

Mountain Sentinel.

"WE GO WHERE DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES POINT THE WAY—WHEN THEY CEASE TO LEAD, WE CEASE TO FOLLOW."

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The Urn of the Heart.

BY MISS MATTIE GRIFFITH.

Deep in my heart there is a sacred urn
I ever guard with holiest care, and keep
From the cold world's intrusion. It is filled
With dear and lovely treasures, that I prize
Above the gems that sparkle in the vales
Of Orient climes or glitter in the crowns
Of sceptered kings.

The priceless wealth of life
Within that urn is gathered. All the bright
And lovely jewels that the years have dropped
Around me from their pinions, in the swift
And noiseless flight to old Eternity.
Are treasured there. A thousand buds and
flowers
That the cool dews of life's young morning bathed
And that its soft gales fanned with their gentle wings,
And that its genial sunbeams warmed to life
And fairy beauty 'mid the melodies
Of founts and singing birds, lie hoarded there,
Dead, dead, forever dead, but oh, as bright
And beautiful to me as when they beamed
With Nature's radiant jewelry of dew.
And they have more than mortal sweetness now,
For the dear breath of loved ones, loved and lost,
Is mingled with their holy perfume.

Like
A very miser, day and night I hide
The hoarded riches of my dear heart-urn.
Of at the midnight calm and silent hour,
When not a tone of living nature seems
To rise from all the lone and sleeping earth,
I lift the lid softly and noiselessly,
Lest some dark, wandering spirit of the air
Perchance should catch with his quick ear the
sound,
And steal my treasures. With a glistering eye
And leaping pulse, I tell them o'er and o'er,
Mixing on each, and hallow it with smiles
And tears and sighs and fervent blessings.

Then,
With soul as proud as if you broad blue sky
With all its bright and burning stars were mine,
But with a saddened heart, I close the lid,
And once again return to busy life,
To play my part amid its mockeries.

From the "Cabinet History of Kentucky," by T. S. Arthur, and W. H. Carpenter.

THE CONSPIRACY OF AARON BURR.

In the year 1801, Aaron Burr, a native of New Jersey, a graduate of Princeton, a colonel in the war of independence, and subsequently a senator of the United States, was elected Vice President of the Union. He was a man of the most extraordinary talents, plausible, intriguing, daringly ambitious, singularly polished in his address, but of the lowest moral character.

Before the expiration of his term of office, he had lost the confidence of his party, and while Jefferson was unanimously nominated as a candidate for re-election to the Presidency; in the selection of a candidate for vice-president, Burr was set aside, and George Clinton nominated in his stead.

Possessing yet some little political power in New York, he was enabled to have himself brought forward by his friends as an independent candidate for governor of that state, in opposition to Chief Justice Lewis, the nominee of the administration party.

Owing to the high character of Alexander Hamilton, and the influence of his opinions upon the active politicians of the state, Burr was defeated, and charging his discomfiture to the instrumentality of Hamilton, only waited a favorable opportunity for accomplishing a signal revenge.

Hamilton at this time was at the head of the federal army, which, though short of its former power, was yet large enough to offer formidable opposition to any candidate whose fitness they doubted, or whose opinions were at variance with their own.

Sinking rapidly in the scale of political reputation, and deeply involved in pecuniary liabilities, Burr brooded over the failure of his latest hope with a malignity, which, gathering strength by nursing, at length impelled him to force his antagonist into a duel. The result was such as might have been expected. Hamilton was shot down at the first fire, and to escape the indignant outburst of public opinion, Burr fled to South Carolina, and took refuge with his accomplished and unfortunate daughter, who had married a wealthy planter of that region.

The seat of government having been removed to the District of Columbia, Burr returned to Washington and presided over the senate until the expiration of his term of office; and then being unable to return to New York in consequence of the officers of that state holding a warrant against him for the killing of Hamilton, he turned his attention to a wider field of operations, and to bolder schemes of ambition.

At the close of the session of Congress in the spring of 1805, Burr set out for the West. The nominal objects for which this journey was prosecuted were variously stated. One was a speculation for a canal around the falls of the Ohio, which he had projected with Senator Dayton of New Jersey, whose extensive purchase of military land warrants had given him a large interest in the military bounty lands in that vicinity.

