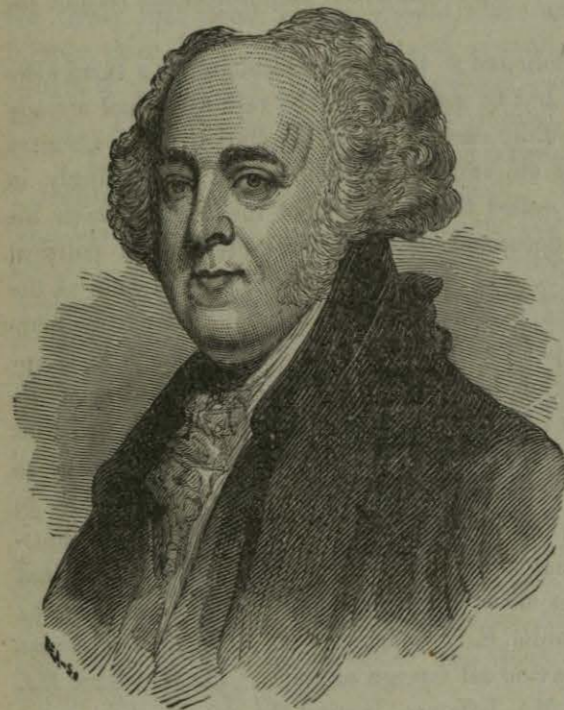


CHAPTER XLVII.

ADAMS'S ADMINISTRATION, 1797-1801.

JOHN ADAMS, second President of the United States, was born in the town of Braintree, Massachusetts, October 19th, 1735. He was a great-grandson of that Henry Adams who, emigrating from Great Britain in 1640, founded in America a family made famous by many illustrious names. Eight



JOHN ADAMS.

sons of the elder Adams settled around Massachusetts Bay, the grandfather of the President in that part of Braintree afterwards called Quincy. The father of John Adams was a Puritan deacon, a selectman of the town, a farmer of small means, and a shoemaker. The son received a classical education, being graduated at the age of twenty from Harvard College. For a while he taught school, but finding that vocation to be, as he expressed it, a school of affliction, he turned his attention to the study of law. In this profession he soon became eminent, removed to Boston, engaged with great zeal in the controversy with the mother country, and was quickly recognized as an able leader of public opinion. From this time forth his services were in constant demand both in his native State and in the several colonial Congresses. He was a member of the celebrated committee appointed to draft the Declaration of Independence, and in the debates on that instrument was its chief defender.

During the last years of the Revolution he served his country as ambassador to France, Holland, and Great Britain, being the first minister to that country after the recognition of American independence. From this important station he returned in 1788, and was soon afterwards elected Vice-President under the new frame of government. After serving in this office for eight years, he was chosen as the successor of Washington.

On the 4th of March, 1797, President Adams was inaugurated. From the beginning his administration was embarrassed by a powerful and well-organized opposition. Adet, the French minister, made inflammatory appeals to the people, and urged the government to conclude a league with France against Great Britain. When the President and Congress stood firmly on the doctrine of neutrality, the French Directory grew insolent, and began to demand an alliance. The treaty which Mr. Jay had concluded with England was especially complained of by the partisans of France. On the 10th of March the Directory issued instructions to French men-of-war to assail the commerce of the United States. Soon afterward Mr. Pinckney, the American minister, was ordered to leave the territory of France.

These proceedings were equivalent to a declaration of war. The President convened Congress in extraordinary session, and measures were devised for repelling the aggressions of the French. Elbridge Gerry and John Marshall were directed to join Mr. Pinckney in a final effort for a peaceable adjustment of the difficulties. But the effort was fruitless. The Directory of France refused to receive the ambassadors except upon condition that they would pledge the payment into the French treasury of a quarter of a million of dollars. Pinckney answered with the declaration that the United States had millions for defence, but not a cent for tribute. The envoys were then ordered to leave the country; but Gerry, who was an anti-Federalist, was permitted to remain. These events occupied the summer and fall of 1797.

In the beginning of the next year an act was passed by Congress completing the organization of the army. Washington was called from the retirement of his old age and appointed commander-in-chief. Hamilton was chosen first major-general. A navy of six frigates, besides privateers, had been provided for at the session of the previous year; and a national loan had been authorized. The patriotism of the people was thoroughly aroused; the treaties with France were declared void, and vigorous preparations were made for the impending

war. The American frigates put to sea, and in the summer and fall of 1799 did good service for the commerce of the country. Commodore Truxtun, in the ship *Constellation*, won distinguished honors. On the 9th of February, while cruising in the West Indies, he attacked the *Insurgent*, a French man-of-war carrying forty guns and more than four hundred seamen. A desperate engagement ensued; and Truxtun, though inferior in cannons and men, gained a complete victory. A year later he overtook another frigate, called the *Vengeance*, and after a five hours' battle in the night would have captured his antagonist but for a storm and the darkness. These events added greatly to the renown of the American flag.

