

LIFE AND DIARY  
OF  
JOHN FLOYD



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JOHN FLOYD.

✓ THE LIFE AND DIARY OF

# JOHN FLOYD

GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA, AN APOSTLE OF SECESSION,  
AND THE FATHER OF THE OREGON COUNTRY

BY

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*Thomas Ritchie: a Study in Virginia Politics, etc.*

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**Dedicated**

TO

MY FRIENDS, THE LATE DOCTOR GEORGE BEN JOHNSTON  
AND HIS NIECE, ANN MASON LEE, OF  
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA



## CONTENTS

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I. A CHILD OF THE FRONTIER.....	9
II. A SPOKESMAN OF THE FRONTIER.....	33
III. THE OREGON COUNTRY.....	52
IV. PRESIDENT MAKER AND GOVERNOR.....	76
V. AN APOSTLE OF DISCONTENT.....	94
VI. JOHN FLOYD'S DIARY.....	123





## P R E F A C E

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This brief biography of John Floyd, one of Virginia's unique characters of the first half of the last century, was made possible by the acquisition of his papers by the Library of Congress and by an opportunity to use his long forgotten diary. His defense of the interests of the frontier, his fight for the Oregon country, his uncompromising stand for the state sovereignty theory of government, his bitter hostility to the administration of Andrew Jackson, and his part in the formation of the Whig party entitle him to a place among the statesmen and politicians of his day. To his contemporaries he was a visionary, known and ridiculed as "Old Oregon." Now, he is honored as the "Father of the Oregon Country," his celebrated report of 1821 on our rights and interests in the Columbia Valley bearing the same relation to the occupation and settlement of that part of the United States as does Richard Hakluyt's famous *Discourse on Western Planting* to the founding of the English colonies in America.

Mr. Floyd's "Diary," published herewith, covers the period from March, 1831 to February, 1834, and is reproduced in full, excepting only the daily comments of its author upon the weather and other commonplace subjects. The parts here given cast some new light upon the purposes and methods of the opposition to Jackson and upon the social life and happenings of Washington in the Jacksonian period. It is hoped that the lapse of time and the demands for a more scientific study of the past will be sufficient reasons for the publication of this source in the unexpurgated form in which it here appears. In bringing to light this Diary, neither the editor nor the publisher vouches for the truthfulness or justice of any of the references made by

Mr. Floyd to Jackson and his friends. Very few changes have been made in the spelling, the punctuation, the capitalization, and the paragraphing of the original document.

Mr. Floyd's "Diary" was first brought to my attention by Mr. J. M. Battin, a former student in my classes in Randolph-Macon College. Mr. Battin first used the "Diary" in writing a short biography of John Floyd. His paper was published in the *John P. Branch Historical Papers of Randolph-Macon College, June, 1913*.

In the preparation of these pages I have received helpful assistance from the late Dr. George Ben Johnston, of Richmond, Virginia, and from his niece, Ann Mason Lee, also of Richmond. They are direct descendants from Floyd and own his "Diary," together with other interesting and useful source materials relating to the Floyd, Johnston, and Preston families of Virginia. Acknowledgements are also due the authorities of the Library of Congress and the State Library of Virginia.

CHARLES H. AMBLER.

*Randolph-Macon College,*  
*Ashland, Va.*  
September 1, 1917.

# LIFE OF JOHN FLOYD

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## I. A CHILD OF THE FRONTIER.

**A**LWAYS true to the interests of the frontier and a zealous defender of the state sovereignty theory of government, John Floyd was, through it all, true to his heritage and early environment. He was, in fact, a child of the frontier, his ancestors being, for generations, leaders in those pioneer movements that carried settlement first into the tidewater section of the New World, thence in turn into the Piedmont, the Valley separating the Alleghany and the Blue Ridge mountains, and finally into the great West beyond. He first saw the light of day near Louisville, Kentucky, on April 24, 1783, twelve days after his father, Colonel John Floyd, had fallen a victim to the savage foe. Reared in this frontier environment he early learned to judge merit by individual standards. It was from the "association," the embryo state of the frontier, that he received his first lessons in the inalienable right of a rational and social people imbued with the highest and most extensive ideas of liberty to make all the laws and regulations necessary for the common good and to alter and abolish those laws when they failed to accomplish the ends for which they were made. Thus to understand this man, it will be necessary to know something of the life and the times of his forebears.

Two brothers, Nathaniel and Walter, seem to have been the first of the Floyds in this country.

They landed at Jamestown in their own vessel, the *Nova*, a short time after the first settlement there and seem to have been engaged for several years in trading with the mother country. Their father, John Floyd, a veteran of that thrilling conflict in which the Spanish Armada had gone down to defeat, was a man of means and of social position. He probably helped to equip his sons for their adventures in the new world. He was knighted at the hands of Queen Elizabeth, and later became a writer of some note and a lecturer in the Society of Jesus.

When tobacco culture and negro slavery were introduced into the colony of Virginia, the life of a planter there became both attractive and profitable. Following the impulse of the times, Walter Floyd patented four hundred acres of land in Martin's Hundred, and five years later, in 1637, Nathaniel became the owner and proprietor of eight hundred fifty acres in Isle of Wight County. These two pioneers in the conquest of the Tidewater thus became the progenitors of the many families which bore their name in that section.<sup>1</sup>

It was not until near the middle of the eighteenth century and until after two generations of their ancestors had passed away that we hear anything more of the Floyds in Virginia. About that time a feeling of unrest and dissatisfaction, followed later by political revolutions and readjustments, was abroad in the world. It had extended even to the tobacco growers of Virginia, who, despite the comparative newness of their lands, now fell victims of that wanderlust which carried the Floyds forth, at intervals more or less regular, in

search of new homes. William, John, and Charles Floyd answered the call and set out on a surveying expedition which carried them along the James to the Blue Ridge Mountains. Already that picturesque frontiersman, Alexander Spotswood, had led the way and had founded a settlement in the Piedmont. Numerous other surveys had been made in the country so that there was nothing very remarkable in the journey of the Floyds to the Blue Ridge. Its significance is in the fact that they were on the move. Soon after their return John cast his lot with the North and was lost to his family. Charles went to the South and became the progenitor of a long line of descendants, among whom was General John Floyd, a famous Indian fighter and a representative from Georgia in Congress. William, the grandfather of the subject of this sketch and the ancestor of the Virginia-Kentucky branch of the Floyd family, returned to the uplands of his native state, finding a home in Amherst County which was then on the very outskirts of the slaveholding society.

William Floyd had received the rudiments of a substantial education and, as a surveyor, early rose to prominence on the frontier. He became the owner of a large tract of land which he himself patented and was, during a large part of his life, both county surveyor and captain of the county militia. Shortly after his arrival in Amherst County he married Abadiah, the beautiful daughter of Robert Davis, a large landholder on the upper James, who had married a half-breed Indian girl. There is a family tradition of uncertain origin that traces the

ancestry of this girl to the great Indian chieftain Opechancanough. However that may be, the descendants of William Floyd and his wife, Abadiah, have never ceased to be proud of the Indian blood that courses through their veins and to hold in highest esteem the memory of their maternal ancestor.

William Floyd and his wife, Abadiah, had twelve children: Sarah, who married Wyatt Powell and became the ancestor of a noted line of descendants, in the succeeding generations in Virginia; Elizabeth, who married Charles Tuley whom she later accompanied to Kentucky, whence her children spread to all parts of the great Northwest; John, the father of the subject of this biography; Charles, who played a prominent part in the Revolutionary War, aided George Rogers Clark, and gave a son for the Lewis and Clark Expedition; Robert and Isham, who lost their lives in encounters with the Indians while fighting under the command of George Rogers Clark; Nathaniel, who saw gallant service under Jackson at New Orleans; Jemimah and Abadiah, whose husbands were killed in Indian massacres; and three other girls, who are known to the family only as Mrs. Pryor, Mrs. Drake, and Mrs. Alexander.

Because they were, in many respects, typical of the other families that carried settlement and civilization into the frontier, it should be noted, in this connection, that the sons and daughters of William Floyd came from a home of refinement and even of wealth. Their ancestors represented the best in the culture and taste of two races and were



numbered among the landholding aristocrats who lived in almost regal splendor on the banks of the upper James, and who were only one generation and a few score miles removed from the aristocrats of the Tidewater. They were thus able to extend to the Valley and to the country beyond a modified, yet discernible, form of the plantation life. Thus amid all the privations and hardships of the frontier, they never forgot or abandoned the distinctive traits of the Virginia gentleman, in emulation of whom they became leaders among their fellows upon the battlefields and in the political arenas of the frontier.

John, the eldest son of Abadiah and William Floyd, was born in Amherst County, Virginia, in 1751. At the age of eighteen he married a Miss Burfoot who died twelve months after their marriage. Disconsolate he now sought new friends and new fortunes in the land beyond the mountains. About 1770 he went to Botetourt County and found employment first as a teacher and later as a clerk in the land-office of Colonel William Preston, surveyor of Fincastle County. When not thus employed he rode as a deputy sheriff with Daniel Trigg, both being employed by Colonel William Christian, high sheriff of Botetourt County.

Shortly thereafter, the officers and soldiers, who had land claims in the West for services rendered in the French and Indian War, made application to Colonel Preston to have their lands located and surveyed. Accordingly a party of surveyors was sent into the trans-Alleghany country. Floyd's services in the land office and in the bailiwick had

been such that Colonel Preston selected him as one of the party and commissioned him a captain. In the spring of 1774 he set out for the "Dark and Bloody Land" with his companions: James Douglas, Isaac Hite, Alexander Spotswood Dandridge, Thomas Hanson (who kept a journal), James Knox, Frederick McCra, and Mordicai Batson.

Notwithstanding the fact that the relations between the white man and the savage had become alarming, that the inhabitants of what is now southwestern Virginia were abandoning their outposts and retreating to the more thickly settled communities, and that the newspapers of the East were demanding war for the protection of the frontier, the band of surveyors pressed on to the task before them. On the long and tedious journey down the Kanawha and the Ohio, Floyd, though yet a young man, seems to have been the moving spirit among his companions. After they had passed the Falls of the Kanawha, on April 14, 1774, it was he who provided the canoe that carried most of the party beyond the "burning spring" and into the midst of the hostile red men who were now jealously watching the Ohio; it was he who surveyed the lands for Colonel George Washington on the Kanawha and for Patrick Henry and others on the Ohio; and it was he who provisioned his companions by the aid of his trusty rifle and inspired them to press on in the face of the dangers which seemed to surround them on all sides.

By the middle of May, 1774, Floyd and those of his companions who had not turned back for fear of the Indians were in the "Kentucky country." A



few days later a canoe driven by two Indians and flying a red flag came down the Ohio. The Indians bore passes from the commandant at Fort Pitt and had come to warn the hunters and trappers that a war was on between the whites and the Shawnees. The news which they bore of the frightful massacres which had already taken place caused some of the party to turn back, but "Mr. Floyd and the rest of the surveyors were determined to do the business they came on if not repulsed by a greater force than themselves." Accordingly they pressed vigorously to the work of surveying on the Ohio River and on the waters of Bear Grass and Elk Horn Creeks. Among the tracts surveyed by Floyd, to say nothing of those surveyed by Hancock Taylor and others already in the field, were six for Patrick Henry comprising seven thousand four hundred acres, five for Colonel William Christian aggregating eight thousand acres, two for Alexander Spotswood Dandridge, making three thousand acres, a tract of one thousand acres for Colonel William Preston, and one of one thousand acres for himself.

Meanwhile the Indians continued to press down in ever greater numbers, and Colonel Preston began to have concern for the safety of his surveyors. Accordingly he secured, through the aid of Captain William Russell, the services of two seasoned woodsmen, Daniel Boone and Michael Stoner, to go as runners through Kentucky and warn the surveyors and the outlying settlers of the impending perils. Before they reached the Kentucky country the Indians had already penetrated

to the very midst of the surveyors and murdered James Hamilton and James Cowan, pioneer settlers. Coming upon the scene of this barbarity, James Douglas and others of Floyd's companions fled by way of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers to New Orleans. Deserted by his companions and officially apprised of the impending danger, Floyd could hold out no longer. He at once set out by the most direct routes for the settlements in the Valley of Virginia, where he arrived after a journey of sixteen days, which led "through mountains almost inaccessible and ways unknown." It is probable that he followed, for a part of the distance at least, the route taken by Christopher Gist in 1751.

Upon his arrival in the Clinch Valley, Floyd found his countrymen busy and even enthusiastic in their preparations for Dunmore's War. All realized that the long series of mutual grievances and outrages between the frontiersmen of Pennsylvania and Virginia on the one side, and the savages of the Ohio Valley on the other, had reached a crisis pregnant with weal or woe. In his inability to restrain his subjects upon the frontier, who "acquire no attachment to place and who ever imagine the lands further off are still better than those upon which they are already settled," Lord Dunmore had issued a circular letter calling out the militia of the western counties for a part in the impending conflict. Dunmore himself was on his way to Fort Pitt and had sent word to Colonel Andrew Lewis "to raise a respectable body in your quarter [southwestern Virginia], and join me

either at the mouth of the Great Kanawha or Wheeling, or such other point on the Ohio as may be most convenient." The summons had also reached the county lieutenants and the local military officials, among whom great rivalry prevailed in the contest then on for excellence in raising and equipping companies of soldiers.

Although the main army had already assembled at Camp Union on the Big Levels of the Greenbriar River and was about ready to march under the command of the gallant Lewises, Floyd began to raise a company of his own, hoping to join his fellow soldiers before they reached the common enemy. The best soldiers had already enlisted, and Floyd did not, therefore, wish his friend Preston "to take too much notice" of the news that might reach him of the efforts and means being used to get others. He was certain that all could be explained when they met and that all differences between rival commanders could then be adjusted. He succeeded in raising one of the best companies that ever went out of the Valley to meet any foe.

Hoping to return by way of Kentucky and to finish his surveys Floyd set out with his command late in September, following the line of march of the main army. We next hear of him from Point Pleasant six days after the decisive battle which took place there on October 10, 1774, between the Indians commanded by Cornstalk and the whites commanded by Colonel Andrew Lewis and his brother Charles. He had arrived on the night of the battle but too late to take part in it. While yet twelve or fifteen miles from the scene of action,

messengers brought reports of the conflict which waged just ahead, and of the uncertainty of the outcome. Inspired by the prayers of those who fought and of those who sought to aid them he hastened onward covering the whole distance in a single afternoon, but, when he arrived, the defeated enemy had fled never again to threaten the whites on the Ohio in such formidable numbers.

When the troops were ready for march from the mouth of the Kanawha, the season was too far advanced and the contest with the Indian was too uncertain to permit Floyd to return by way of Kentucky, as he had planned. April 21, 1775, found him in Powell's Valley, twelve miles from Cumberland Gap, ready to reenter the Kentucky country by that popular route. It mattered not that the red man, in defence of his hunting-grounds, persisted in carrying war and massacre into the very midst of the settlements that were being made there. The lands they sought to defend were the only diet that satisfied the appetites of the pioneers. Already the contest for Kentucky had passed into a chaotic scramble for the best and the next best lands, and it was thus necessary for Floyd to be on the scene of action to protect the interests of those whom he represented.<sup>2</sup> Several independent companies were making surveys there, and Richard Henderson and his associates from the Watauga Valley had purchased the Indian title to several million acres in central Kentucky. Floyd saw plainly that the settlements were ruining the hunting-grounds of the "Tawas and the Kickapoos" and dreaded the consequences, but he too had the land hunger and

pressed onward. This time he marched at the head of a band of thirty-two tried frontiersmen who were resolved to "force their way into the country" and to maintain their ground in the face of the savage foe and in defiance of their white competitors.

Floyd and his party seem to have made a first stop near Stamford in what is now Lincoln County, Kentucky. Joining with Henderson and others, his supposed rivals, he lent a hand to the efforts then on foot to establish law and order in the frontier. Thus he was able to play an important part in the organization of the first Anglo-American government on the west side of the Alleghanies. A movement was on to create a fourteenth colony to be called Transylvania which was to be provided with "a plan of government by popular representation." To this end a representative assembly composed of delegates from the towns or settlements of Boonesborough, Harrodsburg, Boiling Spring, and St. Asaph was summoned to meet at Boonesborough on May 23, 1775, to agree upon a form of government and enact such laws and regulations as were required to meet the immediate needs of the proposed colony. Floyd was sent as a delegate from the St. Asaph settlement.

After listening to a speech from Richard Henderson, the father of the proposed new colony, in which might come from the proposed scheme, and "solid consequence" of their deliberations to "the peace and harmony of thousands," to the blessings which he called attention to the importance and to their right, surrounded as they were by dangers



which threatened their destruction, to make all laws for the regulation of their conduct "without giving offence to Great Britain, or any of the American colonies," the delegates provided for courts of justice. Floyd became a member of the first court that met under their authorization. The delegates also provided for the organization of a militia, for the preservation of game, and for a system of fees. They adjourned after four days, and the proposed colony of Transylvania ceased to be heard of; but their efforts marked the initial step of the process by which Kentucky later entered the Union.

Floyd's work and appearance on this occasion were described, sixty-five years later by John Morehead in a famous address as follows:

Alternately a surveyor, a legislator, and a soldier, his distinguished qualities rendered him at once an ornament and a benefactor of the infant settlements. No individual among the early pioneers was more intelligent or better informed; more displayed on all occasions that called for it, had a bolder or more undaunted courage. His person was singularly attractive. With complexion unusually dark, his eyes and hair were deep black and his tall spare figure was dignified by the accomplishments of a well bred Virginia gentleman. Connecting himself with the Transylvania Company he became their principal surveyor and was chosen a delegate from the town of St. Asaph . . . . to make laws for the infant colony.<sup>3</sup>

Following his initial experience as a legislator Floyd continued to make surveys of land until late in the summer of 1776. The letters which he wrote meanwhile to Colonel Preston tell the story of the occupation of the Kentucky country. They tell of

the hundreds who were pouring into the new land by way of the Ohio River and the Cumberland Gap, of the log cabins which were being erected both by those who came as permanent settlers and those who sought adventure, of the failure of the Virginia convention to take proper steps for the protection of the frontiers and the regulation of land sales, of the pernicious activity of "Jack Jones" (Gabriel Jones) at the head of the Harrodsburg "banditti," of the Bryans and other Tories on the Elk Horn, and of the numerous contests between rival land claimants.<sup>4</sup> Because of the unusual and thrilling narrative contained therein his letter of July 21, 1776, to Colonel Preston is here given in full as follows:

MY DEAR SIR, The situation of our country is much altered since I wrote you last. The Indians seem determined to break up our settlement; and I really doubt, unless it is possible to give us some assistance, that the greater part of the people may fall a prey to them. They have, I am satisfied, killed several whom, at this time, I know not how to mention. Many are missing, who some time ago went out about their business, of whom we can hear nothing. Fresh sign of Indians is seen almost every day. I think I mentioned to you before some damage they had done at Lee's town. On the seventh of this month they killed one Cooper on Licking Creek, and on the fourteenth a man whose name I know not, at your salt spring on the same creek.

On the same day they took out of a canoe in sight of this place, Miss Bessie Callaway, her sister Frances, and a daughter of Daniel Boone—the last two about thirteen or fourteen years old, and the other grown. The affair happened late in the afternoon. They left their canoes on the opposite side of the river from us, which prevented our getting over for some time to pursue them. We could not that night follow more than

five miles. Next morning by daylight, we were on their track; but they had entirely prevented our following them by walking some distance apart through the thickest cane they could find. We observed their course and on which side they had left their sign, and travelled upwards of thirty miles. We then supposed they would be less cautious in travelling, and making a turn in order to cross their trace, we had gone but a few miles, when we found their tracks in a buffalo path—pursued and overtook them in going about ten miles, just as they were kindling a fire to cook. Our study had been how to get the prisoners without giving the Indians time to murder them after they discovered us. We saw each other nearly at the same time. Four of us fired, and all rushed on them, by which they were prevented from carrying anything away except one shot gun without ammunition. Mr. Boone and myself had each a pretty fair shot, as they began to move off. I am well convinced I shot one through the body. The one he shot dropped his gun—mine had none. The place was covered with thick cane, and being so much elated on recovering the three poor little heart-broken girls, we were prevented from making any further search. We sent the Indians off almost naked—some without their moccasins, and none of them with so much as a knife or tomahawk. After the girls came to themselves sufficiently to speak, they told us there were only five Indians—four Shawnese and one Cherokee. They could speak good English, and said they should then go to the Shawnese towns. The war club we got was like those I have seen of that nation. Several words of their language, which the girls retained, were known to be Shawnese. They also told them that the Cherokees had killed or driven all the people from Watauga and thereabouts, and that fourteen Cherokees were then on the Kentucky waiting to do mischief. If the war becomes general, of which there is the greatest appearance, our situation is truly alarming. We are about finishing a large fort, and intend to keep possession of this place as long as possible. They are, I understand, doing the same at Harrodsburg, and also at Elkhorn, at the Royal spring. The settlement on Licking creek, known by the name of Hinkston's, has been broken up; nineteen of the settlers are now here on their way in—Hinkston among the



rest. They all seem deaf to any thing we can do to dissuade them. Ten at least of our people, are going to join them, which will leave us with less than thirty men at this fort. I think more than three hundred men have left the country since I came out, and not one has arrived, except a few *cabiners* down the Ohio.

I want to return as much as any person can do; but if I leave the country now, there is scarcely one single man who will not follow the example. When I think of the deplorable condition a few helpless families are likely to be in, I conclude to sell my life as dearly as I can in their defence, rather than make an ignoble escape.

I am afraid it is in vain to sue for any relief from Virginia; yet the convention urged the settlement of this country, and why should not the extreme parts of Fincastle be as justly entitled to protection as any other part of the country? If an expedition were carried on against these nations who are at open war with the people in general, we might be in a good measure relieved, by drawing them off to defend their towns. If any thing under Heaven can be done for us, I know of no person who would more willingly engage in forwarding us assistance than yourself. I do, at the request and in behalf of all the distressed women and children and other inhabitants of this place, implore the aid of every leading man who may have it in his power to give us relief. I am, etc.<sup>5</sup>

Shortly after this letter was written the Kentucky country was aroused by the information that the united colonies had declared their independence of the mother country. The frontiersmen had eagerly awaited such a turn in events and now abandoned their outposts and hastened to take a part in the efforts being put forth to make that declaration effective. Floyd was the first to join their ranks. By the most direct route possible he came to Williamsburg, where, after presenting the grievances of the pioneers, he offered his services to his

country. Dr. Thomas Walker, Edmund Pendleton, Colonel William Preston, and two or three others had already purchased a vessel which they planned to fit out as a privateer. Now that a suitable commander in the person of Floyd was at hand, their plan was quickly carried out, and the *Phoenix* put to sea headed for the West Indies. A few days after leaving port it overtook and captured a rich prize. To the commander's great surprise the cargo contained a wedding costume for a lady. Thus at one and the same stroke he had won his fortune and a suitable present for his bride to be, Miss Jane Buchanan, a beautiful girl of the mountains of Virginia. A happy man he hastened homeward but was overtaken by a British man-of-war just as he was entering the Chesapeake Bay, was captured, and carried a prisoner to England, where he was retained for almost a year.

Prison bars have rarely prevailed against those types of manliness and worth possessed by John Floyd. They now won for him the regard of his fellow prisoners and, what was more important to him, the heart of the jailor's daughter. The old romantic story of a betrayal of trust was again repeated; the jailor's daughter had freed her lover.

After an affectionate farewell, at which it is said his companions shed tears, Floyd hastened to Dover. There he found a clergyman who assisted him by a sort of underground railway in his efforts to reach France. It was the vintage time when he landed upon those friendly shores, and the people there supplied him with grapes and bread until he reached Paris. After recovering from an attack of

the smallpox he made ready for his return to America, but not before he had purchased a pair of brilliant shoe buckles for his bride to be and a beautiful scarlet coat for himself. With the assistance of Doctor Franklin, our representative in France, he was soon able to secure passage on a westward bound vessel which, after a tempestuous voyage of many days, landed him in Virginia in the autumn of 1778.

During the time of Floyd's absence no intelligence of the *Phoenix* or her crew had reached America, and the inference was that all had gone down at sea. A year, the conventional mourning time in the colonial days, had passed, and Colonel Robert Sayers, an officer in the Revolutionary army and a man of means had addressed Miss Buchanan and been accepted by her. A family tradition has it that they were just returning from a walk in the garden, when the arrival of Captain Floyd in Smithfield was announced. Joy reigned everywhere, except possibly in the heart of Colonel Sayers. Be that as it may, Jane Buchanan became the bride of John Floyd and went to live with him in the home of his father on John's Creek.

Considering the stirring times it is strange that Floyd was content to remain inactive, even if his wife did prefer that sort of life, for so long a time as one year, the period of his residence with his father. But service in the regular army was unattractive, and conditions upon the frontier were anything but certain and desirable. In the latter quarter "Jack" (Gabriel) Jones and Floyd's future friend, George Rogers Clark, had defeated the

purposes of Floyd's former associates in the Transylvania Company and had succeeded in extending the jurisdiction of Virginia over the Kentucky country. Now word came that Clark, the "Hannibal of the West," was planning an expedition into the country north of the Ohio with a view to conquering it and annexing it to Virginia.

Floyd's real interests were in the West, but the short period of his absence had so transformed conditions there as to raise doubts regarding his future course towards it. His former associates were discredited, and their land claims were in litigation in one of the most spectacular cases ever heard in Williamsburg. Indeed, it is not improbable that Floyd's sojourn in eastern Virginia was determined somewhat by the pending land litigations. At any rate he appeared as a witness and betrayed a warm feeling for Henderson and others of the Transylvania Company. His testimony may have aided them in securing from Virginia a grant of several thousand acres in Kentucky, as compensation for their initial service in opening up the wilderness to settlement.<sup>6</sup>

Clark's successes in the Northwest convinced Floyd that the new order of things on the frontier was permanent and unchangeable. Sympathy for the former order of things naturally vanished, and in October, 1779, he with his brothers, Robert, Charles and Isham, and his sisters, Jemima and Abadiah, with their husbands set out in the popular hegira for the Kentucky country. They did not halt before reaching the Falls of the Ohio, where their leader had already preempted some of the choicest lands.

Here they erected a cabin at a point near the present crossing of Third and Main Streets of Louisville, Kentucky. This was only a temporary shelter for the women and children, to be occupied while the men of the company built larger cabins and stockades on Bear Grass Creek a few miles distance at a place later known as Floyd's Station.

After their families had been settled and made secure, Floyd and his brothers found many opportunities to serve their community and country. Every interest centered in the contest with the red men of the forest. Clark's victories of the previous year had aroused them to a determined resistance to the further encroachments of the white man. Evidences of British aid to the Indians were everywhere and served only to intensify the determination of the white man. Under the circumstances no father or husband could rest secure until the last Indian was driven from the Ohio Valley.

Already George Rogers Clark had inaugurated a war of extermination, and Robert, Charles, and Isham Floyd and their brothers-in-law had joined him. In the long and bloody contest which followed in this phase of "the winning of the West" danger and even death crouched in every path and behind every tree, and the Floyd brothers, except Charles, fell victims to the savage foe. Their lives were offered as sacrifices on the altar of their country that that country might have a greater destiny.

Killing Indians was not the only service that a patriotic frontiersman could render his community which stood in need of laws and administration. To these ends John Floyd, the eldest and the most ex-



perienced of the Floyd brothers, directed his chief energies. By an act of 1780 the General Assembly of Virginia constituted him one of a board of seven trustees with authority to lay out and establish the town of Louisville, which, under their direction, soon sprang into importance as one of the chief trading centers on the Ohio. About the same time Floyd joined John Howard, Robert Todd, Judge Samuel McDowell, and others in a movement to secure the enactment of laws to conserve the peace and dignity of their community. It was Floyd who induced John Brown, an able lawyer of Rockbridge County, Virginia, who later became a power in the West, to cast his lot with the people of Kentucky. His patriotic and disinterested efforts were soon rewarded by a commission from the Governor of Virginia making him colonel of the militia of Jefferson County, a position which he held with honor to the time of his death.<sup>7</sup>

As the commander of a frontier militia Colonel Floyd's life was one continuous round of thrilling adventure with the red men. He planned much for others but never hesitated himself to meet the foe. When on his way to Louisville, he one day encountered a huge Indian whom he slew in single combat and whose ornaments of silver he confiscated and later converted into table spoons. Shortly thereafter two hundred Indians attempted to break up Squire Boone's settlement near Shelbyville. Upon hearing of their designs Colonel Floyd raised a company of twenty-seven men and hastened to the rescue. As a precaution his followers were divided into two parties, each of which proceeded with great

care; but this did not prevent those under his immediate command from falling into an ambushade and being killed, except Floyd and one or two others. After the battle the bodies of the dead, white and red men alike, were placed in a common grave, near the place of the encounter, which was on a branch of the Salt River, known to this day as "Floyd's Branch of Salt River."<sup>8</sup>

Finding that they could not drive the frontiersmen from their outpost on the Ohio, even with the aid of the savage foe, the British resorted to bribery. The conditions seemed opportune for success by this method. It was a time when the ties of patriotism sat lightly upon many; the frontier was in constant danger and fear of attacks by the Indians with little hope of aid from Virginia; and dissatisfaction among the settlers and the local militia was the order of the day. Accordingly Governor Hamilton offered Clark and Floyd each any amount of land they might desire on the west bank of the Ohio and an English title, if they would give up the Ohio Valley. The offers were made separately and secretly, and for some time neither knew that he carried a common secret. When at length they unburdened their hearts to each other, each resolved to remain loyal to the country of their nativity in whose future greatness they had unbounded confidence.<sup>9</sup>

At length peace was made with the mother country, and the signs pointed to better times on the frontier. In anticipation of the changed order Colonel Floyd invited a number of his friends in the East to share with him the freedom and the opportunities of the frontier. The responses were numer-

ous, but reluctant to depart from the scenes of their savage vigils the red men lingered and long remained a menace to both life and property.

The determination of the Indian to make the white man pay dearly for his possession on the Ohio finally cost Floyd his life. On April 12, 1783, when he and his brother, Charles, were riding home from a place on Salt River, they were fired upon by the Indians from ambush. On this day Floyd wore his scarlet coat purchased in France. He was thus a tempting mark for the Indian. At the first shot he reeled and would have fallen to the ground, had not his brother supported him to a place of safety. His last hours were spent in expressions of unmitigated sorrow for his young wife and her unborn child and for his two small sons. He saw for them the common lot of the widows and orphans of the frontier for whom he had done so much. Before death came, on the following morning, he knew that the end was at hand and requested that his remains be laid to rest in a grave on an eminence overlooking Floyd's Station, where they now repose.

Besides the subject of this sketch Colonel Floyd left two sons: William and George Rogers Clark. The former was delicate and died before becoming of age, but the latter followed in the footsteps of his father in the ways of the frontiersman. He was born in Kentucky, in 1781, and received the rudiments of an education in the school near his home. In 1807 he received a commission in the federal army. Later he fought in the Indian wars and was several times promoted for gallantry. He was a colonel under General William Henry Harrison and



had a command in the battle of Tippecanoe. When this engagement began he, with others of his command, was asleep in his tent and was awakened only by the war-whoop of the savages. Without stopping to dress he rushed into the midst of the fight and slew several Indians with his own hand. Upon his return to Louisville his neighbors greeted him as the warrior who had "clothed himself with honor." He thought himself slighted in the official reports of the battle and withdrew from the service. Little is known of his later life. He died near Woodville, Kentucky, June, 1823, and was buried near his father.

The subject of this biography, the child of the frontier, was the unborn infant for whom Colonel Floyd manifested concern on his death-bed. He was named John for his father. He learned to read and write at his mother's knee and in the log schoolhouse that stood near the grave of his father. When he was thirteen, John Brown, then a Senator from Kentucky, placed him in Dickinson College at Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Here he remained until financial troubles necessitated his return to Kentucky. But fortune soon took a favorable turn, his dissipated step-father, Captain Alexander Breckenridge, dying in 1801, young Floyd was again permitted to resume his college course. A severe illness kept him from carrying out his plans for graduation.

In May, 1804, young Floyd married Letitia Preston, a daughter of Colonel William Preston, his father's friend and adviser, and soon thereafter entered the University of Pennsylvania for a course in medicine. Already he had read medicine with his

friend, Dr. Ferguson, of Louisville, and he was thus able to graduate at the end of two years. Meanwhile, he had become an honorary member of the Philadelphia Medical Society and a member of the Philadelphia Medical Lyceum. His graduating dissertation was entitled "An Enquiry into the Medical Properties of the Magnolia Tripetala and Magnolia Acuminata" and was dedicated to his friends: Doctors Ferguson, Benjamin Rush, Benjamin Smith Burton, and James Woodhouse. After graduation he first settled at Lexington, Virginia, but soon removed to Christiansburg, where he entered actively upon the practice of his profession and soon acquired a wide and favorable reputation as a physician.

## II. A SPOKESMAN OF THE FRONTIER.

OUR second war with Great Britain marked the beginning of a new era in the history of the United States. Prior to that time we had been in a position of semi-dependence upon Europe, looking to the eastward to determine whether the acts of princes bore weal or woe. Henceforth all was changed. The American frontiersmen had made a war in behalf of free trade and sailor's rights and carried it to a successful conclusion though not without its uncertainties and blunders. Now the whole country, under their leadership, faced about and entered upon the exercise of a new born nationality conceived in hatred of the mother country and in the hopes of our own future greatness. For a time chief interest centered in the West, in the Indian wars, our relations with Spain, and our efforts to acquire and settle new territory. As a spokesman of these interests, if for nothing else, Floyd deserves a place in history.

That the war sentiment in Virginia, which helped to bring about these changes, arose in her western counties and only gradually extended to the lowlands is now rarely disputed. That it took form among Floyd's neighbors, whom he had for years commanded as a major of militia, was hardly a mere coincidence. Be that as it may, it was the eighth regiment of the Virginia militia, in mass meeting assembled at Lexington, that first expressed the desire of the state "to buckle on the armor of the nation" and to meet the foe, if need be, in the wilds of Canada or on the shores of the Atlantic. From

the same quarter went forth those militant petitions which, through the skillful presentation of Thomas Ritchie in the Richmond *Enquirer*, made it possible for Virginia to abandon the peace policy of her beloved Jefferson and join in a war of national vindication.

Floyd was among the first to answer the call to arms. Tarrying only long enough to remove his wife and family to a new home on an old estate near the present site of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute, where they would be nearer friends, he entered the regular army as a surgeon with the rank of major. In this capacity he continued to serve his country until 1814, when he was elected to the General Assembly.

Before entering the General Assembly, Floyd again changed his residence, this time to the "Thorn Spring" on a large plantation in Montgomery County. Here he continued to practice his profession for a number of years, making for himself a warm place in the hearts of the country folk who knew him then and ever afterwards as "Doctor Floyd."

In the General Assembly Floyd's record was that of a good nationalist. With New England in almost open rebellion and with a foreign invader at the door, it was no time for contention regarding the nature of the federal government or over schemes for territorial expansion. Accordingly he joined the majority in support of a resolution providing for a joint committee of the two houses of the General Assembly instructed to confer with the federal authorities regarding plans of defence for Virginia.

The counter proposition to authorize the governor to "communicate" with the "Government of the United States," he opposed.<sup>10</sup>

Probably in condemnation of New England's opposition to the war but certainly not in support of the state sovereignty theory of government, he favored, also, a bill authorizing the state of Virginia to raise troops and place them at the order of the federal government, "as well for the further and more vigorous prosecution of the war, as for the defence of this commonwealth."<sup>11</sup> Moreover, he joined in the support of a resolution condemning the terms of peace proposed by the British commissioners at Ghent, as "arrogant" and "insulting" on the part of Great Britain and as "subversive of the rights and sovereignty of the United States." Nor would he stand for the opposition tactics of the Federalist leader, Charles Fenton Mercer, who tried to call into question the "sovereignty of the United States" and to give a milder tone to the resolutions censuring the British commissioners.<sup>12</sup> Considering both his own future course and that of Virginia it may be of interest to note that he now acted with a majority in the General Assembly.

In 1817 Floyd was elected to Congress from the famous Abingdon district which he continued to represent by successive reelections for twelve years. In the short period between his services as a state legislator and the beginning of his congressional career the nationalistic tendencies of the federal government had become truly alarming. Conscious of our growing power and greatness and forgetful of the teachings of the fathers a younger generation

had boarded the national ship of state, leaving the smaller craft, in which Jefferson and Madison had ridden into power, to rot in the neglected harbors of the sovereign states. Under the spell of the new era Congress had enacted a protective tariff law, rechartered the Bank of the United States, and made appropriations to works of internal improvement. Meanwhile John Marshall had practically destroyed the former rights of the "sovereign states" by his liberal interpretation of the "federal compact."

Despite his liberal tendencies of the war period, tradition, education, and inclination made it impossible for Floyd to acquiesce in the nationalistic tendencies of the federal government. He, too, had been a war-hawk, both favoring and supporting our second struggle for independence, and now shared with others a feeling of confidence in his country's future, but, in his theories of government, he remained true to the fathers of 1789. Like many of them, he saw our only escape from the dangers of absolutism at the one extreme of government and of anarchy at the other, in adhering closely to the constitution which they had made. With equal care he would, therefore, have guarded the rights both of the states and of the federal government by confining the latter strictly to the exercise of its delegated powers. According to his interpretation the recent acts of Congress were therefore unconstitutional.

Floyd was not alone in this particularistic reaction of Virginia, if indeed he could be called a leader. Although he had done much to make it necessary Jefferson had already launched a crusade against the federal Supreme Court and the heresies of na-



tionalism; Judge Spencer Roane was an able second; Thomas Ritchie, through the Richmond *Enquirer*, was calling the country back to original principles; and, after a humiliating defeat at the hands of his former constituents, John Randolph had recovered his seat in Congress, where he now became the popular apostle of discontent and of strict construction of the federal constitution.

Floyd entered Congress at a critical time in the history of Virginia. Her older statesmen were passing from the stage of activity, and new and inexperienced leaders were taking their places. The former had led when Virginia stood in the ascendancy of the states of the Union; the latter were now called upon to preserve that ascendancy at a time when she was in a political minority and in a period of economic uncertainty. A comparison of the fifteenth, the one to which Floyd was first elected, with the Congresses immediately preceding, shows a great change in the personnel of Virginia's representatives. John Tyler, P. P. Barbour, and others later prominent among the strict construction politicians were now just entering national politics. By James Buchanan, just entering upon his own congressional career, and by others at the North, these young leaders from the South were spoken of as the "radical party."<sup>13</sup> Thus, from the beginning they were marked men; but the ability of his rivals, to say nothing of the needs of his state, made it necessary for Floyd to work for distinction. If he surpassed his fellow representatives from Virginia in any particular, it was probably in his vision of the future and importance of the American frontier.