Burr had offered a share in this speculation to General Wilkinson, who, besides being commander-in-chief of the army in that quarter, had lately been appointed governor of the new territory of Louisiana. Burr and Wilkinson had long been known to each other, and the former seems to have reckoned confidently upon secur-

ing the co-operation of his old military associate, with whom he had carried on at various times, a correspondence in cipher, and whose civil and military position promised to make him a very efficient agent in the scheme to which all other projects were intended finally to succumb.

Wilkinson, who about this time was getting ready to embark at Pittsburg to take possession of his government in Louisiana, invited Burr to descend the river in his company; but as Burr's own boat—the common ark or flat-boat of those days—was already prepared to start, he proceeded on his voyage alone.

When nearly opposite Marietta, he stopped at Blennerhassett's Island, and there, for the first time, made the acquaintance of its enthusiastic but visionary owner. This was Herman Blennerhassett, an Irish Gentleman, who, becoming disgusted with the political condition of his own country, had settled on an island in the Ohio, and being possessed of a considerable fortune, gratified his refined taste by erecting an elegant mansion in the wilderness, and surrounding it with all those luxurious accessories which had hitherto been unknown beyond the mountains.

The beautiful and accomplished wife of Blennerhassett was no less an enthusiast than himself; and Burr, a master of all those arts which are best calculated to elicit the admiration of women, soon succeeded in attaching warmly to his cause two persons whose ambition had previously been bounded by the limits of their own domain.

Working upon the ardent imagination of Blennerhassett, Burr moulded him as easily to his purposes as the potter the clay beneath his hands. Both Blennerhassett and his wife devoted themselves, and all they possessed of wealth to the fortunes of the crafty and unscrupulous adventurer, with an enthusiasm heated almost to fanaticism by the glowing prospects held out to them in the future.

The project which Burr actually entertained was one well adapted to enlist in his cause all those who were dissatisfied with their present condition of life, and such turbulent and restless spirits as were ready for any enterprise which promised to gratify their ambition, even though it should be at the expense of common justice and morality.

Well knowing how odious the Spanish name had become to a great portion of the people of the West and South, from the difficulties which had for so many years attended the navigation of the Mississippi on the one hand, and from the long existing territorial disputes on the other, the scheme which Burr desired to perfect was to organize a military force upon the western waters, descend the Mississippi, and wrest from Spain a portion of her territory bounding on the Gulf of Mexico. As the consummation of this act would necessarily implicate the southwestern portion of the United States, it was proposed to make New Orleans the capital of the new empire, of which Burr was to become the chief, but whether dictator or president was left for the future to decide.

When he quitted the hospitable mansion of Blennerhassett, Burr resumed his voyage in his own boat, and met Wilkinson at Fort Massac, by whom he was provided with a barge, belonging to one of the officers, and manned by a crew of soldiers. Furnished with sufficient provision for the voyage, and bearing letters of introduction from Wilkinson to gentlemen in New Orleans, he sailed for that city, which he reached somewhere about the 20th of June, 1805.

The unpopularity of Governor Claiborne, and the bitter feuds by which parties were divided in that city, offered great encouragement to his projects. After a short stay in New Orleans, Burr re-ascended the river to Natchez, traveled by land to Nashville, where he was entertained for a week by General Andrew Jackson, and after being complimented with a public dinner, proceeded on horseback to Kentucky. He spent a few weeks in the latter state, and then set out by land for St. Louis, where he took up his residence with a relation of his, who, at his special request had been appointed secretary to the new territory of Louisiana.

It was not until he met him in St. Louis, that Wilkinson, according to his own account, began to entertain a suspicion of Burr's design. The manner of the subtle intriguer is represented as having become altered and mysterious. He threw out his hints of a splendid enterprise, and spoke of it cautiously, as favored by the government itself with being imbecile, and insinuated that the people of the West were ready for a revolt.

