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THE WALTERS COLLECTION OF ART TREASURES

ITS HISTORY AND EDUCATIONAL IMPORTANCE

THERE are few more interesting processes than tracing the development of civilization and mental powers through the handiwork of peoples of successive ages in the much too imperfectly understood past, or following the march of intellectual culture in modern times by means of a felicitous acquaintance with the offspring of the pencil. The city of Baltimore possesses an institution, of which any city might well be proud, where all this may be achieved in the midst of object lessons in such variety and beauty and value as not to be easily described—a private collection which has been gradually unfolding during the last half-century until it has reached proportions of unrivaled magnitude and far-reaching influence.

Its history is unique and suggestive. Nearly a century after the incident recently chronicled as "the birth of the fine arts in the New World," a young man of Scotch-Irish ancestry, who had but just passed his twenty-first year, educated as a practical engineer and destined to be concerned for a lifetime in the most engrossing of all vocations—the building and management of railroads—resolved to gratify an inborn taste for art by devoting a portion of his earnings each year to the purchase of fine pictures. Had he chosen for himself the profession of an artist he would unquestionably have won great success and distinction through his untiring energy and love for the beautiful. But the strong forces that were united in his character impelled him naturally into broader fields, and made him a man of affairs. He had the genius for colossal undertakings, and the faculty and will-power for leadership and control. At the same time, even while in his early laborious engineering service, he exhibited that acute intuition and poetic sentiment which characterize the true artist. The first picture he bought was an engraving, for which he paid five dollars. He was then in the beginning of his remarkable business career. Henceforward he lived, as it were, two lives. Instead of amusing himself in hours of reprieve from exacting duties as men usually do, he applied himself at every spare moment to the severe study of the various branches of art.

THE EXPANSION OF THE UNITED STATES

The celebrations of historical events oftentimes seem to be but empty pageants; and rather the occasion of supplying the present generation with an opportunity to exploit itself, than to have any real bearing upon that which they are intended to commemorate. But while the celebrations are commonly without any very obvious fitness to their end, they yet revive interest in the event, and become the means of reawakening reflection upon the influence exerted by it. We are this year largely absorbed by the celebration of that great performance which called American history into being. But there are other notable events which have for their natal year the same symbols—92—and one, which is to be celebrated on June 1st of this year, was the signal of a scarcely less important development as far as our national history is concerned. This was the admission of Kentucky to the Union.

While Kentucky was not the first state admitted to the Union, it was in a very real sense the first-born of the nation. The act which provided for its admission was passed by congress and became a law on February 14, 1791, fourteen days prior to a similar act for the admission of Vermont. This act was an epoch-making event. It is easy to say that it only embodied the manifest destiny of the Union, and was really the first step in the inevitable evolution of the great west. And yet it was an act which had been long delayed, much clamored for, and which even at that time was regarded by not a few as of doubtful expediency. When we consider the arguments which were advanced by those who opposed the admission of Kentucky to the Union, we are introduced at once to a totally different school of political thought from any which could be imagined to-day. The eighteenth century rises before us in a way in which mere facts have no power to conjure up the dead past. After all, it is not so much events as motives, it is not so much deeds as thought, which separate one age from another; and yet the views of the politicians of the first decade of our national life were conditioned by the situation of their times, and we shall see, even upon very superficial inquiry, that the conditions of the life of our Revolutionary period circumscribed, in what is to us a remarkable degree, the political outlook of the founders of the republic.

The great Virginians, especially Washington and Henry, and perhaps

Jefferson should also be added to these foresighted statesmen, early grasped the two not necessarily inseparable ideas of the importance of the western country to the United States, and the development at no distant day of this rich and wide domain. The first of these propositions was sufficiently obvious, because it simply meant that England on the northwest and Spain on the southwest must be kept at arm's length. This view was held by those who were content to regard the position of this section as merely providing a barrier of mountain and wilderness against the encroachments of a foe. But the Virginians, with practical foresight, precipitated George Rogers Clark with his gallant western levies upon the British posts of the Illinois territory, and by his brilliant, almost unparalleled campaign, secured to the continental congress the military possession of what was afterwards to be the Northwest Territory. The correspondence between Clark and Governor Henry indicates their appreciation of the ultimate value of the great west in both of the aspects which have been mentioned. But the Revolution was scarcely over before the great difficulty in the minds of those who were skeptical as to the development of the west, took shape in the very practical form of distrust and opposition on the part of the western settlers to the governments in the east. The district of Kentucky, as that part of Virginia's territory beyond the mountains and south of the Ohio river was early called, began to complain of the lack of consideration on the part of the mother state. What was merely murmuring in Kentucky became open rebellion in the western district of North Carolina, and the future territory of Tennessee gave birth to the first rebellion against the new republic in the attempt of the settlers to establish the free state of Franklin. The discontent in both of these sections was fomented by the emissaries of the Spanish government at New Orleans, and for a time it looked as if there were serious probability, if not of an overt attempt to sever the ties with the seaboard states, at least of a dangerous conspiracy with this object in view.

