rehearse the history of the various shocks—if such they may be termed—which the government has been compelled to experience in arriving at its present stage of prosperity. Such is the object of the following article. The first was—

THE ARMY PLOT.

This was a conspiracy that occurred in the year 1783. The War of Independence, which for seven long years had crushed to earth with merciless tread the energy and industry of the American people, had terminated, peace was about being declared, and the three cities occupied by British troops were evacuated—Savannah in July, New York in November and Charleston in December of the same year. Although the struggle had thus been brought to a triumphant issue by the United States, yet the country was impoverished to the last degree. The government had incurred a debt of forty millions of dollars, besides twenty millions incurred by the individual States. Taxation could not yield a tithe of the amount demanded through it, and in 1782, of eight millions of dollars called for by the government, only four hundred and twenty thousand dollars were obtained. Much of the territory had been laid waste, commerce was nearly annihilated, and the circulating medium had become so utterly worthless that, by a decree of Congress, its functions were terminated. Added to this, an army of ten thousand men were large creditors to Congress, their pay being greatly in arrears. They had been promised prompt liquidation at the close of the war; but so crippled was the government in its pecuniary affairs that justice to the brave soldiers in this particular was out of the question. Many feared an open insurrection, and perhaps a civil war, when orders should be given for disbanding the army; for starving men, with arms in their hands, were quite likely to help themselves. Events which immediately preceded the act of disbanding threatened to realize these fears.

In October, 1780, Congress had passed an act granting half pay for life after the close of the war; but nine States had omitted to ratify this grant, and it was in danger of becoming a dead letter. The officers, many of whom had exhausted their private fortunes in the service of the country, petitioned that the half pay for life should be changed to full pay for five years, and that the arrearages should be paid. This reasonable request was not immediately complied with by Congress, and indications were apparent in the camp at Newburg of the approaching evil.

There were some among the officers who ascribed the inefficiency of the government to its republican form. In the midst of these gloomy forebodings Washington received a letter from Lewis Nicola, an old and highly respectable colonel of the Pennsylvania line, but a foreigner by birth, proposing the establishment of an independent monarchy, and intimating the desire of the army to make the Commander-in-Chief King. How many officers were concerned in this intrigue is not known, but it serves to show that the then popular dread of a standing army was not without foundation. To this letter Washington made quick reply, sternly rebuking the writer. He declared that no event during the war had given him so much pain; that he was at a loss to conceive what part of his conduct had given encouragement to such an address; avowed his earnest desire to have justice done the army, and his firm adherence to republican principles, and concluded:—"Let me conjure you, then, if you have any regard for your country, concern for yourself or posterity, or respect for me, to banish those thoughts from your mind, and never communicate, as from yourself or any one else, a sentiment of the like nature." How pure and lofty was the patriotism of that chief, who, at the head of a devoted army and at the pinnacle of general popularity, could thus repel a proffered crown, and so indignantly rebuke the man who held it up to view.

This neglect of Congress to provide for their wants produced a violent ferment among the officers, and through them the whole army became excited to a degree that promised to result in coercive measures. In the midst of this ferment an anonymous notice for a meeting of the general and field officers and a commissioned officer from each company was circulated in the camp at Newburg, accompanied with a very energetically written letter or address complaining of their great hardships, and asserting that their country, instead of relieving them, "trampled upon their rights, disdained their cries and insulted their distresses."

Fortunately, Washington was in the camp, and with his usual promptness and wisdom called a general meeting of all the officers in place of the irregular one. He made a short speech, in which he appealed to the patriotism and good sense of the officers, entreating them to rely on the justice of Congress, and stigmatizing the anonymous addresses as probably the work of some British emissary whose object was disgrace to the army and ruin to the country. He then retired, and left the meeting to its own deliberations. No one arose to counteract the effect of this speech.

A committee appointed for that purpose, of which Knox, one of Washington's firmest adherents, was chairman, reported a series of resolutions expressing "unshaken confidence in the justice of Congress," and "abhorrence and disdain" of the infamous proposal of the late anonymous addresses, and these resolutions were unanimously adopted.

Washington wrote immediately to Congress with great urgency and feeling upon the subject, and that body presently agreed to commute the half pay for life into five years' full pay in one gross sum, certificates to be issued for the amount to bear interest at six per cent. This measure, hardly more popular than the half pay itself, was loudly condemned by the Legislature of Massachusetts.