Wilkinson asserts that his own impression of danger to the confederation were such, that he immediately wrote to his friend, the secretary of the navy, advising him that some great movement was contemplated by Burr, and cautioning him to keep a strict watch. The aid-de-camp of Wilkinson testified to having copied, and, as he believed, transmitted such a letter through the post to the secretary; but as the latter could not recollect having received any such document the important nature of which ought certainly to have impressed itself upon his mind, it is a question of doubt whether the letter was ever sent at all.

Passing through the Indiana territory, Burr next made the acquaintance of Governor Harrison. Continuing his route eastward, he stopped at Cincinnati, Chillicothe, and Marietta, returned to Philadelphia toward the close of the year, and spent the following spring and summer partly in the latter city and partly in Washington.

During this period his movements were enveloped in a cloak of mystery. He resided in an obscure street and received many visitors, all of whom came to him on pretence of business, but no two of whom were admitted into his presence together.

While he remained in Washington he had frequent interviews with Major Eaton, then recently returned from his well-known adventures in Tripoli, to whom, warned by the apparent willingness which Eaton exhibited to enter into his views, he divulged the whole extent of his projects.

Eaton, notwithstanding his relations with the government were at that time of a delicate character, waited on the president, and suggested the appointment of Burr to a foreign mission, intimating, at the same time, his belief that it would be the means of preventing an insurrection or a revolution in the western country, which would otherwise take place within eighteen months.

The president, in reply, expressed his confidence in the attachments of the western people to the Union, and as no further questions were asked, Eaton did not feel himself authorized to say any more upon the subject.

Having remarked in his conversation with Eaton, that if he could secure the marine corps—the only soldiers stationed at Washington—and gain over the naval commanders, Truxton, Preble, Decatur, and others, he would overturn the Congress, make away with the president, and declare himself the protector of an energetic government. Burr, in pursuance of this idea, next sounded Commodore Truxton; but the latter, although dissatisfied with the treatment he had received, declined having any thing to do with the conspiracy. Decatur and others also refused to co-operate, and finding his prospects unfavorable in the Middle States, Burr set off toward the close of the summer on a second western journey.

As a cover to his designs, one of the first things he did on reaching Kentucky was to purchase of a Mr. Lynch, for a nominal consideration of forty thousand dollars, of which a few thousand were paid, an interest in a claim to a large tract of land on the Washita River, under a Spanish grant to the Baron de Bastrop. The claims held by Edward Livingston of New Orleans to a portion of the above grant, had been previously purchased by Burr.

In connection with Blennerhassett, Burr entered into a contract for building fifteen boats on the Muskingum. He also made application to John Smith, one of the senators from Ohio, for the purchase of two gunboats, then building for the government; authority was given at a house at Marietta for the purchase of provisions, a kiln erected for drying corn on Blennerhassett's Island, and a considerable number of young men enlisted for an enterprise down the Mississippi, the true nature of which was only mysteriously hinted.

By this time Wilkinson was at Natchitoches, in command of the troops collected there to oppose the Spanish invasion. While at this post he received various letters from Burr, to which he sent replies; but how far he committed himself to the conspiracy, was never ascertained. That he was tampered with to a considerable extent, and that his replies were at least evasive, does not admit of a doubt. A letter in cipher from Senator Dayton, assuring Wilkinson that he would certainly be deprived of his command at the next session of Congress, determined the course of the latter. He communicated the next morning to Colonel Cushing, his second in command, the substance of Burr's letter, and expressed his determination to hasten to New Orleans and defend that city against Burr, if he should venture to attack it. After extracting from young Swartwout, the bearer of despatches from Burr, all the information necessary to guide his future proceedings, Wilkinson sent an express in hot haste to the President of the United States, stating the general outline of the scheme communicated to him by Swartwout, and then, having been joined by a body of militia from Mississippi, advanced toward the Sabine.

Simultaneously with his letter to the president Wilkinson sent directions to the commanding officer at New Orleans to put the place in the best state of defence, and to attempt to get possession of the park of artillery left by the French government, lest it should fall into other hands.

As there were difficulties at this time between the United States and the Spanish government on the subject of their respective boundary lines and as the troops of the two nations had been called out to watch the motions of each other, Wilkinson entered into a temporary arrangement with the Spanish commander, making the Sabine, for the time being, the line of demarcation between the territories of the disputants.