Soon Clay's proposition for sending a minister to Buenos Ayres came before the House, and Floyd joined its author in a demand amounting to recognition for the new born republic of Argentina and in an attack upon John Quincy Adams, the secretary of state, who hesitated to offend Spain so long as the negotiations for the purchase of Florida remained undetermined. Swayed by the prejudices of a frontiersman and ignorant of the requirements of diplomacy, Floyd had been aroused by the "sublime and wonderful" spectacle of a "brave people, disdaining the shackles of a foreign despot" in an effort to erect their government upon a free basis. Transformed by the influence of a new and pure climate, "where the productions, the scenery, the physical conformity of the country, and even the very sky and stars of heaven are so different that nothing of the Spaniard is left but the name, and that no more," he relied upon the purifying effects of revolution to fit Argentina for a place in the sisterhood of nations. It was in vain that her settlers and explorers had given the names of Spain to her hills, valleys, rivers, and mountains. The wrack and the torture of the inquisition had wrought havoc with all these precautions, and Argentina and other South American countries were free. Moreover, Floyd was happy to believe that the liberties of a republic could be enjoyed by a Spaniard, or by any people capable of fighting for them. Especially was this true in America, where every man was a general capable of "wiles and stratagems, quick advance, attack, and flight," guarantees of success in any en-



counter with the slow and expensive formalities of European warfare.

This effort in behalf of Clay's measure, also, overflowed with the characteristic contempt of the American frontiersman for Spain. From the proud conqueror of the Incas and the Montezumas he now saw in her ruler only an improvident and bankrupt gamester. Bloated with pride inherited through a long line of ancestors the ruling king was incapable of imitating the magnanimous conduct of George III. in acknowledging the independence of his colonies; yet, despite his proud boast that "the sun never sets upon his domains," the king of Spain was impotent at home and despised abroad. Plainly his was not a power to be taken seriously, certainly not one to thwart the extension of justice to an independent and free people.

Both from our own example and from the writings of Vattel, Henry Clay had defended the right of the Spanish colonies to rebel, but Floyd carried this right to its logical conclusions: independence and recognition. Moreover, he was certain that it would be a "black and sorrowful day for this republic," when the opinions of Europe were held over our deliberations "like a lash of scorpions." He did not, however, share the boldness of his leader, who already had aspirations for the presidency, in urging recognition for Argentina for political reasons and was sorry that the efforts to intimidate those who advocated the measure from "honest conviction" had led gentlemen to mention the presidency in connection with the matter.

With a vision which penetrated the conditions

under which the Monroe Doctrine was later proclaimed, Floyd also attempted to show that our proposed course towards Argentina was a matter of indifference to some of the European nations, particularly to Great Britain. Since some of the nations of Europe were then making efforts, "not loud, but deep and dangerous," to exclude her from American markets, he felt confident that Great Britain would welcome our intervention in South America. Thus he relied upon another continental system, more dangerous to Britain than the colossal power of Napoleon had ever been, to break down the decaying fibers of the Holy Alliance. Under the circumstances we had nothing to fear. If war with Europe should follow our acts, England could be relied upon to aid us, "even with arms." Thus she would win the eternal gratitude of a grateful people and serve her own commercial purposes.

Alarmed at the hereditary land mania of the Russian monarchs who had carried their conquests across the continent of Asia and well down the Pacific coast of North America, he considered the Czar a formidable factor in South American affairs. No doubt the prominence of the Czar had been enhanced somewhat by the part which he had taken in the formation and maintenance of the Holy Alliance, but Floyd now saw in his designs only a barrier to our ambitions for some day reaching the Pacific coast. But Russian territorial ambitions in America were not sufficient cause of war. Before them came always her designs upon Constantinople in an effort to reach an ice free harbor on the Mediterranean. She was not then to be feared.

Floyd therefore urged the recognition of Argentina, not only as a matter of justice but also as a matter of self-interest, but some of his colleagues failed to see wherein recognition would be to our best interest. Because Chili had already sold wheat in the West Indies cheaper than the United States could sell it in the same market, Mr. Smith, of Maryland, the merchant prince and "crooked" politician, opposed all measures intended to accelerate the growth and importance of the South American countries. Even the capable Mr. Lowndes of South Carolina was discouraged because of the fact that the British trade advantages with those countries exceeded ours in the proportion of one to seventy. But Floyd saw that great advantages must accrue to us from a free and direct trade with the countries of South America, a veritable granary of luxuries and the precious metals.

This proposed recognition meant more to Floyd even than trade advantages and justice; it was another step in the disentrallment of America. It would afford relief from that political plexus which had made it impossible for one European nation to move, even in matters relating to America, without creating a corresponding movement in each of the others. He was tired of negotiating the things which related exclusively to America in London, Paris, and Madrid.<sup>14</sup>

While Congress was debating the subject of our relations with Spanish America, General Jackson, in an attack upon the Seminoles, invaded the Spanish territory of Florida and put to death, in a most summary manner, Arbuthnot and Ambrister, British

subjects charged with aiding and abetting the Indians in their attacks upon the United States. It is true that he bore instructions from the president and Mr. Calhoun, the secretary of war, which, in the absence of other instructions and in the light of our previous policies in dealing with the Indians, might have justified his course. However that may be, his acts alarmed the president and his cabinet, aroused British and Spanish war talk, and placed Jackson prominently before the country as the object of praise and criticism. Under the circumstances the president could not well disavow Jackson's conduct, and the magnanimous Adams adroitly placed the blame upon the impotency of Spain to preserve law and order within her own territory.

Except as a subject of diplomatic negotiation Jackson's conduct in Florida would have passed simply as the ill-advised act of a rash and daring general, but the politicians would not have it that way. Somehow the rival candidates for the presidency, Clay, Crawford, Adams, and even others, now recognized in him their most formidable opponent. Led by the Richmond *Enquirer*, the press of the country attacked him under the heading "Arbuthnot and Ambrister,"<sup>15</sup> thus precipitating the great Seminole debate in the Congress of 1818-1819, during which Jackson loomed large as the most talked of and probably the most popular man in the whole country. As every other possible error of the Seminole campaign had been officially explained, the House Committee on Military Affairs attempted to censure Jackson for the execution of Arbuthnot and Ambrister. At once a minority of the same

committee reported a resolution extending to him the thanks of the country for his services in terminating the Seminole campaign, and the debate was staged.

To one whose ancestors had fallen victims to the savage foe and whose childhood visions were filled with pictures of the scalping-knife and the tomahawk this occasion presented a rare opportunity for a word upon the frontier and for a defence of him who stood as its best impersonation. To Floyd it mattered not that more than half of Virginia's representation in Congress followed the cue of the *Enquirer*. Their course was actuated largely by politics and diplomacy; he spoke for those forces making for national expansion and for the rights and safety of the frontier. He therefore justified Jackson upon every score.

In view of the semi-independent condition of the Indian tribes and of the fact that our government had only treaty relations with them, some argued that Congress alone could have authorized the war with the Seminoles and that Jackson had exceeded his authority, whatever may have been the wishes and intentions of the president in the matter. In answer to these contentions Floyd reviewed the history of previous administrations to show the origin of Indian wars. Whatever the causes he found that defensive measures had usually thrown the initial step for the United States upon her president, who had without exception been sustained in his course by Congress. At least that was the procedure in the wars of 1789, 1791, and 1793. Nor was the war with the Seminoles any exception. Granting that the



president was in a measure responsible for it, had not Congress come to his rescue with liberal appropriations and supplies to maintain it? Jackson had therefore acted in keeping with established precedents and had not exceeded his authority.

To the other point of this contention Floyd replied by denying the sovereignty of the Indian tribes. Their espousal of the British cause in the American Revolution had forfeited all such rights, a fact attested by our refusal to treat with them as separate nations in the peace negotiations of 1783. Her later resumption of diplomatic relations with them and the fact that they made war upon the United States without becoming traitors mattered not. Treaties made with them were only ceremonies indulged as a means of conciliating favor, and treason was a meaningless term to a savage. Besides the question of their alleged sovereignty had been definitely settled at Ghent. Both Clay and Adams had then opposed the desires of the British for a sovereign Indian state between the United States and Canada.

Moreover, Floyd justified Jackson's acts in Florida. With definite instructions from the secretary of war to conduct the fight with the Seminoles "in the manner he [Jackson] might think best" he had indeed entered the territory of a neutral power in pursuit of a common enemy and tried in vain to proceed with the good will and permission of the local authorities. When all hope of cooperation had passed, then it was that he attacked the Indian towns and discovered that their war-poles were decorated with the scalps of his fellow countrymen and that their wigwams were stored with stolen plunder.

Signs pointed to St. Marks, a Spanish town, as the place whence the Indians received their ammunitions, guns, and instructions and where they sold their plunder. With the case thus clearly established against the Spaniards, it was no time for fine-spun distinctions regarding the sovereign rights of the nation to which they owed allegiance. An experienced Indian fighter had found his prey and would give no quarter either to the inhabitants of St. Marks and later, for a similar reason, to those of Pensacola. Their nationality was a question of trivial importance; they were made captives; and Floyd was certain that the spirit of the law of nations would justify Jackson in his treatment of them.

For Arbuthnot and Ambrister, Floyd could not feign the "sickly sorrow" of time-serving editors and interested politicians. To him they were simply "British agents," for more than a generation the authors of the horrors and cruelties of our Indian wars. They were of those the mere mention of whose name created "a sudden start of horror in the widowed mother of a family on the frontier, as it tears open the sluices of her grief, which time had smoothed but could not destroy." They were in a class with Simon Girty and Alexander McKee and would have been considered undeserving of clemency in any age. Their activities in Florida brought to Floyd's recollection those early days on the frontier, when helpless females had been butchered while kneeling and begging for mercy and toothless infants had been snatched from their mother's breasts and thrown upon the ground to die. Satisfaction and retaliation therefore demanded their death, and



Floyd was not particular in his choice of an executioner. It was just as well to leave the patriotic service to a general with his army as to a frontiersman with his rifle.

In the course of this debate Clay reviewed the conditions that had given Greece an Alexander, Rome a Caesar, England a Cromwell, and France a Napoleon and closed with the warning that the United States should beware of her military despots. In view of his subsequent attitude towards both Jackson and Clay, Floyd's answer to the above argument is the most interesting feature of his speech on this occasion. He was unable to trace the fall of free governments to the usurpations of military despots. On the other hand he traced them directly to the legislative halls and thence to the "hollow, treacherous eloquence of some ambitious, proud, and aspiring demagogue" who either needed the help of a military leader or was willing to do his bidding. In proof of this position he called attention to the fact that Caesar had retired to the distance, "whilst the two great factions preyed upon the liberties of Rome." Also, he insisted that the French Revolution was the product of insincere orators; that Cromwell had been the leader of a faction; and that the French orators, in legislative assemblies, had aided and abetted the Napoleonic usurpations.

The Seminole debate ended in a vote of confidence in Jackson, thus sending him upon another phase of his triumphant conquest of popular favor. The date of the vote marked the beginning of a new regime in American politics. Henceforth Jackson

was the coming man, and it was to be well with those who had been friendly to him and bad for those who had not. Thus far Floyd was in the favored class; the influence of environment had placed him there.

Meanwhile Missouri had applied to Congress for admission to statehood, and a heated debate had followed over the various proposals for the retention and the exclusion of negro slavery within her proposed boundaries. Again Floyd was not in accord with a majority of Virginia's representatives in Congress, who desired the retention of negro slavery in Missouri at any price. Thus while they debated, he remained quiet. His silence was probably due to the influences of his early environment, to the interests of his constituents, and to his personal convictions. The fact remains that he was one of the four representatives from Virginia and the only one from a district west of the Blue Ridge, who voted for the Missouri Compromise in its final form.<sup>16</sup> Judging from his subsequent utterances he seems to have preferred immediate statehood for Missouri to an extension of the slaveholding territory of the Union, though there is little evidence to show that he opposed the latter on general principles.

At the subsequent session of Congress, that for 1820-1821, Floyd felt called upon to defend the sovereignty of the state of Missouri. Under the enabling act of 1820, out of which the compromise of that date had grown, she had made a constitution which required her legislature to enact a law "to prevent free negroes and mulattoes from coming to, or settling in" Missouri under any pretext whatso-

ever. Since some of the northern states accorded such persons all the rights and privileges of citizens, the anti-slavery forces in Congress demanded that the "free negro clause" be expunged from the constitution of Missouri, threatening, notwithstanding the enabling act, to keep her from the Union in case their desires were not complied with. The points thus raised involved the rights of the people of Missouri under the enabling act, also their power over their own local institutions.

Floyd regarded the demands upon the "sovereign State of Missouri," in this connection, as opposed to the nature and intent of the federal constitution and as dangerous in practice. As the representative of an old state, he was unwilling to dictate to a new one in the exercise of its sovereign power, because, under such precedents, he did not know how soon Congress might desire to encroach upon the reserved rights of the former. Already he had seen an alarming tendency among legislators to find justification for their acts of centralization and federal usurpation in the law and history of England and in their desire to convince the crowned heads of Europe of the self-sufficiency and nationality of the United States of America. Then followed an exposition of his conception of the nature of the federal government. Said he:

If gentlemen would only expunge from their memories the progress of European liberty and institutions, they would find in America a number of states, or separate, independent, and distinct nations, confederated for common safety, and mutual protection, taught wisdom by the eternal feuds of Spain, England, France, and Germany, now consolidated into large empires.

These states before the confederation could make war and peace, raise armies, or build a navy, coin money, pass bankrupt laws, naturalize foreigners, or regulate commerce . . . Informed by Europe they knew jealousies would arise, and constant strife render armies in every nation necessary to their defence, which would endanger their liberties and homes.

These states then, in their sovereign and independent characters, were willing to enter into a compact, by which the power of making war and peace, and regulating commerce, possessed alike by all, should be transferred to a congress of the states, to be exercised with uniformity, for their mutual benefit; thus avoiding the evils of "superannuated and enslaved" Europe. These two were the only powers ever intended to be granted by the states. All other powers conferred by the compact are necessary to carry these two into execution.<sup>17</sup>

This rather circumscribed but defensible exposition of the nature of the federal government was followed by the presentation of the point in question. Floyd argued that the enabling act of Congress had given the people of Missouri the necessary power to create a "sovereign state" which they and they alone could destroy. After the state had been formed Congress had no other power than that of admitting it or excluding it from the Union. In case of its refusal to admit Missouri, she became at once a "foreign state" or a "state out of the Union." In any event she was not to be dictated to regarding her sovereign rights, if she would preserve them. As Congress would not tolerate the presence of a rival state west of the Mississippi, there was only one other course open to it: the immediate recognition of Missouri as a state in the Union under her duly authorized and legal constitution. Delay and ultimate refusal would make necessary a war to force her return to her former territorial status.

The question of Missouri's sovereign rights under her constitution came up again, when the two houses of Congress met in joint session to canvass the returns of the presidential election of 1820. She had finally yielded the point of her original constitution regarding the proposed exclusion of free negroes and mulattoes but had not yet made the necessary changes in that document to have it conform with the requirements of the majority in Congress. Nevertheless, she claimed to be a state in the Union entitled to a vote in the electoral college. On the other hand there were those who denied her this right arguing that she was not a state and that she could not be until Congress had approved the final draft of her constitution.

In his speeches on the proposed amendment of Missouri's constitution under the enabling act Floyd had already answered the points raised by those who would have excluded her from the electoral college. Accordingly he now introduced the following resolution: "That Missouri is one of the states of the Union, and her vote for president and vice-president ought to be received and counted."<sup>18</sup> The debate which followed precipitated one of the liveliest "scenes" ever witnessed on such an occasion. Amidst the repeated disorder which followed both Floyd and John Randolph were so persistent in their interruptions as to necessitate an adjournment of the joint session. They each voted against the compromise whereby the presidential vote was counted as so many with the vote of Missouri and

so many without it.<sup>19</sup> John Quincy Adams later described their action as an effort to bring Missouri into the Union "by storm."<sup>20</sup>

In the other important debate of this session, that occasioned by the successful effort to reduce the official and numerical strength of the army, Floyd favored retrenchment but seems to have had no part with those who would have humiliated and injured Jackson by relieving him of his command. As has been seen he had no fears of a military despot, but his faith in the valor and patriotism of the frontiersman was an abiding one. In all matters of defence he was, therefore, willing to place chief reliance upon the state militias. Some thought them inadequate for the defence of the frontier, but Floyd knew that standing armies were equally inadequate for that purpose. Memory carried him at once to the days of his childhood in the "dark and bloody land," where the pioneer had protected himself and the federal army, where mothers and daughters had constituted a part of the home guard, and where the laborer, with his rifle at his side, had played an important part in the winning of an empire.



### III. THE OREGON COUNTRY

WHEN John Floyd entered Congress, in 1817, our claims to the territory along the Columbia River were disputed. Captain Gray of Boston had probably discovered the mouth of that river in 1792; later Lewis and Clark had certainly explored the country through which it flowed; and, in 1811, John Jacob Astor had planted a trading post, Astoria, near its mouth. Meanwhile our chief rival, Great Britain, had done little or nothing to make good her claims to the country. Notwithstanding her inactivity a British sloop-of-war, the *Raccoon*, captured Astoria in 1812, hauled down the American flag, and placed in its stead the Union Jack. Peace had been followed, however, by a notification of our intention to reoccupy the country and by a consequent series of diplomatic negotiations resulting in a treaty of joint occupation of 1818. Under this arrangement the territory in dispute was opened for a period of ten years to the citizens of both countries without prejudice to the rights of either on the subject of ultimate ownership.

Meanwhile the people at home knew little of the country in dispute and probably cared less. Indeed there was little available information about it. Some had read the interesting *Diary of Patrick Gass*, and, in 1811, Nicholas Biddle had published the *Journals of Lewis and Clark*. But, as late as 1817, the Columbia Valley was known to William Cullen Bryant only as



The continuous woods  
Where rolls the Oregon and hears no sound  
Save his own dashings.

It was left to John Floyd, a young Virginian, himself a child of the frontier, to bring our claims to the Columbia Valley prominently before the American people. "To him," said Professor E. G. Bourne, "unquestionably belongs the credit of first proposing in Congress the actual occupation of the Columbia River country by the United States Government, of promoting its settlement, and of organizing it as a territory with the name Oregon."<sup>21</sup> Scholars now generally agree in crediting Floyd with this initiative, dismissing the rival claims made for Hall J. Kelley, the Massachusetts schoolmaster, and for others as without foundation.<sup>22</sup>

Floyd's interests in the Columbia River country are not difficult to determine. George Rogers Clark was the boyhood idol for whom he had later named a son; his first cousin, Charles Floyd, was a member of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, holding the rank of sergeant and losing his life in the early months of its history; and the friendship of William Clark, a member of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, was an "honor" which Floyd had enjoyed "from his earliest youth." Moreover, in the early winter of 1820-1821 he lodged, while in Washington, at Brown's Hotel where he met Thomas H. Benton who was then the author of a series of articles for the *St. Louis Enquirer* regarding our claims to the Columbia Valley and our interests there.<sup>23</sup> At this hotel he, also, met Ramsey Crooks of New York and Russell Farn-

ham of Massachusetts, both of whom had been engaged in the Astoria enterprise. Of their influence upon Floyd, Benton later wrote: "Their conversations, rich in information upon a new and interesting country, was eagerly devoured by the [his] ardent spirit."<sup>24</sup> As it had already provoked adverse criticism our treaty of joint occupation with Great Britain was doubtless a subject of conversation among these friends, and it is not at all improbable that they then and there resolved to change it for a more aggressive policy.

At all events, on December 20, 1820, Floyd brought the question of our rights in the Columbia country, for the first time, to the attention of Congress. By a resolution, he asked that a committee be appointed to "inquire into the situation of the settlements upon the Pacific Ocean and the expediency of occupying the Columbia River."<sup>25</sup> The resolution carried, and the proposed committee was appointed with Floyd, chairman, and Metcalf of Kentucky, and Swearingen of Virginia, members. The boldness and vision of the report which this committee later made is best understood in the light of the popular conception then prevalent regarding the frontier and the far West.

At this time, 1820, the frontier was a wedgelike area, the apex of which rested near the junction of the Kansas and Missouri Rivers. The flanks of this advance army of civilization widened gradually to the eastward, that to the south passing near New Orleans and that to the north passing near Detroit. Within the waterways were the highways controlling the distribution of population. At opportune times

areas of white settlement had made rapid strides to the westward, but now a further advance seemed almost impossible. In the first place there were few who desired it. In the second place the areas already preempted for settlement seemed sufficient for all time. Besides, the outlet to the far West seemed now closed, because the Missouri, the door of exit, had taken an abrupt turn to the northward to an inhospitable climate and to the home of the most warlike of the savage foes. Nature and expediency had thus seemingly placed a limit to the frontier.

Moreover, the country beyond the Missouri, and between it and the "Stony Mountain," was then thought to be a great desert. Geographers had described it as such and had furnished their proof. Were not the sections nearest the mountains without rainfall? Then, too, Major Stephen B. Long, after a trip through the country in 1819-1820, had described it as a barren waste incapable of supporting an agricultural population. Also, the newspapers of the day described the country just east of the Rockies, as a land "covered with sand, gravel, and pebbles" and as utterly destitute of timber, and they expressed the belief that the Creator had fixed the bend in the Missouri as the point beyond which the white man was never to go.

Nevertheless, on January 21, 1821, Floyd presented his report, to-day justly considered famous. It was accompanied by a bill authorizing our occupation of the Columbia River. In both the handiwork of his friends, Benton, Crooks, and Farnham, is evident. They certainly supplied the details regarding the climate, the fertility of the soil, the ex-

periences of the Astorians, the nature of the overland routes, and, more important than all else, the plans and suggestions for the development of the fur trade with the East and with China. In its expressions and in the embodiment of the ideas and impulses that were to shape the progress of events this pioneer report "bears the same relation to Oregon that Richard Hakluyt's famous *Discourse on Western Planting* bears to the foundation of the English colonies in America."<sup>26</sup> No other apology is therefore needed for a further presentation of its contents.

Floyd based our claims to the Columbia country almost wholly upon our rights under the Louisiana Purchase and gently hinted to the European nations that "there is no longer territory to be obtained by settlement and discovery" in the New World. Spain had not yet relinquished her claims to the territory north of the forty-second degree of north latitude. The Treaty of 1819 for the purchase of Florida remained unratified, but Floyd did not hesitate to restrict Spanish possessions to the northern boundary of Mexico. Thus by a strange elasticity the Louisiana Territory was made to embrace another empire. If, however, doubt remained regarding the validity of our title, he would have removed it by asserting our rights accruing from the discoveries and explorations of Hendricks, in 1785-1786, from the Lewis and Clark Expedition, in 1804-1807, and from the Astoria settlement made in 1811.

Thus satisfied with our rights on the Columbia, Floyd urged its immediate occupation, that the citizens of the United States might have a free and full

opportunity to participate in the fur trade. Following an able presentation of the value of that trade to the early German tribes, to the Tartars, and to the French he traced the rise of the British Hudson Bay Company and the Northwestern Company, showing how their agents had carried Indian supplies from Montreal to the Rocky Mountains and later to the Pacific coast. Returning with their furs they had followed routes more than three thousand miles long, paddling their birch canoes through innumerable rivers across more than sixty lakes and over a hundred and thirty portages varying in width from a few yards to thirteen miles. Despite these obstructions and consequent delays these two companies had exported annually from Quebec alone, to say nothing of their exports from New York, Philadelphia, and the mouth of the Columbia, furs valued at more than a million dollars. Floyd insisted that such a source of income could not be neglected by the United States, because, valuable as the fur trade was, its routes were soon to become the highways of emigrants going to the far West and of trade to China.

The practicability of occupation was not even questioned; its necessity was imperative. Did not the British Northwest Fur Company then occupy posts in the Louisiana Territory east of the Rocky Mountains? Our occupation of the Pacific Northwest was not therefore to be delayed. To make it effective all that was needed was a small guard at the mouth of the Columbia and another at "the most northeastern point of the Missouri River," thus "confining the foreigners to their own territory."



It was urged that these outposts could be maintained with comparative ease by the United States. Instead of passing the great lengths and obstructions of the Canadian rivers, as the British were forced to do in reaching the far West, our citizens could reach that region by way of "a smooth and deep river [the Missouri] running through a boundless extent of the most fertile soil on the continent, containing within its limits all those valuable furs which have greatly enriched others, a certain, safe, and easy navigation, with a portage two hundred miles uniting it with another river [the Columbia] equally smooth, deep and certain running to the great western ocean." Furthermore several passageways leading from the Missouri to the Columbia had already been discovered in the Rocky Mountains. Responsible initiative was, therefore, all that remained to make our occupation of the Columbia Valley a certainty. Men with their wives and families stood ready to follow such leadership, and it could rely, moreover, upon the Chinese to supply a laboring population.

The Columbia country was desirable, also, for its natural resources other than furs. From the ocean to the head of tide, a distance of two hundred miles, it was heavily timbered with a variety of woods "well calculated for ship-building and every species of cabinet and carpenter's work." Then came another belt of inferior but desirable timber two hundred miles in width. This was followed to the eastward by the plain country which produced grass of the finest quality and horses surpassing in perfection those of Andalusia and even Virginia.

Besides, the Pacific coast waters abounded in fish of numerous varieties, and Floyd saw the possibility of making a port at the mouth of the Columbia the center of the whale fishing industry of the world.

To strengthen the courage and faith of those who believed Oregon a forbidding wilderness beyond the reach of civilization and settlement, this report called attention to the magic power, dauntless courage, and clear vision with which Russia had extended her territory across the continent of Asia, even to the western coast of North America and to the islands of the Pacific, making it possible for her subjects to journey in open boats from Kamchatka to Japan in their own territory. If Russia could carry cannon through "immense oceans, round Cape Horn" and drive sledges loaded with articles of trade across the continent of Asia "through seas of ice, and storms of snow so terrible as to obscure an object beyond the distance of a few paces, in an effort to build up her commerce with China and Japan and to extend her own territory, thus laying tribute upon the four quarters of the globe and winning for herself a "proud security" among the nations of Europe, Floyd was "persuaded that, with a little care and small expense," the United States could lay the foundations of a power in the Columbia Valley that would eventually be necessary to complete her national development and serve her best commercial and industrial interests.

Although nothing beyond the presentation of this report was accomplished at this time, the subject being not even discussed in Congress, Floyd had struck a telling blow in our fight for the Columbia



country. Of his efforts on this occasion Benton said: "Public attention was awakened, and the geographical, historical, and statistical facts set forth . . . made a lodgment in the public mind which promised eventual favorable consideration"<sup>27</sup> Others did not think so favorably of Floyd and his proposals. For instance, John Quincy Adams saw in him only a "flaunting" canvasser and a politician seeking to win prestige and patronage, particularly the latter, by a vigorous opposition to the party in power. In this connection his support of W. H. Crawford in preference to Adams for the presidency should be taken into consideration. Moreover, Adams questioned Floyd's honesty in urging the occupation of the Columbia Valley, insisting that he was actuated by a desire to provide a retreat for a defaulting relative and possibly for himself.<sup>28</sup> Of the report itself Adams' "Memoirs" has this amusing comment:

The president gave me yesterday [January 17, 1821,] a paper to read which this man [Floyd] has prepared as chairman of a committee, being a report urging an immediate settlement and territorial establishment at the mouth of the Columbia river, and a total change of our system of intercourse and trade with the Indians. Floyd had put it into the President's hands with the request that he should suggest any alternative that he might think desirable. I returned the paper this morning to the President who asked me what I thought of it. I told him I could recommend no alternative. The paper was a tissue of errors in facts and abortive reasoning, of individual reflections and rude invectives. There was nothing could purify it but the fire.<sup>29</sup>

Notwithstanding this opposition from those high in power Floyd was undismayed. On December 10,

1821, he reintroduced his resolutions of the previous year but with important modifications. It was now proposed to inquire into the "expediency of occupying the Columbia River and the territory of the United States adjacent thereto. Ignoring completely Mr. Calhoun, the secretary of war, who, like Adams and probably for similar reasons, was thought to be unfriendly to his proposals, Floyd one week later presented an additional resolution asking that the secretary of the navy be instructed to furnish the House with an estimate of the expenses of a survey of the harbors of the United States upon the Pacific Ocean and of exporting artillery to the mouth of the Columbia River.<sup>30</sup> One month later, January 18, 1822, these resolutions were followed by a bill authorizing and requiring the president to occupy "the territory of the United States" on the waters of the Columbia River, to extinguish the Indian titles thereto, and to make land grants to prospective settlers. What is probably even more important this bill provided that "When the population of the settlements amounted to 2000 souls, all that portion of the United States north of the 42d parallel of latitude and west of the Rocky Mountains is to be constituted a territory of the United States, under the name of the Territory of Oregon."<sup>31</sup>

Thus Floyd had taken a bold stand. In neither of the above mentioned resolutions nor in the bill did he express the slightest doubt about our sovereign rights of ownership in the Columbia Valley which was now boldly spoken of as the "territory of the United States." The skillful wording

employed was probably intended to force the president and his cabinet officially to recognize Floyd's contentions regarding our rights in the Columbia Valley, now generally spoken of as the Oregon country. The resolutions showed that Floyd's plans for furthering our interests on the Pacific had advanced, in one year, from that of a commercial outpost to that of a nascent state in the Union. Moreover, they contain the first formal proposal whereby the territory in question was called Oregon.<sup>32</sup>

Every possible effort was made to secure a favorable consideration for Floyd's propositions. Thinking that it might contain important information regarding the Louisiana Territory which, Floyd maintained, included Oregon, he next called upon the president to cause to be laid before the House all the correspondence relating to the Treaty of Ghent, which it "might not be improper to disclose."<sup>33</sup> In this request it is not at all improbable that Floyd desired to damage the political ambitions of John Quincy Adams by making it appear that he had neglected the interests of the West in the negotiations of 1814. Be that as it may, the desired information was forthcoming, but it failed either to arouse interest in the Oregon bill or to incriminate Adams. Accordingly the whole matter was again passed by with little consideration.

Meanwhile a rare opportunity for placing the Oregon question before the people presented itself. Aroused and alarmed at the growing power of Russia, which was then said to be making claims of ownership to the Pacific northwest south of the Columbia River, and distrustful of Adams, the secre-

tary of state and the guardian of our interests there, Floyd next secured the adoption of a resolution calling upon the president to communicate to the House "whether any foreign government had made claim to any part of the territory of the United States upon the coast of the Pacific Ocean, north of the 42° of latitude, and to what extent; whether any regulations have been made by foreign powers affecting the trade on that coast; and how it affects the interests of this Republic; and whether communications have been made to this government, by foreign powers touching the contemplated occupation of the Columbia River."<sup>34</sup> Again his resolution brought the desired information which was, however, considered to be of too confidential a nature for use in the open House. Accordingly the Oregon question was allowed to take its course in the rounds of diplomacy, thus defeating another attempt to popularize it.

Two years later, in 1824, the United States concluded with Russia a treaty in which the latter government renounced any and all claims to territory on the Pacific coast south of 54° and 40'. Nevertheless Floyd did not cease his attacks upon Adams. For some time, it seems, that he searched in vain to expose him because of his alleged neglect of our interests on the Pacific coast. But "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," especially when that day falls in a presidential campaign in the United States of America. Probably through the author himself, who was then a member of Congress and had been one of our commissioners at Ghent, in 1814, word

came to Floyd of a letter written by Jonathan Russell to James Monroe on December 15, 1814. This letter was said to contain proof positive of Adams' neglect of and opposition to the interests of the West in the negotiations ending our second war with Great Britain. Floyd determined to have that letter. It would serve two purposes: that of making Adams unpopular in the West and that of arousing popular interest in Oregon. A resolution of inquiry placed the letter at his command,<sup>35</sup> but it, too, failed to produce the desired sensation. Instead the anti-Crawford press attacked the "electioneering tactics" embodied in the Oregon movement with such persistency as to call from Floyd a defence of his conduct. In a letter to the *Richmond Enquirer* of August 27, 1822, he refuted the charges made against him but refused to give the source of his information regarding the Russell letter.<sup>36</sup>

The provocation thus extended Adams called for more than one of his customary confidences to the pages of his diary. In a brief letter to the *National Intelligencer* for August 31, 1822, he accused Russell of aiding and abetting the attacks which Floyd was making upon him. But one must go to Adams' *Memoirs* to learn what he really thought of the incident and of Floyd. The whole affair was a part of an alleged plot to injure him with the western people and thus to prevent his election to the presidency. Back of it all Adams saw Henry Clay working "like a mole" to discredit him in the West. He was certain that the influence of the press alone had defeated their diabolical attempts. Strange as it may seem, his opinion of Floyd had experienced



a complete change. From a "flaunting canvasser" and an abettor of fugitives he had, in the short period of eighteen months, become "a man having in the main honest intentions." His usefulness was still impaired, however, by a fondness for gigantic projects formed out of crude and half digested information, by a disposition to suspect dishonesty and corruption in others than himself, and by the delusions of an "obfuscated" intellect and a violent passion.<sup>37</sup>

In making the Oregon country a subject of diplomatic negotiations and in connecting it with the name of a prominent candidate for the presidency, Floyd had rendered impossible a further delay in the official consideration of the subject. Accordingly Monroe, in his annual message of December, 1822, suggested that the time had come for serious consideration of our rights and interests on the Pacific coast. Following this suggestion Floyd reintroduced his bill of January, 1822, which was promptly referred to the Committee of the Whole. The debate which followed was one of the most animated and illuminating of the session.

As the first speech ever made in Congress on Oregon, Floyd's is especially interesting and instructive. Unlike his other efforts it showed the results of painstaking investigation on his own part. In a graphic presentation of the operation of those democratic ideas and practices which had carried the pioneer from the Atlantic to the Pacific, often in defiance of law and always at a rate to astound those who opposed, he assured his hearers that it was the "ball of empire" rolling to the westward, which



had made his alleged "fanciful" measures and "bold" projects a reality. Then he showed how the King of England had tried in vain to limit settlements to within one hundred miles of the Atlantic coast; how Sevier had been outlawed for leading his fellow countrymen into Tennessee, only later to be esteemed a gentleman of honor and integrity fit for any trust; and how Boone, in defiance of the wishes of government, had found a safe and beautiful retreat in the Ozark Hills, there to die a patriot and a benefactor. Thus it was and always would be with authority "whether Republican, Imperial or Royal." Authority could never hope to take unto itself the "exclusive privilege of thinking for the people, of checking the progress of population in one direction, and of fixing bounds to it in another, beyond which they the people are not permitted to pass." They might be held in check temporarily by military and other restrictions, but these in turn would be crushed by succeeding revolutions of the ball of empire as it moved to the westward.

Nor was the lawlessness and boldness of those who carried empire to the westward a cause of alarm to Floyd. Their acts were simply proofs of the ability of the people to "preserve their own interest long before government can be prevailed upon to relinquish to them their privilege of acting." He was certain, therefore, that our republic would never bind its citizens to a sterile soil simply to please the notions of those in authority. Mandates to the contrary, such as "would have kept Boone's Lick a wilderness," would be made only to be defied.<sup>38</sup>

As the occupation was inevitable Floyd urged

that it be immediate. By such a course he would have opened a mine of riches to our shipping interests and to the western country surpassing the hopes of avarice itself. Laboring under great disadvantages, had not the American fur traders on the upper Mississippi and Missouri cleared almost four hundred thousand dollars annually? Give our citizens access to Oregon and encourage the whaling industries of the Pacific, and he was certain that our trade would, in a short time, rival that of the British and become the basis of a commerce with China more than sufficient to balance our purchases from that country. Besides, this new field of commerce would become a training school for sailors, whence could be drawn "hardy sons of the sea," who, like those in our second war with Great Britain, would "shed a blaze of glory over the arms of the nation" and teach "the British lion to crouch to the banners of the republic." To those who argued that the proposed settlement would, in time, become a free and independent state and thus drain the United States of her population and wealth, Floyd replied with the wise suggestion that our security would be better conserved by the presence of a neighbor upon the Pacific coast, who spoke our language and adhered to our manners and customs, than by the presence of a Russian state with all its "disgusting notions of monarchy."

Floyd was ably seconded in most of his arguments by Francis Baylies<sup>39</sup> of Massachusetts, who spoke chiefly for the whale fishing industries of New Bedford and Nantucket. Unlike most of the representatives of the New England States, Baylies was

pleased with the idea of multiplying and extending the states of the Union as a certain means of preserving it. Thus a variety of interests could be depended upon to neutralize each other, cementing the whole. In the following prophetic utterance he even urged the extension of our territory and population to the Pacific:

As we reach the Rocky Mountains we should be unwise did we not pass that narrow space which separates the mountains from the ocean, to secure advantages far greater than the existing advantages of all the country between the Mississippi and the mountains. Gentlemen are talking of natural boundaries. Sir, our natural boundary is the Pacific Ocean. The swelling tide of our population must and will roll on until that mighty ocean interposes its waters and limits our territorial empire. Then with two oceans washing our shores, the commercial wealth of the world is ours, and imagination can hardly conceive the greatness, the grandeur, and the power that await us.<sup>40</sup>

Those who opposed the bill were equally zealous and were doubtless as patriotic as either Floyd or Baylies. Tucker of Virginia did not think the proposition visionary but rather too practical. With the deserted farms of his own state being abandoned to grow up in briars and pines, he thought it time to call a halt upon the westward movement of population and capital. Tracy of New York pictured the "imaginary Eden" on the Columbia as an inhospitable wilderness, and Wood of the same state opposed occupation because of the indifference on the subject. Numerous others opposed, urging mainly the inaccessibility of the Oregon country.

On January 27, 1823, the vote was taken on

Floyd's bill. It stood: ayes 61, noes 100, an analysis of the vote showing the representatives of the manufacturing and frontier sections in the majority and those from the commercial and small farming sections in the minority.<sup>41</sup> Public indifference had probably done most to defeat the measure, but its friends had no reason to despair even on that account. In less than one month after their defeat, Little of Maryland presented a memorial from eighty farmers and merchants within his district praying Congress to pass the Oregon Bill.

At the following session of Congress, that for 1823-1824, Floyd again introduced a bill providing for the occupation of the Columbia River, but the progress of diplomatic negotiations with both Great Britain and Russia regarding our interests there rendered discussion inexpedient at that time. He was unwilling, however, completely to bury Oregon in the labyrinth of diplomacy. Accordingly he secured the adoption of a resolution requesting the president to cause to be laid before the House an estimate of the expenses for transporting two hundred troops from Council Bluffs to the mouth of the Columbia.<sup>42</sup> Later he addressed a letter to Calhoun, the secretary of war, asking for the president's opinion upon the proposed occupation of Oregon from a military point of view. The official replies to these inquiries showed such occupation wholly practicable and estimated the expense at about \$44,000. They also carried a tone of official approval.<sup>43</sup>

Thus slowly Floyd was winning his way into executive favor. Our difficulties with Russia satisfactorily adjusted, President Monroe suggested to

the next session of Congress, that for 1824-1825, that it take the necessary steps to establish a military post at the mouth of the Columbia River. Such a post was now desired as a resort for our ships of war, a point of strategy in dealing with the Indians, and a base of commercial intercourse between the East and the West. Accordingly Floyd again re-introduced his bill for the occupation of the Oregon country.

