

# Paul Johnson

National  
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Author of *Modern Times* and *A History of the Jews*

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## HISTORY *of the* AMERICAN PEOPLE

"This audacious book is a magnificent achievement." —*Forbes Magazine*

**A HISTORY  
OF THE  
AMERICAN  
PEOPLE**

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*Paul Johnson*

'Be not afraid of greatness'

*Shakespeare, Twelfth Night, II, v*

HarperCollins *Publishers*

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by Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

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This book is dedicated to the people of America-strong, outspoken, intense in their convictions, sometimes wrong-headed but always generous and brave, with a passion for justice no nation has ever matched.

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## PREFACE

This work is a labor of love. When I was a little boy, my parents and elder sisters taught me a great deal of Greek, Roman, and English history, but America did not come into it. At Stonyhurst, my school, I was given a magnificent grounding in English constitutional history, but again the name of America scarcely intruded. At Oxford, in the late 1940s, the School of Modern History was at the height of its glory, dominated by such paladins as A. J. P. Taylor and Hugh Trevor-Roper, Sir Maurice Powicke, K. B. McFarlane, and Sir Richard Southern, two of whom I was fortunate to have as tutors and all of whose lectures I attended. But nothing was said of America, except in so far as it lay at the margin of English history. I do not recall any course of lectures on American history as such. A. J. P. Taylor, at the conclusion of a tutorial, in which the name of America had cropped up, said grimly: 'You can study American history when you have graduated, if you can bear it.' His only other observation on the subject was: 'One of the penalties of being President of the United States is that you must subsist for four years without drinking anything except Californian wine.' American history was nothing but a black hole in the Oxford curriculum. Of course things have now changed completely, but I am talking of the Oxford academic world of half a century ago. Oxford was not alone in treating American history as a non-subject. Reading the memoirs of that outstanding American journalist Stewart Alsop, I was intrigued to discover that, when he was a boy at Groton in the 1930s, he was taught only Greek, Roman, and English history.

As a result of this lacuna in my education, I eventually came to American history completely fresh, with no schoolboy or student prejudices or antipathies. Indeed my first contacts with American history were entirely non-academic: I discussed it with officers of the US Sixth Fleet when I was an officer in the Garrison at Gibraltar, during my military service, and later in the 1950s when I was working as a journalist in Paris and had the chance to meet such formidable figures as John Foster Dulles, then Secretary of State, President Dwight D. Eisenhower, and his successor at SHAPE Headquarters, General Matthew Ridgeway. From the late 1950s I began visiting the United States regularly, three or four times a year, traveling all over the country and meeting men and women who were shaping its continuing history. Over forty years I have grown to know and admire the United States and its people, making innumerable friends and acquaintances, reading its splendid literature, visiting many of its universities to give lectures and participate in debates, and attending scores of conferences held by American businesses and other institutions.

In short, I entered the study of American history through the back door. But I also got to know about it directly during the research for a number of books I wrote in these years: *A History of Christianity*, *A History of the Jews*, *Modern Times: the World from the Twenties to the Nineties*, and *The Birth of the Modern: World Society, 1815-1830*. Some of the material acquired in preparing these books I have used in the present one, but updated, revised, corrected, expanded, and refined. As I worked on the study of the past, and learned about the present by traveling all over the world-but especially in the United States-my desire to discover more about that extraordinary country, its origins and its evolution, grew and grew, so that I determined in the end to write a history of it, knowing from experience that to produce a book is the only way to study a subject systematically, purposefully, and retentively. My editor in New York, Cass



Canfield Jr of HarperCollins, encouraged me warmly. So this project was born, out of enthusiasm and excitement, and now, after many years, it is complete.

Writing a history of the American people, covering over 400 years, from the late 16th century to the end of the 20th, and dealing with the physical background and development of an immense tract of diverse territory, is a herculean task. It can be accomplished only by the ruthless selection and rejection of material, and made readable only by moving in close to certain aspects, and dealing with them in fascinating detail, at the price of merely summarizing others. That has been my method, as in earlier books covering immense subjects, though my aim nonetheless has been to produce a comprehensive account, full of facts and dates and figures, which can be used with confidence by students who wish to acquire a general grasp of American history. The book has new and often trenchant things to say about every aspect and period of America's past, and I do not seek, as some historians do, to conceal my opinions. They are there for all to see, and take account of or discount. But I have endeavored, at all stages, to present the facts fully, squarely, honestly, and objectively, and to select the material as untendentiously as I know how. Such a fact-filled and lengthy volume as this is bound to contain errors. If readers spot any, I would be grateful if they would write to me at my private address: 29 Newton Road, London W25JR; so that they may be corrected; and if they find any expressions of mine or opinions insupportable, they are welcome to give me their comments so that I may weigh them.

The notes at the end of the book serve a variety of purposes: to give the sources of facts, figures, quotations, and assertions; to acknowledge my indebtedness to other scholars; to serve as a guide to further reading; and to indicate where scholarly opinion differs, directing the reader to works which challenge the views I have formed. I have not bowed to current academic nostrums about nomenclature or accepted the flyblown philacteries of Political Correctness. So I do not acknowledge the existence of hyphenated Americans, or Native Americans or any other qualified kind. They are all Americans to me: black, white, red, brown, yellow, thrown together by fate in that swirling maelstrom of history which has produced the most remarkable people the world has ever seen. I love them and salute them, and this is their story.

## PART ONE

### **‘A City on a Hill’**

Colonial America, 1580 -1750

**T**he creation of the United States of America is the greatest of all human adventures. No other national story holds such tremendous lessons, for the American people themselves and for the rest of mankind. It now spans four centuries and, as we enter the new millennium, we need to retell it, for if we can learn these lessons and build upon them, the whole of humanity will benefit in the new age which is now opening. American history raises three fundamental questions. First, can a nation rise above the injustices of its origins and, by its moral purpose and performance, atone for them? All nations are born in war, conquest, and crime, usually concealed by the obscurity of a distant past. The United States, from its earliest colonial times, won its title-deeds in the full blaze of recorded history, and the stains on them are there for all to see and censure: the dispossession of an indigenous people, and the securing of self-sufficiency through the sweat and pain of an enslaved race. In the judgmental scales of history, such grievous wrongs must be balanced by the erection of a society dedicated to justice and fairness. Has the United States done this? Has it expiated its organic sins? The second question provides the key to the first. In the process of nation-building, can ideals and altruism—the desire to build the perfect community—be mixed successfully with acquisitiveness and ambition, without which no dynamic society can be built at all? Have the Americans got the mixture right? Have they forged a nation where righteousness has the edge over the needful self-interest? Thirdly, the Americans originally aimed to build an other-worldly 'City on a Hill,' but found themselves designing a republic of the people, to be a model for the entire planet. Have they made good their audacious claims? Have they indeed proved exemplars for humanity? And will they continue to be so in the new millennium?

We must never forget that the settlement of what is now the United States was only part of a larger enterprise. And this was the work of the best and the brightest of the entire European continent. They were greedy. As Christopher Columbus said, men crossed the Atlantic primarily in search of gold. But they were also idealists. These adventurous young men thought they could transform the world for the better. Europe was too small for them—for their energies, their ambitions, and their visions. In the 11th, 12th, and 13th centuries, they had gone east, seeking to re-Christianize the Holy Land and its surroundings, and also to acquire land there. The mixture of religious zeal, personal ambition—not to say cupidity—and lust for adventure which inspired generations of Crusaders was the prototype for the enterprise of the Americas.

In the east, however, Christian expansion was blocked by the stiffening resistance of the Moslem world, and eventually by the expansive militarism of the Ottoman Turks. Frustrated there, Christian youth spent its ambitious energies at home: in France, in the extermination of heresy, and the acquisition of confiscated property; in the Iberian peninsula, in the reconquest of territory held by Islam since the 8th century, a process finally completed in the 1490s with the destruction of the Moslem kingdom of Granada, and the expulsion, or forcible conversion, of the last Moors in Spain. It is no coincidence that this decade, which marked the homogenization of western Europe as a Christian entity and unity, also saw the first successful efforts to carry Europe, and Christianity, into the western hemisphere. As one task ended, another was undertaken in earnest.

The Portuguese, a predominantly seagoing people, were the first to begin the new enterprise, early in the 15th century. In 1415, the year the English King Henry V destroyed the French army at Agincourt, Portuguese adventurers took Ceuta, on the north African coast, and turned it into a trading depot. Then they pushed southwest into the Atlantic, occupying in turn Madeira, Cape Verde, and the Azores, turning all of them into colonies of the Portuguese crown. The Portuguese adventurers were excited by these discoveries: they felt, already, that they were

bringing into existence a new world, though the phrase itself did not pass into common currency until 1494. These early settlers believed they were beginning civilization afresh: the first boy and girl born on Madeira were christened Adam and Eve.<sup>1</sup> But almost immediately came the Fall, which in time was to envelop the entire Atlantic. In Europe itself, the slave-system of antiquity had been virtually extinguished by the rise of Christian society. In the 1440s, exploring the African coast from their newly acquired islands, the Portuguese rediscovered slavery as a working commercial institution. Slavery had always existed in Africa, where it was operated extensively by local rulers, often with the assistance of Arab traders. Slaves were captives, outsiders, people who had lost tribal status; once enslaved, they became exchangeable commodities, indeed an important form of currency.

The Portuguese entered the slave-trade in the mid-15th century, took it over and, in the process, transformed it into something more impersonal, and horrible, than it had been either in antiquity or medieval Africa. The new Portuguese colony of Madeira became the center of a sugar industry, which soon made itself the largest supplier for western Europe. The first sugar-mill, worked by slaves, was erected in Madeira in 1452. This cash-industry was so successful that the Portuguese soon began laying out fields for sugar-cane on the Biafran Islands, off the African coast. An island off Cap Blanco in Mauretania became a slave-depot. From there, when the trade was in its infancy, several hundred slaves a year were shipped to Lisbon. As the sugar industry expanded, slaves began to be numbered in thousands: by 1550, some 50,000 African slaves had been imported into Sao Tome alone, which likewise became a slave entrepot. These profitable activities were conducted, under the aegis of the Portuguese crown, by a mixed collection of Christians from all over Europe-Spanish, Normans, and Flemish, as well as Portuguese, and Italians from the Aegean and the Levant. Being energetic, single young males, they mated with whatever women they could find, and sometimes married them. Their mixed progeny, mulattos, proved less susceptible than pure-bred Europeans to yellow fever and malaria, and so flourished. Neither Europeans nor mulattos could live on the African coast itself. But they multiplied in the Cape Verde Islands, 300 miles off the West African coast. The mulatto trading-class in Cape Verde were known as Lancados. Speaking both Creole and the native languages, and practicing Christianity spiced with paganism, they ran the European end of the slave-trade, just as Arabs ran the African end.<sup>2</sup>

This new-style slave-trade was quickly characterized by the scale and intensity with which it was conducted, and by the cash nexus which linked African and Arab suppliers, Portuguese and Lancado traders, and the purchasers. The slave-markets were huge. The slaves were overwhelmingly male, employed in large-scale agriculture and mining. There was little attempt to acculturate them and they were treated as body-units of varying quality, mere commodities. At Sao Tome in particular this modern pattern of slavery took shape. The Portuguese were soon selling African slaves to the Spanish, who, following the example in Madeira, occupied the Canaries and began to grow cane and mill sugar there too. By the time exploration and colonization spread from the islands across the Atlantic, the slave-system was already in place.<sup>3</sup> In moving out into the Atlantic islands, the Portuguese discovered the basic meteorological fact about the North Atlantic, which forms an ocean weather-basin of its own. There were strong currents running clockwise, especially in the summer. These are assisted by northeast trade winds in the south, westerlies in the north. So seafarers went out in a southwest direction, and returned to Europe in a northeasterly one. Using this weather system, the Spanish landed on the Canaries and occupied them. The indigenous Guanches were either sold as slaves in mainland Spain, or converted and turned into farm-labourers by their mainly Castilian conquerors.<sup>4</sup>

Profiting from the experience of the Canaries in using the North Atlantic weather system, Christopher Columbus made landfall in the western hemisphere in 1492. His venture was characteristic of the internationalism of the American enterprise. He operated from the Spanish city of Seville but he came from Genoa and he was by nationality a citizen of the Republic of Venice, which then ran an island empire in the Eastern Mediterranean. The finance for his transatlantic expedition was provided by himself and other Genoa merchants in Seville, and topped up by the Spanish Queen Isabella, who had seized quantities of cash when her troops occupied Granada earlier in the year.<sup>5</sup>

The Spanish did not find American colonization easy. The first island-town Columbus founded, which he called Isabella, failed completely. He then ran out of money and the crown took over. The first successful settlement took place in 1502, when Nicolas de Ovando landed in Santo Domingo with thirty ships and no fewer than 2,500 men. This was a deliberate colonizing enterprise, using the experience Spain had acquired in its *reconquista*, and based on a network of towns copied from the model of New Castile in Spain itself. That in turn had been based on the *bastides* of medieval France, themselves derived from Roman colony-towns, an improved version of Greek models going back to the beginning of the first millennium BC. So the system was very ancient. The first move, once a beachhead or harbour had been secured, was for an official called the *adelantana* to pace out the streetgrid.<sup>6</sup> Apart from forts, the first substantial building was the church. Clerics, especially from the orders of friars, the Dominicans and Franciscans, played a major part in the colonizing process, and as early as 1512 the first bishopric in the New World was founded. Nine years before, the crown had established a Casa de la Contracion in Seville, as headquarters of the entire transatlantic effort, and considerable state funds were poured into the venture. By 1520 at least 10,000 Spanish-speaking Europeans were living on the island of Hispaniola in the Caribbean, food was being grown regularly and a definite pattern of trade with Europeans had been established.<sup>7</sup>

The year before, Hernando Cortes had broken into the American mainland by assaulting the ancient civilization of Mexico. The expansion was astonishingly rapid, the fastest in the history of mankind, comparable in speed with and far more exacting in thoroughness and permanency than the conquests of Alexander the Great. In a sense, the new empire of Spain superimposed itself on the old one of the Aztecs rather as Rome had absorbed the Greek colonies.<sup>8</sup> Within a few years, the Spaniards were 1,000 miles north of Mexico City, the vast new grid-town which Cortes built on the ruins of the old Aztec capital, Tenochtitlan.

This incursion from Europe brought huge changes in the demography, the flora and fauna, and the economics of the Americas. Just as the Europeans were vulnerable to yellow fever, so the indigenous Indians were at the mercy of smallpox, which the Europeans brought with them. Europeans had learned to cope with it over many generations but it remained extraordinarily infectious and to the Indians it almost invariably proved fatal. We do not know with any certainty how many people lived in the Americas before the Europeans came. North of what is now the Mexican border, the Indians were sparse and tribal, still at the hunter-gatherer stage in many cases, and engaged in perpetual inter-tribal warfare, though some tribes grew corn in addition to hunting and lived part of the year in villages-perhaps one million of them, all told. Further south there were far more advanced societies, and two great empires, the Aztecs in Mexico and the Incas in Peru. In central and south America, the total population was about 20 million. Within a few decades, conquest and the disease it brought had reduced the Indians to 2 million, or even less. Hence, very early in the conquest, African slaves were in demand to supply labor. In addition to smallpox, the Europeans imported a host of welcome novelties: wheat and

barley, and the ploughs to make it possible to grow them; sugarcanes and vineyards; above all, a variety of livestock. The American Indians had failed to domesticate any fauna except dogs, alpacas and llamas. The Europeans brought in cattle, including oxen for ploughing, horses, mules, donkeys, sheep, pigs and poultry. Almost from the start, horses of high quality, as well as first-class mules and donkeys, were successfully bred in the Americas. The Spanish were the only west Europeans with experience of running large herds of cattle on horseback, and this became an outstanding feature of the New World, where enormous ranches were soon supplying cattle for food and mules for work in great quantities for the mining districts.<sup>9</sup>

The Spaniards, hearts hardened in the long struggle to expel the Moors, were ruthless in handling the Indians. But they were persistent in the way they set about colonizing vast areas. The English, when they followed them into the New World, noted both characteristics. John Hooker, one Elizabethan commentator, regarded the Spanish as morally inferior 'because with all cruel inhumanity ... they subdued a naked and yielding people, whom they sought for gain and not for any religion or plantation of a commonwealth, did most cruelly tyrannize and against the course of all human nature did scorch and roast them to death, as by their own histories doth appear.' At the same time the English admired 'the industry, the travails of the Spaniard, their exceeding charge in furnishing so many ships ... their continual supplies to further their attempts and their active and undaunted spirits in executing matters of that quality and difficulty, and lastly their constant resolution of plantation.'<sup>10</sup>

With the Spanish established in the Americas, it was inevitable that the Portuguese would follow them. Portugal, vulnerable to invasion by Spain, was careful to keep its overseas relations with its larger neighbor on a strictly legal basis. As early as 1479 Spain and Portugal signed an agreement regulating their respective spheres of trade outside European waters. The papacy, consulted, drew an imaginary longitudinal line running a hundred leagues west of the Azores: west of it was Spanish, east of it Portuguese. The award was made permanent between the two powers by the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494, which drew the lines 370 leagues west of Cape Verde. This gave the Portuguese a gigantic segment of South America, including most of what is now modern Brazil. They knew of this coast at least from 1500 when a Portuguese squadron, on its way to the Indian Ocean, pushed into the Atlantic to avoid headwinds and, to its surprise, struck land which lay east of the treaty line and clearly was not Africa. But their resources were too committed to exploring the African coast and the routes to Asia and the East Indies, where they were already opening posts, to invest in the Americas. Their first colony in Brazil was not planted till 1532, where it was done on the model of their Atlantic island possessions, the crown appointing 'captains,' who invested in land-grants called *donatorios*. Most of this first wave failed, and it was not until the Portuguese transported the sugar-plantation system, based on slavery, from Cape Verde and the Biafran Islands, to the part of Brazil they called Pernambuco, that profits were made and settlers dug themselves in. The real development of Brazil on a large scale began only in 1549, when the crown made a large investment, sent over 1,000 colonists and appointed Martin Alfonso de Sousa governor-general with wide powers. Thereafter progress was rapid and irreversible, a massive sugar industry grew up across the Atlantic, and during the last quarter of the 16th century Brazil became the largest slave-importing center in the world, and remained so. Over 300 years, Brazil absorbed more African slaves than anywhere else and became, as it were, an Afro-American territory. Throughout the 16th century the Portuguese had a virtual monopoly of the Atlantic slave trade. By 1600 nearly 300,000 African slaves had been transported by sea to plantations-25,000 to Madeira, 50,000 to Europe, 75,000 to Cape Sao

Tome, and the rest to America. By this date, indeed, four out of five slaves were heading for the New World."

It is important to appreciate that this system of plantation slavery, organized by the Portuguese and patronized by the Spanish for their mines as well as their sugar-fields, had been in place, expanding steadily, long before other European powers got a footing in the New World. But the prodigious fortunes made by the Spanish from mining American silver, and by both Spanish and Portuguese in the sugar trade, attracted adventurers from all over Europe. While the Spanish and Portuguese were careful to respect each other's spheres of interest, which in any event were consolidated when the two crowns were united under the Habsburgs in 1580, no such inhibitions held back other nations. Any chance that the papal division of the Atlantic spoils between Spain and Portugal would hold was destroyed by the Reformation of the 1520s and 1530s, during which large parts of maritime northwest Europe renounced any allegiance to Rome. Protestantism took special hold in the trading communities and seaports of Atlantic France and the Low Countries, in London, already the largest commercial city in Europe, and among the seafaring men of southwest England. In 1561, Queen Elizabeth I's Secretary of State, Sir William Cecil, carried out an investigation into the international law of the Atlantic, and firmly told the Spanish ambassador that the pope had had no authority for his award. In any case there had long been a tradition, tenaciously held by French Huguenot seamen, who dismissed Catholic claims on principle, that the normal rules of peace and war were suspended beyond a certain imaginary line running down the midAtlantic. This line was even more vague than the pope's original award, and no one knew exactly where it was. But the theory, and indeed the practice, of 'No Peace Beyond the Line' was a 16th-century fact of life.' It is very significant indeed that, almost from its origins, the New World was widely regarded as a hemisphere where the rule of law did not apply and where violence was to be expected.

From the earliest years of the 16th century, Breton, Norman, Basque, and French fishermen (from La Rochelle) had been working the rich fishing grounds of the Grand Banks off Newfoundland and Labrador. Encouraged by their rich hauls, and reports of riches on land, they went further. In 1534 the French seafarer Jacques Cartier, from St Malo, went up the St Lawrence River, spent the winter at what he called Stadacona (Quebec) and penetrated as far as Hochelaga (Montreal). He was back again in 1541, looking for the 'Kingdom of Saguenay,' reported to be rich in gold and diamonds. But the gold turned out to be iron pyrites and the diamonds mere quartz crystals, and his expedition failed. As the wars of religion began to tear Europe apart, the great French Protestant leader Gaspard de Coligny, Admiral of France, sent an expedition to colonize an island in what is now the immense harbor of Rio de Janeiro. This was in 1555 and the next year 300 reinforcements were dispatched to join them, many picked personally by Jean Calvin himself. But it did not prosper, and in 1560 the Portuguese, seeing that the colony was weak, attacked and hanged all its inhabitants. The French also set up Huguenot colonies at Fort Caroline in northern Florida, and at Charles Fort, near the Savannah River, in 1562 and 1564. But the Spaniards, whose great explorer Hernando de Soto had reconnoitered the entire area in the years 1539-42, were on the watch for intruders, especially Protestants. In 1565 they attacked Fort Caroline in force and massacred the entire colony. They did the same at Charles Fort the next year, and erected their own strongholds at St Augustine and St Catherine's Island. Six years later, in 1572, French Catholic militants staged the Massacre of St Bartholomew, in which Admiral Coligny was murdered, thus bringing to an end the first phase of French transatlantic expansion."

Into the vacuum left by the discomfiture of French Protestantism stepped the English, and it from their appearance on the scene that we date the ultimate origins of the American people. The Englishman John Cabot had been off the coast of Labrador as long ago as 1497, and off Nova Scotia the following year. Nothing came of these early ventures, but the English were soon fishing off the Banks in strength, occasionally wintering in Newfoundland. Henry VIII took many Huguenot seamen and adventurers into his service and under his daughter Elizabeth maritime entrepreneurs like Sir John Hawkins worked closely with French Protestants in planning raids on Spanish commerce 'beyond the line.' The West Country gentleman-seafarer Humphrey Gilbert helped the Huguenots to fortify their harbour-bastion of La Rochelle in 1562, was made privy to their Atlantic schemes, and conceived some of his own. He came of a ramifying family clan which included the young Walter Raleigh, his half-brother, and their cousin Richard Grenville. In 1578 Gilbert obtained Letters Patent in which Queen Elizabeth signified her willingness to permit him to 'discover and occupy' such lands as were 'not possessed by any Christian prince,' and to exercise jurisdiction over them, 'agreeable to the form of the laws and policies of England. He was in touch with various scholars and publicists who did everything in their power to promote English enterprise on the high seas. One was Dr John Dee, the Queen's unofficial scientific adviser; another was the young mathematician Thomas Harlot, friend and follower of Raleigh. The most important by far, however, was Richard Hakluyt.

Hakluyt was the son of a Middle Temple lawyer who had made a collection of maps and manuscripts on ocean travel. What his father followed as a hobby, young Hakluyt made his lifework. His countless publications, ranging from pamphlets to books, reinforced by powerful letters to the great and the good of Elizabethan England, were the biggest single impulse in persuading England to look west for its future, as well as our greatest single repository of information about the Atlantic in the 16th century. Young Hakluyt has some claims to be considered the first geopolitical strategist, certainly the first English speaking one. What Dr Dee was already calling the future 'British Empire,' and exhorting Queen Elizabeth to create, was to Hakluyt not a distant vision but something to be brought about in the next few years by getting seamen and entrepreneurs and 'planters' of 'colonies'-two new words which had first appeared in the language in the 1550s-to set about launching a specific settlement on the American coast.' In 1582, Hakluyt published an account of some of the voyages to the northwest Atlantic, with a preface addressed to the popular young hero Sir Philip Sidney, who had already arranged with Gilbert to take land in any colony he should found. Hakluyt complained in it that the English were missing opportunities and should seize the moment:

I marvel not a little that since the first discovery of America (which is now full forescore and ten years) after so great conquest and planting by the Spaniards and the Portingales there, that we of England could never have the grace to set fast footing in such fertile and temperate places as are left as yet unpossessed by them. But again when I consider that there is a time for all men, and see the Portingales' time to be out of date and that the nakedness of the Spaniards and their long-hidden secrets are at length espied ... I conceive great hope that the time approacheth and now is that we of England may share and part stakes (if we will ourselves) both with the Spaniard and Portingale in part of America and other regions as yet undiscovered.

