

“Gardoqui, in the meantime, was busily engaged in carrying forward his scheme of colonization. Colonel George Morgan, a soldier of the Revolution, had conceived himself greatly injured by the government, in rejecting what he believed a meritorious claim, and smarting under his disappointment, resolved to avail himself of the opportunity of placing himself beyond the limits of the United States, and by securing a liberal grant of the Spanish crown, to restore his broken fortunes in the fertile valley of the Mississippi. Having applied to Gardoqui, he obtained the conveyance of a vast tract of land, situated some seventy miles below the mouth of the Ohio, upon which he stipulated to place a large number of families. * * * *

“During the month of February, 1788, Wilkinson returned across the mountains to Kentucky. His splendid equipage and numerous servants, attracted the attention and excited the wonder of his old companions, while rumors were freely circulated that his sudden exhibition of wealth was to be attributed to something beyond the profits on his southern cargo. It was suggested that others who should follow his example might discover the source from which it sprung, and that the philosopher’s stone, which was to turn everything it touched into gold, lay within the limits of the Spanish dominion. On the subject of the navigation of the Mississippi he grew quite enthusiastic, demonstrating in glowing language the benefits to be derived from direct commercial relations with New Orleans, and at the same time informing his friends of the exclusive privileges which had been granted him by the Spanish governor. He entered into large contracts for tobacco, and at once excited the jealousy of his rivals by the liberal prices offered for western products.

“Soon after his return he dispatched a pirogue, with two oarsmen, to New Orleans, conveying a communication¹ to Miro, informing the latter of his safe return across the mountains and assuring him that their joint design was soon to be accomplished, as Kentucky had separated herself from Virginia, and the rest, as Spain desired, must inevitably follow. ‘I have,’ he says, ‘collected much European and American news, and have made various interesting observations for our political designs. It would take a volume to contain all that I have to communicate to you. But I dispatch this letter with such haste, and its fate is so uncertain, that I hope you will excuse me for not saying more until the arrival of my boats, and, in the meantime, I pray you to content yourself with this assurance, *all my predictions are verifying themselves, and not a measure is taken on both sides of the mountains which does not conspire to favor ours.* * * * * I beg you to be easy, and to be satisfied that nothing shall deter me from attending exclusively to the object we have in hand, and I

¹ “Most of these dispatches, if not all, were originally in cipher; they are to be found at length, and in Spanish, in the archives of Spain.”—Gayarre’s history of Louisiana, vol. iii., p. 211.