a war with the greatest of naval powers. When, immediately after the declaration of war, in 1812, Madison was put forward as Presidential candidate for a second term, the contest showed sharply the line of demarcation. North-east of the Hudson he did not receive a vote.

The war opened prosperously for the Republic, with the destruction by Commander Perry of the British fleet on Lake Ontario--an incident which still is held in glorious memory by the American Navy and the American people. Following on this notable success, an invasion of Canada was attempted; but here Fortune changed sides. The invasion was a complete failure, the American army was beaten, forced to fall back, and attacked, in its turn, upon American soil. Instead of American troops occupying Quebec, English troops occupied a great part of Ohio.

Meanwhile, Jefferson's frigates were showing their metal. In many duels with English cruisers they had the advantage, though we in this country naturally hear most--indeed, it is almost the only incident of this war of which we ever do hear--of one of the cases in which victory went the other way--the famous fight between the Shannon and the Chesapeake. On the whole, the balance of such warfare leant in favour of the American sea-captains. But it was not by such warfare that the issue could be settled. England, summoning what strength she could spare from her desperate struggle with the French Emperor, sent an adequate fleet to convoy a formidable army to the American coast. It landed without serious opposition at the mouth of the Chesapeake, and marched straight on the national capital, which the Government was forced to abandon.

No Englishman can write without shame of what followed. All the public buildings of Washington were deliberately burnt. For this outrage the Home Government was solely responsible. The general in command received direct and specific orders, which he obeyed unwillingly. No pretence of military necessity, or even of military advantage, can be pleaded. The act, besides being a gross violation of the law of nations, was an exhibition of sheer brutal spite, such as civilized war seldom witnessed until Prussia took a hand in it. It had its reward. It burnt deep into the soul of America; and from that incident far more than from anything that happened in the War of Independence dates that ineradicable hatred of England which was for generations almost synonymous with patriotism in most Americans, and which almost to the hour of President Wilson's intervention made

many in that country doubt whether, even as against Prussia, England could really be the champion of justice and humanity.

Things never looked blacker for the Republic than in those hours when the English troops held what was left of Washington. Troubles came thicker and thicker upon her. The Creek Nation, the most powerful of the independent Indian tribes, instigated partly by English agents, partly by the mysterious native prophet Tecumseh, suddenly descended with fire and tomahawk on the scattered settlements of the South-West, while at the same time a British fleet appeared in the Gulf of Mexico, apparently meditating either an attack on New Orleans or an invasion through the Spanish territory of Western Florida, and in that darkest hour when it seemed that only the utmost exertions of every American could save the United States from disaster, treason threatened to detach an important section of the Federation from its allegiance.

The discontent of New England is intelligible enough. No part of the Union had suffered so terribly from the war, and the suffering was the bitterer for being incurred in a contest which was none of her making, which she had desired to avoid, and which had been forced on her by other sections which had suffered far less. Her commerce, by which she largely lived, had been swept from the seas. Her people, deeply distressed, demanded an immediate peace. Taking ground as discontented sections, North and South, always did before 1864, on the doctrine of State Sovereignty, one at least, and that the greatest of the New England States, began a movement which seemed to point straight to the dilemma of surrender to the foreigner or secession and dismemberment from within.

Massachusetts invited representatives of her sister States to a Convention at Hartford. The Convention was to be consultative, but its direct and avowed aim was to force the conclusion of peace on any terms. Some of its promoters were certainly prepared, if they did not get their way, to secede and make a separate peace for their own State. The response of New England was not as unanimous as the conspirators had hoped. Vermont and New Hampshire refused to send delegates. Rhode Island consented, but qualified her consent with the phrase "consistently with her obligations"--implying that she would be no party to a separate peace or to the break-up of the Union. Connecticut alone came in without reservation. Perhaps this partial failure led the plotters to lend a more moderate colour to their policy. At any rate, secession was not directly advocated at Hartford. It was hinted that if such evils as those of which the people of New England complained proved permanent, it might be necessary; but the members of the Convention had the grace to admit that it ought not to be attempted in the middle of a foreign war. Their good faith, however, is dubious, for they put forward a proposal so patently absurd that it could hardly have been made except

for the purpose of paving the way for a separate peace. They declared that each State ought to be responsible for its own defences, and they asked that their share of the Federal taxes should be paid over to them for the purpose. With that and a resolution to meet again at Boston and consider further steps if their demands were not met, they adjourned. They never reassembled.