Gilbert immediately took up Hakluyt's challenge and set out with five ships, one of them owned by Raleigh, and 260 men. These included 'masons, carpenters, smiths and such like requisites,' but also 'mineral men and refiners,' indicating that Gilbert's mind, like those of most of the early adventurers, was still focussed on gold. But he did not survive the voyage: his tiny ship, the *Squirrel*, which was only 110 tons, foundered-Gilbert was last glimpsed reading a book



on deck, a typical Elizabethan touch." So Raleigh took his place and immediately secured a new charter from the Queen to found a colony. Raleigh is the first great man in the story of the American people to come into close focus from the documents, and it is worth looking at him in detail.

Raleigh was, in a sense, a proto-American. He had certain strongly marked characteristics which were to be associated with the American archetype. He was energetic, brash, hugely ambitious, money-conscious, none too scrupulous, far-sighted and ahead of his time, with a passion for the new and, not least, a streak of idealism which clashed violently with his overweening desire to get on and make a fortune. He was of ancient family, but penniless, born in Devon about 1554 and 'spake broad Devonshire until his dying day.' He was, wrote John Aubrey, who devoted one of his *Brief Lives* to him, 'a tall, handsome and bold man,' with a lot of swagger, 'damnably proud.' His good looks caught the Queen's eye when he came to court, for she liked necessitous youngsters from good families, who looked the part and whom she could 'make.' But what made her single him out from the crowd of smart-looking gallants who jostled for attention was his sheer brain-power and his grasp of new, especially scientific, knowledge. The court was amazed at his rapid rise in favor. As Sir Robert Naunton, an eyewitness, put it, 'true it is, he had gotten the Queen's ear at a trice, and she began to be taken with his elocution, and loved to hear his reasons to her demands. And the truth is, she took him for a kind of oracle, which nettled them all. Raleigh was one of the first young courtiers to make use of the new luxury, tobacco, which the Spaniards had brought back from America, and typical of the way he intrigued the Queen was his demonstration, with the help of a small pair of scales, of how you measured the weight of tobacco-smoke, by first measuring the pristine weed, then the ashes. His mathematical friend, Hariot, fed him new ideas and experiments with which to keep up the Queen's interest."

Raleigh was not just an intellectual but a man of action since youth, having fought with the Huguenots, aged fifteen, and taken part in a desperate naval action under his half-brother Gilbert. He had also been twice in jail for 'affrays.' But his main experience of action, which was directly relevant to the American adventure, was in Ireland. The English had been trying to subdue Ireland, and 'reduce it to civility' as they put it, since the mid-12th century. Their success had been very limited. From the very beginning English settlers who planted themselves in Ireland and took up lands to turn into English-style estates had shown a disturbing tendency to go native and join the 'wild Irish.' To combat this, the English government had passed a series of laws, in the 14th century, known as the Statutes of Kilkenny, which constituted an early form of apartheid. Fully Anglicized territory, radiating from Dublin, the capital, was known as the Pale, and the Irish were allowed inside it only under close supervision. The English might not sell the Irish weapons or horses and under no circumstances were to put on Irish dress, or speak the local Gaelic language, or employ 'harpers and rhymers.' Conversely the Irish were banned from a whole range of activities and from acquiring land in the Pale, and staying there overnight. But these laws were constantly broken, and had to be renewed periodically, and even so English settlers continued to 'degenerate' and intermarry with the Irish and become Irish themselves, and indeed foment and lead revolts against the English authorities. One such uprising had occurred in 1580, in Munster, and Raleigh had raised a band of 100 footmen from the City of London and taken a ruthless part in suppressing it. He had killed hundreds of 'Irish savages,' as he termed them, and hanged scores more for treason, and had been handsomely rewarded with confiscated Irish lands which he was engaged in 'planting.' In the American enterprise, Ireland played the same part for the English as the war against the Moors had done for the Spaniards-it was a

training-ground both in suppressing and uprooting an alien race and culture, and in settling conquered lands and building towns. And, just as the money from the *reconquista* went into financing the Spanish conquest of the Americas, so Raleigh put the profits from his Irish estates towards financing his transatlantic expedition."

Raleigh's colonizing venture is worth examining in a little detail because it held important lessons for the future. His first expedition of two ships, a reconnaissance, set out on April 27, 1584, watered at the Canaries and Puerto Rico, headed north up the Florida Channel, and reached the Carolina Banks at midsummer. On July 13, they found a passage through the banks leading to what they called Roanoke Island, 'And after thanks given to God for our safe arrival hither, we manned our boats and went to view the land next adjoining, and to take possession of the same, in the right of the Queen's most excellent Majesty.'" The men spent six weeks on the Banks and noted deer, rabbits, birds of all kind, and in the woods pines, cypress, sassafras, sweat gum and the highest and reddest cedars in the world.' What struck them most was the total absence of any pollution: 'sweet and aromatic smells lay in the air.' On the third day they spotted a small boat paddling towards the island with three men in it. One of them got out at a point opposite the English ships and waited, 'never making any show of fear or doubt' as a party rowed out to him. Then:

After he had spoken of many things not understood by us we brought him with his own good liking aboard the ships, and gave him a shirt, a hat and some other things, and made him taste of our wine and our meat, which he liked very well; and after having viewed both barks, he departed and went to his own boat again, which he had left in a little cove or creek adjoining: as soon as he was two bowshots into the water, he fell to fishing, and in less than half an hour he had laden his boat as deep as it could swim, with which he came again to the point of land, and there he divided his fish into two parts, pointing one part to the ships and the other to the pinnacle: which after he had (as much as he might) requited the former benefits received, he departed out of our sight.

There followed further friendly contact with the Indians, and exchanges of deerskins and buffalo hides, maize, fruit, and vegetables, on the one hand, and pots, axes, and tun dishes, from the ship's stores, on the other. When the ships left Roanoke at the end of August, two Indians, Manteo and Wanchese, went with them. All were back in the west of England by mid-September, bringing with them valuable skins and pearls. Raleigh was persuaded by the detailed account of one of the masters, Captain Arthur Barlow, that the landfall of Roanoke was suitable for a plantation and at once began a publicity campaign, using Hakluyt and other scribes, to attract investors. He had just become member of parliament for Devonshire, and in December he raised the matter in the Commons, elaborating his plans for a colony. On January 6, 1585 a delighted Queen knighted him at Greenwich and gave him permission to call the proposed territory Virginia, after her. In April an expedition of seven ships, carrying 600 men, half of them soldiers, assembled at Plymouth. The fleet was put under the command of Raleigh's cousin Sir Richard Grenville, with an experienced Irish campaigner, Ralph Lane, in charge of the troops. It carried aboard Harlot, as scientific expert. He had been learning the local language from the two Indians, and was given special instructions to make scientific measurements and observe flora and fauna, climate and geology. Also recruited was John White, England's first watercolor-painter of distinction, who was appointed surveyor and painter, and a number of other specialists-an apothecary, a surgeon, and skilled craftsmen.

After various misadventures, some losses, prize-taking from the Spaniards, and quarreling between Grenville and Lane, the bulk of the fleet reached the Roanoke area in July. There they discovered, and Hariot noted, one of the main difficulties which faced the early colonists in

America. 'The sea coasts of Virginia,' Hariot wrote, 'are full of islands whereby the entrance into the main land is hard to find. For although they be separated with divers and sundry large divisions, which seemed to yield convenient entrance, yet to our great peril we proved that they were shallow and full of dangerous flats.'" There are literally thousands of islands off the American coasts, especially in the region of the great rivers which formed highways inland, and early voyagers could spend weeks or even months finding their way among them to the mainland, or to the principal river-system. And when they occupied a particular island, relief and reinforcements expeditions often found immense difficulty in identifying it. Moreover, the topography of the coast was constantly changing. Raleigh's Virginia lies between Cape Fear and Cape Henry, from latitude 33.50 to 36.56, mainly in what is now North Carolina, though a portion is in modern Virginia. The Carolina Banks, screening the Roanoke colony, are now greatly changed by wind and sea-action, though it is just possible to identify the 16th-century outlines.

No satisfactory harbor was found, though a fort was built on the north of Roanoke Island. Lane was left with 107 men to hold it, while Grenville returned to England in August to report progress. On the return voyage, Grenville took a 300-ton Spanish vessel, the Santa Maria, which had strayed from the annual treasure convoy, and brought it into Plymouth harbor on October 18. The prize and contents were valued at £15,000, which yielded a handsome dividend for all who had invested in the 1585 expedition. But the fact that Grenville had allowed himself to be diverted into commerce-raiding betrayed the confusion of aims of the Raleigh enterprise. Was its object to found a permanent, viable colony, with an eye to the long term, or was it to make quick profits by preying on Spain's existing empire? Raleigh himself could not have answered this question; or, rather, he would have replied 'Both,' without realizing that they were incompatible.

Meanwhile Lane had failed to find what he regarded as essential to a settlement, a proper harbor, had shifted the location of the colony, fallen foul of the local Indians and fought a pitched battle; and he had been relieved by a large expedition under Sir Francis Drake, which was cruising up the east coast of America after plundering the Spanish Caribbean. Lane was a good soldier and resourceful leader, but he knew nothing about planting, especially crop-raising. The colonists he had with him were not, for the most part, colonists at all but soldiers and adventurers. Hariot noted: 'Some also were of a nice bringing up, only in cities or towns, and such as never (as I may say) had seen the world before.' He said they missed their 'accustomed dainty food' and 'soft beds of down and feathers' and so were 'miserable.' They thought they would find treasure and 'after gold and silver was not to be found, as it was by them looked for, had little or no care for any other thing but to pamper their bellies.' Lane himself concluded that the venture was hopeless as the area had fatal drawbacks: 'For that the discovery of a good mine, by the goodness of God, or a passage to the south sea, or some way to it, and nothing else can bring this country in request to be inhabited by our nation.' Lane decided to bring his men back to England, while he still had the means to do so. The only tangible results of the venture were the detailed findings of Hariot, published in 1588 as *A Briefe and true report of Virginia*, and a number of high-quality watercolor drawings by White, now in the British Museum, which show the Indians, their villages, their dances, their agriculture, and their way of life. White also made a detailed map, and elaborate colored sketches of flora and fauna, including a Hoopoe, a Blue Striped Grunt Fish, a Loggerhead Turtle, and a plantain.

A further expedition of three ships set out for Roanoke on May 8, 1587, with 150 colonists abroad, this time including some women and children, and John White in charge as governor. His journal is a record of the expedition. Again there were divided aims, for Captain Simon

Fernandez, master of the fleet, was anxious to engage in piracy and so quarreled with White. Roanoke was reached, and on August 18 John White's daughter, Elenora, who was married to his assistant Ananias Dare, gave birth to a girl, who was named Virginia, 'because this child was the first Christian born in Virginia.' But there was more trouble with the Indians, and Fernandez was anxious to get his ships away to prey on the Spaniards while their treasure fleet was still on the high seas. So 114 colonists, including Elenora and little Virginia, sixteen other women, and ten children, were left behind while White sailed back with Fernandez to persuade Raleigh to send a back-up fleet quickly. White reached Southampton on November 8 and immediately set about organizing relief. But he found the country in the midst of what was to be its first global conflict, preparing feverishly to resist the Spanish invasion-armada, which was expected in the spring. All shipping was stayed by government order in English ports, to be available for defensive flotillas, and when Raleigh and Grenville got together eight vessels in Devon in March 1588, with the object of equipping them for Roanoke, the Privy Council commanded Grenville 'on his allegiance to forbear to go his intended voyage' and to place them under the flag of Sir Francis Drake, to join his anti-Armada fleet. White's attempt to set out himself, with two small pinnaces, proved hopeless.'

As a result of the Armada campaign and its aftermath, White found it impossible to get his relief expedition to Virginia until August 17, 1590. He anchored at Roanoke Island at nightfall, lit by the lurid flickers of a forest fire. He recorded: 'We let fall our grapnel near the shore, and sounded with a trumpet and call, and afterwards many familiar English tunes and songs, and called to them friendly. But we had no answer.' When they landed the next day, White found no sign of his daughter or granddaughter, or anyone else. Five chests were found, broken open, obviously by Indians. Three belonged to White himself, containing books, framed maps, and pictures with which he had intended to furnish the governor's mansion, to be built in the new town he had planned and called Raleigh. They were all, he said, 'rotten and spoiled with raine.' They found three letters, 'CRO,' carved on a tree, and nearby the full word 'Croatoan,' on a post, 'in fayre Capital letters.' White had agreed with the colonists that, if forced to quit Roanoke, they would leave behind a carved signpost of their destination; and in the event of trouble they were to put a Maltese cross beside it. There was no cross. But all the other evidence-the defensive palisade and the cabins overgrown with weed-indicated a hasty departure. And where the colonists went to was never discovered, though White searched long and anxiously. But he failed to get to Croatoan Island, and whether the frightened colonists reached it can never be known. To this day, no further trace of the lost colony has ever been found. Raleigh himself tried to sail past Virginia in 1595, on his way home from a voyage to Guyana, and he sent another search-party in 1602. But nothing came of either attempt. The most likely explanation is that the colony was overwhelmed by Indians on their way from Roanoke to Croatoan, the males killed, the women and children absorbed into the tribe, as was the Indian custom. So the bloodline of the first Virginians merged with that of the Indians they intended to subdue.

In 1625 Sir Francis Bacon, no friend of Raleigh-who in the meantime had been executed by King James I-wrote an essay, 'On Plantations,' in which he tried to sum up the lessons of the tragic lost colony. He pointed out that any counting on quick profits was fatal, that there was a need for expert personnel of all kinds, strongly motivated in their commitment to a long-term venture, and, not least, that it was hopeless to try to win over the Indians with trifles 'instead of treating them justly and graciously.' Above all, back-up expeditions were essential: 'It is the sinfulness thing in the world to forsake or destitute a plantation once in forwardness; for besides the dishonour, it is the guiltiness of blood of many commiserable persons.'

There are two points which need to be added. First, as the historian A. L. Rowse has pointed out, the failure of the Roanoke colony may have been a blessing in disguise. Had it taken root, the Spanish would certainly have become aware of this English intrusion in a continent all of which they claimed. They would have identified its exact location and strength and have sent out a powerful punitive expedition, as they did against the French in Florida in the 1560s. At that stage in the game they were still in a military and naval position to annihilate any English venture on the coast. Moreover, they would almost certainly have built forts in the vicinity to deter further English ventures and have laid specific claim to the entire coast of what is now the eastern seaboard of the United States, and so made it much less likely that the English would have returned, after the turn of the 17th century and in the new reign of James I. James was anxious to be on peaceful terms with Spain and would, in those circumstances, have forbidden any more attempts to colonize Virginia. So English America might never have come into existence."

Secondly, in listing the reasons why Roanoke failed, Francis Bacon omitted one important missing element. It was an entirely secular effort. It had no religious dimension. This was in accordance with Raleigh's own sentiments. Though he was for form's sake an oath-taking, church-attending Protestant, like anyone else who wanted to rise to the top in Elizabethan England, religion meant nothing to him. It is not even clear he was a Christian. It was darkly rumored indeed, by his enemies at the court, that he and his friend Harlot, and others of their circle, were 'atheists'-though the term did not then necessarily imply a denial of God's existence, merely a rejection of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity: in our terminology he was a deist of sorts. At all events, Raleigh was not the man to launch a colonizing venture with a religious purpose. The clergy do not seem to have figured at all in his plans. There was no attempt on his part to recruit God-fearing, prayerful men.

In these respects Raleigh was unusual for an Elizabethan sea-venturer. Most of the Elizabethan seadogs were strict Protestants, usually Calvinists, who had strong religious motives for resisting Spanish dominance on the high seas and in the western hemisphere. Drake was typical of them: his family were victims of the papist persecution under Queen Mary, and Drake had been brought up in a Thames-side hulk in consequence, educated to thump his Bible and believe in double-predestination and to proselytize among the heathen and the benighted believers in Romish superstition. He held regular services on board his ships, preached sermons to his men, and tried to convert his Spanish prisoners. Next to the Bible itself, his favorite book was *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, that compendium of the sufferings of English Protestants who resisted the Catholic restoration under 'Bloody Mary' and died for their faith. Foxe's vast book, published early in Elizabeth's reign, proved immensely popular and, despite its size and expense, had sold over 10,000 copies before the end of it, an unprecedented sale for those times. It was not just a history of persecution: it also embodied the English national-religious myth, which had been growing in power in the later Middle Ages and came to maturity during the Reformation decades-the myth that the English had replaced the Jews as the Elect Nation, and were divinely appointed to do God's will on earth.

This belief in divine appointment was to become an important factor in American as well as English history, because it was transmitted to the western side of the Atlantic when the English eventually established themselves there. At the origin of the myth was the widely held belief that the Christian faith had been brought to Britain directly by Joseph of Arimathea, on the express instructions of the Apostles. Some thought the agent was St Paul; others that Christ himself had

paid a secret visit. It was through Britain that the Roman Empire had embraced the faith: for the Emperor Constantine had been British-his mother Helena was the daughter of the British King Coilus. So, wrote Foxe, 'by the help of the British Army,' Constantine 'obtained ... peace and tranquillity to the whole universal Church of Christ.'

In the reign of Elizabeth the myth became a historical validation of England's role in resisting the Counter-Reformation and the Continental supremacy of the Catholic Habsburgs. The Elect Nation had imperative duties to perform which were both spiritual and geopolitical. In the second year of the Queen's reign, John Aylmer wrote in his *An Harborow for faithful and true subjects* that England was the virgin mother to a second birth of Christ:

God is English. For you fight not only in the quarrel of your country, but also and chiefly in defence of His true religion and of His dear son Christ. [England says to her children:] 'God hath brought forth in me the greatest and excellentest treasure that He hath for your comfort and all the world's. He would that out of my womb should come that servant of Christ John Wyclif, who begat Huss, who begat Luther, who begat the truth.'

The most strident in proclaiming the doctrine of the English as the Chosen Race were the explorers and navigators, the seamen and merchant adventurers, and the colonizers and planters. It is they who gave the myth its most direct geopolitical thrust by urging England's divinely appointed right to break open Spain's doomed empire of the Scarlet Woman, the popish Whore of Babylon, and replace it with an English Protestant paramountcy. One of them, John Davys, put the new English ideology thus:

There is no doubt that we of England are this saved people, by the eternal and infallible presence of the Lord predestined to be sent into these Gentiles in the sea, to those Isles and famous Kingdoms, there to preach the peace of the Lord; for are not we only set on Mount Zion to give light to all the rest of the world? It is only we, therefore, that must be these shining messengers of the Lord, and none but we!"

It is curious that this powerful religious motivation, so strongly marked in seafaring men and others involved in overseas ventures, was made so little use of by the Englishmen controlling or plotting the attempted settlement of North America in the closing decades of the 16th century and even in the first decade of the 17th century. But so it was. It is part of the larger mystery of why the English, and the French too for that matter, were still so reluctant to settle across the Atlantic a whole century after Columbus' first discoveries, during which the Spanish and Portuguese created vast empires there and possessed themselves of enormous fortunes.

France was totally absorbed in a long and bitter religious-civil war until the 1590s, when the Protestant leader Henri IV reluctantly accepted conversion to Catholicism to end the struggle, and gave the Protestants tolerance by the Edict of Nantes of 1598. Once at peace, eager French minds quickly conceived geopolitics of European and global expansion. The English avoided civil war but in the 1590s and the first decade of the 17th century they were embroiled in desperate struggles to subdue the 'wild Irish,' which they finally achieved-for the moment-in the last year of old Elizabeth's reign. Thereafter their colonial energies were absorbed with 'planting' the conquered country, especially Ulster, until then the wildest part of it. Early in the 1600s Ulster was made the theater of the largest transfer of population ever carried out under the crown-thousands of Scots Presbyterians being allocated parcels of confiscated Catholic land along a defensible military line running along the Ulster border: a line which is still demographically significant to this day and explains why the Ulster problem remains so

intractable. This major Ulster planting took root because it was based on agriculture and centered round hard-working, experienced Scots lowland farmers who were also ready to take up arms to defend their new possessions.

In transatlantic expeditions, however, the English maritime intellectuals like Raleigh, Hakluyt, and Hariot were still obsessed with the possibility of quick riches and refused to accept the paramount importance of food-growing capacity to any successful settlement. The Indians could and did grow food, especially maize, but not for cash. Once their own needs were satisfied there was little left over. Colonists had either to grow their own or be dependent on continuing supplies from England-that was the great lesson of Roanoke. And the only way to insure that settlers grew food systematically and successfully was to send them out as entire families. This emerged as the leading principle of English colonization. Hakluyt, in his practical book on planting, wrote in terms of commerce and trading posts. He even recognized that religion could be important and he accepted the need to grow food. But he did not discuss the need to send out independent families and he thought agricultural labor could be supplied by criminals, civil debtors, and the like, sent out to regain their freedom by work.

The notion of using overseas colonies for getting rid of 'human offal,' as it was termed, was coming to be accepted. A generation before, Gilbert had thought of using persecuted and discontented papists as settlers, but did nothing about it. In the 1590s, increasingly, life in England was made hard for the Presbyterians and other Nonconformists, but to begin with they migrated to Calvinist Holland. Certainly, by the turn of the century, there were many ill-fitting groups in society for whom the new business of exporting humans seemed the obvious solution. Population was rising fast, the number of 'sturdy beggars,' as parliament referred to them, was growing. In 1598 the House of Commons laid down banishment beyond the realm as one punishment for begging. The same year the French founded their first overseas penal colony. It was only a matter of time before the English state recognized that North America had the answer to many social problems.

Then too, international trade was increasing steadily. In the later Middle Ages trade outside Europe had been falling off as Europe's own meager gold and silver mines became exhausted and the Continent was gradually stripped of its specie to pay for imports. The discovery by the Spanish of precious metals in the Americas had a profound effect on world trade. Once and for all, Europe became a money-economy. Merchants began to operate on an ever-increasing scale. The huge quantities of silver brought to Europe pushed up commodity prices, and since wages and rents lagged behind, those involved in commerce made handsome profits, built themselves grand houses, and upgraded their importance in society. As trade spread throughout the world, and its quantity rose, the importance of colonizing ventures to expand the system became obvious. And finally there was North Atlantic fishing, increasing all the time. By the turn of the century both English and French had semi-permanent fishing settlements off what is now Labrador, Newfoundland, and Canada. Sable Island in the Atlantic was the first French permanent post. They set up another at Tadoussac at the mouth of the Saguenay River. Their great explorer-entrepreneur Samuel de Champlain came there in 1603 and his party moved into Acadia, Cape Breton Island, and Canada itself. In 1608 Champlain established Quebec. Much of this early French enterprise was conducted by Huguenots, though when the French crown took over in the 1620s, Catholic paramountcy was established. It was now the French, rather than the Spanish, who caused forward-looking Englishmen uneasiness and spurred them to move out across the Atlantic themselves, before it was too late.

All these threads began to come together in the early years of the 17th century. James I was keen on colonization, provided it could be carried out without conflict with either Spain or France. As in Elizabethan times, the method was for the crown to issue charters to 'companies of adventurers,' who risked their own money. The Ulster plantation, which began in earnest in 1606, absorbed most of the available resources, but the same year the Virginia Company was refounded with a new charter. It had a Plymouth-based northern sector, and a southern sector based on London. The Plymouth men settled Sagadahoc on the Kennebec River, but abandoned it in 1608. A related, Bristol-based company founded settlements in southwest Newfoundland two years later. Meanwhile the Londoners followed up the old Roanoke settlement by entering the Chesapeake Bay in 1607 and marking out a city they called Jamestown, after their sovereign, 40 miles up the Powhatan River, renamed the James too.

The Jamestown settlement is of historic importance because it began the continuous English presence in North America. But as a colony it left much to be desired. This time, the men who ran the Virginia Company from London did not leave out the religious element, though they saw their divine purpose largely in terms of converting Indians. The company asserted that its object was 'to preach and baptise into the *Christian Religion* and by propagation of the Gospell, to recover out of the arms of the Divell, a number of poure and miserable soules, wrapt up into death, in almost invincible ignorance.", The true benefits of colonization, wrote Sir George Peckham in a pamphlet, would accrue to the 'natives,' brought by the settlers 'from falsehood to truth, from darkness to light, from the highway of death to the path of life, from superstitious idolatry to sincere Christianity, from the Devil to Christ, from Hell to Heaven.' He added: 'And if in respect of all the commodities [colonies] can yield us (were they many more) that they should but receive this only benefit of Christianity, they were more fully recompensed."

There was also the 'human offal' argument. The *New Britannia*, published at the time of the Jamestown foundation, justified it by urging that 'our land abounding with swarms of idle persons, which having no means of labor to relieve their misery, do likewise swarm in lewd and naughtie practises, so that if we seek not some ways for their foreign employment, we must supply shortly more prisons and corrections for their bad conditions. It is no new thing but most profitable for our state, to rid our multitudes of such who lie at home [inflicting on] the land pestilence and penury, and infecting one another with vice and villainy worse than the plague itself.'

