

Jefferson's administration drew to a close. The territorial area of the United States had been vastly extended. Burr's wicked and dangerous conspiracy had come to naught. Pioneers were pouring into the valley of the Mississippi. Explorers had crossed the mountains of the great West. The woods by the river-shores resounded with the cry of steam. But the foreign relations of the United States were troubled and gloomy. There were forebodings of war. The President, following the example of Washington, declined a third election, and was succeeded in his high office by James Madison of Virginia. For Vice-President George Clinton was re-elected.

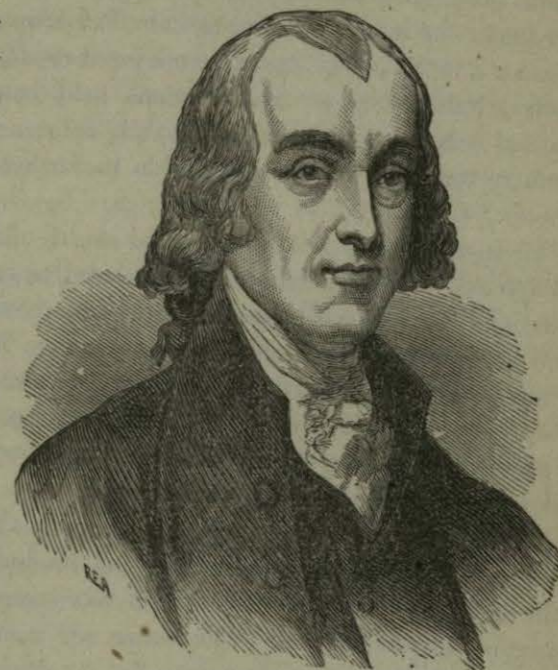
CHAPTER XLIX.

MADISON'S ADMINISTRATION, AND WAR OF 1812.

JAMES MADISON, fourth President of the United States, was born at King George, Virginia, on the 16th of March, 1751. He was educated first in a private school and afterwards at Princeton College, where he was graduated at the age of twenty. Devoting himself to the profession of the law, he found time for extensive reading and a profound study of morals, metaphysics, and polite literature. From these pursuits, so congenial to his disposition, his sterling patriotism called him to take an active part in the struggles of the Revolution. In the councils of his own State and afterwards in the Continental Congress his influence was marked and powerful. But of all the patriot leaders Madison had the calmest and least aggressive spirit. Not by oratory and vehemence of passion, but by philosophy and cogent argument, did he mould the opinions of his fellow-men. It was he who, in 1786, secured the passage by the legislature of Virginia of the resolution, suggested by Washington, calling for a convention of the States at Annapolis—a work which resulted in the formation of the Federal Constitution. Afterwards, with Hamilton and Jay, he defended that great instrument in the *Federalist*; but with the new division of parties, his views underwent a change and he joined himself with the Jeffersonian school of statesmen. For eight years he held the office of secretary of state; and on the 4th of March, 1809, was inaugurated as Jefferson's successor in the presidency. He owed his election to the Democratic party, whose sympathy with France and hostility to the policy of Great Britain were well known. Three

days before the new administration came into power, the embargo act was repealed by Congress; but another measure was adopted instead, called the non-intercourse act. By its terms American merchantmen were allowed to go abroad, but were forbidden to trade with Great Brit-

ain. Mr. Erskine, the British minister, now gave notice that by the 10th of June the "orders in council," so far as they affected the United States, should be repealed. But the British government disavowed the act of its agent; and the orders stood as before.



JAMES MADISON.

In the following spring the emperor of the French issued a decree authorizing the seizure of all American vessels that might approach the ports of France or other harbors held by his troops. But in November of the same year the hostile decree was reversed, and all restrictions on the commerce of the United States were removed. If Great Britain had acted with equal liberality and justice, there would have been no further complaint. But that government, with peculiar obstinacy, adhered to its former measures, and sent ships of war to hover around the American ports and enforce the odious orders issued in the previous years. It was only a question of time when such insolence would lead to retaliation and war.