Under these changed conditions the time seemed ripe for results, and Floyd made a master effort in behalf of his pet measure. His opponents continued to talk of the inaccessibility of Oregon, of the insuperable difficulties in maintaining a local government there, and of the folly of establishing settlements that could not be protected and defended in time of war. They were reminded, however, of the achievements of the application of steam to navigation bringing Oregon closer to the East than Wheeling and Pittsburg had been in 1810, of the success of the frontiersmen of Missouri and elsewhere in solving, for themselves and in their own way, the problems of local self-government, and of the experiences of the "Dark and Bloody Land," where the settlers, alone and unaided save by the use of their rifles, had defended themselves and the Union against the designs of foreign enemies. Floyd was certain that the interests of the citizens of the United States upon the Pacific coast "would be identified with the interests of the people of the whole Atlantic coast in a stronger degree" than had been the interests of the people of Vermont and Louisiana at an earlier date. He therefore urged an outpost on the Pacific



as a center, whence the United States in time would rule the Pacific and probably achieve the victories in India for which Napoleon had longed in vain.

To prove further the urgent necessity of occupation he then produced a wonderful array of facts concerning the geography and topography of Oregon and of our commercial interests there. He, also, predicted the rise of a city at the mouth of the Columbia, that would become a world mart for the precious goods of Asia and of a vast inland empire. He saw, in fact, a modern Tyre in America. Thence the United States would supply Canton with flour, cotton, and tobacco, thus completing a commercial circuit of the globe.

To those who still questioned the practicability of maintaining a settlement in Oregon, Floyd conceded the impossibility of finding there the wealth and splendor then found in the salons and drawing rooms of Washington, that "magnificent counterfeit of European royalty;" neither would they find what was very common in Washington, namely: "a heartless intercourse, an aping etiquette of miserable pretenders to the monthly fashions just from Europe." But he assured them that they could find there salmon sufficient to subsist fifty thousand men annually; potatoes grew wild along the banks of the Columbia; and gooseberries were found in abundance with strawberries, raspberries, onions and peas. Moreover, wheat and all kinds of grains could be had cheaply in a few days from Mexico; hogs, sheep, and cattle could be procured in abundance and in a short time from California and the Sandwich Islands; and enterprising citizens had re-



duced the difficulties of the trans-continental route to a minimum.

Floyd closed his argument with this characteristically imaginative and instructive statement:

"I . . . appeal to the House to consider well our interests in the Western Ocean, on our western coast, and the trade to China and India; and the ease with which it can be brought down the Missouri. What is this commerce? Thousands of years have passed by, and, year after year, all the nations of the earth have, each year, sought the rich commerce of that country; all have enjoyed the riches of the East. That trade was sought by King Solomon, by Tyre, Sidon; this wealth found its way to Egypt, and at last to Rome, to France, Portugal, Spain, Holland, England, and finally to this Republic. How vast and incomparably rich must be that country and commerce, which has never ceased, one day, from the highest point of Jewish splendor to the instant that I am speaking, to supply the whole globe with all the busy imagination of man can desire for his ease, comfort, and enjoyment! Whilst we have so fair an opportunity offered to participate so largely in all this wealth and enjoyment, if not to govern and direct the whole, can it be possible that doubt, or mere points of speculation, will weigh with the House and cause us to lose forever the brightest prospect ever presented to the eyes of a nation?"<sup>44</sup>

On this occasion no set speeches were made in opposition to Floyd's arguments, those who did not agree with him contenting themselves with the suggestion that our occupation of Oregon, at that time, would be a violation of the spirit of the treaty of joint occupation with Great Britain under which our citizens had access to the country. Nevertheless the bill passed the House by a vote of 115 to 57, crowning with partial success the ability and efforts of one man. From the House the bill went to the Senate, where it was championed by Benton of Mis-

souri and James Barbour of Virginia; but their efforts could not prevail to command for it even a respectful hearing, and thus the question of our occupation of Oregon ceased again to be agitated for a brief period.

Meanwhile the question of our rights and interests on the Pacific had again entered the rounds of diplomacy. After some delay the treaty of joint occupation was renewed for another term of ten years but not without protests. Floyd's distrust of Adams together with the demands of the diplomats had served, however, to prevent a discussion of the Oregon question in Congress, but now, that the former of these barriers was removed, popular interest in Oregon began to revive. As a result three companies of adventurers, one in Massachusetts, one in Ohio, and another in Louisiana, were formed with a view to colonizing the country. The time thus seemed opportune for another effort, and Floyd revived and reintroduced his bill providing for our occupation of the Columbia Valley.

Like a school of hungry trout after a new bait, a number of the newer members of the House attacked the measure resolved to defeat it. Most prominent among them was James K. Polk of Tennessee, who later entered the presidency as the champion to our claims to "fifty-four forty." With Bates of Missouri, Mitchell of Tennessee, Drayton of South Carolina, Ingersoll of Connecticut, and others, mostly young men, Polk argued against any use of the Oregon country that might drain the East of specie and offend Great Britain. He thus spoke for a generation in greater accord with the mother country.

To one of Floyd's traditions and prejudices his arguments were deplorable. Besides marking a backward step they rendered necessary the temporary abandonment of our rights and interests on the Pacific.

Though the outlook seemed hopeless Floyd fought to the last. His opponent's alarm, lest their specie should some day take wings and fly to the West, he traced to the "ignorant days of British commerce," the days of the Mercantilists, when England had actually prohibited the exportation of gold and had suffered untold consequences. Nor was he willing to take seriously our treaty obligations with Great Britain. He predicted that the British would soon repeat in Oregon the scenes of Kentucky, where the "British trader" and the "British agent" had induced the Indians to murder our citizens on their own territory, to drive them from the fur producing regions, and to deter them from returning. Regardless of their treaties, were they not then increasing their establishments upon the Columbia? Under the circumstances he thought it imperative that Congress take some steps to prevent the murder of our citizens and to command respect for the "sovereignty and rights of the Confederacy,"<sup>45</sup> but the House would take no action.

In a few days after this effort Floyd voluntarily ended his congressional career, but his work had not been in vain. He had succeeded abundantly in filling the minds of the American people with a sort of romantic interest in the lands upon the Pacific and in kindling in them a patriotic resistance to British aggressions in that quarter. These forces

later combined to win the prize for which he had labored. Following the lines thus marked out the American fur traders carried their activities across the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific coast. Through the knowledge which they brought back of the superior tribes of Indians who dwelt there and longed to know of the white man's God, Jason Lee of the Methodist Mission Board answered the call for the gospel and, in so doing, paved the way for the colonization of the Columbia Valley. This movement gave a new interest to the Oregon country, and, in 1838, Senator Lewis F. Linn again took the matter up in Congress, where Floyd had left it ten years before. At the later period the movement for occupation was carried to a successful conclusion.

Whatever credit may belong to Linn and others, John Floyd remains, nevertheless, the father of the Oregon country. "He, more than any one of his day, was the unwearied prophet of the commercial future of the Pacific Northwest."<sup>46</sup> Far greater honor and credit should therefore be accorded him in the future than he has received in the past. His famous report on Oregon has been reprinted; some of his speeches should be preserved; and he himself should have some lasting and fitting memorial.

#### IV. PRESIDENT MAKER AND GOVERNOR

THOUGH concerned in a proposed national vaccine institution for the eradication of small-pox,<sup>47</sup> in the alleged rights of the free negroes in the District of Columbia,<sup>48</sup> and in the prompt payment of the public debt, Floyd's minor activities and interests centered in national politics. To the great surprise and alarm of the politicians of the rival factions he was, in 1824, made chairman of a select committee appointed to consider the "Address of Ninian Edwards,"<sup>49</sup> which made charges of malfeasance in office against William Henry Crawford, then a prominent candidate for the presidency. The composition of the committee together with Floyd's known friendship for Crawford's candidacy were thought to render impossible an impartial investigation.<sup>50</sup> But the politicians had set their hearts upon a political scandal and were determined to have no whitewash instead. Accordingly some of them joined in a movement to remove Floyd from the committee, but the "caucus politicians" remained loyal to Crawford and defeated every effort to depose Floyd.

Then followed a period of anxiety during which the country waited for the results of the investigation, the suspense being increased by one of John Randolph's antics. Deserting the committee of investigation of which he was a member, he left in a flurry for Europe, leaving behind for publication in the Richmond *Enquirer* a letter in which he attacked Edwards, the president, and his fellow investigators.<sup>51</sup> Meanwhile rumor had it that Floyd was

trying to dismiss the charges against Crawford as "frivolous and malicious," and suspicion and uncertainty increased.<sup>52</sup>

But the fears of the politicians were ill founded. The Committee of Investigation finally acquitted Crawford of all charges of wrong doing, and most persons were satisfied that the evidence and circumstances showed a deep laid and infamous plot to discredit an honest, though at times careless, public servant; and Floyd received only praise for the thoroughness and fairness with which it was exposed. Thus he triumphed over his critics, vindicated his choice for the presidency, and terminated one of the most embarrassing and painful incidents of Monroe's administration.

Among other questions having a direct bearing upon the presidential succession, but of later date than the above, the proposed Panama Congress of 1826 was important. Both Adams and Clay, his secretary of state, favored the project and thought that the United States should be represented in it. Although he doubtless had an eye to the presidency, Floyd's opposition to their plans was not entirely political. He, too, favored an "American policy" but desired no counterpoise to the Holy Alliance.

Such a course meant defiance to Europe and war. Moreover, he did not care to participate in any arrangements which might result in Hayti sending a negro minister to Washington, in the liberation of the slaves of Cuba and Porto Rico, and in subjecting the southern states to the possible at-



tacks and the subtle influences of a neighboring free negro population.<sup>53</sup>

It was about this time, probably earlier, that Floyd and other southern leaders of his type had their first definite understanding regarding the presidential election of 1828. Up to that time they had been determined to defeat Adams for a reelection but could not agree upon a candidate to oppose him. Jackson was considered impossible, but their favorite, Calhoun, could not command a popular following. After his unsuccessful contest of 1824-1825 they had expected Jackson's star to set in peaceful oblivion, but the developments of a period of anxious waiting convinced them that he had come into the political arena to stay. As the innocent victim of the famous "corrupt bargain" by which Clay was alleged to have placed Adams in the presidency, Jackson had constantly grown in popular favor. The leaders had, therefore, no other choice between him and certain defeat. They flattered themselves, however, that Jackson in the White House could easily be relegated into the background of his own administration and that the affairs of government could thus be carried on as of old. Accordingly, Martin Van Buren, speaking for the North, and Littleton Waller Tazewell, one of Floyd's intimate friends, speaking for the South, concluded a working alliance between the "planters" of the latter section and the "plain republicans" of the former by which Andrew Jackson was to be made president.<sup>54</sup>

Confident of success and probably of preferment under the leadership of the "Old Hero" who

was thought to have at least one foot in the grave, Floyd was active on the political battle line. At times his ardor seems to have dulled his judgment. This was certainly true when he gave to the Democratic Central Committee, for publication, a statement of a private conversation with Clay, in 1824, in which the latter, in response to Floyd's efforts to dissuade him from supporting a man of Adam's unpopularity for the presidency, was alleged to have said: "Give us [Adams and Clay] the patronage of the federal government, and we will make ourselves popular." Despite the methods used to secure it, Floyd considered Jackson's election a triumph for true democracy. Accustomed, as he was to the old methods of caucus politics, he doubtless considered himself partly responsible for the victory.<sup>55</sup>

Relying upon Jackson's supposed intention to select his advisers from the "talented and distinguished men of the Confederacy" and probably expecting for himself a call to the new cabinet, Floyd, in January, 1829, declined a reelection to Congress. Considering his future course his printed letter to his constituents announcing his purpose to retire is as amusing as it is interesting and instructive. The letter is here given in full:

FELLOW CITIZENS—I have been your representative in Congress, and I feel proud of having been so distinguished by my fellow citizens. This favor has been the more grateful to me, and is cherished in every recollection, when I reflect in this long period, you have conferred that office upon me without opposition.

I know you have had something to pardon and forgive

in your representative, because I, in common with mankind, am liable to err. Whatever my errors may have been, they were, however, unintentional; as I am not conscious of ever having done anything other than the constitution of our country, your honor, and your interest required at my hand. That portion of the sovereign power of Virginia, which you confided to me, is returned to you uninjured and undiminished. Though, in the course of the great conflict, which has eventuated in another great political revolution, the constitution may have received some deep wounds, it has not been by the hand of your representative.

I have the fullest hope, and the strongest belief, that a wise, cautious, circumspect, and temperate course will be pursued by General Jackson whom we all contributed our best wishes and our best efforts to place in the presidential chair of the Confederacy; and that he will aid in healing those wounds, and calming the troubled fears of all.

Whilst this war in the political world was going on, in which, as we conceived, nothing less than the great principles of liberty and the rights of the sovereign states were concerned, I should have deemed myself unworthy the flattering kindness and confidence, with which you have on all occasions honored me, had I in this hour of danger and difficulty, of responsibility and trial, quitted the post which you assigned me. Now it is otherwise. General Jackson will, on the fourth day of March next, commence his duties as President of the United States with a clear sky and a calm sea. To pay the public debt, to lop off all the branches of useless expenditure, to revive our sinking commerce and heal the bleeding wounds in the Constitution, inflicted by ambition, avarice, and a spirit of monopoly, will constitute an ample field, in which he may win laurels no less green than those won on the plains of New Orleans; and crown himself with more true glory in the love and admiration of millions of free-men, than all the conquerors of earth ever possessed. Such, fellow citizens, is the condition of our country which justifies me in saying to you that I am not a candidate to represent our district in the next Congress.

In taking leave of you, as your representative, I have

a request which fills me with pain, because I feel assured that I never can convey to you any just idea of the deep sense of my gratitude for your indulgence and kindness to me. Could I manifest that to you and make you sensible of the true condition of my feelings, I should be cheered by the memories of it in my retirement. I am, fellow citizens,<sup>56</sup> Your humble servant,

JOHN FLOYD.

For reasons later to be considered Floyd was not given a place in Jackson's cabinet. Accordingly he retired to his home in the Valley of Virginia, there to enjoy the love and confidence of a large family of children and a devoted wife and to retrieve his declining fortunes. In his retirement his children shared with him the pleasures of the chase and the violin; his wife became his most trusted political and business adviser; and his neighbors again became the recipients of his gratuitous services as a physician.

Of the many wonderful families of Virginia there are few to be found anywhere more interesting and important than that of John Floyd and his wife, Letitia. To this union were born twelve children, of whom George, Susan, and Thomas died in infancy, Mary at the age of six, and Coralie at the age of eleven. Those who survived to maturity were: John Buchanan, who became Governor of Virginia and a member of President Buchanan's cabinet; William Preston, a distinguished physician of Wytheville, Virginia; George Rogers Clark, secretary of the Wisconsin Territory and later a distinguished member of the legislature of West Virginia; Benjamin Rush, a celebrated lawyer of southwestern Virginia; Letty Preston who married William S. Lewis; Eliza

Lavelette who married George Frederick Holmes, long a professor of history and literature in the University of Virginia; and Nicketti Buchanan who married John Warfield Johnston, from 1870 to 1883 a member of the United States Senate.<sup>57</sup>

Through this family, celebrated for its intellect as well as for its numbers, John Floyd's influence survived long after he had passed from the political stage and had much to do with shaping Virginia's policies at critical periods. Almost without exception, his immediate descendants and their connections were persons of political influence devoted to the state sovereignty theory of government. But for them the history of secession in Virginia might have been written differently. Wherever they resided and were active, even in what is now West Virginia, there the pro-southern and secession sentiment was strong; there particularism, as taught by Patrick Henry, flourished.

There are yet those in Virginia and elsewhere who believe that Floyd's descendants and their connections should have had a greater part and responsibility in directing the affairs of the Southern Confederacy. Such persons criticise President Davis for his failure or refusal to recognize their importance and abilities. Although their favorite was vindicated by the General Assembly of Virginia and the testimonials of his soldiers, there are those who have not forgotten that John B. Floyd was summarily removed from his command after the fall of Fort Donaldson; that Joseph Eggleston Johnston, a member of the famous Johnston family of Virginia, did not receive the promotion which seemed to be due him;



and that, against the protests of his devoted soldiers, he too was relieved of his command following the fall of Atlanta. The heartburnings thus kindled are yet alive and have rendered the name of Jefferson Davis odious to some confederates.

In his efforts to relieve his declining fortunes Floyd relied largely upon the products of his pasture lands. Experience, environment, and study had, in fact, made him an authority upon the subject of grazing. The following extract from a letter by Floyd upon that subject shows a broad grasp of the economic forces in the development of this and other countries:

I am inclined to believe that we might almost tell the condition of every country and form a very accurate opinion of its prosperity from simply ascertaining the proximity of the grazing region to the commercial town of that country, provided the soil of the country is adapted to grass from the seaport to the distant frontier.

This is founded upon my knowledge in part and from history which I think fully sustains the opinion.

I cannot now call to mind the precise period, but you recollect that English history tells us at the period referred to, perhaps during the reign of Elizabeth, an ox sold in the markets of London for about thirteen shillings, which ox grazed near the city. Now their beef is fed on the Teese in the mountains of Wales and in the Highlands of Scotland; that small but esteemed beef called the Kyloe is principally had there.

In France, also, grass and beef at a much later period than that first referred to, seems to have employed many of its inhabitants in the neighborhood of their largest towns. Now however the principal supply of beef is obtained at a great distance.

In our own country the same thing has taken place. The city of New York not many years ago obtained its beef from



the neighbouring counties. At this day they procure it from the most distant counties, and even from the State of Ohio, Philadelphia and Baltimore thirty-five years ago, were supplied from the counties lying between those cities and Carlisle in Penna. They now get much of their beef from Ohio, and the western counties of Pennsylvania and Virginia.

I have mentioned this briefly to show that as the prosperity of the country increases cities also increase, which arises from the fact that all the commodities produced from the soil are more valuable in market than beef, and hence the beef region is thrown to a greater distance.

Not only is this true, but it requires much more land to produce the same revenue where the ox is grazed, than any product which the farmer cultivates, for example I will take Virginia in her present condition.

The grass region in the southwest may be said to extend from the Roanoke to Kentucky, including all the branches of grazing. The nearest point to this city where is fed for market, intended as proof beef, is Montgomery in that direction. In that county there are many extensive farms some perhaps of from fifteen hundred to two thousand acres, laid down in grass to graze the ox for market. This is the precise point at which flour and other heavy products of the farm cease to be of value to the producer on account of the high price of transportation resulting from the distance to market and the bad condition of the roads.

The farmer finding himself possessed of large tracts of land immediately clears it off, by killing the timber; perhaps sows upon it some grass seed, and in a few days it becomes rich pasture. His next step is to purchase as many oxen, from his neighbour still more distant, as will graze upon these pastures and become fat. If he has slaves he keeps them on his farm during the winter and feeds them the crop of the preceding summer. For this purpose perhaps twenty hands may be necessary where the farm contains fifteen hundred acres of pasture land.

But if the farmer has such an extensive establishment and six or eight men, which is a pretty good supply of labor, he generally sells his cattle in October or November to some purchaser who feeds them as before observed until he can

dispose of them in the market, which will sometimes require a whole winter's operation.

In this way you will perceive slaves are not necessary, very few however to the feeder and still fewer to him who sells from the pasture, and none to those who furnish the store cattle, because they most generally raise them in the range, as it is called, that is by turning in the forest or in the mountains during the winter months.

To graze an ox well it will require from two and an half to five acres of ground. Taking into view the quality of the soil of the country, the age of the pasture, and the drought, I think five acres would be about a fair average, because I have known some thin soil whilst new to require even eight acres for several years to sustain an ox so as to make proof beef. This however is rarely the case.

By this process the land will be worth perhaps two dollars per acre, sometimes more, but I think the increased value of the ox, when made fat upon the grass alone, will be worth much more. When poor, the animal is purchased, according to his size, say at twelve dollars. If the animals are large and well formed they will command when poor from twenty to twenty-five dollars. The increased value when fat is not in the same proportion, besides this stock sheep are often put over the same ground to follow the fat cattle and become the finest sort of mutton. The only attention in this process is to examine daily to ascertain whether accidents have occurred, to know when the stock should be removed to fresh pasture and to give them salt every day, or every few days. It will not be well to let them want salt longer than three days.

In this mode of drawing a revenue from the soil you will perceive that few slaves are necessary, and more than can be employed in the daily routine described is a bad investment of capital in such a country. Hence a slave is seldom purchased unless his labor is wanted for some specific purpose.<sup>58</sup>

But Floyd was not long permitted to enjoy the pleasures of his home and estate. On January 9, 1830, less than one year after he had declined a re-

election to Congress, he was made governor of Virginia, receiving one hundred and forty votes to sixty-six cast for Peter V. Daniel.<sup>59</sup> At the time of his election a notable body of men, in convention assembled, was engaged in relaying the fundamental laws of his state. Considering the personnel of that body, containing, as it did, two ex-presidents of the United States, Madison and Monroe, the venerable chief justice of the Supreme Court, John Marshall, the Governor of Virginia, William B. Giles, and a score or more other members prominent in political and judicial life, Floyd was rather conspicuous for his absence. Considering the exigencies of the times from the standpoint of federal relations, he was probably already the choice of the state rights politicians for the governorship of Virginia to succeed Giles. His desire to speak for the whole state in the impending nullification crisis, therefore eliminated him from participation in local politics.

From the sources at hand it is difficult to determine Floyd's position on the question of a proper basis of representation for the several counties of Virginia in the General Assembly, the chief subject of discussion in the state constitutional convention at the time of his election to the governorship. His neighbor favored the white basis as opposed to the mixed basis of property and persons. His silence is probably best explained again by the fact that he was the gubernatorial candidate of the old line politicians of the eastern countries, who favored the mixed basis of representation and opposed reforms generally. The readiness with which he accepted the Constitution of 1830, as the best possible compromise

of the differences between the rival sections, betrays an unusual sympathy for the tidewater interests, because his neighbors of the Abingdon district were now, for the most part, unwilling to compromise their local political difference with the residents of the eastern counties. Some were open in their expression of a desire for dismemberment of the Commonwealth.<sup>60</sup>

Whatever may have been Floyd's attitude towards the all important question of representation in the local Assembly, he was in thorough sympathy with the interests and demands of his section on the subject of internal improvements. Blessed, as it was with many navigable rivers, the Tidewater had consistently refused to tax itself for the construction and maintenance of roads and canals for the use of the uplands and the sections beyond the mountains. But Floyd thought that the future greatness of the Commonwealth lay in her ability to render available her natural resources and to bind her inhabitants together by the ties of common interest. In his annual messages to the General Assembly he, therefore, recommended that immediate steps be taken to these ends. The debates then waging regarding the comparative values of railroads and canals were of little concern to him; action had become imperative.<sup>61</sup>

The proposed central line of communication connecting Richmond and the Valley by way of the James received his first consideration. Next in importance came the plans for rendering accessible the counties of the southwest. This he thought should be done by a railroad extending to the salt, lead,

iron, and gypsum mines of that section. Thus, in case of war, the state could command its natural resources and dispatch troops, very important considerations to one who believed, as did Floyd, that "speed is power; dispatch victory." Meanwhile the proposed great highway passing through Fredericksburg, Richmond and Petersburg at the head of tide and connecting the North and the South, and that other proposed highway passing from one end to the other of the Valley were not to be neglected.

Like many other Virginians, Floyd's attitude towards negro slavery, which was receiving serious consideration at this time by his state, was determined largely by local conditions and abolitionist activities. When, in August, 1831, like a firebell in the night, the report of a negro uprising in Southampton County, brought to all the gruesome account of the death struggle of helpless women and children at the hands of their brutal and misguided slaves, thus breaking the long and studied silence upon the subject of the relations between the whites and the blacks, Floyd predicted that "This will be a very notable day." At once he prepared to meet the crisis by sending troops and artillery to the scene of the uprising. Though taking every precaution for the defence of his people, he refused to implicate the slave masses and placed the blame for their conduct in Southampton County upon their misguided leaders. Through the whole excitement he never lost sight of those slaves who had remained loyal to their masters, even in the midst of the uprising. The court sentences of some of those condemned to



death were commuted to imprisonment or deportation, and others were set free.<sup>62</sup>

In reply to an inquiry from Governor Hamilton of South Carolina, Floyd wrote the following letter regarding the causes of the Southampton Insurrection and suggested ways of dealing with the negro and slave problems :

I received your letter yesterday, and with great pleasure will state my impressions freely.

I will notice this affair in my annual message, but shall only give a very careless history of it, as it appears to be public.

I am fully persuaded the spirit of insubordination which has, and still manifests itself in Virginia, had its origin among, and emanated from, the Yankee population, upon their first arrival amongst us, but most especially the Yankee pedlars and traders.

The course has been by no means a direct one. They began first by making them religious; their conversations were of that character, telling the blacks, God was no respecter of persons; the black man was as good as the white; that all men were born free and equal; that they can not serve two masters; that the white people rebelled against England to obtain freedom; so have the blacks a right to do.

In the meantime, I am sure without any purpose of this kind, the preachers, especially Northern, were very assiduous in operating upon our population. Day and night they were at work and religion became, and is, the fashion of the times. Finally our females and of the most respectable were persuaded that it was piety to teach negroes to read and write, to the end that they might read the Scriptures. Many of them became tutoresses in Sunday Schools and pious distributors of tracts from the New York Society.

At this point more active operations commenced; our magistrates and laws became more inactive; large assemblies of negroes were suffered to take place for religious purposes. Then commenced the efforts of the black preachers. Often



from the pulpits these pamphlets and papers were read, followed by the incendiary publications of Walker, Garrison and Knapp of Boston; these too with songs and hymns of a similar character were circulated, read and commented upon, we resting in apathetic security until the Southampton affair.

From all that has come to my knowledge during and since this affair, I am fully convinced that every black preacher, in the whole country east of the Blue Ridge, was in the secret, that the plans as published by those northern prints were adopted and acted upon by them, that their congregations, as they were called knew nothing of this intended rebellion, except a few leading, and intelligent men, who may have been head men in the church. The mass were prepared by making them aspire to an equal station by such conversations as I have related as the first step.

I am informed that they had settled the form of government to be that of the white people, whom they intended to cut off to a man, with this difference that the preachers were to be their governors, generals and judges. I feel fully justified to myself, in believing the northern incendiaries, tracts, Sunday Schools, religion and reading and writing has accomplished this end.

I shall in my annual message recommend that laws be passed to confine the slaves to the estates of their masters, prohibit negroes from preaching, absolutely to drive from this state all free negroes, and to substitute the surplus revenue in our treasury annually for slaves, to work for a time upon our railroads, etc., and then sent out of the country, preparatory, or rather as the first step to emancipation. This last point will of course be tenderly and cautiously managed, and will be urged or delayed as your state and Georgia may be disposed to cooperate.

In relation to the extent of this insurrection I think it greater than will ever appear. The facts will as now considered, appear to be these: It commenced with Nat and nine others on Sunday night, two o'clock, we date it Monday morning before day, and ceased by the dispersion of the negroes on Tuesday morning at ten o'clock. During this time the negroes had murdered sixty-one persons and traversed a distance of twenty miles, and increased to about seventy men. They

spared but one family and that one was so wretched as to be in all respects upon a par with them. All died bravely indicating no reluctance to lose their lives in such a cause.

I am with consideration and respect. Your obedient servant,<sup>63</sup>

JOHN FLOYD.

Though impressed with the necessity of moving "tenderly and cautiously" and with due regard to the wishes and conditions of other slave-holding states the alarm occasioned by the Southampton Insurrection, in eastern Virginia, was such that Floyd decided, in November, 1831, to recommend to the General Assembly the enactment of a law providing for the gradual abolition of negro slavery. If such a law could not be made to apply to the whole state, he hoped to have it apply to the counties west of the Blue Ridge Mountains with a view to the final enactment of such a law for the whole state.<sup>64</sup>

Nevertheless his annual message for that year contained no recommendation regarding the abolition or even the gradual abolition of negro slavery. Whether, as on former occasions, the slave-holding states advised delay and caution or the condition of federal relations was such as to render unwise the injection of other and complicating subjects, Floyd had evidently resolved not to push the matter. Yet he did all in his power to precipitate its discussion in the Assembly and expressed his confidence in the ability of his young friends from the western counties: Summers, Faulkner, Preston, Campbell, and others to manage the "affair most excellently."

But, when the debate which he thus aided to precipitate in the House of Delegates began to be heat-

ed and to engender bad feelings, Floyd, with others, became alarmed. Regarding the delegates from beyond the mountains as allies of the abolitionists and as bent upon the destruction of slave property, the delegates from the eastern counties talked of a dismemberment of the Commonwealth. As expressed by Floyd, "a sensation had been engendered which required great delicacy and caution in touching." It was allayed, and with his approval, by shifting the question from that of gradual abolition to that of the "expediency" of legislating upon the subject at all at that time. On this proposition the pro-slavery party won, the vote being sixty-seven to sixty.

The uncertain condition of federal relations at this time was doubtless a factor in defeating the anti-slavery party in Virginia. Absorbed, as he was in national affairs, Floyd was perfectly willing to turn the whole subject of the state's proper policy regarding negro slavery over to the solution of a master who was at hand in the person of Thomas R. Dew of William and Mary College, a man in whom all Virginia reposed the greatest confidence. In April, 1832, Floyd wrote him inviting his attention to the subjects of slavery and abolition as set forth in the debates of the Assembly of 1831-1832. The able defence and justification of the institution of negro slavery which followed was accepted by Floyd and most other Virginians of whatever section as final. Under the changed conditions the anti-slavery sentiments of 1832 were largely lost sight of in a struggle to maintain the state sovereignty theory of government.

As Floyd's "Diary," published herewith, prac-

tically covers the period of his term as Governor, the reader is referred to that source for a fuller account of his domestic policies and local activities than is here given. On February 11, 1831, he was re-elected without opposition, this time, to a full term of three years, thus becoming the first governor of Virginia under her Constitution of 1830, a distinction of which he was proud. Like his predecessor he took a keen interest in the selection of his successor, his choice falling upon the successful candidate, Littleton Waller Tazewell. Believing that "great events are in the gale" he urged Tazewell to hasten to Richmond and prepared to lay down his share in the power of the state as he had lain it down for the "Confederacy," "uninjured and undiminished."<sup>65</sup>

The Richmond *Whig* of April 17, 1834, noted his retirement to private life in this editorial:

Yesterday Governor Floyd left Richmond for his residence in Montgomery, carrying with him the hearty good wishes of the great bulk of this population for his happiness and prosperity. He was escorted out of town by all the volunteer companies—Bigger's Blues, Richardson's Artillery, Myer's Cavalry, and Richardson's Riflemen. No Governor has retired from office with a more general feeling of regard from the citizens of Richmond.

## V. AN APOSTLE OF DISCONTENT

SUFFERING from declining health and despairing of the republic under the administration of Jackson whom he had helped to place in office, Floyd was, during his period as governor of Virginia, an apostle of a local and sectional discontent that, at times, threatened the preservation of the Union. His grievances were not, however, mainly personal and political. He spoke for a poverty stricken and declining section embracing a large part of tidewater and piedmont Virginia and extending far into the same sections of the lower Atlantic seaboard. Thence had gone tobacco growers into Kentucky and Tennessee and cotton planters into the Gulf States leaving desolation and poverty behind. With others Floyd now lamented the decline of the seaboard planters and watched, in dismay, the lowering clouds of obscurity as they gathered over the places made vacant by the flight of population and capital to the westward. Alarm was, indeed, the general aspect of the South's ancient aristocracy, and others than Floyd had come to believe that the days of her wonderful civilization were numbered.

Many patriotic attempts had been made to avert the effects of these calamities. For a decade or more agricultural societies had sought remedial aid in a more scientific cultivation of lands; experiments were then being made with a view to converting the tobacco, corn, and wheat lands of Virginia into cotton plantations; Edmund Ruffin was teaching the scientific use of calcarious manures; plans for con-



necting the eastern and western counties by means of turnpikes and canals were on foot; in defence of a declining power in their legislative assemblies the older sections of the slaveholding states had developed a well defined theory of minority rights; at South Carolina College Doctor Cooper was teaching the sons of the South the Manchester doctrines of *laissez faire*; near him, at Fort Hill, South Carolina, Calhoun had formulated his famous nullification doctrines; and meanwhile Virginia, in her resolutions on federal relations, had protestèd, from time to time, against the exactions of the odious tariff.

Regardless of the wishes and interests of the South, the North continued meanwhile to demand protection for her manufacturing industries and congressional appropriations for her projected internal improvements. More alarming still, her power to enforce these demands increased from day to day, as the South's minority in Congress grew smaller. Nor could she always rely upon the loyalty of her own sons removed to other sections to guard her interests. Prosperous in their new homes beyond the mountains, which required only good roads and markets to make them ideal, they had not hesitated to ally themselves with the North in support of the American System of which Clay, himself a native Virginian, was the father.

Under the circumstances there seemed nothing left to the seaboard South but the election of a president who would cast the weight of his office against the demands and power of the North. Thus it was hoped to make any resort to nullification,



secession, or the Virginia doctrines of 1798 unnecessary. Although Jackson's record was not to their liking, Floyd and others expected his official acts, under the changed conditions, to be shaped largely by the interests and demands of the South. For these and other reasons, already referred to, they had aided in placing him in the presidency.

Speaking of their expectations in this connection Floyd later said:

"At this moment [1828] came the direful struggle between the great parties in Congress founded upon the claim which the majority . . . from the north of the Potomac made to the right to lay any tax upon the importations into the United States which was intended to act as a protection to northern manufacturers by excluding foreign fabrics of the same kind. Hence all the states to the south of the Potomac became dependent upon the Northern States for a supply of whatever thing they might want, and in this way the South was compelled to sell its products low and buy from the North all articles it needed from twenty-five to one hundred and twenty-five per cent higher than from France to England . . . At this juncture the southern party brought out Jackson."

With the popularity which he had shown in 1824 and especially with the aid of Pennsylvania which he had carried at that time, it was thought that "the South could elect Jackson and by his help reduce the odious tariff."<sup>66</sup>

In this connection Floyd's support of the interests and demands of the seaboard South may need some explanation. The interests of his former constituents in the Valley had not always harmonized with those of eastern Virginia. Besides, it can not be forgotten that Floyd was born and reared in

Kentucky. He seems, however, to have been true to the interests of his neighbors and was not the tool of the slave-holding aristocracy. Already negro slavery had gained a firm foot-hold in the counties about his home, thus identifying their interests with those of the slaveholding sections. Besides, Floyd was related to and connected with some of the oldest and most conservative families of the old South, notably the Prestons of South Carolina, who were then among Calhoun's most trusted advisers.

Personal and political disappointments played, however, a large part in Floyd's opposition to Jackson and his administration. It seems certain that he left Congress fully expecting to be called to some higher place in the federal service. It is certain that he expected Mr. Calhoun, the vice-president, his close friend, and "the one upon whom we placed the highest confidence," to play the leading role in the new administration; also, that such men as Landon Cheves of South Carolina, Tazewell of Virginia, Hugh L. White of Tennessee, and others of the old guard would be called to the places of highest trust.<sup>67</sup> Instead, of all those who had done most, in Floyd's opinion, to secure Jackson's election only Martin Van Buren received a cabinet portfolio. In some mysterious way Floyd and his friends had qualified as suitable persons for foreign missions and governors of distant territories, and a race of "harpies" represented by Amos Kendall, William B. Lewis, and others of the later famous "kitchen cabinet" had usurped the places which the old line politicians had reserved for themselves.

Thus Jackson had been tested and found to be like "the apples of the Dead Sea . . . fair to the eye but all bitterness and ashes within."<sup>68</sup>

It was under these conditions that Floyd was made governor of Virginia but not as an avowed anti-administration candidate. Those back of his candidacy were too farseeing for any such a blunder. Disappointed in their personal ambitions they still hoped to redress the South's economic grievances and to allay the sectional discord in Virginia which was then threatened with dismemberment. Accordingly many Jackson men in the General Assembly, which then elected the governor, supported Floyd's candidacy.<sup>69</sup> Though the Richmond *Enquirer*, a Jackson organ ably conducted by Thomas Ritchie, failed to comment upon Floyd's election, there is no reason to conclude that its attitude was in itself a severe stricture.

Already disgusted with the personnel of the new cabinet, Floyd was driven by the events of the year 1830 into active and open opposition to the administration. First there was the Mrs. Eaton affair in which Jackson demanded recognition by his official family for a woman whose reputation was such that Mrs. Calhoun did not recognize her. Then came the famous Webster-Hayne debate in which the bonds uniting the North and the South were drawn to the breaking point with Jackson maintaining the position of a neutral. An effort to ally him with the South, his own section, brought from him that astounding but patriotic declaration: "Our Federal Union, it must be preserved." Soon thereafter followed an open breach between Jackson and Calhoun

caused by W. H. Crawford's revelation of the long concealed fact that it was Calhoun who, as secretary of war in 1818, had desired to censure Jackson for his conduct in Florida in dealing with the Seminoles and the British agents, Arbuthnot and Ambrister. Explanations from Calhoun had sufficed only to place him among political traitors and in no way appeased Jackson who had probably known of Crawford's intentions for some months. The time had come for a break. Accordingly Duff Green, Calhoun's friend, was deposed from the editorship of the party organ, the *Daily Telegraph*, to make a place for Jackson's friend, Francis P. Blair, who, in December, 1830, founded a new organ, the *Globe*. Meanwhile one session of Congress had passed without any change in the tariff schedules.

Thus far the attitude of the administration was equivalent to a declaration of war, if not upon the South certainly upon her politicians of the old guard. In a letter of May 4, 1830, to his "dear friend," Floyd, John Tyler made his position clear. He was certain that the efforts of the president, his satellites, and his mercenaries would not break them (the state rights party) down or cause them to yield to a mere majority. He said:

"We should [thus] derive an immortality of infamy more damnable than that which attended the rascal who fired the Temple of Ephesus. They may pronounce us mad, if they please, but we say with Hamlet that we yet know a "hawk from a hand saw." If I am to sink for this, be it so in the name of all that is holy, I can not die a political death that would be attended with fewer pangs.<sup>70</sup>

But there is little evidence that Tyler expected political death either for himself or his friends. That was to be the portion of the administration crowd. Failing to recognize Clay's superior rights, Tyler expected Jackson to throw himself at the head of the American System. There, he would favor and encourage large appropriations for roads and canals, a "judicious tariff," a distribution of the surplus revenues, an enlargement of the pension system, removals from office for "opinion's sake" and license for the wildest pretensions of the Federal Supreme Court under the leadership of John Marshall. As in the case of Adams and Clay, this course was expected to result in an avalanche of disapproval. Already discontent was abroad in the land. Tyler had never seen "so much dissatisfaction." His friend Troup, a senator from Georgia, was authority for the statement that the president could not again carry the state of Ohio.