Converting Indians, getting rid of criminals and the idle poor-that was not a formula for a successful colony. The financing, however, was right: this was a speculative company investment, in which individuals put their cash into a joint stock to furnish and equip the expedition, and reinforce it. The crown had nothing to do with the money side to begin with. Over the years, this method of financing plantations turned out to be the best one and is one reason why the English colonies in America proved eventually so successful and created such a numerous and solidly based community: capitalism, financed by private individuals and the competitive money-market, was there from the start. At Jamestown, in return for their investment, each stockholder received 100 acres in fee simple (in effect perpetual freehold) for each share owned, and another -100 acres when the grant was 'seated,' that is, actually taken up. Each shareholder also received a 'head right' of 50 acres for each man he transported and paid for. That was the theory. But in practice the settlers, who were adventurers rather than farmers-most were actually company employees-did not know how to make the most of their acres.

It was on May 6, 1607 that three ships of the Virginia Company, the *Godspeed*, the *Discovery*, and the *Sarah Constant*, sighted the entrance to Chesapeake Bay. The settlers numbered 105, and



they built a fort, a church, and huts with roofs of thatch. None of the original settlement survives but an elaborate reconstruction shows us what it looked like, and it was extremely primitive. It was in fact more like a Dark Age settlement in western Europe during the 6th or 7th centuries than a neat township of log cabins-as though the English in establishing a foothold on the new continent had had to go back a thousand years into their past. As it was, lacking a family unit basis, the colony was fortunate to survive at all. Half died by the end of 1608, leaving a mere fifty-three emaciated survivors.

The rest might have perished too had it not been for the leadership of Captain John Smith (c.1579-1631). Smith was a Lincolnshire man, who had had an adventurous career as a mercenary fighting the Turks. He joined the Jamestown expedition not as an investor but as a hired soldier. His terms of engagement entitled him to a seat on the Jamestown council, set up immediately the colony was formed, but he was denied it for brawling on board ship. He accordingly spent the winter of 1607 mapping the Chesapeake Bay district. In the course of it he was taken by the Indians, part of a tribal grouping Thomas Jefferson was later to call the Powhatan Confederacy. He put this to good advantage by establishing friendly relations with the local inhabitants. When he returned to the colony he found it in distress. Since he was the only man who had a clear idea of what to do, he was elected president of the council in September 1608, the earliest example of popular democracy at work in America. He imposed military discipline on the remaining men, negotiated with the Indians for sufficient food to get the colony through the winter, and in fact kept the mortality rate down to 5 per cent-a notable achievement by the standards of early colonization across the Atlantic. He got no thanks for his efforts. A relief convoy which arrived in July 1609 brought the news that changes in the company's charter left him without any legal status. So he returned to England two months later. Smith continued to interest himself in America, however. In 1614 he conducted a voyage of discovery around the Cape Cod area, and published in 1616 *A Description of New England*, which was to be of importance in the next decade-among other things, it was the first tract to push the term 'New England' into common use."

Meanwhile Jamestown again came close to collapse. Under its new charter, the Virginia Company tried to recruit new settlers from all levels of society by promising them land free in return for seven years of labor. It attracted about 500 men and put them aboard the relief convoy, under a temporary governor, Sir Thomas Gates. Gates' ship (one of nine) was wrecked off Bermuda, where he spent the winter of 1609-10, thus providing England's first contact with a group of islands which are still a British crown colony at the end of the 20th century-and Shakespeare with his setting for *The Tempest*. The rest of the fleet deposited 400 new settlers at Jamestown. But, in the absence of both Smith and Gates, the winter was a disaster. When Gates and his co-survivors, having built two small ships in Bermuda-no mean feat in itself-finally arrived at Jamestown in May 1610, scarcely sixty settlers were still alive. All the food was eaten, there was a suspicion of cannibalism, and the buildings were in ruins. The Indians, moreover, seeing the weakness of the colony, were turning hostile, and it may be that a repetition of the Roanoke tragedy was pending. An immediate decision was taken to give up the colony, but as the settlers were marching downriver to reembark, a further relief convoy of three ships arrived, this time under the leadership of the titular governor of the Virginia Company, the grandee Lord De La Ware (or Delaware as the settlers wrote it). Under his rule, and under his successor Gates, a system of law was established in 1611.

We have here the first American legal code, what Gates called his 'Lawes Divine, Moral and Martiall.' They are known as 'Dale's Code,' after his marshal, Thomas Dale, who had the job of

enforcing them. Unlike Smith's ordinances, they were civil not martial law, but they had a distinctly Puritan tone. Sabbath observance was strictly enforced, immodest dress was forbidden and idleness punished severely. The colony was not yet self-supporting even in food, however, and had nothing to export to England. But, the year after the code was promulgated, a settler called John Rolfe, fearing prosecution for idleness, began experiments with tobacco. After trying various seeds, he produced a satisfactory crop, the first sweet-tasting Virginian tobacco, and by 1616 it was already exportable. In the meantime, in 1614, he had married an Indian princess, Pocahontas, who had been in and out of the colony since its inception, when she was twelve. The marriage produced offspring and many in Virginia to this day are proud of their descent from the princess. At the time the union produced a precarious peace with the local tribes.

The year 1619 was significant for three reasons. In order to make the Virginia colony more attractive to settlers, the company sent out a ship carrying ninety young, unmarried women. Any of the bachelor colonists could purchase one as a wife simply by paying her cost of transportation, set at 125 pounds of tobacco. Second, the company announced that it would give the colonists their 'rights of Englishmen.' A fresh governor, Sir George Yeardley, was sent out to introduce the new dispensation. On July 30, 1619 the first General Assembly of Virginia met in the Jamestown Church for a week. Presided over by Yeardley, flanked by his six fellow-councillors, constituting the government, it also included twenty-two elected burgesses. They sat in a separate 'House,' like the Westminster Commons, and their first task was to go over Dale's Code, and improve it in the light of experience and the popular will, which they did, 'sweating and stewing, and battling flies and mosquitoes.' The result of their deliberations was approved by Yeardley and his colleagues, constituting an Upper House, and both houses together, with the governor representing the King, made up a miniature parliament, as in England itself. Thus, within a decade of its foundation, the colony had acquired a representative institution on the Westminster model. There was nothing like it in any of the American colonies, be they Spanish, Portuguese or French, though some of them had now been in existence over a century. The speed with which this piece of legislative machinery had developed, at a time when its progenitor was still battling with King James and his theory of the divine right of kings, in London, was a significant portent for the future.

Three weeks later, on August 20, John Rolfe recorded in his diary the third notable event of the year: 'There came in a Dutch man-of-warre that sold us 20 negars.' He did not state the price, but added that fifteen of the blacks were bought by Yardley himself, for work on his 1,000-acre tobacco plantation in Flowerdew Hundred. These men were unfree though not, strictly speaking, slaves. They were 'indentured servants.' Theoretically they became free when their indentures expired at the end of five years. After that, they could buy land and enjoy all the rights of free citizens of the colony. White laborers arrived from England under the same terms, signing their indentures, or making their mark on them, in return for the passage to America. But in practice many indentured men acquired other financial obligations by borrowing money during their initial period of service, and thus had it extended. It is doubtful if any of this first batch of blacks from Africa ended up free farmers in the colony. Most white servants, when they struggled free of their indentures, found themselves tenant farmers on the Jamestown River. But it was not impossible for a black to become a free man in early Virginia: some are recorded as having done so. What was more ominous, however, was the success with which Yeardley and other landowners used blacks to work their tobacco plantations. Soon they were buying more men, and not indentured laborers either, but chattel slaves. Thus in 1619 the first English colony in America embarked on two roads which bifurcated and led in two totally different directions:

representative institutions, leading to democratic freedoms, and the use of slave-labor, the 'peculiar institution' of the South, as it was to be called. It is important to bear in mind that large numbers of black chattel slaves did not arrive in North America until the 18th century. All the same, the bifurcation was real, and it eventually produced a society divided into two castes of human beings, the free and the unfree. These two roads were to be relentlessly and incongruously pursued, for a quarter of a millennium, until their fundamental incompatibility was resolved in a gigantic civil war.

The very next year occurred the single most important formative event in early American history, which would ultimately have an important bearing on the crisis of the American Republic. This was the landing, at New Plymouth in what was to become Massachusetts, on December 11, 1620, of the first settlers from the *Mayflower*. The original Virginia settlers had been gentlemen-adventurers, landless men, indentured servants, united by a common desire to better themselves socially and financially in the New World. The best of them were men cast in the sturdy English empirical tradition of fair-mindedness and freedom, who sought to apply the common law justly, govern sensibly in the common interest, and legislate according to the general needs of the Commonwealth. They and their progeny were to constitute one principal element in American tradition, both public and private—a useful, moderate, and creative element, good for all seasons. The *Mayflower* men—and women—were quite different. They came to America not primarily for gain or even livelihood, though they accepted both from God with gratitude, but to create His kingdom on earth. They were the zealots, the idealists, the utopians, the saints, and the best of them, or perhaps one should say the most extreme of them, were fanatical, uncompromising, and overweening in their self-righteousness. They were also immensely energetic, persistent, and courageous. They and their progeny were to constitute the other principal element in the American tradition, creative too but ideological and cerebral, prickly and unbending, fiercely unyielding on occasions to the point of self-destruction. These two traditions, as we shall see, were to establish themselves firmly and then to battle it out, sometimes constructively, occasionally with immense creative power, but sometimes also to the peril of society and the state.

The *Mayflower* was an old wineship, used to transport barrels of claret from Bordeaux to London. She had been hired by a group of Calvinists, all English and most of them from London, but including some who had been living in exile in Holland. Thirty-five of the settlers, who were led by William Bradford and William Brewster, were Puritan Nonconformists, dissenters whose Calvinist beliefs made them no longer prepared to submit to the episcopal governance and Romish teachings (as they saw it) of the established Church of England. They were going to America to pursue religious freedom, as a Christian body. In this sense they were not individuals but a community. They were also traveling as families, the first colony to sail out on this basis. They obtained from the Virginia Company an 80,000-acre grant of land, together with important fishing rights, permission to trade with the Indians, and authority to erect a system of self-government with wide powers. They brought with them sixty-six non-Puritans, and the settlers as a whole were grouped into forty-one families. Many carried books with them, in addition to a Bible for each family. The captain, Miles Standish, had *Caesar's Gallic War* and a *History of Turkie*. There were enough beds, tables, and chairs carried on board to furnish a score of family huts, plus dogs, goats, sheep, poultry, and quantities of spices, oatmeal, dried meat and fish, and turnips. One passenger, William Mullins, brought with him 126 pairs of shoes and 113 pairs of boots. Others, carpenters, joiners, smiths, and the like, brought their tools of trade.

An important event occurred on the voyage, when the *Mayflower* was two months out from England, and the discomforts of a crowded voyage were leading to dissension. On November 21, the colony's leaders assembled in the main cabin and drew up a social compact, designed to secure unity and provide for future government. In effect it created a civil body politic to provide 'just and equal laws,' founded upon church teaching, the religious and secular governance of the colony to be in effect indistinguishable. This contract was based upon the original Biblical covenant between God and the Israelites. But it reflected also early-17th-century social-contract theory, which was later to receive such notable expression in Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* (1655) and John Locke's *Treatise of Civil Government* (1690). It is an amazing document for these earnest men (and women) to have agreed and drawn up, signed by all forty-one 'heads of households' aboard the tiny vessel in the midst of the troubled Atlantic, and it testified to the profound earnestness and high-purpose with which they viewed their venture.

What was remarkable about this particular contract was that it was not between a servant and a master, or a people and a king, but between a group of like-minded individuals and each other, with God as a witness and symbolic co-signatory. It was as though this small community, in going to America together, pledged themselves to create a different kind of collective personality, living a new life across the Atlantic. One of their leaders, William Bradford, later wrote a history, *Of Plymouth Plantation*, in which he first referred to them as Pilgrims. But they were not ordinary pilgrims, traveling to a sacred shrine, and then returning home to resume everyday life. They were, rather, perpetual pilgrims, setting up a new, sanctified country which was to be a permanent pilgrimage, traveling ceaselessly towards a millenarian goal. They saw themselves as exceptions to the European betrayal of Christian principles, and they were conducting an exercise in exceptionalism.

Behind the Pilgrims were powerful figures in England, led by Sir Robert Rich, Earl of Warwick, who in 1612 at the age of twenty-five had become a member of the Virginia Company, and was later to be Lord High Admiral of the parliamentary forces during the English Civil War. Warwick was an adventurer, the Raleigh of his age, but a graduate of that Cambridge Puritan college, Emmanuel, and a profoundly religious man. Together with other like-minded Puritan gentry, he wanted to reform England. But if that proved impossible he wanted the alternative option of a reformed colony in the Americas. Throughout the 1620s he was busy organizing groups of religious settlers, mainly from the West Country, East Anglia and Essex, and London-where strict Protestantism was strongest-to undertake the American adventure. In 1623 he encouraged a group of Dorset men and women to voyage to New England, landing at Cape Ann and eventually, in 1626, colonizing Naumkeag." John White, a Dorset clergyman who helped to organize the expedition, insisted that religion was the biggest single motive in getting people to hazard all on the adventure: 'The most eminent and desirable end of planting colonies is the propagation of Religion,' he wrote. 'This Nation is in a sort singled out unto this work, being of all the States enjoying the liberty of the Religion Reformed, and are able to spare people for such an employment, the most orthodox in our profession.' He admitted: 'Necessity may oppress some: novelty draw on others: hopes of gain in time to come may prevail with a third sort: but that the most sincere and Godly part have the advancement of the Gospel for their main scope I am confident.'

The success of this venture led to a third Puritan expedition in 1628 which produced the settlement of Salem. A key date was March 4, 1629 when the organizers of these voyages formed the Massachusetts Bay Company, under royal charter, which had authority to transfer itself wholly to the American side of the ocean. It promptly dispatched six ships with 350 people

and large supplies of provisions, tools, and arms. But that was as nothing to a great fleet which set out in 1630, with 700 settlers aboard. This was the first of a great series of convoys, numbering 200 ships in all, which throughout the 1630s transported 20,000 Englishmen and women to New England. Thus in 1634 William Whiteway noted in his Dorchester diary: 'This summer there went over to [New England] at least 20 sail of ships and in them 2,000 planters, from the ports of Weymouth and Plymouth alone.' It was the greatest outward movement, so far, in English history.

The most important of these early convoys, as setting a new pattern, was the one in 1630 under the leadership of John Winthrop. He was the outstanding figure of the Puritan voyages, the first great American. Son of a Suffolk squire, and neighbor and friend of Warwick, he was tall and powerful, with a long, lugubrious, stern, impressive face, penetrating eyes, prominent nose, and high brow. He was another Cambridge man, trained as a lawyer in Gray's Inn, sat as a justice of the peace, and took up a job in the Court of Wards but lost it because of his uncompromising Puritan views. He was a sad but exalted man, who had buried two beloved wives and reasoned to himself that 'The life which is most exercised with tryalls and temptations is the sweetest and may prove the safest.' He came to the conclusion that overcrowded, irreligious, ill-governed England was a lost cause, and New England the solution, setting his views down fiercely in his *General Observations for the Plantation of New England*:

All other Churches of Europe are brought to desolation and it cannot be but that the like judgement is coming upon us ... This land grows weary of its Inhabitants, so as man, who is the most precious of all Creatures, is heere more vile and base than the earth they tread upon ... We are grown to the height of intemperance in all excess of Ryot, as no mans estate almost will suffice to keep sayle with his equals ... The fountains of Learning and Religion are corrupted ... Most children, even the best wittes and fayrest hopes, are perverted, corrupted and utterly overthrowne by the multitude of evil examples and the licensious government of those seminaries.

Previous colonies had failed, Winthrop argued, because they were 'carnall not religious'. Only an enterprise governed in the name of the reformed religion stood a chance.

Winthrop joined the new company at the end of July 1619, when it was decided that the proposed new colony should be self-governing and not answerable to the backers in England. Under their charter they had power to meet four times annually in General Courts, to pass laws, elect new freemen or members, elect officers, including a governor, deputy governor, and eighteen 'assistants,' make ordinances, settle 'formes and Ceremonies of Government and Magistracy,' and 'correct, punish, pardon and rule' all inhabitants of the plantation, so long as nothing was done 'contrary to English. lawe.' The decision to make the colony self-governing persuaded Winthrop to sell up his estate at Groton, realizing £5,760, and put all his assets into the venture. He impressed everyone connected with the venture by his determination and efficiency, and in October he was elected governor, probably because other major shareholders said they would not go except under his leadership.

Winthrop proved extremely successful in getting people and ships together over the winter, thus forming the largest and best-equipped English expedition yet. As the fleet set off, on Easter Monday 1630, Winthrop was in a mood of exaltation, seeing himself and his companions taking part in what seemed a Biblical episode—a new flight from Egypt into the Promised Land. To record it he began to keep a diary, just as he imagined Moses had made notes of the Exodus. These early diaries and letters, which are plentiful, and the fact that most important documents about the early American colonies have been preserved, mean that the United States is the first nation in human history whose most distant origins are fully recorded. For America, we have no

ancient national myth or prescriptive legends but solid facts, set down in the matter-of-fact writings of the time. We know in considerable detail what happened and why it happened. And through letters and diaries we are taken right inside the minds of the men and women who made it happen. There can be no doubt then why they went to America. Among the leading spirits, those venturing out not in the hope of a quick profit but to create something new, valuable, and durable, the overwhelming thrust was religious. But their notions of religious truth and duty did not always agree, and this had its consequences in how they set about emigrating.

The original Pilgrim Fathers of Plymouth Rock were separatists. They thought the church back in England was doomed, irrecoverably corrupt, and they wanted to escape from it. They came to America in the spirit of hermits, leaving a wicked world to seek their own salvation in the wilderness. John Winthrop saw things quite differently. He did not wish to separate himself from the Anglican church. He thought it redeemable. But, because of its weakness, the redemptive act could take place only in New England. Therefore the New England colony was to be a pilot church and state, which would create an ideal spiritual and secular community, whose example should in turn convert and save the Old World too. He set out these ideas to his fellow-travelers in a shipboard sermon, in which he emphasized the global importance of their mission in a striking phrase: 'We must consider that we shall be as a City upon a Hill, the eyes of all people are upon us.' Winthrop observed to his fellows, and set down in his diary, numerous Old Testament-style indications of godly favor which attended their voyage. Near the New England coast, 'there came a smell off the shore like the smell of a garden.' 'There came a wild pigeon into our ship, and another small land-bird.' He rejoiced at providential news that the Indians, within a range of 300 miles, 'are swept away by the small-pox ... so God hath hereby cleared our title to this place.' He warned the colonists of the coming harsh winter, telling them: 'It hath been always observed here, that such as fell into discontent, and lingered after their former condition in England, fell into the scurvy and died.'

The Winthrop-led reinforcement was the turning-point in the history of New England. He took over 1,000 colonists in his fleet, and settled them in half a dozen little towns ringing Boston harbor. In Boston itself, which became the capital, he built his town house, took a farm of 600 acres, Ten Hills, on the Mystic River, and other lands, and he built a ship, *Blessing of the Bay*, for coastal trading. Throughout the 1630s more ships arrived, to make good losses, swell the community, and form new towns and settlements.

The land God gave them, as they believed, was indeed a promised one. Of all the lands of the Americas, what is now the United States was the largest single tract suitable for dense and successful settlement by humans. The evidence shows that human beings function most effectively outdoors at temperatures with a mean average of 60-65 degrees Fahrenheit, with noon temperature 70 average, or a little more. Mental activity is highest when the outside average is 38 degrees, with mild frosts at night. It is important that temperature changes from one day to the next: constant temperatures, and also great swings, are unfavorable-the ideal conditions are moderate changes, especially a cooling of the air at frequent intervals. The territory now settled and expanded met these requirements admirably, with 40-70 degrees average annual temperatures, a warm season long enough to grow plenty of food, and a cold season severe enough to make men work and store up food for the winter. The rainfall averages were also satisfactory. Until the development of 'dry' farming, wheat was grown successfully only if the rainfall was over 10 inches annually and less than 45: the average United States rainfall is 26.6, and east of the Appalachians, in the area of early settlement, it is 30 to 50 inches a year, almost ideal. Variations of rainfall and temperature were greater than those in Europe, but essentially it

was the same general climate. Odd, then, that the English, who came to the Americas comparatively late, got their hands on those parts where Europeans were most likely to flourish.

Successive generations of settlers discovered that almost anything can be grown in America, generally with huge success. Central North America has the best soil in the world for growing regular food-crops. Only 40 per cent may be arable but it has the best combination of arable soil, natural transport, and exploitable minerals. The soil makes a remarkable variety of crops possible, and this is one reason why there has never been a famine in this area since Europeans arrived. The effect of the Ice Age glaciers on North America, which once covered New England, was to scrape some areas to the bare rock but to leave ample valleys with rich deposits. Thus the Connecticut Valley, soon penetrated by the English, proved the most fertile strip in New England, and became in time prodigiously rich not just in settlements but in colleges, publishing houses, and the first high-quality newspapers in the Americas. The colonists brought with them, in addition to livestock of all kinds, most of the valuable plants they grew. In New England, the Pilgrim settlers never made the mistake of the Jamestown people, of looking for gold when they should be growing crops to feed themselves. But they found maize, or 'Indian Corn,' a godsend. It yielded twice as much food per acre as traditional English crops. It was less dependent on the seasons, could be cultivated without plowing using the crudest tools, and even the stalks could be used as fodder. It was the ideal cheap and easy food for an infant colony and it is no wonder the corn-cob became a symbol of American abundance-as did the turkey, a native of North America which the Puritans found much to their taste. The settlers also discovered chestnuts, walnuts, butternuts, beech, hazel, and hickory nuts in abundance, and also wild plum, cherry, mulberry, and persimmon, though most fruit trees were imported. In addition to maize the colonists had pumpkins, squash, beans, rice, melons, tomatoes, huckleberries, blackberries, strawberries, black raspberries, cranberries, gooseberries, and grapes, all growing wild or easily cultivated.

To European arrivals, the wildlife, once they learned to appreciate and hunt it, was staggering in its fecundity. The big game were the deer and the buffalo. But of great importance to settlers were the smaller creatures whose fur and skin could be exported: weasel, sable, badger, skunk, wolverine, mink, otter, sea-otter, beaver, squirrel, and hare. Then there were the fish and seafood. The waters of Northeast America abounded in them, and once the New England colonists built their own ships-as they began to do, with success, almost immediately-there was a never-ending source of supply. John Josselyn, in his *New England Rareties*, published in 1672, lists over 200 kinds of fish caught in the area.

The mineral resources were without parallel, as the settlers gradually discovered. If we can look ahead for a minute, exactly 300 years after John Winthrop's fleet anchored, the United States was producing, with only 6 percent of the world's population and land area, 70 percent of its oil, nearly 50 percent of its copper, 38 percent of its lead, 42 percent each of its zinc and coal, and 46 percent of its iron-in addition to 54 percent of its cotton and 62 percent of its corn. What struck the first New Englanders at the time, however, was the abundance and quality of the timber, to be had for the simple effort of cutting it down. In western Europe in the early 17th century wood for any purpose, including fuel, was increasingly scarce and costly. The ordinary family, which could not afford 'sea coal,' could never get enough of it. So the colonists fell on the wood with delight. Francis Higginson, minister to the settlers at Cape Ann, wrote in 1629: 'Here we have plenty of fire to warm us ... All Europe is not able to make so great fires as New England. A poor servant here, that is to possess but 50 acres of land, may afford to give more wood for timber and fire as good as the world yields, than many noblemen in England can afford to do. Here is good living for those that love good fires.'" William Wood, the first American

naturalist, who explored the forests in the years 1629-32, and published his findings two years later in *New England's Prospects*, delightedly listed all the varieties of trees available, virtually all of which could be used for furniture, though also for charcoal, dyes, and potash for soap. He too was amazed by the sheer quantity, as well he might be. It has been calculated that the original forests of what is now the United States covered 822 million acres in the early 17th century. This constituted a stand of marketable saw-timber of approximately 5,200 billion square feet. Early America was a timber civilization, growing out of its woods just as Anglo-Saxon England grew out of its primeval forests. In the first 300 years of their existence, the American people consumed 353 million acres of this huge area of forests, being over 4,075 billion square feet of saw-timber. Washington and Lincoln with their axes drew attention to the archetypal American male activity."