The organization of the provisional army was soon completed. The commander-in-chief repaired to Philadelphia and remained five weeks with Generals Hamilton and Pinckney, superintending the work. Such measures were taken as were deemed adequate to the defence of the nation, and then Washington retired to Mount Vernon, leaving the greater part of the responsibility to be borne by Hamilton. The news of these warlike proceedings was soon carried to France, and the shrewd Talleyrand, minister of foreign affairs for the French republic, seeing that his dismissal of Mr. Monroe and General Pinckney had given mortal offence to the American people, managed to signify to Vans Murray, ambassador of the United States to Holland, that if President Adams would send another minister to Paris he would be cordially received. Murray immediately transmitted this hint to the President, who caught eagerly at this opportunity to extricate the country from apprehended war. On the 18th of February he transmitted a message to the Senate nominating Mr. Murray himself as minister plenipotentiary to the French republic. The nomination was confirmed, and the ambassador was authorized to proceed at once to France. It was also agreed by the Senate that two other persons should be added to the embassy; and Oliver Ellsworth and William R. Davie were accordingly commissioned to proceed to Amsterdam and join Murray in his important mission to the French capital.

Meanwhile, Napoleon Bonaparte had overthrown the Directory of France and made himself first consul of the republic. More wise and politic than his associates in the government, he immediately sought peace with the the United States. For he saw clearly enough that the impending war would, if prosecuted, inevitably result in an alliance between America and England—a thing most unfavorable to the interests of France. He was also confident that peaceful overtures on his part would be met with favor. The three American ambassa-

dors—Murray, Ellsworth and Davie—reached Paris, after many delays, in the beginning of March, 1800. Negotiations were at once opened, and, in the following September, were happily terminated with a treaty of peace. In all his relations with the United States Napoleon acted the part of a consistent and honorable ruler.

Before the war-cloud was scattered America was called to mourn the loss of Washington. On the 14th of December, 1799, after an illness of only a day, the venerated chieftain passed from among the living. All hearts were touched with sorrow. The people put on the garb of mourning. Congress went in funeral procession to the German Lutheran church, where General Henry Lee, the personal friend of Washington, delivered a touching and eloquent oration. Throughout the civilized world the memory of the great dead was honored with appropriate ceremonies. To the legions of France the event was announced by Bonaparte, who paid a beautiful tribute to the virtues of "the warrior, the legislator and the citizen without reproach." As the body of Washington was laid in the sepulchre, the voice of partisan malignity that had not hesitated to assail his name was hushed into everlasting silence; and the world with uncovered head agreed with Lord Byron in declaring the illustrious dead to have been among warriors, statesmen and patriots

"— The first, the last, the best,
THE CINCINNATUS OF THE WEST."

The administration of Adams and the eighteenth century drew to a close together. In spite of domestic dissensions and foreign alarms, the new republic was growing strong and influential. The census of 1800 showed that the population of the country, including the black men, had increased to over five millions. The seventy-five post-offices reported by the census of 1790 had been multiplied to nine hundred and three; the exports of the United States had grown from twenty millions to nearly seventy-one millions of dollars. The permanency of the Constitution as the supreme law of the land was now cheerfully recognized. In December of 1800 Congress for the first time assembled in Washington city, the new capital of the nation. Virginia and Maryland had ceded to the United States the District of Columbia, a tract ten miles square lying on both sides of the Potomac; but the part given by Virginia was afterward re-ceded to that State. The city which was designed as the seat of government was laid out in 1792; and in 1800 the population numbered between eight and nine thousand.

With prudent management and unanimity the Federal party might have retained control of the government. But there were dissensions in

Mr. Adams's cabinet. Much of the recent legislation of Congress had been unwise and unpopular. The alien law, by which the President was authorized to send out of the country any foreigners whose presence should be considered prejudicial to the interests of the United States, was specially odious. The sedition law, which punished with fine and imprisonment the freedom of speech and of the press when directed abusively against the government, was denounced by the opposition as an act of tyranny. Partisan excitement ran high. Mr. Adams and Mr. Charles C. Pinckney were put forward as the candidates of the Federalists, and Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr of the Republicans or Democrats. The latter were triumphant. In the electoral college Jefferson and Burr each received seventy-three votes; Adams, sixty-five; and Pinckney, sixty-four. In order to decide between the Democratic candidates, the election was referred to the House of Representatives. After thirty-five ballotings, the choice fell on Jefferson; and Burr, who was now second on the list, was declared Vice-President. After controlling the government for twelve years, the Federal party passed from power, never to be restored.

