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## THE WAR IN THE WEST.

### View of the Political Situation in Kentucky.

### CAMP DICK ROBINSON.

#### Establishment of the First Military Camp.

### KENTUCKY NEUTRALITY.

#### How it Affected the People of the State.

#### CHAPTER I.

For many years previous to the rebellion, the estrangement between the North and the South, having its root in slavery, had been fostered by political demagogues, until party and church divisions were based, in a great measure, upon the line that separated the free from the slave States.

A plank in a political platform or an utterance of the Church which expressed any intimation of approval of slavery was construed into an attack upon the institution, and raised a spirit of antagonism among its devotees similar to that which existed in the breast of a faithful Musselman at the expression of a doubt of the prophetic character of Mahomet.

The divine origin of the system of slavery became a fundamental article of belief in the creed of every true Southerner, and to extend the area of slave territory was regarded as the prime duty of the Southern statesman. All other objects were of secondary importance, and "enterprises of great pitch and moment" had been undertaken and prosecuted solely to this end. Afterward, when the people of the fighting point, this trait of Northern character was handled with strong effect by Southern orators, who professed to find endorsement of their opinion in the conduct of the Union troops at the battle of Bull Run.

**THE "CRACKER" AT HOME.**  
Loyalty to their political leaders has always been a distinguishing characteristic of the Southern voter, but the extent to which this feeling prevailed in the lower classes is almost incredible. It partook of the fealty of the Highlander to his chief, and also of the subservience of the slave to his master, according as the adherent stood high or low in the social scale.

The favor with which the poor man who exhibited ambition to rise above the poverty of his surroundings was regarded by the potentate, whose seat in Congress or the Legislature rendered his sanction necessary, was there, as elsewhere, based upon his value at a primary election or convention, and to obtain it no sacrifice was esteemed too costly.

The natural effect was to group the rising young men almost rival political leaders, who, however much they might differ upon the means to be employed, the end in view was always the same—the extension of slavery.

But there was another class—now happily almost extinct, for it could exist only beneath the shade of slavery, in the very sewers of society, an inert mass—dwelling in easy luxuriance upon patches of wasted ground on the outskirts of plantations, warmed by the sun, fed upon yams that grew to prodigious size within the borders of insuburby, and clothed like the hills of the field or in cotton fabrics stained with buttermilk.

To them the doctrines of the Whig and Democratic parties were expounded orally from the stump, as were those of the various religious denominations from the platform at the annual camp-meeting, and if they failed to comprehend the principles of a protective tariff, or were doubtful as to the proper form of baptism, they were well grounded in belief in the saving ordinances of slavery and obedience to their rulers.

Troubled by views, they were a reliable constituency, ever ready to rally at the call of their masters to elect a runaway slave or to duck an abolitionist. Whenever opposition to the conspirators met with the hands of their regulars in intellectual strength, most of whom lived in cities, they set aside the cordial support of the planters and their adherents.

**MATERIAL FOR AN ARMY.**  
To have seen them thus dwelling in listless apathy beneath their vines and fig trees, in blissful ignorance of the great world beyond the limits of the horizon within sight of their humble dwellings, daily resigned to the existence of the great gulf that separated them from the mansion and its occupants, and with no earnestness of purpose to lead them to change their condition, they would be the last people from which to select an army of fighting men.

Yet from this unpromising material an army was formed, which, when officered by the upper classes, for four years held at bay the legions of the North. After fighting against great odds, defeated but not discouraged, poorly clad, poorly clothed, and yet more poorly paid, with their country overrun by hostile armies, their families scattered and their homes laid waste, loyal to their ancient chiefs, they fought as only brave men fight, and for what? Not for their slaves—they owned no slaves. Not against oppression by the general Government—their only oppressors were their neighbors. Not to resist invasion, for none had been attempted when they, in blind, unreasoning obedience to the behests of their

leaders, suffered themselves to be organized into armies that could not be disbanded without destroying them.

**OPPOSITION TO SECESSION.**  
The mountaineers of Western Virginia refused to ratify the ordinance of secession, choosing rather to see their country separated from that ancient commonwealth, and the people of Arkansas and North Carolina clung to the Union until, betrayed into the hands of the Confederacy by their political leaders, they were forced to choose between exile from their homes or submission to its authority.

It was destined to be the next to feel the mailed hand of tyranny laid upon her unarmed and defenseless populace, and in violation of the wish of three-fourths of her citizens, as expressed at the polls, to see her name added to the list of States in rebellion against the Union. Only in name, however. Through the assistance of her loyal sons the national flag floated proudly from the spire of her beautiful capitol within a year from the date of her ordinance of secession, never to be removed, when one of their number, Andrew Johnson, was duly installed in office as Governor of that State.

Notwithstanding the fact that John C. Breckinridge was, when a candidate for the Presidency, the favorite son of Kentucky, a member of one of its most prominent and influential families, and a man of most winning address and persuasive eloquence, the official record of the votes polled in his native State shows that the people had already begun to distrust the wing of the party of which he was the especial champion. The vote stood:

For Bell	65,913
For Breckinridge	23,142
For Lincoln	52,936
Total	141,991

A majority of nearly two to one against him. The proclamation of President Lincoln calling for 75,000 men to suppress the rebellion had for its effect to determine the political bias of every thinking mind in the United States, except Kentucky; yet the facts were unmistakable that a rebellion had been inaugurated by the secession of six States; that the flag at Fort Sumter had been fired upon; that the President of the United States, in strict conformity to his official oath, had determined to restore the supremacy of the National Government over all the territory of the United States.