There prevailed, indeed, throughout New England, a strong feeling against the whole scheme of extra pay. Meanwhile, the preliminary treaty arrived in America. As the army could not be safely disbanded so long as the British continued to hold New York, Congress pronounced the engagements of the men enlisted for the war to be binding till the treaty of peace was definitely ratified. Orders, however, were issued for granting furloughs or discharges at the discretion of the Commander-in-Chief, and the lines of Maryland and Pennsylvania were ordered to march to their respective States. Three months' pay was to be furnished to the furloughed soldiers; and they were also to keep their arms and accoutrements as an extra allowance. The amount, however, was not forthcoming, owing to the continued depression in the finances of the country, and at these preparations for disbanding the army while their dues still remained unsettled, symptoms of uneasiness again made their appearance among the officers in the camp at Newburg. Some delay which occurred in preparing the notes for the three months' pay led to a humiliating insult to Congress. A body of Pennsylvania soldiery—some three hundred in number—lately arrived from the Southern department, had already given signs of insubordination by sending an insolent letter to Congress. Soon after a part of the corps stationed at Lancaster took up their line of march for Philadelphia, and, arriving there, besieged for three hours the doors of the State House, in which Congress was in session, sending in demands for immediate payment. Congress sent word to Washington of the revolt, and, disgusted at the conduct of the Pennsylvania Council in not calling out the militia of the State to suppress it, adjourned to Princeton, New Jersey. Washington promptly sent fifteen hundred men to Philadelphia, and the revolt was terminated at once, several of the mutineers being tried by court martial and sentenced to be shot. All, however, were presently pardoned, and, the government settling their arrearages, no further difficulty was experienced. Thus ended the first conspiracy against the authority of the land.

SHAYS' REBELLION—1786-7.

This second outbreak occurred in Massachusetts in 1786-7. The General Court had voted customs and excise duties for producing a revenue sufficient to meet the interest on the State debt; but it was also necessary to meet the instalments of the principal, and to make some response to the repeated requisitions of Congress. The annual State tax amounted to nearly a million of dollars, and many of the farmers had fallen behind in their payments. They were encumbered besides with private debts, to which law costs were added. County conventions called to complain of the grievances had been followed in Worcester and the counties west of it by armed mobs, which prevented the sitting of the courts.

The real difficulty, however, was the poverty and exhaustion of the country consequent upon the war, the want of a certain and remunerative market for the produce of the farmer, and the depression of domestic manufactures by competition from abroad. But, as often happens in such cases, the popular mind glanced only at the surface. The grievances principally dwelt upon were the extortions of the lawyers, the aristocratic character of the Senate, the high salary of the Governor, the sessions of the General Court in Boston, the refusal to issue paper money, and especially the recent grant of "supplementary funds," in the shape of specific taxes conceded to Congress, in addition to the proposed federal impost, as a means of paying the interest on the federal debt. In this emergency certain artful, restless individuals, such as always step forth on such occasions for the sake of a little notoriety, came forward to inflame public discontent and to flatter popular delusions. The example of the Revolution so lately accomplished naturally enough suggested an appeal to arms and the overthrow of the existing State government as an appropriate means for the remedy of social evils.

The same ideas prevailed also in the neighboring States. Only a year or two before an armed mob had surrounded the Legislature in session at Exeter, New Hampshire, and demanded a remission of taxes and an immediate issue of paper money—a project which the Legislature had referred to the people, but upon which no vote had been taken. The energetic promptitude of Governor Sullivan, however, succeeded in dispersing this mob without bloodshed.

Alarmed at this aspect of affairs in Massachusetts, Gov. Bowdoin called a special session of the General Court. An attempt was made to satisfy the malcontents by yielding to several of their demands. Acts were passed diminishing the legal costs of the collection of debts and allowing the payment of back taxes and of private debts in certain articles of produce. But as these acts did not seem to allay the public agitation, the Governor called out the militia to protect the sessions of the courts in the southern counties.

This condition of affairs in Massachusetts attracted the very serious attention of Congress. It was feared that the malcontents, who were very numerous in the western part of the State, might seize the arms in the federal arsenal at Springfield and muster in sufficient force to overturn the government. Under pretence of raising troops to act against the Northwestern Indians, Congress voted to enlist thirteen hundred men to sustain the State of Massachusetts. A special requisition of about half a million of dollars was made upon the States for the support of these troops, on the credit of which a loan was authorized, it being understood that some wealthy men of Boston would advance the money. The insurrection, however, had already broken out before these troops could be raised.

Daniel Shays, late a captain in the Continental army, on the 5th of December, 1786, took possession of Worcester, and effectually prevented the session of the Supreme Court in that town. At the head of another smaller body he repeated the same operation at Springfield; but beyond preventing the sessions of the courts these insurgents do not seem to have had any fixed plan. Governor Bowdoin at once called out four thousand militia to serve for thirty days, under the command of General Lincoln, the necessary means to sustain which troops in the field were obtained by loan in Boston.