The affairs of the two nations were fast approaching a crisis. It became more and more apparent that the wrongs perpetrated by Great Britain against the United States would have to be corrected by force of arms. That England, after such a career of arrogance, would now make reparation for the outrages committed by her navy was no longer to be hoped for. The ministry of that same George III. with whom the colonies had struggled in the Revolution still directed the affairs

of the kingdom; from him, now grown old and insane, nothing was to be expected. The government of the United States had fallen completely under control of the party which sympathized with France, while the Federal party, from its leaning toward British interests and institutions, grew weaker year by year. The American people, smarting under the insults of Great Britain, had adopted the motto of FREE TRADE AND SAILORS' RIGHTS, and for that motto they had made up their minds to fight. The elections, held between 1808 and 1811, showed conclusively the drift of public opinion; the sentiment of the country was that war was preferable to further humiliation and disgrace.

In the spring of 1810 the third census of the United States was completed. The population had increased to seven million two hundred and forty thousand souls. The States now numbered seventeen, and several new Territories were preparing for admission into the Union. The resources of the nation were abundant; its institutions deeply rooted and flourishing. But with the rapid march of civilization westward the jealousy of the Red man was aroused, and Indiana Territory was afflicted with an Indian war.

The Shawnees were the leading tribe in the country between the Ohio and the Wabash. Their chief was the famous Tecumtha, a brave and sagacious warrior; and with him was joined his brother Elksawatawa, called the Prophet. The former was a man of real genius; the latter, a vile impostor who pretended to have revelations from the spirit-world. But they both worked together in a common cause; and their plan was to unite all the nations of the North-west Territory in a final effort to beat back the whites. When, therefore, in September of 1809, Governor Harrison met the chiefs of several tribes at Fort Wayne, and honorably purchased the Indian titles to three million acres of land, Tecumtha refused to sign the treaty, and threatened death to those who did. In the year that followed he visited the nations as far south as Tennessee and exhorted them to lay aside their sectional jealousies, in the hope of saving their hunting-grounds.

Governor Harrison from Vincennes, the capital of the Territory, remonstrated with Tecumtha and the Prophet, held several conferences with them, and warned them of what would follow from their proceedings. Still, the leaders insisted that they would have back the lands which had been ceded by the treaty of Fort Wayne. The governor stood firm, sent for a few companies of soldiers and mustered the militia of the Territory. The Indians began to prowl through the Wabash Valley, murdering and stealing. In order to secure the country

and enforce the terms of the treaty, Harrison advanced up the river to Terra Haute, built a fort which received his own name, passed on to Montezuma, where another block-house was built, and then hastened toward the town of the Prophet, at the mouth of the Tippecanoe. When within a few miles of his destination, Harrison was met by Indian ambassadors, who asked for the appointment of a conference on the following day. Their request was granted; and the American army encamped for the night. The place selected was a piece of high ground covered with oaks. Burnet Creek skirted the encampment on the west. Beyond that, as well as to the east of the oak grove, were prairie marsh-lands covered with tall grass. Before daybreak on the following morning, 7th of November, 1811, the treacherous savages, numbering seven hundred, crept through the marshes, surrounded Harrison's position and burst upon the camp like demons. But the American militia were under arms in a moment, and fighting in the darkness, held the Indians in check until daylight, and then routed them in several vigorous charges. On the next day the Americans burned the Prophet's town and soon afterward returned victorious to Vincennes. Tecumtha was in the South at the time of the battle; when he returned and found his people scattered and subdued, he repaired to Canada and joined the standard of the British.

Meanwhile, the powers of Great Britain and the United States had come into conflict on the ocean. On the 16th of May Commodore Rodgers, cruising in the American frigate *President*, hailed a vessel off the coast of Virginia. Instead of a polite answer, to his salutation, he received a cannon-ball in the mainmast. Other shots followed, and Rodgers responded with a broadside, silencing the enemy's guns. In the morning—for it was already dark—the hostile ship was found to be the British sloop-of-war *Little Belt*. The vessel had been severely though justly punished by the *President*, having eleven men killed and twenty-one wounded. The event produced great excitement throughout the country.

On the 4th of November, 1811, the twelfth Congress of the United States assembled. In the body were many men of marked ability and patriotism. John C. Calhoun of South Carolina now took his seat as a member of the House of Representatives. Henry Clay, already distinguished as a statesman, was chosen speaker. From the first it was seen that war was inevitable. It was impossible for the United States, knowing that more than six thousand American citizens had been impressed into the British navy, to endure, without dishonor, further injury and insolence. Still, many hoped for peace; and

the winter passed without decisive measures. The President himself had no disposition and little capacity for war; and his various messages to Congress were marked as the productions of a ruler over-cautious and timid. But not so with the fiery leaders of the Democracy who supported the President's administration; and notwithstanding the opposition of the Federalists, the war-spirit fired the popular heart.