The New Englanders fell upon this astonishing natural inheritance with joy. They were unable to decide whether the Indians were part of this inheritance or competitors for it. They developed, almost from the first, a patriarchal attitude towards the Indians, and the habit, to us distasteful, of referring to them as their children. It is true that the North American Indians, compared to the Indians of Central and parts of South America, were comparatively primitive. They were particularly backward in domesticating animals, one reason why their social organizations were slow to develop. That in turn helps to explain why their numbers (so far as we can guess them) were small compared to the Indians of the south. Being so few, and occupying so large and fertile an area, the Indians did not replenish their cultivated land-they had of course no animal manure-and moved on to fresh fields when it became exhausted. But their agricultural skills, at least in some cases, were not contemptible. The early French and Spanish explorers-Cartier and Champlain on the St Lawrence, De Soto on the Mississippi, Coronado in the southwest-all reported seeing extensive cornfields. Henry Hudson said the Indians built houses of bark and stored them with corn and beans for winter. When the first settlers reached the Ohio Valley they came across cornfields stretching for miles. In 1794 General Wayne said he had 'never before beheld such immense fields of corn in any part of America, from Canada to Florida.'

There were wide differences between the various Indian peoples. Most of them farmed a little, and hunting and fighting tended to be suspended during planting and harvest. The Indians of the southwest, presumably because they had closer contact with the advanced Indians of South and Central America, irrigated their crops from reservoirs and had actual towns. The Pueblo Indians had permanent villages near their fields. The Iroquois villages were semi-permanent. The Indians the New Englanders came across were usually farmers. The settlers noted the way they cleared land of trees and grew corn and beans, pumpkins and squash; in some cases they imitated Indian methods, for instance in the use of fish-fertilizer. The Indians seem to have been low-grade farmers but produced at least a million bushels of crops a year, drying and storing. They also produced poor-quality tobacco.

In most cases the New Englanders began by following Indian practice in sowing, growing, and storing, but then improved on their methods. They also got from the Indians the white potato, which had arrived from Peru in South America, though this was surprisingly little eaten until the Irish arrived in New Hampshire. Where the early New Englanders benefited most from the Indians was in taking over cleared fields, left unclaimed when the tribes were wiped out by smallpox. The early New England farm, cleared of trees, with rows of corn twined with beans arranged as vines, and with squash and pumpkins growing in between, was not very different from the fields of the Indians. William Bradford, for one, testified to the help the Pilgrims



received from Indian example, especially in growing corn, 'ye manner, how to set it, and after, how to dress & tend it.'

The importance of livestock was critical. All thrived, pigs especially. One of the earliest exports was barrels of pork. Flocks of sheep were soon common in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. The colonists raised hardy horses and exported them to the West Indies. They brought in seed for turnips, carrots, buckwheat, peas, parsnips, wheat, barley, and oats—all raised with success. New England apples were soon doing particularly well. One commentator, writing in 1642, said they now 'had apples, pears and quince tarts, instead of their former Pumpkin Pies.' Apples were 'reckoned as profitable as any other part of the Plantation.'

New England farming standards were much higher than Indian ones but, by the best European standards, wasteful. All knowledgeable observers noted how the plentiful supply of land, and the shortage of labor, led to 'butchering.' One account said tillage was 'weakly and insufficiently given; worse, ploughing is nowhere to be seen, yet the farmers get tolerable crops; this is owing, particularly in the new settlements, to the looseness and fertility of the old woodlands, which with very bad tillage will yield excellent crops.'" Another claimed that New England farmers were 'the most negligent ignorant set of men in the world. Nor do I know of any country in which animals are worse treated ... they plough cart and ride [horses] to death ... all the nourishment they are like to have is to be turned loose in a wood. Visitors were making the same complaints in the mid-18th century, though by then the supply of new land to take in was running out, at least on the eastern side of the Appalachians.

The New Englanders were, on the whole, much less wasteful than the Virginians. Indeed, without tobacco it is doubtful whether the Virginia colony could have survived at all. Initially all the authorities, at home and abroad, were against tobacco farming, largely because King James I hated the 'weed,' thinking it 'tending to general and new Corruption both of Men's Bodies and Manners.' Governor Dale actually legislated against it in 1616, ordering that only one acre could be laid down to tobacco for every two of corn. It proved impossible to enforce. By the next year tobacco was being laid down even in Jamestown itself, in the streets and market-place. Men reckoned that, for the same amount of labor, tobacco yielded six times as much as any other crop. It had a high cash value. Everything conspired to help it. It was grown close to the banks of many little rivers, such as the James, the York, and the Rappahannock. Every small plantation had its own riverside wharf and boat to get the crop to a transatlantic packet. Roads were not necessary. Land would yield tobacco only for three years: then a fresh set of fields had to be planted. But the real problem was labor—hence slavery. The increasing supply of cheap, high-quality slave-labor from Africa came (as the planters would say and believe) as a Godsend to America's infant tobacco industry. So it flourished mightily. James I himself signaled his capitulation as early as 1619 when he laid a tax of a shilling in the pound (5 percent) on tobacco imports to England, though he limited the total (from Bermuda as well as Virginia) to 55,000 lb a year. But soon all such quantitative restrictions were lifted and tobacco became the first great economic fact of life in the new English-speaking civilization growing up across the Atlantic. It continued to be counted a blessing over four centuries until, in the fullness of time, President Bill Clinton brought the wheel back full circle to the days of James I, and in August 1996 declared tobacco an addictive drug.

New England had no such crutch as tobacco to lean on. It had to work harder, and it did. Under John Winthrop, whose first spell as governor lasted 1630-4, it got the kind of firm, even harsh, government a new colony needs. In effect it was a theocracy. This meant that government was

conducted by men chosen by all the full members of the congregation. These were the freemen, and they were recruited in batches on account of their 'Godly behaviour.' Thus in May 1631 Winthrop added 118 men to the freeman ranks. More were added from time to time as he and the congregational elders saw fit. In effect, he ran a dictatorship. He summoned his General Court only once a year, not four times as the company's charter stipulated. Everyone, not just the freemen, had to swear an oath of loyalty to his government. He was quite ruthless in dealing with any kind of dissent or (as he saw it) antisocial behavior. In August 1630, in the first weeks of the settlement, he burned down the house of Thomas Morton of Boston for erecting a maypole and 'revelling.' Morton was kept in the stocks until he could be shipped home in the returning fleet. The following June, Philip Radcliffe was whipped and had both his ears cut off for, in the words of Winthrop's *Journal*, 'most foul, scandalous invectives against our church and government.' Sir Christopher Gardiner was banished for bigamy and papism. Again, 'Thomas Knowler was sett in the bilbowes for threatening the Court that, if hee should be punished, hee would have it tryed in England whether hee were lawfully punished or not.

However, Winthrop was not the only man in New England who had a lust for authority and a divine mandate to exercise it. The new American colonies were full of such people. James I pettishly but understandably remarked that they were 'a seminary for a fractious parliament.' Men with strong religious beliefs tend to form into two broad categories, and constitute churches accordingly. One category, among whom the archetypal church is the Roman Catholic, desire the certitude and tranquility of hierarchical order. They are prepared to entrust religious truth to a professional clergy, organized in a broadbased triangle of parish priests, with an episcopal superstructure and a pontifical apex. The price paid for this kind of orthodox order is clericalism-and the anticlericalism it provokes. There was never any chance of this kind of religious system establishing itself in America. If there was one characteristic which distinguished it from the start-which made it quite unlike any part of Europe and constituted its uniqueness -in fact-it was the absence of any kind of clericalism. Clergymen there were, and often very good ones, who enjoyed the esteem and respect of their congregations by virtue of their piety and preachfulness. But whatever nuance of Protestantism they served, and including Catholic priests when they in due course arrived, none of them enjoyed a special status, in law or anything else, by virtue of their clerical rank. Clergy spoke with authority from their altars and pulpits, but their power ended at the churchyard gate; and even within it congregations exercised close supervision of what their minister did, or did not, do. They appointed; they removed. In a sense, the clergy were the first elected officials of the new American society, a society which to that extent had a democratic element from the start-albeit that such electoral colleges were limited to the outwardly godly.

Hence Americans never belonged to the religious category who seek certainty of doctrine through clerical hierarchy: during the whole of the colonial period, for instance, not a single Anglican bishop was ever appointed to rule flocks there. What most Americans did belong to was the second category: those who believe that knowledge of God comes direct to them through the study of Holy Writ. They read the Bible for themselves, assiduously, daily. Virtually every humble cabin in Massachusetts colony had its own Bible. Adults read it alone, silently. It was also read aloud among families, as well as in church, during Sunday morning service, which lasted from eight till twelve (there was more Bible-reading in the afternoon). Many families had a regular course of Bible-reading which meant that they covered the entire text of the Old Testament in the course of each year. Every striking episode was familiar to them, and its meaning and significance earnestly discussed; many they knew by heart. The language and lilt of

the Bible in its various translations, but particularly in the magnificent new King James version, passed into the common tongue and script. On Sunday the minister took his congregation through key passages, in carefully attended sermons which rarely lasted less than an hour. But authority lay in the Bible, not the minister, and in the last resort every man and woman decided 'in the light which Almighty God gave them' what the Bible meant.

This direct apprehension of the word of God was a formula for religious excitement and exaltation, for all felt themselves in a close, daily, and fruitful relationship with the deity. It explains why New England religion was so powerful a force in people's lives and of such direct and continuing assistance in building a new society from nothing. They were colonists for God, planting in His name. But it was also a formula for dissent. In its origins, Protestantism itself was protest, against received opinion and the exercise of authority. When the religious monopoly of the Roman Catholic Church began to disintegrate, in the 1520s and 1530s, what replaced it, from the start, was not a single, purified, and reformed faith but a Babel of conflicting voices. In the course of time and often by the use of secular force, several major Protestant bodies emerged: Calvinism in Geneva and Holland; Anglicanism in England; Lutheranism in northern Germany. But many rapidly emerging sects were left outside these state churches, and more emerged in time; and the state churches themselves splintered at the edges. And within each church and sect there were voices of protest, antinomians as they were called-those who refused to accept whatever law was laid down by the duly constituted authorities in the church they belonged to, or who were even against the idea of authority in any form.

We come here to the dilemma at the heart of the perfect Protestant society, such as the Pilgrims and those who followed them wished to create. To them, liberty and religion were inseparable, and they came to America to pursue both. To them, the Roman church, or the kind of Anglicanism Charles I and his Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud, were creating in England, were the antithesis of liberty, the essence of thralldom. They associated liberty with godliness because without liberty of conscience godliness was unattainable. But how to define liberty? When did the exercise of liberty become lawlessness? At what point did freedom of conscience degenerate into religious anarchy? All the leaders of opinion in New England tackled this point. Most of them made it clear that liberty had, in practice, to be narrowly defined. Nathaniel Ward, who came to Massachusetts Bay in 1634 and became pastor of Ipswich, wrote a tract he entitled *The Simple Cobbler of Aggawam in America*, and boldly asserted: 'I dare take it upon me to be the herald of New England so far as to proclaim to the world, in the name of our colony, that all Familists, Antinomians, Anabaptists and other enthusiasts shall have free liberty to keep away from us; and such as will come, to be gone as fast as they can, the sooner the better ... I dare aver that God does nowhere in his world tolerate Christian states to give toleration to such aversaries of his truth, if they have power in their hands to suppress them.", John Winthrop himself gave what he termed a 'little speech,' on July 3, 1645, on the whole vexed question of the authority of magistrates and liberty of the people-a statement of view which many found powerful, so that the words were copied and recopied and eventually anthologized. Man, he laid down, had:

a liberty to that only which is good, just and honest ... This liberty is maintained and exercised in a way of subjection to authority, it is of the same kind of liberty whereof Christ hath made us free ... If you stand for your natural, corrupt liberties, and will do what is good in your own eyes, you will not endure the least weight of authority ... but if you will be satisfied to enjoy such civil and lawful liberties, such as Christ allows you, then you will quietly and cheerfully submit under that authority which is set over you ... for your good.

That was all very well in theory. But the difficulty of applying it in practice was illustrated by the vicissitudes of Winthrop's own career, as a political and religious leader of the colony. It is early American history in microcosm. Winthrop had natural authority, a kind of charisma: that is why he had been picked as governor in the first place. But his stern and at times brutal exercise of it led strong-minded spirits-and there were plenty of them in the Bay Colony-to feel he had exceeded its legitimate bounds.

Moreover, in what Winthrop no doubt felt was a justified stratagem, such as Joshua and David and Solomon had indulged in from time to time, he had cheated. He obliged all colonists, including non-freemen, to swear an oath of loyalty to his government, in accordance with the charter. But, according to the charter, the General Court should meet four times a year, and Winthrop called it only once. After four years of what some called his 'tyranny,' many colonists, freemen and non-freemen alike, demanded he show them the charter, to see what it said. He reluctantly did so. It was generally agreed he had acted *ultra vires*. The colonists brought with them from England a strong sense of the need to live under the rule of law, not of powerful individuals. That was what the developing struggle in the English parliament was all about. The colonists had been promised, by the founding company of Massachusetts, all 'the rights of Englishmen.' Winthrop, no doubt from high motives, had taken some of those rights from them, by flouting the charter. So he was publicly deposed at a general meeting. The freemen of the colony set up what was in effect a representative system of government, with each little town sending deputies 'who should assist in making laws, disposing of lands etc.' This body confirmed Winthrop's dismissal, and replaced him with his deputy, Thomas Dudley. Thus the first political coup in the history of North America was carried out, in 1634, when the colony was still in its infancy. And it was carried out not by force of swords and firearms but by arguments and speeches, and in accordance with the rule of law.

However, the colonists soon discovered that to change a government by popular mandate does not necessarily mean to improve it. During the next three years, 1634-7, the colony was shaken by a series of arguments over rebellious and antinomian figures, such as Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson. We will come to these two in a minute, because they are important in their own right. From the point of view of good government, they needed to be handled with a mixture of firmness, common sense, and fairness. The feeling grew in the colony that Winthrop's successors lacked all three. Some felt that the authorities were becoming antinomian themselves. It was a fact that the church in Boston itself tended to be antinomian, all the rest orthodox. The antinomians held that the only thing which mattered in religion was the inner light of faith, which was a direct gift of God's grace. The more orthodox held that good works and exemplary behavior were also necessary, and were visible, outward evidence of true faith and godliness. This argument was raging in England and Holland and other countries where Calvinism was strong. But it was fiercer in Massachusetts than anywhere. One contemporary wrote: 'It began to be as common here to distinguish between men, by being under a Covenant of Grace or a Covenant of Works, as in other countries between Protestants and Papists.'

The argument came to a head in the first contested election on American soil, May 17, 1637, an important date in the development of American democracy. The issue was religious; but behind it was the question of good, orderly government. If the antinomians had their way, it was argued, religion and government would cease to be based on reasoned argument, and learning, and the laws of evidence, and would come to rest entirely on heightened emotion-a form of continuous revivalism with everyone claiming to be inspired by the Holy Spirit. The issue was

settled at a crowded outdoor meeting in Cambridge. 'There was a great danger of a tumult that day. [The antinomians] grew into fierce speeches; and some laid hands on others; but seeing themselves too weak [in numbers], they grew quiet. Winthrop was triumphantly reelected governor, the antinomians being 'quite left out' in the voting. So from 1637 Winthrop was free to resume his clear and insistent policy of imposing orthodoxy on the colony by punishment, exclusion, and banishment.

But doctrinal orthodoxy was not the only measure of a man's fitness to govern, as Winthrop learned to his cost. His natural authority was based to some extent on his descent from the old squirearchy of England, and his manifest possession of means to keep up his station in the New World. In 1639, however, Winthrop discovered that his English agent had cheated him, and that his affairs were in a muddle. The agent was convicted of fraud and sentenced to have his ears cut off. But that did not get the governor out of his financial difficulties. He found himself £2,600 in debt—a formidable sum—and was forced to sell land on both sides of the Atlantic. His financial plight became obvious. Friends and political supporters rallied round. They collected £500 to tide him over. They donated 3,000 acres to his wife. But Winthrop's opponents pointed fingers. The Puritans did not exactly insist that poverty was a sign of wickedness. But there was a general assumption that the godly flourished and that if a man persistently failed to prosper—or if financial catastrophe suddenly struck him—it was because he did not, for some reason, enjoy God's favor. This idea was very potent and passed into the mainstream of American social consciousness. Winthrop was its first victim. In 1640 he was demoted to deputy governor. Some purists even proposed to ban him, and another unsuccessful man, from office for life, 'because they werthe growne poor.' But this measure did not pass.

Indeed, Winthrop struggled back into the governorship two years later, when his earthly fortunes revived a little. Embittered and soured by his political vicissitude and 'the unregeneracy of man,' he dealt ever more severely with dissenters. He fell foul of an unorthodox preacher called Samuel Gorton, and commanded him to shut up or leave the colony. Gorton's congregation sent a 'weird and impudent letter' to the Massachusetts government, comparing the Blessed Samuel to Christ and Winthrop to Pontius Pilate—it referred to him as 'the Great and Honoured Idol General, now set up in Massachusetts' and to his supporters as 'a Generation of Vipers.' Almost beside himself with rage at these 'horrible and detestable blasphemies, against God and all Magistry,' Winthrop sent three commissions of forty soldiers to arrest them. He had them tried and put in irons, but they continued preaching, until he took off their shackles and simply dispatched them into the wilderness.' As a result of this high-handedness, Winthrop was again demoted to deputy governor in 1644. He wrote in his journal that he feared rule by the rabble, an actual democracy, 'the meanest and worst of all forms of government.' The amount of arguing and political maneuvering was intense. Early Massachusetts was a remarkably argumentative and politically conscious society—reflecting of course the Civil War then raging in England, which was a battle of words as well as arms. Winthrop published a treatise defending his actions, saying that a wise magistrate had no alternative but to stamp out a firebrand like Gorton before he set fire to the whole house. He said that wise men had to be given discretionary power to follow God's law as they saw it. One of the deputies attacked this view as outrageous: he said the tract should be 'burnt under the gallows' and added that 'if some other of the magistrates had written it, it would have cost him his ears, if not his head.'" But Winthrop survived this controversy too, won back public favor, regained the governorship in 1646, and held it to his death three years later.

Winthrop's career and views raised fundamental issues at the time, which have continued to reverberate through American history and political discourse. Where does freedom end and authority begin? What was the role of the magistrate? And how should he combine the need for order and the commands of justice with the Christian virtue of mercy? There is no doubt that Winthrop himself thought deeply about these issues, communing and agonizing with himself in his journal. Generations of American historians have been sharply divided on his civic merits. In the 1830s, George Bancroft depicted him as a pioneer in laying down representative government in America. Later in the century Brooks Adams and Charles Francis Adams emphasized his authoritarian character and his propensity to persecute intellectual opponents-blaming him for the bigotry in the colony which later produced the witchhunting catastrophe in Salem. In the 1930s Perry Miller and Samuel Eliot Morison stressed that Winthrop was a man of religion first, that his political philosophy was a projection of his Christian beliefs, thus indicating to what extent New England was a kind of theocracy, a deliberate attempt to erect a system of government in conformity with Christ's teaching. Yet another historian, Edmund Morgan, went further and argued that Winthrop's magistracy was a continuing struggle, in fashioning this Christian-utopian society, to prevent the separatist impulse, so strong among New England settlers from undermining corporate responsibility, and instead to harness the colonists' sense of righteousness to the cause of social justice.

Winthrop emerges from the chronicle of events as a severe and often intolerant man, and that is how his critics saw him. He regarded himself as a man chosen by God and the people to create a new civil society from nothing by the light of his religious beliefs, and he prayed earnestly to discharge this mandate virtuously. He admitted his shortcomings, at any rate to himself. His political theory was clear. Man had liberty not to do what he liked-that was for the beasts-but to distinguish between good and evil by studying God's commands, and then to do 'that only which is good.' If, by God's grace, you were given this liberty, you had a corresponding duty to obey divinely sanctioned authority. In the blessed colony of Massachusetts, freemen chose their rulers. But, once chosen, the magistrate's word must be obeyed-it was divine law as well as man's. If his commands were not just and honest, his authority was not genuine, 'but a distemper thereof.' Man was sinful, and struggling with his sinful nature. So sometimes magistrates had to exercise mercy and forgiveness. But, equally, final impenitence and stiff-necked obstinacy in sin had to be dealt with ruthlessly. Conversely, the people should forgive magistrates their occasional errors of judgment. And if these errors were persisted in, then the people had the right of removal. Winthrop could claim that he was freely elected governor of the colony, not just once but four times, and that therefore he embodied representative government. Moreover it has to be said, on his behalf, that he implanted this system of government firmly in American soil, so that at the end of twenty years the colony had been built up from nothing to a body politic which was already showing signs of maturity, in that it was reconciling the needs of authority with the needs of liberty.

The success of the Bay Colony in this respect would not have been possible without the sheer space America afforded. America had the liberty of vast size. That was a luxury denied to the English; the constraints of their small island made dissent a danger and conformity a virtue. That indeed was why English settlers came to America. A man could stand on Cape Cod with his face to the sea and feel all the immensity of the Atlantic Ocean in front of him, separating him, like a benevolent moat, from the restrictions and conformities of narrow Europe. And, equally, he could feel behind him-and, if he turned round, see it-the immensity of the land, undiscovered, unexplored, scarcely populated at all, a huge, experimental theater of liberty. In a way, the most

important political fact in American history is its grandeur and its mystery. For three centuries, almost until 1900, there were crucial things about the interior of America which were unknown to its inhabitants. But what they were sure of, right from the start, was that there was a lot of it, and that it was open. Here was the dominant geopolitical fact which bore down upon the settlers from their first days on the new continent: if they did not like the system they found on the coast, and if they had the courage, they could go on. Nothing would stop them, except their own fear.

This was the point made by Roger Williams (1603-83), the second great American to emerge. Williams was a Londoner, of Welsh descent, who was ordained a minister in 1628 and came to the Bay Colony three years later. His original intention was to be an Indian missionary. Instead he became pastor in Salem. He was clever, energetic, and public-spirited, and promptly made himself a well-known figure in local society. Whereas Winthrop stood for the authority-principle, Williams represented the liberty-principle, though curiously enough the two men liked and respected each other. Williams loved the vastness of the New World and took the opportunity to explore the hinterland of the Bay. He liked the Indians, made contact with them, established friendships. He tried to learn their tongue; or, as he quickly discovered, tongues. In the early 17th century the 900,000 or so Indians of what is now the United States and Canada were divided by speech into eight distinctive linguistic groups, all unrelated, which in turn branched out into fifty-three separate stocks and between 200 and 300 individual languages. Of these, the most widely spoken, used by about 20 percent of all Indians, was Algonquilian. Williams learned this, and noted other Indian languages, and eventually published his findings in *A Key into the Languages of America* (1643), the first and for long the only book written on the subject.' His friendships with individual Indians led him to conclude that there was something fundamentally wrong with settler-Indian relationships. The Europeans had come to bring Christianity to the Indians, and that was right, thought Williams. Of all the things they had to impart to the heathen, that was the most precious blessing-far more important than horses and firearms, which some settlers were keen to sell, and all Indians anxious to buy. But in practice, Williams found, few New Englanders took trouble to instruct Indians in Christianity. What they all wanted to do was to dispossess them of their lands and traditional hunting preserves, if possible by sheer robbery. Williams thought this profoundly unChristian. He argued that all title to Indian land should be validated by specific negotiations and at an agreed, fair price. Anything less was sinful.

None of this made Williams popular among right-thinking freemen of Boston. But his religious views, and their political consequences, were far more explosive. He did not believe, as Winthrop's Anglicans held, and as even the Pilgrim Fathers had accepted, that God covenanted with a congregation or an entire society. God, he held, covenanted with each individual. The logic of this was not merely that each person was entitled to his own interpretation of the truth about religion, but that in order for civil society to exist at all there had to be an absolute separation between church and state. In religion, Williams was saying, every man had the right to his individual conscience, guided by the inner light of his faith. In secular matters, however, he must submit to the will of the majority, determined through institutions shorn of any religious content. So to the Massachusetts elders Williams was not merely an antinomian, he was a secularist, almost an atheist, since he wanted to banish God from government. When Williams began to expose these views in his sermons, the authorities grew alarmed. In October 1635 they decided to arrest him and deport him to England.

Winthrop was out of office at the time, or he might perhaps have taken a similar view. But, nursing his own wrongs, he concluded that the treatment of Williams was unjust and ungodly. In tiny England, there was no alternative but to suppress him. In vast America, he should be given the choice of planting himself elsewhere. So Winthrop, who knew what had been decided in council, secretly warned Williams of the plan to send him back to England and advised him to slip off from Salem, where Williams was established, into the Narragansett Wilderness. As Williams himself related it: '[Winthrop] privately wrote to me to steer my course to Narragansett Bay and the Indians, for many high and heavenly and public ends, encouraging me, from the freeness of the place from any English claims and patents.' So Williams fled, with his wife Ann, their children, and their household servants. It was the beginning of the harsh New England winter, and Williams and his family had to spend it traveling through the forest, in makeshift shelters, until in the spring of 1636 he reached an Indian village at the head of Narragansett Bay. To his dying day-and he lived to be eighty-Williams believed that his family's survival was entirely due to divine providence, a fact which confirmed him in the rightness of his views. And he retained correspondingly bitter memories of his 'persecutors.' He negotiated a land purchase with two Indian tribes, and set up a new colony on a site he named Providence. He let it be known that his new settlement on Rhode Island welcomed dissidents of all kinds, fleeing from the religious tyranny of the Bay Colony. As he put it, 'I desired it might be a shelter for persons distressed for conscience.' By 1643, Portsmouth, Newport, and Warwick had been founded as further towns.