In the depth of one of the severest of winters, on the 19th of January, 1787, the quotas of the eastern counties assembled at Boston, whence they marched to Worcester, on their way to Springfield, to relieve General Shepard, who was guarding the federal arsenal there, at the head of a small body of western militia. The malcontents had appeared in that neighborhood to the number of near two thousand men, in three bodies, under three different leaders, of whom Shays was the principal, the others being Luke Day and Eli Parsons, from the district west of the river. Shays demanded possession of the arsenal, and approached from Wilbraham to take it. Shepard pointed some pieces of cannon at the advancing column, and when the insurgents persisted in approaching he gave the order to fire. The first discharge was over their heads, and when the pieces were levelled at their ranks a cry of "murder" arose from Shays' men, who then broke and fled in confusion, leaving three killed and one wounded.

Upon Lincoln's approach, the next day, the insurgents retreated towards Amherst. They were followed, but made good their retreat to Pelham, where they took post on two high hills, almost inaccessible by reason of the snow. The weather was very severe, and Lincoln turned aside at Hadley to put his troops under cover. Negotiations ensued. The insurgents offered to disperse on condition of a general pardon; but Lincoln had no authority to make such a promise. While this negotiation was still pending the insurgents, hard pressed for provisions, broke up their camp and retreated to Petersham, on the borders of Worcester county. As soon as Lincoln was informed of this movement, at six o'clock the same evening, he started in pursuit. Pushing on all night through a driving northeast snow storm, he accomplished a march of forty miles, one of the most remarkable on record, and entered Petersham the next morning, to the utter astonishment of the insurgents, of whom one hundred and fifty were made prisoners. The rest, having had a few minutes' warning, fled hastily by the northern road. Most of the leaders escaped into New Hampshire. The insurgents east of the Connecticut being thus dispersed, Lincoln moved into Berkshire, the extreme western county, where the malcontents were still more numerous.

Meanwhile the General Court had been called together; a declaration of rebellion was put forth, and the neighboring States were called upon to assist in arresting and dispersing the insurgents who lurked in their borders, whence they made plundering incursions into Massachusetts, proceeding even so far as to kidnap some of their most obnoxious opponents. About eighty of these plunderers from New York, after an attack on Stockbridge, were intercepted by as many militia on the road, and an action ensued, in which two were killed and thirty wounded. New Hampshire, Connecticut and New York responded promptly to the request of Massachusetts, but Vermont and Rhode Island were more backward. Some of the leaders fled to Canada.

The trouble was finally settled in this manner:—A free pardon, on laying down their arms and taking the oath of allegiance, was offered to all who had served among the insurgents as privates merely or as non-commissioned officers, with deprivation, however, for three years of the right to vote, to serve as jurymen, or to be employed as schoolmasters, innkeepers or retailers of ardent spirits. The active leaders taken were subject to the decision of a commission appointed for their disposal. Of those taken and tried, fourteen were found guilty of treason and sentenced to death. Many others were convicted of sedition. None, however, were executed. Indeed, the punishments inflicted and the terms imposed by the commission above mentioned, of whom seven hundred and ninety persons took the benefit, were in general very moderate. Harsh measures would not have been safe. At least a third of the population were thought to sympathize more or less with the insurgents, and even the slight penalties imposed were not inflicted without serious opposition. At the ensuing general election the prevalence of these sentiments became very apparent. The energetic Bowdoin was dropped and Hancock reinstated as Governor, while many of those who had been most zealous against the insurgents lost their places in the General Court. Thus was happily terminated difficulties which at one time wore the most threatening aspect, and seemed about to result in the overthrow of one of the sovereignties which it had cost so much blood and treasure to establish.

THE WHISKEY INSURRECTION—1791-2-3-4.

According to the calculations, in 1790, of Alexander Hamilton, then the Secretary of the Treasury, there was required, to meet the charges growing out of the assumption of the State debts, an additional annual revenue of $826,000. This sum he proposed to raise by an increase of the duties on imported spirits, and a tax by way of excise on those produced at home. Accordingly, in 1791, Congress enacted laws imposing upon all imported spirits a duty varying from twenty to forty cents a gallon. The excise to be collected on domestic spirits varied, with their strength, from nine to twenty-five cents per gallon on those distilled from grain, and from eleven to thirty cents when the material was molasses or other imported product, thus allowing a considerable discrimination in favor of the exclusively home product.

