

were fully committed to the enterprise. Possessing talents of marked ability themselves, they, nevertheless, looked to Wilkinson for counsel and direction. The people were kept in constant agitation by conventions and meetings on the subject of their grievances. The secretary of state, Mr. Jay, it was asserted, had formed, or was about to form, a treaty with Spain, by which the exclusive right to navigate the Mississippi for twenty-five years, on the part of his majesty, was to be recognized by the United States' government. Delegates had been assembled from the principal counties of Kentucky, had discussed their grievances, and had separated without any organized plan. The people became distracted, their burthens became more and more intolerable, and many seemed willing to resort to anything that promised a present relief. It was true that not a few of the evils of which they complained were imaginary—some unavoidable—perhaps all, in time, would have been satisfactorily adjusted, yet they conceived themselves aggrieved, and it was the policy of their leaders to cultivate such a belief.

“Wilkinson had returned in February, 1788. He had sailed from New Orleans to Philadelphia; visited Richmond, Virginia; was present in the assembly when the separation of Kentucky was voted on, and was greatly gratified when the result was announced. His entrance into Lexington was grand and imposing. He had left there poor and in debt only the summer before, but now flourished in a splendid chariot, drawn by four richly-caparisoned horses, and attended by several slaves. Unfavorable rumors were freely circulated. By some it was hinted that at New Orleans he had sold both his cargo and himself; that, in fact, he had taken the oath of allegiance, and had already become a subject of Spain. He informed them himself of the exclusive privileges granted him by the governor, by which he could ship tobacco and deposit it at the king's store at ten dollars the hundred, which was a privilege allowed only to his majesty's subjects. He advocated the right to navigate the Mississippi, urged the great importance of a commercial connection of the two countries, and insinuated that it might all be affected by a separation from the Union and the independence of Kentucky. Many were already convinced; others felt that their prosperity had been too long retarded by the inactivity of the government. ‘What has been accomplished by Wilkinson,’ they argued, ‘may also be effected for ourselves.’ As yet they had derived no benefits from the Union, but as an independent state they could form an alliance with Spain, and reap the advantages of her liberal patronage. The incredulous, of whom there were many, were reluctant to move. Although they divined the object of Wilkinson's mission, still he stood high in popular favor, and they were cautious of giving offense. Some there were who would have openly denounced him, but the facts upon which to base an accusation had been carefully con-