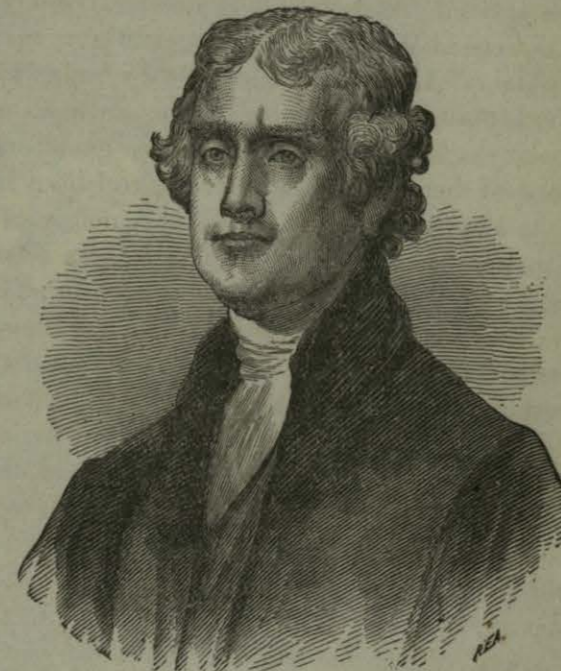
CHAPTER XLVIII.

JEFFERSON'S ADMINISTRATION, 1801-1809.

THOMAS JEFFERSON was born in the county of Albemarle, Virginia, on the 2d of April, 1743. Of his ancestry, history has preserved no record other than the name of his father, Colonel Peter Jefferson, a man noted for native abilities and force of character. The son found excellent advantages of early training in the private school of an exiled Scottish clergyman, and afterwards completed his education at William and Mary College. He then entered upon the study of law, and soon rose to distinction. Like his predecessor in the presidential office, he became in his early manhood deeply absorbed in the controversy with the mother country, and by his radical views in the House of Burgesses contributed much to fix forever the sentiments of that body against the arbitrary measures of the English ministry.

From the councils of his native State Jefferson was soon called to the councils of the nation. His coming was anxiously awaited in the famous Congress of 1776; for his fame as a thinker and a demo-

crat had preceded him. To his pen and brain the almost exclusive authorship of the great Declaration must be awarded. During the struggles of the Revolution he was among the most distinguished and uncompromising of the patriot leaders. After the war was over, he was sent abroad with Adams and Franklin to negotiate treaties of amity and commerce with the European nations, and was then appointed minister plenipotentiary of the new Republic to France. From this high trust he was recalled to become secretary of state under Washington; in 1796 was elected Vice-President, and in 1800 President of the United States. The American decimal system of coinage, the statute for religious freedom, the Declaration of Independence, the University of Virginia, and the presidency of the Union are the immutable foundations of his fame.



THOMAS JEFFERSON.

At the beginning of his administration Mr. Jefferson transferred the chief offices of the government to members of the Democratic party. This policy had in some measure been adopted by his predecessor; but the principle was now made universal. Such action was justified by the adherents of the President on the ground that the affairs of a republic will be best administered when the officers hold the same political sentiments. One of the first acts of Congress was to abolish the system of internal revenues. The unpopular laws against foreigners and the freedom of the press were also repealed. But the territorial legislation of Jefferson's first term was most important of all.