Somewhat later, in a letter of December 27, 1830, Floyd's own impressions and purposes were clearly set forth, to his friend, Colonel John Williams of Nashville, Tennessee, as follows:

As you long ago wrote me, and told me personally, nay predicted, Jackson has thrown me overboard; he is not only unwilling to give me employment, as he promised after I declined a reelection to Congress, but has in every single instance refused office to my friends, and even respectful consideration to my letters of recommendation to others. Nor does he stop here. I am at this moment enduring the whole weight of the opposition to him, his friends, and the power and patronage of his government to break down myself and my friends in Virginia, and to prevent my reelection to the office I now fill. Without having much reputation for politi-



cal matters, I have read those folks at Washington thoroughly . . . I am not of a temper to pocket insult, neglect, or injury.

I have, my dear friend, determined on my course. I can be as silent and patient as any of my aboriginal ancestors, and like them I feel that vengeance would be sweet, but when the day of retribution shall come, it will be marked by the effects of the tomahawk.

You must know that notwithstanding all efforts to prevent it I calculate on a reelection. Then I will begin to formulate a message in which, as you know, my own principles will be maintained.<sup>71</sup>

Thus all hope of a reconciliation with Jackson had passed, and Floyd began to prepare for a contest. To this end he requested his friend, Colonel Williams, to procure affidavits from certain Methodist ministers of Nashville, Tennessee, who, it was alleged, had been asked by Jackson in the summer of 1830 to be on the lookout for such a man for the vice-presidency as would suit them, in case he should decide to resign the presidency after securing a reelection. He desired, also, to know the particulars about a certain letter reported to have been written by W. H. Crawford in December, 1827, to one Balch of Nashville, in which the vote of Georgia had been promised to Jackson on the condition that he (Jackson) would decline to listen to the views of John C. Calhoun. He desired to know in particular "whether Balch had shown that letter to General Jackson, what the Genl's answer was, and what Balch's answer was to Mr. Crawford." Fortified with this data Floyd was confident of his ability to "produce a state of things which will be ample vengeance for so much ingratitude."



More interesting still than this declaration of war and active preparation for hostilities, coming, as they did, immediately after a conversation between Floyd and Calhoun, was the willingness of the former, even at this early date, to be on terms of accord with Clay. All that now prevented a reconciliation between them was the absence of common ground "to occupy with the freedom of former friendship." Floyd had no enmity toward Clay, not even "the remotest disposition to check his future hopes in this state, or anywhere else," and he was perfectly willing that his friends "should deal with him as their judgment of the present and belief of the future shall dictate." He also suggested that Clay might be benefited by Calhoun's friends, since all others in the South had for him only curses. For himself, if he could not be Clay's friend, he was resolved not to be his enemy.<sup>72</sup> Considering the character of the combination later effected between the followers of Clay and those of Calhoun for the formation of the Whig party, the above suggestions are, to say the least, interesting.

Notwithstanding these suggestions for the formation of an opposition party, the way to political success was not clear to Floyd. His prospective allies would probably expect too great a share of the spoils and honors. Accordingly he began again to despair of the republic. At that moment Jackson's friends seemed supreme not only at Washington but also in Virginia, and, in disgust, Tazewell was preparing to resign his seat in the federal Senate. Thinking that such a document might serve as a guide and warning to future generations, Floyd now

began a diary in which he proposed to chronicle the events of our failure at self-government.

Although Floyd continued his diary for some years, his despair soon turned to hope. Encouraged by a unanimous reelection to the governorship of his state, then regarded as pivotal, he was, one month later, taken into the confidence of certain southern leaders who proposed to make Calhoun president in 1832. Accompanied by their favorite they had, following the adjournment of Congress, stopped in Richmond on their way home from Washington to formulate their plans. There they enjoyed a convivial period at the governor's mansion and mingled with members of the General Assembly. They certainly talked about Jackson's candidacy for a reelection and about his rumored choice of Van Buren for the succession. The good of the country plainly demanded their defeat, and Calhoun was thought to be the only man who could accomplish that end.

Before his guests resumed their respective journeys information from Washington made it clear that Jackson knew of the rendezvous in Richmond and that he would give no quarter in the approaching fight. This information came to Floyd in the form of a letter from Duff Green; the recent happenings in political circles at Washington was the pretext. As a matter of self-justification Calhoun had published the correspondence between himself and Jackson relevant to the Seminole affair. It was not wholly favorable to Jackson who became indignant and read Calhoun out of the Democratic party. On the information of Judge W. T. Barry, the post-

master general in Jackson's cabinet, Green was informed that Calhoun must henceforth be regarded as a traitor and a nullifier. Through the same source warning was also given that the attacks upon Van Buren must cease.<sup>73</sup>

The challenge was complete, and Floyd prepared to put Virginia and especially Richmond in a condition for aggressive and defensive warfare. First of all, he desired to weaken the influence of that "profligate," Thomas Ritchie, the editor of the Richmond *Enquirer* and the head of the Richmond Junto, a body of politicians similar in some respects to the Albany Regency of New York. To this end Thomas W. Gilmer was encouraged to establish a party organ in Richmond, devoted to the Virginia doctrines and to the patriotic duty of keeping Calhoun before the country as a prominent candidate for the presidency. In the following letter of April 16, 1831, to Calhoun, Floyd had already outlined his plans of action:

You will perceive that Messrs. Tyler and Tazewell have declined a public dinner; that however has made no difference with us. Mr. Tazewell is here and has been for several days, has been much among the members, has dined with several messes, and has met a most graceful reception; wherefore we are settling down to a quiet belief that so far as Virginia is concerned, all is safe, or at least so little to doubt that we do not fear the contest.

I have received several letters from Duff Green, which have puzzled me. He writes as though it were his opinion, and perhaps some of our northern friends also, that it would be well to bring you forward by the General Assembly before they adjourn, as the vice-president with Jackson at his reelection, so as to keep the long end of the lever in case of his death.

Of the wisdom of this scheme I doubt as Jackson in two years may die, and moreover of his reelection I also doubt, because Virginia you may be assured, at least we feel assured, will vote for you as president if necessary at the next election. Then comes the difficulty with Clay and his friends; that with Jackson's own may throw the election into the House. How then would it terminate? Were we now to offer you as a candidate for the vice-presidency, would we be able with good grace to change our front if the presidency should be deemed the proper course next winter? Would it not seem like placing too low a value upon the pretensions of our candidate? Besides, three fourths of our friends look to you as the proper person to be supported as president on the first, fit occasion. Though if necessary to defeat Clay the vote can be given again to Jackson. If Clay were out of the field, we can carry your election against Jackson to an entire certainty.

Under all these views I really do not know which course to take; whether to announce you a candidate for the presidency and take the hazard of war, or wait the fate of Clay. We would be glad to know your opinion about these things.

I have though, suggested to our friends that it would be perhaps prudent, to keep firmly in the opposition to Clay, conciliate his former adherents, who are now for you, and observe a quasi war with Jackson through the summer—extend your interests, and still weaken Jackson; let the public eye be still held upon you until the meeting of the Assembly next fall, at which time you will be formally presented, in the meantime our paper will war for our principles, yet holding you forward to be supported at the proper time. As to Van Buren he has been so disposed of—that you may consider him in this State a *Caput Mortuum*, of according to the lawyers *civilitur mortuum*.

I have talked much with Judge Brook, the confidential friend of Clay. He is at the head of that party, is with us, and is anxious Clay should decline for a time. We have saved these judges, they are our friends and will give efficient aid by their talents, their characters and judgment.

This is my course, holding you thus before the public as a candidate for the first office, and as we think, succeeding so well in this state, that we are unwilling to have it supposed

anything less would be tolerated. You, however, can from your position look through the whole Union, and can determine whether we are right, and make any suggestion if we are wrong. We think, as I have observed to you, that Clay alone stands in the way. If you can be assured of New England even he, I think, would not prevent your success. As Clay will see if he does not already perceive, the consequence of his continuing in the contest is not to benefit himself, but to aid Jackson, as he never can be president, until another administration has intervened. To ask the people to turn Jackson out and put him in would be to ask them to pronounce a satire upon themselves. To prevail upon them to turn Jackson out, and put you in would be to censure Jackson and so far by that act, to excuse Clay for his former course as to make his future justification more easy. Can he be made to see this course? The Fox and the Stag, when long chased by the hounds, often lose all self-possession and lose their sagacity entirely as to attack their pursuers at a moment when safety would be secured by another effort.

I will not say anything about the proceedings of Pennsylvania. You no doubt are already advised of all. Should they address you, without doubt you will answer fully, fully, very fully. Take from them the charge of nullification and disunion, and you are stronger than any man. I do not urge this as being at all necessary for Virginia. Here you are safe.

The resignation of Jackson's cabinet, which now followed as a further means of ridding the administration of objectionable influences, made no changes in Floyd's plans. He considered Van Buren's flight a streak of political sagacity in which he could find no personal consolation. Instead he saw in the departure of the "wretched harpies" only evidences of a "concerted political movement, intended by the president and Van Buren to effectuate some great political object." It was possible that they desired to make the latter vice-president and thus "to inflict



a punishment upon Mr. Calhoun and overthrow his friends.”

But so long as Virginia held the destiny of the plotters in her hand Floyd felt secure. By a judicious use of her power and influence he hoped to defeat the political aims of the administration. Accordingly he now proposed united action on the part of the States Rights party of the South in an effort to defeat its plans. Soon he proposed, also, to suggest “to the Confederacy the name of Mr. Calhoun of South Carolina, as a fit and proper person to fill the presidential chair.”<sup>4</sup>

That Calhoun knew of and approved, in general, the movements in Virginia there can be no doubt. In a letter of May 10, 1831, to W. C. Preston he said:

I see that Gilmer is about to establish a new paper at Richmond. It does seem to me that nothing could be more propitious to the great cause for which we have been contending than the establishment of such a paper (as I doubt not will be established) at this moment in the Capitol of the Ancient Dominion. I have long believed that the lead of Virginia is all important on all great constitutional struggles touching the interests of the South; and it does seem to me that no time could be more propitious to obtain that lead than the present. Nothing is wanting but an energetick and able press at Richmond, and I do trust that all who feel the importance of the crisis will cooperate in its support. No one state can take a stand on its constitutional rights, however clear her cause, without the cheering voice of her surrounding sister states, but with that nothing can be more easy than to mention her rights. Most men require to be backed by the force of publick opinion. With these views, I do hope that this state will unite with our friends in Virginia in sustaining Mr. Gilmer's move. I know it is hard to get subscribers but still much may be done



and few can do more than yourself. Let all who have a stake in the South remember that at the next session the battle must be fought, and that it is essential that our cause should be vigorously sustained in the oldest, most populous, and most exposed Southern State. I know that our friends in Virginia are looking anxiously to be sustained in this State and generally in the South.<sup>75</sup>

But all these well laid plans went awry. In the first place the anti-administration organ under the editorship of Gilmer did not materialize, and in the second place Clay refused to listen to any overtures for a political alliance which meant his elimination even for a period of four years. Accordingly Floyd's friends advised a more moderate course, and Calhoun himself refused to become an active candidate for the presidency so long as Clay remained in the contest "with just strength enough to defeat him . . . without being able ever to elect himself."<sup>76</sup>

Discouraged and with nightmares of "Peggie" O'Neil and of the towering wrecks of the federal edifice haunting his memory, Floyd betook himself to his home beyond the mountains, there to enjoy a period of quiet and repose. He returned, however, in time to observe the fruitless flirtations which his friends were conducting with the Anti-Masonic party with a view to supporting its candidate, William Wirt, for the presidency in place of Jackson, but Floyd would not listen to their suggestions. He refused absolutely to have anything to do with one of Wirt's "laxity in morals" and "opportune" political thinking; with one who would turn the federal government over to "fanatics, knaves, and religious bigots."

Again Calhoun appeared on the scene, this time on his return to Washington. Realizing the impossibility of his own political ambitions and that the interests of the South, so far as remedial tariff legislation was concerned, depended upon the approaching session of Congress, that for 1831-1832, he probably advised his friends in Virginia to acquiesce in the reelection of Jackson who, in spite of his faults, was now considered less objectionable than the "persistent" Clay. At any rate Floyd's opposition to Jackson ceased for the time, and he turned his attention to the efforts then being made for a rehabilitation of the sovereign states and for a reduction of the tariff. Considering the fact that nullification was in the air, that Virginia held a strategic position in the crisis, and that Floyd was in the confidence of Calhoun, his annual message of December, 1831, to the General Assembly, was of more than usual interest. That part bearing upon federal relations dealt both with the nature of the federal government and with the tariff."

In clear and forceful language Floyd reasserted the state sovereignty theory of government, as guaranteed by the "Compact or Constitution," holding the Federal Government to be merely the "Agent of the States" entrusted only with such powers as were originally intended to operate "externally" and "upon nations foreign to those composing the Confederacy." He called attention to the disregard with which "an unrestrained majority" had received the memorials and protests of some of the "sovereign states," justifying their acts by precedent and expediency and thus melting away "the

solder of the Federal chain;" also to the fact that it was then "strongly insinuated" that the states could not "interpose to arrest an unconstitutional measure." Such a course, he was certain, could result only in nullifying the federal constitution and in a complete failure in our experiment in government.

The tariff was considered as a menace to the South's agricultural interests and as a violation of the constitution. Floyd opposed any arrangement whereby money could be drawn from one section, the South, for the enrichment of another section, the North. Under such a system he feared that those who contributed least to the exports which brought wealth to the treasury, would be tempted to urge expedients for increasing their advantages. To his mind the "Compact" with its several compromises had been entered into for the express purpose of averting such a contingency. Otherwise, it had been "misunderstood" and was, therefore, insufficient to accomplish the object for which it was designed, the preservation of our rights and liberties. On the other hand, if the tariff was unconstitutional, then the federal government had usurped the rights of the states and erected a political system "subversive of that to which allegiance is due." No arrangement in justification of the tariff, not even the proposed distribution of the surplus revenue among the several states, was therefore legal and right.

With this statement of his views before the country Floyd was willing to wait the action of Congress and, for a time at least, to eschew politics; but unforeseen events seemed to make the latter desire im-

possible. Accepting as a challenge the refusal of the federal Senate to confirm Jackson's nomination of Van Buren to be Minister to the Court of St. James, his friends now put him forward as the candidate of the Democratic party for the vice-presidency to succeed Calhoun. To Floyd's great amazement, Ritchie and the Richmond Junto fell in with the plan, if indeed, they had not played an important part in formulating it. As he had not yet given up the idea of a reelection for his favorite and of thus keeping control of the long end of the lever in case of Jackson's death, these new arrangements for the presidential succession did not appeal to him.

Accordingly his attacks upon Jackson were renewed with increased vigor. Gilmer having failed in his efforts to found a Calhoun organ in Richmond, Richard K. Crallé, Calhoun's friend, was aided in establishing the *Jeffersonian and Virginia Times* in Petersburg. Meanwhile active steps were taken to prevent the election of Van Buren. To this end, Tazewell having declined to save the day, P. P. Barbour, a Virginian with a long and satisfactory period of public service to his account, was brought forward on a Jackson-Barbour ticket. In this way Floyd expected to throw the choice of the vice-president into the Senate, where, it was thought, Van Buren's election could be prevented.

Meanwhile, in Floyd's dealings with Jackson, a question arose involving the rights and dignity of the "sovereign state" of Virginia. Bearing a letter of studied official character from Floyd, Charles J. Faulkner had appeared at the White House to

request Jackson's aid in securing information from the British archives regarding the disputed boundary line between Maryland and Virginia. After receiving the "Agent of Virginia" with all due ceremony Jackson promised the desired aid and suggested that it might be necessary to send a special agent to London to make investigations. Whereupon Faulkner advised that, inasmuch as the establishment of state boundary lines was a matter of concern to the federal government, the expenses of such an agent should not fall upon the states. This gave the "Old Hero" an opportunity to remind the "Agent of Virginia" that he too belonged to the strict construction school of politicians, which denied to Congress the power to appropriate money for other than federal purposes. "Sir," said he, "your Senators are constantly watching my appropriations. Tazewell, judging by his past course, would be sure to condemn us, and your Governor, Floyd, would be the first to blast us, if we departed from the strict line of our duties, even if in favor of your own State."<sup>78</sup>

Sarcasm was not considered in good taste in such serious undertakings. Faulkner was therefore asked to prepare an account of his interview in a form suitable for use by Tazewell as the basis of an attack upon Jackson from the floor of the Senate. Of the incident Floyd wrote: "The President has in an official conversation, with the Agent of the State of Virginia, had no hesitation in opposing his own resentment at the political opinions of the governor, and the state, as well as those entertained by the senator, her representative in the Senate of the United



States." Tazewell was urged to resent it all and was assured of Virginia's approval of his acts. Faulkner's refusal to permit an account of a private interview to be made the basis of a public attack probably saved both Floyd and Tazewell from ridicule.<sup>79</sup>

Other events of the year 1832 were not such as to restore Floyd's confidence in Jackson. Instead they led him to the conclusion that things were going from bad to worse. Notwithstanding the fact that it had received the support of a majority of Virginia's representatives in Congress, the Tariff of 1832 was mockery to the requests and needs of the South; Jackson's attack upon the Bank of the United States was simply a decoy; and the leaders of the South had frequently encountered indifference and ridicule. Then, too, Floyd's friend Barbour had resigned his candidacy for the vice-presidency to accept a place on the federal Supreme Bench, and the "little magician," Van Buren, had been elevated to the vice-presidency with Jackson as president. To cap the climax South Carolina had nullified the tariff act of 1832.

Though counseling prudence and moderation in his annual message of December, 1832, Floyd was then secretly counting the costs and horrors of war. To his mind that "outrage upon our institutions," that "satire upon the revolution," and that "consummation of a long expected executive usurpation," Jackson's Proclamation, in answer to the Nullification Ordinance of South Carolina, made war inevitable. Even before receiving information of his choice by South Carolina for the presidency in



preference to Jackson, Floyd had, as the governor of Virginia, prepared to sustain her sister state in the fight upon the tariff and had given warning that others should "beware." Already he had recommended a better organization and equipment of the state militia, and he then chafed under the limitations placed on his power by the state constitution.<sup>80</sup>

Whatever one may think of his attitude and statesmanship on this occasion the following letter of December 23, 1832, to his friend Tazewell affords ample proof of Floyd's patriotism:

MY DEAR SIR: I have received your letter for which I thank you, and hold the expression of your approbation of my message [the regular annual message] and conduct, in this critical and dangerous period, far above the favor of a parasitical confederacy. I, as you will have perceived, have been left to choose my course, for none seem willing to develope any view, or to contribute an effort, to resist this torrent poured upon our liberties by the tyrant usurper, Jackson.

When I know my course has met the approbation of yourself, who have no object in view but the good of the country, and that it is the cheering voice of a personal friend who commends, I feel a pleasing sensation flow over my heart like a smile, which I would not exchange for all the honors and wealth a tyrant could give.

How often I have wished you were now in the Assembly; you could, if a member of that body, still save the republic. As it is I fear the result of the coming conflict will leave us in chains; and unless the tariff party in Congress do now repeal those laws nullified by South Carolina, the blood of our citizens will flow like water. Jackson pants for the sword and will apply it freely in all cases law, politics or religion.

I have, my dear Sir, spent many many sleepless nights since I came to be informed that Jackson had determined to wage war upon a sovereign state, because I knew he was not a patriot, but a tyrant who would as soon fight against his coun-

try as for it, if he in his own person was to be most distinguished and could rule without a check. I knew that to doubt either his patriotism, his purity, his objects or his wisdom was to stir up opposition, and perhaps hatred in those intended to be protected and to be preserved.

I feel my bosom beginning to overflow, and I am afraid of worrying your patience; for the heart like the eyes finds relief from disburthening itself of long concealed and pent up grief. I will restrain the inclination and say that all my heretofore reading in my school boy days, as well as my own observation in riper years, and we, since the revolution in France down to that in Mexico, had ample fields for observation, confirm me in the full conviction that all who are prominent in authority when those horrid brutalities of civil war begin will surely perish. Virtue and patriotism then often cause the death of the man who possesses them; nor do they receive justice until after ages pronounce judgment, which is generally correct, there being no successful villain to flatter by an opposite decision.

You will perceive by these reflections that should the tyrant wage a civil war, I have no very strong expectation of living through the struggle; but the crisis has arrived and we ought to meet it like men who have not sought it, but it being inevitable have met it with a corresponding resolution.

I have no desire but to retain the good opinion of my friends, discharge my duty to Virginia like a good and faithful citizen, more anxious to discharge well the duties of office than to possess office.

Should this man bring upon us the scourge of civil war, you will have no cause to lament the vacillation of your friend or call in doubt the confidence reposed. Killed and conquered we may be, but the honor and the patriotism of the man, and of Virginia shall not be questioned even by malignity itself.

With the sincerest friendship and the highest regard, I am yours,<sup>81</sup>

JOHN FLOYD.

Floyd's family shared with him these sentiments and alarms. On January 1, 1833, his wife wrote:

God bless you my dear Floyd—a happy, happy New Year to you. What will be its close? Will the alarming state of our country break up the enjoyments of our plentiful, peaceful home? Merciful Father! is there not honesty enough in our government “To render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and unto God the things that are God’s? I rejoice to see you hold out for the people. I can not be patient at the possibility of a gallant enlightened community being sacrificed to the passion of a “bloody, bawdy, treacherous, leacherous villian.” Oh my husband, how prophetic has your friend Col. John Williams been as to yours and Calhoun’s fate. I fear power will crush you both. There is an universal indignation amongst the women of the country at the President’s course “for letting the negroes loose upon us.” Do you think such a thing is possible? Ritchie I observe has got his cue from the Albany Regency. You are to be sacrificed. Have you no personal or political friend to aid you in these attacks? I advise you at once to discontinue your subscription to Niles Register, upon the principle that I would not pay any man for abusing me. Surely it has come to Ritchie’s and Croswell’s to meet out the same justice. Croswell has forwarded a statement of your dues to him which I will send by Nathan Hart to you, which please discharge and stop the Albany Argus. If money is to be given let it be to our own side. Duff Green has lately had his arm broken for the cause; strengthen it by giving him that which has pampered Ritchie and Croswell.<sup>82</sup>

Amidst the fears of impending disaster peaceful currents continued meanwhile to flow and to make for national accord. For his own part Floyd had always been willing to “modify” his tone for the common good. Thus when word came to him that South Carolina was willing to submit her grievances to a convention of the states and that Clay would

agree to a modification of the tariff, Floyd was willing to cooperate with each. The Compromise Tariff of 1833 had his approval, and it was partly out of regard for his desires that the General Assembly of Virginia voted to send Benjamin Watkins Leigh, as a special commissioner, from that state, to South Carolina, bearing requests for moderation and conciliation in the nullification controversy. With these turns the crisis passed leaving all parties in a position to claim victory and the character of the federal government as indefinite as it ever had been.

Under the changed conditions Floyd modified his tone toward Jackson, but he stoutly refused to return to the Democratic fold so long as Van Buren was one of its leaders. With many other state rights men he now became "a sort of Clay man," going so far as to renew his friendship with him and to apologize in the pages of his diary for the abuses which he had made of his confidences.<sup>83</sup> He now probably thought it possible to attach Clay to the Calhoun car, hoping thereby to unite the South and the West upon Calhoun for the presidency.

But it was no time for favorites; principles now amounted to more than men; and the elimination of both Clay and Calhoun from the list of eligibles for the presidency had become temporarily imperative. Accordingly Floyd set himself to the task of working out a fighting alliance between all the factions opposed to the administration. To this end he encouraged discord within the Democratic party, while scrupulously keeping the conflicting ambitions of his own friends in the background. In November, 1833, Judge Brook, Clay's confidential adviser in Vir-

ginia, made it clear to Floyd that Clay was not then a candidate for the presidency, and about the same time Calhoun's friends ceased to urge his claims to that office. Thus was rendered possible a formidable alliance between the heterogeneous elements opposed to the administration. The product was the Whig party. Thus Floyd retired from office happy in the belief that he had saved his country from a threatened executive usurpation and that the wise and the good would again soon shape the destinies of the republic.

Soon after his retirement from public life Floyd was attacked by a stroke of paralysis from which he never recovered. He died August 16, 1837, and his remains now repose in an unmarked grave at Sweet Springs, Monroe County, West Virginia. His spirit still lives, however, in that bond existing between the Valley of Virginia and her tidewater and piedmont sections. When our claims to Oregon became the leading issue in the presidential election of 1844, his memory and achievements were revived, but they soon sank from sight in the long drawn out period of sectional strife that followed.<sup>84</sup>

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Richmond *Times-Dispatch*, May 2, 1909; Floyd, J. N. *Biographical Genealogies of the Virginia-Kentucky Floyd Families*.

<sup>2</sup>McElroy, R. M., *Kentucky in the Nation's History*, 2.

<sup>3</sup>Morehead, *Address on the Settlement of Kentucky* (pamphlet).

<sup>4</sup>*Draper (Manuscripts)*, 33 S291-335.

<sup>5</sup>Morehead's *Address*.

<sup>6</sup>*Calendar Virginia State Papers*, I, 310.

<sup>7</sup>*Idem*, II, 47; James, *George Rogers Clark Papers in Illinois Historical Collection*, VIII, 524.

<sup>8</sup>Collins, *History of Kentucky*, I, 238, 311; Marshall, *History of Kentucky*, I, 115.

<sup>9</sup>Johnston, *Johnston, Preston, Floyd, and Bowen Families*, in manuscript.

<sup>10</sup>*Journal*, House of Delegates, 1814-1815, 13.

<sup>11</sup>*Idem*, pp. 78, 141.

<sup>12</sup>*Idem*, pp. 59, 76.

<sup>13</sup>Moore, *The Works of James Buchanan*, XII, 306.

<sup>14</sup>Benton, *Abridgement of the Debates of Congress*, VI, 158-162.

<sup>15</sup>Richmond *Enquirer*, December 15, 1818; *Idem*, May 11, 1830.

<sup>16</sup>*Annals of Congress*. 16Cong. 1st sess., II., 1587; Richmond *Enquirer*, March 7, 1820.

<sup>17</sup>*Annals of Congress*. 16Cong. 2d sess., p. 991.

<sup>18</sup>*Idem*, 16Cong. 2d sess. p. 1154.

<sup>19</sup>*Idem*, p. 1165.

<sup>20</sup>*Memoirs*, V., p. 275.

<sup>21</sup>*Oregon Historical Society, Quarterly*, VI, 261.

<sup>22</sup>*Idem*, 260; Shafer, *History of the Pacific Northwest*. 129

<sup>23</sup>These essays are in the Library of Congress.

<sup>24</sup>Benton, *Thirty Years' View*, I, 13.

<sup>25</sup>*Annals of Congress*, 16Cong. 2d sess., 679; Benton, *Abridgement of Debates*, VII, 50; Bancroft, H. H. *History of Oregon*, I, 349-369.

<sup>26</sup>Bourne, E. G., *Oregon Histo. So. Quarterly*, VI, 263.

<sup>27</sup>Benton, *Thirty Years' View*, I, 13.

<sup>28</sup>This was undoubtedly a reference to the defalcation of John Preston, one of Floyd's kinsmen. See Richmond *Enquirer*, January 30, 1820.



<sup>29</sup>Adams, *Memoirs*, V, 237.

<sup>30</sup>*Niles Weekly Register*, XXI, 270.

<sup>31</sup>*Idem*, XXI, 350.

<sup>32</sup>It seems that the name Oregon was first applied by the author of the *Travels of Jonathan Carver* to a fabled river somewhere in the far west. After Captain Gray's voyage, in 1792, the names "Oregon" and "Columbia" were used interchangeably for the river which he discovered. Later Bryant, in his *Thanatopsis* popularized the word "Oregon" as the name of a river, but it was John Floyd who first formally applied the name Oregon to the territory along the Columbia River. See Shafer, *History of the Pacific Northwest*, 47; *Oregon Histo. So. Quarterly*, VI, 265.

<sup>33</sup>*Annals of Congress*. 17Cong. 1st sess. I, 722, 733; *Richmond Enquirer*, August 27, 1822.

<sup>34</sup>*Annals of Congress*. 17Cong. I, 1034, 1073.

<sup>35</sup>*Idem*, II, 1617.

<sup>36</sup>*National Intelligencer*, August 30, 1822.

<sup>37</sup>*Memoirs*, VI, 57.

<sup>38</sup>*Annals of Congress*. 17Cong. 2d sess. 397.

<sup>39</sup>Francis Baylies was born at Dighton, Massachusetts, in 1783, and was elected to Congress in 1821, where he served three terms. A former Federalist he became a strong supporter of Andrew Jackson for the presidency and voted for Jackson in preference to Adams in 1825. Adams considered him "one of the most talented and worthless men in New England." See *Oregon Histo. So. Quarterly*, VI, 268.

<sup>40</sup>*Annals of Congress*. 17Cong. 2d sess., 682-683.

<sup>41</sup>*Idem*, 17Cong. 2d sess., 700.

<sup>42</sup>*Idem*, 18Cong. 1st sess., I, 1203; Adams, *Memoirs*, VI, 239.

<sup>43</sup>*Annals of Congress*. 18Cong. 1st sess., I, 1622; *Ibid.*, II, 2345.

<sup>44</sup>*Congressional Debates*. I, pt. I, 25; Benton, *Abridgments of Debates*, VIII, 208.

<sup>45</sup>*Idem*, V, 195.

<sup>46</sup>Professor E. G. Bourne, *Oregon Histo. So. Quarterly*, VI, 275.

<sup>47</sup>Benton, *Abridgment of Debates*, VII, 8.

<sup>48</sup>*Idem*, IX, 358.

<sup>49</sup>*Idem*, VII, 40; Adams, *Memoirs*, VI, 297, 360, 391.

- <sup>50</sup>Adams, *Memoirs*, VI, 360.
- <sup>51</sup>*Idem*, VI, 360.
- <sup>52</sup>*Idem*, VI, 391.
- <sup>53</sup>Benton, *Abridgments of Debates*, VII, 641, 673.
- <sup>54</sup>Ambler, *Thomas Ritchie*, p. 108.
- <sup>55</sup>*Floyd's Diary*.
- <sup>56</sup>*Richmond Enquirer*, February 3, 1829.
- <sup>57</sup>For a fuller account of the Floyd family see *The John P. Branch Historical Papers* of Randolph-Macon College, IV, p. 78.
- <sup>58</sup>*Floyd Manuscripts*, Library of Congress.
- <sup>59</sup>*Journal of the House of Delegates*, 1829-'30.
- <sup>60</sup>Ambler, *Sectionalism in Virginia*, p. 309, 315.
- <sup>61</sup>*Journal of the House of Delegates; Kanawha Banner*, October 1, 1830.
- <sup>62</sup>*Floyd's Diary*.
- <sup>63</sup>*Floyd Manuscripts*.
- <sup>64</sup>*Floyd's Diary*.
- <sup>65</sup>*Tazewell Papers*, now in Norfolk, Va.
- <sup>66</sup>*Floyd's Diary*.
- <sup>67</sup>*Idem*.
- <sup>68</sup>*Idem*.
- <sup>69</sup>*House Journal*, 1829-30. The house was largely Democratic, and the vote was: Floyd 140, Peter V. Daniel 66.
- <sup>70</sup>*Floyd Manuscripts*, in the Library of Congress.
- <sup>71</sup>*Idem*.
- <sup>72</sup>*Idem*.
- <sup>73</sup>*Floyd's Diary*, April 16, 1831.
- <sup>74</sup>*Idem*, April 25, 26, 1831.
- <sup>75</sup>*Floyd Ms.*
- <sup>76</sup>*Floyd's Diary*, April 25, 26, 1831.
- <sup>77</sup>*Journal*, House of Delegates, 1831-32, p. 13.
- <sup>78</sup>*Tazewell Ms.* Faulkner to Floyd, May 18, 1832.
- <sup>79</sup>*Floyd Ms.* Floyd to Tazewell, May 24, 1832; *Tazewell Ms.*, Floyd to Tazewell, June 11, 1832.
- <sup>80</sup>*Floyd's Diary*.
- <sup>81</sup>*Floyd Ms.*
- <sup>82</sup>*Floyd Ms.*
- <sup>83</sup>*Floyd's Diary*.
- <sup>84</sup>*Richmond Enquirer*, April 28, 1845; Moore, *The Works of James Buchanan*, V, 457.



# DIARY OF JOHN FLOYD

## CHAPTER VI.

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MARCH, 1831.

*Eighth day.* When at the Capitol I received a letter from A. L. Botts, a member of the Privy Council, resigning his seat in that body.

On my return to my house I was informed that the Honorable Lewis Williams, a member of Congress from North Carolina, had called on me. I regret very much I did not see him. I am informed by Colonel J. P. Preston, who is with me, and the rest of my present household that he gives the same account of the reckless course of General Jackson in the Presidency which Mr. Alexander and Mr. Trezvant of this State gave me on Monday last.

My resentment toward General Jackson, the President, I find has changed to pity and a total abstraction of feeling of interest in his future course.

It is possible that what I now write for amusement to gratify a momentary desire may some day become history and I will therefore take more care in writing the ideas and facts more distinctly. I have not nor do I intend to record anything but simple facts either known to me or my friends.

This President has disappointed friends and foes; all his enemies said of him before his election, has been realized. The future historian will regret to record the error these States committed in raising a victorious general of their army to the first office in the State of a civil kind, merely because he had become popular for winning a great battle and

closing a war with a splendid victory over the English armies at New Orleans. I thought Jackson had mind, which by practice in the affairs of government, would soon be qualified to manage the machine and in a short space of time he would become a statesman. That all the talents of the Union were at his command, I know, and did believe in common with all others of his friends, that he would call around him the talented and distinguished men throughout the confederacy and make as strong and splendid an administration as Jefferson's. How sorrowfully all have been disappointed. We believed that Langdon Cheves, Littleton Waller Tazewell, John McLean of Ohio, Thomas H. Benton, James Hamilton, Jr., of South Carolina, Hayne, a senator of that State, Hugh L. White of Tennessee, and so forth and so forth would have been called; and that Mr. Calhoun, the Vice-President, would have been consulted and allowed his due weight, he being considered a man of the first talents in the Union, the one on which we placed the highest value. Instead of giving us such men, he has surrounded himself with men of narrow minds, some of them hardly gentlemen and none of them have much character and no principles, moral or political, except Ingham and Branch. Jackson has given himself up to the management of these wretches and has even had the folly to engage in the petty little quarrels of the women! The ladies who have been esteemed virtuous refused to associate with Mrs. Eaton, who had been the wife of Timberlake, a purser, but who had been the kept mistress of Eaton for years before Timberlake's death and whilst Tim-

berlake was at sea, where Eaton, then a senator from Tennessee, contrived by influencing the Secretary of the Department of the Navy to keep him. Jackson has degraded himself into a defender of that woman who did not confine her favors to Eaton. He even descended to the humble station of a procurer of certificates to prove her innocence. General Francis Preston, my brother-in-law, informed me that Jackson had given him a manuscript of ninety pages to read containing certificate evidence to prove the innocence of Mrs. Eaton! Mrs. Eaton was, whilst I was in Congress, considered as a lady who would be willing to dispense her favors wherever she took a fancy.

Such the President and such his Cabinet. All the talent and morality of the country is against him as strongly as it was in his favor two years ago. Our constitutional doctrine has been so cut up, changed and disregarded by Jackson that it is probable he will be put out of the Chair in two years more. It shall be done unless it is ascertained that the Clay construction of the Constitution should prevail by so doing; in that case, Jackson may be reelected.

*Ninth day.* Received a letter from Mr. Tazewell, our senator. He, I think, will not resign. Tyler, our other senator, writes to me that the Vice-President, Calhoun will be here in Richmond on Friday next.

*Tenth day.* Had a meeting of the James River Company. The Vice-President arrived today. He spent the evening with me and a few friends called in also. He confirms all we have heard from Washington City as to the course of the Federal Govern-



ment. I anticipate many evils from the course of the present administration of that government.

*Eleventh day.* The Vice-President, J. C. Calhoun, dines with me today, also Governor Preston [of South Carolina], Wm. B. Preston, and Mr. Thomas W. Gilmer. Much conversation passed amongst us and all the prominent measures of President Jackson were discussed amongst us. We all seemed to agree in our political opinions very cordially. I will write these things as I progress in these notes or records.

This evening I invited about sixty gentlemen to spend the evening to meet the Vice-President. Most of these gentlemen were of the Assembly, senators and delegates. All went away highly gratified, pleased and delighted with Mr. Calhoun. He has won upon all and I think nineteen-twentieths will support him for the Presidency. All Van Buren's hopes are blasted forever in this State. All are disgusted with his base attempt to ruin the character of Mr. Calhoun by the plot to embroil him through Mr. Crawford with General Jackson.

*Twelfth day.* Mr. Calhoun went on his way to South Carolina to his own residence. Met the Council of State and transacted much business.

I received a confidential letter yesterday from Duff Green which, according to his desire, I showed to Mr. Calhoun. This letter exhibits such unexpected traits of character, and opinions so reckless and an intolerance so reprehensible, in the highest officers of the Federal Government, that I cannot forbear inserting it below as follows:

WASHINGTON, MARCH 10TH, 1831.

*(Confidential)*

DEAR SIR: I have just had an interesting conversation with Judge Barry, in which he expressly told me that the administration considered me as in opposition because I had inserted an article approbatory of Mr. Tazewell and had also assailed Mr. Van Buren. I asked if I was to understand that support or opposition to Mr. Van Buren was to be considered the test of friendship to the administration? To this he replied that he did not see how anyone could sustain the administration and assail one of the members of the Cabinet. I then asked him how he could reconcile bitter attacks on the Vice-President with a support of the administration. To this he replied that he was a Jackson man. But said I "Your organ, the *Globe*, assails Mr. Calhoun and I learn that friendship or enmity to Mr. Calhoun is to be made the test of friendship or enmity to General Jackson! He said that Mr. Calhoun has assailed Mr. Jackson by the publication of the correspondence and that if I identified myself with Mr. Calhoun, I must abide the consequences. To this I replied that I had counted the cost and was prepared for the contest. That I denied the right of the President or anyone to propose any such terms, but that when proposed, I was at no loss to choose.

I give you these facts that you may judge of the state of things here and that you may communicate them in confidence to Mr. Calhoun. Mr. Barry further added that he had been the friend of Mr. Calhoun and that he was desirous to do him justice and to befriend him when he went West next summer but that if he was a nullifier that he could never support him. "Sir," said I, "You know that Mr. Calhoun is no more of a nullifier than you and Jefferson always were and that the construction given to the doctrines of the South was given to cover the attacks contemplated against Mr. Calhoun and I have now in my possession the proof under the signed manual of both Kendal and Blair to show that the *Globe* was established with the preconcerted purpose of hunting Mr. Calhoun down on that charge." I told him that the scheme would fail. We parted, he profess-

ing feeling of personal kindness but you may rest assured that they are resolved on an uncompromising war on Mr. Calhoun's friends.