Williams may have been an extremist. But he was also a man of business. He knew the law of England and the ways of government. He had no title to his colony and the Bay authorities would not give him one: they called Providence 'the Sewer of New England.' But he knew that parliament and the Puritans now ruled in London, so he went there. On March 24, 1644 parliament, at his request, transformed the four towns into a lawful colony by charter, endorsing an Instrument of Government which Williams had drawn up. He took the opportunity, London being for the time being an ultra-libertarian city where the most extreme Protestant views could be circulated, to write and publish a defense of religious freedom, *The Bloody Tenet of Persecution for the Cause of Conscience discussed*. And his new Instrument declared that 'The form of government established in Providence Plantations is DEMOCRATICAL, that is to say, a government held by the free and voluntary consent of all, or the greater part, of the free inhabitants.' Williams listed various laws and penalties for specific transgressions but added: 'And otherwise than this, what is herein forbidden, all men may walk as their consciences persuade them, every one in the name of his God. And let the Saints of the Most High walk in this colony without molestation, in the name of Jehovah their God, for ever and ever.'

Williams' rugged angularity and unbiddable nature emerge strongly from his voluminous writings and correspondence. His new colony was by no means popular. Public opinion in Massachusetts was against it. It was believed to be a resort of rogues. Nor was it easy to get title to land there, as Williams insisted that any acquired from the Indians must be paid for at market rates. He opposed force, and was virtually a pacifist: 'I must be humbly bold to say that it is impossible for any man or men to maintain their Christ by the sword, and to worship a true Christ.'" The Rhode Island towns were stockaded and fortified. But Williams managed to avoid any conflict at all with the Indians until the disaster of King Philip's War in 1675-6. His Rhode Island colony thus got the reputation of being a place where the Indians were honored and protected. Then again, Williams was accused with some justice of being a man of wild and volatile opinions, an eccentric, an anti-establishment man. A few colonists liked that sort of



thing. Most did not. Williams was actually governor of his colony only in the years 1654-7, but he was always the power behind the scenes. He set the tone. So he attracted the antinomians, but not much else. Even as late as 1700, the colony numbered only 7,000 inhabitants, 300 of them slaves.

When Charles II was invited back to govern the British Isles in 1660, and the Puritan ascendancy ended, there was some doubt about the lawfulness of such colonies as Rhode Island. So Williams hastened to England and on July 18, 1663 he obtained from the King a charter confirming the privileges granted in 1644. This made the principle of religious freedom explicit and constitutes an important document in American history. 'No person,' it read, 'within the said colony, at any time hereafter, shall be in any wise molested, punished, disquieted or called in question, for any difference in opinion in matters of religion, and who do not actually disturb the civil peace of our said colony; but that all ... may from time to time, and at all times hereafter, freely and fully have and enjoy his and their own judgments and consciences in matters of religious concernments.' Rhode Island was thus the first colony to make complete freedom of religion, as opposed to a mere degree of toleration, the principle of its existence, and to give this as a reason for separating church and state. Its existence of course opened the doors to the more angular sects, such as the Quakers and the Baptists, and indeed to missionaries from the Congregationalists of the Bay Colony and the Anglicans of Virginia. Williams himself was periodically enraged by what he saw as the doctrinal errors of the Quakers, and their stiff-necked obstinacy in refusing to acknowledge them. He was almost tempted to break all his own principles and have them expelled. But his sense of tolerance prevailed; the colony remained a refuge for all. The creation of Rhode Island was thus a critical turning point in the evolution of America. It not only introduced the principles of complete religious freedom and the separation of church and state, it also inaugurated the practice of religious competition. It thus accepted the challenge the great English poet John Milton had just laid down in his pamphlet *Areopagitica* appealing for liberty of speech and conscience: 'Though all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth, so Truth be in the field, we do injuriously by licensing and prohibiting to misdoubt her strength. Let her and Falsehood grapple: who ever knew Truth put to the worse, in a free and open encounter?' Who indeed? Rhode Island was now in existence to provide a competitive field in which the religions-or at any rate the varieties of Christianity-could grapple at will, the first manifestation of that competitive spirit which was to blow mightily over every aspect of American existence.

Yet it must be said that, in the 17th century at least, the way of the rebellious individual in New England was a hard one, especially if she was a woman. The case of Anne Hutchinson (1591-1643) is instructive. She was the first woman to achieve any importance in North America, the first to step forward from the almost anonymous ranks of neatly dressed, hard-working Puritan wives and mothers, and speak out with her own strong voice. Yet we know very little about her as a person. Whereas Winthrop and Williams left books and papers, often highly personal, which between them fill a dozen thick volumes, Mrs Hutchinson left behind not a single letter. She published no books or pamphlets-for a woman to do so was almost, if not quite, impossible in the first half of the 17th century. If she kept a journal, it has not survived. The only real documentation concerning her is the record of the two trials to which she was subjected, which naturally leave a hostile impression."

She came from Lincolnshire, one of thirteen children of a dissenting minister, Francis Marbury, who encouraged her early interest in theology and taught her everything he knew. She married a merchant, William Hutchinson, and had twelve children by him. But she kept up her

religious enthusiasm and attended the charismatic sermons given by John Cotton at St Botolph's in Lincoln. Under the 'Godless tyranny' of Archbishop Laud, Cotton lost his license to preach in 1633, and promptly emigrated to the Bay Colony. Mrs Hutchinson, her husband, and children followed the next year, and she gave birth to another child shortly after they arrived in Boston. She was capable of delivering a child herself, and acted as a midwife on occasions. She also dispensed home-made cordials and 'simples' and gave medical advice to women. A natural leader, she made her house a resort for women in trouble. There is no need to read into her story the overtones of women's rights with which feminist historians have recently embellished it." But it is clear she was formidable, and that she thought it proper and natural that women should participate in religious controversy.

It was Anne Hutchinson's practice, along with her brother-in-law John Wheelwright, to hold post-sermon discussion groups at her house on Sunday afternoons and on an evening in midweek. There, the words of John Cotton and other preachers were analyzed minutely and at length, and everyone present there were often as many as sixty, half of them women-joined in if they wished. Cotton himself, and Hutchinson and Wheelwright still more passionately, believed in a Covenant of Grace. Whereas most official preachers held that a moral life was sufficient grounds for salvation, Mrs Hutchinson argued that redemption was God's gift to his elect and could not simply be earned by human effort-albeit the constant practice of good works was usually an external sign of inward election. The logic of this doctrine was subversive. The one power the clergy in New England still possessed was the right to determine who should be a full member of the church-and monitoring of his or her good works was the obvious way in which to do it. But the Hutchinson doctrine stripped the minister of this power by insisting that election, or indeed self-election, with which he had nothing to do, was the criterion of church membership. Such a system, moreover, by which divine grace worked its miracles in the individual without any need for clerical intermediary, abolished distinctions of gender. A woman might just as well receive the spirit, and utter God's teachings, as an ordained pastor. Some people liked this idea. The majority found it alarming.

By 1636 the controversy was dividing the colony so sharply that the elders decided on extreme measures. Cotton was hauled before a synod of ministers and with some difficulty cleared himself of a charge of heresy. Then Winthrop was reelected governor in May 1637 and immediately set about dealing with Mrs Hutchinson, whom he regarded as the root of the problem. He put through an ordinance stipulating that anyone arriving in the colony could not stay more than three weeks without the approval of the magistrates. In November he had Hutchinson, Wheelwright, and their immediate followers up before the General Court, and banished. Some seventy-five of their adherents were disenfranchised and disarmed. He followed this up in March 1638 by having Hutchinson and Wheelwright charged with heresy before the church of Boston, and excommunicated. It is clear that Winthrop believed Anne Hutchinson was in some way being manipulated by the Devil-was a witch in fact. He discovered that she had had a miscarriage, which he interpreted as a sign of God's wrath, and that her friend Mary Dyer had given birth to a stillborn, malformed infant-a monster. He even went so far as to have the pitiful body of the 'monster' dug up and examined. All this he recorded in his diaries. He also communicated the results to England so 'all our Godly friends might not be discouraged from coming to us.' Mrs Hutchinson and her supporters, to save their lives, had no alternative but to leave the Bay Colony and seek refuge in Williams' Rhode Island, where most of them settled and flourished. Her husband, a long-suffering man many might argue, died, and in due course the widow and his six youngest children moved further west, to Pelham Bay in what is now New

York State. There, all but one daughter were killed by Indians in 1643. The violent death of Mrs Hutchinson and her brood was promptly interpreted as providential, and New England orthodoxy produced pious literature about the 'American Jezebel,' initiated by a violent pamphlet from the pen of Winthrop himself. Anne Hutchinson's vindication, which has been voluminous and imaginative, had to wait for the women's movement of the 1960s.

The Hutchinson story showed that even the most radical dissent was possible, albeit dangerous. The practice in Massachusetts was to warn people identified as religious troublemakers to move on. If they insisted on staying, or came back, they were prosecuted. In July 1641, for instance, Dr John Clarke and Obediah Holmes, both from Rhode Island, were arrested in Lynn by the sheriff for holding an unauthorized religious meeting in a private house, at which the practice of infant baptism was condemned. Clarke was imprisoned; Holmes was whipped through the streets. Again, on October 27, 1659, three Quakers, William Robinson, Marmaduke Stevenson, and Mary Dyer, having been repeatedly expelled from the colony, the last time under penalty of death, were arrested again as 'pestilential and disruptive' and sentenced to be hanged on Boston Common. Sentence on the men was carried out. The woman, blindfolded and with the noose around her neck, was reprieved on the intervention of her son, who guaranteed she would leave the colony forthwith. She did in fact return, and was finally hanged on June 1, 1660. Other women were hanged for witchcraft-the first being Margaret Jones, sentenced at Plymouth on May 13, 1648 for 'administering physics' with the 'malignant touch.' Severe sentences were carried out on moral offenders of all kinds. Until 1632 adultery was punished by death. In 1639, again at Plymouth, an adulterous woman was whipped, then dragged through the streets wearing the letters AD pinned to her sleeve: she was told that if she removed the badge the letters would be branded on her face. Two years later, a man and a woman, convicted of adultery, were also whipped, this time 'at the post,' the letters AD 'plainly to be sewn on their clothes.'

To buttress orthodoxy in Boston, a college for training ministers of religion was founded on the Charles River at Newtown in 1636, according to the will of the Rev. John Harvard. He came to the colonies in 1635 and left £780 and 400 books for this purpose. Three years later, the college was named after him and the place rechristened Cambridge, after the university where he was nurtured. The event was an index of the way in which the colony was achieving its primary objects. As one of the Harvard founders put it, 'After God had carried us safe to New England, and wee had builded our houses, provided necessaries for our livelihood, rear'd convenient places for God's worship and settled the Civill Government; One of the next things we longed for, and looked after was to advance Learning and Perpetuate it to Posterity.'" But the college never had a monopoly of religious education, when dissenters could move off and found other establishments for teaching, without any need for a crown charter. In April 1638, for instance, the Rev. John Davenport led a congregation of pious Puritans from Boston, a town they claimed had become 'corrupt,' to settle in Quinnipiac, which they renamed New Haven. Davenport brought with him some successful merchants, including Theophilus Eaton and David Yale, the latter a learned gentleman whose descendant, Elihu Yale, was to found another historic college. Two months later, on May 31, 1638, another dissenting minister, Thomas Hooker, arrived at Hartford on the Connecticut, with 100 followers, marking the occasion by preaching them a sermon stating that all authority, in state or religion, must rest in the people's consent. Thus, within New England, there was a continuing diaspora, often motivated by religious dissent and the urgent desire for greater freedom of thought and action.

As far back as 1623, David Thompson had founded a settlement at Rye on the Piscataqua, the nucleus of what was to become New Hampshire. In 1639 Hooker's Hartford joined with two other Puritan-dissenter townships, Windsor and Wethersfield, to form what they called the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut. Neither they nor Davenport's New Haven had royal charters, but they constituted in effect a separate colony. From the 1620s there were further settlements up the coast in what was to become Maine, set up by dissenting fishermen. Annual new fleets from England reinforced all the areas of settlement. Between 1630 and 1660 about 20,000 Puritans came out, with Massachusetts and Connecticut forming the core area of settlement. This was characterized by what have been called 'Christian, utopian, closed and corporate communities.'

Some settlements were formal. New Haven had nine squares, the central square being a market-place, eventually occupied by the meetinghouse, court-house, schoolhouse, and jail. An early map survives of Wethersfield, one of the first of the Connecticut towns, showing houselots, adjacent field-lots, then outlying strips. Some of these early colony-towns were abandoned. But the vast majority survived with continuous occupation to this day. The fact is, the Puritans were successful settlers. They were homogeneous in belief, literate-they could read the many and often excellent printed pamphlets advising colonists-and skilled. Most of them were artisans or tradesmen, some were experienced farmers, and there was a definite sprinkling of merchants with capital. They came as families under leaders, often as entire congregations under their minister. Their unit-plantation was of several square miles, with an English-style village in the middle (in New England called a town), where all had houses, then lands outside it.

There was, from the start, no egalitarianism. The free-enterprise investment system ensured that leaders and largest investors got bigger units. There was no symmetrical uniformity or pattern since the countryside was rugged and varied, and there was a universal pragmatism in adapting to the physical features of the place. When more space was needed, the congregation met and decreed a formal move to found a new township. This was the New England equivalent of an Old England village-but with no manor-house and tenant cottages. Virtually everyone came from England and Wales. The religious exclusivity of the original settlements rarely lasted more than a decade or so, with dissenters being expelled. Gradually, Anglicans, Baptists, and even Quakers were allowed to settle. Wealth-gaps widened in the second and third generation, rows and splits weakened church authority, the social atmosphere became more secular and mercantile, and the Puritan merged into the Yankee, 'a race whose typical member is eternally torn between a passion for righteousness and a desire to get on in the world.'

Even Catholics were soon living in America in organized communities. This was the work of the Calvert family. George Calvert, born in 1597, was an energetic Yorkshireman who became James I's Secretary of State and did some vigorous 'planting' in Ireland as well as investing largely in the East India Company and the Virginia Company. When he became a Catholic in 1625 he retired into private life, but James made him a peer, Lord Baltimore, and encouraged him to found a colony for his fellow-papists. He looked at Newfoundland twice, but decided it was too cold. Then he visited Jamestown, but felt unable to sign the Protestant Oath of Supremacy there. In the end Charles I gave him a charter to settle the northern Chesapeake area. It was left to his son Cecil, 2nd Baron Baltimore, to organize the actual settlement in 1633. He recruited seventeen younger sons of Catholic gentry to lead and finance the expedition, taking with them about 200 ordinary settlers, mostly Protestants, some of them married, a few farmers. They had two ships, the *Ark*, 350 tons, and the *Dove*, a mere pinnace, but both armed to the teeth.

Various attempts were made by religious enemies to sabotage the venture and in the end Baltimore had to stay behind to protect its London end. Two Jesuits were taken aboard secretly at Cowes on the Isle of Wight. Baltimore, who had studied Captain John Smith's account of Virginia, gave handwritten instructions to his brother Leonard, who was to act as governor, and Jerome Halwey and Thomas Cornwallis, Catholic gentlemen, his co-commissioners. They were to get on good terms with the Virginians, using their Protestant passengers as intermediaries. They were not to disperse but to build a town and concentrate all their efforts on feeding themselves and becoming self-sufficient as quickly as possible. They were to train a militia and build a fort but to try and remain at peace with the Indians. The three leaders were to be 'very careful to preserve unity and peace' between the Protestants and the Roman Catholics: the Protestants were to receive 'mildness and favour', the Catholics to practice their faith as quietly as possible.

One of the priests aboard, Father Andrew White, kept a record of the colony's foundation, and found it full of splendid auguries for success. Of the Chesapeake he wrote: 'This bay is the most delightful water I ever saw ... two sweet landes, firm and fertile: plenty of fish, woods of walnuts, oakes, and cedars.' He noted 'salad herbes and such like, strawberries, raspberries, fallen mulberry vines, rich soil, delicate springs of water, partridge, deer, turkeys, geese, ducks, and also squirrels, eagles and herons'-'the place abounds not only with profit but with pleasure.' Maryland, he concluded, being halfway between the extremes of Virginia and New England, had 'a middle temperature between the two, and enjoys the advantages, and escapes the evils, of each.'

The land was called Maryland after Charles I's French wife, Henrietta Maria, and the township was St Mary's. Father White had a cross set up and said a dedicatory mass on the shore, 'to take solemn possession of the country.' They traded axes, hoes, hatchets, and cloth for 30 miles of land below the Wicomico River., Strictly speaking, Baltimore's colony was, in English law, a feudal fiefdom, with palatine powers like those of the Bishop of Durham. He was answerable only to the King, owned all the territory granted, received rents, taxes, and fees, appointed all officials, exercised judicial and political authority, could build forts and wage defensive war, confer honors and titles, incorporate boroughs and towns, license trade, was head of the church, could erect and consecrate chapels and churches, and these his 'ample rights, liberties, immunities and temporal franchises' were to be enjoyed by him and his heirs for ever. But this was theory, English lawyers' big talk. In practice none of these grandiose baronies based on feudal models worked as they were intended, quickly losing their gilding under the erosion of America's democratic rock. To begin with, Baltimore did not have perfect title to his land. A Kentish man called William Claiborne, who had been in Virginia since 1621 and had erected a fur-trading stockade on Kent Island, disputed it. In law he was in the right, for Baltimore's title excluded land already settled. Claiborne threatened to cause trouble, and did, once King Charles' power collapsed in the 1640s. The American coast was already dotted with difficult loners like Claiborne, ferociously opposed to authority of any kind, litigious, well armed, and ready to fight if necessary. Then again, Baltimore's charter specifically stated that the colonists were to enjoy 'the full rights of Englishmen.' That proviso was incompatible with the feudal trappings and was far more likely to be turned into a reality. The first assembly of the colony met in January 1635, consisting of all freemen, that is males not bound in service. Within two years, and after some acrimonious arguments paralleling the debates in Westminster, it had won the legislative initiative. Thereafter there was no chance of Baltimore exacting his feudal privileges in full-quite

apart from the fact that, from 1640, the Long Parliament in England systematically demolished what was left of the feudal system.

The principal investors in the colony, called 'Adventurers,' who had to provide their own transport out plus five 'able men' between twenty and fifty, got 2,000 acres each. Anyone bringing less than five men got 100 acres, plus a further 100 for each man beside himself. Married settlers got 200 acres plus 100 for each 'servant.' Each child under sixteen got 50. Widows with children got the same grants as the men, and unmarried women with servants got 50 acres for each. The land was freehold but owners had to pay Baltimore a 'quitrent'-20 shilling for a manor, 12 pence for a 50-acre tract, payable 'in the commodity of the country' and due annually for fifty years. If a man wanted to come and could not afford the voyage, he could travel free in return for a four- to five-year indenture of service. He made it with the captain, who sold it on landing to any bidder. The indenture bound the master to furnish transport, 'meat, Drinke, Apparel and Lodging' during the term and, on completion, to supply clothes, a year's provision of corn, and 50 acres. Skilled men earned their freedom earlier.

The actual apportioning of land proceeded swiftly-something Americans learned to do well very early in their history, and which was for 300 years one of their greatest strengths. A settler went to the secretary of the province, recorded his entitlement, and requested a grant of land. The secretary then presented a Warrant of Survey to the surveyor-general, who found and surveyed an appropriate tract. When he reported, the secretary issued a patent, which described the reasons for the grant, the boundaries and the conditions of tenure. The owner then occupied the land and began farming. Compared to the difficulties of acquiring land in England, even for ready money, it was amazingly simple.

The farming went well from the start. The land produced a surplus the very first year and a load of grain was dispatched to Massachusetts for cash. But most farmers quickly went into tobacco, and stayed there. By the mid-1630s, tobacco prices, after a sellers' market in the 1620s, then a glut, had stabilized at about 4 to 6 shillings a pound. The Maryland settlers planted on creeks and rivers on the western shore, with wharves to receive annual tobacco-export ships. They killed trees by 'girdling'-cutting a ring round the base-then planted. By 1639 the Maryland planters were producing 100,000 pounds of the 'sotte weed.' Tobacco planting was never easy. It required 'a great deal of trouble in the right management of it.' It was expert, labor-intensive, and tricky at all times. A plant had to be 'topped,' using the thumbnail. You could always tell a 17th-century tobacco farmer by his hard, green-stained thumb. Everyone worked hard, at any rate in those early days. The laborers and indentured servants did a twelve- to fourteen-hour day, with Saturday afternoon free and Sunday. They could be transferred by sale and corporally punished, and if they ran away they were punished by longer terms of service. They could not marry until their contract expired. In any case, men outnumbered women by two or three to one. There were lots of bastards and heavily pregnant brides-twice as many as in England.

Housing was poor: 'The dwellings are so wretchedly constructed that even if you are close to the fire as almost to burn yourself, you cannot keep warm and the wind blows through them everywhere.' That was in the winter. The problem in summer was malaria. The more settlers who arrived, the more the mosquitoes bred. Those who got it were peculiarly susceptible to smallpox, diphtheria, and yellow fever. Amebic dysentery, known as Gripes of the Gutts, was endemic. Maryland was noticeably less healthy than New England, where a male who survived to twenty lived generally to around sixty-five. In Maryland it was more like forty-three. About 70 percent died before fifty; only 6 percent of fathers lived to see their offspring mature. And half the children died before twenty. Wives worked very hard, in the tobacco fields, as well as by

milking the cow, making cheese and butter, raising chickens, tending to the vegetable garden—mainly peas, beans, squash, and pumpkins. The men butchered but the wives cured, usually pork, which was the commonest meat. Corn was ground with pestle and mortar until the family could afford a grist-mill. These vigorous women were more partners than inferiors to their husbands. They lived longer and inherited more property than was usual in England.

Despite the hardship, there was a feeling of nature's bounty, thanks to tobacco. It was everything to the Marylanders. It was, in practice, the local currency. One settler, who wrote an account of the place, the Rev. Hugh Jones, called it 'our meat, drinke, cloathing and moneys.' The highest-priced variety, which was sweet-scented, the 'true Virginia,' would flourish only in a few counties in Virginia itself. Maryland grew mainly Orinoco, from South America. By the end of the 1630s a Maryland planter could produce 1,000 pounds a season, which rose to 1,500 or even 1,700 later in the century. It is true that the soil soon became exhausted, the yield dropped, and planters had to move on. But they did so—land was cheap and plentiful—and thus the colony scattered and spread. Only four of the original gentlemen-adventurers stuck it out. But they became major landowners, with manor-houses, which in the next generation were rebuilt in fine brick. One of them, Thomas Gerard, soon farmed 6,000 acres. Four-fifths of the land worked fell within such manors; only one in five freemen claimed land, preferring to work as tenants or wage-earning landowners. Thus society rapidly became far more stratified than in New England. Maryland had a difficult time during the English Civil War. It was invaded by a shipmaster-pirate and parliamentary fanatic called Richard Ungle who, in conjunction with the still-smouldering and discontented Claiborne, pillaged the settlement, claiming the authority of parliament to do so. At one point, Claiborne and a fellow-parliament man went to London, ingratiated themselves with the authorities, and were made governor and deputy governor. They came back and sought to wage an anti-papist war of terror. Not only did they ban Catholic worship but they passed an Act outlawing sin, vice, and the most minute infractions of the sabbath. Throughout the 1640s and 1650s, religion as well as the proprietorial form of government were the issues: more particularly, the degree of toleration to be allowed to different faiths, and which exactly were to be excluded from it. But by the late 1650s toleration had won the battle. Maryland's Toleration Act, based upon an Act Concerning Religion first pushed through the Assembly in 1649, not only laid down the principle of the free practice of religion but made it an offence to use hostile language about the religion of others, 'such as Heretick, Schismatic, Idolator, Puritan, Independent, Presbyterian, Popish Priest, Jesuite, Jesuited Papist, Roundhead, Separatist and the like.' But you could also be penalized for denying Christ was the Savior, the doctrine of the Trinity, or the Existence of God. A free-thinking Jew, Dr Jacob Lumbroso, was later bound over for saying that Christ's miracles were 'magicianship and body-snatching.' Thus toleration did not extend to outspoken Jews and atheists. But, for its time, it was an astonishing measure. Henceforward, no Christian whatever could 'bee any wais troubled, molested or discountenanced for or in respect of his or her religion nor in the free exercise thereof.'