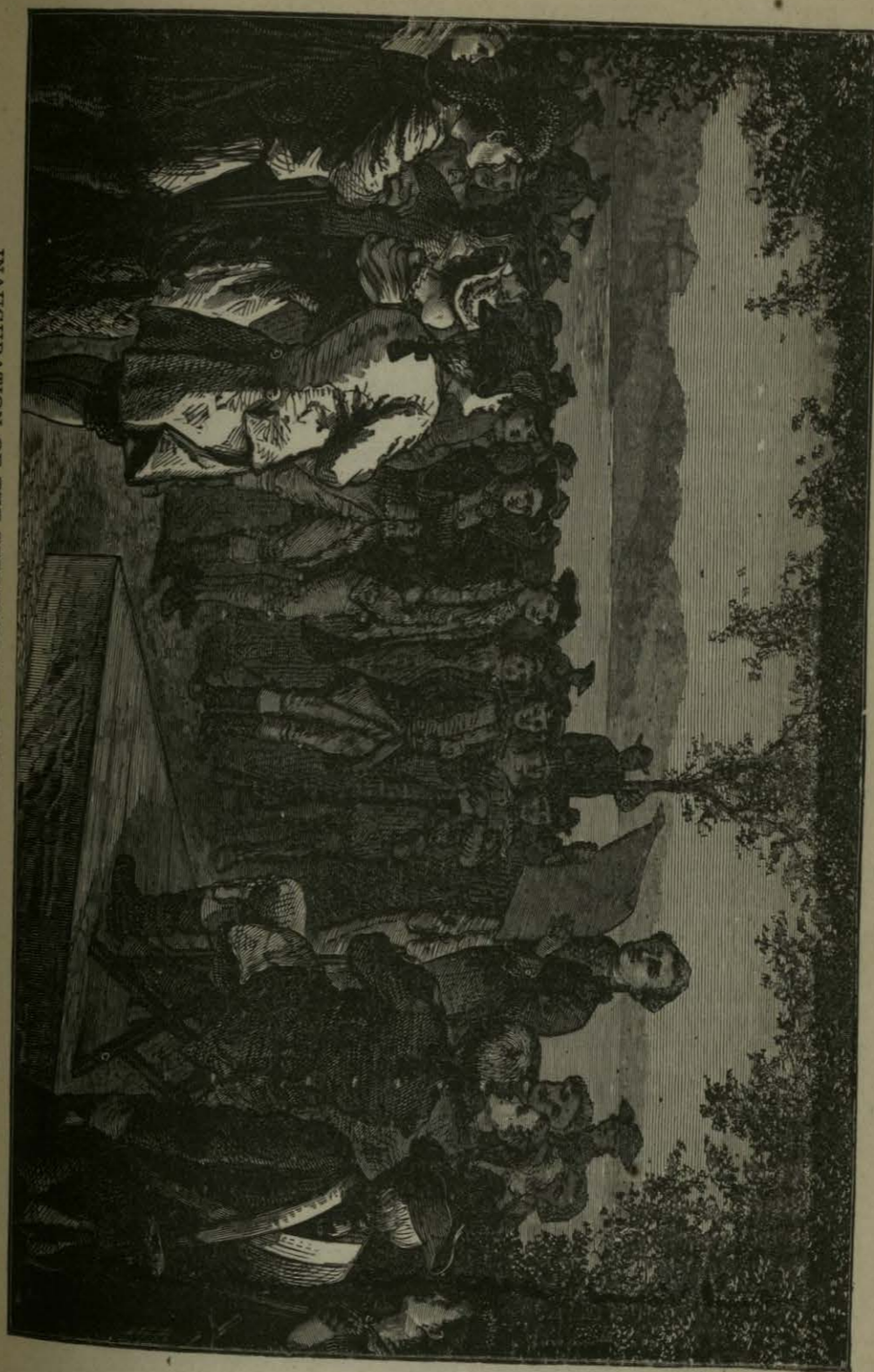
In the year 1800 a line was drawn through the North-west

Territory from the mouth of the Great Miami River to Fort Recovery, and thence to Canada. Two years afterward the country east of this line was erected into the State of Ohio and admitted into the Union. The portion west of the line, embracing the present States of Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin and a part of Michigan, was organized under the name of THE INDIANA TERRITORY. Vincennes was the capital; and General William Henry Harrison received the appointment of governor. About the same time the organization of THE MISSISSIPPI TERRITORY, extending from the western limits of Georgia to the great river, was completed. Thus another grand and fertile district of a hundred thousand square miles was reclaimed from barbarism.

More important still was the purchase of Louisiana. In 1800 Napoleon had compelled Spain to make a secret cession of this vast territory to France. The First Consul then prepared to send an army to New Orleans for the purpose of establishing his authority. But the government of the United States remonstrated against such a proceeding; France was threatened with multiplied wars at home; and Bonaparte, seeing the difficulty of maintaining a colonial empire at so great a distance, authorized his minister to dispose of Louisiana by sale. The President appointed Mr. Livingston and James Monroe to negotiate the purchase. On the 30th of April, 1803, the terms of transfer were agreed on by the agents of the two nations; and for the sum of eleven million two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, Louisiana was ceded to the United States.* In another convention, which was signed on the same day, it was agreed that the government of the United States should assume the payment of certain debts due from France to American citizens; but the sum thus assumed should not, inclusive of interest, exceed three million seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Thus did the vast domain west of the Mississippi, embracing an area of more than a million square miles, pass under the dominion of the United States.

Four nations—France, the United States, Great Britain, and Spain—were concerned in determining the boundaries of the ceded territory. In regard to the eastern limit, all were agreed that it should be the Mississippi from its source to the thirty-first parallel of latitude. On the south-east the boundary claimed by the United States, Great Britain, and France, was the thirty-first parallel from the Mississippi to the Appalachicola, and down that river to the Gulf.

* Bonaparte accepted in payment six per cent. bonds of the United States, payable fifteen years after date. He also agreed not to sell the bonds at such a price as would degrade the credit of the American government.



INAUGURATION OF THE TERRITORIAL GOVERNMENT AT MARIETTA, OHIO.