His activity at this period was only equalled by his alarm, as despatch after despatch was received indicating the progressive steps of the revolutionists. He wrote to Cushing to hasten the march of the troops, he pressed to the frontier New Orleans to push forward his defence, and sent him a reinforcement of men and artillery to assist in the work. He proceeded to Natchez and despatched a second special messenger to the President, declaring that the existence of the conspiracy had been placed beyond all doubt, and expressing the necessity of putting New Orleans under martial law, a step in which he trusted to be sustained by the president.

Not content with taking these precautions, Wilkinson warned Claiborne, the governor of the Louisiana Territory, that his government was menaced by a secret plot, and entreated him to co-operate with the military commander in measures of defence. At the same time he made a requisition upon the acting governor of the Mississippi Territory for a reinforcement of five hundred militia to proceed to New Orleans.

In all these measures the activity and energy of Wilkinson were undoubted; but it still remains a problem whether he intended to remain faithful to the United States, or to throw himself into the arms of Burr. When he wrote to the officer at New Orleans, he neither expressed any anxiety in relation to the safety of the place, nor gave any reasons for his desire to have it immediately strengthened. In his letter to Claiborne he expressly enjoined secrecy till he himself arrived; and when he made his demand upon the governor of the Mississippi Territory, as he declined to specify the service in which the troops were to be engaged, the governor refused to send them at all.

His proceedings on reaching New Orleans are less open to doubt. On the 9th of December, 1806, a meeting of the merchants was called, before whom Wilkinson and Claiborne made an exposition of Burr's projects. The militia and a squadron of gunboats and ketches upon the river were placed at Wilkinson's disposal, Swartwout and several others were arrested, and one of them, having obtained his release by writ of habeas corpus, was re-arrested by order of Wilkinson, and with Swartwout sent a prisoner by sea to Washington.

While these mysterious and alarming rumors were agitating the people of lower Mississippi, Burr and his confederates in the western states were actively engaged in perfecting their preparations for the attainment of the object they had in view.

So various, however, and conflicting were the reports concerning the intentions of the conspirators, and so carefully had Burr shrouded the whole scheme in mystery, that the developments which were made in the newspapers of the day tended more to confuse the public mind than to enlighten it.

Almost simultaneously with Burr's second appearance in the western country, a series of articles appeared in the Ohio Gazette, strongly advocating the separation of the western states from the Union. Of these articles Blennerhassett was the nominal author, but the main arguments were believed to have been furnished by Burr. Articles of a similar, though less decided tendency, appeared also in the Commonwealth a democratic paper published at Pittsburg.

A short time previous to this, a newspaper, called the Western World, which had been started at Frankfort, Kentucky, published a series of articles blending the present project of Burr with the old intrigues of the Spanish party in that state.

Sebastian, then a judge of the Supreme Court was boldly denounced as a pensioner of Spain, and charges of a similar, though less sweeping character, were also made against Senator Brown, Judge Innis, and General Wilkinson.

But although in these papers, which were written by Colonel Humphrey Marshall, Burr was proclaimed a traitor to his country, and his whole scheme laid open, it was a long time before the leading politicians of Kentucky could be brought to believe in his criminal designs.

One gentleman, however, rising above the incredulity of his party, kept a watchful eye on Burr, and wrote several letters to the president on the subject, but without receiving any specific authority to act in the matter. This was Colonel Joseph H. Davies, the attorney for the United States.

On the 5th of November, 1806, Davies appeared in open court before Judge Innis, and made affidavit to the effect, that he believed Burr to be engaged in organizing a military expedition within the district, for the purpose of descending the Mississippi and making war on the provinces of Mexico. He concluded by moving that process might issue to compel the attendance of Burr before the court to answer the charge. After taking two days for reflection, Judge Innis refused to issue process, but directed a grand jury to be impeled to inquire into the accusation, and witnesses to be summoned.

At the time Davies made application in the federal district court at Frankfort for the arrest of Burr, the latter was in Lexington. In less than four hours after the motion was made, he was in receipts of the tidings. He immediately wrote to Innis that he would be in court in a day or two, and confront his accuser.