Major Eaton, the Secretary of War, is extremely ill with the croup and I am apprehensive that he will not recover. What may be the result, I do not pretend to foresee. I shall be glad to hear from you from time to time. Please show this to Mr. Calhoun. I send it to you because I do not believe a letter from me to him could pass safely. Your friend,

DUFF GREEN.

*Thirteenth day.* Showed the above letter to Wm. B. Preston, a member of the House of Delegates. I have projected a public dinner to our senators, Tazewell and Tyler. The members of the General Assembly will do that thing in approval of their bold, honorable and independent stand made by them in the Senate of the United States in defence of States Rights. This day Mr. Calhoun is on his way to South Carolina.

*Fourteenth day.* Had a Council of State.

*Fifteenth day.* Saw Senator Tyler to-day. I advised him to be absent as the members of the Assembly were getting up a public dinner for him and Mr. Tazewell, in appreciation of their conduct in the Senate of the United States. Consequently Mr. Tyler went to the country to return in a day or two.

*Sixteenth day.* Had a meeting of the James River Company.

*Seventeenth day.* Mr. Tyler has returned and is mixing with the members. A dinner will be given to Senators Tyler and Tazewell. This day I saw Mr. Ewing, a senator elect from the State of Ohio, who brought me a letter of introduction from Mr. Creigh-

ton, a representative from that State, with whom I served in Congress. Whilst at the Council Chamber, Governor Poindexter, late of Mississippi, called on me. He is now a senator from that State in the Congress of the United States.

*Eighteenth day.* I have invited Senator Poindexter and his two nephews to dine with me to-morrow, also Mr. Ewing, Judges Carr, Cabell, Coulter, Brook, May, and Brockenbrough, Doctors Watson and Page, Major Gibbon, Mr. Thomas Giles, W. B. Preston, J. P. Willson, of Cumberland, Lynn Banks, Mr. Robert Stanard, Colonel Andrew Beirne, G. W. Mumford, J. Robinson and others.

*Nineteenth day.* In the evening my guests arrived and we enjoyed quite a pleasant time. Among other things some of the company played whist until eleven o'clock. After dinner whilst Senator Poindexter staid he talked on politics, of the Federal Government and said that nothing could be more surprising than the course General Jackson had taken in the Presidency, he was surrounded by a few favorites who controlled and directed all things; these men too were ignorant and presumptuous. He had turned his thoughts to making Van Buren his successor and had done violence to the constitution to forward his popularity, that the Turkish treaty was a direct violation of the constitution, that he now went for internal improvements by the United States, for a division of the surplus revenue. That the Senate had rejected the nomination of Stambough as an Indian agent, yet General Jackson had reappointed him after the adjournment of the Senate. Mr. Poindexter said that he would have voted

against the nomination of the printers if he had been in the Senate where he would have been but for ill health. He is and will go heartily and firmly for the South and support the Virginia principles.

*Twentieth day, Sunday.* There is nothing stirring to-day, no news. Thomas Miller, a Delegate, says that Mr. Tazewell will be here this week. Of course we may expect him the next return of the steamboat.

*Twenty-first day.* This day Sir William Campbell of Upper Canada called to see me and paid his respects. He is in bad health and is a fine gentleman.

WASHINGTON, MARCH 6TH, 1831.

(*Private*)

DEAR SIR: I am very desirous of learning the state of public feeling in Richmond relative to matters and things in general but more particularly with regard to the Correspondence.

Now I ask this as a friend. I am desirous of knowing whether the censure falls on the right person, I mean Van Buren.

I am in the hurry of departure and have not time to write more. Address me at "Pleasant Gardens," Burke, N. Car. Your Friend,

SAMUEL P. CARSON.

To Governor Floyd.

(*Answer*)

RICHMOND, MARCH 17TH, 1831.

DEAR SIR: I received your letter dated at the city of Washington desiring me to give you the real state of the facts in relation to the effects upon the public mind caused by the publication of the correspondence between the President and the Vice-President and to know where the blame attaches if "in the right place" you say, "I mean Van Buren."



I do not know whether I can give you such information as you desire. The facts so far as I have learned them I will cheerfully communicate to you with the same frankness and confidence you have observed in the request.

When that correspondence was known to be in the city, it was sought and read with singular avidity. Previous to this period, Van Buren had some advocates among the friends of [T. M.] Randolph here, as also Ritchie, the printer of the *Richmond Enquirer*. When the public mind had time to reflect upon the correspondence and gentlemen began to talk upon the subject there seemed to be hardly a division of opinion among them.

At this juncture, Ritchie began to lament the appearance of the "correspondence" and as the only possible means of sustaining Van Buren, he seemed to desire the public to consider it a private quarrel and refrain any expression of opinion until after General Jackson's reelection. This advice none seemed disposed to heed. Van Buren is utterly annihilated in Virginia and Jackson himself so hurt that he may now be said literally to live politically but by the sufferance of those he has most neglected or had permitted his printers to abuse.

For my part I have seen with pain all the brilliant hopes of his real friends blasted and ruined forever, hopes not for themselves but for their country which by his energy and decision would see her Constitution renewed and protected in its just power, the conflicting interest of the Confederacy adjusted, the talents of the country brought into council, the virtue, morality and integrity of the whole brought around him, to aid in establishing an administration the fame and character of which would have gone down to posterity as bright as though its history had been written in letters of sunshine upon the blue vault of Heaven, but all, all I fear, is lost forever. Nothing can save Jackson's posthumous fame but such decision and change of measures as none who know his present condition believe will take place.

From recent events I think it may be said that in this State he is tolerated and his future hopes here will be owing to the forbearance of those I have alluded to, which will be directed by his future conduct.

Though this state of things has been brought about by the councils of these depraved individuals, he himself is to be pitied as being ignorant of what everyone else knows full well. Such



conduct cost Charles of England his head and lately Charles of France his throne. The ballot-box will do in this country what the axe and the bayonet did unless Jackson should prove as wise as the English monarch lately has proven himself to be in such a dilemma.

I have heard from the country and believe this state of things to exist everywhere. Richmond is the only point where there is an advocate and he has been bought and sold for the purpose of securing the succession to that Van Buren. Yours with friendly regard,

JOHN FLOYD.

To the Hon. Sam'l P. Carson,  
Pleasant Gardens, Burke County, North Carolina.

Though these letters have been recorded in this book to-day at my request by my son, William Preston Floyd, nevertheless I received that of Mr. Carson's in due course of mail. My answer was written as it purports to have been, but I retained it until this time to see whether the agitation of this proposed dinner to our Senators would make any change in public opinion, or if the opinion of gentlemen being more freely expressed, would make it necessary for me to change my opinion as to the true state of public sentiment. I will forward the letter by to-morrow's mail under a full and thorough belief that all which has transpired from the conversations of gentlemen since the writing of it has been justified and that Jackson is even more strongly objected to than even I imagined at the time it was written.

*Twenty-second day.* Had a council of state and received an answer from the President relative to our claims against them. It was unsatisfactory.

*Twenty-fourth day.* Had a meeting of the James

River Company. In the evening I dined with Mr. James Lyons. At dinner he informed me, in the hearing of Mr. Goode of Brunswick, a Member of the Assembly, that Mr. Powell, a delegate from that side of the James River, called him a "south-sider," said to Peter V. Daniel that if Jackson did not turn out Van Buren that they (the south-siders) would turn out Jackson. After dinner I spent the evening at Mr. Call's.

*Twenty-fifth day.* No council as the members did not attend.

*Twenty-sixth day.* Had a council of state to-day and transacted much business. In the evening at eight of the clock, General Walter Jones of the District of Columbia, came in and sat some time and conversed much about Washington City and the administration of Jackson. Jones is a lawyer in that city, his reputation for talents is among the best at the Supreme Court of the United States. He is a Virginian, but of the Adams and Clay party, yet his character is such that none will dispute his statements in anything he would say in matters of fact. He says that it is generally believed in Washington that there is a good understanding among the members of the cabinet that the wretch of a printer, Amos Kendal, fourth Auditor of the Navy has more influence with the President than any other man, he puts up and puts down. These miserable reptiles, William B. Lewis, John Eaton, Van Buren and Barry manage the whole affairs of the United States. Jackson has overturned the settled constitutional construction of all the laws which have governed the President from the foundation of the

United States until the present time. He has outraged all regulations and has violated the Constitution whenever it stood in the way of his will. He has appointed ministers without the knowledge or consent of the Senate, has signed and approved bills for roads, canals and rivers and when Stambough was nominated to the Senate as an Indian agent, who being rejected by an almost unanimous vote, he then in defiance of all this, appointed him sub-agent without consulting the Senate. General Jones says the alleged reason for his appointment as reported in Washington was "that the poor, helpless Indians said they would not go home without Stambough, that they would hunt their way home and die on the highway sooner than take anyone else!" Can it be possible that Jackson and this depraved set about him can believe that the people of these States will suffer their constitution to be violated, and that too, for such puerile and insulting reasons as those.

*Twenty-seventh day.* A few friends called in during the day. I received many public dispatches.

*Twenty-eighth day.* Had a Council of State, in the afternoon I was informed that Mr. Gilmer was going to Charlottesville to consult his family as to the propriety of coming here to Richmond to edit a paper to support our and Calhoun's interests.

*Twenty-ninth day.* Had a meeting of the Northwestern Turnpike Board of Directors, consisting of the Governor (ex-officio), the Treasurer, Attorney-General, and Second Auditor. We organized the business, made a recommendation to the General Assembly and adjourned.

*Thirty-first day.* This day I took the oath of of-

fice prescribed by law to be administered to the Governor of Virginia, and am now the Governor of Virginia under the New Constitution, having had the honor to be the last Governor under the old Constitution by a vote of three to one over the opposing candidate, P. V. Daniel, and under the New Constitution I was unanimously elected governor for three years, to take office this day.

APRIL 1ST, 1831.

*Second day.* Mr. Thomas W. Gilmer, a Delegate from Albemarle, called this evening and agreed to edit a newspaper in this city to support the doctrine of Virginia as declared in the resolutions of 1798, also internal improvements by the state and finally Mr. Calhoun's election to the Presidency.

*Third day.* I went to the old Baptist Church to hear Mr. Broadus preach as it is reported his eloquence excels all the preachers. I was disappointed in his eloquence not being equal to my expectations as created from the reports I heard of him.

I received this evening a letter from Duff Green on general politics. I will write to him shortly and put him right as he seems to think Mr. Calhoun should be put up for the Vice-Presidency again. No, he must be President and that at the next term in lieu of Jackson. If he is not, Jackson and his profligate and ignorant Cabinet will ruin the Confederacy and dissolve this Union in six years from this day.

*Fourth day.* Had a Council of State.

*Fifth day.* General Carrington called to-day, who

gives us the pleasing intelligence of the health of his lady, our niece. My Council of State evidently feels less potent than under the old Constitution.

*Sixth day.* Met the James River Company and in the evening I went to Mr. Ritchie's party. He is alarmed at the prospect of a rival in T. W. Gilmer's paper and is now trying to conciliate all parties.

*Seventh day.* Had a Council.

*Eighth day.* This day I have sent off many of Mr. Gilmer's proposals for printing a paper devoted to the interests of Virginia in her improvements and to the Constitution of the United States as expounded by our Resolutions of 1798. We dined with P. N. Nicholas to-day, Mr. Tazewell called on me to-day.

*Ninth day.* Mr. Tazewell came up in the steam-boat night before last and looks well. He informed me that he stopped at the Union Hotel. I will see him to-day. I called to see him but he was not in at the hour. Went to Council.

*Eleventh day.* Mr. Tazewell called. We were alone from eleven to two o'clock. I heard all his views fully on the subject of the course of the Federal Government and Jackson's prospects for reelection and his present mode of administering the Government. He thinks Jackson wholly incompetent to administer the government and that his cabinet is more incompetent than he. This seems to be the general opinion now amongst the intelligent of Virginia and especially amongst the members of the Legislature.

*Twelfth day.* Had a council and transacted business and returned home. I was at the play last

night. Forest played in the character of Damon in the play of Damon and Pythias. Forest is an actor of the highest attainments. This is the first time I have been at the theater in Richmond. It will, I think, be the last, as the house is dirty, noisy and ill arranged.

*Thirteenth day.* Nothing of importance to-day. The President, it is said, is dangerously ill, but not believed as the report cannot be traced.

*Fourteenth day.* Night before last the frost was exceedingly severe. It is thought most of the fruit has been killed. The Lucerne in the public square around the capitol is much injured. My daughter returned at nine past meridian in fine health and spirits from her visit to Mrs. Harrison.

*Fifteenth day.* I heard last night that the President is better of his attack, which is good news to his dependents as they calculate to a man being deprived of office if he should die, as none believe them worthy of office, friend or foe, yet they must submit to them.

*Sixteenth day.* Had a Council of State. Went into the House of Delegates in the afternoon, and saw them elect two judges, Robert B. Taylor, the one, the other was the reelection of Judge May of the old court.

*Seventeenth day.* I was visited by P. N. Nicholas and Dr. Brockenbrough. These gentlemen sat an hour and a half at least. They talked much of politics, but said nothing of domestic politics or men.

*Eighteenth day.* Nothing of much importance is stirring or reported, except that the news of two days ago is confirmed. The Poles have beaten the



Russians, there is revolt throughout Italy, Spain and Portugal. Germany has armed to interfere and France will be obliged to take part in the War.

*Nineteenth day.* Had a Council of State. No news of importance. The General Assembly has had the longest session that has ever been known since the foundation of the government.

*Twentieth day.* The Russians, Poles, French, Italians, Spain, Portugal and Germany are preparing for war. England is disturbed, the people clamor for a reform in the government. Lord Russell brought in a bill at the instance of the King's ministers to produce a "Reform in their Parliament." This is to reorganize their counties and boroughs so as to cut off about sixty-four members. This is stated in the last advices from England. This is like offering insult to injury. The people clamor against the national debt, say they are crushed under a load of taxes, are in want of something to eat, one fifth of the whole population of England is on the parish and some die daily throughout that kingdom of hunger. Yet strange to tell, the rich clergy and aristocracy refuse any change! Poor unfortunate avarice, which will utterly destroy them as it did the King of France, Louis XVI, in our own day. This proposition now made by Lord Russell is as inefficient as an attempt to stop the current of the Kanawha with straw. If they do not at once give up as much of their wealth as will pay these debts of the Nation, relieve the people from their deep depression and suffering under their system of taxation, and above all, give the people something to eat, there will be revolution which will cost the King

his throne and the Nobles their estates and the clergy their revenues.

*Twenty-first day.* My health is not good. I have a bad taste in my mouth and my eyes are not clear, seem hot and sore. Had a Council of State.

About the hour that I dismissed the Council I received Papers and letters from the city of Washington giving information of the resignation of all of the Secretaries of the President. That the Ministers of England have often resigned in a body is well known, because having been outvoted they resign as having felt that the people or rather the Parliament required them to resign. This in the United States is different, appointed as they are. Each gentleman entertains his own views and only gives his opinion, or counsel and advice as it may be termed, when desired by the President and as the President is the only man known to our laws or Constitution the opinion or advice of a Secretary is of no consequence to the country.

This general resignation then must be a concerted political movement, intended by Jackson and Van Buren to effectuate some great political object. I think to make Mr. Van Buren Vice-President and inflict a punishment upon Mr. Calhoun and to overthrow his friends. It will not answer their expectations. So far Virginia holds the destiny of all these men in her hands. I will take care that her power is judiciously used.

*Twenty-second day.* Had a Council.

*Twenty-third day.* Had a Council. Called to see Colonel Andrew Beirne who has been very ill. He is better. Warren R. Davis has left the city.

*Twenty-fifth day.*

RICHMOND, APRIL 24TH, 1831.

DEAR SIR: I received your last letter giving me the information relating to the resignation of the Secretary of State and the Secretary of War, followed by that of the other two Secretaries and the Attorney General.

So wide a sweep has never before taken place in the United States, for my own part I feel at no loss to account for this singular occurrence.

If Van Buren and Eaton had remained in, the administration in all its parts, would have been prostrated in another year.

To have dismissed Ingham or Branch would have been to do at a blow what time will soon do, accomplish their overthrow.

This step is another of those manifestations of weak sagacity with which Mr. Van Buren has often of late astonished us. To save himself, to save Jackson, to suspend public judgment, he has taken this course, to have an entire Van Buren Cabinet and Administration by thus getting clear of Ingham and Branch without disturbing the repose of the friends of those men, he has been silly enough to believe.

I am inclined to think that Jackson's requesting those Secretaries to remain in office until suitable successors can be found is a part of their scheme. Because when it is known that Van Buren and Eaton have resigned and only remain as a kind of *locum tenens*, none, they fancy, will assail them, as they are no longer Secretaries. At the same time they are concocting and conglomerating all their nauseous materials in the Presidential catalogue. Besides, if Ingham and Branch remain thus good naturally until a successor be found, it will seem to show that they have resigned by invitation, in quite a good-humored way, or remain in office until their friends learn to hide their blushes, to smother their indignation or learn to be silent. In either of those events they lose character and injure their friends and party.

I have today for the first time seen Mr. Ingham's correspondence with the President. He has managed the affair as an able diplomatist and wary statesman. I think he ought not to have remained one hour in the Department after he resigned. The dignified station he was in, the manner of his resignation, and

the manly attitude he assumed in the correspondence required it.

This course would have compelled the President to have made his appointment on an early day that we might have, as soon as possible, some index to their future course. I think yet they ought to go as soon as possible. Jackson says he must resign, that he may reorganize his administration and reproduce harmony.

Might that not have been done by appointing men who would have agreed with Ingham and Branch?

Add to all this, if the letters are true in their dates, Eaton told the President on the fourth that he would resign, on the seventh he did resign. It is now twenty days and no whisper of a successor.

They will attempt to sound the public mind, we cannot doubt, as to successors. Would it not be well to comment upon the names thrown out as little as possible? So as to make them take all the responsibility of their course. They have stirred up the dregs, let them swallow their potations at pleasure.

You have said, now is the time to strike. We are not quite ready. Our newspaper must be in operation, besides would it not be better to see the new Cabinet first?

Mr. Gilmer's paper will succeed. We get information from the country which says six or seven hundred names have already been obtained. The people are with us, anxiously waiting the moment of its appearance. It will appear even sooner than July if the neighboring States to the South will do anything for us.

Ritchie's friends here are at fault (I have not seen R.) They are standing still and know not what to be at. Be assured that the ablest and most experienced of our citizens will contribute to Gilmer's paper and Jackson will meet with an entire overthrow here, if necessary, and Van Buren will never be able to recover himself in this State, as I do believe he had not twenty advocates in the entire General Assembly, and four-fifths of the Judiciary against him.

Would it not be well to urge the immediate appointment of successors? How do affairs look in Pennsylvania, New York and New England? We think the dissolution of the Cabinet has hurt J. much. Yours with regard,

JOHN FLOYD.

To Duff Green.

*Twenty-sixth day.* The above letter is in the handwriting of my nephew, correctly transcribed. Jackson's correspondence with Branch, the Secretary of the Navy, I have this day seen for the first time. It is well done and as usual the President has intermingled in his letter to the Secretary some vulgar and violent expressions. We of the States Rights Party will be obliged to oppose his reelection. I will shortly propose to the Confederacy the name of Mr. John C. Calhoun, of South Carolina, as a fit and proper person to fill the Presidential Chair. Mr. Calhoun is a singularly strong minded man, the finest intellect, except Tazewell, I have ever met with, well educated, fine manners, forbearing and generous, he is bold, brave and truthful.

*Twenty-eighth day.* I received letters and papers all tending to show the utter confusion which reigns in the Federal Government and the entire inability of Jackson to manage the affairs of the Confederacy.

*Twenty-ninth day.* This day the Supreme Court of Appeals under the New Constitution met in the Capitol. Henry St. George Tucker, the President thereof, is present. This gentleman though formerly a friend and correspondent, is cold and reserved. I infer his political hostility to me and my party who are in favor of J. C. Calhoun as President of the United States. This gentleman and myself have not met for several years. He has been teaching a law school in Winchester, I have been engaged in politics. I have this day received letters on politics and governmental matters of much interest. I will, when I feel better, which I hope will be in a day or two, record the information. Gilmer writes



me that his scheme is approved by the farmers in publishing a paper, all is therefore well.

*Thirtieth day.* I wrote a long political letter to-day to Governor Hamilton of South Carolina. Also one I wrote to the Vice-President Calhoun a day or two ago was dispatched by this day's mail. Went to M. F. Smith's, three miles off.

## MAY, 1831.

*First day.* This day I received letters from every direction and from Mr. J. C. Calhoun. All are dissatisfied with Jackson but do not know what to do as Clay still stands on as a candidate for the Presidency with just strength enough to defeat Calhoun without being able ever to be elected himself.

*Third day.* Council was not in attendance. What a miserable, wretched form of government is this of Virginia. The Constitution ought to be abolished and a new one substituted to give the State either energy, dispatch or permanency.

*Fifth day.* There is news from the Federal Government to-day, but my health is so bad that I can not write it. The history of all the operations of Jackson and Van Buren for some little time past must be postponed until my health improves. My head to-day is aching, my lungs oppressed, much weakened and thoroughly disordered.

*Sixth day.* Had a meeting of the Board of Public Works, of the James River Company, and the Literary Fund, a busy *ex officio* day I have had.

*Tenth day.* Transacted much public business.

*Eleventh day.* Transacted business in the Exec-



utive, The James River Company and the Board of Public Works.

*Thirteenth day.* I this day go up the canal with the James River Company.

*Fourteenth day* I left Powell's and went with the other members of the James River Company to view the canal. I dined at Cox-tavern and afterwards we called upon Governor Pleasants, where we were agreeably entertained and passed onward to the canal. There we viewed the canal down to a point opposite to Powell's, when we went to Powell's and staid all night.

*Fifteenth day.* We left Powell's after breakfast and proceeded to the Tuckeyhoe canal, of which Mr. Joseph Watkins talks so much.

*Sixteenth day.* I went to the Catholic Chapel to-day to hear the eloquent Mr. Shriber, a Jesuit Priest. He was ill and could not preach.

*Seventeenth day.* Had a Council and transacted business on the Board of Public Works.

*Eighteenth day.* Engaged in public business. Received a letter from the Vice-President which gives a gloomy account of South Carolina under the tariff.

*Twenty-first day.* Attended to my public duties.

*Twenty-second day.* Judge P. P. Barbour called in to-day. Attended as usual to my public business. Wrote a very confidential letter to General Green upon the subject of our federal politics.

*Twenty-third day.* Wrote to Wm. B. Preston, a political letter.

*Twenty-fourth day.* Had a Council. Received an answer from Judge Wright, the engineer, declining the appointment as engineer to this State as an associate with Crozet.

*Twenty-fifth day.* Transacted much executive business to-day.

*Twenty-sixth day.* I went to the Board of Public Works, the James River Board and the Literary Fund.

*Twenty-seventh day.* After I transacted some executive business, I went with Col. J. P. Preston into the country where we stayed with his uncle Francis Smith until the next day. This gentleman is eighty-nine years old, is cheerful and happy, rides and walks with ease and pleasure. He was a captain in the Revolutionary War.

*Thirtieth day.* Had a Council of State to-day. I received from Loudoun to-day the record of the trial and condemnation of Dick, a slave, to be hanged for the crime of rape. Dick must be treated as the law requires. It is a bold and aggravated offence. I will not, because so disagreeable, record any more of these convictions.

JUNE, 1831.

*Third day.* I received a letter from Mr. Calhoun, treating of public affairs. Its suggestion shall be attended to. Also one from Colonel John Williams, of Tennessee, who is now in Surry County in North Carolina on a visit to his aged mother. Colonel Williams is bitterly opposed to General Jackson, says from many years of acquaintance with him that he is a bad man and will not be content with one term in the Presidency, nor two, nor three nor four, and then will try to appoint his successor.

*Fifth day.* Much preaching through the city to-day and has been for some time. It is fortunate

that the Constitution permits everybody to preach and pray as they please else this fanaticism which has seized upon the minds of the people, or new zeal, or as they call it a "revival of religion" would seek to satisfy itself by shedding the blood of their fellow citizens "for love of the Lord they adore" as was done so often in England and most of the governments on the continent of Europe.

*Eighth day.* The trial of Marshall for shooting Mr. Galt took place to-day. Jury not decided.

*Tenth day.* The jury on the trial of Mr. Marshall for the shooting of Mr. Galt is still in their room, not yet being able to agree upon a verdict. It is reported about the city that seven of the Jurors are for his conviction and the sentence would be confinement in the penitentiary. I have just learned at five o'clock in the evening that the jury had acquitted Marshall!

*Eleventh day.* I appointed Dabney Carr, one of the Judges of the Court of Appeals, to be a visitor to the University to-day. In this we had a practical view of the operation of the New Constitution upon the Council. Disappointment is a disagreeable and distressing occurrence to those who have used power to be deprived of it. In the evening I went to the Quoit Club.

*Sixteenth day.* Senator Tyler is in the city. I have not seen him, being from home when he called.

*Twenty-second day.* Attended to public affairs. I have seen Colonel Swift of North Carolina, who gives a deplorable account of the condition of things in the city of Washington. Jackson seems every day to exhibit greater and greater incapacity for gov-

ernment. I now fear before his term of service expires he will have degraded the authority of the Republic in such a manner as to create the impression that it is a weak government and dissatisfy the people with it and debase them so much as to accept a King.

*Twenty-fifth day.* Public officers have left the city. I can do but little business on that account.

*Twenty-seventh day.* Took tea with Mr. Nicholas. His daughter is now opposed to Jackson. Mr. N. himself is very cautious in speaking on the subject of Jackson's reelection or that of his successor. He was of Van Buren's friends. Their cause is hopeless.

*Twenty-eighth day.* Had a Council. I have received a letter from Mr. Calhoun giving me some information as to his intentions, which I approve. I have not had time to record those disgraceful scenes at Washington City yet, but it shall be done before long.

*Twenty-ninth day.* I intend leaving Richmond to-day for my county where I shall remain a few days before I return.

The occurrences of the day fill me with disgust. The news from the Federal Government is of the most unpleasant kind. President Jackson has disappointed his party and friends as he daily exhibits more strongly his incapacity to govern the country. To add to all this, he has appointed so many men to office, nay, all whom he has appointed except three or four, are blackguards, not gentlemen, men without knowledge, learning or morals, as violent and vindictive as Jackson himself. The President has

permitted all his former scenes on the race field at Nashville to be acted over again at Washington City.

He has dismissed three of his Cabinet Officers because they would not permit their wives to associate with Mrs. Eaton, the wife of the Secretary of War. This Eaton and his wife daily become more and more his favorites. Jackson has had the folly to say "That no man should receive office or favor from him that would not receive Mrs. Eaton." This Mrs. Eaton is, and has been, notoriously a woman destitute of virtue and of morals. She was pretty, the daughter of a tavern-keeper in the city where navy officers, army officers and sometimes members of Congress lodged. Her father, William O'Neal, was a roguish, impudent Irishman, without any principles, but a good tavern-keeper, wherefore the officers lodged with him.

His daughter, Peggie, was pretty and found out means to make Timberlake, a purser in the Navy, believe she was virtuous when he married her. He, Timberlake, was often at sea and at such times his wife indulged herself in many amours. Finally she got into an amour with John H. Eaton, a Senator from Tennessee, a man of as little morals as herself, but the favorite and pet of Jackson, the President. Finally all this came to the ears of Timberlake who cut his own throat. In eight months after this his widow married Eaton who was, in a few weeks after that, appointed Secretary of War by Jackson, and because she was not received into company, Jackson has dismissed and is dismissing all who will not receive her, the wife of his friend, as pure and spotless. This amour is spoken of merely

because she is the wife of Eaton and urges him and the President to these measures, for she has many, very many other paramours.

The President has had the meanness to ask and has obtained certificates to prove her pure, innocent and virtuous. Good God! What an office for the President! How debased. I know, myself, that all is true which has been said of her.

*Twenty-ninth day.* I arrived last evening at this place, the residence of Governor Pleasants, late Governor of Virginia. I find him disgusted with the Federal Administration and the efforts he has made to sustain Eaton's wife. He will use his efforts to turn him out of office.

*Thirtieth day.* Nothing of importance has occurred. I pursued my journey, however, and delayed all night at Cole's tavern on the road to Charlottesville.

JULY, 1831.

*First day.* Arrived at Charlottesville, was invited to a public dinner, which was refused or declined, the invitation for to-morrow.

*Second day.* I took the road to Staunton, arrived at Waynesborough, where I remained for the night.

*Third day.* I arrived here at John H. Peyton's who married my niece. My wife is taken sick. The rest of the family are well. We remained this day on account of my wife's illness.

*Fourth day.* We arrived at Colonel McDowell's. My wife still sick.

*Fifth day.* We remained this day with our broth-



er-in-law, Colonel McDowell. His wife is Mrs. Floyd's sister.

*Sixth day.* We arrived here at Mr. Taylor's in Lexington, where we took dinner with our niece Mrs. Taylor, and stayed all night with our nephew, James McDowell, Jr.

*Seventh day.* We took the road homeward and will stay all night at the old Rockbridge Tavern, kept by Robert Douthat.

*Eighth day.* My daughter, Laetitia, and my niece, Sarah Lewis, and my nephew, John G. Floyd, visited the Natural Bridge before breakfast, after which we set out for Fincastle.

*Ninth day.* Went from Fincastle to Mr. Bowyer's, who married Sarah Preston, where we dined and went to Mr. Wm. R. Preston's. We remained there for the day.

*Tenth day.* We left Wm. R. Preston's, dined at Dr. Johnston's (being Sunday) and arrived at Mrs. Madison's.

*Eleventh day.* We went to Smithfield through the Devil's Den, being the first carriage that ever passed that road. Smithfield is the residence of Colonel James P. Preston.

*Twelfth day.* We remained this day at Smithfield.

*Thirteenth day.* We leave Smithfield at five o'clock. We reached home to find our son John and his wife. All our children are well.

*Fourteenth day.* I am desired to visit Miss Nancy Smyth who is ill. She is the daughter of the late General Alexander Smyth.

*Fifteenth day.* I visited Miss Smyth this day.

*Sixteenth day.* I remained with Miss Smyth to-

day at Captain John Matthews'. She, I think, will die. General Smyth was my friend and I will not desert his children.

*Seventeenth day.* I saw Doctors Watson and Jacob Haller before I returned home this day.

*Eighteenth day.* At home all day.

*Nineteenth day.* I remained at home all day seeing to my plantation.

*Twentieth day.* John Wygal, Jr., and wife called on us this day.

*Twenty-first day.* Mrs. Wygal remained with us all this day.

*Twenty-second day.* I spent this day in visiting my mills and in looking at my estate.

*Twenty-third day.* This day was spent as yesterday.

*Twenty-fourth day.* I remained at home all day with my children, with the exception of Benjamin and La Fayette, who are at school, around me. The former is at Georgetown, D. C., the latter at Richmond.

*Twenty-fifth day.* I visited my son John and his wife to-day. I am exceedingly unwell with a pain in the head of rheumatic kind.

*Twenty-seventh day.* My son's wife is ill. I visited her.

*Twenty-eighth day.* I remained with my son's wife who is no better.

*Twenty-ninth day.* I remained with my daughter-in-law, who is better to-day.

*Thirtieth day.* I remained at my son's whose wife is nearly recovered.

*Thirty-first day.* I returned to Thorn Spring to-

day. Mr. Herron, the engineer, called on me to-day desiring funds to enable him to prosecute the survey of the road or turnpike from the upper Kanawha in this county to the Tennessee line.

AUGUST, 1831.

*First day.* My sons have gone to the election this day for a member to Congress from this district and a Delegate to the General Assembly.

I have read this morning the correspondence between Eaton, late Secretary of War, and Mr. Berrien, between Mr. Berrien and Colonel Johnson, Mr. Ingham, etc., relative to the dissolution of the President's Cabinet and the cause of that dissolution. I know these facts to be entitled to the highest possible credit, but the facts are so extraordinary and the President's course so strange, indeed, so outrageous, that I will desire my nephew, John G. Floyd, to transcribe them in this book that they may not be lost. I will never again vote for or support General Andrew Jackson for any office or anything.

*Second day.* The Lieutenant-Governor has, according to the wretched Constitution as amended, been exercising the duties of Governor and has made an attack of a personal character which has covered him with disgrace and contumely. I can therefore safely leave him to the degradation he has brought upon himself as sufficient punishment. His folly and imbecility has prompted him to this hostility to make himself agreeable to the President or Federal Executive that he may attain from him an office which he much wants.

*Ninth day.* Went to my mill. They will raise the framed house over it to-day. I saw them put it up. The whole is a fine work. The sawmill is said to be the best in the country or State.

*Tenth day.* I have this day to go on my way to Richmond City. Tonight I will be at Governor Preston's family at their farm called Smithfield. His son, William B. Preston, is with me having called last night on his way from Wythe Court. He is again elected from this (Montgomery County) to the General Assembly of Virginia. Rain and bad weather stops me this day from setting off as expected.

*Eleventh day.* I remained at home until the thirteenth day, which day I arrived at Governor Preston's.

*Fourteenth day.* I remained this day with the family, who are all well. I never saw this beautiful and extensive farm look better.

*Fifteenth day.* I went to Christiansburg to take the public coach. I found many of my old friends in that old town who all gave me great manifestations of their attachment and the pleasure they had on seeing me. This town and the neighborhood is suffering severely with a malady called dysentery. Some have died and many are ill.

*Sixteenth day.* I left Salem in Botetourt County this morning. I arrived at this place yesterday, accompanied by Dr. Chas. Barnett, whom I met with on the road. The Doctor is desirous of making his home in the village near my residence, the Thorn Spring. He is amiable and clever. This morning I arrived at Lynchburg.

*Seventeenth day.* I left Lynchburg at six minutes past six of the clock, having first breakfasted and arrived at Langhorn's Tavern at twelve minutes after six. I had not been long at this place before Colonel, the late Governor Preston (J. P.) drove up accompanied by my daughter Lavalette, whom we left at school in Richmond, both in fine health. They say my son, Benjamin Rush Floyd, is at the Governor's House by himself, and that my popularity as Governor has increased since the imbecile attack of Peter V. Daniel, one of the Council of State.

*Eighteenth day.* At half after five, I took leave of my daughter Lavalette and her uncle, Colonel Preston. They proceeded to the mountains, I to Richmond, where I arrived at a few minutes after three of the clock. As I approached the City I was attacked with a gouty or rheumatic headache, so very bad that I was obliged to go to bed. I was better at night, at which time I ordered and received a visit from Mr. Gilmer, who informed me that he was going home to Charlottesville in the morning, that the public mind had condemned Peter V. Daniel in the severest terms and that it was not necessary for me to notice him.

*Twentieth day.* I went to the Capitol to-day and had a Council. Willson, the second councillor was alone there. After public business was closed, before he set off for Cumberland, his residence, he talked to me of the difference between Daniel, the first councillor, and myself. I said there was no difference on my part but that we must cease to be friends.

*Twenty-second day.* I had no Council to-day. Had conversation with the Board of Public Works on the Northwest Turnpike Road Company. The business of this Board was dispatched and we adjourned.

*Twenty-third day.* This will be a very noted day in Virginia. At daylight this morning the Mayor of the City put into my hands a notice to the public, written by James Trezvant of Southampton County, stating that an insurrection of the slaves in that county had taken place, that several families had been massacred and that it would take a considerable military force to put them down.

Upon the receipt of this information, I began to consider how to prepare for the crisis. To call out the militia and equip a military force for that service. But according to the forms of this wretched and abominable Constitution, I must first require advice of Council, and then disregard it, if I please. On this occasion there was not one councillor in the city. I went on, made all the arrangements for suppressing the insurrection, having all my orders ready for men, arms, ammunition, etc., when by this time, one of the council came to town, and that vain and foolish ceremony was gone through. In a few hours the troops marched, Captain Randolph with a fine troop of cavalry and Captain John B. Richardson with light artillery, both from this city and two companies of Infantry from Norfolk and Portsmouth. The light Artillery had under their care one thousand stand of arms for Southampton and Sussex, with a good supply of ammunition. All these things were dispatched in a few hours.



*Twenty-fourth day.* This day was spent in distributing arms below this where it was supposed it would be wanted.

*Twenty-fifth day.* I received dispatches from Brigadier Richard Eppes, stating with local militia those I sent him were more than enough to suppress the insurrection.

*Twenty-sixth day.* Constant application for arms are made. I received letters from W. O. Goode of Mecklenburg and James H. Gholson for arms. They were sent. General Eppes disbanded the Artillery and Infantry who returned home.

*Twenty-seventh day.* I received from Brigadier-General Broadnax a letter giving an account of his having assumed command of Brunswick and of the insurrection at Hick's Ford in Greenville.

*Twenty-eighth day.* General Broadnax disbanded those troops and returned home. He reports several families killed the same day dispatches were received from General Eppes stating the names of many who were killed. From the two accounts, I find that there have been murdered by the negro insurgents sixty-one persons! The accounts received from the seat of war informs me that the operation of the troops is now confined to the capturing of the insurgents as they can make no further resistance and are endeavoring to escape.

*Twenty-ninth day.* The news heretofore from below, Surry and Nansemond, is in expectation of an insurrection. The Commandants of those regiments ask for arms. They are sent them.

A few days ago the mayor of Fredericksburg and the Colonel of that regiment informed me that the

negroes there have been detected in a conspiracy, and desired arms. They have been sent them.

*Thirtieth day.* The news as heretofore. General Thomas captured most of the insurgents. The principal leaders yet untaken. Nat, alias Nat Turner, by the negroes called General, heretofore a preacher and a slave, Artis and some others are yet sought.

*Thirty-first day.* I learn that many negroes have been taken up in the county of Nansemond, about forty, some of whom inform us of its being intended as a general rising of the negroes.

## SEPTEMBER, 1831.

*First day.* General Eppes informed me that they had captured about forty of the insurgents, that they have been confined in the Southampton jail and have been turned over to the courts of that County to be dealt with according to law.

*Second day.* The same information as yesterday.

*Third day.* General Eppes informs me by the return of Captain Harrison of the Cavalry, whose troops returned to-day, that a Court of Oyer and Terminer for Southampton County was convened on the thirty-first of August and continued the first of September and had convicted some of the prisoners of conspiracy and murder.

A few hours after this he sent an express with the record of the court, containing the trial and condemnation of four of the prisoners, Moses and Daniel, Andrew and Jack. The last two the court recommended their punishment to be commuted for transportation, to which I will agree. Moses and David will be hanged on Monday, the fifth. Through-

out this affair the most appalling accounts have been given of the conduct of the negroes, the most inhuman butcheries the mind can conceive of, men, women, and infants, their heads chopped off, their bowels ripped out, ears, noses, hands, and legs cut off, no instance of mercy shown. The white people shot them in self defense whenever they appeared.

But amidst these scenes there were slaves found to defend their masters and to give information of the approach of the hostile party. These insurgents progressed twenty miles before they were checked, yet all this horrid work was accomplished in two days.

*Fourth day.* I have written General Eppes to retain at Southampton a sufficient guard and to disband the rest of his forces.