The national government at once had before it a problem which involved a general principle. Virginia with commendable moderation accepted the situation, and readily consented to a division of her territory, provided that congress would admit the dissevered territory as an independent state, and so presented the problem to the national government. But this was not an isolated case. Almost from its beginning congress had had upon its hands a somewhat similar problem. What was the status of Vermont was a difficult, and yet not exactly a dangerous, problem. Vermont, in a sense, stood alone. Her citizens had refused so peremptorily to listen to British suggestions of treason to the cause which

they had so spontaneously accepted that there could be no fear lest she should become an enemy. She was obviously rather annoying as a bone of contention than dangerous as the entering wedge of an enemy. Still, the problem of Vermont was one which the congress was never courageous enough to solve; and from 1776, when she first sought admission as one of the confederate colonies, throughout the whole period of the old confederation she remained practically an independent republic. With Vermont knocking for admission from the north, with Virginia demanding the right to subdivide her territory and have the separated section admitted to equality in statehood, the problem plainly was, whether the fabric of the Union should be extended or whether the strait limits imposed by the Appalachian mountains should be permanently recognized as the measure of the territory of the nation. It seems to us to-day incredible that there should have been any doubt as to the manifest destiny of this great republic. But while the doctrinaires, even in that sober, wise, and well-informed convention which drafted the constitution solemnly discussed and generally acquiesced in the view that republics are unstable, and large republics inevitably of short duration, the practical pioneers, at first, drove the question home by the obvious needs of local self-government; and then, nearly proved the position of the opponents of expansion to be correct, by illustrating the difficulties of such a development.

The logic of thought plays but a small part in problems of practical politics. The logic of events here rules with unquestioned sway. Loyalty must oftentimes yield to so prosaic a plea as an empty stomach, and the want of supplies and the impossibility of prompt and efficient commercial intercourse with the seaboard well-nigh ruined the prospects of a budding republic. Those statesmen who, putting aside all questions of sentiment, decided that the destiny of the eastern half of North America was plainly a division into three distinct governments, had all the logic of thought on their side. The St. Lawrence and its tributaries, including the territory of the great lakes, obviously formed one commercial system, the seaboard states of the new Union another, while the Gulf and the territory tributary to it upon the waters of the father of rivers was quite as obviously destined to be a distinct governmental unity. From the summit of their lofty philosophic point of view they waved a regretful but resigned farewell to the prairies of the northwest and to the fair valleys of Kentucky and Tennessee. But there is a tie which will sometimes conquer the temporary loss even of the necessities of life. The Kentuckians and Tennesseans clung to their connection to the Union, and firmly believed that if they were given political autonomy they would be able to adjust the com-

mercial difficulties of their situation to their necessities. In view of this belief, temptations to disloyalty were not lacking. General James Wilkinson brought them face to face with a commercial proposition from the Spanish intendant which offered them an assured solution of the difficulties of their situation.

Among the chief products of the infant state of Kentucky tobacco was first. Tobacco was worth only two dollars and a half per hundred in an average season in Kentucky, while the transportation to Virginia could only be effected at a cost of from four to five dollars, making it hopeless to compete with the average price in the Virginia market of four and a half per hundred. Wilkinson successfully demonstrated that with the admission of tobacco to the Spanish market it could be sold in Kentucky at the rate of seven dollars per hundred, which would realize an enormous profit for the Kentucky producer; but this bait was resisted. Then came the question of the production of cereals. Neither wheat nor corn could be transported beyond the mountains at a price which would not exceed the market price of the grains in the eastern cities. In other words, commercial relations between the new and the old states rested upon the same circumstances which had ruined colonial trade before the Revolution. England had then by means of its legislation required the colonists to exist for her commercial benefit. A hard fate now required that the western country should buy its supplies of every sort in the east without being able to return anything but money in payment for them; or, to state the problem in economic language, the west was forced to pay the transportation in both directions. This became an intolerable burden, and it might well be doubted whether it could ever be relieved.