In the South the skies were clearing a little. Jackson of Tennessee, vigorous and rapid in movement, a master of Indian warfare, leading an army of soldiers who worshipped him as the Old Guard worshipped Napoleon, by a series of quick and deadly strokes overthrew the Creeks, followed them to their fastnesses, and broke them decisively at Tohopeka in the famous "hickory patch" which was the holy place of their nation.

He was rewarded in the way that he would have most desired: by a commission against the English, who had landed at Pensacola in Spanish territory, perhaps with the object of joining hands with their Indian allies. They found those allies crushed by Jackson's energy, but they still retained their foothold on the Florida coast, from which they could menace Georgia on the one side and New Orleans on the other. Spain was the ally of England in Europe, but in the American War she professed neutrality. As, however, she made no effort to prevent England using a Spanish port as a base of operations, she could not justly complain when Jackson seized the neighbouring port of Mobile, from which he marched against the British and dislodged them. But the hardest and most glorious part of his task was to come. The next blow was aimed at New Orleans itself. Jackson hastened to its defence. The British landed in great force at the mouth of the Mississippi and attacked the city from both sides. Jackson's little army was greatly outnumbered, but the skill with which he planned the defence and the spirit which he infused into his soldiers (the British themselves said that Jackson's men seemed of a different stuff from all other American troops they had encountered) prevailed against heavy odds. Three times Jackson's lines were attacked: in one place they were nearly carried, but his energy just repaired the disaster. At length the British retired with heavy losses and took to their ships. New Orleans was saved.

Before this last and most brilliant of American victories had been fought and won, peace had been signed at Ghent. News travelled slowly across the Atlantic, and neither British nor American commanders knew of it for months later. But early in the year negotiations had been opened, and before Christmas they reached a conclusion. Great Britain was more weary of the war than her antagonist. If she had gone on she might have won a complete victory, or might have seen fortune turn decisively against her. She had no wish to try the alternative. Napoleon had abdicated at Fontainebleau, and been despatched to Elba, and there were many

who urged that the victorious army of the Peninsula under Wellington himself should be sent across the Atlantic to dictate terms. But England was not in the mood for more fighting. After twenty years of incessant war she saw at last the hope of peace. She saw also that the capture of Washington had not, as had been hoped, put an end to American resistance, but had rather put new life into it. To go on meant to attempt again the gigantic task which she had let drop as much from weariness as from defeat a generation before. She preferred to cry quits. The Peace, which was signed on behalf of a Republic by Clay--once the most vehement of "war-hawks"--was in appearance a victory for neither side. Frontiers remained exactly as they were when the first shot was fired. No indemnity was demanded or paid by either combatant. The right of impressment--the original cause of war, was neither affirmed nor disclaimed, though since that date England has never attempted to use it. Yet there is no such thing in history as "a drawn war." One side or the other must always have attempted the imposition of its will and failed. In this case it was England. America will always regard the war of 1812 as having ended in victory; and her view is substantially right. The new Republic, in spite of, or, one might more truly say, because of the dark reverses she had suffered and survived, was strengthened and not weakened by her efforts. The national spirit was raised and not lowered. The mood of a nation after a war is a practically unfailing test of victory or defeat; and the mood of America after 1814 was happy, confident, creative--the mood of a boy who has proved his manhood.