*Fifth day.* I have received to-day by express a record of the trial of the other slaves, eight of them, concerned in the massacre of Southampton. They are all condemned to be executed on Friday and next Monday. I will not in these cases interfere with the operations of the law.

*Sixth day.* This day I have attended to the Executive business, James River Company, Board of Public Works and Northwestern Turnpike Company, all of which are *ex officio* duties. It has been a laborious day. I am not well to-day. I am feverish and thirsty with a bad taste in my mouth.

*Seventh day.* I am this day informed by a letter from Colonel Wm. A. Christian, Commandant of the twenty-seventh Regiment in Northampton, that the negroes in that county are in a state of insubordination and intend to create an insurrection in that

county. Guns have been found among them and some they were compelled to take from them by force. That county and Accomack are well armed, I have sent them a good supply of ammunition by this day's boat. I fear much this insurrection in Southampton is to lead to much more disastrous consequences than is at this time apprehended by anybody.

*Eighth day.* Had a meeting of the *ex officio* Boards.

*Ninth day.* No news from Southampton though even Prince William County has its emissaries in it from among the free negroes of the District of Columbia. He is a Preacher. The whole of that massacre in Southampton is the work of these Preachers as daily intelligence informs me. I am still unwell.

*Tenth day.* I received by express to-day the record of the trial of nine others of the slaves concerned in the insurrection of Southampton. Five of these slaves the court recommended to transportation which the law calls commuting this punishment. I am so unwell this afternoon that I have to go to bed.

*Eleventh day.* I hear nothing this morning from below. I do not feel so badly as yesterday. I had more appetite to-day and not so bad a taste in my mouth.

*Twelfth day.* I have transacted some official business, but have heard nothing from below. Major Gibbons has received a letter from citizens of New York inviting donations for the Poles. There may be a town meeting.

*Fourteenth day.* Attended various Boards *ex of-*

*ficio.* This day the record of the trial of Misk, a negro in Greenville, for Conspiracy was brought. The evidence was too feeble and therefore I have reprieved him for sale and transportation.

*Sixteenth day.* I had a Council of State, transacted business and received the record of nine slaves condemned to be hanged by the Court of Sussex. One I have reprieved. No news from any other part of the State.

*Seventeenth day.* Had a Council. Received an express from Amelia to-day, asking arms as families have been murdered in Dinwiddie near the Nottoway line. Colonel Davidson of the thirty-ninth Regiment Petersburg, states the same by report. I do not exactly believe the report.

*Nineteenth day.* News from the Colonel of the thirty-ninth says the whole is false as it relates to the massacre of Mrs. Cousins and family in Dinwiddie. The slaves are quiet and evince no disposition to rebel.

*Twentieth day.* Did little business except to receive and dispatch public letters. The alarm of the country is great in the counties between this and the Blue Ridge Mountains. I am daily sending them a portion of arms though I know there is no danger as the slaves were never more humble and subdued.

*Twenty-first day.* I went to the council chamber to-day to transact business which required a Council. There are no councillors in town but Daniel. After waiting until I was tired I left the Capitol. Mr. Daniel did not come at half after ten.

*Twenty-second day.* This day was spent in giv-



ing orders for arms to be distributed to various counties and regiments.

*Twenty-third day.* I received the record of the trial of Lucy and Joe of Southampton. They were of the insurgents. What can be done, I yet know not, as I am obliged by the Constitution first to require the advice of the Council, then I do as I please. This endangers the lives of these negroes, though I am disposed to reprieve for transportation I cannot do it until I first require advice of the Council and there are no councillors now in Richmond, nor will there be unless Daniel comes to town in time enough.

*Twenty-sixth day.* I have been busily employed sending off arms to distant counties this morning, but the rain put a stop to that operation.

*Twenty-seventh day.* I have received a record of the trial of three slaves, for treason in Southampton. Am recommended to mercy, which I would grant but the forms of our infamous Constitution makes it necessary before the Governor does any act involving discretionary power, first to require advice of Council, and in this case I cannot do so, because there is not one member of the Council of State in Richmond, wherefore the poor wretch must lose his life by their absence from their official duty.

I have received this day another number of the "Liberator," a newspaper printed in Boston, with the express intention of inciting the slaves and free negroes in this and the other States to rebellion and to murder the men, women and children of those states. Yet we are gravely told there is no law to punish such an offence. The amount of it then is this, a man in our States may plot treason in one



state against another without fear of punishment, whilst the suffering state has no right to resist by the provisions of the Federal Constitution. If this is not checked it must lead to a separation of these states. If the forms of law will not punish, the law of nature will not permit men to have their families butchered before their eyes by their slaves and not seek by force to punish those who plan and encourage them to perpetrate these deeds. I shall notice this in my next message to the General Assembly of this State. Something must be done and with decision.

*Twenty-ninth day.* No councillors in Richmond.

OCTOBER, 1831.

*First day.* But little business done. Councillors out of the city except P. V. Daniel, with whom I will not do business unless of necessity where it can not be delayed.

*Second day, Sunday.* I transacted much business to-day of an official character and some *ex officio* business.

*Fourth day.* I transacted business at the Capitol until late, but became so unwell that I had to return home to the Governor's house.

*Eighth day.* Transacted much business and in the evening went to the Quoit Club. Major Gibbon was there in fine spirit. Chief Justice Marshall was absent to-day. It is among the few days that he has been absent from this club for forty years. His health is declining and I think he will not live long. He is now in his seventy-fourth year. This club meets together to enjoy themselves every other Saturday from May to October.

*Ninth day.* This day the distinguished Ornithologist, Mr. Audubon, called on me, bearing a letter of introduction from the Honorable Charles Everett of Massachusetts. This gentleman is an American Ornithologist, and is at the head of men of that branch of science, is accomplished and sensible.

*Tenth day.* The Supreme Court of Appeals assembled to-day.

At eleven o'clock, my nephew, Colonel William Campbell Preston, of South Carolina, called upon me on his way home to South Carolina from the Anti-Tariff Convention at Philadelphia. He says that the New York members came there for any other purpose than to aid in repealing the tariff. That he has knowledge of the proceeding of the Anti-Masonic Convention in Baltimore. That John C. Springer of New York told Mr. Wirt they would deal fairly with him, that their object was to elect Mr. Calhoun, but if in offering it to him he could make anything of it, he should have the trial, that they would support him. Wirt had the meanness to accept the nomination under these circumstances. He has, though, met the reward of his folly as he is sneered at and ridiculed by the universal public, not one State will vote for him, not even the smallest. If, however, he becomes ashamed of his attitude and withdraws his pretensions as a candidate, then that party will take up Mr. Calhoun. In that event he will be elected and turn out Jackson with all his unworthy officers, men not gentlemen, who lie, mutilate records, alter dates and traduce all men opposed to them to keep themselves in power. The

American people have much patience and virtue and must send them home with ignominy. Cralle must come here and edit a Calhoun paper, Ritchie of the *Enquirer* must be overthrown and Pleasants of the *Whig* must be brought round to aid our cause. I think I can effect all this. According to Ritchie "We shall see."

*Eleventh day.* This day I gave to Judge Carr a written paper connected with the conduct of Garrison and Knopp, conspirators in Boston, to cause the negroes of the South to engage in an insurrection.

*Thirteenth day.* I did business to-day though I am far from being well. My health, I fear, is never to be restored. I feel as though it was this climate which has so hastened my depletion, not that there is in it anything positively bad, but so much worse than my own mountain air, that a weak constitution and much enfeebled health is sinking under it.

*Fourteenth day.* Transacted public business and called in the evening on Mrs. Robertson, the daughter of our cousin Frank Smith. She behaved shabbily and he was cool and exhibited unfriendly feelings, why, I know not, unless that her father knows he has abstracted himself from his relations because he is rich. This Mrs. Robertson is lately married to one of the councillors, a man of good sense but no talents. He is a gentlemen and in advance of a majority of men, though some strong defects exhibit in him.

*Fifteenth day.* This day my son Benjamin arrived from Thorn Spring. He is in good health. Had much business transacted. The James River Company could not meet as the second Auditor, Mr.

Brown, is sick, the Treasurer out of town, and Mr. Heath's wife is not expected to live.

*Sixteenth day.* I saw Judge Brook and talked over the affairs of the country and the course pursued by the Northern conspirators. He thinks they might be punished under the common law. I have as yet not determined whether I will require of the Governor of Massachusetts to have the villains prosecuted and punished.

*Seventeenth day.* This day I granted a pardon for William V. Neil of Washington County, sentenced to the Penitentiary for Grand Larceny. I had another application for arms from the town of Norfolk. I am disgusted with the cowardly fears of that town. They have exhibited more fear, cowardice and alarm than the whole State besides, even during the insurrection of Southampton.

*Eighteenth day.* I received yesterday an anonymous letter from Philadelphia, giving me an account of the proceedings of the Northern Conspirators and promising me his name if concealed from the public as the conspirators would fire his residence or injure him. This club of villains, who are maturing plans for treason and rebellion and insurrection in Virginia and the southern states extends from Philadelphia to Boston. They are unheeded by the northern states. If we, to the South, ever feel the influence of their measures, this Union is at an end as we can not consent to be tied up by the confederacy from doing ourselves justice, when the authorities of those states refuse to check the evil. I think I shall be able, in the end to disappoint their plans.

*Twentieth day.* No public business to-day. The

James River Company not convened, members sick. Called on Mrs. Ambler, Mrs. Nicholas and Doctor McCaw, Sr.

When I returned I wrote the following letter to L. N. Q., an anonymous writer from Philadelphia, who gives me to understand that the Northern fanatics are in that city plotting treason and insurrection in this State and planning the massacre of the white people of the southern states by the blacks. Allen, a negro of Philadelphia, and two white men of Boston and some of New York, besides a numerous band of white men and negroes in their train. The letter is here recorded in the handwriting of my son, Benjamin Rush Floyd.

VIRGINIA EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT, RICHMOND, VIRGINIA,

October 20th, 1831.

SIR: I have received your communication of the fifteenth instant, for which I feel under obligations to you and am glad to perceive this manifestation of correct and good feeling from the North, and the more pleased to find it from Pennsylvania, where all the scenes and pleasant days of my schoolboyhood are located, to which I have often recurred with unmixed pleasure.

I know there are many unworthy fanatics in every country, but those of the North seem to think it would be proper to have the minority here put to death the majority that the minority might be free, or in other words, wander at large, as that would be the only change. The condition of our slaves is good. They have for years occupied the position of laborers as they have felt nothing of slavery.

I think I may say to you that the feelings of the Virginians are more strongly enlisted in favor of these people than even the people of the North and would do anything which could be effect-

ed with safety for their emancipation. We feel the inconvenience and know the difficulty.

This process has been going on gradually and in due time would have ceased; if the process has been too slow to suit the views of these fanatical pretenders to extensive philanthropy it is because we have been tender and mindful of the condition of those people. I think now you will agree with me that we are not bound to consult their interests any longer and are at liberty to act upon our own.

I would not have you believe that any change will take place in relation to our treatment of our Slaves, but as they acquire their freedom hereafter, we will not be bound to make that freedom any matter of interest to the State which heretofore has been done with affectionate sympathy.

I was prepared to expect much from those fanatics from Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, though it never occurred to me that the citizens of those cities would be molested from entertaining any opinion they pleased in relation to the expediency and policy of the measures pursued by them. This, however, appearing from your letter not to be the case proves the affair to be of a more desperate character than even I suspected. I cannot therefore hesitate to offer you every assurance that the injunction you require shall be strictly and fully complied with.

I would, though, be glad to know from yourself, whether the matter you communicate can or may be communicated to the General Assembly withholding your name? That body will soon be here and the Southampton affair will doubtless occupy their earnest attention. Yours respectfully,

JOHN FLOYD.

To L. N. Q.

*Twenty-second day.* Transacted my public business. My nephew by marriage, Mr. Charles C. Johnston, arrived and is with me. He will remain a few days before he goes to Congress. Not well to-day.

*Twenty-fourth day.* Professor Dew of Williamsburgh called to-day. We talked on Federal politics.

*Twenty-sixth day.* Met the James River Com-



pany, also received news of the supposed appearance of Nat, the Southampton leader of insurrection, being in Greenbrier. Not true.

*Twenty-eighth day.* Had a Council. Mr. Johnston, our nephew, left me to-day to return to Abingdon with a view of preparing for his trip to Congress.

*Thirtieth day.* Had a Council. Received news that the dead body of the negro which was supposed to be Nat had been taken up and examined by General Smith of Kanawha and found not to answer the description.

NOVEMBER, 1831.

*First day.* No business done as the second Auditor is sick and the Treasurer is out of town.

*Third day.* Received news of the capture of Nat. He was taken in Southampton.

*Fourth day.* This day my wife arrived and her children, John and his wife, William, Lavalette, Nicketti, Coralie, and Woushippagniga.

*Seventh day.* Received the record of the trial of sundry slaves condemned for insurrection.

*Eighth day.* Transacted business in Council, in the Board of Public Works, James River Company and Literary Fund.

*Tenth day.* I saw to-day Mr. White, the delegate from Florida. He spent the day with me and talked much of the Presidential Election. He professed himself friendly to Mr. Calhoun but alleging as cause for not supporting him that the North would not support him on account of his nullification expose,

that he could not support Clay as the Anti-Masons had refused to take him up, wherefore he thought it the true policy for all those who were not friendly to the election of Jackson to unite on Wirt, who has been elected by the Anti-Masons.

To this I feel opposed because Wirt is not a man to be trusted, he is lax in his morals and can think anything in politics. As to constitutional law, he finds no difficulty in evading it. Moreover, Mr. White stated that Wirt would unite all the fanatics and discontents in the aid of the Anti-Masons if he could and succeed at all events. This is with me highly objectionable. I know that Jackson has disappointed all of the hopes of his friends and party as he has proved himself ignorant and incapable and latitudinous in his politics, and has put the government into the hands of mean people, but this is not so bad and dangerous to liberty as to place the government in the hands of fanatics, knaves, and religious bigots.

This Gentleman, White, I am sure has been sent here to converse with me with a hope to influencing me to take over Wirt's interests. The Calhoun party, believing that the Clay party would go along with us and thereby take the majority of this State against Jackson. I will never sanction success by calling fanatics to aid. If liberty cannot be preserved without, then it can not be preserved at all.

*Thirteenth day.* Yesterday Senator John Tyler, of Congress, called on me. He will be here to-day as we have much conversation on hand relative to general politics.

*Fourteenth day.* Transacted the usual business of

the office of Governor and also the *ex officio* business.

*Fifteenth day.* Wirt cannot be elected as President of the United States. He cannot obtain more than six or eight votes.

*Seventeenth day.* I received letters from John and Lewis Williams, dated Knoxville, Tennessee. They are complimentary as to the mode in which I managed the Southampton insurrection.

*Nineteenth day.* Business as heretofore. We begin to look for movements in the Legislative world.

*Twentieth day.* This day I went to the Catholic Church.

*Twenty-first day.* There are still demands for arms in the lower country. I could not have believed there was half the fear amongst the people of the lower country in respect to their slaves. Before I leave this Government, I will have contrived to have a law passed gradually abolishing slavery in this State, or at all events to begin the work by prohibiting slavery on the West side of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

*Twenty-third day.* I have reprieved for sale and transportation several slaves.

*Twenty-sixth day.* I have received more applications for arms.

*Twenty-eighth day.* I am preparing a message to the General Assembly. It will be ultra States Rights.

DECEMBER, 1831

*First day.* Members of Congress are passing through this City to Washington. Almost all of

them are dissatisfied with Jackson's administration. Public business as usual.

*Second day.* I am busy with my message. Some of my friends to whom I have shown it are afraid it is too bold and strong for the times. I think it right and know it honest, therefore I will send it forth, though it may not suit the palate of the Federal Executive. What is he to me, when the good of the country requires this weak and wicked administration to be stopped in its downward career.

*Third day.* Mr. John C. Calhoun, the Vice-President of the United States, arrived this day on his way to Congress. He says South Carolina will nullify the tariff unless it is greatly modified.

*Fourth day.* Mr. Calhoun leaves for Washington to-morrow. He dines this day with me, also Mr. Cralle.

*Fifth day.* Mr. Calhoun left the city this morning. The General Assembly met to-day in good spirits and elected their officers.

*Sixth day.* My message was well received, though many think it a bold state paper. It may be their attachment to Jackson has blunted their patriotism. I think so. But it is the true doctrine of the Federal Constitution and States Rights. I will maintain it as long as I am Governor even to the utmost hazard.

*Ninth day.* The House of Delegates have appointed their Committees. The President's message to Congress has been received. It is in much more subdued tones than heretofore. The old man is afraid of losing his reelection.

*Twelfth day.* The river is frozen as far down as City Point and all navigation is stopped, both above and below.

*Fourteenth day.* Letters from Congress advise me that measures are taken by Clay and his party to sustain the tariff.

*Sixteenth day.* Nothing of importance in the Assembly. Some of the members begin to talk of a loan for improving the State in Railroads.

*Nineteenth day.* Letters from Washington City declare that no nullification of the Tariff will take place this year.

*Twentieth day.* The General Assembly have done little. Congress also seems stationary. I believe because both parties, Tariff and Arbitration, are ascertaining their grounds and maturing their plans for a tremendous debate. The President's hands are found to be too feeble to hold the reins of the Government of the Confederacy. I fear the worst of consequences from his incapacity.

*Twenty-third day.* Letters from the South inform me that my message is still well considered and has much increased my standing and popularity there.

*Twenty-sixth day.* The public business gets on slowly. The question of the gradual abolition of slavery begins to be mooted. The Eastern members, meaning those east of the Blue Ridge Mountains, wish to avoid the discussion, but it must come if I can influence my friends in the Assembly to bring it on. I will not rest until slavery is abolished in Virginia.

*Twenty-ninth day.* News from Congress shows us

that little hope is to be entertained of a modification of the tariff to suit Southern interests, if not, then let South Carolina nullify.

JANUARY, 1832.

*First day.* This being the first day of another year I shall hence use figures for the day of the month.

*Second day.* There is more conversation about the Presidential election. Jackson has lost all his popularity in Virginia but will still get the vote of this State because he is now less odious than Clay, for neither hold political opinions at this time agreeable to Virginia.

*Third day.* Still the same conduct in public affairs, the nomination of the Secretaries and Ministers to foreign courts made by the President are still before the Senate of the United States.

*Seventh day.* Letters from the Vice-President and Senator Tyler, state the aspect of public affairs adverse to the South.

*Ninth day.* Members begin to talk of debating the question of gradually emancipating the Slaves of Virginia. It has been very adroitly brought about. Summers, Faulkner, Preston and Berry, also Campbell and Brook will be fast friends to the measure. They are talented young men and will manage this affair most excellently well.

*Tenth day.* The slave question increases.

*Eleventh day.* Hopes are entertained by my young friends that a debate can be had upon the slave question.



*Twelfth day.* Mr. Goode this day made a motion to discharge the Committee on so much of the Governor's message as relates to free negroes and mulattoes and to which a memorial of sundry citizens of Hanover had been referred with a view to prevent debate upon the Slave question involved in that memorial. The abolition party opposed it and hence the slave party have produced the very debate they wished to avoid, and too, have entered upon it with open doors.

*Thirteenth day.* The debate in the House of Delegates still continues.

*Fifteenth day.* The debate in the House continued with great ability by Faulkner. This is a fine talented young gentleman.

*Sixteenth day.* The debate continues with increased ability.

*Eighteenth day.* I heard from Congress the agent appointed by me last summer to settle the claim of Virginia against the Federal Government for disbursement during the Revolutionary War, reports that they are in a fair way for adjustment which will give us near a million dollars.

*Nineteenth day.* The debate still goes on.

*Twentieth day.* Nothing now is talked of or creates any interest but the debate on the abolition of slavery. All is well.

*Twenty-first day.* The debate in the House is growing in interest and I fear engendering bad and party feelings. It must be checked in erratic tendencies.

*Twenty-third day.* Many speculations are now made upon the result of this debate. We can carry

the question, if necessary, by about two votes which will depend upon the views and objects to be developed by the slave part of the state. I think as yet nothing has transpired other than to prove that they must not be hurt, but held in check.

*Twenty-fourth day.* The debate begins to be carried on in an angry tone. It is not good that it should be so.

*Twenty-fifth day.* The debate is stopped but the members from the South side of the James River talk of making a proposition to divide the State by the Blue Ridge Mountains sooner than part with their negroes, which is the property of that part of the State.

*Twenty-sixth day.* The talk of dividing the State continues.

*Twenty-seventh day.* The cold increases, being two below Zero. The conversation this morning is not so violent about dividing the State. I have no doubt the few malcontents will soon become cool and contented. They will see the fallacy and futility of such a thought.

Our Federal Government is at this time engaged on the tariff and instead of relieving the South are about to repeal the duties on luxuries and retain them on iron, cottons and woollens. If so, South Carolina will nullify the act and thus bring into action the reserved right of the State. All this is owing to the utter inefficiency of President Jackson, who has no influence with Congress and who will probably again be reelected to the Presidency, as the two great contending parties, tariff and arbitration, are fearful of trying their strength directly,

and Jackson floats like a stick upon the flood, though the tariff party think they are gaining by his inefficiency, which is unquestionably true, and if they succeed in their expectation and desire, the South will be compelled to secede.

*Twenty-eighth day.* Letters from Congress create a doubt here as to the confirmation of Van Buren.

*Twenty-ninth day.* All navigation above and below stopped by ice. Nothing of much importance to-day.

*Thirty-first day.* This day news has been received from Congress that the nomination of Van Buren as Minister Plenipotentiary has been rejected by the Senate of the United States by the casting vote of the Vice-President of the United States.

FEBRUARY, 1832.

*First day.* The rejection of Van Buren has created much conversation, and forced the profligate, Ritchie, Editor of the *Enquirer*, to speak out together with that chief of hypocrites, Peter V. Daniel. These men now enjoy much influence though Ritchie's father, in the Revolutionary War was a base Scotch Tory, was tied to a cart tail in Tappahannock and afterwards ducked. These fellows still have in a strong degree a hereditary penchant for monarchy. The surprise is that the community should so soon have forgotten their cause as to have allowed those enemies of their country an influence amongst them.

*Second day.* These descendants of the old Tories are still harping upon the rejection of the idol of their party, the corrupt Van Buren. If ever a man met his just fate, surely this has been dealt out to him. He has degraded his country by the instructions given to our Minister to England, his predecessor, and almost every word said of him by the Senators, who made speeches on his nomination is true.

*Third day.* The General Assembly rejected the bill to-day which was intended to loan money to improve the State. This the members on the East side of the Blue Ridge Mountains did, saying they had no interest in such improvements and in revenge for the debate on the negro subject of abolition. Goode, of Mecklenburgh, said to me the day the debate closed upon the "slave question" as it was called, that the Eastern and Western people were not at all the same people, that they were essentially a different people, that they did not think alike, feel alike, and had no interests in common, that a separation of the State must ensue, and rather than have the subject of abolition again debated he would be glad for a separation. Both sides seem ready to separate the State if any one would propose it. I think that event from appearances highly probable.

*Fifth day.* The public business still proceeding as usual. But Ritchie, that profligate son of a Scotch Tory, and the Richmond Junta are at work trying to procure a party to nominate in this State Van Buren to be Vice-President. This same Van Buren whom the Senate of the United States only a few days ago, rejected as minister to England because he was un-

worthy having tarnished the honor of his country when Secretary of State, by giving unworthy and degrading instructions to the Minister, McLean, who immediately preceded him. For myself, I think that McLean, now Secretary of the Department of the Treasury, equally unworthy for acting upon those instructions, which he did!

*Sixth day.* Congress still employed upon the maturation of the Bank scheme tariff and the Senate on Van Buren's nomination as Minister to England.

*Seventh day.* The General Assembly are now devising a law to give up the public improvements finished by the State into the hands of individual companies.

*Ninth day.* Van Buren is rejected by the casting vote of the Vice-President as we have already heard. Much excitement is trying to be gotten up by the Tory party but it will fail.

*Sixteenth day.* There is no news of interest afloat to-day. This evening I was taken ill and was not able to leave my bed to transact business until the twenty-second, when I joined the procession in celebrating the centennial birthday of General Washington, when I took cold from the dampness and coldness of the day. This compelled me to take my bed again from which I did not rise until the twenty-fourth day of March following.

The illness from which I have recovered was an influenza which has prevailed throughout the State, accompanied with some discharge of blood from the lungs. The scarlet fever has also been prevalent and has attacked old and young and has been exceedingly fatal, more deaths have taken place in this city

than was ever known before in the same length of time.

*Twenty-eighth day.* I went this day to the board of public works and James River Board, being the first time for some weeks that I have been out owing to my late indisposition.

*Twenty-ninth day.* Mr. Richard K. Cralle this day issued his new Journal called the *Jeffersonian and Virginia Times*. This paper will be devoted to the true States Rights principles which I hope will benefit the country. There is so strong a tendency to a consolidated government from the increasing powers of the Federal Government that unless shortly arrested the State government will cease to exist, become merely nominal or there must be disunion. Ritchie and the other supporters of Jackson and Van Buren now go for patronage regardless of principle. Ritchie's Tory blood and propensities begin strongly to manifest themselves. If they and Jackson again triumph in the election, I think it will be doubtful whether the Union will last very long.

APRIL, 1832.

*Eleventh day.* This morning at six o'clock I received an express from Williamsburgh informing me that the former Capitol of the State in that City was yesterday consumed by fire. This edifice is that which has been rendered so dear to the memory of all Virginians from its being the same in which Patrick Henry, the greatest orator in the world, thundered forth his irresistible floods of eloquence which produced the American Independence which made freemen of an entire continent.



*Fifteenth day.* This day is clear, cloudless and agreeable, just so cool as to require a little fire in the morning and for the first time the weather looks and feels like spring. The wind is from the Southwest. The season past has been altogether unusual. Winter before last was severe beyond anything known for sixty-one years, so say the old people. The Summer was in places dry, so much so as to prove destructive to the crop, in other parts there was an unusual quantity of rain, but upon the whole a favorable season for corn and small grain. The winter just past has been very severe and variable. The latter part was as cold as the winter before, the Powhatan or James River was frozen over as far down as City Point. This Spring was singularly backward, as it appears, for this part of the State.

Amongst other calamities, the scarlet fever, as the doctors call it, has raged in this city for a year past and has been singularly destructive to human life. Hardly a family has escaped and some have lost two or three members of their family. The merchants say they have not enough black cloth to supply the demand for mourning apparel. To complete our misfortunes as the scarlet fever begins to decline, I presume it declining, as I have not heard of a death for two days, the measles are beginning to prevail; so has the smallpox frequently appeared during the winter and spring in different parts of the State.

All these things induce me to believe that the constitution of the air or atmosphere on the Earth is changed or operated upon by the approach of the great comet, which comes so near us as to have a de-

cided effect upon the motions of the Earth. Moreover disease has prevailed throughout the world more extensively and more fatally than common; tempests at sea have been more frequent and more violent and all the volcanoes of America have exhibited much more motion than usual. So, I understand, have Etna and Vessuvius in Europe.

Whether these things, or rather, whether this state of the Telline Constitution, if I may be allowed to coin a word, produced any effect on the minds of men, I do not know, but it appears to me that the political men of the country have exhibited as much instability in their minds, principles, and opinions as the surrounding elements. Men who have maturely formed opinions which we thought had become a part of themselves, have changed without a blush and seem to think they deserve praise. But the greatest misfortune of the country is that men of the first talents are not now employed in the Federal Government and character has, as it would seem, no claim to respect or preferment, so utterly reckless seem the favorites who move the President about as they please.

*Twentieth day.* This day letters from the city of Washington have been received which are entitled to full credit. That Sam Houston, who assaulted Stansberry, a member of Congress from Ohio, for words spoken in debate had determined, after consulting President Jackson, to change the ground of defence and place it upon that of a quarrel in a bawdy house and that he meant to summon the whore to the bar of Congress to prove the fact, and also the gunsmith of whom he, Houston, says Stansberry

purchased a pistol to use against Houston on that account. The story is this, which I omitted to record on the eighteenth.

General Duff Green, the Editor of a newspaper called the United States *Telegraph*, some year or so ago, detected a plan laid by Eaton, the then Secretary of War, and William B. Lewis, the Second Auditor of the Treasury, and Sam Houston, late Governor of Tennessee, in an attempt to practice a most tremendous fraud upon the Government, perhaps to the amount of two million dollars, which he communicated in person to the President in the presence of Branch, the then Secretary of the Navy, but was so illy received by President Jackson that he left the President under the belief that he, the President had already been privy to the contract and approved. Green, however, went on to prove, as he has done, the intended fraud and defeated it. Congress was about to investigate the subject, and in the debate upon the subject, Mr. Stansberry, a member from the State of Ohio, animadverted freely upon the subject. For this speech, Houston was offended and preparing himself with a tremendous bludgeon and a pistol, waylaid Stansberry at night and coming up behind him, struck him with such violence that he knocked him down into the gutter of the footway, for it was in the street near Stansberry's lodgings. As Stansberry attempted to rise and make resistance Houston repeated the blows with the bludgeon until he crippled Stansberry's right arm and broke to pieces the bones of his left hand. Before Stansberry was so much disabled, he drew a pistol, but

in attempting to fire at Houston it snapped, and was then knocked out of his hand and he was disabled.

The letter now referred to states that Houston is an inmate at the President's and says that it was in consultation with him that Houston intends to place the quarrel with Stansberry on the footing of a private affair, growing out of a rivalry in a brothel.

This is in accordance with the loose actions of Jackson's life and all those who have always been near his person. They are all without any moral restraint and are as virtuous and correct as Jackson himself. I did believe when Jackson became President he would have the power to restore his country to harmony but he has proved to be inadequate to the task and has nothing to distinguish his administration but the vicious violence of his own temper and his adherents.

*Twenty-eighth day.* The following letter comes into my hands, I know not how, sent by I know not whom, for the purpose I know not what. It was slipped into this I know not when. I have observed it in this book daily for several months, but not regarding it in any other light than as an old letter of my own, put in this book perhaps to cause the book to open more easily and readily when I wished to write in it. Though so constantly before my eyes, and not needing it, I thought I would examine it when I note it is as follows, thinking it worthy of record. I fear somebody has been in my office and placed it here to create a suspicion in my mind in relation to the fidelity of John Tyler, our Senator in Congress. My wife says she recollects the letter to

have been received by mail or through the post-office under cover from whom none know.

Ritchie, the writer of the letter, is politically my enemy, so is Mr. Stevenson. Tyler is the man in the world whom I have most trusted as a purely honest man and as a virtuous Statesman. I risked much of my popularity to sustain him as he was a personal friend and a purely States Rights politician. He was at that time assailed with deadly hate by Ritchie and Stevenson and the Richmond Junta. What can now be the meaning of the subjoined letter? Ritchie and Stevenson and the Junta are harnessed to the Van Buren car. I am the friend of Calhoun, so are Tazewell and Tyler. We three have been the head of that party which supports the Resolutions of Virginia and Calhoun. It is true that Tazewell and myself have been very obnoxious, I thought Tyler not less so. He and Tazewell have been sustained in their office and in their course by me. But what puzzles me now is to find Ritchie writing to Stevenson and saying to him to converse with Tyler most frankly. His words are "Converse most frankly with Tyler."

What! Converse frankly with his greatest enemy! These enemies who have pursued him with such steady hate and opposition—whilst I am left to suppose him on the same terms with them that he was, and myself left where I stood when I extended him aid against these unprincipled hypocrites in politics who have taken every side and held every opinion, who have fought on both sides of the question and seem to be regardless of the restraints of the constitution! Truly this is a development.

The subjoined letter has no date, but the post-mark is Richmond December 1st, Free. Endorsed thus: Andrew Stevenson, Washington.

I will copy it in this place as follows:

FRIDAY NIGHT.

MY DEAR SIR: The night I left you an accident to my wife prevented my hearing about you next day. In the meantime you were flown so that my valedictory note on Wednesday evening did not reach you. It made no odds for it was to bid you adieu, to ask you to deliver a note from me to our friend Archer and to beg you to ask G. D. Green to send his daily *Telegraph* to the *Enquirer*. I wish to hear daily from both sides and during the Winter the *Enquirer* comes out three times a week and will not be altogether unworthy of his acceptance.

You must write to us as often as you can conveniently, though if you are put in the chair, you will of course have less time.

Do write me a line on receiving this to let me know how the land lies. Converse most frankly with Tyler and believe me. Yours truly,

T. RITCHIE.

*Thirtieth day.* News from the City of Washington informs us that the President is outrageously abusive in all his conversations of every member of Congress who differs with him in opinion about any measure, and openly bullies all who do not acquiesce in his declarations that the assault upon Stansberry, a member of Congress, by Houston for words spoken in debate is correct. He, Jackson, says that he wished there were a "dozen Houstons" to beat and cudgel the members of Congress.

In future history these things will have a strange appearance and will be quoted by the enemies of liberty and of Republican Government as proofs of



the inability of men to preserve a Republican form of Government, or in other words, for man to govern himself.

These are facts—Jackson was violent, ignorant, vindictive and intractable, excessively vain and self-conceited. He by good luck gained the battle of New Orleans. This gave him some eclat with the people generally and rendered his name familiar to all. At this moment came the direful struggle between the great parties in Congress founded upon the claim which the majority in Congress from the north of the Potomac made to the right to lay any tax upon the importations into the United States which was intended to act as protection of the Northern manufactories by excluding foreign fabrics of the same kind. Hence all the states to the South of the Potomac became dependent upon the Northern States for a supply of whatever thing they might want, and in this way the South was compelled to sell its products low and buy from the North all articles it needed, from twenty-five to one hundred and twenty-five per cent higher than from France or England. The South protested, and resisted by arguments and remonstrances, all these laws as unconstitutional and oppressive to them. John Quincy Adams, Henry Clay, etc., were at the head of that party. It was believed they urged on this party to act, it of course, being very popular with the majority, that they might in turn be made President of the United States by these parties.

At this juncture the Southern Party brought out Jackson who was thought to be a States Rights politician, because his battle of New Orleans made him

popular with the people of Pennsylvania and with that State, the South could elect Jackson and by his help reduce the odious tariff. In this work of his election I myself have much to answer for as I influenced the State of Virginia to vote for him at least in a very great degree. When he was elected, to our utter consternation, we found him without principle and of very feeble intellect. He gave himself up to the opposite party, was willing to take any course which would keep him in a majority and called around him men of the most depraved morals, habits and principles, without any character before the country and who employ themselves alone in flattering him, draughts of which he swallows as coarse as swill. He declines rapidly from age and infirmity, he is now literally in his dotage and has never since his illness last summer, recovered his mind. His appearance now is not believed by the people, they think these things untrue, and therefore it is that the country seems to foreigners and will appear in history so disadvantageous. These selfish and corrupt villains who are near to him and use him have by the immense patronage of the Federal Government bribed all the printing presses to denounce all these things as lies and all honest men who speak out these things are represented to the people as discontented and disappointed men. I know the people virtuous, honest and pure and would, if they believed these things, hurl all of them headlong from office, Jackson and all, but unfortunately for the country they do not believe.

This security urges on these men to push forward all schemes which will create patronage that

they may remain in office by its distribution, therefore I now fear the day is near at hand when the South, wearied out with oppression of the North, aggravated by the ill conduct of this base administration, will only find safety from oppression by withdrawing from the Union, thus proving for the thousandth time that ignorance and vice will destroy in a short time that which virtue and talents have been years building up. Surely Jackson has deceived many, very many of our most intelligent and virtuous, as well as myself. I did act for the best but we failed to effectuate the good desired because our instrument was vicious though this we did not know when we embraced his cause. I, myself, it is true suspected him and kept out of his toils, but I suspected him of avarice, hypocrisy, etc., not of a sufficient want of judgment, when aided by virtuous men like Calhoun, Tazewell, Hayne, and Hamilton, etc., with a host of others. Now! What are you to think. Day after day he sinks still lower and lower until Jackson's name will soon be a reproach to us, a disgrace to the country, and I fear, ruin to the Union, though the people themselves are yet simple in their habits and most virtuous and unsuspecting. But the bribed printing presses will not let them know until the awful tumbling to pieces of this beautiful confederacy informs them of the reality of their condition.

MAY, 1832.

*First day.* This day I wrote to John Tyler, our Senator in Congress and sent him the original letter of Ritchie to Stevenson transcribed into this book on the twenty-eighth day of last month. This I have done as fair dealing and due to a friend.

*Eighth day.* This day I received a letter from Senator Tyler in answer to one I wrote him when I enclosed the letter which I had so curiously received. I refer to what I have copied into the book on the twenty-eighth ultimo from T. Ritchie to Andrew Stevenson. Tyler seems to be puzzled to know what to make of it. Upon the whole he is not so much to blame as I thought at the first blush of the business. It is Ritchie and Stevenson who are the rogues, both to the Republican party and to Tyler.

*Twelfth day.* Visited the Senior Quoit Club or barbecue. Three of the Judges only were there to-day. It was a pleasant day.

*Thirteenth day.* My marriage took place with Laetitia Preston on Sunday, the thirteenth day of May in the year 1804, so that we have been married this day twenty-eight years. She left me to-day on her return to our residence in the County of Montgomery on the Thorn Spring, accompanied by our son, William and five daughters. We have now living and grown, except three, nine children, four sons and five daughters, finer children no parents ever had, both for size, talents, morals, beauty and good tempers. Their education has been of the best.

*Fourteenth day.* I feel distressed that my wife and children should be on their journey during this rainy weather. They must have a disagreeable trip to our home as it is two hundred and fifty miles.

I saw Mr. Faulkner to-day who is just from the City of Washington. He gives a most lamentable account of President Jackson. Among other things that four gentlemen from Boston who had made the

trip on purpose to see the man they had favored so much and fixed such a high value on and thought him a blessing to his country, that when these gentlemen arrived at the City of Washington they called upon Mr. Appleton, their representative in Congress, to introduce them to President Jackson. Mr. Appleton complied with their request and at the usual hour in the morning they all four repaired to the President's house and were formally announced. Instead of being received, they were kept some time standing in the anti-chamber. During this period of their stay they heard much loud and noisy conversation in the next room. After this they perceived Senator Grundy of Tennessee issuing from the room from which the loud talking was heard, leaving the door of the room open, and they perceived that it was President Jackson and Grundy who were in conversation, that Jackson followed Grundy still talking very loudly and looking after Grundy who had passed through the room in which these gentlemen were standing. Mr. Appleton then introduced his Boston friends, but Jackson never deigned to notice them but continued talking after Grundy as though he were present and still in hearing. These gentlemen stood all this time in perfect amazement. Mr. Appleton introduced the gentlemen again, still he bawled after Grundy in the same vehement and boisterous manner, violently abusing the Senators who had voted against Van Buren. In this situation these gentlemen left Jackson, not having been noticed or offered the slightest recognition. Senator Poindexter, Senator Moore and others were the subject of his abuse in terms the most coarse and



vulgar, such as that "Oh, Poindexter, he is a scoundrel, a villain, I know him, he shall be punished. I wish the American people knew him as well as I do, he is a damn rascal, and I will have his character known to the people," with much more of this same kind of stuff.