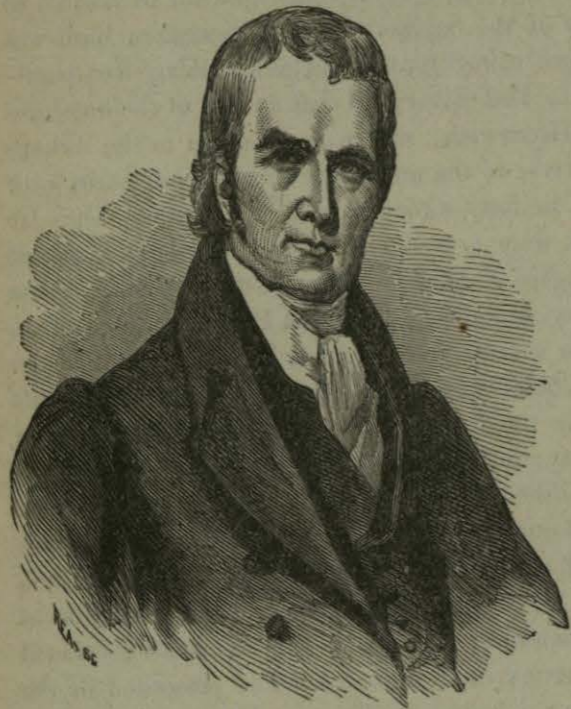
From this line, however, Spain dissented, claiming the Iberville and Lakes Maurepas and Pontchartrain as the true limit between Louisiana and her possessions in West Florida; but she was obliged, after fruitlessly protesting, to yield to the decision of her rivals. On the south, by the consent of all, the boundary was the Gulf of Mexico as far west as the mouth of the Sabine. The south-western limit was established along the last named river as far as the thirty-first parallel; thence due north to Red River; up that stream to the one-hundredth meridian from Greenwich; thence north again to the Arkansas; thence with that river to the mountains; and thence north with the mountain chain to the forty-second parallel of latitude. Thus far all four of the nations were agreed. But the United States, Great Britain, and France—again coinciding—claimed the extension of the boundary along the forty-second parallel to the Pacific Ocean; and to this extension Spain, for several years, refused her assent; but in the treaty of 1819 her objections were formally withdrawn. In fixing the northern boundary only the United States and Great Britain were concerned; and the forty-ninth parallel from the Lake of the Woods to the Pacific was established as the international line.*

The purchase of Louisiana was the greatest event of Jefferson's administration. Out of the southern portion of the new acquisition the TERRITORY OF ORLEANS was organized, with the same limits as the present State of Louisiana; the rest of the vast tract continued to be called THE TERRITORY OF LOUISIANA. The possession of the Mississippi was no longer a matter of dispute. Very justly did Mr. Livingston say to the French minister as they arose from signing the treaty: "We have lived long, but this is the noblest work of our whole lives."

Two years previous to these events John Marshall had been nominated and confirmed as chief-justice of the United States. His appointment marks an epoch in the history of the country. In the colonial times the English constitution and common law had pre-

* See Map VII. The discussion of the boundaries of Louisiana is thus fully given because of the many statements, needlessly contradictory, which have been made on the subject. Between the years 1803 and 1819 there was some ground for controversy, but since the latter date none whatever—except as to the northern line. For all the facts tending to elucidate the subject, see *American State Papers*; topics: Treaty of Paris, 1763; Definitive Treaty between Great Britain and the United States, 1783; Text of the Louisiana Cession, 1803; Boundary Conventions between the United States and Great Britain, 1818 and 1846; Treaty of Washington, 1819. See also Walker's *Statistical Atlas of the United States*; subject: Areas and Political Divisions, pp. 2 and 3; and the *American Cyclopædia*; article: Louisiana.

vailed in America, and judicial decisions were based exclusively on precedents established in English courts. When, in 1789, the new republic was organized, it became necessary to modify to a certain extent the principles of jurisprudence and to adapt them to the altered



CHIEF-JUSTICE MARSHALL.

theory of government. In some measure this great work was undertaken by Chief-Justice Jay; but he was a great statesman rather than a great judge. It remained for Chief-Justice Marshall to establish on a firm and enduring basis the noble structure of American law. For thirty-five years he remained in his high office, bequeathing to after times a great number of valuable decisions, in which the principles of the jurisprudence of the United States are set forth with unvarying clearness and invincible logic.

The Mediterranean pirates still annoyed American merchantmen. All of the Barbary States—as the Moorish kingdoms of Northern Africa are called—had adopted the plan of extorting annual tributes from the European nations. The emperors of Morocco, Algiers and Tripoli became especially arrogant. In 1803 the government of the United States despatched Commodore Preble to the Mediterranean to protect American commerce and punish the hostile powers. The armament proceeded first against Morocco; but the frigate *Philadelphia*, commanded by Captain Bainbridge, was sent directly to Tripoli. When nearing his destination, Bainbridge gave chase to a pirate which fled for safety to the batteries of the harbor. The *Philadelphia*, in close pursuit, ran upon a reef of rocks near the shore, became unmanageable, and was captured by the Tripolitans. The crew and officers

were taken; the latter were treated with some respect, but the former were enslaved. The emperor Yusef and his barbarous subjects were greatly elated at their unexpected success.

