

Spanish government "finally consented that the products of the upper country might pass through the Mississippi on the payment of a duty of fifteen *per cent.* \* \* \* \* The monopoly of the upper trade had been swept from his grasp by the last act of the court of Madrid. It had placed on terms of equality all who possessed the capital and energy to compete for the patronage of the Spanish government. Scores of boats, laden with the products of the country, were pouring their commerce into the lap of New Orleans. The new constitution proved much more popular than was generally anticipated, and was, day by day, increasing in favor with the people. Washington, too, the illustrious commander in the Revolution, was now the chosen chief of the Union, and his selection had inspired a spirit of loyalty which it was difficult, nay, dangerous, to tamper with. Already had Wilkinson been marked as a traitor, and spies were vigilant in seeking the evidences of his intrigue. *'My situation,'* says he,<sup>1</sup> *'is mortally painful, because, while I abhor duplicity, I am obliged to dissemble. This makes me extremely desirous of resorting to some contrivance that will put me in a position in which I flatter myself to be able to profess myself publicly the vassal of his Catholic majesty, and, therefore, to claim his protection in whatever public or private measures I may devise to promote the interest of the crown. You may rest assured,'* he adds, *'that the constant persecutions of congress cannot produce the slightest impression on my attachment and zeal for the interests of Spain, which I shall always be ready to defend with my tongue, my pen, and my sword.'*

"It would be presumed that Miro would gladly have assented to the proposition, and suggested the 'contrivance' by which to have secured him 'a vassal of Spain,' but the Spanish governor knew too well that Wilkinson's power to subserve his majesty's interest lay in his connection with the people of Kentucky and his intimate knowledge of the affairs of the federal government. For were it once understood he had become a subject of Spain, he would, of necessity, be excluded from a participation in their affairs, and his influence lost to the interest of Louisiana.

"*'I much regret,'* replied Miro,<sup>2</sup> *'that General Washington and congress suspect your connection with me, but it does not appear to me opportune that you declare yourself a Spaniard, for the reason which you state. I am of the opinion that this idea of yours is not convenient, and that, on the contrary it might have prejudicial results. Therefore, continue to dissemble, and to work as you promise, and as I have above indicated.'*

"Miro now began to feel gloomy forebodings of the result. Wilkinson's late communication had dampened his hopes and rendered him suspicious even of the general himself. He was either the victim of panic faith, or his Ameri-

<sup>1</sup> Gayarre, vol. iii., p. 280.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. iii., p. 284.