The Toleration Act proved invaluable to the colony. The upheavals in England, followed by the reassertion of royal authority and the imposition of the so-called Clarendon Code against dissenters, brought a rush of refugees of all religious persuasions to America, and large numbers chose to go to Maryland, where they lived perfectly happily together. The population had risen slowly to pass the 2,500-mark about 1660, but in the next twenty years it increased by 20,000. Maryland even took in Quakers. During its brief period of Puritan rule they were fined, whipped, jailed, and banished: they claimed the Indians treated them better than 'the mad, rash rulers of

Maryland.' But once the Puritans were pushed out and the Toleration Act came back into force, the Calverts got the Quakers back, arguing that they were good citizens and farmers. One leading Quaker preacher, Wenlocke Christison, who had been whipped in Massachusetts, called his Maryland land-patent 'The Ending of Controversie.' Another, Elizabeth Harris, fleeing Boston where the authorities had stripped her and other Quaker women to find marks of witchcraft, gave sermons throughout the province, and George Fox himself came out there in 1672. By the late 1670s, Quakers held regular meetings in fifteen different places in Maryland.

The colony attracted Dutch and German dissenters too. One group, the Labadists, of Dutch origin, had a remarkable German polymath leader, who drew the first good map of Maryland, had himself naturalized, and built up by 1674 an estate of 20,000 acres, making him the largest private landowner in America. Within ten years 100 Labadists were settled on this beautiful domaine, farmed with fine German-Dutch neatness and efficiency, sloping down to the Bohemia River and Chesapeake Bay. They followed the communal teaching of a Jesuit-turned-Calvinist called Jean de Labardie, sleeping in single-sex dormitories, eschewing private property, observing silence at meals, and denying themselves fires in winter. It was too strict and eventually dispersed, but it set a pattern of individualist utopian colonies in America which persists to this day and, in its own way, is one of the glories of the New World.

Studying the history of these early settlements one is astonished-and delighted-by the variety of it all, and by the way in which accidents, events, and the stubborn individuality of ordinary men and women take over from the deep-laid schemes of the founders. The Calverts of Maryland attempted to create a perfect baronial society in America, based on status rather than wealth. But such an idea, it was already clear, simply did not work in America. The basic economic fact about the New World was that land was plentiful: it was labor and skills that were in short supply. To get immigrants you had to offer them land, and once they arrived they were determined to become individual entrepreneurs, subject to no one but the law. So the manorial courts rapidly gave place to elective local government. St Mary's, like Jamestown, remained no more than a village. People just spread out into the interior, out of control of everything except the law, which they respected and generally observed. But they had to make the law themselves.

It is important to remember that the area of settlement of North America covered thousands of miles of coastline and islands, from Providence Island off the coast of Central America, settled by Puritans in 1629, right up to Newfoundland, first exploited by two groups of fishermen, one Anglican, one Irish Catholic, who lived in separate areas there. Various towns claim to have 'the oldest street in North America.' The best claimants are Water Street, St John's, Newfoundland, and Front Street in Hamilton, Bermuda-neither of them in what is now the United States. In the 17th century there were in fact many scores of colonies, only a few of which would acquire full historical status. And not all of them were English. Leaving aside the French to the north, in Canada, and the Spanish to the south, there were the Dutch on the Hudson. As early as 1614 they settled upriver at Fort Nassau, opposite modern Albany. New York, or New Amsterdam as they called it, was founded by them on May 4, 1626. During the Anglo-Dutch war of King Charles II's day, it was conquered by Colonel Richard Nicolls on September 7, 1664, on behalf of Charles' brother James, Duke of York, who got a charter to found a proprietary colony there. Despite a brief Dutch reoccupation in 1673-4, the English were able to consolidate their power in the Hudson Valley. One reason was that they left the Dutch settlers alone, with their lands and privileges, or rather encouraged them to enter their system of local government. In North America, the settlement and actual ownership of land came first. What flag you lived under was



secondary-it was successful farming and ownership of land which brought you personal independence, the only kind which really mattered. Again, on the Delaware River, there was a mixed Swedish-Dutch-Finnish settlement at Fort Christian, dating from 1638. It called itself New Sweden, and when the English finally got control in 1674 it was the sixth change of flag over the colony in half a century. The settlers, overwhelmingly farmers-and good ones-did not mind so long as they were left in peace.

The English, French, and Dutch, as well as the Spanish, scattered all over the Caribbean and the islands of Central America. Some islands changed hands again and again. The English put in the biggest effort, both of men and money. In the years 1612-46 alone, 40,000 English Puritans emigrated to various West Indian island-colonies. The most important by far was Barbados, not least because it became a springboard for colonization in the Carolinas on the American mainland. Barbados, unlike most of the other islands, was not a volcanic mountain sticking out of the sea but a limestone block with terraced slopes. It was uninhabited when the English arrived in 1627. First they tried planting tobacco, then cotton, both unsuccessfully. Then, during the English Civil War, there was an influx of royalist refugees, bringing capital and grand ideas, and Dutch expelled by the Portuguese from northeast Brazil. The latter knew about sugar-planting, and with the help of English capital they set up a sugar industry. From the start it was a huge commercial success, the first plantation boom-economy in English-speaking America. By the middle years of Charles II's reign, there were 400 households in the capital, Bridgetown, 175 big planters, 190 middling, and 1,000 small ones, 1,300 additional freemen, 2,300 indentured servants, and 40,000 slaves. It was easily the richest colony in North America-its sugar exports were more valuable than those of all the other English colonies combined." But with over 55,000 people on 166 square miles it was also the most congested.

A solution was found in 1663 when Charles II gave the Carolinas, unsuccessfully settled under his father in 1629, to a group of eight proprietors, who invited experienced colonizers, from the islands as well as from Virginia and New England, to take up land on easy terms. The Barbadians responded with enthusiasm. A first group came in 1664 to Cape Fear, but had to abandon it three years later. In 1670 a much larger group tried again, laying out Charlestown. This time it worked. Of course there was the usual nonsense from the proprietors of 12,000 acre 'baronies' and private courts-feudal ideas died hard among the more romantic gentlemen-adventurers. The actual Barbadian planters simply ignored the propaganda and went for the most likely sugarbearing lands on inlets and creeks. They ignored proprietorial guidance in other ways. The proprietors wanted religious toleration, in order to attract the maximum numbers of settlers. The planters were Anglicans, insofar as they were anything: they agreed with Charles II that it was 'the only religion for gentlemen.' So they made it their business to enforce second-class status on people from other faiths. The proprietors opposed slavery. The planters needed slaves, and got them. In one sense the wishes of the proprietors were carried out-the Carolinas got a stratified society, with three classes: a small ruling class of plantation owners or gentry, a large class of laborers, and an enormous number of slaves.

The settlement of Carolina was by no means exclusively Barbadian. There were also Scotch Presbyterians at Port Royal, Huguenots on the Santee, English dissenters west of the Edisto. And there were new waves of settlers from Ireland and France, as well as England. Nor did sugar do particularly well in Carolina. It can be argued that Carolina was saved by rice just as Virginia was saved by tobacco. The lands backing onto Charleston and the other river systems made perfect ricefields: it was easy to set up a water-control system, and rice-fields, unlike tobacco plantations, did not have to be moved every few years. But the essence of Carolina was a

Barbadian slave-owning colony transported to the American mainland. This gave the place a distinctive social, political, and cultural character quite unlike the rest of the emerging colonies, even Virginia. Indeed, as we shall see, without this Barbadian implant, which became in due course the aggressively slave-owning state of South Carolina, the emotional leader of the South, it is quite possible that the American Civil War would not have taken place.

Indeed, it is fascinating for the historian to observe how quickly different regions of the North American coast developed distinctive and deep-rooted characteristics. In Europe, where national forms go back to the pre-scriptive Dark Ages and beyond, these differences remain mysterious. In America there is no real mystery. The books are open from the start. The earliest origins of each colony are well documented. We know who, and why, and when, and how many. We can see foreshadowed the historical shape of things to come. With remarkable speed, in the first few decades, the fundamental dichotomy of America began to take shape, epitomized in these two key colonies-Massachusetts and Carolina. Here, already, is a North-South divide. The New England North has an all-class, mobile, and fluctuating society, with an irresistible upward movement pushed by an ethic of hard work. It is religious, idealistic, and frugal to the core. In the South there is, by contrast, a gentry-leisure class, with hereditary longings, sitting on the backs of indentured white laborers and a multitude of black slaves, with religion as a function of gentility and class, rather than an overpowering inward compulsion to live the godly life.

Not that the emerging America of colonial times should be seen as a simple structure of two parts. It was, on the contrary, a complex structure of many parts, changing and growing more complex all the time. It was overwhelmingly English, as yet. But it was also already indestructibly multiethnic, preparing the melting-pot to come. It was also, compared with limited England, which was obliged to think small in many ways, already a place which saw huge visions and thought in big numbers. Bigness was the characteristic of Pennsylvania from the start. In 1682 William Penn (1644-1718) arrived at New Castle, Delaware bearing a massive proprietary grant from Charles II. He was the son of a rich and politically influential admiral, to whom Charles II was much indebted, both financially and otherwise. Penn had already dabbled in colonizing in the Jersey region, but his new charter, in full and final settlement of a £16,000 debt to his father, was on a princely scale and actually termed 'Pennsylvania' as a proprietary colony. Penn had become a Quaker in 1666, and suffered imprisonment for his beliefs, and he was determined to create a 'tolerance settlement' for Quakers and other persecuted sects from all over Europe. He called it his 'Holy Experiment.' There were Europeans in the area already-Swedes from 1643 at Tinicum Island, 9 miles south of modern Philadelphia, Dutch and English too. But they were few: Penn brought the many. His first fleet was of twenty-three ships, many of them large ones; and plenty more soon followed.

Everything in Pennsylvania was big from the start. In Philadelphia, his city of brotherly love and capital, he had plans for what was later called a 'Garden City,' which he termed a 'Greene Country Town,' spread out on an enormous scale so that every houseowner would have 'room enough for House, Garden and small Orchard.' In fact this did not happen: Philadelphia grew up tightly on the Delaware waterfront, and was manifestly from the start a city built for high-class commerce. But it was quite unlike Boston, whose narrow, winding streets recalled medieval London. Philadelphia was a proud and self-conscious example of contemporary town-planning, made of brick and stone from the start, and much influenced by the new baroque London of squares and straight streets. It was laid out on a large scale to fill, eventually, its entire neck of the river, with twenty-five straight streets bisected by eight. All these streets had proper paving and curbing, sidewalks and spaced-out trees.

Into this colony radiating from Philadelphia, Penn poured multitudes of Quakers, from Bristol and London, many of considerable property, who bought the best lots in the city, but also from Barbados, Jamaica, New York, and New Jersey, from Wales-forming a separate, Welsh-speaking area which kept its culture for generations-and from the Rhineland, founding a city they called Germanopolis. Penn wanted the settlement dense for cultural as well as economic reasons: 'I had in my view Society, Assistance, Busy Commerce, Instruction of Youth, Government of Peoples' Manners, Conveniency of Religious Assembling, Encouragement of Mechanics, distinct and beaten roads.' He wrote home: 'We do settle in the way of townships or villages, each of which contains 5,000 acres or at least ten families ... Our townships lie square; generally the village in the Center, for near-neighbourhood. But it rarely proved possible to carry out these schemes. In practice, land was simply sold off in lots of a hundred acres or more. Again and again in early America, planning-good, bad, or indifferent-was defeated by obstinate individualism. The European notion of the docile, contented peasant, living in agricultural villages under a squire, was an anachronism, or becoming one. A new pattern of owner-occupiers, producing food for the market, was already to be found in England, where they were known as yeomen. America was a natural paradise for such a class, where they were called simply farmers. And Pennsylvania, with its rich soil, was particularly well adapted to promote their numbers and interests. These farmers pushed inland from the river valleys into the low hills of piedmont of the interior, and then across the first range or corrugation of the Appalachian mountains in what was known as the Great Valley. Here was 'the best poor man's country,' the ideal agricultural setting for a farmer with little capital to carve out not only a subsistence for his family but, through hard and skillful work, a marketable surplus for cash. So Pennsylvania soon became known as the 'Bread Colony,' exporting a big surplus not only of grain but of livestock and fruit. Huge numbers of immigrants arrived and most did well, the Quakers setting the pattern. They were well dressed, they ate magnificently, and they had money jingling in their pockets.

Amid this prosperous rural setting, it was natural for Philadelphia to become, in a very short time, the cultural capital of America. It can be argued, indeed, that Quaker Pennsylvania was the key state in American history. It was the last great flowering of Puritan political innovation, around its great city of brotherly love. With its harbor at Philadelphia leading up the Delaware to Pittsburgh and so to the gateway of the Ohio Valley and the west, and astride the valleys into the southern back country, it was the national crossroads. It became in time many things, which coexisted in harmony: the world centre of Quaker influence but a Presbyterian stronghold too, the national headquarters of American Baptists but a place where Catholics also felt at home and flourished, a center of Anglicanism but also a key location both for German Lutherans and for the German Reformed Church, plus many other German groups, such as Moravians and Mennonites. In due course indeed it also housed the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the first independent black denomination. With all this, it was not surprising that Philadelphia was an early home of the printing press, adumbrating its role as the seat of the American Philosophical Society and birthplace of the American Declaration of Independence.

But much, indeed most, of this was for the future. The question has to be asked: was early America a hard-working but essentially a prosaic, uncultured place? Were the attitudes of early Americans, when they were not narrowly religious, equally narrowly mercantile? It is a curious fact that, whereas in England the 17th century was an age of great literature-and the actual language used by those New Englanders, such as Winthrop and Roger Williams, who did set down their thoughts on paper, was often expressive and powerful-the New World was strikingly slow to develop its own literature. There is more than one argument here, however. Cultural

Bostonian historians of the late 19th century were inclined to dismiss their forebears as horribly uncivilized. Charles Francis Adams wrote: "As a period it was singularly barren and almost inconceivably somber." On the contrary, argued the great Samuel Eliot Morison: the Puritan clergy and many leading layfolk were notable in their anxiety to educate and distinguished by their interest in science. They did everything possible to promote intellectual activity by founding schools and colleges. It is true they disliked individualism, a necessary ingredient in cultural creativity. Perry Miller, the historian of the Puritan mind, argued that they were communalists, who believed that government should interfere and direct and lead as much as it could, in all aspects of life. And when necessary it should discipline and coerce too. Puritans saw the individualist as a dangerous loner, meat for the Devil to feed on. As one of them, John Cotton, put it, "Society in all sorts of humane affairs is better than solitariness. The Puritans believed they had the right to impose their will on this communally organized society."

John Davenport of Connecticut summed up the entire Puritan theory of government thus: "Power of Civil rule, by men orderly chosen, is God's ordinance. It is from the Light and Law of Nature, because the Law of Nature is God's Law." They did not accept that an individual had the right to assert himself, in religious or indeed in any matters. When in 1681 a congregation of Anabaptists published an attack on the government of Massachusetts Bay and appealed to what they called the "tolerant spirit" of the first settlers there, Samuel Willard, minister to the Third Church in Boston, wrote a pamphlet in reply, with a preface by Increase Mather, saying: "I perceive they are mistaken in the design of our first Planters, whose business was not toleration but were professed enemies of it, and could leave the world professing they *died no Libertines*. Their business was to settle and (as much as in them lay) to secure Religion to Posterity, according to that way which they believed was of God."

In this kind of would-be theocracy, it was difficult for cultural individualism to flourish. But the elites proposed-and the people disposed themselves otherwise. Sermons, tracts, and laws say one thing; town and church records often show that quite different things actually happened. The New England rank and file contained many individualists who would not be curbed by Puritan leaders. If there were enough of them, there followed a heated town-meeting, an unbridgeable difference, a split-and a move by one faction. A study shows that this is exactly what happened in Sudbury, Massachusetts, in the 1650s, leading to the founding of Marlboro, Massachusetts. The head of the conservative faction, Edmund Goodnow, put his case thus: "Be it right or wrong, we will have [our way] ... If we can have it no other way we will have it by club law." To which the leader of the younger generation, John How, replied: "If you oppress the poor, they will cry out. And if you persecute us in one city, we must fly to another." And so they did." The early Americans were lucky people-they had the space for it.

Individualism did assert itself, therefore, even in Puritan New England. Indeed in a sense it had to, for America was a do-it-yourself society. Potential settlers were warned they would have to depend on their own skills. A London broadsheet of 1622 has survived entitled "The Inconvenients that have happened to Some Persons which Have transported Themselves from *England to Virginia*, without Provisions Necessary to Sustain Themselves." It advised that settlers should take arms, household implements, and a list of eighteen tools, recommended to be carried in duplicate, from axes to saws and shovels, not excluding a grindstone. Early settlers erected their own huts, and made their own furniture when necessary.

But it was not always necessary, even in the earliest decades. It is a notable fact that America, from the start, had a powerful attraction for skilled men. The reason was clear. One of the original *Mayflower* backers, Robert Cushman, wrote that England was a poor place for an honest

man to raise a family. The towns, he said, 'abound with young tradesmen and the hospitals are full of the ancient. The country is replenished with new farms, and the alehouses are filled with old labourers. Many are those who get their living with leaving burdens; but more are fain to burden the land with their whole bodies. Multitudes get their means of living by prating and so do numbers more by begging.' He complained that 'even the most wise, sober and discrete men go often to the wall, when they have done their best.' He and others pointed out that a skilled young man in England had a poor economic future, and no status at all, since status was entirely dependent on land, which he had virtually no hope of acquiring. In America, he could get higher wages, and his raw materials were cheap. And there was a strong likelihood he could get land too.

So there was no shortage of craftsmen in the colonies. Carpenters and joiners were particularly fortunate. Not only was wood plentiful and in great variety: it was also cheap in sawn lengths. One of America's earliest innovations was the rapid spread of water-driven sawmills. England had no real tradition of mechanical sawing. America by contrast had masses of timber located near fast-flowing streams. So mills were built everywhere but particularly in New England. They saved labor-the biggest item in furniture-making. One small waterpowered mill could produce seven times the output of two skilled sawyers. There was waste of material-so what? Timber was plentiful; it was human labor which was scarce. Settlers were moving from an economy of scarcity to an economy of plenty, where men were valuable to a degree unknown in Europe. It was this fact which shaped the early culture.

Excellent furniture was made in 17th-century America, and a surprising amount of it has survived. There were skilled glassmakers from the start, for glass was difficult to transport with safety and had if possible to be manufactured on the spot. We know there were professional glassmakers on the first Virginia voyage of 1608. They flourished because raw materials, particularly wood, were cheap and easily available. The shortage of skilled labor attracted foreigners as well as Englishmen: the first glass-factories in America, both in Jamestown, were run by Venetians and Poles. The same principle applied to pottery. Suppliers were unwilling to ship pots across the Atlantic, saying there was no money in it. So potters went instead. The skilled English ceramicist Philip Drinker was in Charlestown, Massachusetts, by 1635 working away. The Dutch 'pottmaker' Dirck Clausen was turning out ware on Manhattan Island by 1655. Redware was the quintessential American pioneer ceramic, dictated by the clays available (porcelain was not successfully manufactured in America until the 19th century). It came with simple abstract geometric patterns, rather like protoclassical Greek pottery of the 8th century BC, then with written mottoes: 'Mary's Dish,' 'Clams and Oysters,' and 'Pony Up the Cash.' But very little survives from the 17th century.

Records exist of dozens of other categories of craftsmen at work in America by the mid-17th century. Thus, by the 1630s, two expert shoemakers, Henry Elwell and Philip Kirkland, were already settled in Lynn, Massachusetts, later to become a major shoe-manufacturing center. They specialized in women's shoes. Church silver was in demand from early on-even the Puritans liked it. In fact by the end of the 17th century superb silver, almost on a par with the European best, was being made in Boston. One of the interesting points about New England craftsmen is that they came from all ranks-something impossible in 17th-century England. The best Boston silversmith-goldsmith was Jeremiah Dummer, born in 1645, the son of a leading landowner. He was a member of the Boston elite and invested in shipping, but he was not above slaving at his bench making candlesticks for prominent families and Boston churches. That was the kind of social mobility which augered well for America's future.

It is, however, a futile quest to look for much in the way of fine art produced in 17th-century America. Only about thirty paintings have survived from this period, all of them amateurish. We know the names of men described as painters but it is impossible to match them convincingly to the surviving paintings. Any who practiced as painters did so intermittently, it seems. One or two Dutchmen in New York Gerrit Duyckinck (1660-1712) for instance-combined portrait painting with other crafts, such as glazing. There were virtually no architects in the first decades. Men, even men with many acres, designed their own houses: the tradition of the rich amateur architect began early in America. Thus there is Adam Thoroughgood's house in Norfolk, Virginia, 1636-40, of brick, in a mixture of Elizabethan and Jacobean styles, with a huge, medieval-type chimney. Another early Virginia house, built by Arthur Allen and known as Bacon's Castle, had towers, front and rear, massive chimney-stacks, and Flemish gables. All the writers were amateurs too, be they authors of works of travel, like John Smith or William Bradford, or Puritan poets like the metaphysician Edward Taylor of Westfield, Massachusetts (c.1644-1729) or Michael Wigglesworth, whose theological poem, *Day of Doom*, published in Cambridge in 1662, popularized Puritan dogma in ballad meter.

Yet there was one sense in which early America was abreast of the European world, even ahead of it. It had a deep-rooted, and increasingly experimental, political culture. Here the English tradition was of incomparable value. It was rich and very ancient. By comparison, the French and Spanish settlers knew little of the art of politics. Both France and Spain, as geographical entities with national institutions, were still recent developments in the 17th century, and neither had much experience of representative government, or even at that date of unified legal systems. By contrast, England had been a national unity since the 9th century, with forms of representation going back to that date and even beyond. Its common law began to mature as early as the 12th century; its first statute of the realm, Magna Carta, was enrolled as early as 1215; its parliaments, with their knights of the shire and their burgesses of the towns, had had a continuous history since the 14th century, as an institution which passed laws for all the people and raised revenues from all of them too. Behind the Englishmen who came to settle in Virginia and Massachusetts, in Carolina and Maryland and Pennsylvania, were 1,000 years of political history.

Moreover, it must be said that the period at which this tradition was implanted in America was also of great significance. English America 'took off' as a viable social and economic entity in the three decades 1630-60. That was when its population reached a critical mass large enough to produce self-sustaining growth. And it was during these three decades that there took place in England a veritable explosion of political argument and experiment, in which, perhaps for the first time in history, the fundamentals of participatory and democratic politics were discussed. It could be said, indeed, that modern politics was invented in the England of the 1640s, and the English settlers in America were, in a sense, participants in this process-the coming and going between England and America during this decade was of great political significance. If the English had first settled America in the first half of the 16th century, during the Tudor autocracy, or in the first half of the 18th century, during the long calm of the Whig supremacy, it might have been a very different story. But they settled it during the first half of the 17th century, when the smoldering dispute between king and parliament reached its climax, burst into flames, and was resolved by a parliamentary victory, albeit a qualified one. The English settling in America brought with them this political tradition, just when it was at its most active and fruitful.

The early settlers, then, came from an intensely religious and political background, and most of them were independent-minded, with ingrained habits of thinking things out for themselves.

And it was the earliest settlers who counted most. It is almost a law of colonization that the first group, however small, to set up an effective settlement has more effect on the political and social character of the colony than later arrivals, however numerous. Until Charles II's reign, indeed until the 1680s, by which time the English had effectively wrested maritime control of the North Atlantic from the Dutch, the English crown made little attempt to supervise closely what went on across the Atlantic. It awarded charters, then let the colonists get on with it. This was an old tradition in England, applying particularly to local government through justices of the peace (magistrates), sometimes referred to as 'Self-government by the King's Command.' So governors, however appointed or elected, operated independently of England. And every colony, almost from its inception, and in most cases within a year of its foundation, had some kind of representative assembly. Electing people was one of the first things a settler in America learned to do. Moreover, many offices in America which, in England, would have been filled by appointment, by lords lieutenant or even by the crown-key offices in the administration and enforcement of the law-became elective from the start.