In the following February Captain Decatur recaptured the *Philadelphia* in a marvelous manner. Sailing from Sicily in a small vessel called the *Intrepid*, he came at nightfall in sight of the harbor of Tripoli, where the *Philadelphia* was moored. The *Intrepid*, being a Moorish ship which the American fleet had captured, was either unseen or unsuspected by the Tripolitans. As darkness settled on the sea, Decatur steered his course into the harbor, slipped alongside of the *Philadelphia*, lashed the two ships together, sprang on deck with his daring crew of only seventy-four men, and killed or drove overboard every Moor on the vessel. In a moment the frigate was fired, for it was the purpose to destroy her; then Decatur and his men, escaping from the flames, returned to the *Intrepid* and sailed out of the harbor amid a storm of balls from the Tripolitan batteries. Not a man of Decatur's gallant band was lost, and only four were wounded.

In the last of July, 1804, Commodore Preble arrived with his fleet at Tripoli and began a blockade and siege which lasted till the following spring. The town was frequently bombarded, and several Moorish vessels were destroyed; but not even the pounding of American cannon-balls was sufficient to bring Yusef to terms. In the meantime, however, it was ascertained that the services of Hamet, Yusef's elder brother, the deposed sovereign of Tripoli, might be secured to aid in reducing the barbarians to submission. Hamet was at this time in Upper Egypt, commanding an army of Mamelukes in a war against the Turks. To him General William Eaton, the American consul at Tunis, was despatched with proposals of an alliance against the usurping Yusef. Hamet eagerly accepted the overture, and furnished General Eaton with a fine body of Arab cavalry and seventy Greek soldiers. With this force the American commander set out from Alexandria on the 5th of March, 1805. He traversed the Desert of Barca for a thousand miles, and on the 25th of April reached Derne, one of Yusef's eastern sea-ports. Yusef himself was already approaching with an army; and General Eaton found it necessary to storm the town. A division of the American fleet arrived in the harbor at the fortunate moment and aided in the work. The place was gallantly carried. The assaulting column was made up of Arab cavalry, Greek infantry, Tripolitan rebels, and American sailors serving on land! The Stars and Stripes never before or since waved over so motley an assemblage! Yusef, alarmed at the dangers which menaced him by sea

and land, made hasty overtures for peace. His offers were accepted by Mr. Lear, the American consul-general for the Barbary States; and a treaty was concluded on the 4th of June, 1805.* For several years thereafter the flag of the United States was respected in the Mediterranean.

In the summer of 1804 the country was shocked by the intelligence that Vice-President Burr had killed Alexander Hamilton in a duel. As the first term of Mr. Jefferson drew to a close, Burr foresaw that the President would be renominated, and that he himself would *not* be renominated. Still, he had his eye on the presidency, and was determined not to be baffled. He therefore, while holding the office of Vice-President, became a candidate for governor of New York. From that position he would pass to the presidency at the close of Jefferson's second term. But Hamilton's powerful influence in New York prevented Burr's election; and his presidential ambition received a stunning blow. From that day he determined to kill the man whom he pretended to regard as the destroyer of his hopes. He accordingly sought a quarrel with Hamilton; challenged him; met him at Weehawken, opposite New York, on the morning of the 11th of July, and deliberately murdered him; for Hamilton had tried to avoid the challenge, and when face to face with his antagonist refused to fire. Thus under the savage and abominable custom of dueling the brightest intellect in America was put out in darkness.

In the autumn of 1804 Jefferson was re-elected President. For Vice-President George Clinton of New York was chosen in place of Burr. In the following year that part of the North-western Territory called Wayne county was organized under a separate territorial government with the name of MICHIGAN. In the same spring, Captains Lewis and Clarke, acting under orders of the President, set out from the falls of the Missouri River with a party of thirty-five soldiers and hunters to cross the Rocky Mountains and explore Oregon. Not until November did they reach their destination. For two years, through forests of gigantic pines, along the banks of unknown rivers and down to the shores of the Pacific, did they continue their explorations. After wandering among unheard-of tribes of barbarians, encountering grizzly bears more ferocious than Bengal tigers, escaping perils by forest and flood, and traversing a route of six thousand miles, the hardy adventurers, with the loss of but one man, returned to civilization, bringing new ideas of the vast domains of the West.

* It is a matter of astonishment that Lear agreed to pay Yusef sixty thousand dollars for the liberation of American slaves: their liberation ought to have been *compelled*—and might have been if Lear had said so.