**TREASON OF MAGOFFIN AND BRECKENRIDGE.**  
In response to the call upon the State for its quota of troops, on the 15th of April, 1861, Governor Magoffin said: "Kentucky will furnish no troops for the wicked purpose of subduing her sister Southern States."

This action of the governor was indorsed at a secession meeting held on the 30th at Louisville, where speeches were made by the Hon. James Guthrie, Hon. Archie Dixon, Hon. John Young Brown, Judge Bullock, and Judge Nicholas, and a resolution was unanimously adopted encouraging him to resist the Government. On the 24th Governor Magoffin issued a proclamation calling upon the State to place herself in a state of defense, and convening the Legislature on the 6th of May following "to take such action as may be necessary for the general welfare."

In his proclamation he forewarned his constituents that the secession of the State would be a crime, and that the people of the State would be held responsible for the same. He also declared that the State would not be bound to furnish troops for the purpose of subduing her sister Southern States.

**FATHERLY CONCERNS OF KENTUCKIANS.**  
Hon. Garrett Davis, himself a slaveholder, in a speech made in the court-house at Paris, said: "The American Union is worth more than all the slaves on the American continent." Hon. Joseph Holt, in a letter to Joshua F. Speed, held that it was impossible for Kentucky to preserve herself from secession without at once declaring for the Union. He said: "Could my voice reach every dwelling in Kentucky, I would implore its inmates, if they would not have the rivers of their prosperity shrink away as do the streams beneath the summer heat—to raise themselves from their lethargy, and fly to the rescue of their country before it is everlastingly too late." Hon. L. H. Rousseau took the ground in the Kentucky Senate that Kentucky was in a false position. Sundry citizens of Paducah, Ky., had petitioned for an appropriation for the purpose of establishing a fort at that place. Senator Rousseau said: "If you liberally assist me, I will send every man of you who will get his head knocked off or be taken prisoner, and that the Cairo people will never permit you to come to Kentucky again. But we won't go out of the Union. You must take us out according to law and right or take us dead. Believe this, and act accordingly. We shall be too happy to keep peace, but we cannot leave the Union of our fathers. When Kentucky goes down it will be in blood. Let that be understood. She will not go as other States have gone. We have more right to defend our Government than you have to defend it. Many of us are sworn to support it." Hon. D. Robert J. Breckinridge, in the *Dunville Review*, May, 1861, disseminated the Southern rebellion in temperate but forcible language. He traced the origin and progress of the insurrection, and demonstrated not only that the rebel leaders were bent upon the accomplishment of selfish ends, but that "the latent loyalty of the Southern people needed but the protection of the Federal Government to be able to assert itself to the utter discomfiture of Jeff. Davis and his followers."

Utterances such as these could not fail to rekindle the fires of patriotism upon their altars throughout the length and breadth of the land. It was a time when the utmost cordiness was required to prevent a conflict between the adherents to the Union and the advocates of secession, a time when brains were of more value than muscle, and when the pen was more powerful than the sword.

**THE BORDER STATES CONVENTION.**  
On May 27th a Border States Convention, composed of leading men from Kentucky and Missouri, met at Frankfort, Ky., and on the 31st of June issued a declaration in which each had an interest, thrust upon them by the apostles of peace, was exceedingly distasteful to the youth of the State, in whom martial tastes were inherited from a warlike ancestry.

**YOUNG REBELS.**  
They were the descendants of the pioneers whose intrepid courage in wresting Kentucky from the grasp of the savages had been displayed in deeds of daring fresh in the memories of men still living. Their sires had borne a honorable part in all the struggles in which their country had ever engaged. To be kept at home like women while their neighbors in other States were winning fame at the cannon's mouth was a position which they regarded as humiliating and unworthy of a Kentuckian. Fearing that their native State might succumb to maintaining its neutrality, large numbers of young men about this time, instigated by the leaders of the secession movement, left the State under command of Thomas Taylor and Blanton Duncan, and offered their swords to the Southern Confederacy. They were for the most part sons of slaveholders whose interest in the institution of slavery prompted in their minds a profound distrust of the party at the North, whose chief design they believed to be to subvert the Southern States, hold them as conquered provinces, and liberate the slaves. In wealth, courtesy of manner and social standing they were the peers of any in the land, while in intellectual endowments they ranged from the alumni of Yale and Harvard down to the younger whose most noteworthy accomplishment was to read and write and ride a horse. They had many of the attributes of knight-errantry. Brave even to recklessness, faithful to the cause they espoused, true to their leaders, they followed the fortunes of the Confederacy from the opening gun at Fort Donelson to the surrender at Jonesboro with a steadfastness of purpose that goes far to excuse their devotion to the principle of State rights, upon which the Confederacy was founded.

### KENTUCKY NEUTRALITY.

Viewed from the standpoint of unconditional loyalty to the National Government, it appears incredible that intelligent men should have held the opinion and openly proclaimed it that a single State could be able to hold 700 miles of border lying between two immense contending forces sacred from the tread of hostile feet. Yet the facts warrant the belief that some regarded the position tenable. Encouraged by the attitude assumed alike by friends of the Union and of the Confederacy, united upon a platform of neutrality in the approaching struggle, Governor Magoffin, on the 20th of May, issued a proclamation forbidding any movement of troops upon Kentucky soil or the occupation of any part or place therein for any purpose whatever. 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