The American tradition of electing large numbers of public officers directly took deep root quickly. Those men so chosen might be very humble people. Forty years after the foundation of Maryland, governors were complaining that many men chosen as justices or sheriffs could not even sign their names. Virtually everyone voted for somebody or other. In orthodox Calvinist New England, voting rights, to begin with at least, were confined to church members. Elsewhere all freemen had them, as a rule. In Maryland, for instance, at least from the 1650s, all freemen voted for four delegates per county to serve in the Lower House. It was linked to service in the militia, compulsory for every male over sixteen: if you fought for the colony, you voted in it. In Carolina, you voted automatically if you took up a 50-acre plot, though to be a delegate you were supposed to have 500 acres. These 50-acre men were lowly folk who would never have been allowed to take part in politics in Europe: Thomas New, who came out in 1682, described them as 'tradesmen, poor and wholly ignorant of husbandry ... their whole business was to clear a little ground to get bread for their families. But they voted all the same. Some of the Carolina elite, who originally tried to call themselves 'landgraves' and 'cassiques,' grumbled at this. As one of them put it, 'It is as bad as a state of Warre for men who are in want to have the making of Laws over Men that have Estates. But it was a fact of colonial life, even in Carolina, explained partly by the proprietors themselves being mostly absentee landlords. As an independent-minded Caroliner wrote in the 1670s: 'By our frame [of government], noe bodys power, noe not of any of the Proprietors themselves were they there, is soe great as toe be able to hurt the meanest man in the Country.'

You may ask: how did the early settlers reconcile their acceptance that even the meanest had rights-including rights to vote-with the institution of slavery? The point was to be made with great force by Dr Samuel Johnson at the time of the American Revolution, and it echoes through American history: 'How is it that the loudest YELPS for LIBERTY come from the drivers of Negroes?' The answer is that America was only gradually corrupted into the acceptance of large-scale slavery. The corruption entered through Carolina, whence it came from Barbados. In the West Indian islands, those occupied by the Spanish, Portuguese, and French under Catholic teaching, slaves were treated as actual or potential Christians, with souls and rights-not just property. In the islands occupied by the English and Dutch Protestants, who got their doctrine about slavery from the Old Testament, slaves were seen as legal chattels, with no more rights than cows or sheep. The Barbadian planters in Carolina, who set the tone, never troubled themselves to Christianize their slaves and even prevented others from doing so. In any case, it

made no difference. Early laws laid down that baptism did not change a person's free or unfree status. Such laws spread north. Thus in 1692 a Maryland statute insisted that baptism did nothing to change a black's servile status.

Carolina was the first slave state, properly speaking. From the start it imported black slaves, even before it acquired rice as an agricultural staple. A Carolina promotion pamphlet of 1682 stated flatly: 'without [negro slaves] a planter can never do any great matter.' The same year, a settler told a friend: 'Negroes are more desirable than white servants. This was because a white indentured servant cost £2-£4 a year in capital investment. A slave cost £18-£30 outright, plus the likelihood of breeding. Young, healthy female slaves were particularly valuable for this reason. In Maryland, slavery grew only slowly. Until the late 1680s, an estate was more likely to be run by indentured labor. Early probates from the years 1658-70 show that only 15 out of 150 estates had slaves. But the treatment and legal status of slaves, especially black ones, declined as the 17th century wore on. A statute of 1663 recognized black service as perpetual, writing of 'Negroes and other Slaves who are incapable of making Satisfaction by Addition of Tyme.' A black had to prove he was under limited contract by producing documents, otherwise the law assumed he (and his children) was a chattel slave.

Much legislation of these years strengthened the hands of the planters against slaves. In Carolina, slavery was an early source of corruption in politics. Slavers were heard to boast that they could 'with a bowl of punch get who they would Chosen of the parliament and afterwards who they would Chosen of the Grand Council. The Barbadians in Carolina also enslaved numbers of Indians. This was strictly against the law. The policy of Charles II's government was 'to get and continue the friendship and assistance of the Indians and make them useful without force or injury.' It laid down (1672) that enslavement of Indians was forbidden 'upon any occasion or pretence whatsoever. But the Barbadian planters induced Indian tribes-who did not need much persuasion-to make war on others to produce Indian slaves. An early anti-slaver in Charleston, John Stewart, wrote angry letters home to England, protesting about the behavior of the Barbadians, or 'Goose Creek Men' as he called them (this was their densest area of settlement). He said that one of their leaders, Maurice Matthews, an important man because he was the official surveyor as well as a planter and slaver, was 'Hell itself for Malice, a Jesuit for Design politick.' Stewart eventually got Matthews sacked for slaving. His predecessor, Florence O'sullivan, was as bad: 'a very siddencious, troublesome Man, an ill-natured buggerer of children,' as other settlers complained.

All the same American slavery was on a small scale, Carolina being the only exception. Large-scale slavery was an 18th-century phenomenon. Even by 1714 there were fewer than 60,000 slaves in the whole of the English colonies on mainland America. Thereafter the numbers grew steadily-78,000 by 1727, 263,000 by 1754, and 697,000 at the first census in 1790. So in Dr Johnson's day the existence of huge, black, servile multitudes in America was a recent development, growing daily-one reason he was so outraged by it. In early settler times, by contrast, over most of the colonies, slavery was very marginal, blacks were almost invisible, and servile work was seen in terms of indentured whites, who served their terms, became freemen and soon owned land and exercised their votes. So the leading settlers, creating their assemblies, were not struck by the paradox of free whites and blacks who had no rights at all. That came later-when it was too late and slavery was deeply entrenched.

The early lack of interest by the English government in the American mainland colonies led, therefore, both to a rapid growth of legislative assemblies, with wide franchises and, rather later, to an unregulated growth of slavery. When the home country first began to take a closer interest,



during Charles II's reign, its main concern was with regulated trade. By an Act of 1660, 'enumerated' commodities from the English mainland colonies in America had to be sent direct to England. These included tobacco, cotton, wool, indigo, to which were later added tar, pitch, turpentine, hemp, masts, yards, rice, copper, iron, timber, furs, and pearls. These included all the staples of the South, chiefly tobacco, rice, and indigo. But, further north, leading exports like fish-for a long time the chief staple of New England-grain, and other foods were kept out of England by high tariffs. So the North, especially New England, sent to the West Indies and southern Europe dried fish, pickles and pickled beef and pork, horses and livestock, plus building materials. New York and Philadelphia sent flour and wheat. As, by the closing decades of the 17th century, the West Indies was concentrating largely on sugar and tobacco, it imported food and wood cheaply from the mainland colonies. In return, they got molasses, to turn into rum for the fishing fleet and to buy slaves. If they were lucky, they got gold and silver too.

The cash was welcome, because under this mercantalist system the balance of trade was in England's favor and there was a chronic shortage of coin in America. Any specie they got from the West Indies 'seldom continues six months in the province before it is remitted to Europe.' Business was accounted in pounds, shillings, and pence, but English coin was seldom seen. Large-scale internal trade was done in drafts and bills of exchange, local trade in barter. Termly bills of students at Harvard College were for decades met by produce, livestock, and pickled meat. In 1649 one student is recorded as settling his bill with 'an old cow.' The accounts for the college's first building includes one item: 'Received a goat 30S plantation of Watertown rate, which died.' All kinds of dodgy procedures were used to get round the shortage of specie. Thus in Virginia and Maryland, receipts for tobacco deposited in warehouses circulated as cash. Then colonial governments began to create paper credit-a slippery slope. In 1690 Massachusetts created bills of credit for payment to militia soldiers. This example was eagerly followed, and such paper money acceptable, at a discount, for silver and marked with a date of payment soon spread. But this was followed by larger, weaker issues, which discredited it. So American paper money tended to be rotten from the start, and distrust of it-followed by distrust of the banks which circulated it-became deep-rooted in Americans from an early date, and was to have very long-term consequences. Primitive 'loan banks,' issuing credit on the security of real estate, made the financial system even more suspect. Parliament in England, instead of solving the problem by ensuring that America got enough coin, stamped on the consequences of the shortage as an abuse. In 1751 it forbade issue of further bills of credit as legal tender in New England, and in 1764 it extended the ban to all the colonies. This both infuriated the Americans and proved ineffective, since by then an estimated \$22 million of unlawful paper was already in circulation. It was an early example of the way in which government from both sides of the Atlantic would not work.

Irritation with England, whenever the home government exercised any authority at all, was an early American characteristic. It is a curious fact that the first printed work ever published in America, put out by Stephen Daye in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in January 1639 (he had come out only the year before) was a broadside, *The Oath of a Free-Man*, attacking the oath of allegiance all settlers had to swear to the English crown. Taxes in goods were exacted on settlers, without much success to be sure, and some of this got back to the English crown. But in return it was hard for the colonies to see what they got, other than notional protection. The home government certainly did nothing to defend outlying farms or plantations from occasional Indian raids-for that, the settlers were left entirely to their own devices. On the whole, relations between English settlers and Indians were good and there was surprisingly little conflict. When it

occurred, the settlers were usually to blame. But not always. The Indians were capable of unpredictable changes of mood, and downright bellicosity under a certain type of leader. Settler-Indian relations were complicated by disputes among Indian tribes, which were often in a state of perpetual warfare with each other.

This was the origin of the Pequot War in the 1630s. It began with a dispute between the Pequots and the Mohicans in the Connecticut River area, over the valuable shoreline, whose shells and beads were collected for wampum, the Indian form of exchange. Neither the English nor the nearby Dutch would come to the aid of the Mohicans and they were beaten. The Pequots, 'grown arrogant,' attacked an English sea-captain, John Stone, and his seven companions, who were trading upriver. They were murdered. Two years later, there was another murder, on Block Island, of a New England trader, John Oldham. In response, the Massachusetts governor, John Endecott, sent three armed vessels, which destroyed the two Indian villages believed to have been guilty of these crimes. In May 1637, the Pequots retaliated by attacking Wethersfield, Connecticut, killing nine people and abducting two. This in turn provoked a combined operation by all the militia forces of Massachusetts and Connecticut, accompanied by several hundred Narragansett and Niantic Indians, who together surrounded the main Pequot fort on June 5, 1637, and slaughtered 500 Indians, men, women, and children, within it. The village was set on fire and most of those who tried to escape were shot or clubbed to death. This bloody war against the Pequots, which seems to have ended Indian raiding in New England for a generation, was conducted without any assistance from England.

Further south, in the Hudson Valley and Virginia, wars among the Indians, and with settlers over fur and trading, continued sporadically. In June 1644 as many as 350 settlers south of the James River were massacred by the warriors of a chieftain called Opechancanought. This led to large-scale counterattacks by the governor of Virginia, William Berkeley, and the acting governor Richard Kemp. Again, only the local militia was employed. There was a major flare-up in Dutch territory near the Hudson the same year. Near New Amsterdam, 120 Algonquins, fleeing from their Mohawk enemies, were massacred by the Dutch in retaliation for early murders. Various Algonquin tribes then united for a vengeful raid against Dutch settlements, but were defeated when 150 heavily armed Dutch killed 700 Indian warriors near Stamford, Connecticut, in February 1644.

In Virginia it was a constant complaint among settlers pushing into the interior that the authorities never provided them with any protection from hostile Indians. The trouble with Virginia, as indeed with other colonies, is that although its latitude, that is its extent along the coast, was fairly accurately determined by original charters, its extension inland was indefinite. There was an early conflict of interest between the large plantation-owners of the Tidewater, who dominated the assembly and ran the government, and the smaller farmers who penetrated into the foothills, or piedmont, of the Appalachian ridges, and beyond them. In fact almost from the start two very different societies began to emerge. On the coast, there was a characteristically 'Southern' civilization, slave-owning, tobacco-growing, cultured, elitist, leisured, and there was a much more rugged farming society in the interior—a bifurcation which was eventually to find constitutional expression when West Virginia hived off from the rest during the Civil War and formed a separate state.

Early in 1676, the small farmers up the James River became convinced that the plans of Sir William Berkeley, the royal governor, were inadequate, and that this sprang from the fact that they were underrepresented in the House of Burgesses, dominated by the Tidewater aristocracy. They got a wealthy planter, Nathaniel Bacon, to lead them, both against the Indians and to

remonstrate with the governor. Berkeley accused Bacon of treason and had him arrested when he arrived in Jamestown with 500 men on June 6. Then having-as he thought-asserted his authority, he let Bacon go, and the result was an angry confrontation in which Bacon demanded a commission of inquiry into the government's failure to police the Indians, and authorization to raise an army. The governor then fled, to the eastern shore, and Bacon rampaged for three months in the capital, raising volunteers and plundering the estates of Tidewater grandees. He denounced Berkeley and his 'clique' as 'sponges' who 'sucked up the Publik Treasure.' But on October 26, 1676 he abruptly succumbed to what was called 'a severe attack' of 'the bloody flux.' Without his leadership, the rebellion collapsed. When a party of English redcoats, summoned by the governor three months before, finally arrived in November from England, only eighty slaves and twenty 'servants' still defied the authorities, turning a serious white man's revolt into a servile one, which was soon suppressed.

Bacon's Rebellion showed how fragile authority in America was in these early times. In the same year there was another demonstration of its fragility in New England. The Puritans had not been particularly assiduous in converting Indians to Christianity. But one of them, John Eliot (1604-90), had done his best from 1646 onwards, preaching widely to the tribes and translating the Bible into Algonquin. His converts were known as 'praying Indians,' and since they often became detribalized he settled them in what were known as 'praying towns.' One of these converts, Sassamon, actually attended Harvard, though he seems to have lapsed afterwards and became a follower of 'King Philip,' also known as Metacom, who was a chief and sacham, or holy man. Sassamon was murdered early in 1676, and since he had once again become a Christian before this occurred, three men of the Wampanoag tribe, who were heathen, were held to be guilty and executed by the Plymouth authorities. That was the ostensible cause of King Philip's War, a conflict between Christianity and Indian religious culture, but it is likely that increasing pressure on Indian land by the rapidly expanding Massachusetts colony was the real reason.

Throughout the summer and autumn of 1679, Philip and his men destroyed white farms and townships over a large area, and at one point came within 20 miles of Boston itself. If Philip had been able to organize a grand coalition of the Indians, it is quite possible he could have extinguished the entire colony. However, the inability to unite against their white enemies was always the fatal weakness of the Indians. The Massachusetts governor, another Winthrop, raised the militia, which was dispatched in parties of armored dragoons, from 10 to 150 and more, to meet the danger whenever large parties of Indians were reported to be gathering. This warfare continued throughout the winter of 1676-7 and the spring, until in August Philip himself was cornered and killed. Thereafter it was a question of isolating small groups of Indians, or hunting them down in the backwoods, though some fighting went on in New Hampshire and Maine until 1678. The casualties on both sides were very heavy. Every white family in New England was involved in one way or another. It is probably true to say that no war in American history produced so many killed and wounded in proportion to the total population. It goes without saying that no assistance was forthcoming from England. Without the local militia which proved itself in the end a formidable fighting machine, far superior to its English counterparts, the Indians could not have been held at bay. The war was fought with great bitterness. When Philip was finally killed, his head was hacked off and sent for public display Boston, his hands to Plymouth. It left deep scars among the survivor and it had a profound effect on the Puritan ministry, who felt that the near-disaster indicated divine displeasure with New England. It had been, as they put it, 'So Dreadful a Judgment.'

The ravages of King Philip's War, the break-up of families it brought about, and the widespread feeling that the godly people of New England had somehow become corrupted and were being punished in consequence, was the long-term background to the Salem witchcraft hysteria of 1692. The immediate background, however, was a prolonged disruption in the normal government of the colony. From 1660 onwards, the authorities in England had been taking an increasing interest in America, and were endeavoring to recover some of the power that had been carelessly bestowed on the colonists during the early decades. This tendency increased sharply in the 1680s. In 1684 the crown revoked the original charter of Massachusetts, which gave it self-government, and in 1686 appointed Sir Edmund Andros (1637-1714) governor. Andros was a formidable public official who had been sent by James, Duke of York, in 1674 to run his proprietary colony of New York, seized from the Dutch. He made the place the strategic focus of England's North American empire, enlarging the anchorage, building warehouses, establishing an exchange, laying down regulations to foster commerce, and building forts. It has been said, 'He found New York a village, he left it a city.'

That was all very well, but Massachusetts wanted to run its own affairs, and the arrival of Andros as 'Governor of Our Dominion of New England,' coinciding as it did with the accession of the Duke of York, now James II and an open Catholic, to the throne, was not welcome in Boston. It was clear that King James wanted to unite all the northern colonies into one large New England super-colony, and that Andros was his instrument. When a group of Whig nobles invited William of Orange to England, to become its Protestant king, and James fled, the New England elite took the opportunity to stage their own 'Glorious Revolution,' put Andros behind bars, and resumed their separate existences. The president of Harvard, Increase Mather (1639-1723), was sent to London to negotiate a new settlement and charter. It was while he was away doing this that the witch hysteria broke out. It is important to grasp that what, in retrospect, was a breakdown in the rule of law occurred when the entire political frame of New England was in a state of suspension and uncertainty.

There was nothing new about witchcraft, or the suspicion of it, in New England. Religious dissidents, such as Quakers, were regularly stripped and examined for its marks. The fear of the witch was linked to fear of the Devil, his or her master, and the Devil was omnipresent in the moral theology of the 17th century. Conviction and hanging of witches was not common in Massachusetts, but it occurred from time to time. In Connecticut we know of ten cases of witches being hanged for 'familiarity with the Devil.' Rhode Island alone had an unblemished record in this respect. Nor were Calvinists the only people who believed strongly in the reality of sorcery. Witches were prosecuted in Anglican Virginia. There was a case in Catholic Maryland too, where a 'little old woman,' suspected of being a witch, was cast into the sea to appease an inexplicably violent storm. What made the Salem case in 1692 unique was the scale and suddenness of the accusations, the sinister farce of the trials, and the severity of the punishments.

There may be an explanation for this too. The huge religious controversies and wars which had convulsed Europe from over a century since the outbreak of the Reformation in the 1520s, came to a climax in the first half of the 17th century, with the appalling Thirty Years War in central Europe and such marginal catastrophes as the Civil War in Britain. But with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, the world slowly turned to secularity. It was as though the volcanic spirit of religious intolerance had exhausted itself and men were turning to other sources of dispute. But there were nonetheless periodic convulsions of the dying beast of fanaticism. In the 1680s Louis XIV, at the urging of Catholic extremists, revoked the toleration for Protestants accorded by the

Edict of Nantes. The same decade, in Protestant London, there was a violent mob-led hunt for Catholic subversives led by the renegade Titus Oates. The Salem hysteria was part of this irrational, recidivist pattern.

The ostensible facts of the Salem case are not in dispute. Early in 1692, two children in the household of the vicar of Salem, Samuel Parris-his daughter Betty, aged nine, and his niece Abigail, elevenbegan to be taken with hysterical fits, screaming and rolling on the floor. Their behavior affected some of their friends. Neither girl could write and they may not have been able to read. They were fond of listening to the tales of Tituba, a black female slave who formed part of the household. When the girls' behavior attracted attention, they were medically examined and closely questioned by their credulous father and local busybodies. The girls finally named Tituba as the source of their trouble and she, under pressure to confess witchcraft, admitted she was a servant of Satan, and spoke of cats, rats, and a book of witchcraft, 'signed by nine in Salem.' Two names of local women were screamed out by the girls, and this set off the hunt.

It soon attracted a great deal of interest, not just in Salem but in the entire neighborhood, including Boston. One of those who took a hand in it was Increase Mather's learned minister-son, Cotton Mather (1663-1728), a young but already prominent member of the Boston elite. The authorities, such as they were, also took a hand. In mid-May, the temporary governor, William Phillips, arrived in Salem and, impressed by what he heard-perhaps horrified is a better word-set up a special court, under William Stoughton, to get to the bottom of the matter. This of course was a serious error. The ordinary law might or might not function fairly in sorcery cases, but a special court was bound to find culprits to justify its existence. And so it did. Its proceedings were outrageous. Accused persons, men and women, who confessed to using witchcraft, were released-as it were rewarded by the court for 'proving' the reality of the Devil's work in Salem. The more sturdy-minded among the accused, who obstinately refused to confess to crimes they had not committed, were judged guilty. The hysteria raged throughout the long New England summer. By the early autumn, fourteen women and five men, most of them respectable people with unblemished records, had been hanged. One man, who refused to plead at all, was pressed to death with heavy stones, the old English *peine forte et dure*, for contempt of court-the only time it was ever used in America's history. Over 150 people were awaiting trial in overcrowded jails, and some of them died there. The reaction set in during October, when prominent people, including the governor's wife, were 'named.' The authorities then came to their senses. The special court was dissolved. Those under arrest were released.

The Salem trials can be seen as a throwback to an early age of credulity. In a sense they were. But they were more complicated than that. Belief in witches and the modern, sceptical mind were not opposite polarities. Cotton Mather who, at the climax of the hysteria in October, published a tract, *Wonders of the Invisible World*, 'proving' the existence of witchcraft and its connection with the Devil, was not an obscurantist opponent of science. Quite the contrary. He was descended from the Cottons and Mathers, two of Boston's leading intellectual families since the inception of the colony. In the late 17th century, the new empirical science and older systems of belief overlapped. Isaac Newton, greatest scientist of the age, was an example. He was fascinated by all kinds of paranormal phenomena and his library contained large numbers of books on astronomy. Cotton Mather was a learned man and a keen scientist. He was not only awarded an honorary Doctorate of Divinity by Glasgow University but was also elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, then the leading scientific body in the world. He popularized the Copernican system of astrophysics in the colonies. He regarded the empirical study of nature as a form of worship, a notion pursued by the New England Transcendentalists in the 19th century.

For him, his numerous scientific interests were in no way opposed to his religious beliefs but were an extension of them. He argued that the existence of witches was a collateral proof of the life to come: 'Since there are witches and devils,' he wrote, 'We may also conclude that there are immortal souls.'

It was in fact precisely Cotton Mather's scientific interests which made him such an enthusiastic witchhunter. He believed that the trials, if pursued vigorously enough, would gradually expose the whole machinery of witchcraft and the operations of the Devil, thereby benefiting mankind enormously. But here he disagreed with his own father, another learned, scientific gentleman. Increase Mather held that the very operation of hunting for witches might be the work of the Devil, and characteristic of the way the Great Deceiver led foolish men into wickedness. His return from England in the autumn of 1692 was one factor in the ending of the witchhunt, and the following spring he published a book, *Cases of Conscience Concerning Evil Spirits*, which drew attention to the risks of public delusions and suggested that the real work of the Devil was the hanging of an innocent old woman. Increase Mather was instrumental in persuading the General Court of Massachusetts to pass a motion deploring the action of the judges. Members of the jury signed a statement of regret, indemnities were granted to the families of the victims who had been hanged. Some of those who had made false statements later confessed to them, though in one case not till many years had passed. These events, and Increase Mather's book, virtually put an end to trials for witchcraft in America.

The Salem trials, then, can be seen as an example of the propensity of the American people to be convulsed by spasms of self-righteous rage against enemies, real or imaginary, of their society and way of living. Hence the parallels later drawn between Salem in 1692 and the 'Red Scare' of 1919-20, Senator McCarthy's hunt for Communists in the early 1950s, the Watergate hysteria of 1973-74, and the Irangate hunt of the 1980s. What strikes the historian, however, is not just the intensity of the self-delusion in the summer of 1692, by no means unusual for the age, but the speed of the recovery from it in the autumn, and the anxiety of the local government and society to confess wrongdoing, to make reparation and search for the truth. That indeed is uncommon in any age. In the late 17th century it was perhaps more remarkable than the hysteria itself and a good augury for America's future as a humane and truth-seeking commonwealth. The rule of law did indeed break down, but it was restored with promptness and penitence.

The real lesson of the affair, a contemporary historian may conclude, is not the strength of irrationality but the misuse of science. Cotton Mather had been trained as a doctor before he decided to follow his father into the ministry, and was a pioneering advocate of smallpox vaccination, especially of the young. He was a keen student of hysterical fits as a medical as well as a religious phenomenon. Both he and his father took an interest in the behavior of children under extreme psychic and physical stress, though they reached different conclusions. He, and the interrogators of the children, were manifestly anxious to hear tales of possession and sorcery and devilish activity to confirm their preconceptions, and the children intuited their need and supplied it. We have here a phenomenon by no means confined to the 17th century. Perhaps the best insight into the emotional mechanism which got the Salem trials going can be provided by examining some of the many cases of child-abuse hysteria, and cases in which children were alleged to have been abused by Satanist rings, occurring in both the United States and Britain in the 1980s and 1990s. The way in which children can be encouraged, by prosecuting authorities, to 'remember' imaginary events is common to both types of case. The Salem of the 1690s is not so far from us as we like to think.

Cotton Mather himself is a significant and tragic figure in American history. When he was born in 1663, New England still seemed outwardly the religious commonwealth the Pilgrim Fathers had wished to create, through Congregationalism was already losing its physical grip on the machinery of government and signs of a growing secularization were manifest. He was born to the Puritan purple: both his Christian and his surname proclaimed it. He entered Harvard, its school for clerical princes, at the age of twelve-the youngest student ever enrolled there. He seemed destined to inherit not merely his father's mantle as president of the college, but leadership of the entire New England intellectual and religious community. But neither happened. Indeed he was publicly defeated for the presidency of Harvard, and when he was finally asked, in 1721, to become head of its rival, Yale, which had been founded in 1701 and moved to New Haven in 1716, it was too late. He was too old and he refused.