In the mean time a transaction was brought to light which created intense excitement and roused the indignation of the whole country. On the night of the 2d of February, 1812, an Irishman, named John Henry, now a naturalized citizen of the United States, called at the President's mansion and revealed to him the astounding fact that the ministry of Great Britain, coöperating with Sir James Craig, governor of Canada, *had been engaged for some years in a treasonable scheme to destroy the American Union!* Henry bore a letter from Governor Gerry of Massachusetts, and all the documents necessary to prove the truth of his statements. As early as 1808 the attention of the Canadian governor had been called to certain published articles written by Henry against republican governments; and the latter was summoned to Montreal. From him Craig learned of the intense hostility of the Federal party to the administration and of the great distress of New England on account of the Embargo and other restrictions on commerce. These facts were communicated to the British ministry, and Sir James promised Henry an annual salary of five thousand dollars to return to Boston and become the secret agent of England and Canada.

The purpose of the conspirators was to aggravate the popular discontent of New England until the Eastern States should be induced to secede from the Union and join themselves with Canada. But with the repeal of the Embargo and the subsidence of political excitement, Henry found the depravity of his business only equaled by its unprofitableness. The people of Massachusetts were in no humor to be led into a rebellion. Sir James Craig died, and Henry, unsuccessful and unpaid, went, in 1811, to London and presented his claim for thirty thousand pounds to the English ministers. By them he was well received; but the payment of thirty thousand pounds for services which had resulted in nothing was reckoned a serious matter; and Henry was sent back to get whatever remuneration he could from Sir George Prevost, the successor of Craig in the governorship of Canada. Enraged at his treatment, the spy, instead of returning to Montreal, sailed to Boston, and going thence to Washington divulged the whole conspiracy to the President, surrendered his correspondence with

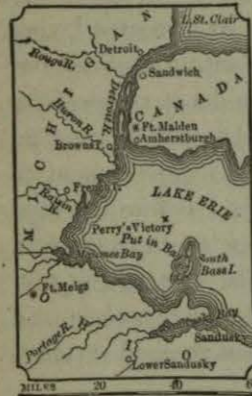
Craig, and received therefor fifty thousand dollars out of the secret service fund of the United States. The disclosure of this perfidious business contributed greatly to consolidate public sentiment against Great Britain and to strengthen the hands of the war party in the government.

On the 4th of April, 1812, an act was passed by Congress laying an embargo for ninety days on all British vessels within the jurisdiction of the United States. But Great Britain would not recede from her hostile attitude. One of the ministers declared that it was "an ancient and well-established right" of His Majesty's government to impress British seamen on board of neutral vessels. Before the final decision of England was known, Louisiana, the eighteenth State, was, on the 8th of April, admitted into the Union. The area of the new commonwealth was more than forty-one thousand square miles; and her population, according to the census of 1810, had reached seventy-seven thousand.

On the 4th of June a resolution declaring war against Great Britain was passed by the House of Representatives. On the 17th of the same month the bill received the sanction of the Senate; and two days afterward the President issued his proclamation of war. Vigorous preparations for the impending conflict were made by Congress. It was ordered to raise twenty-five thousand regular troops and fifty thousand volunteers. At the same time the several States were requested to call out a hundred thousand militia for the defence of the coasts and harbors. A national loan of eleven million dollars was authorized. Henry Dearborn of Massachusetts was chosen first major-general and commander-in-chief of the army.