For the collection of these duties each State was made an inspection district, with its supervisor, and each district was subdivided into surveys of inspection, each with its inspector. All distillers were required to enter their distilleries at the nearest office of inspection, with a complete description of all the buildings, which buildings were to be subject to the constant examination of an inspector appointed for that purpose, who was to guage and brand the casks, the duties to be paid before the removal of the spirits from the distillery. But to save the expense and trouble to both parties of this constant oversight, the small country stills not situated in any town or village were to pay an annual rate of sixty cents per gallon on the capacity of the still. All casks containing spirits not properly branded and certified were liable to forfeiture.

From the very commencement of the operation of these laws combinations were formed in the four western counties of Pennsylvania to defeat them, and violent acts were repeatedly committed. The insurgents followed, as they supposed, the example of the American Revolution in opposing an excise law. Distilling was then considered a reputable business, and it is said that in Pennsylvania alone the number of private stills was not less than five thousand. Rye, their principal crop, was too bulky to transport across the mountains, and, having no market for it, they were obliged to convert it into the more easily transported article of whiskey, which was their principal item to pay for their salt, sugar and iron. They had cultivated their lands for years at the peril of their lives, with little or no protection from the federal government, and when at last they were enabled to raise a little surplus grain to meet their expenses of living, they were encountered with a law which forbade them doing as they pleased with the fruits of their labors. In effect it was as bad as a government tax on wheat would be at the present day to the Western farmer.

The indignation of the people was consequently universal. Public meetings were held, composed of the most influential men, denouncing the law, and resolutions passed recommending the public to treat all persons holding the office of collector of the tax with contempt. They were consequently subjected to all sorts of indignities. In September, 1791, Robert Johnson, the Collector for Allegheny and Washington, was waylaid, his hair cut off, and he was tarred and feathered. The next month a man named Wilson was taken from his bed by persons in disguise, carried several miles to a blacksmith's shop, stripped naked, burned with a red-hot iron, and covered with a coat of tar and feathers. Others met with similar treatment.

In May, 1792, Congress passed material modifications to the law, but all to no purpose. The excitement increased, and not only were collectors visited with violence, but also those distillers who complied with the law. Barns were burned, houses torn down, and death threatened to those who should disclose the names of the adversaries of the law. So strong was the public feeling that one word in favor of the act was enough to ruin any man. It was considered a badge of toryism. No clergyman, physician, lawyer or merchant was sustained by the people unless his sentiments accorded with those of the community.

In July, 1794, steps were taken by the government to enforce the collection of the excise. Thirty warrants were issued against distillers, which the Marshal of the district undertook to serve. He succeeded with twenty-nine of them, but as he was going, in company with Gen. Neville, the inspector of the district, to serve the thirtieth, they were intercepted by a party of armed men, who fired upon them and compelled them to fly for their lives. The next morning, July 16, Neville's house, in the vicinity of Pittsburg, was attacked by a party of forty or more. In expectation of some such violence the windows had been barricaded, Neville's negroes and other servants had been armed, and the assailants were repulsed with the loss of six men wounded, and one of them mortally. Anticipating further trouble, the General immediately obtained a detachment of eleven men from the neighboring garrison of Fort Pitt to assist him in defending himself and property. The next morning the assailants appeared, five hundred strong, led by one John Holcroft, who, under the assumed name of "Tom, the Tinker," had been deeply concerned in stirring up previous outrages against officers who attempted to enforce the law, and distillers who were disposed to submit to it. On the approach of this force Neville escaped from the house, leaving his kinsman, Major Fitzpatrick, to make such defence or capitulation as might be deemed expedient. The surrender of Neville was demanded, and, on information that he was gone, the admission of six men to search the house for the papers connected with his office. This being refused, a flag was sent for the women to leave the house, soon after which the attack was commenced. McFarlane, one of the directors of the enterprise, was killed, and several other of the assailants wounded, but they succeeded in firing the outhouses, and as the flames threatened to spread, the garrison, three of whom had been wounded, were compelled to surrender. The men were dismissed without injury, but all the buildings were burned to the ground. The next day a message was sent to Pittsburg, where the inspector and marshal had taken refuge, requiring one to resign his office and the other to give up the warrants in his possession. This they refused to do, and as there was a probability of an attack upon them there, they made good their escape down the river to Marietta, and thence set out over land for Philadelphia.

After this insubordination everywhere prevailed. All law was disregarded; peaceable members of the community became obnoxious to the mob and their adherents; the mail was boldly robbed and disclosed letters which added new victims to the lawless rage; a summons to the militia by the leaders of the insurgents drew together not less than seven thousand men. Colonel Cook, one of the Judges of Fayette county, was chosen President of this armed assembly. Albert Gallatin was appointed Secretary, and a man named Bradford assumed the character of Major General, and reviewed the troops. Many outrages were committed. The design was entertained of taking possession of Fort Pitt, but for some reason it was not carried out, and, in fact, a reign of terror seemed to have been completely established.