In 1816 Madison was succeeded by Monroe. Monroe, though, like his successor, a Virginian and a disciple of Jefferson, was more of a nationalist, and had many points of contact with the new Democracy which had sprung up first in the West, and was daily becoming more and more the dominant sentiment of the Republic. "Federalism" had perished because it was tainted with oligarchy, but there had been other elements in it which were destined to live, and the "National Republicans," as they came to call themselves, revived them. They were for a vigorous foreign policy and for adequate preparations for war. They felt the Union as a whole, and were full of a sense of its immense undeveloped possibilities. They planned expensive schemes of improvement by means of roads, canals, and the like to be carried out at the cost of the Federal Government, and they cared little for the protests of the doctrinaires of "State Right." To them America owes, for good or evil, her Protective system. The war had for some years interrupted commerce with the Old World, and native industries had, perforce, grown up to supply the wants of the population. These industries were now in danger of destruction through the reopening of foreign trade, and consequently of foreign competition. It was determined to frame the tariff hitherto imposed mainly, if not entirely, with a view to revenue in such a way as to shelter them from such peril. The exporting Cotton States, which had nothing to gain from Protection, were

naturally hostile to it; but they were overborne by the general trend of opinion, especially in the West. One last development of the new "national" policy--the most questionable of its developments and opposed by Clay at the time, though he afterwards made himself its champion--was the revival, to meet the financial difficulties created by the war, of Hamilton's National Bank, whose charter, under the Jeffersonian régime, had been suffered to expire.

But the Western expansion, though it did much to consolidate the Republic, contained in it a seed of dissension. We have seen how, in the Convention, the need of keeping an even balance between Northern and Southern sections was apparent. That need was continually forced into prominence as new States were added. The presence or absence of Negro Slavery had become the distinguishing badge of the sections; and it became the apple of discord as regards the development of the West. Jefferson had wished that Slavery should be excluded from all the territory vested in the Federal authority, but he had been overruled, and the prohibition had been applied only to the North-Western Territory out of which the States of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois were carved. The South-West had been left open to Slavery, and it had become the custom, with the purpose of preserving the balance in the Senate, to admit Slave States and Free in pairs. This worked satisfactorily enough so long as the States claiming admission were within a well-defined geographical area. But when Missouri became sufficiently populated to be recognized as a State, there was a keen contest. Her territory lay across the line which had hitherto divided the sections. She must be either a Northern promontory projecting into the south or a Southern promontory projecting into the north. Neither section would yield, and matters were approaching a domestic crisis when Clay intervened. He was in an excellent position to arbitrate, for he came from the most northern of Southern States, and had ties with both sections. Moreover, as has been said, his talents were peculiarly suited to such management as the situation required. He proposed a settlement which satisfied moderate men on both sides, was ratified by a large majority in Congress, and accepted on all hands as final. Missouri was to enter the Union, as she apparently desired to do, as a Slave State, but to the west of her territory the line 36° 30' longitude, very little above her southern border, was to be the dividing line of the sections. This gave the South an immediate advantage, but at a heavy ultimate price, for it left her little room for expansion. But one more Slave State could be carved out of the undeveloped Western Territory--that of Arkansas. Beyond that lay the lands reserved by treaty to the Indian tribes, which extended to the frontier of the Western dominions of Mexico. Clay, who, though by no means disposed to be a martyr on the question, sincerely desired to bring about the gradual extinction of Slavery, may well have deliberately planned this part of his compromise to accomplish that end. At the same time, Maine--a territory hitherto attached to Connecticut--was admitted as

a Free State to balance Missouri.

Such was the great Missouri Compromise which kept the peace between the sections for a generation, and which gradually acquired an almost religious sanction in the minds of Americans devoted to the Union. It struck the note of the new era, which is called in American history "the era of good feeling." Sectional differences had been settled, political factions were in dissolution. Monroe's second election was, for the first time since Washington's retirement, without opposition. There were no longer any organized parties, such as Hamilton and Jefferson and even Clay had led. There were, of course, still rivalries and differences, but they were personal or concerned with particular questions. Over the land there was a new atmosphere of peace.