These gentlemen reduced to writing what passed and what will without doubt become history. Mr. Faulkner vouches for the facts and his authority is unquestionable.

*Sixteenth day.* Some days ago I saw in the newspaper, the *National Intelligencer*, a letter from Mr. Arnold, a member of Congress from Tennessee, to the editor stating that one Heard had threatened to beat or shoot him for speaking ill of his friend, Houston. Sure enough this day's mail brings us the intelligence that upon the adjournment of the House of Representatives on yesterday, Morgan A. Heard, the person alluded to and named by Mr. Arnold, actually did meet him, Arnold, as he descended the steps of the terrace on the west side of the Capitol and attacked him with a club. The blow was parried by Arnold, whereupon the other drew out a pistol and fired at Arnold, which shot entered the sleeve of his coat, lacerated the skin of his right arm all the way to the shoulder and passed through his coat again near the shoulder. Arnold struck Heard with a sword cane which he had in his hand, which broke the lower part of the staff and thereby left the sword bare, yet the blow felled Heard to the ground, and Arnold was in the act of running him through the body when his arm was arrested by General Duncan, who is a representative from Illinois. Jackson has



encouraged these attacks upon the members, and Stansberry has so said in his place in the House and pledged himself to prove it if the House would grant an investigation, but the servile, contemptible House refused an inquiry into so flagitious an outrage upon the people, the dignity of the country and the purity of the principles of the Constitution!

*Eighteenth day.* We were invited very kindly by Mr. Mills, a very rich merchant of this city, to accompany him on a trip of pleasure of the railroad, or rather, it was an expedition he had prepared for us. The travel on the road was very agreeable and very expeditious.

*Nineteenth day.* News from Washington City is still of a disagreeable character. Since Arnold was shot at, a man by the name of Davis from South Carolina and a pet of General Jackson's, has challenged Mr. Cooke of Ohio, for words spoken in debate. The papers inform us this day that a Mr. Condit, of New Jersey, has offered in the House sundry resolutions asking a committee to investigate the facts as to the general report whether the President has not encouraged those attacks upon the members. The result of this has not yet been ascertained, no votes yet by the House upon those resolutions.

*Twentieth day.* The times at Washington City are bad, still the mob of bullies is excited by the President to attacks on the Members for their speeches or words spoken in debate and his subservient majority stifles all inquiry or investigation, thus is our liberty melting away, the good and the talented men retiring from office and the vicious and the ignorant fostered by the President. I much

fear our Republic will fail and that before many years. The scum of a country may be blown off and the pure part left free, but when the dregs are commingled with the mass, the whole is destroyed. The dregs now are courted, sought, are encouraged, protected and given the whole of the executive favor.

*Twenty-second day.* Nothing has transpired worth recording. The threatenings daily heard for the purpose of intimidating Members of Congress by the bullies of Jackson still rife in the country and other attacks are believed to be in contemplation.

*Twenty-seventh day.* I went to the chapel to hear Mr. O'Brien, who is a man of talents and a respectable orator. Politics seem to be assuming more interest. The party now favorable to Jackson is striving for the election of Van Buren, the disgraced minister, upon the ground that Jackson favors his election and that party is now contending for the elevation of Mr. Van Buren, that they may make him President to succeed Jackson that thereby they may appropriate the money or patronage of the federal offices to their own use. Mr. Marcy, a senator from New York, and a friend of Van Buren's has in a speech lately said on the floor of the Senate "that the victorious party in these contests for the Presidency is entitled to the spoils by the right of their victory."

*Twenty-eighth day.* Dined with Mr. Adams at Fairfield.

*Twenty-ninth day.* I received to-day a letter from Senator Tazewell which required me to write to Mr. Faulkner, a copy of which I here subjoin.

RICHMOND, VA., MAY 29TH, 1832.

*(Confidential)*

DEAR SIR: I received your letter informing me of the official conversation with the President of the United States.

I regret much you did not give it all the forms of an official communication to me and will be glad if you will yet do so for which purpose I will shortly send it to you.

In the meantime I must say to you that the President's conversation with you in your official capacity, is so offensive to me that for the honor of Virginia I cannot consent to have any further correspondence with the Federal Government or with any of its officers, either by the agents of Virginia or by myself.

The attack which the President of the United States made upon me and Mr. Tazewell, the Senator of Virginia, in his political conversation with you, the official agent of Virginia, was of so distinct a character that, as a friend of Mr. Tazewell's as well as Governor, I felt bound to give him a sight of the letter and accordingly enclosed it to him.

I wish Mr. Tazewell to make that letter the basis of an official communication to me but as you have written it not desiring it to be considered official you can have an opportunity of making it so very soon as you shall have it, or a copy of it, returned to you.

I wish you to go as soon as practicable to Annapolis and search the records of Maryland for the document wanted as I have an advice of Council to pay expenses in this country. On your way you can see Mr. Tazewell and deliver him the official paper. In the meantime I hope you will give me the permission desired.

Soon you shall hear all. The document can be had if in existence but you shall know all in a few days freely and efficiently. We will yet do well. Yours with regard,

JOHN FLOYD.

To Charles James Faulkner, Esq.,  
of Berkeley County, Virginia.

## Note to the foregoing letter.

If you are willing to grant the request simply direct a letter to me for that purpose, but if you are willing to take back the letter merely to throw it into a better official form, you will have an opportunity to do so as you pass through Washington City to Annapolis by calling on Mr. Tazewell and saying to him that I have instructed you to ask for the letter to be put in a more official form to be again placed in his hands to be by him returned to me. Pray weigh all these things. It is all right. I use these last expressions because I am pressed for time, I cannot explain as fully as I will in a few days. Your friend and servant,

JOHN FLOYD.

*Thirtieth day.* The news from Washington is still more and more unfavorable to the honour or intelligence or gentlemanly deportment of the administration of the Federal Government. If I record them all it will hardly be believed in future times if by accident this record should see the light.

JUNE, 1832.

*First day.* The Council of State, to use their power, have refused to notice the pretensions of Mr. John B. Richardson to the clerkship of their Board. This, I understand, to take place day before yesterday.

*Second day.* I wrote on this day to Mr. Tazewell.

*Thirteenth day.* The crops throughout the country have been much injured by the cold, the rains and the hailstorms and the coolness and the irregularity of the Winter though there will be enough of grain for subsistence, it will greatly take from the usual supply of commerce. The excessive rains dur-

ing the Spring together with the cold caused very much of the Indian corn to rot in the ground, which had been planted. Whole fields had been ploughed up and replanted or sowed in oats. Though the destructive rains have injured the grain crops it has produced a finer crop of grass for meadows and pastures than has almost ever been seen.

*Sixteenth day.* Congress is still in session, the elements are more and more troubled. The Northern Members insist on keeping on the tariff and oppressing the South by its execution, as it operates as a monopoly to the northern states. The Southern members resist all this. My belief is that the great wealth which has flowed in upon the North under the operation of that law of Congress has given them so strong a predeliction for that system which makes them rich by the labor of the South that they will never abandon it. The South on the other hand, will not bear it long and I do believe they could not bear it ten years if they were willing to pay the exaction.

The President, I see from the papers, is about to rip up the whole of that old business of the Seminole War to prove that he acted under secret orders thus hoping to shield himself from the odium of violating his orders and also violating the Constitution. I was Jackson's friend in that debate in Congress, as I thought he entered Florida in "hot pursuit" of his enemy; but since I left Congress I have seen letters which prove he did it deliberately and wantonly. He even proposed by letter, and I have seen the letter lately, to the President that if he, the President, would sanction it or give a private hint to any of

his friends that he, Jackson, would make the attack upon Florida or Pensacola. Monroe, the President, repelled the idea and forbade it. Still Jackson, as it lately appears, went on and to gratify his hatred to Calhoun he wishes to, and says he will, open that subject again and prove that he was privately instructed to do what he did on that occasion.

If Jackson does prove any such thing as that, he will do it by perjury and fraud, as I say I have lately seen all the private letters between the President and Jackson, between Calhoun, the Secretary of War, and Jackson, between the President and Calhoun on that occasion. Jackson alone justifies himself, or did justify himself, in these letters upon the ground that it was covered by the official orders.

Yet such is the character of Jackson that he can prove by certificates and oaths anything he pleases, and can make a witness out of any of his retainers, for if they refuse any request they lose his favor, patronage and office, which such as he generally has around him, will not do.

*Twenty-fourth day.* I am so much recovered that I think to-morrow I will take the road for my residence in the mountains and spend a few weeks in order to see whether the cool and healthful atmosphere will not restore me to perfect health once more.

JULY, 1832.

*First day.* Received to-day the news of the passage of the tariff bill by a majority in the House of Representatives of one hundred and twenty-one to



sixty-five—a majority, too, of the Virginia delegation voting for it, among whom was Craig of the Montgomery District.

*Third day.* Ritchie's paper came out this morning, he speaks of the passage of the Tariff but no one can say from his article whether he is for or against the bill.

*Fourth day.* This day has been celebrated with unusual display, two companies of volunteers from Petersburg and one from Chesterfield County attending with the Richmond Volunteers.

*Ninth day.* We got the news to-day of Jackson's having signed the bill for internal improvement which totally annihilates every position taken in his Maysville *veto*. Rumour says that he will veto the United States Bank Bill.

OCTOBER, 1832.

*Twenty-fifth day.* The cholera, the most terrible disease to which the human body is subject to is disappearing.

*Twenty-sixth day.* This day a letter from P. P. Barbour to Thomas W. Gresham was published in the *Whig*, wherein he declines being voted for as Vice-President. This man, so soon before the election, puts us, the States Rights party, in such a condition that no efficient measures can be taken to defeat the election of Jackson and Van Buren, the latter a man of moderate talents and the man less governed by principles or the Constitution than any who are at all of consequence enough to be looked to as a candidate for any respectable Station before the

country. Thus has the honest P. P. Barbour succumbed to power regardless of his principles. Some do say that Jackson has promised him the office of Chief Justice of the United States should Marshall die or resign. I know he wishes that office.

*Twenty-seventh day.* This evening I have received from the Honourable Littleton Waller Tazewell, a letter resigning his seat in the Senate of the United States from Virginia. I am truly sorry for this as Mr. Tazewell is a virtuous, good man and a man of the highest order of talents, and as a man of learning and ability stands first in the Senate. I have feared this because he, a year or more ago, told me that the inclination of his mind was that way. Because said he, "Jackson has abandoned all his principles and ignorant and vicious as his mind is there is no hope for maintaining the struggle for States Rights, and it would be worse than useless for me to spend my time in the Senate in fruitless attempts to sustain the States Rights principles alone or in a hopeless minority. All Jackson's counsellors are of low, underbred characters without minds or morals and are as yet sustained by a majority."

To this I answered that all he said was true but that our country ought to be sustained and not given up to be disgraced, plundered and ruined by ignorance and vice, that the exertions of such men as himself, few as they were, would sustain themselves until the great mass of the people could be informed of the truth of things, not only in this State, but in the other States, that the mass of the people were virtuous and would in the end be with us. He consented to serve another session but said if there was,

at the end of that time, no strong hope of the restoration of the dignity of the United States Government, that he would feel disposed then to resign. Upon reflection, I think this conversation took place last Spring a year, not long after the adjournment of Congress.

NOVEMBER, 1832.

*Second day.* It is hazy and warm, what we in the mountains call a "blue day in the fall."

*Tenth day.* No case of cholera for several days.

*Eleventh day.* The elections for President of the United States are going through the confederacy, of course, nothing else astir but all anxiously waiting what the result will be.

*Fourteenth day.* Letters from the Thorn Spring, our home, inform me that the snow there is four inches deep.

*Fifteenth day.* This day is cloudless and clear though becoming cold.

*Seventeenth day.* Yesterday afternoon I heard of the death of Charles Carroll of Maryland, the last signer of the Declaration of Independence. He was a Catholic by persuasion, a pious, good man. I am fearful the liberty of the country, the Declaration of whose Independence he signed, will not long outlive the last of its signers.

I have heretofore been as firm and dauntless a supporter of the rights of the people and the supremacy of the Constitution as any man now living. I declare before Heaven that I never had an object but to support the Constitution in its limited con-

struction believing as I have, and as twenty years experience and observation in public life now fully prove to my mind, that this confederacy cannot long last unless the Federal Government is administered upon this principle, which I am now hopeless of. Jackson is again elected to the office of the President of the United States. Should he still pursue his ignorant and violent course, which there is a strong probability he will do, we will never see another President of the United States elected. Such has been the misrule of this man and so ignorant of the Constitution he has been called to administer the government under, that the States which feel their Sovereignty insulted, contemned and threatened, writhing under the oppressive exactions of the Tariff that they talk seriously of calling a Convention of the people of their States to decide upon the constitutionality of these acts and of arresting their operation in their States. Such is the folly of Jackson that, dizzy with his power and maddened by his tyrannical disposition, he is ordering troops to South Carolina to threaten an attack should the Convention now called nullify the Tariff. This will, if an attack is made, destroy the confederacy. Such is the man who is President and the one in whom I had originally so large a share in putting into that place. My error was an honest one. I thought he was not so ignorant and would be assisted by the good, learned, and virtuous of his party, but he has quarreled with them and has chosen the mean, ignorant, and unprincipled as his counsellors.

*Twenty-second day.* It is now ascertained beyond a doubt that Jackson is reelected President of the

United States for four years from the fourth of March next.

Now comes the downfall of the liberties of my country or at all events, the destruction of the Confederacy. I pray God that I may not be a true prophet, but I will with truth record the facts that future inspectors may know the truth and shun the danger.

*Twenty-fifth day.* I this day received a letter from South Carolina from a member of the Convention that they have in that body determined to nullify all the tariff laws of Congress and if force is used against them to enforce them, then, in that event, they declare South Carolina out of the Union. I, as Governor of Virginia, will sustain South Carolina with all my power. Let others beware.

*Twenty-seventh day.* I have heard this day from South Carolina. Wm. C. Preston writes that the Committee have agreed to report a measure of unconditional nullification of all the laws on the subject of the tariff. So far it is well.

DECEMBER, 1832.

*Second day.* South Carolina is much talked of and her nullification of the tariff laws of Congress. I will first learn the opinion of the members of the Assembly of this State before I record anything as they meet to-morrow. My message will show my opinion upon these subjects to be precisely that which the Legislature exposed as their opinions by the adoption of the resolutions of the year 1798. I think the flatterers of Jackson are becoming alarmed

at the course of South Carolina and begin to change their language and minds.

*Thirteenth day.* This day I received intelligence that something would transpire in Congress of deep import. At twelve o'clock I received from a Senator in Congress, the Honourable John Tyler, a copy of a "Proclamation by Andrew Jackson, President of the United States, denouncing war upon the State of South Carolina." This is the most extraordinary document which has ever appeared in the United States. It concentrates all power in the President and denounces all meetings in any states, as treason if to call in question the constitutionality of any act passed by Congress, denies the States to be sovereign or this to be a confederacy, and acknowledges no authority but that vested in the President. He has ordered his army to South Carolina and is making every preparation for war. I think I shall be able to check him.

*Fourteenth day.* I have this day laid before the General Assembly the ordinance adopted by the Convention of the People of South Carolina, with a message, which will call for their action whereby it will be seen whether the people of this State will submit tamely to be governed by a tyrant who acknowledges no law but his own will. A republic and constitutional liberty I will have or I will perish in the struggle.

*Fifteenth day.* There is some sensation created in the Assembly and among the people from my message and the President's Proclamation and the Ordinance of South Carolina. The minions of Jackson, Ritchie, the Tory son of a Tory father, P. N.



Nicholas, P. V. Daniel, Wyndham Robertson and D. Willson, the three Councillors of State, Banks, the Speaker of the House of Delegates, and Dromgoole, the Speaker of the Senate, are agitated. These wretches have deserted their principles and the liberties of the people for the smiles of that tyrant, Jackson. I still do not despair of the stability and virtue of the people, with them I am strong and they shall be free.

*Seventeenth day.* The Committee to which my message conveying to the house the Ordinance of South Carolina has not yet reported. Strange to tell, some of them are for submission to the will of Jackson in compliance with the desires of that base Tory printer, Ritchie.

*Nineteenth day.* No report yet from the Committee. I understood this morning that when my message was received in the City of Washington the friends of the President were with him almost all night consulting upon the propriety of his retracing his steps but as yet his personal hate to Calhoun induces him to insist upon using the sword to enforce his doctrine of treason. If so, there is no government or Constitution but his will and that Proclamation. If he uses force, I will oppose him with a military force. I nor my country, will not be enslaved without a struggle.

*Twenty-sixth day.* I have this day received from the Governor of Pennsylvania sundry resolutions of the Assembly of that State, approved by the Governor, requesting them to be laid before the Commonwealth (Virginia), affirming all the power to belong to the Federal Government which is claimed

for it by the President by his late Proclamation ordering the people of South Carolina to repeal their ordinance of nullification and offering the military aid of that State to subdue South Carolina.

If this should take place there is no limit to the Federal Government, and the United States becomes the most arbitrary government in the world and we have lost our liberty should that take place, by the action of one section of the Union by force of arms appropriating the profits of the labor of the other for their own use.

I have often said and here state that Jackson is the worst man in the Union, a scoundrel in private life, devoid of patriotism and a tyrant withal, and is only capable of using power that he may have the gratification of seeing himself obeyed by every human being. He speaks the language ungrammatically, writes it worse and is exceedingly ignorant, but strange to tell, he is feared and most all seem disposed to give up their liberty rather than displease him, who is now so popular that many fear to encounter his frown and many, very many, seem willing to let him rule, the arbitrary despot, provided they can obtain office. Thus office and a base love for gold and power have mainly contributed to enslave us by a brutal, ignorant soldier.

Notwithstanding all these things my countrymen are inert and many say "O, I think Jackson does not mean to wage war, he is only getting his vast armies together, chartering steamboats, manning his ships, merely to scare South Carolina a little." Base, treacherous curs! thus adding insult to injury.

I, at this moment, feel assured we will soon be

by that monster and villain, Jackson, involved deeply in a civil war. I deplore this the more as the Constitution of Virginia has so limited the power of the Governor and through jealousy of him, has made the most imbecile government that a free people ever lived under, and still more strange, they have had no fears in regard to the President, yet I will do the best I can to save the liberty of my country. I expect civil war and I expect to perish in it, but none shall say hereafter in the history of this coming conflict that I, as Governor of Virginia, wanted either prudence, courage or patriotism. I will do my duty though I have no fondness for power of office.

JANUARY, 1833.

*Fifth day.* The whole of this week the debate on our Federal Relations has continued and each day's debate convinces me that we hold our liberty by a very slender thread and a very uncertain tenure.

I have heard almost all the members of the Legislature speak who have delivered orations on this subject and am fully of the opinion that they are [more] afraid of offending the Tyrant, Jackson, than of preparing the minds of the people for resistance to encroachments upon their liberty.

Broadnax, Bruce and Witcher feel like freemen and assert like men of firmness the rights of the States, but all the others submit abjectly to the usurpations of Jackson. Mr. Brown, of Petersburg, spoke yesterday and sustained the President's proclamation throughout. At last he said a

“State had the right to judge of the violations of the compact, treaty or constitution (call it what you will) and secede from the Union but that the remaining twenty-three had an equal right to judge whether they had or not so violated the Constitution and if they were of the opinion that they had not so violated the Constitution, or compact, that they had a right to compel the seceded State to submit to the law and return to the Union. That the President had not now power to wage war upon South Carolina, but that it was in the power of Congress to pass laws to enable him to subdue that State under the provisions of the Constitution!

This is the highest toned consolidation doctrine I have ever heard in my life, entertained by any man south of the Potomac, John Marshall, perhaps, excepted.

If the Legislature sustains that doctrine then the States cease to exist as Sovereignties, and the Union becomes one great consolidated despotism. This, by the by, seems the language of the whole Jackson party at this time, which is an immense majority and our liberty now depends entirely on our ability to prevent them from being carried into absolute execution until the people once more dispense with their fears so as to enable them to think. If we fail, then we have lost our liberty forever! This results from the eclat which belongs to the drum and the sword. I know Jackson personally, he has not the capacity to govern the country, nor has he the information, but if he had the virtue to choose men of morals and character he would have acquitted himself to the country and to posterity.

His vices and his violence have urged him onward and thousands sing praises to his progress because they have not the courage to say he is wrong or that they will not be his slaves.

All this is the result of his victory at New Orleans, a victory gained by accident, by the commission of a blunder which, if he had been unsuccessful, he ought and would have been cashiered and dismissed from the army in disgrace.

*Fifteenth day.* This day the debate on Federal Relations came to a close so far as to take the vote between Brown of Petersburg's substitute to the original resolution of the committee of twenty-one. These resolutions of Mr. Brown's are of a spirit so slavish and so submissive that I wonder men could be pleased to so easily surrender the liberty of the country to the caprice of a tyrant. These resolutions were adopted by the House of Delegates by a majority of one vote. They were written to please General Jackson and adopted to please him. So ends the high character of the State of Virginia and such the end of liberty.

Though we have not chains upon our hands, still we now have no guard for our liberty but hold it at the will of a tyrant, and all mouths exhaust all terms in his praises; and when they are told they have voted away their liberty they say no, "the General Assembly will meet as heretofore." When they are told the General Assembly has voted away the power to protect them, they say, "O, we know General Jackson will not hurt us." Poor, wretched men! I now perceive how all tyrants of the earth have overturned the liberties of their countries, and



find the process clear, plain, and simple. It is not the tyrant who does this thing, it is the multitude. Jackson won a victory at New Orleans, the crowd lauded him for it. The crowd thought they would make him president of the United States, many men of integrity, patriotism and talents united to take him sooner than Adams, as Adams has already claimed power for the Federal Government which at a blow consolidated those states. Jackson was elected, and though palpably ignorant, as it was soon ascertained and surrounded by vice, still the crowd lauded him and he, by the voice of this multitude, has been cheered on to make himself despotic.

Many patriots have endeavored in the last four years to arrest his course but the indignation which ought to have been hurled upon the Tyrant was turned upon the patriot and at this moment has leveled with the dust the constitution and liberty and prostrated all but South Carolina, which I think will be crushed by a military force which Jackson has been anxious for and has been preparing.

*Twenty-sixth day.* This day the General Assembly finally adopted their resolutions relating to the affairs of South Carolina. They are poor ineffectual affairs though they have been debating them there for five or six weeks. It is a proof that where Legislative bodies keep all the power of government as in Virginia the government cannot act promptly and efficiently. The action of the Legislature has been wholly inadequate to save the country though I think South Carolina and the Southern members will yet be able to resist the Tyrant.

*Twenty-seventh day.* My message of the twenty-



fifth instant I will say nothing of except that it contains the true States Right doctrine, and under no other mode of administering the Federal Government can this Union be permanent.

*Twenty-eighth day.* I saw Judge Brook to-day who tells me that he has received a letter from Henry Clay who will advocate a reduction of the tariff and save, if possible, the Union. But that Clay thinks that Jackson and Van Buren will prevent a settlement of the difficulties of the country for fear Mr. Calhoun will be benefited by it in his public standing. Thus our liberty is jeopardized and civil war proposed by the villain, Van Buren, through his influence upon Jackson that he may ruin a rival for office.

FEBRUARY, 1833.

*Seventh day.* News from Washington says that there is not much prospect of an adjustment of the tariff, that Jackson and his party are urging forward preparations of a military character to attack South Carolina.

*Ninth day.* Congress, at least the Senate, speak of reporting a bill to raise forces to indulge the Tyrant in his military propensities.

*Eleventh day.* The Consolidationists, or what may rightly be termed the Monarchical Party, are endeavouring to turn Tyler out of the Senate of the United States. The General Assembly are nearly equally divided, though all that party are not monarchists, but devotion to Jackson is impelling them forward to support even worse measures against

South Carolina to gratify him, the fifteenth instant was fixed upon for the election of Senator.

*Fifteenth day.* This day Tyler was reelected to the Senate by a majority of one vote, seventeen of the States Rights party throwing away their votes. Such is the confusion among the friends of liberty and the Constitution that their enemies often gain an advantage. Each thinks he has a right to lead and all being very independent, choose to pursue his own way which has already endangered us and will seriously injure us in the end.

*Twenty-second day.* There is much music, rejoicing and a vast display of military of the State. They have all passed in review before me and have paid me, as the Commander-in-Chief, the usual military honours.

For some hours last evening and this morning the Consolidationists, or the friends of Jackson and Van Buren, who favored an unlimited government, reported that I intended to haul down the flag of the United States this morning and put up that of the State of Virginia, by this means to excite the mass of the people against me as Governor and against nullification as the rightful remedy for Federal aggression and usurpation, and even stated that if the flag of Virginia were put up the populace would tear it down and that probably blood would be spilt. So far from this being the feeling of the multitude, they say that if Governor Floyd hoists the flag of Virginia none shall trouble it and but for respect for him "we would tear down the United States flag now floating on the flag staff."

This has been a most mortifying occurrence to

the unlimited government men. The poor, unworthy dogs, Ritchie, Van Buren, Jackson and Company, are chagrined that Virginia will sustain me and the "States Rights" party, though I seem to make no effort to please anybody. It is owing to a full belief the people have that I will do justice and defend the liberty and the integrity of the Constitution regardless of men or consequences. In this they do me justice, for I will do so.

*Twenty-fifth day.* News from Congress informs us that Clay has pressed the passage of a bill to modify the tariff so as to bring it down to the common standard, and abandoning the protection principles. This will restore harmony to the country and prove that nullification is the rightful remedy for Federal usurpation. South Carolina has triumphed and has saved the confederacy and the liberties of the country from the Tyrant's grasp, has saved us from a civil war. Yet we of the South know Jackson would have been defeated. I could, I think, have beaten him with the troops of this State for a long time. If he had shed one drop of blood in civil war, my determination was to strike the next blow upon himself.

MARCH, 1833.

*Second day.* I heard this day that the tariff bill as proposed by Clay will certainly pass Congress. The Tyrant, Jackson, will not dare to send it back with objection.

I have this day received from the Honorable John Tyler a letter informing me of his acceptance

of the position as Senator in Congress for six years to take office on the 4th of March.

*Twentieth day.* The people begin to move and take an interest in public affairs. The Proclamation of Jackson, his after-message and the Force Bill are becoming odious and he is much less popular than he was. The election begins to be much talked of. Jackson and his partizans are evidently losing ground.

*Twenty-third day.* This day, B. W. Leigh, Esq., the commissioner to South Carolina returned. He brings news of great excitement in that State. They have rescinded their ordinance nullifying the tariff on account of the modification of the tariff law by Congress but have nullified the law called the enforcing bill which is called "a law for the collection of the revenue."

This act which they have now nullified is in its provisions a complete repeal of the Constitution of the United States.

*Twenty-sixth day.* This day I organized a board under the law of the last session for the purpose of transporting the free persons of color.

*Twenty-eighth day.* Political news much as before. All are becoming disgusted with Jackson's course and admit his utter incapacity for government.

*Thirty-first day.* I have heard from South Carolina. All our friends are in high spirits. From various parts of this State I have also heard the States Rights party is gaining strength daily. That base Tyrant, Jackson, will be overthrown at last, our

principles will be reestablished on a firm foundation and upon that success alone at this moment rests the liberty of the world.

APRIL, 1833.

*First day.* Now things progress very well in the political world. States Rights will be restored and our Liberty perpetuated.

*Fourth day.* This day Senator Tyler came to Richmond. He looks in fine health and spirits. From what he tells me, I did not know of half of the vile corruption which was carried on last winter in Washington. Among other things that Louis McLane, Secretary of the Department of the Treasury, said, "Give us (the administration) the force bill and the tariff will be compromised." The passage of that bill, the Republicans all agree, repeals the Constitution and makes this country a military despotism instead of a constitutional confederacy or a confederated republic.

*Sixteenth day.* For some time past the Northern papers have been full of disquisitions on slavery, emancipation, rights of man and universal amalgamation of color.

Such is the corrupt state of public morals, produced by the ignorance, vice and bad passions of Jackson and the minions around him that I do believe these United States will be shaken to pieces in a few years and deluged with blood purely because the Southern States tolerate slavery and the North wishes to destroy this property that they may govern by a majority in Congress and make the entire

South subservient to their views. It cannot be affection for our slaves, who, at this moment, are happier and in a very much better condition than the laboring poor of the North. They have more of the comforts of life. They have, in truth, everything but political rights and rights of property.

MAY, 1833.

*Seventh day.* This is the day appointed to lay the corner-stone of the monument to be erected to the mother of Washington, who was a Yorkshire woman and in the Revolution was a Tory. She never liked that George, as she called him, should go to war against the King—this I have from Judge Brook, of the Court of Appeals but a few days ago. Judge Brook was an officer of the Revolution and a relation of Washington's.

I have this day received letters from Alexandria informing me that President Jackson has had his nose pulled at Alexandria by Lieutenant Robert Beverly Randolph, the same gentleman whom the President so unceremoniously dismissed from the Navy of the United States a few days ago. If anything could justify any citizen in pulling the nose of such a President, this gentleman was surely justified. Jackson surely has entered personally into this affair and taken part against Randolph and has used his power and patronage to effect his ruin both as an honest man and his property. These are the facts. John H. Eaton, Jackson's favorite, had been for years in the habit of importuning the Secretaries of the Navy for employment for Timber-



lake, a purser in the United States Navy. This was most gratefully acknowledged by Timberlake, who was most strongly attached to Eaton, whom he thought did all this for friendship to him. I was a member of Congress at that time and so was Eaton, and know this to be true, but the cause, I did believe instead of friendship for Timberlake was an attachment for Timberlake's wife, and this was to keep Timberlake always at sea and out of the way.

Mrs. Timberlake was very pretty and the daughter of one O'Neal, an impudent Irishman, who went to Washington City to seek employment as a labourer. By good fortune he got a little money and at an early day he commenced tavern-keeping and with the profits of that business he enlarged his house and purchased other lots which, as it was thought, made him rich. The naval officers stopped there when they went to the city. Timberlake married finally this daughter. She was impudent, or rather, has as much assurance as her father but she was the wife of a naval officer. She was admitted into good society but about the year 1821, Mrs. Monroe, the wife of the then President, sent her a message desiring her, Mrs. Timberlake, not to come to their drawing-rooms. This was done, as was supposed, from the report of Mrs. Timberlake's amour with Eaton having got to the ears of Mrs. Monroe. Whether so or not none can tell, but this I know, that Eaton's connection with Mrs. Timberlake was as notorious at that day as any part of the day. She was no more faithful to Eaton, her paramour, at that day than to her husband, though Eaton thought she was, as several members of Congress, who lodg-

ed in her father's house where she stayed with her mother, told me they knew of their own knowledge that she was faithless to both husband and Eaton.

Thus things were when Jackson was elected President of the United States but that very winter the news of this very intrigue and infidelity of his wife reached Timberlake in Mahon in the Mediterranean, which so affected him that he cut his own throat. Mrs. Timberlake's brother-in-law, a certain Dr. Randolph, knowing Eaton's connection with Mrs. Timberlake, his wife's sister, and his great influence with the President, then just elected, compelled Eaton to marry the widowed Timberlake, which marriage accordingly took place that winter, Eaton's fears prevailing over all other considerations.

At this moment Jackson took the oath of office and became the President of the United States. The first act was to appoint Eaton Secretary of the Department of War which disgusted every political friend of character and standing in the country, which he had in the world. The notorious and ill concealed conduct of Mrs. Timberlake, now Mrs. Eaton, caused every decent and respectable family and lady to refuse to visit Mrs. Eaton. Then instantly Jackson was appealed to by his favorite to support his wife. He did so and actually for a whole season busied in procuring affidavits and certificates to prove her a virtuous woman! Not only this, but Jackson went to the trouble of writing out a defence for this woman by way of argument founded upon the certificates and affidavits which he had obtained of ninety-one manuscript pages! He had the base-

ness to require all persons connected with that government and all persons who desired office under that government to visit Mrs. Eaton and defend her as a virtuous woman, and all who failed so to do were disappointed in obtaining office if they were in search of one or if in office, were turned out if they failed to perform that task.

During Timberlake's lifetime, believing Eaton his good friend, he was prevailed upon by Eaton to place in his hands a large sum of the public money which had been advanced to him as Purser of the Navy to pay the officers of the ships in which he last sailed. This advance was solicited under the pretext of securing old O'Neal's property which at that time was in danger of being lost, as it was about to be seized by his creditors.

Timberlake died. The captain of the ship, then in Port Mahon, ordered his then lieutenant on board that ship to take charge of Timberlake's goods and the balance of the public money in the hand of the Purser, Timberlake. The Captain was Peterson, the Lieutenant who received the order was this Dr. Robert Beverly Randolph.

When the ship returned to the United States, Timberlake's books and property were returned to the Navy Department, also Randolph's account of his disbursements.

In the meantime Eaton procured from Jackson the appointment of fourth auditor of the Treasury to be conferred upon one Amos Kendal, a printer and a Yankee of notoriously false and knavish character. The business of the fourth auditor is to settle the accounts of the naval officers and the Navy.

Eaton determined to keep the money he had obtained from Timberlake and in concert with Kendal, the fourth auditor, determined to throw the odium of their embezzlement upon Lieutenant Randolph. Consequently they charged Randolph with the crime and at the same time cut the leaves out of the books of Timberlake's which explained the transaction, at least as far as Randolph was concerned. Thus they harassed Randolph for four years. At length believing themselves safe, they agreed to let Jackson call a Court of Inquiry.

When this court assembled, to the amazement of these unprincipled men, Lieutenant Randolph was able to prove to the court clearly every transaction. Lieutenant Randolph was honorably acquitted and brought the United States in debt upwards of six hundred dollars. When this disclosure was made, and the proceedings of the Court of Inquiry was laid before the President, as Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, he was prevailed upon by his friends and Kendal to mix in this business as a partizan of Eaton's and Amos Kendal's, disregarded all testimony in the case except Peterson's, whom nobody believed, and charged Lieutenant Randolph, in the face of the decision of the Court, then before him, with embezzlement of the money and to injure his character and testimony which was believed would be injurious to Eaton in case he should ever be brought to account for the money by the proper officers of the Treasury. The President interposed and by a sentence which all believed to be erroneous and unjust, but dictated alone by the feeling of

power and fortunately for this favorite not only decided against the court but ordered Lieutenant Randolph to be dismissed from the Navy without further ceremony. All these things so operated on the minds of the public that the conduct of the President in thus voluntarily becoming a partizan for his unworthy favorites that he was viewed by the virtuous and the good with the mingled emotions of pity, scorn and contempt. For this Lieutenant Randolph pulled the President's nose on board the steamboat *Sidney*, then at the wharf at Alexandria whilst on his way to Fredericksburg to lay the aforesaid corner-stone of the aforesaid monument, so that the sixth of May, 1833, will be notorious for pulling Presidents' noses.

I regret this act as the President, Jackson should have been exempt from that disgrace. As a partizan, however, he ought to have deserved a partizan's punishment.

*Tenth day.* Such is the total disregard of the Constitution and laws of the State that I am verbally informed by a gentleman this day that large parties of men are in pursuit of Lieutenant Randolph in the county of Fairfax, adjoining the District of Columbia, in this State with a view to carrying him forcibly within the jurisdiction of the District, with a view to punish him for the assault and battery committed on the person of Jackson.

That county is distant from this but I hope the magistrates will not permit violence and force to be used, thus in the person of Randolph to permit the sovereignty of the laws of Virginia to be violated within her own limits.



Whatever the laws and the constitution of Virginia require to be done or the Constitution of the United States enjoins shall be fully and distinctly performed but no obliquity of justice or conduct shall or will be tolerated to gratify popular desires or the malice of Jackson. Impartial justice is due us and shall be given to all.

*Eleventh day.* I have received a letter from Henry Clay under the date of the eighteenth of April last. This letter is on business though it contains an expression of a wish to be on terms of former friendship. I will agree to that. I think I was wrong in giving the certificate though it contained literally the truth but I now think it might have been withheld with propriety. I did not think so then. I here refer to the certificate I gave the "Central Committee," as it was called, which was an association of gentlemen in Washington, to promote the election of Andrew Jackson to the Presidency of the United States.

The facts were these: Clay, by his influence, had John Quincy Adams elected by the House of Representatives, as the election had fallen upon that body, neither of the candidates having according to the Constitution of the United States received a majority of the electoral votes, or the votes of the electors. Then the three candidates having the highest number of votes are carried to the House of Representatives, one of whom the House chooses as President.

In the present case, Andrew Jackson, John Quincy Adams, and William H. Crawford and Henry Clay were the candidates. It was ascertained that the three first were those who had the highest num-



ber of votes, that they stood in the order above named. Of course, Mr. Clay was excluded from the House and could not be voted for, though I do believe with that body the most popular.

At this time a tariff for the protection of the manufacturers of the Northern States was in progress, of which Mr. Clay was the greatest champion, he being popular in the Western States, took the lead in favor of the tariff and the manufacturers with a hope of securing that interest in the North. With this course of reasoning and with a hope of future success, he threw his influence with the House of Representatives into the scale of John Quincy Adams and elected him President of the United States.

Pending the election, I had frequent conversations on the subject with Mr. Clay, or rather, he with me. I sought a conversation with him but once in relation to it. The object Mr. Clay seemed to have in view was to secure the election of Adams, and to get as many Southern votes as possible. He was at that time Speaker of the House and I a member from Virginia.

I was a friend of Mr. Clay's personally but opposed to his course in this election and to him, whence I did not think I had much influence with him but I felt it a duty to give him such advice and opinion as was due to a personal friend. I urged to a different course if notwithstanding he did vote for and cause Mr. Adams to be elected, that he should not take office under him; that he and his father were both unpopular and never could be otherwise as they were of the party fond of power and

strong government, that if he, Clay, continued in the House of Representatives as Speaker, that he would be the most influential and powerful man in the Union since he was popular with the House of Representatives and could at any time govern and control the legislation of the country. This position I urged upon him, telling him that, by occupying such a station, he would be able to prevent Adams when elected, if elected, from running into those excesses of power which his opponents in my party so much feared and if he did so, that his influence would then be able to arrest it and for that all who were afraid of tyranny would come to his support and that ultimately success must attend his efforts, that if he took office under Mr. Adams, that then, from the controller of Mr. Adams, he sunk into the subordinate agent, acting under his orders and having caused him, Adams, to be elected, would be held responsible for his acts, that he knew Mr. Adams was a man without judgment, full of conceit, obstinate and intractable, that he had done so many strange things in his life that a person ought to cease to be surprised at anything he might do, that Mr. Adams could not be made acceptable to the people of the Union.

To which Mr. Clay replied that Adams was unpopular and disposed to claim much power for the Federal Government, but surrounded as he would be by men of character and experience in public affairs he would get along very well (or rather his identical words "we will get along very well") and a great deal could be done. Then he used these me-

morable words "Give us the patronage of the government and we will make ourselves popular."