News of these events soon reached Washington and his Cabinet. The State authorities of Pennsylvania declining to take the initiative in the matter, the President resolved to assume the responsibility himself.

A proclamation was put forth requiring these opposers of the law to desist, and a requisition was issued to the Governors of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland and Virginia, for a body of 13,000 men, raised afterwards to 15,000. The insurgent counties could bring into the field about 16,000 fighting men.

The movement of the troops was fixed for the 1st of September. Meanwhile Commissioners were appointed to arrange with the leaders of the faction an effectual submission to the laws. These proceeded to the infected district, and various meetings were held, in which the subject was fully discussed, but without arriving at any definite conclusion, and the Commissioners, after experiencing a series of personal insults, returned to Philadelphia. The next day, September 24, Washington gave orders for the advance of the troops. This news soon produced the desired result. Calmer thoughts ensued, and a Convention was held at Parkinson's Ferry, in which resolutions of submission to the law were for the first time adopted. Some blood was shed in the final settlement by the rebels coming in contact with the militia; but after due season, the Commander-in-Chief, Governor Lee, of Virginia, having issued a proclamation of amnesty to all those entitled to it, the re-establishment of the law became complete. Many prisoners were made, but only two were found guilty of capital offences—one of arson and the other of robbing the mail—both of whom, from some palliating circumstances, were ultimately pardoned by the President.

A body of twenty-five hundred men under General Morgan remained through the winter encamped in the district; but, order having been restored, these were discharged and returned to their homes in the spring.

THE ALIEN AND SEDITION LAWS—1798.

The next great excitement which pervaded the United States was during the administration of John Adams, and grew out of the passage of the famous Alien and Sedition laws. The French Revolution had just reached its highest point of delirium, and the people of this country were divided in the sentiments they entertained for the course pursued by France. Mr. Adams wished to preserve a neutrality, but found this impossible. The American Minister had been expelled from the republic, and new orders had been issued for depredations upon American commerce. An army was raised, and though there was no actual declaration of war, hostilities commenced on the ocean between the two nations. Several French frigates were taken, with great loss, and it is estimated that not less than three hundred private American vessels were armed for self-defence and the purpose of privateering. The French government and people were surprised at these hostile demonstrations of the United States, and Napoleon having come into power, a disposition was manifested to recede from the offensive position which had been assumed. Commissioners were again appointed on behalf of the two governments, and the difficulties were finally adjusted.

During this period, however, the people of the United States were convulsed with excitement.

The greater part of the immigrants to this country since the adoption of the federal constitution had been either Frenchmen driven thither by their political opinions, or Englishmen, Scotchmen and Irishmen who had expressed ultra republican doctrines, and brought to America a furious hatred of their own government and institutions and hearty good wishes for republican France. A large number of these were desperate and violent men, whose chief idea of freedom seemed to be the unrestrained indulgence of their own fierce passions and hatreds. These strongly sympathized with the ultra democratic party, and having obtained by naturalization the rights of citizenship, they led off among the most vindictive opponents of the national administration. Some of them became candidates, and this raised the question whether the government of the country ought not to be in the hands of native citizens.

Many propositions were made with this view, it being thought necessary, as a part of the system of defence then under consideration, to vest a power somewhere to send out of the country such foreign residents as might be suspected of co-operating with external enemies.

To provide against this contingency three bills were passed. The first was an amendment to the naturalization act, extending the previous residence to fourteen years, and requiring five years previous declaration of intention to become a citizen. A register was also kept of all aliens resident in the country.

A second act, limited to two years, gave the President authority to order out of the country all such aliens as he might deem dangerous to the peace and safety of the United States.

By a third act, in case of declaration of war all natives or citizens of the hostile nation were liable to be apprehended or removed.

The second of these, which became familiarly known as the "Alien act," was vigorously opposed; and, though neither of the three was ever carried into effect, two or three shiploads of Frenchmen took the hint and left the country.

Meanwhile the warlike measures growing out of the fears of a rupture with France—to which we have referred—were vigorously pushed forward. Pending their progress, on the 26th of June, 1798, Mr. Lloyd, of Maryland, introduced in the Senate a bill to define more precisely the crime of treason, and to define and punish the crime of sedition. As originally introduced the first section of the bill declared the people of France to be the enemies of the United States, and adherence to them as treason, punishable with death.