When he reached Frankfort in company with his counsel, Henry Clay and Colonel Allen, finding the motion already overruled, he addressed the judge, and demanded an immediate investigation.

Davies replied, by declaring his readiness to proceed as soon as he could procure the attendance of his witnesses, and with the consent of Burr, the ensuing Wednesday was fixed upon by the court for the investigation.

The immense sensation created by the affidavit of Davies caused the court-room to be filled on the day of trial with a large number of persons; but it was soon discovered that David Floyd, one of the principal witnesses relied upon by the district attorney, and undoubtedly a

partisan of Burr, had failed to make his appearance, and Davies was reluctantly compelled to ask a postponement of the case.

Relying, upon the next occasion, less upon Floyd as his principal witness than upon General Adair, Davies made application on the 25th of November for a new grand jury, which was accordingly summoned to attend on the 2d of December following.

Shortly after Burr entered the court-room, attended by his former counsel, the district attorney rose, and with evident mortification, expressed himself unable to proceed, in consequence of the absence of General Adair, whose testimony was of the first importance to the prosecution. He therefore asked a postponement for a few days, and that the grand jury should be kept together until he could compel the attendance of General Adair by attachment.

The counsel of Burr immediately objected to the delay, and demanded that the business should proceed at once. After a sharp and animated debate, the court decided that the case must be proceeded with or the grand jury discharged. In order to obtain the time he required for the production of his witnesses, Davies prepared an indictment against General Adair, which was returned by the jury, endorsed, "Not a true bill." He then moved for an attachment against the general, but the motion was refused by the court. At the suggestion of Davies, the court then adjourned until the following day.

Finding himself thus far baffled at every step in his attempt to fasten the charge of criminality upon Burr, the prosecuting attorney sought and obtained a private interview with Judge Innis, who, in answer to a question from Davies, as to whether he would have a right, as prosecutor, to attend the grand jury in their room, examine the witnesses, and give such explanations as might be found necessary to connect and apply their testimony, gave an opinion in the affirmative.

Fully believing that Innis would sustain in court the opinion which he had given unofficially, Davies determined to proceed with the examination with such witnesses as were present. Accordingly, the next morning, as soon as the judge had resumed his seat, the prosecuting attorney asked permission to attend the grand jury in their room. This request was immediately opposed by the council of Burr, who denied the right of Davies to examine the witnesses in the manner proposed. After some argument, Judge Innis remarked, that when he himself was attorney-general for the commonwealth, he had never claimed or exercised any such privilege.

"Sir," said Davies, "you admitted I had the right to do what I now propose."

"Yes," replied the judge quickly, "but that was out of court."

"True, sir," responded Davies, "but this is the first of my knowing you had two opinions upon the subject, the one private and confidential, the other public and official."

The only reply of Innis was to refuse the request, and the prosecuting attorney saw at once that his cause was lost. It was worse than lost, for as the witnesses in the grand jury room testified reluctantly, the little that could be gleaned from them threw no light upon the design charged in the indictment, and on the fifth of the month the grand jury came into court and ignored the bill.

But this was not all; they presented at the same time a written declaration, signed by the whole of them, in which it was stated that there had been nothing in the testimony received by them which in the slightest degree criminated the conduct of either Burr or Adair; nor could they, after all their inquiries and investigations of the subject, find any thing improper or injurious to the government of the United States designed or contemplated by either of them.

This triumphant acquittal of Burr strengthened his cause wonderfully in Kentucky. It was celebrated by a ball at Frankfort, which was rendered more imposing by the attendance of many prominent men.

The reckless disregard of all moral principle evinced by Burr in this avowal, which he well knew to be utterly false, is only paralleled by the daring with which he confronted the exposure of his schemes.

At this very time, all his long and laboriously digested plans were in the act of being scattered to the winds. The communications of Wilkinson, the statements of Eaton, and the letters of Davies, had, as early as October, stimulated Jefferson to commission Graham, the secretary of the Orleans Territory, then about to leave Washington, to investigate, on his way south, the charges against Burr, and if they appeared well founded, to apply to the governors of the western states to take steps to cut short his career.