Great Britain was already prepared for the conflict. Her armies in Europe were immense and thoroughly equipped. Napoleon just at this time began his famous invasion of Russia, and the allied nations of Western Europe were for a while relieved of their apprehensions. The British navy amounted to no less than a thousand and thirty-six vessels. Of these there were two hundred and fifty-four ships-of-the-line, not one of which carried less than seventy-four guns of large caliber. At various stations on the American coast there were eighty-five war-vessels bearing the English flag, and ready for immediate action. Lake Ontario was commanded by four British brigs carrying an aggregate of sixty guns. The Canadian armies of England amounted to seven thousand five hundred regulars and forty thousand militia. Back of all these forces and armaments stood the seemingly inexhaustible British treasury, with the ambitious young Lord Castlereagh and

his associate ministers to disburse it. As to George III., old age and incurable insanity had at last prevailed to displace him from the throne and to make the Prince Regent, George IV., the actual sovereign. In all that appertained to preparation and readiness for the conflict the United States bore no comparison to the powerful foe.



SCENE OF HULL'S CAMPAIGN,
1812.

The first movement of the war was made by General William Hull, governor of Michigan Territory. A force of twelve hundred Ohio volunteers, together with three hundred regulars, was organized at Dayton for the purpose of overawing the Indians on the north-western frontier. Hull was also authorized, should circumstances warrant such a course, to invade and conquer Canada. The march began on the 1st of June; and it was a full month before the army, toiling through more than two hundred miles of forests, reached the western extremity

of Lake Erie. Arriving at the Maumee, Hull despatched his baggage, stores and official papers in a boat to Detroit. But the British forces posted at Malden had already been informed of the declaration of hostilities; and Hull's boat with every thing on board was captured. Nevertheless, the American army pressed on to Detroit, where early in July the general received despatches informing him of the declaration of war, and directing him to proceed with the invasion of Canada. On the 12th of the month he crossed the Detroit River to Sandwich with the avowed purpose of capturing Malden. And this might easily have been accomplished had not the inefficiency of the general checked the enthusiasm of the army.

Meanwhile, the news came that the American post at Mackinaw had been surprised and captured by the British. This intelligence furnished Hull a good excuse for recrossing the river to Detroit. Here he received intelligence that Major Brush, sent forward by Governor Meigs of Ohio, was approaching with reinforcements and supplies. Major Van Horne was accordingly despatched with a body of troops to meet Brush at the River Raisin and conduct him safely to Detroit. But Tecumtha, assisted by some British troops, had cut the lines of communication and laid an ambush for Van Horne's forces in the neighborhood of Brownstown. The scheme was successful; Van Horne ran into the trap and was severely defeated. Any kind of energetic movement on Hull's part would have retrieved the disaster; but en-

ergy was altogether wanting; and when, three days later, Colonel Miller with another detachment attacked and routed the savages with great loss, he was hastily recalled to Detroit. The officers and men lost all faith in the commander, and there were symptoms of a mutiny.

In the mean time, General Brock, the governor of Upper Canada, arrived at Malden and took command of the British forces. Acting in conjunction with Tecumtha, he crossed the river, and on the 16th of August advanced to the siege of Detroit. The Americans in their trenches outside of the fort were eager for battle, and stood with lighted matches awaiting the order to fire. When the British were within five hundred yards, to the amazement of both armies Hull hoisted a white flag over the fort. There was a brief parley and then a surrender, perhaps the most shameful in the history of the United States. Not only the army in Detroit, but all the forces under Hull's command, became prisoners of war. The whole of Michigan Territory was surrendered to the British. At the capitulation the American officers in rage and despair stamped the ground, broke their swords and tore off their epaulets. The whole country was humiliated at the disgraceful business. The government gave thirty British prisoners in exchange for Hull, and he was brought before a court-martial charged with treason, cowardice and conduct unbecoming an officer. He was convicted on the last two charges, and sentenced to be shot; but the President, having compassion on one who had served the country in the Revolution, pardoned him. After all the discussions that have been had on Hull and his campaign, the best that can be said of him is that he was a patriot and a coward.

About the time of the fall of Detroit, Fort Dearborn, on the present site of Chicago, was invested by an army of Indians. The garrison was feeble, and the commandant proposed a surrender on condition that his men should retire without molestation. This was agreed to; but the savages, finding that the garrison had destroyed the whisky that was in the fort, fell upon the retreating soldiers, killed some of them, and distributed the rest as captives. On the day after the capitulation Fort Dearborn was burned to the ground.