The fourth section provided for punishing by fine and imprisonment any person who, by writing, printing or speaking, should attempt to justify the hostile government of the French or to defame the laws of the United States, by any seditious or inflammatory declarations tending to induce a belief that the government or any of its officers were influenced by motives hostile to the constitution or to the liberties of the people. In passing through the Senate and House, however, the bill experienced several important modifications, and, as finally carried, provides as follows:—First, that it is a high misdemeanor, punishable by fine, not exceeding five thousand dollars, for any persons to conspire against the government of the United States to impede the operation of the law, or to commit, advise or attempt to procure any insurrection, riot, unlawful assembly or combination. The second section subjected to a fine not exceeding two thousand dollars the publishing of any false, scandalous or malicious writings against the government of the United States, or either house of Congress, or the President, with intent to defame them or bring them in disrepute, or to excite against them the hatred of the people of the United States, or to stir up sedition, or to excite any unlawful combination for opposing any law of the United States, or to encourage any hostile designs of any foreign nation against the United States. The act was to continue in force until March, 1801.

There were at this period two hundred newspapers published in the United States. One hundred and seventy or eighty were in favor of the federal administration, while of the balance, opposed to most of the leading measures then adopted, a greater portion were under the control of aliens. These exercised an individual influence over the minds of their readers even greater than that of the much abler journals of our own times, and as a political agent in the hands of the statesmen of the time, then played an important part in the affairs of the young republic.

In examining the character and policy of this sedition act, it must be taken into consideration that it was merely a temporary one, passed at a moment of threatened war, and when the government was assailed in print with a malice scarcely paralleled before or since—publications principally made by foreign refugees. Party spirit was at this time fast rising to the pitch of civil war, and to the excited minds of the federalists the conduct of the opposition began to appear even more reprehensible than that of the tories of the Revolution. In some parts of the country the opposition to the Alien and Sedition laws was very great, and in Kentucky and Virginia the Legislatures declared them to be gross and direct infractions of the constitution, and appealed to the other States to join in urging their repeal—or in the language of a letter from John Taylor, of Virginia, one of the dominant leaders of the opposition, "to estimate the separate mass of Virginia and North Carolina, with a view to their separate existence." Jefferson, however, to whom this letter had been shown, suggested to Taylor some reasons why this idea should not be pushed. "It is true," he wrote, "that we are completely under the saddle of Massachusetts and Connecticut, and that they ride us very hard, cruelly insulting our feelings, as well as exhausting our strength and subsistence. Their natural friends—the three other Eastern States—join them from a sort of family pride, and they have the art to divide certain other parts of the Union, so as to make use of them to govern the whole. But they are circumscribed within such narrow limits that their numbers will ever be the minority, and they are marked, like the Jews, with such a perversity of character as to constitute from that circumstance the natural division of parties. A little patience, and we shall see the reign of witches pass over, their spells dissolved and the recovering of their true might and restoring the government to its true principles."

The pitch of excitement to which the country had arrived may be estimated from another letter by Jefferson, in which he declares it to be "a singular phenomenon that, while our State governments are the very best in the world without exception or comparison, our general government has, in the rapid course of nine or ten years, become more arbitrary and has swallowed up more of the public liberty than even that of England." It was under the influence of feelings like these that Jefferson prepared the original draft of what are known as the "Resolutions of 1798," referred to above as having been introduced in the Kentucky Legislature.

The original draft began with a resolution that the federal government is a compact between the States, as States, by which is created a general government for special purposes, each State reserving to itself the residuary mass of power and right, and that, as in other cases of compact between parties, having no common judge, each party has an equal right to judge for itself, as well of infractions as of the mode and measure of redress. Then followed five resolutions, practically applying to the acts of the last Congress—this alleged right of the States to judge of infractions and their remedy, not merely as a matter of opinion, but officially and constitutionally as parties to the compact, and as the foundation of important legislation. These three acts were severally to punish counterfeiters of bills of the United States Bank, the Sedition law and the Alien law—all of which, for various reasons assigned, were successively pronounced "not law, but altogether void and of no force." The Senators and members of Kentucky were directed to lay these resolutions before the two houses of Congress, and the Governor was also instructed to transmit the resolutions to the Legislatures of the several States, to whom an earnest appeal was made for a concurrence with Kentucky in requesting the repeal of the obnoxious laws and declaring them void and of no force. This was the shape in which, with only two or three dissenting votes, the resolutions passed the Kentucky Legislature, on the 14th of November, 1798.

A few weeks after, on the 24th of December, the same sentiments were re-echoed by the Legislature of Virginia in a series of resolutions prepared by James Madison, and about a month after they were sent out with an address, likewise prepared by Madison, containing the entire case of the opposition as against the federal administration.