But the first congress at its second session boldly dealt with the difficulties which had been relegated to it by its predecessors, and in February, 1791, passed acts admitting the two states then clamoring for admission, and so made its expansion a part of the permanent policy of the Union. In so doing it did not solve the problem; but, on the old theory that that which is well begun is half done, the conditions of the problem were never afterwards in doubt. At no distant day Tennessee was received, and Ohio followed early in the present century, completing the advance guard and establishing the general principle of alternate admission of northern and southern states. It was not long before the western part of Pennsylvania precipitated the natural question as to the subordination of the economic necessities of the trans-Appalachian country to the general policy of the Union. The whisky rebellion turned on the simple economic question of cost of transportation. Corn could not be carried to market at a profit over

the mountains by the bad roads then existing. But when the corn was distilled it could be carried in the form of whisky to profitable markets, provided it was untaxed. The result established, to the general satisfaction of the great bulk of the people, the superiority of a general national policy to the particular needs of a section. This principle, though questioned not infrequently, notably by South Carolina in 1829-31, and by the seceding states in 1861, has remained a principle of our national policy.

But these new states which clamored for admission based their demands upon the necessity of geographical situation. It was obvious, from discussions which preceded their admission, if they were to be subordinated to the general principle of the best policy for the nation, that the nation was to consider not merely the advantage of a majority, but to act upon the principle that the well-being of any whole made up of unhomogeneous elements must always be determined by the individual well-being of the separate components. Thus it was recognized at the outset, and stoutly urged, that the navigation of the Mississippi river was inevitably associated with the admission of Kentucky to statehood. This proposition met with opposition and with qualification, but scarcely with denial; and it is somewhat remarkable to trace the permanent stability of this principle of the well-being of the whole through the well-being of the sections, as illustrated in our national expansion. The contradictions to this position so early assumed have been rather superficial and specious than real. Of course, the extension of slavery was eventually to condition the question of the expansion of the states, and the question as to the best limitation of this national curse was always dealt with from the point of view, first, of local necessity, and, secondly, of national welfare. The local necessity for it, sometimes judged of by others than those dwelling in the locality, was nevertheless treated from a just and equitable standpoint in the great majority of cases, and the eventual decision of the case was certainly in favor of the best good of the various localities which recognized this "peculiar institution."

As we look back across the hundred years which we bridge to-day, it is impossible not to be struck with the peculiarly typical character of the example chosen to first illustrate the permanent problems connected with national expansion. Kentucky has been one of the most individualized of all the new states, and yet it has been a state with a history so typical of the various movements which have perplexed the nation that its history involves the discussion of almost every problem which the nation has had to deal with. It brought into the national councils at once the

great problem of the free navigation of the Mississippi; by a continuation of the Spanish cabal it brought the question of national loyalty prominently before the people at the very outset of its career, and carried this same question to a higher pitch when it accepted in 1796 the four emissaries of citizen Genet, the French ambassador, and permitted George Rogers Clark, whose splendid powers had suffered the eclipse of approaching dotage, to accept a revolutionary commission for the purpose of levying war against Spain, as "lieutenant-general and commander-in-chief of the revolutionary armies of France in the United States." Iron-handed old Isaac Shelby no doubt thought that this harmless foible could safely be pardoned in the hero of Vincennes. In 1798, under the leadership of John Breckinridge, Kentucky threw down her gage in her famous resolutions of 1798, formulating and promulgating the unfortunate doctrine of state's rights, and bitterly reproaching the administration for endeavoring to precipitate a war with France. With equal confidence she pressed, through Clay, for a war with England, and when it was finally declared in 1812, she called her revolutionary soldier and first governor once more to the head of affairs, and supplied the greater part of the soldiery for the war in the northwest. Following the lead of her great commoner she pressed the claims of the development of America in every possible way during the next period of national history, clamoring for internal improvements, supporting the tariff, condemning South Carolina nullification, and struggling bravely, but in vain, against the horrid incubus of slavery. When at last Clay gave way to another less worthy, but no less loved, she was well-nigh swept over the brink of the chasm of secession. It was only a temporary aberration, and, successfully stemming the current, she became the battle ground of opposing forces, and sent her full quota of soldiers into the Union army, even while a nearly equal number, deserting her standard and that of the Union, rallied to the standards of secession and slavery. Torn with the strife of hostile factions, distracted by the difficulties of the reconstruction period, harassed by the inevitable conflict of the two irreconcilable elements in her population, she has yet maintained the most conspicuous regularity in her own government, and the highest prominence in national affairs.