These losses, however, were more than compensated by the brilliant achievements of the young American navy. From the first it became apparent that the war was destined to be a conflict on the sea-coast and the ocean. The United States would act for the most part on the defensive, and Great Britain would rely chiefly upon her navy. The condition of both nations was such as to provoke this sort of warfare. On the one side was the British armament superior to any other

in the world, and on the other an exposed sea-coast, a few fortresses, and a navy of almost insignificant proportions. From the beginning, the policy of the American government had been distinctly declared against a standing army and a regular fleet. It was held that a citizen soldiery and an extemporized flotilla would be sufficient for every emergency. A large military establishment, said the defenders of the American system, is enormously expensive and a constant menace to civil liberty. After the Revolution, especially during the administration of Jefferson, the military spirit was discouraged and the defenses of the country fell into decay. In 1808 the whole coast of Maine was defended only by Fort Sumner, at Portland. New Hampshire had but one fortress, a half ruined block-house at Portsmouth. On the coast of Massachusetts four fortifications—one at Cape Ann, one at Salem, one at Marblehead, and Fort Independence in Boston Harbor furnished the only security against attack. In the neighborhood of Newport, Rhode Island, there were six works, some of importance, others insignificant. New London, Connecticut, was defended by Fort Trumbull, a block-house of considerable strength but in bad repair. On Governor's Island, in New York Harbor, stood Fort Jay, which, together with the Battery at the south end of Manhattan and some slight fortifications on Ellis's and Bedloe's Islands, furnished a tolerable protection. The whole coast of New Jersey lay open to invasion. On Mud Island in the Delaware, a short distance below Philadelphia, stood the formidable Fort Mifflin, an old British fort of the Revolution. Not less in strength and importance was Fort McHenry on the Patapseo, commanding the approach to Baltimore. Annapolis was defended by Fort Severn, then only a group of breast-works. Norfolk, Virginia, relied for protection on a fort of the same name and another work, called Fort Nelson, on the opposite side of Elizabeth River. In Charleston Harbor stood Fort Johnson on James's Island, Fort Pinckney in front of the city, and Fort Moultrie of Revolutionary fame. Upon these scattered fortifications and the terror inspired by Fulton's torpedoes the Americans must depend for the defense of a coast-line reaching from Passamaquoddy to the St. Mary's.

Such was the attitude and relative strength of the two nations. Great, therefore, was the astonishment of the world when the American sailors, not waiting to be attacked, went forth without a tremor to smite the mistress of the seas. And greater the admiration when a series of brilliant victories declared for the flag of the Republic. During the summer of 1812 the navy of the United States won a just and lasting renown. On the 19th of August the frigate *Constitution*,

commanded by Captain Isaac Hull, overtook the British ship-of-war *Guerriere*, off the coast of Massachusetts. Captain Dacres, who commanded the British vessel, had been boasting of his prowess and sending challenges to American vessels to come out and fight; now there was an opportunity to exhibit his valor. The vessels manœuvred for a while, the *Constitution* closing with her antagonist, until at half-pistol shot she poured in a terrible broadside, sweeping the decks of the *Guerriere* and deciding the contest. Dacres, after losing fifteen men killed and sixty-three wounded, struck his colors and surrendered his shattered vessel as a prize. The American loss was seven killed and an equal number wounded. On the following morning the *Guerriere*, being unmanageable, was blown up; and Hull returned to port with his prisoners and spoils.

On the 18th of October the American sloop-of-war *Wasp*, of eighteen guns, under command of Captain Jones, fell in with a fleet of British merchantmen off the coast of Virginia. The squadron was under convoy of the brig *Frolic*, of twenty-two guns, commanded by Captain Whinyates, who put his vessel between the merchantmen and the *Wasp*, and prepared for battle. A terrible engagement ensued, lasting for three-quarters of an hour. Both ships became nearly helpless; but the *Wasp* closed with her foe and delivered a final broadside which completely cleared the deck. The American crew then boarded the *Frolic* and struck the British flag; for not a seaman was left above deck to perform that service. Scarcely had the smoke of the conflict cleared away when the *Poictiers*, a British seventy-four gun ship, bore down upon the scene, captured the *Wasp* and retook the wreck of the *Frolic*. But the fame of Captain Jones's victory was not dimmed by the catastrophe.