On the 27th of November, two days after he had received Wilkinson's despatches from Natchitoches, the president issued a proclamation denouncing the project of Burr, warning all good citizens against it, and calling upon those in authority to exert themselves in suppressing the enterprise and arresting all concerned in it.

Previous to this, Graham had met with Blennerhassett at Marietta, and obtained from him such intelligence concerning the enterprise as warranted an immediate application to the Governor of Ohio for authority to seize the boats on the Muskingum, then nearly completed.

The legislature of Ohio, which was then in session, after debating the question with closed doors, promptly authorized the seizure to be made.

During the same week that Burr was feasted and caressed at Frankfort, as an innocent and much-injured man, ten of his boats, laden with provisions and warlike stores, were captured on the Muskingum.

Five other boats, filled with volunteers from the neighborhood of Beaver, reached Blennerhassett's Island about the 10th of December. This flotilla was commanded by Colonel Tyler, who took possession of the island and posted sentinels to prevent any communication with the river banks. He had scarcely done so, before Blennerhassett received information of the seizure of his boats on the Muskingum, and the approach of the militia ordered out by the governor of Ohio. Hastily abandoning the place, he embarked in the boats of Tyler, and with a few of his followers descended the river, passed the falls of the Ohio about the 20th of the month, and reached the point of rendezvous, the mouth of the Cumberland River, two days afterwards.

Leaving Frankfort on the 7th of December, Burr hastened to Nashville. From the latter place he descended the Cumberland with two boats, and on an island at its mouth was introduced to such of his adherents as yet clung to his desperate fortunes. Deserter had already thinned their ranks to less than two hundred men.

Breaking up his encampment at this place, Burr proceeded to New Madrid, gathering slender reinforcements as he went along. Bitterly disappointed at finding his schemes thus suddenly baffled at the very moment of fruition, the last hope of Burr rested upon the city of New Orleans and the surrounding territory. Bayou Pierre was named as a point of reunion; and the party dispersed.

When he reached the first settlement on the left bank of the Mississippi, Burr became acquainted with the revelations made by Wilkinson, and foreseeing at once the danger of an arrest, he ordered his boats to withdraw from the jurisdiction of the Mississippi Territory. An encampment was accordingly formed some thirty miles above Natchez, and a piece of ground cleared on which to exercise the men.

Even here, he soon found himself equally insecure. The president's proclamation having already reached the Mississippi Territory, the acting governor at once raised a body of four hundred militia for the purpose of arresting Burr.

While those troops were collecting on the opposite side of the river, several militia officers were sent to Burr to induce him to submit. After some little delay, a written agreement was entered into, which resulted in an unconditional surrender to the civil authorities.

Previous to this, however, the chests of arms on board the boats were thrown secretly into the creek, so that when a search took place none were found in sufficient quantities to justify their detention.

The subsequent history of Burr, his arrest and acquittal, his wandering life, the extraordinary sensation created throughout the country by his trial at Richmond, his wanderings in Europe, and his death in extreme old age at New York, belong rather to the history of the United States, than to any single member of the confederation. The authentication of Burr's conspiracy by the government agent, Graham, created an immediate and violent reaction in the minds of the people of Kentucky. The legislature, then in session, immediately passed an act similar to that of Ohio, and under it some seizures were made. An examination of the charges preferred against Judge Sebastian was ordered and pressed with so much determination that, notwithstanding the opposition of many whose interest it was that the affair should remain concealed, the whole of his mysterious intrigues with Spain were exposed, and conclusive evidence brought forward to prove his receipt of an annual pension of two thousand dollars from the court of Madrid up to the period of his trial. Sebastian, finding all other efforts vain, attempted to stifle the inquiry by resigning his seat upon the bench, but the legislature preserved until a thorough investigation had taken place. Judge Innis, the principal witness against Sebastian, was also believed to be deeply implicated, as he held office under the general government, a resolution was passed at the succeeding session requesting Congress to order an inquiry into his conduct. It was accordingly instituted soon after and resulted in his acquittal.