Throughout this whole century of struggle Kentucky has produced men in every decade who have filled posts of honor and distinction, and has occupied upon the national theatre at all times a notable place. While no President has ever been elected who was, at the time of his election, a citizen of the state, Taylor and Lincoln were both born within her borders. Richard N. Johnson and John C. Breckinridge have repre-

sented her in the Vice-Presidency, while men like Clay, the four Breckinridges, Crittenden, Carlisle, and many others have been among the leading spirits in the senate and house of representatives. She has had her fair share, and more, of representation upon the supreme bench, and at foreign capitals. In the pulpit and at the bar she has occupied a conspicuous position. And this despite the unfortunate division of the state into two almost hostile sections, growing out of the inevitable difference in the population of the barren mountains, whose rich mineral wealth is just now being developed, and that of her fertile valleys. Her school system has long been upon the best basis, both financial and educational, south of Mason and Dixon's line, and throughout her history she has inspired all of those who claim her name as their birthright with peculiar devotion. Some have said that, like the great bulk of the southern states, the higher virtues of duty, obligation to law, self-sacrifice, and similar lofty motives have been subordinated to those principles of conduct such as generosity, hospitality, and love of personal honor, which are in themselves but second-class virtues and rather the fruitage of feudalism than of christianity. It may be true in part that the gentler claims of life have been preferred to the more rugged which find a natural home upon the bleak coast of New England. It may even be true that the heart has in her citizens taken the place of the head; it may be true that they have loved eloquence more than they have honored logic, and that they have been more careful to inquire what men are rather than what they have done. But there is a beauty and sweetness and a satisfaction about the life which her citizens have lived amid the rolling limestone hills of the blue-grass country which is in a sense a true reflection of the best of the old-fashioned life of the English country gentleman. The men have aimed too much to be strong, brave, and accomplished; the women have valued beauty and the amenities of life beyond their due; the libraries have been filled with old books rather than with new, and they have been learned rather than read. But there is a flavor, though it be only a flavor of the soil, in this quasi-civilization, which has something of a charm even in this latest age of the republic.

In tracing these particular qualities of this first recognized commonwealth, do we not seem to be still following the line of expansion out beyond the prairies of the Mississippi valley, over the uplands of the central west, and beyond the loftiest summits of the Rocky mountains even to the Golden Gate of the great western ocean? In all the somewhat varied wanderings of the spirit of civilization, here or there is still to be found in this little commonwealth the lingering spirit of the backwoodsman, but

ever in close juxtaposition with the finest fruitage of the expanding nation. As Arthur's horn is said still to echo through the valleys of Cornwall, so the crack of the rifle of Daniel Boone may be heard among the rugged mountains of Kentucky. Among the foothills of these mountains there is a little stream known as Lulbegrud creek, and the story is told in an old pioneer's diary of how a little band of pioneers camped one day upon this stream and in the evening gathered round the camp fire, when old Daniel Boone took out of his pocket a little book, which was *The Travels of one Gulliver*, and read to them about the town of Lulbegrud, and they gave this name to the stream upon whose banks they had lighted their camp fire. That old copy of *Gulliver* is to-day, with its much-worn and dog-leaved pages, in the possession of a friend of mine in the beautiful city of Louisville, in a house possessing all the beauty and convenience of the present day, being one of the principal ornaments of one of the richest collections of Americana in existence. Its owner is a Kentuckian of the Kentuckians, representing many things which Kentuckians love and honor, and representing also the catholicity of its people, born in the state but educated in the extreme north, loving the country as a whole, loving Kentucky better than all else; courteous, learned, wise, but content in the borders of his native commonwealth, and publishing important memoirs of her history in sumptuous form for circulation among the favored few of his immediate neighborhood.

Catholicity is always a virtue. It may be somewhat doubted whether cosmopolitanism is so great a virtue as we have been led to believe. The catholic mind passes readily into the patriotic; the cosmopolitan is more apt to degenerate into the cosmopolite. And it will be a misfortune when it really becomes true, as it is often said to be, that the typical American will prefer to direct his ambition toward an ideal life beyond the eastern sea rather than to a life of generous struggle beyond the western mountains. The expansion of America should bring with it the deepening of Americanism, and in this point of view the provincialism which is yet the pride of the average Kentuckian rises out of the category of a vice to be something better than a foible; to be, if not a virtue, at least the inducement to the highest of all virtues in a citizen—love of country.

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