Seven days afterward, Commodore Decatur, commanding the frigate *United States*, of forty-four guns, attacked the British frigate *Macedonia*, of forty-nine guns. The battle was fought a short distance west of the Canary Islands. After a two hours' engagement, in which the *United States* was but little injured, the *Macedonia* surrendered, with a loss in killed and wounded of more than a hundred men. On the 12th of December the ship *Essex*, commanded by Captain Porter, captured the *Nocton*, a British packet, having on board fifty-five thousand dollars in specie. More important still was the capture of the frigate *Java* by the *Constitution*, now under command of Commodore Bainbridge. On the 29th of December the two vessels met off San Salvador, on the coast of Brazil. A furious battle ensued, continuing for two hours. Every mast was torn from the British ship, and her

hull was burst with round shot. The deck was made slippery with the blood of more than two hundred killed and wounded seamen. The vessel was reduced to a wreck before her flag was struck; then the crew and passengers, numbering upward of four hundred, were transferred to the *Constitution*, and the hull of the *Java* was burned at sea. The news of these successive victories roused the enthusiasm of the people to the highest pitch. In the course of the year two hundred and fifty British ships, carrying three thousand sailors, and cargoes of immense value, were captured by the American cruisers. Filled with exultation, the people of the United States saw in these naval triumphs the omens of complete overthrow to the arrogant dominion of Britain on the seas. The nations of Europe heard in astonishment. France was well pleased; for in these humiliations of her great enemy she witnessed the fulfillment of Napoleon's prophecy when, at the cession of Louisiana, he exclaimed with delight: "There! I have this day given to England a maritime rival that will sooner or later humble her pride!" For a while the English themselves were well-nigh paralyzed. The British newspapers burst forth raging and declared that the time-honored flag of England had been disgraced "by a piece of striped bunting flying at the mast-heads of a few fir-built frigates, manned by a handful of * * * * and outlaws!" And the comment, though stated in unpleasant language, was true!

During the summer and autumn of 1812 military operations were active, but not decisive, on the Niagara frontier. The troops in that quarter, consisting of the New York militia, a few regulars, and recruits from other States, were commanded by General Stephen Van Rensselaer. The first movement of the Americans was made against Queenstown, on the Canada side of the river. On the 12th of October a thousand men were embarked in boats and landed on the western shore. They were resisted at the water's edge, and Colonel Solomon Van Rensselaer, the leader, was wounded. The subordinate officers led the charge, and the British batteries on the heights of Queenstown were carried. The enemy's forces were rallied, however, by General Brock, and returning to the charge, were a second time repulsed. General Brock fell mortally wounded. The Americans began to entrench themselves, and orders were sent across the river for the remaining division, twelve hundred strong, to hasten to the rescue. But the American militia on the eastern shore declared that they were there to defend the United States, and not to invade Canada. There they stood all afternoon, while their comrades at Queenstown were surrounded by the British, who came with strong

reinforcements from Fort George. The Americans bravely defended themselves until they had lost a hundred and sixty men in killed and wounded, and were then obliged to surrender. General Van Rensselaer, disgusted at the conduct of the New York militia, resigned his command, and was succeeded by General Alexander Smyth of Virginia.

This officer began his career as commander by issuing two proclamations that would have put to shame the bulletins of Bonaparte or Cæsar. He declared that in a few days his standards should be planted in the strongholds of Canada. After crossing Niagara and conquering the British dominions, he would annex them to the United States! His predecessors in command of the army had been popular men, but wholly destitute of skill or experience in the art of war! The soldiers of the "Army of the Center," as he called the militia under his authority, had now a general who would lead them to certain victory! Every man who performed a gallant action should have his name immortalized in the annals of his country! And so on for quantity and style.

In the mean time the Americans, numbering between four and five thousand, had been rallied at Black Rock, a few miles north of Buffalo. From this point, on the 28th of November, a company was sent across to the Canada shore; but instead of following with a stronger detachment, General Smyth ordered the advance party to return. A few days afterward another crossing was planned, and the Americans were already embarked, when they were commanded to return to winter quarters. The militia became mutinous. Smyth was charged with cowardice and disloyalty, and after three months was deposed from his command. Thus ended the military operations of 1812. In the autumn Madison was re-elected President; the choice for Vice-President fell on Elbridge Gerry of Massachusetts. In the debates at the opening of Congress the policy of the administration was strongly condemned by the opponents of the war; but vigorous measures were adopted for strengthening the army and navy.



THE NIAGARA FRONTIER, 1812.