After the death of Hamilton, Burr fled from popular indignation and sought refuge in the South. At the opening of the next session of Congress he returned to the capital, and presided over the Senate until the expiration of his term of office. Then he delivered his valedictory, went to the West, and, after traveling through several States, took up his residence with an Irish exile named Harman Blannerhassett, who had laid out an estate and built a splendid mansion on an island in the Ohio, just below the mouth of the Muskingum. Here Burr made a wicked and treasonable scheme against the peace and happiness of the country. His plan was to raise a sufficient military force, invade Mexico, wrest that country from the Spaniards, detach the Western and Southern States from the Union, make himself dictator of a South-western empire, and perhaps subvert the government of the United States. For two years he labored to perfect his plans. But his purposes were suspected. In accordance with a proclamation of the President, the military preparations at Blannerhassett's Island were broken up; and in February of 1807 Burr himself was arrested in Alabama and taken to Richmond to be tried on a charge of treason. Chief-Justice Marshall presided at the trial, and Burr conducted his own defence. The verdict was, "Not guilty, for want of sufficient proof." But his escape was so narrow that under an assumed name he fled from the country. Returning a few years afterward, he resumed the practice of law in New York, lived to extreme old age, and died alone in abject poverty.

During Jefferson's second administration the country was constantly agitated by the aggressions of the British navy on American commerce. England and France were engaged in deadly and continuous war. In order to cripple the resources of their enemy, the British authorities struck blow after blow against the trade between France and foreign nations; and Napoleon retaliated with equal energy and vindictiveness against the commerce of Great Britain. The measures adopted by the two powers took the form of blockade—that is, the surrounding of each other's ports with men-of-war to prevent the ingress and egress of neutral ships. By such means the commerce of the United States, which had grown vast and valuable while the European nations were fighting, was greatly injured and distressed.

In May of 1806 England declared the whole coast of France from Brest to the Elbe to be in a state of blockade. Neutral nations had no warning. Many American vessels, approaching the French ports, were seized and condemned as prizes; all this, too, while the harbors of France were not actually, but only declared to be, blockaded. In the following November Bonaparte issued a decree blockading the British isles. Again

the unsuspecting merchantmen of the United States were subjected to seizure, this time by the cruisers of France. In January of the next year the government of Great Britain retaliated by an act prohibiting the French coasting-trade. Every one of these measures was in flagrant violations of the laws of nations. The belligerent powers had no right to take such steps toward each other; as to neutral States, their rights were utterly disregarded; and the nation that suffered most was the United States.

In addition to these causes of complaint an old crime against international law had, in the mean time, been revived by the English government, to the great distress of American commerce. At the outbreak of the French and Indian War George II. had issued an edict forbidding the vessels of neutral nations to trade with the colonies of France or the provinces of any other country with which Great Britain might be at war. The offences committed under the authority of this arbitrary decree, which was known as THE RULE OF 1756, had been greatly injurious to the commerce of the colonies, and during Washington's administration had occasioned many complaints and remonstrances. But in June of 1801, in a treaty between Great Britain and Russia, the former government assented to such a modification of the Rule as rendered it comparatively harmless. The effect of this modification was exceedingly beneficial to neutral nations, especially to America. Between the years 1803 and 1806 the foreign carrying-trade of the United States was increased nearly fivefold, while that of England fell off in a nearly corresponding ratio. Vexed and mortified at this result, and caring little for justice if the supremacy of the British merchant-marine could be maintained, the ministry, in the summer of 1805, revived the old edict in full force, and impudently asserted that it was *a part of the law of nations!* The result, as had been clearly foreseen by the English lords of trade who contrived the measure, was that American merchantmen trading largely with the dependencies of France and Spain, were driven from the ocean, and the commerce of the United States shrank suddenly into insignificance.

Finally Great Britain aggravated her injustice by a still more arrogant and unwarrantable procedure. The English theory of citizenship is, that whoever is born in England remains through life a subject of the British Empire. The privilege of an Englishman to expatriate himself—that is, the right to go abroad, to throw off his allegiance to the British crown, and to assume the obligations of citizenship in another nation—is absolutely denied. Under this iron rule of “once an Englishman, always an Englishman,” the British cruisers

were from time to time authorized to search American vessels and to take therefrom all persons suspected of being subjects of Great Britain. One of the chief objects had in view in this iniquitous business was to prevent the emigration of the Irish to the United States. The impulsive sons of the Emerald Isle, hearing of the free institutions and boundless prospects of America, were flocking hither in great numbers, and something must be done to stop the movement. George III. and his advisers therefore marshaled forth their despotic theory of citizenship and set it up like a death's-head at every port of the British Isles. Inasmuch as every Irishman or Scotchman who ventured on board an American vessel would expose himself to the peril of seizure and impressment, it was, with good reason, believed that not many would take the fearful risk. And the apprehensions of the emigrants were well founded; for all those who had the misfortune to be overtaken at sea were, without inquiry, impressed as marines in the English navy. To crowd the decks of their men-of-war with unwilling recruits, torn from home and friends, was the end which the British king and ministry were willing to reach at whatever sacrifice of national honor. Finally to these general wrongs was added a special act of violence which kindled the indignation of the Americans to the highest pitch.