It does not appear, however, that either the Senators or the representatives of Kentucky had ventured to lay before Congress the resolutions of their State, nor had the resolutions of Kentucky or Virginia found favor with the various State Legislatures. Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont disavowed the doctrine set up of a right in the State Legislatures to decide upon the validity of acts of Congress. The reply of Massachusetts likewise maintained the constitutionality of the Alien and Sedition laws as being justified by the exigency of the moment, and the power of Congress to provide for the common defence.

These laws continued the subject of constant and acrimonious agitation throughout the administration of President Adams, and were one of the causes which led, in 1801, to his rejection by the people of the United States, after having served four years, and the election in his place of Thomas Jefferson as President, with Aaron Burr as Vice President of the United States, both of these eminent men having distinguished themselves as ardent opponents of the federal administration in the party then known as republicans, anti-federalists or democrats.

BURR'S CONSPIRACY—1806-7.

Before, as well as after his elevation to the position of Vice President, Burr never had the full confidence of the country. His political strength was confined chiefly to New York, and even here he was denounced as a traitor by the more influential republican leaders and presses. By others he was regarded as a man whose energy, enterprise and audacity would never allow him to rest content with a subordinate position. Four years had passed by. Jefferson became a candidate for re-election, and a caucus of the administration members was held to select a candidate for the Vice Presidency in the place of the first incumbent. They accordingly displaced Burr and nominated George Clinton. Burr was then brought forward by his friends as an independent candidate; but owing to the efforts of Alexander Hamilton, whose opinions about him had been frankly expressed three or four years before, he found himself disappointed, distrusted and about to sink alike into political annihilation and pecuniary ruin. He therefore seized upon a pretext to force Hamilton into a duel, and, as is well known, was successful. The meeting took place July 11, 1804, on the grounds of Weehawken, on the Jersey shore, opposite New York, and Hamilton fell. The outburst of public indignation which followed this event was tremendous. An indictment for murder was found against Burr, and, after a concealment of a few days in Philadelphia, Burr fled to Georgia to escape arrest.

In 1805 he made his appearance in the West, one of the nominal objects of his journey being a speculation for a canal around the Falls of the Ohio, on the Indiana side. Burr had offered a share in this speculation to General Wilkinson, the Commander-in-Chief of the army, and just appointed the Governor of the new Territory of Louisiana, including all the region west of the Mississippi.

Another nominal object of Burr's Western tour was to present himself in Tennessee, where no previous residence was required, as a candidate for Congress. Wilkinson was about departing at this time to take possession of his government of Louisiana, and he invited Burr to embark with him at Pittsburg, and to descend the river in his company. The vessels then chiefly employed in descending voyages were arks—chest-like boats, square at the ends—which admitted of being fitted up with every comfort for a small number of passengers, and which floated down with the current.

Burr's boat being the first ready, he declined to wait for Wilkinson, and proceeded alone. Arriving at Blennerhasset's Island, nearly opposite Marietta, he acquired a most zealous, devoted and enthusiastic partisan in the person of its owner. This was Herman Blennerhasset, an Irishman, possessing by inheritance a considerable fortune; a man of education and refinement, who had retired from Europe under the influence of certain politico-romantic notions common in Great Britain towards the close of the eighteenth century. Retiring to the frontier settlements, he invested a considerable part of his fortune on the island, which soon became known by his name, erected a beautiful mansion, surrounded by gardens and conservatories, and furnished it in a style yet unknown beyond the mountains. Blennerhasset's wife was no less enthusiastic than himself, and she even more, if possible, than her husband, became captivated by the arts of Burr, whose success with the fair sex is a matter of general history.

Both these excitable imaginations were thus at once set on fire, and Blennerhasset, prompted no less by his own ambition than by the prospect of princely returns, was ready to risk at once upon the enterprise all he possessed. Soon after Burr resumed his voyage and proceeded to New Orleans. His real plans appear to have been threefold:—

First. To ascertain the sentiments of the people of the West upon the subject of a separation from the Atlantic States, and, if favorable, to have attempted to erect a separate republic in the West, of which he was to be the head and New Orleans the capital.

Secondly. To raise a force and make arrangements for a private expedition against Mexico and the Spanish provinces in the event of a war between the United States and Spain, which at that time seemed inevitable.

Thirdly. In the event of the failure of both these measures, to purchase a tract of land of Baron Bastrop on the Washita river in Louisiana, upon which he contemplated the establishment of a colony of wealthy and intelligent individuals, where he might rear around him a society remarkable for its elegance and refinement.

The unsettled relations with Spain presented a specious cloak to his enterprise in that quarter, and enabled him to give to each person addressed such representation of his plans as best suited their character. There is but little doubt that many concurred in the enterprise without being aware of its treasonable character; while to others all his schemes were exposed in their full deformity. His adherents existed in every State and Territory in the West, from Western Pennsylvania down to Louisiana, and among them were some of the leading men of the country.