For reasons then deemed good, to wit; in several conversations with friends and political partizans, I happened to mention Mr. Clay's views and opinions on this subject, which I presume were spoken of among themselves. I was at last asked whether I would write down these words. This request was made by Van Ness, the chairman of the "Jackson Central Committee." as I had spoken these words, which were certainly true, I did write them down. Afterwards they were published and did Mr. Adams and Mr. Clay great harm in the election then again commencing for the next Presidential term. The Jackson party, of which I was a prominent member, and was the cause of giving the vote of Virginia to Jackson, aided by the influence of Mr. L. W. Tazewell and Mr. John Tyler. Tazewell was then and Tyler was afterwards a Senator from this State. I say the Jackson party made great use of this fact which did Clay and Adams great harm particularly Clay. To give it all the injurious effect these words were capable of effecting, the worst construction was put upon them.

At this time, a year afterwards, when the Presidential canvass was highest, Mr. Clay and myself were not friends, which compelled me to be silent as to the impression these words made upon my mind and were intended by him to make, as I then supposed, nor did I at the time I wrote them reflect upon the construction they would bear so injurious to him.

My regret and mortification was now extreme

since I saw a great man injured by bad men, torturing his true words into bad meaning, though certainly susceptible of this erroneous construction but which circumstances now compelled me from correcting, because of us, Clay and myself, not being friends. If I spoke at all, it would be considered as propitiating his wrath. As soon as Jackson was elected, he outraged the Constitution of the United States so grossly, violating it in every provision, that I found myself unable to support his administration without feeling myself a traitor to my country and the Constitution. I was then soon considered in opposition to him. If then I had spoken out and published to the world my own impressions as to what Clay did mean to convey, I was liable to the unworthy imputation of taking this step out of revenge or disappointment in not receiving office from Jackson although I had refused office and told him that I wanted none. This, however, only he and I and two or three others knew. Thus was I still prevented from doing Clay justice, at least, explaining how I understood his words.

Mr. Clay, I suspect, has for some time past judged that I did not approve of the construction put upon his words by the Jackson party and hence in the letter which I have lately received from him upon business appertaining to my office, dated Ashland, Kentucky, April 18th, 1833, after speaking of his business, he closes his letter in these words:

I am aware that an apology is due your Excellency for troubling you with this small matter, be pleased to put it in

some hands to attend to and place my addressing you to the score of our old friendly relations. With great respect, I am truly yours,

H. CLAY.

This reminded me of the necessity of doing something which would convey at some future time to the world my impressions in relation to those words so often referred to of Mr. Clay's and upon the suggestion of James E. Heath, the Auditor of Public Accounts, who saw the letter and to whom I related my own expressions I have now made this record. Mr. Heath was then informed of my having this book. I then told him I would make the record here. I now proceed to finish the most important part of it.

Mr. Clay did say to me when conversing upon the subject of the election of the President when I told him "Adams was too unpopular to be chosen by the people of this country" he said, "Give us the patronage of the Federal Government and we will make ourselves popular."

In using this expression I did not understand Mr. Clay as meaning to convey to my mind the remotest insinuation that the "patronage" was to be corruptly used, nor do I believe that it ever was corruptly used by him and Mr. Adams whilst they administered that government, but I did understand him to mean that if they had the administration of the Federal Government in their hands that by selecting men who were known and admitted to be persons of high character, talents and popularity that their influence with the people would sustain them (Adams and Clay) because these men would sus-



tain them upon the wisdom and justice of their measures, thus making manifest to the people the impropriety of turning out men who had conducted the administration upon wide principles and beneficial measures merely because they had a personal aversion to one man (Mr. Adams). In other words they would have selected men of talents and virtue, so arranged locally as to have made themselves popular by thus distributing the patronage of the government. I have little idea but that this suggested the corrupt use which has been made of the patronage of this government by Jackson. Every day proves him to be the worst and most corrupt man in the United States.

My journal has long been suspended. The epidemic of scarlet fever has been in my family at the Thorn Spring where all of us were during the summer. We suffered much. Every one was ill during the summer and my two youngest daughters, Coralie and Mary fell victims to it. No parent ever had better children or children of more intellect. These misfortunes have had a deep effect upon my mind and feelings, the more so as it has often happened before. I am beginning to be old and have had no share of the affections of the world but from my children and my wife. Yet everybody manifests the highest respect for me and everybody is kind to me and among the people generally I have, for twenty-three years, been very popular, so also with the General Assembly, who made me Governor of this ancient Commonwealth under the old constitution by a vote of three to one, and elected me the first Governor



under the new Constitution by a unanimous vote of both Houses of the General Assembly, still that warm and cordial devotion to the affections of the heart cannot be compensated by honors and the profoundest respect which has always been manifested to me. What can this be? Everybody loves me, as my friends tell me, I certainly am and for many years have been popular and after the first election I never was opposed afterwards for that station. That I have friends I know, whom I trust with everything, but in my presence they are more ceremonious than with each other. It is the playfulness of affection which makes friendship so delightful, but when mingled with but little reserve it has the effect of keeping the very object of that respect a little more on his guard, because it seems to be a caution to him to remain so.

NOVEMBER, 1833.

*Fifth day.* I saw Judge Brook of the Court of Appeals and had much conversation with him about Henry Clay, whom he says, will not press his claim to the Presidency but leave the selection of the candidate to oppose the corrupt minions of Jackson to the good sense of the people. So far it is well, yet every day gives me new cause to doubt the stability of the Union. The multitude is more disposed to follow the tendencies and go for party success than in search of principle, which act in support of liberty, besides the utter ignorance of the structure of our government in the mass of the people (the togata Romana), besides this men, who have some educa-

tion cannot fully comprehend it, simple as it is. This ignorance in the first place, and the anxiety every man has for success when he attaches himself to a party must cause the downfall of the Union.

If I am justified in applying the same tendencies in a simple state government which I have witnessed in the Union, the same local and general causes, parties instead of principles, the state governments themselves will not long keep their liberty though the form will remain. To aid the progress of these tendencies, all the unprincipled join the dominant party for office and it is surprising to see how many there are and how high some of them stand in the estimation of their countrymen, men who stand well, yet counsel and aid the basest principles of self aggrandisement whilst they think themselves concealed from the observation of the best and most learned of our citizens.

Judge Henry St. George Tucker, of the Court of Appeals, has enjoyed much of the favor of the people of Virginia. He was, and yet calls himself, a Republican and is believed by many though he was in correspondence with Senator Rives during the last winter or session of Congress and approved of everything Jackson had done and proposed doing, Proclamation and all, and induced that poor, weak creature, Rives, to vote for the force bill and for all this he now has Jackson's promise in his pocket that if John Marshall shall die or resign he, Tucker, shall receive the appointment of Chief Justice of the United States! This is the pure Republican who thinks himself secure in his negotiation in selling his principles for

office, not even that, for a promise of office. His friends may say that he has not changed his principles. If so, it is the worse for him, for then it is a proof that he has been a base hypocrite for twenty years or more. To my proof: Rives showed Tucker's letter to John S. Barbour, as Barbour related it to me, persuading him and insisting upon his taking the course he did and developing the reasons why he ought to continue his course for the other, Beverly Tucker, the brother of Henry St. George Tucker, was in Washington City about this period and learned the fact of his assurance about the Chief Justice's place being destined for Tucker, the Judge, and communicated the fact to Colonel William Campbell Preston of South Carolina, who informed me of it at the Thorn Spring during the month of August last. Judge Henry St. George Tucker thinks now that no person is acquainted with his secret and is aiding and forwarding, as well as he can all the federal and latitudinous principles entertained by Jackson. He is now paying the price of his promised appointment.

*Sixth day.* I have heard to-day that vast defalcations have taken place in the General Post Office, which, from the profligate manner in which the public business has been transacted generally, has been long expected, and to cover similar frauds, it is believed by many, the Treasury Department was burnt.

*Thirteenth day.* This day there was witnessed the most extraordinary phenomenon ever beheld in this place. About two o'clock in the morning the whole heavens seemed to be on fire, from each star there

seemed to descend a stream of active fire, it appeared in every variety of hue and form, it seemed to continue at times to fall in flakes as though it was snowing fire. It continued thus for nearly three hours. The ignorant, of course, were greatly alarmed and thought the day of judgment was at hand. The weather for a few days preceding had been very warm and suddenly it changed and became very cool. To me it seems a phosphoric production of some kind. We will have to leave its nature and character to be investigated by future philosophers as at this day we know nothing of such a phenomenon.

*Twenty-third day.* I have this day finished my message to the General Assembly of Virginia. It is a true States Rights paper. On account of its length I have been obliged to suppress about half of it. This doctrine is an able exposition of the doctrine of the Constitution, and would be much more complete if the whole was sent in. This I have no fear in saying, and posterity will find it true, that the Government of the United States will, unless the doctrine of state sovereignty and nullification and secession be admitted as belonging to the States overthrow the liberties of these United States and consolidate them in one great despotism. Jackson may exercise unlimited power and the Togata huzza for Jackson. This man is thoroughly vicious, there is not a crime he has not committed. Surrounded with men as vicious as himself, they plunder the treasury at will and the majority in Congress submit without resistance, because the majority is of the same party. Even the treaty making power is

perverted so as to make treaties with Indians within the limits of the States and by that treaty make reservations of large and valuable tracts of lands to be enjoyed by himself and his friends.

*Twenty-fourth day.* I have sent a copy of my correspondence with Henry Clay to William C. Preston of Columbia, South Carolina. The object of that correspondence was to induce Mr. Clay to detach himself from the Northern constructionists and to prevail upon him to unite with the States Rights party, and to prevail upon his friends in the Legislature of Kentucky to reaffirm their resolutions of 1798.

*Thirtieth day.* On next Monday the General Assembly meets. I will send them my annual message which contains the true doctrine of the Constitution and the only doctrine by which this confederacy can be kept together or the liberty of the people of America can be maintained. I have also indicated the policy which Virginia ought to pursue to preserve her liberty, but this I awfully fear will be left unattended to.

Virginia is now paralyzed, if not governed by a Junta in Richmond, who obliquely operate upon the Legislature and influence all their acts. In this Junta there is not one man who has an intellect more than equal to decent mediocrity and whose moral integrity no man will rely upon further than he knows he can coerce him through the courts of justice. These fellows fawn and flatter, are abject or tyrannical as they find it their interest.

DECEMBER, 1833.

*First day.* The assembly meets to-morrow and so does Congress. At no former period has there been a more settled purpose in the minority to arrest the corruption and usurpation than at this time. So much do the filthy, ignorant beasts who compose Jackson's administration, including himself, believe that all power, even the officers and treasurers of the United States, belong to them that they begin to quarrel among themselves for the posts of honour and profit, and so afraid are they of rivals and participators in these "spoils" as they have called them, even in the Senate itself, that they begin to push from the party many who are anxious to join it. I am no longer surprised that the republics of Greece and Rome were overthrown by popular men. The multitude are ignorant and neither understand their rights or have learning enough to pursue them. They huzza for their leader and never believe anything which is told them except what he says nor is there any hope for support of liberty from a very large proportion of the learned and intellectual, because many are scoundrels and are soon bought up, many are cowards and cannot act; and a still greater number are mean and take any position which will give them office or pelf. As for power, the multitude seem to care nothing. Their idea of power and of kings is that to be a king and to have power one must have a crown on his head and a scepter in his hand. Without these, they cannot believe any man is a king or can have power.

*Sixth day.* We got the President's message yes-



terday. It contained little of interest. He says not a word of Alabama, it would seem that he is disposed to take his own course in relation to that State without reference to the vassal Congress.

*Seventh day.* Several judges dined with me this day and talked freely of the Constitution and topics of the day.

*Eighth day.* The intelligence which I have received heretofore of the intended outrages of Jackson have all transpired. The source from which I obtained that intelligence has never failed to ascertain the true state of the parties of Washington City and has never failed to obtain the true intentions, feelings and objects of Jackson and his cabinet. This friend finds out more things sooner and more correctly than any one of my friends in Congress, even sooner than Calhoun himself, hence from this friendship I have been enabled to put into operation many things, which has saved Virginia from injury and vexation, from the malice and hatred of the unfeeling Tyrant, Jackson, and from the filthy putridity of those around him.

*Twenty-third day.* Many members of the Assembly spent this evening with me. I am gratified to find that the ancient spirit of freedom is reviving and from all appearance the "dirty set," the "President and his kitchen cabinet" as they are called, will soon lose their influence, at least, in this Commonwealth. They surely deserve to be considered and held as odious for attempting to establish the most unmitigated despotism ever known, besides their being underbred, vulgar fellows, without learning or talents. Such is the effect of military reputation, the most deadly enemy to freedom.

*Twenty-fifth day.* Many members of the legislature called on me to-day. There is much talk as to the person who is to be my successor, Tazewell it appears from this day's conversation to be the most prominent. He is a man of great talents and integrity and will discharge the duties of his station with honour to himself and to the State.

JANUARY, 1834.

*Third day.* There has been but little snow this winter. On one day it fell for a few hours to a depth of a few inches, perhaps three, and disappeared the next day. For many weeks (four) the ground has been covered with snow to the depth of ten inches only forty miles above this. At the foot of the Blue Ridge it is said to be fifteen or eighteen inches deep, in the Great Valley, two feet and in the Alleghaney Mountains three feet deep. That is the deepest snow those mountains in Virginia have known for many years, perhaps since the winter of 1779 and 1780.

*Sixth day.* This day the Philosophic Society met, still many of the persons made members and officers of the Society have never met it.

*Eighteenth day.* Yesterday there was much debate in the House upon the resolution censuring the removal of the money of the United States out of the Bank by the act of the President, upon his own authority and by one of the most glaring acts of usurpation ever exercised in this country. The resolution passed, but still to flatter the Tyrant appended thereto, they passed a resolution condemning the

Bank! Brown of Petersburg and Stevenson of Spotsylvania acted in bad faith and henceforth ought to be considered as traitors to the cause of States Rights which they profess to support.

FEBRUARY, 1834.

*Second day.* I received a letter from Mr. Tazewell, my successor, couched in the friendliest terms—more of this anon.

*Twentieth day.* This day I received an invitation to a ball in Portsmouth, to be given on the 22nd of this month. I will go. Many of the members of the Assembly will accompany me.

*Twenty-second day.* I left Richmond this morning in the steamboat, *James Gibbon*, and arrived at Portsmouth at seven o'clock. We stopped and enjoyed the hospitality of Dr. Collins, one of the Delegates from that county, and after resting a few hours we all attended the ball. A more brilliant display of more beautiful and accomplished ladies I never saw, or a room more brilliantly illuminated, nor was there ever more enjoyment ever afforded any company than there was that evening to that company.

*Twenty-third day.* All the volunteer troops of Portsmouth and Norfolk assembled in Portsmouth and were reviewed by me, after which they invited me to partake of a cold collation which was elegant and agreeable. At five we dined with Mr. John Murdaugh and supped with the gentlemen of Norfolk, about three hundred. We also had the company of Mr. Littleton Waller Tazewell, the Governor Elect, and the Honorable William C. Preston,

a Senator in the Congress of the United States. Here was great enjoyment and many political toasts drunk, which very clearly indicated the triumph of the Nullifiers and the States Rights Party over that corrupt Tyrant, Jackson, who is even worse than his bitterest enemies ever believed him.

I left this banquet and went home with Mr. Tazewell, the Governor Elect, accompanied by Mr. W. C. Preston, referred to above, where we enjoyed ourselves in conversation until three o'clock in the morning, when we went to bed.

*Twenty-fourth day.* In the morning of this day we went to the Navy Yard and were received by Commodore Warrington in the handsomest military or naval honours. The guards were turned out and salutes were fired from the *Java*, a man of war, taken from the British during the late war. We were accompanied during the morning by the Commodore in examining the works and Dry Docks and hospitably entertained by the Commodore, who was a fine gentleman and proved himself during the late war a brave and gallant officer.

*Twenty-fifth day.* I breakfasted with Governor Tazewell this morning and became acquainted with his lady. A more amiable and accomplished lady I have never seen. After breakfast, accompanied by Governor Tazewell, we went to Portsmouth and after resting ourselves and collecting our whole company, we again embarked on board the *James Gibbon*, accompanied by Mr. Tazewell and his son, together with many other gentlemen and set sail, under the roar of cannon, the salute fired by the Portsmouth Artillery.

## INDEX

- Abolitionists, *Liberator*, 161; Boston conspirators, 164; suggestion to punish under common law, 165; anonymous letter regarding, 165; letter to L. N. Q. regarding, 166-167; discussed in General Assembly, 173-175; agitation in northern press, 214.
- Adams, John Q., and Argentina, 38; recognized in Gen. Jackson a rival, 42; comment upon conduct of Floyd and John Randolph, 51; opinion of John Floyd, 60; accused of neglect of the West, 62; denounced plots to inquire in the West, 64; changed estimates of John Floyd, 64; favored Panama Congress, 77.
- Argentina, recognition proposed, 38.
- Astor, John Jacob, Astoria, 52.
- Barbour, James, for occupation of Oregon, 73.
- Barbour, Judge P. P., particularist, 37; candidate for vice-presidency, 111; visited Gov. Floyd, 144; declined to run for vice-presidency in 1832, 198.
- Barry, Judge W. T., conference with Duff Green, 103; ultimatum to Calhoun faction, 127; influence with Jackson, 133.
- Baylies, Francis, for occupation of Oregon, 68.
- Batson, Mordicai, accompanied Col. Floyd to Kentucky, 14.
- Beirne, Col. Andrew, 129; 139.
- Benton, Thomas H., articles on the Columbia Valley, 53; comment upon Floyd's interest in Oregon, 54; comments upon effects to arouse interest in Oregon, 60; efforts in behalf of Oregon, 60; efforts in behalf of Oregon measure in Senate, 72; man of talents, 124.
- Biddle, Nicholas, published *Journals* of Lewis and Clark, 52.
- Blair, Francis P., editor of *Globe*, 99.
- Boone, Daniel, runner in Kentucky, 15; daughter captured by Indians, 21.
- Botts, A. L., member council, 123.
- Bourne, E. G., comment upon proposal to occupy the Columbia Valley, 53.
- Breckenridge, Capt. Alex., step-father of John Floyd, 31.

- Broadnax, General W. H., and Southampton Insurrection, 56.
- Brockenbrough, Dr. John, visited Gov. Floyd, 137.
- Brown, John, found home in Kentucky, 28; educated John Floyd, 31.
- Bryans, Tories, 21.
- Bryant, William Cullen, description of Oregon, 52.
- Buchanan, James, comment upon the Va. school of leaders of 1817, 37.
- Buchanan, Jane, second wife of Col. John Floyd, 24-25.
- Burton, Dr. Benjamin Smith, 32.
- Calhoun, John C., instructions to General Jackson regarding Florida, 42; ignored by Floyd, 61; unpopular with masses, 78; author of nullification doctrines, 95; visited Richmond in 1831, 103; letter of May, 1831, to W. C. Preston on the presidency, 107; declined candidacy for presidency in 1832, 108; advice on presidential election, 1832, 109; visited Richmond, 125; read out of Jackson party, 127; qualifications for presidency, 142; and Anti-Masons, 163; unpopularity in North, 168; and nullification, 171.
- Campbell, Sir William, in Richmond, 130.
- Carson, Samuel P., Letter to Gov. Floyd, 130.
- Calloway, Bessie, captured by Indians, 21.
- Carr, Dabney, a visitor of University of Va., 146.
- Cheves, Landon, 97, 124.
- Christian, Col. Wm., and Kentucky lands, 15.
- Christian, Col. Wm. A., of Northampton County, 158.
- Clark, George Rogers, expedition into Northwest, 26; defeat of Indians, 27; declined British bribe, 29; the boy idol of John Floyd, 53.
- Clark, Wm., friend John Floyd, 53.
- Clay, Henry, on recognition of Argentina, 38-39; arguments for, 39; presidential aspirations, 42; opposed military leaders, 46; efforts to discredit Adams, 64; and Panama Congress, 77; regarding Adams and the presidency, 79; father of the American System, 95; candidate for presidency, 143; and compromise of tariff, 210; the tariff, 212; desired terms of accord with Gov. Floyd, 221; presidency in 1836, 228.
- Congress, nationalistic legislation, 36; Fourteenth and Fifteenth Congresses, 37; of encounters between members, 181; encounters between Heard and Arnold, 191; and tariff, 1832,



- 196; vote on Tariff of 1832, 197-198.
- Conventions, Ante-Tariff of Philadelphia, 163; Anti-Masonic of Baltimore, 163; constitutional proposed, 201.
- Cowan, James, murdered in Kentucky, 16.
- Crallé, R. K., urged to edit paper in Richmond, 164; editor of Calhoun organ in Petersburg, Va., 179.
- Crawford, W. H., aspired to presidency, 42; on Jackson and the Seminole affair, 99; Balch letter of 1827, 101.
- Crooks, Ramsey, 153.
- Dandridge, Alexander Spotswood, accompanied Col. Floyd to Kentucky, 14; Kentucky lands, 15.
- Daniel, P. V., candidate Gov. of Va., 86; Jackson partisan, 133; attack upon Gov. Floyd, 152; unpopular in Va., 154; friend of Van Buren, 176; deserted principles, 204.
- Davis, Robert, wealthy landowner, 11; children of, 12.
- Davis, Jefferson, 82.
- Dew, Thomas R., dissertation on negro slavery, 92; called on Gov. Floyd, 167.
- Douglas, James, accompanied Col. Floyd to Kentucky, 14; flight from Kentucky, 16.
- Dunmore's War, preparations, 16.
- Eaton, John H., account of illness, 128; influence with Jackson, 133; married Mrs. Timberlake, 148; Jackson's favorite, 215-216; Lieut. Randolph affair, 218-220.
- Eaton, Mrs. J. H., defended by Jackson, 124; marriage to Eaton, 148.
- Europe, unrest in, 138.
- Everett, Charles, 163.
- Ewing, Senator, visited Richmond, 128.
- Farnham, Russell, 53.
- Faulkner, C. J., agent of Va. to federal government, 11; favored gradual abolition in Va., 173; account of conditions in Washington, 190.
- Floyd, George Rogers Clark, son of Col. John Floyd, 30; in battle of Tippecanoe, 31.
- Floyd, Colonel John, son of William Floyd, 13; married Miss Burfoot, 13; teacher and surveyor in Botetourt County, 13; led surveying party to Kentucky, 14; forced to leave Kentucky, 15; in Dunmore's War, 16; in Powell's Valley, 18; joined Henderson in Kentucky, 19; in first representative

assembly in Kentucky, 19; member of first civil court in Kentucky, 20; described by John Morehead, 20; letters to Col. Wm. Preston, 20; account of capture of Boone's daughter by Indians, 21; joins Revolutionary army, 23; commander of *Phoenix*, 24; prisoner in England, 24; married Jane Buchanan, 25; aid to Richard Henderson, 26; returned to Kentucky, 26; trustee of Louisville, 28; colonel of militia, 28; Indian adventure, 28; declined English bribe, 29; death, 30.

Floyd, Gov. John, birthplace and early environment, 9, 31; education, 31; marriage, 31; spokesman of the frontier, 33; major in regular army, 34; member of the General Assembly, 34; opposition to New England influences, 35; member of Congress, 35; strict constructionist, 36; supported recognition of Argentina, 38; arguments for, 38-40; on Russia, 40; defended Jackson in Florida, 42-46; early favor with Jackson, 47; voted for Missouri Compromise, 47; defended rights of "sovereign state" of Missouri, 47; exposition of nature of federal government, 48; resolution on the status of Missouri in the Union, 50; favored retrenchment in regular army, 51; first proposed occupation of Columbia Valley, 53; interest in Oregon, 53; resolution on, 54; famous report on Oregon, 55-59; second resolution regarding the Oregon country, 61; bill for the occupation of the Columbia Valley, 61; resolution of inquiry regarding activity of Russia on Pacific, 63; denied charges of electioneering tactics, 64; J. Q. Adams changed opinion of, 64; speech on Oregon, 65; second bill for occupation of Oregon, 69; master effort in behalf of bill for occupation of Oregon, 70; success of Oregon bill in House, 72; answer to Polk and others on Oregon question, 74; retirement from Congress, 74; prophet of commercial Northwest, 75; interested in national politics, 76; chairman of select committee on Address of Ninian Edwards, 76; opposed Panama Congress, 77; understanding regarding presidential election of 1828, 78; betrayal of Clay's confidences, 79; letter declining re-election of Congress, 79; retirement to farm, 81; family, 81; authority upon grazing, 83; letter on, 83; elected Governor of Va., 86; interest in internal improvements, 87; opposed to negro slavery, 88; letter to Gov. Hamilton on Southampton Insurrection, 89; proposed

abolition of negro slavery, 91; invited the attention of Prof. Dew to the subject of negro slavery, 92; re-elected Governor, 93; an apostle of discontent, 94; reasons for support of Jackson for presidency, 96; spokesman for eastern Va., 97; disappointed in Jackson, 17; conditions determining choice as Governor, 98; beginning of active opposition to Jackson, 98; letter to Colonel John Williams, 100; planned to expose Jackson, 101; drew closer to Clay, 102; "Diary," 102; letter to Calhoun on presidential succession, 104; comments on resignation of Jackson's Cabinet, 106; opposed Wirt's candidacy for presidency, 108; message of December, 1831, to General Assembly, 108; defense of rights of Va., 111; comments on Tariff of 1832, and federal relations, 113; denounce proclamation and thought of civil war, 114; death and burial, 118; disappointed in Jackson, 123; planned public dinner for Tyler and Tazewell, 128; Letter to Samuel P. Carson, 130; first Governor of Va., under constitution of 1830, 134; urged Calhoun for presidency, 135; comments on unrest in Europe, 138; in poor health, 139; on resignation of Jackson's cabinet, 139; letter to Duff Green, 140-141; proposed Calhoun for presidency, 142; embarrassments because of Clay's candidacy for presidency, 143; viewed James River Canal, 144; visit to Francis Smith, 145; comments upon Jackson and social life of Washington, 147-148; visited his home, 149-151; efforts to suppress Southampton Insurrection, 155; complains of necessity of consulting Council, 161; comments on the *Liberator*, declining health, 164; called on friends, 166; letter to L. N. Q. regarding abolitionists, 166-167; opinion of William Wirt, 169; to press abolition of negro slavery, 160; message of 1831, 171; conjectures on relation between heavenly bodies and political conditions, 181; comments upon letter from Ritchie to Stevenson, 183; explanation of Jackson's election to the presidency, 186-188; children, 189; quarrel between Jackson and Grundy, 190; account of Jackson and assaults upon members of Congress, 190-192; letter to Charles J. Faulkner, 194-195; comments upon Jackson and the Seminole incident, 197; comments upon resignation of Tazewell from U. S. Senate, 199; comments upon death of Charles Carroll of Maryland, 200; regrets part in making Jackson president, 201; comments

on the Proclamation, 203; message on nullification, 203; message to General Assembly, 204; denounces Jackson, 204-208; explanation of Jackson's usurpations, 209; reviewed state militia; comments regarding use of flag of Va., 211; social life in Washington, 215-216; explanation regarding Clay, 221-224; comments upon his family and friends, 226; comments upon falling of the stars, 231; message of 1833 to Assembly, 231; correspondence with Clay, 232; on Richmond Junta, 232; on usurpation of tyrants, 233; the "kitchen cabinet," 234; comments on removal of deposits, 235; attended ball in Portsmouth, 236-237.

Floyd, John Buchanan, son of Gov. John Floyd, Gov. of Va., member of Buchanan's cabinet, 81.

Floyd, Letty Preston, wife of Wm. S. Lewis, 81.

Floyd, Elisa Lavelette, wife of George Frederick Holmes, 82.

Floyd, Nicketti Buchanan, wife of John Warfield Johnston, 82.

Floyd, Letitia, wife of Gov. John Floyd, letter on federal relations, 116.

Floyd, Nathaniel, first of name in Virginia, 9; land patents, 10.

Floyd, Walter, first of name in Virginia, 9; land patents, 10.

Floyd, William, resident of Amherst County, 11; married Abadiah Davis, 11.

Floyds, William, John, Charles, join the Spotswood movement to the West, 11; descendants, 11; migrate to Kentucky, 26; killed in Indian wars, 27.

Forrest, Edwin, in Richmond, 137.

Franklin, Benjamin, aided Col. John Floyd, 25.

Fredericksburg, unrest among negroes of, 156.

Frontier, in 1820, 52.

Frontiersmen, influence following Second War with Great Britain, 33.

Gass, Patrick, Diary, 52.

Giles, Wm. B., member of constitutional convention of 1829-1830, 86.

Gholson, James H., and Southampton Insurrection, 156.

Gilmer, Thomas W., supported Calhoun for presidency, 104; visit to Richmond, 126; discussed Calhoun newspaper for Richmond, 134, 135, 136.

Goode, Wm. O., and Southampton Insurrection, 156; on gradual abolition of negro slavery, 174.

- Green, Duff, deposed as party editor, 99; letter to John Floyd, 126; proposed Calhoun for vice-presidency, 135; detected plot to defraud government, 182.
- Great Britain, Claims to Oregon, 52.
- Hakluyt, Richard, Discourse on Western Planting, 26.
- Hamilton, James, murdered in Kentucky, 16.
- Hamilton, James Jr., of South Carolina, 124.
- Hanson, Thomas, accompanied Col. Floyd to Kentucky, 14.
- Hayne, Robert Y., 124.
- Heard, Morgan A., quarrel with Arnold, 191.
- Henderson, Richard, land purchases in Kentucky, 18; proposes new colony of Transylvania, 19; given land grant by Virginia, 26.
- Henry, Patrick, lands on Ohio, 14; owner of Kentucky land, 15; speech at Williamsburg, 179.
- Hite, Isaac, accompanied Col. Floyd to Kentucky, 14.
- Houston, Samuel, assault upon Stansberry, 181.
- Howard, John, for law and order on frontier, 28.
- Jackson, Gen. Andrew, invasion of Florida, 41; considered for presidency, 42; popularity grows, 26, 78, 97; plans for succession, 101; reception of C. J. Faulkner, agent of Va., 112; Proclamation of 1832, 113; disappointing course in the presidency, 123; defended Mrs. Eaton, 124; executive usurpations, 129; appointed Stambough Indian agent, 134; disappointed friends, 147; unable to administer government, 172; less odious than Clay, 173; without influence in Congress, 175; attacks upon Congress, 182; abuse of members of Congress, 185; characterization of, 186; election to presidency explained, 186-188; quarrel with Grundy, 190; accused of encouraging attacks on members of Congress, 192; on the Seminole War, 196; repudiates position on internal improvements, 198; used the Chief Justiceship, 199; dizzy with power, 201; re-elected, 202; denounced as usurper, 205-208; plan to use army against South Carolina, 210; assaulted by Lieut. Randolph, 215.
- Jefferson, Thomas, strict constructionist, 36.
- Johnston, Charles C., member of Congress, 167.
- Johnston, Joseph Eggleston, 82.
- Jones, Gabriel (Jack), pioneer settler in Kentucky, 21; thwarts plans of Richard Henderson, 26.

- Kelley, Hall J., 53.
- Kendall, Amos, 97; influence with Jackson, 133; Auditor of Treasury, —
- Kentucky, early settlements, 16; first legislative assembly, 19; rush to, 1776, 21.
- Knox, James, accompanied Col. Floyd to Kentucky, 14.
- Lee, Jason, 75.
- Leigh, B. W., agent to South Carolina, 117; return from South Carolina, 213.
- Lewis, Col. Andrew, in Dunmore's War, 16.
- Lewis, Wm. B., member of "kitchen cabinet," 97; influence with Jackson, 133.
- Linn, Lewis F., 75.
- Louisiana, and Oregon, 62.
- Long, Major Stephen B., 55.
- Louisville, Floyd settlement, 27.
- Lyons, James, south sider, 133.
- Madison, James, member of constitutional convention, 1829-1830, 86.
- Marcy, W. L., comments on spoils system, 193.
- Marshall, Chief Justice John, influence upon state rights, 36; member of constitutional convention, 1829-1830, 86; absence from the Richmond Quoit Club, 162; nationalist, 207.
- McCra, Frederick, accompanied Col. Floyd to Kentucky, 14.
- McDowell, Judge Samuel, 28.
- McLean, John, 124.
- Mercer, Charles Fenton, Federalist leader, 35.
- Missouri Compromise, 47; constitutional provisions regarding presidential election, 1820, 50.
- Monroe, James, mention of interests on Pacific, 65; recommended military establishment on Pacific, 70; member of constitutional convention, 1829-1830, 86.
- Morehead, John, description of Col. John Floyd, 20.
- Nicholas, N. P., dined with Gov. Floyd, 136; visited Gov. Floyd, 137; Van Buren supporter, 147; deserted principles, 204.
- Negro Slavery, debate in General Assembly, 1831-1832, 91; influence of federal relations upon, 92.
- Norfolk, alarm because of slaves, 165.
- Oregon, claims to, 52; Floyd's report on, 55; proposed state, 61; Russia renounced claim to, 63; first speech in Congress



- upon, 65; opposition to occupation, 68; vote on bill to occupy, 69; success of bill in House, 72; companies formed to colonize, 73.
- Panama Congress, 77.
- Pendleton, Edmund, joint owner of a privateer, 24.
- Pennsylvania and the Proclamation, 204.
- Pleasants, James, opposition to Jackson, 149.
- Poindexter, George, in Richmond, 129.
- Point Pleasant, Battle of, 17.
- Poland, uprising in, 138.
- Polk, James K., opposed occupation of the Columbia Valley, 73.
- Preston, Col. J. P., account of Jackson, 123; visited Richmond, 126; accompanied Gov. Floyd on visit to Francis Smith, 145; goes to mountains of Va., 154.
- Preston, Colonel William, high sheriff of Botetourt County, 13; owner of Kentucky lands, 15; joint owner of privateer, 24; visited Richmond, 126.
- Preston, Wm. B., member House of Delegates of Va., 128, 129; member of General Assembly, 153; for gradual abolition of negro slavery, 173.
- Randolph, John, strict constructionist, 37; resolution on vote of Missouri in presidential election of 1820, 50; attacked Ninian Edwards and Floyd, 76.
- Randolph, Robert B., pulled Jackson's nose, 215; accused of defaulting, 218-220.
- Richmond, farewell to Gov. Floyd, 93; theater, 137; frosts in April, 1831, 137; agitation concerning flag, 211.
- Ritchie, Thomas, opposed to peace policy of Jefferson, 34; strict constructionist, 37; declined to comment upon choice of John Floyd for Gov., 98; denounced as a political "profligate," 104; head of Richmond Junta, 104; dinner party, 136; to be overthrown, 164; supporter of Van Buren, 176-178; for patronage regardless of principle, 179; letter to Andrew Stevenson, 185; failure to comment on enactment of tariff of 1832, 198; deserted principles, 203; chagrin at success of Floyd, 211.
- Roane, Judge Spencer, strict constructionist, 37.
- Ruffin, Edmund, taught the uses of calcarious manures, 94.
- Rush, Dr. Benjamin, 32.
- Russell, Jonathan, Letter to James Monroe, 64.

- Russell, Col. Wm., aid to Col. Wm. Preston, 15.
- Russia, encroachments on Pacific coast, 40; same, 63.
- Sayers, Col. Robert, engagement to Jane Buchanan, 25.
- South, a minority section, 95.
- Southampton, Insurrection, 88; effects upon Va., 155; participants convicted, 157-158; loyalty of many slaves to masters, 157; uprising extended, 159-160.
- South Carolina, nullification in, 202.
- Springer, John C., comments on Anti-Masonic Convention, 163.
- Stevenson, Andrew, letter from Thomas Ritchie to, 184-185.
- Taylor, Hancock, surveyor in Kentucky, 15.
- Taylor, Robert B., elected judge, 137.
- Stoner, Michael, runner in Kentucky, 15.
- Summers, Geo. W., for gradual abolition of negro slavery, 173.
- Tariff, Act of 1832, 113; compromise act of 1833, 117; discussed in Congress, 175.
- Tazewell, Littleton W., promoted the election of Jackson, 78; Governor of Va., 93; disapproval of Jackson, 102, 124; in Richmond, 136; disappointed in Jackson, 136; man of talents, 142; resigned from U. S. Senate, 199; aid in making Jackson president, 224; Governor of Virginia, 235-237.
- Todd, Robert, for law in interior, 28.
- Tories, in Kentucky, 21.
- Transylvania, colony, 19; absorbed by Virginia, 26.
- Trezvant, James, informed Gov. Floyd of Southampton Insurrection, 155.
- Trigg, Daniel, deputy sheriff of Botetourt County, 13.
- Tucker, Henry St. George, President of Va. court of appeals, 142; Supreme Court, 229.
- Turner, "Nat.," leader of Southampton Insurrection, 157; false reports regarding capture of, 168; captured in Southampton county, 168.
- Tyler, John, particularist, 37; letter announcing break with Jackson, 99; political predictions, 100; on Calhoun's proposed visit to Richmond, 125; public dinner in Richmond, 128; called on Gov. Floyd, 169; mentioned in a letter from Ritchie to Stevenson, 184; explanation of Ritchie-Stevenson letter, 189; sent Gov. Floyd copy of Jackson's Proclamation, 203; re-elected to U. S. Senate, 211; report on political conditions in Washington, 214; aided Jackson to presidency, 224.

- United States, effect of Second War with Great Britain, 33.
- Van Buren, Martin, promoted election of Jackson, 78; mentioned for vice-presidency, 103; candidate for vice-presidency, 111; political hopes blasted in Va., 126; influence with Jackson, 133; rejected by Senate for minister to England, 176; candidacy for vice-presidency, 193; chagrin at success of Floyd in Va., 211.
- Virginia, authorized incorporation of Louisville, 28; militia-men in second war with Great Britain, 33; influence in the Union, 37; constitutional convention of 1829-1830, 86; dismemberment proposed, 92; of abolitionist influences in, 92; declining influence of, 94; threatened dismemberment, 98; a strategic state politically, 107; position in the nullification crisis, 109; session of Gen. Assembly, 138; held destiny of Jackson and Van Buren in hands, 139; constitution condemned as weak, 143; extreme cold in, 172; discussion of abolition in, 172; dismemberment proposed, 175; causes of possible dismemberment, 177; review of weather conditions in, 180; crop conditions in, 1832, 195-196; on tariff of 1832, 197-198; subservient to Jackson, 207-208; on federal relations, 208; governed by junta, 232; weather conditions in, 235.
- Walker, Dr. Thomas, owner of a privateer, 24.
- Washington, George, lands on Kanawha, 14; centennial celebration of birth of, 178; mother a Tory, 215.
- Whigs, beginnings of party, 102, 118.
- White, Hugh L., 97, 124.
- Williams, Col. John, Floyd's letter to, 100; opposed to Jackson, 145; commends Gov. Floyd, 170.
- Williams, Lewis, member of Congress, 123; commends Gov. Floyd, 170.
- Williamsburg, old capitol burned, 179.
- Wirt, William, candidate of the Anti-Masonic party for presidency, 108; nominated by Anti-Masonic party for presidency, 163.
- Woodhouse, Dr. James, 32.





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