On the 22d of June, 1807, a frigate, named the *Chesapeake* which had just sailed out of the bay of the same name, was approached by a British man-of-war, called the *Leopard*. The frigate was hailed; British officers came on board as friends, and then, to the astonishment of Commodore Barron, who commanded the *Chesapeake*, made a demand to search the vessel for deserters. The demand was indignantly refused and the ship cleared for action. But before the guns could be gotten in readiness, the *Leopard* poured in several destructive broadsides and compelled a surrender. Four men were taken from the captured ship, three of whom proved to be American citizens; the fourth, who was an actual deserter, was tried by the British naval officers and hanged. The government of Great Britain disavowed the outrage of the *Leopard*, and promised reparation; but the promise was never fulfilled.

The President at once issued a proclamation forbidding British ships of war to enter the harbors of the United States. Still, there was no reparation; and on the 21st of December Congress passed the celebrated EMBARGO ACT. By its provisions all American vessels were detained in the ports of the United States. The object was, by cutting off commercial intercourse with France and Great Britain, to compel them to recognize the rights of American neutrality. But the

measure was of little avail; and after fourteen months the embargo act was repealed.* Meanwhile, in November of 1808, the British government outdid all previous proceedings by issuing an "order in council," prohibiting *all* trade with France and her allies. And Napoleon, not to be outdone, issued his famous "Milan decree," forbidding all commerce with England and her colonies. Between these outrageous acts of foreign nations and the American embargo, the commerce of the United States was well-nigh crushed out of existence.

While the country was distracted with these troubles Robert Fulton was building THE FIRST STEAMBOAT. This event exercised a vast



ROBERT FULTON.

influence on the future development of the nation. It was of the first importance to the people of the inland States that their great rivers should be enlivened with rapid and regular navigation. This, without the application of steam, was impossible; and this Fulton successfully accomplished. Indeed, the steamboat was the harbinger of a new era in civilization. Fulton was an Irishman by descent and a Pennsylvanian by birth. His education was meagre and imperfect. In his boyhood he became a painter of miniatures at Philadelphia. His friends sent him to London to receive instruction from Benjamin West; but his tastes led him to the useful rather than to the fine arts. From London he went to Paris, where he became acquainted with Chancellor Livingston; and there he conceived the project of applying steam to the purposes of navigation. Returning to New York, he began the construction of a steamboat in East River. When

* The embargo act was the subject of much ridicule. The opponents of the measure spelling the word backward, called it the *O Grab me* act.

the ungainly craft was completed and brought around to the Jersey side of the city, Fulton invited his friends to go on board and enjoy a trip to Albany. It was the 2d of September, 1807. The incredulous crowds stood staring on the shore. The word was given, and the boat did not move. Fulton went below. Again the word was given, and this time *the boat moved*. On the next day the happy company reached Albany. For many years this first rude steamer, called the *Clermont*, plied the Hudson. The old methods of river navigation were revolutionized.

But the inventive genius of Fulton was by no means satisfied with the great achievement. For years his thoughts had been busy with another project which was considered by himself of greater value and importance to the future interests of mankind than the steamboat. His object was to produce some kind of an engine, so destructive to ships as to banish naval warfare by making it possible for any one to destroy the most formidable vessels which could be constructed. Finally his plans were matured, and the result was the invention of that submarine bomb, called THE TORPEDO, which has played so important a part in the bay and river battles of modern times. This terrible machine is as distinctly and certainly the fruit of Fulton's brain as is steam navigation itself; but the result has hardly met the expectations of the inventor. As early as 1804, having completed the invention at Paris, he offered it successively to the governments of France, Holland, and Great Britain; but neither nation would accept the patronage of so dangerous an engine. In England a public demonstration of its destructive effects was given in the presence of British statesmen and men of science.* On the 15th of October, in Walmer Roads, within sight of the residence of William Pitt, the Danish brig *Dorothea*, which had been given by the government for that purpose, was blown to atoms on the first trial. But, although the success of the torpedo was manifest, the English ministry refused to accept the invention on the ground that Great Britain, already mistress of the seas, did not need torpedoes, and that their use by other nations would destroy her supremacy. Logic of habitual selfishness! In 1807, and again in 1810, Fulton offered his invention to the United States, and in the latter year received an appropriation of five thousand dollars for further experiments. Such was the terror inspired by the torpedo that, although it was not very successfully used in the war that ensued, the British cruisers were notably shy of the American coast, and many a sea-port town was saved from destruction.

* Colonel Congreve, inventor of the "Congreve Rocket," was present on the occasion.