The winter of 1806 Burr spent partly in Washington and partly in Philadelphia, but in a very obscure manner. It was here that he became acquainted with Gen. Eaton, who had recently returned from the Mediterranean, to whom he divulged the fact of his contemplated expedition against Mexico, and thus secured a promise of his co-operation. He also developed a project for revolutionizing the Western country, establishing a monarchy, organizing a force of ten or twelve thousand volunteers, and finally securing the co-operation of the marine corps at Washington and gaining over Truxton, Preble, Decatur and others. He then intended to turn Congress out of doors, assassinate the President, seize on the Treasury and navy, and declare himself the Protector of an energetic government. This satisfied Eaton that Burr was a dangerous man, and he accordingly waited upon the President and made a partial revelation of the facts, suggesting the propriety of appointing Burr to some foreign mission to keep him out of mischief.

During the summer of 1806 the public mind in the West became agitated by rumors of secret expeditions and conspiracies in which Burr and others were implicated, and in the following November he was seized at Lexington, Ky., and arraigned before the United States Court to answer to a charge of high misdemeanor in organizing a military expedition against a Power with whom the United States were at peace. He was defended by Henry Clay, then a rising young lawyer, after being assured upon his honor that he was engaged in no design contrary to the laws and peace of the land.

Owing to the absence of an important witness he was acquitted; and yet at that very time, an armed force in his service occupied Blennerhasset's island, and a large number of boats were at Marietta laden with provisions and military stores.

All danger of collision had ere this been removed, but Burr, notwithstanding, adhered to his original design. On the 25th of November Jefferson issued a proclamation denouncing the enterprise, and soon after the 1st of December the boats were seized, and the mansion of Blennerhasset occupied by the militia, the owner making his escape down the Ohio. Burr meanwhile proceeded down the Mississippi in a flotilla of eleven boats. His adherents at this time had dwindled to a comparatively small number. The West now became thoroughly aroused to the true nature of the conspiracy, and from Pittsburg to the Gulf militia were held in readiness by the State authorities, and the most rigid measures were adopted to check the further progress of the expedition.

Gen. Wilkinson, who commanded the United States forces in the West, was Burr's principal *confidante* in his schemes, and with that officer he maintained, in cypher, a constant communication. The latter, however, informed Jefferson of all the movements of the conspirators, and finally became the most active person in effecting their arrest.

In January, 1807, the flotilla of Burr arrived at Bayou Pierre, on the Lower Mississippi. He was there seized by the Governor of Mississippi, but managed shortly after to effect his escape. A reward of two thousand dollars was offered for his apprehension, and many arrests were made of his supposed accomplices.

Finally, about the 1st of February, late at night, a man in the garb of a boatman, with a single companion, arrived at the door of a small log cabin in the backwoods of Alabama. Colonel Nicholas Perkins, who was present, observed by the light of the fire that the stranger, though coarsely dressed, possessed a countenance of unusual intelligence and an eye of sparkling brilliancy. The tidy boot, which his vanity could not surrender with his other articles of finer clothing, attracted Perkins' attention, and led him truly to conclude that the mysterious stranger was none other than the famous Colonel Burr.

That night Perkins started for Fort Stoddart, on the Tombigbee, and communicated his suspicions to the late General Edmund P. Gaines, then the lieutenant in command. The next day Gaines, with a file of soldiers, started in pursuit of Burr and arrested him on his journey. Burr attempted to intimidate his captor; but the young officer was resolute, and told him he must accompany him to his quarters, where he would be treated with all the respect due the ex Vice President of the United States.

In about three weeks Burr was sent to Richmond, Va., under a special guard selected by Colonel Perkins, upon whom he could depend in any emergency. Perkins knew the fascinations of Burr, and fearing his familiarity [illegible]

[illegible]

A few miles beyond Fort Wilkinson they stopped at a [illegible] kept by one Bevis. [illegible] "I am Aaron Burr; what do you want with me?" [illegible]

When they reached the confines of South Carolina Perkins watched Burr more closely than ever, for his son-in-law, Colonel Alston [illegible], a man of talents and influence, resided in the State. [illegible]

Arriving at Richmond, the ladies of the city vied with each other in contributing to his comfort. [illegible]

[illegible]

THE HARTFORD CONVENTION—1814.

From the peculiar analogy which exists between the events of 1814 and those of the present time—the principal difference being that the New England States were leagued together in an attempt at secession then, while the Southern States are now—a history of that period will be especially interesting to the general reader.

[illegible]

MASSACHUSETTS COMPARED TO GEORGIA.

[illegible]

THE MISSOURI COMPROMISE—1820.

[illegible]