Abroad, America had never been stronger. To this period belongs the acquisition of Florida from Spain, an acquisition carried through by purchase, but by a bargain rather leonine in character. It cannot, however, be said that the United States had no reasonable grievance in the matter. Spain had not been able--or said that she had not been able--to prevent the British from taking forcible possession of one of her principal ports during a war in which she was supposed to be neutral. She declared herself equally unable to prevent the Creek and Seminole Indians from taking refuge in her territory and thence raiding the American lands over the border. Monroe had a good case when he pressed on her the point that she must either maintain order in her dominions or allow others to do so. Jackson, who was in command against the Seminoles, insisted--not unreasonably--that he could not deal with them unless he was allowed to follow them across the Spanish frontier and destroy their base of operations. Permission was given him, and he used it to the full, even to the extent of occupying important towns in defiance of the edicts of their Spanish governors. Monroe's Cabinet was divided in regard to the defensibility of Jackson's acts, but these acts probably helped to persuade Spain to sell while she could still get a price. The bargain was struck: Florida became American territory, and Jackson was appointed her first governor.

But the best proof that the prestige of America stood higher since the war of 1812 was the fact that the Power which had then been her rather contemptuous antagonist came forward to sue for her alliance. The French Revolution, which had so stirred English-speaking America, had produced an even greater effect on the Latin colonies that lay further south. Almost all the Spanish dominions revolted against the Spanish Crown, and after a short struggle successfully established their independence. Naturally, the rebels had the undivided sympathy of the United States, which was the first Power to recognize their independence. Now, however, the Holy Alliance was supreme in Europe, and had reinstated the

Bourbons on the Spanish as on the French throne. It was rumoured that the rulers of the Alliance meditated the further step of re-subjugating Spain's American empire. Alexander I. of Russia was credited with being especially eager for the project, and with having offered to dispatch a Russian army from Siberia for the purpose: it was further believed that he proposed to reward himself by extending his own Alaskan dominions as far south as California. England, under Canning's leadership, had separated herself from the Holy Alliance, and had almost as much reason as the United States to dread and dislike such a scheme as the Czar was supposed to meditate. Canning sent for the American Ambassador, and suggested a joint declaration against any adventures by European powers on the American Continent. The joint declaration was declined, as seeming to commit the United States too much to one of those "entangling alliances" against which Washington had warned his fellow-countrymen; but the hint was taken.

Monroe put forth a proclamation in which he declared that America was no longer a field for European colonization, and that any attempt on the part of a European power to control the destiny of an American community would be taken as a sign of "an unfriendly disposition towards the United States."

Canning let it be understood that England backed the declaration, and that any attempt to extend the operations of the Holy Alliance to America would have to be carried out in the teeth of the combined opposition of the two great maritime powers so recently at war with each other. The plan was abandoned, and the independence of the South American Republics was successfully established.

But much more was established. The "Monroe Doctrine" became, and remains to-day, the corner-stone of American foreign policy. It has been greatly extended in scope, but no American Government has ever, for a moment, wavered in its support. None could afford to do so. To many Englishmen the doctrine itself, and still more the interpretation placed upon it by the United States in later times, seems arrogant--just as to many Americans the British postulate of unchallengeable supremacy at sea seems arrogant. But both claims, arrogant or no, are absolutely indispensable to the nation that puts them forward. If the American Republic were once to allow the principle that European Powers had the right, on any pretext whatever, to extend their borders on the American Continent, then that Republic would either have to perish or to become in all things a European Power, armed to the teeth, ever careful of the balance of power, perpetually seeking alliances and watching rivals. The best way to bring home to an honest but somewhat puzzled American--and there are many such--why we cannot for a moment tolerate what is called by some "the freedom of the seas," is to ask him whether he will give us in return the "freedom" of the

American Continent. The answer in both cases is that sane nations do not normally, and with their eyes open, commit suicide.