Mather spent his entire life industriously acquiring knowledge and regurgitating it. He learned seven languages, well. He was a living rebuke to the proposition that New England was uncultured and lacked authors. He wrote 450 books. Many more remained unpublished but those that saw print were enough to fill several shelves-and all this in addition to seven thick volumes of diaries. He stood for the proposition that, in America, religion was the friend of enlightenment. He promoted schemes of public charity for the poor and infirm. His books, *The Family Well Ordered* and *The Ornaments for the Daughters of Zion*, put forward sensible and in some ways surprisingly modern views about the role of parents in education, and especially of girls. He wrote about the rights of the slaves and the Indians. He tried to bring order and sense to the medical and legal professions-something high-minded American intellectuals have been trying to do ever since. He was not exactly a man for all seasons-he was too opinionated and cantankerous for that-but he was a man for all disciplines, an all-purpose American do-gooder and right-thinker who adumbrated Benjamin Franklin. But he lacked Franklin's chance to operate on a world stage. He was damned at the time and for posterity (until recent scholarship came to his rescue) as the man behind the Salem witch-trials. He appeared to move effortlessly from Young Fogey to *Laudator Temporis Actae*.

Long before his death Cotton Mather recognized that the times had moved against him and that the kind of religion the Puritans had brought to America was changing beyond recognition. In 1702 he published his masterpiece, the *Magnalia Christi Americana*, which despite its prolixity has a strong claim to be considered the first great work of literature produced in America. It is a primary source-book because it gives lives of the governors of New England and leading divines, a history of Harvard and various churches, and valuable details about early Indian wars. But in essence it is an epic history of the New England religious experiment-the attempt to create the Kingdom of God in the New World-and an inquiry into what went wrong. He proclaims: 'I write the wonders of the Christian religion, flying from the depravations of Europe to the American strand,' and his tone is often wondering; but it is also querulous and elegiac. He put his bony finger on the inherent contradiction in the Puritan mission. Their Protestant ethic, their intensity of religious endeavor which was the source of their lawabiding industry, contained the seeds of its own dissolution. As he put it, '*Religion* brought forth *Prosperity*, and the *daughter* destroyed the *mother*.' He could see what had happened to Boston in his own lifetime: the mercantile spirit flourishing in its busy streets, and its conformist preachers in the well-filled churches goading on their complacent congregations to amass yet more wealth as an outward symbol of inward grace. Thus America's success was undermining its divine mission: 'There is danger lest the *enchancements* of this world make them forget their *errand into the wilderness*.'

Here is rich food for thought about the whole American experiment, secular as well as religious. It is worth noting that when Cotton Mather died, full of warnings and fulmination, in 1728, Benjamin Franklin, so like him in his universality, so unlike him in his objectives, was already a young man of twenty-two, making his way purposefully in Philadelphia. Whereas Mather was obsessed by the need to save one's soul for the next world, Franklin was preoccupied-like the vast majority of his fellow-countrymen-with getting on in this one. To move from one man to the other is to cross a great watershed in American history.

We are now in the 18th century and the final pieces of the jigsaw of early America are beginning to fit into place. From its growth-points on the coasts of New England and Virginia, now joined by the middle colonies of Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New York, settler America was moving north, and south, but above all west. The frontier was already a physical reality and a powerful metaphysical concept by the year 1700. The overwhelming dynamic was the lust to own land. Now, for the first time in human history, cheap, good land was available to the multitude. This happy prospect was now open, and it remained so for the best part of the next two centuries; then it closed, for ever. In the early 18th century, the movement to acquire land outside the original settlements and charters, and dot it with towns, was just getting into its stride, which was not to relax until the frontier ceased to exist in the 1890s. The advance from the shoreline and the tidewater into the piedmont was what might be called America's first frontier. It took place everywhere in English America. Thus there was a push up the Housatonic Valley into the Berkshires, leading to the foundation of Litchfield in 1719, Sheffield in 1725, Great Barrington in 1730, Williamstown in 1750. In 1735, four closely linked townships were founded to bridge the gap between these Housatonic settlements and the Connecticut River itself. Governor Benning Wentworth (1696-1770), who was instrumental in separating New Hampshire from Massachusetts, then granted lands west of the Connecticut in what was to become Vermont.

This northern push consisted mainly of Ulster Protestants, provoked into seeking a new, transatlantic life by an Act prohibiting the export of Irish wool to England, by the enforced payment of tithes to Anglican churches, and by the expiry of the original Ulster plantation leases in 1714-18. So here were hardy frontier farmers, after three generations of fighting and planting to defend the Protestant enclave against the Catholic-Irish south of Ireland, moving to expand the new frontier in North America. They came in organized groups, and for the first time the authorities had the resources to take them direct to the frontier, where they founded Blandford, Pelham, and Warren, or settled in Grafton County in New Hampshire, and Orange, Windsor, and Caledonia counties in Vermont. These were first-class colonists: law-abiding, church-going, hard-working, democratic, anxious to acquire education and to take advantage of self-government. We heard little of them: always a good sign.

This was only the beginning of the Ulster-Scotch migration. From 1720, for the next half-century, about 500,000 men, women, and children from northern Ireland and lowland Scotland went into Pennsylvania. A similar wave of Germans and Swiss, also Protestants, from the Palatinate, Wurttemberg, Baden, and the north Swiss cantons, began to wash into America from 1682 and went on to the middle of the 18th century, most of them being deposited in New York, though 100,000 went to Pennsylvania. For a time indeed, the population of Pennsylvania was one-third Ulster, one-third German. Land in Pennsylvania cost only £10 a hundred acres, raised to £15 in 1732 (plus annual quitrents of about a halfpenny an acre). But there was plenty of land, and the rush of settlers, and their anxiety to start farming, led many to sidestep the surveying formalities and simply squat. The overwhelmed chief agent of the Penn family, James Logan,



complained that the Ulstermen took over 'in an audacious and disorderly manner,' telling him and other officials that 'it was against the laws of God and nature that so much land should be idle while so many Christians wanted it to labor on and raise their bread.' How could he answer such a heartfelt point, except by speeding up the process of lawful conveyance?

The further south you went, the cheaper the land got. Indeed it was often to be had for nothing. From the 1720s onwards, Germans, Swiss, Irish, Scotch, and others, moved down from the northeast along the rich inland valleys of the mountain area-the Cumberland, Shenandoah, and Hagerstown valleys, then through the passes east into what is now North Carolina, Kentucky, and Tennessee. Shortly after the mid-century they were getting into Georgia this way. As F. J. Turner was later to note, in *The Frontier in American History*, this moving mass of people contained children with names like Daniel Boone, John Sevier, and James Robertson, and the forebears of Andrew Jackson, Sam Houston, Davy Crockett, John C. Calhoun, James K. Polk, Jefferson Davis, Abraham Lincoln, and Stonewall Jackson. This was when Andrew Jackson's father set up in Carolina piedmont and Thomas Jefferson's built his home on the frontier at Blue Ridge.

South of the Chesapeake, the framework of government became weaker. In the Carolinas there was constant bickering between north and south, as well as between Tidewater grandees and inland settlers in the piedmont. In 1691 the Carolina proprietors recognized the *fait accompli* of a northern region by dividing the colony into two provinces, with a deputy governor living in the town of Albemarle, capital of what was already being called North Carolina. On May 12, 1712 the separation was completed and North Carolina became a colony on its own. It had already run its own legislature, be it noted, for forty-seven years-five years longer than South Carolina's in Charleston. This did not solve the problem in either half, for the proprietors were absentee landlords-the absentee grandee was the curse of the early South, as it always was in Ireland-and that meant there was a lack of control and purpose in the governor's mansion, leading to tardy and inadequate response to Indian raids, a poorly led and equipped militia, and other evils. The settlers petitioned London for help-it is significant that, even in the 1720s, colonists still had the 'look homeward' reflex and saw the crown as their father and savior. The crown responded: South Carolina became a royal colony on May 29, 1721 and North Carolina followed eight years later on July 25, 1729. But that did not mean the arrival of royal soldiers or assured protection from London.

Nor were the Indians the only threat. In 1720, for instance, South Carolina had only 7,800 whites, as opposed to 11,800 black slaves-the largest ratio of blacks to whites, about 60 percent, in any colony. And it was bringing in more slaves fast; another 2,000 in the years 1721-5 alone. Many slaves escaped, and these maroons, as they were called, tended to organize themselves into gangs to break out of British territory into Spanish Florida, which issued a decree in 1733 stating that slaves who defied the British and managed to reach land under the Spanish flag would be considered free. The result, in 1739, was a series of slave revolts. A band of Charleston slaves set out for Spanish St Augustine and freedom, killing all whites they met on the way, a total of twenty-one; forty-four of these maroons were rounded up and executed on the spot. On the Stono River, a black firebrand called Cato led an even bloodier uprising-thirty whites and about fifty blacks were killed before order was restored. There was a third revolt in St John's Parish, in Berkeley County.

Violence between blacks and whites was by no means confined to Carolina, of course, as the number of blacks imported from Africa and the West Indies steadily increased. In 1741 a series of mysterious fires in New York City, where blacks were a fifth of the population, led to rumors

that a negro conspiracy was to blame and that the slaves were planning to take over the city. Many blacks were arrested, eighteen were hanged, and eleven burned at the stake, though a public prosecutor, Daniel Horsemanden, later admitted that there was no evidence such a conspiracy ever existed. But in the Carolinas, especially towards the south and in the back-country, security was much more fragile. Stability was not established until a first-class royal governor, James Glen, took over in 1740. He was even able to get some action from the crown: early in 1743 General James Oglethorpe, with a fierce body of Scottish Highlanders, as well as local militia, thrashed a Spanish force four times its size at the Battle of Bloody Marsh.

James Oglethorpe (1696-1785) was a fascinating example of the bewildering cross-currents and antagonisms which make early American history so confusing at first glance. He was a rich English philanthropist and member of parliament, who came to America as a result of his passionate interest in prison reform. He was particularly interested in helpless men imprisoned for debt and believed they ought to be freed and allowed to work their way to solvency on American land. In 1732, George II gave him a charter to found such a colony between the Savannah and the Altama rivers, to be named Georgia after himself. Oglethorpe himself went out with the first band of settlers in January 1733. This was another utopian venture, though with humanitarian rather than strict religious objectives-an 18th-century rationalist as opposed to a 17th-century doctrinaire experiment. Oglethorpe and his supporters wanted to avoid extremes of wealth, as in South Carolina, to attract victims of religious persecution and the penal system, and to create a colony of small landowners, with total landholdings limited by law, and slavery prohibited. He was also a military man and he intended, with British government backing, to set up Georgia as a defended *cordon sanitaire* against Spanish troublemaking in the South. He built forts, recruited a militia, and attracted fighting Highlanders for a defensive colony on the Altamaha frontier, which they called New Inverness. His victory at Bloody Marsh not only put an end to the Spanish threat but was a warning to the Indians too-though he made it clear his approach to them was essentially friendly by setting up Augusta as an advance post for the Indian trade. In every respect, Georgia was intended to be a model colony of the Age of Enlightenment. Oglethorpe planned to introduce silk-production, and in Savannah, his new capital, he even set up what was called the Trustees Garden, an experimental center for plants.

The colony itself prospered; but the experiment in reason, justice, and science failed. Just as in North Carolina, attempts to ban slavery came up against the ugly facts of economic interest and personal greed. Georgia was too near to the rambunctious but undoubtedly flourishing planter economy of South Carolina to remain uncorrupted. Oglethorpe's regulations were defied. Slaves were smuggled in. So was rum-another banned item. Then the Savannah assembly legitimized widespread disobedience by changing the law. Rum was officially admitted from 1742. Five years later the laws against slavery were suspended and in 1750 formally repealed. These changes brought a flood of newcomers from north of the Savannah, including experienced planters and their slaves, taking up Georgia's cheap land. The utopian colony was Carolined. Oglethorpe was already in trouble with the English authorities for muddling the military finances. So the man who, in the words of Alexander Pope, went to America 'driven by strong benevolence of soul,' returned to England disillusioned and disgusted, surrendering his charter in 1752.

By mid-century all the original Thirteen Colonies were in actual, though not always legal, existence, and all were being rapidly transformed by unequal, sometimes patchy, but on the whole overwhelming prosperity. It was already a region accustomed to dealing in millions-the land of the endless noughts.' In 1746 a New Hampshire gentleman, John Mason, sold a tract of

land totaling 2 million acres, which had been in his family for generations, to a group of Portsmouth businessmen for a planned settlement of new towns. This was merely the largest single item in a continuing process of buying and selling farms, estates, and virgin soil, which had already made British America the biggest theater in land-speculation in human history. Everyone engaged in it if they could-a foreshadowing of the eagerness with which Americans would take to stock-market speculation in the next century.

Four years later in 1750, the population of the mainland colonies passed the million mark too. The British authorities of course saw North America as a whole, and missed the significance of this figure. But whereas at mid-century Barbados had a population of 75,000 and Bermuda-Bahamas 12,000 and Canada, Hudson Bay, Acadia, and Nova Scotia, plus Newfoundland, had a further 73,000, Massachusetts and Maine together were approaching a quarter-million, Connecticut had 100,000, Rhode Island and New Hampshire had 35,000 each, there were 34,000 in East Jersey, 36,000 in West Jersey, 75,000 in New York, 1165,000 in Pennsylvania and the Lower Counties, 130,000 in Maryland, 135,000 in the Carolinas-plus 4,000 in infant Georgia-and a massive 260,000 in Virginia. Greater New England had 400,000, Greater Virginia 390,000, Greater Pennsylvania 230,000, and Greater Carolina nearly 100,000. These four major self-sustaining growth-centres were the main engines of demographic increase, attracting thousands of immigrants every year but also ensuring high domestic birth-rates with a large proportion of children born reaching adulthood, in a healthy, well-fed, well-housed family system.

Noting all these facts, Benjamin Franklin, writing his *Observations Concerning the Increase of Making, Peopling of Countries etc* (1755), felt that the country had doubled in population since his childhood and calculated it would double again in the next twenty years, which it did-and more. In attracting yet more people, to keep up the impetus of growth, local authorities did not worry too much about boundaries, an early indication of how the whole territory was beginning to meld together. Thus in 1732 Maryland invited Pennsylvanian Germans to take up cheap 200-acre plots in the difficult country between the Susquehanna and Patapsco, which became an inland district for the new and soon flourishing town of Baltimore. Equally, in the 1750s there was a large movement from Pennsylvania at the invitation of the Virginia government into the western region of the colony, where large blocks in the Shenandoah Valley were offered at low prices. This created, from an old Indian tract, the famous Great Philadelphia Waggon Trail, which became a major commercial route too. Thus Greater Pennsylvania merged into Greater Virginia, creating yet more movement and dynamism. As settlement expanded inland from the tidewaters, colonies lost their original distinctive characteristics and became simply American.

The historian gets the impression, surveying developments in the first half of the century, that so many things were happening in America, at such speed, that the authorities simply lost touch. Their information, such as it was, quickly got out of date and they could not keep up. Strictly speaking, in an economic sense, the colonies were supposed to exist entirely for the home country's benefit. A report to the Board of Trade sent by Lord Cornbury, governor of New York 1702-8, reveals that all governors were instructed 'To discourage all Manufactures, and to give accurate accounts of any Indications of the Same,' with a view to their suppression. One member of the Board of Trade stated flatly in 1726, that certain developments in a colony were *eo ipso* unlawful whether or not there was a specific statute forbidding them:

Every act of a dependent provincial government ought to terminate to the advantage of the Mother State unto whom it owes its being and protection in all valuable privileges. Hence it follows that all advantageous projects or commercial gains in any colony which are truly prejudicial to and

inconsistent with the interests of the Mother State must be understood be illegal and the practice of them unwarrantable, because they contradict the end to which the colony has a being and are incompatible with the terms on which the people claim both privileges and protection ... for such is the end of colonies, and if this use cannot be made of them it is much better for the state to do without them.

This was hard doctrine, manifestly unjust and equally clearly unenforceable. There were of course many legislative efforts to turn it into reality. An Act of 1699 forbade the colonies to ship wool, woolen yarn, or cloth. Another in 1732 vetoed hats. An Act of 1750 admitted entry of bar-iron into England but banned slitting or rolling mills, plat-force, or steel furnaces. But iron casting was not specifically forbidden and so the colonies produced such things as kettles, salt-pans, and kitchen utensils, as well as cannon. According to Board of Trade economic doctrine these must be inherently unlawful. But they continued to be made. And what about shipbuilding? The sea was Britain's lifeblood and ships were made, competitively, in yards all over England and Scotland. But with wood so cheap and accessible, America had a huge competitive advantage in shipbuilding before the age of iron and steam. By mid-century New England yards were turning out ships at an average cost of \$34 a ton, 20 to 50 percent cheaper than in Europe. They had vigorously promoted shipbuilding from the 1640s and as early as 1676 were turning out thirty a year for the English market alone; this rose to 300 to 400 a year by 1760. By this time fully a third of the British merchant fleet of 398,000 tons was American-built, and the colonies were turning out a further 15,000 tons a year. The reason for permitting this obvious anomaly was the British need for cheap timber. A British merchant could sail his ship to Boston, sell his cargo, then with the proceeds build an additional ship, and load both with timber. The British authorities unwittingly encouraged this procedure, paying substantial bounties on timber-related products such as pitch, tar, rosin, turps and water-rotted hemp, to reduce its dependence on supplies from the Continent.

This cheapness of wood, and so of ships, also encouraged the development of an enormous fishing fleet which again, strictly speaking, was a challenge to British interests. As early as 1641 figures show that New England was exporting 300,000 cod a year plus halibut, mackerel, and herring. By 1675, 4,000 men and 600 ships were involved in the industry. By 1770 its exports were worth \$225,000 a year. The largest and most difficult-to-cure fish were eaten locally; small, damaged, or tainted fish were sent to the West Indies to be eaten by slaves; the best smaller fish were cured and sent to Britain. All this stimulated a large cooperage industry, again encouraged by cheap wood-New England farmers often increased their incomes by turning out barrels on the side. As New England made bigger and better ships, it went into worldwide deep-sea whaling, already important by 1700 and growing rapidly. For its own mysterious reasons the home government again favored this activity, paying a pound bounty per ton (1732) on whalers of 200 tons or more, and raising it (1747) to 2 pounds a ton. By midcentury America had the most skillful whalers in the world, 4,000 of them from New Bedford and Provincetown, Nantucket and Marblehead, operating over 300 ships.

The fact is, though America's was largely an agricultural economy, far more so than Britain's, it was stealthily catching up in manufactures of all sorts. When the Board of Trade wrote to colonial governors, asking for figures of goods produced locally, the governors, with their eye on local opinion, deliberately underestimated output. A lot of phony statistics passed across the Atlantic in the 18th century-not for the last time, either. Comptroller Weare wrote anxiously to the Board of Trade c.1750: `The Planters throughout all New England, New York, the Jerseys, Pennsylvania and Maryland (for south of that province no knowledge is here pretended) almost

entirely clothe themselves in their own woollens, and generally the people are sliding into the manufactures proper to the Mother Country, and this not through any spirit of industry or economy, but plainly for want of some returns to make to the shops.' Another report at the same time suggested that American producers were competing successfully with English ones, even in exports, in cotton yarn and cotton goods, hats, soap and candles, woodwork, coaches, chariots, chairs, harness and other leather, shoes, linens, cordage, foundry ware, axes, and iron tools.

American spokesmen, like Benjamin Franklin, were anxious to play down how well the colonies were doing in this respect, for fear of arousing the wrath of the jealous Mother Country. As Agent of Pennsylvania, he informed a House of Commons committee in 1766 that his colony imported half a million pounds' worth of goods from Great Britain but exported only £40,000 in return. Asked how the difference was made up he replied: 'The balance is paid in our produce to the West Indies, or sold in our own island, or to the French, Spaniards, Danes or Dutch; by the same carried to other colonies in North America, or to New England, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Carolina and Georgia; by the same carried to different parts of Europe, as Spain, Portugal and Italy: in all which places we receive either money, bills of exchange or commodities that suit our remittance to Britain; which together with all the profits on the industry of our merchants and mariners, arising in those circuitous voyages, and the freights made by their ships, center finally in Britain, to discharge the balance and pay for British manufactures . . . ' Separating 'visibles' from 'invisibles,' distinguishing between all the different elements in triangular or quadrilateral trading patterns-it was all too difficult for an amateur group of parliamentary gentlemen, and all too easy for Franklin to bamboozle them, though it is very likely that his own figures were inaccurate and many of his assumptions misleading. The truth is, by the mid-18th century, mercantilism was on its last legs, overwhelmed by the complexity of global trade and the inability to distinguish what was in the true long-term interests of a country with burgeoning self-sustaining dominions. Entrepreneurial capitalism, spanning the Atlantic, was already too subtle and resourceful for the state to manage efficiently.

In any case, the British economic strategists-if that is not too fancy a name for classically educated Whig country gentlemen advised by a handful of officials who had never been to America (or, in most cases, to the Continent even)-were slow to grasp the speed with which the American mainland colonies were maturing. The conventional wisdom in London was to treat them as poor and marginal. They had played little part in the great wars of King William and Queen Anne's day. Tobacco was the only thing they produced of consequence. In the early 18th century they accounted for only 6 percent of Britain's commerce, less than one-sixth of the trade with northern Europe, two-thirds or less of that with the West Indies, even less than the East Indies produced. Almost imperceptibly at first this situation changed. By 1750 the mainland American colonies had become the fastest-growing element in the empire, with a 500 percent expansion in half a century. Britain, with the most modern economy in Europe, advanced by 25 percent in the same period. In 1700 the American mainland's output was only 5 percent of Britain's; by 1775 it was two-fifths. This was one of the highest growth-rates the world has ever witnessed.

It seems as though everything was working in America's favor. The rate of expansion was about 40 percent or even more each decade. The availability of land meant large family units, rarely less than 60 acres, often well over 100, huge by European standards. Couples could marry earlier; a wife who survived to forty gave birth on average to six or seven children, four or five of whom reached maturity. Living standards were high, especially in food consumption. Males ate over 200 pounds of meat a year, and this high-protein diet meant they grew to be over two

inches taller than their British counterparts. They ate good dairy food too. By 1750 a typical Connecticut farm owned ten head of cattle, sixteen sheep, six pigs, two horses, a team of oxen. In addition the farm grew maize, wheat, and rye, and two-fifths of the produce went on earning a cash income, spent on British imports or, increasingly, locally produced goods. It is true that widows might fall into poverty. But only 3 to 5 percent of middle-aged white males were poor. One-third of adult white males held no appreciable property, but these were under thirty. It was easy to acquire land. Over the course of a lifecycle, any male who survived to be forty could expect to live in a household of median income and capital wealth. In short by the third quarter of the 18th century America already had a society which was predominantly middle class. The shortage of labor meant artisans did not need to form guilds to protect jobs. It was rare to find restriction on entry to any trade. Few skilled men remained hired employees beyond the age of twenty-five. If they did not acquire their own farm they ran their own business. In practice there were no real class barriers. A middle-aged artisan usually had the vote and many were elected to office at town and county level. These successful middle-aged men were drawn not just from the descendants of earlier settlers or from the ranks of the free immigrants but from the 500,000 white Europeans who, during the colonial period, came to America on non-free service contracts running from four to seven years. White servitude, unlike black slavery, was an almost unqualified success in America.

The policy, begun in 1717, of transporting convicts to the American mainland, for seven years as a rule, worked less well-far less well than it later did in Australia. This was subsidized by the British state, which wanted to get rid of the rogues, but was also a private business tied to the shipping trade. The convicts left Britain in the spring, were landed in Philadelphia or the Chesapeake in the summer, and the ships which transported them returned in the autumn loaded with tobacco, corn, and wheat. In half a century, 1717-67, 10,000 serious criminals were dumped on Maryland alone. They arrived chained in groups of ninety or more, looking and smelling like nothing on earth. Marginal planters regarded them as a good buy, especially if they had skills. They went into heavy labor-farming, digging, shipbuilding, the main Baltimore ironworks, for instance. In 1755 in Baltimore, one adult male worker in ten was a convict from Britain. They were much more troublesome than non-criminal indentured labor, always complaining of abuses and demanding `rights.' People hated and feared them. Many were alcoholics or suicidal. Others had missing ears and fingers or gruesome scars. Some did well-one ex-thief qualified as a doctor and practiced successfully in Baltimore, attracting what he called 'bisness a nuf for 2.' But there were much talked-about horror-stories-one convict went mad in 1751 and attacked his master's children with an axe; another cut off his hand rather than work. From Virginia, William Byrd II wrote loftily to an English friend: `I wish you would be so kind as to hang all your felons at home. There were public demands that a head-tax be imposed on each convict landed or that purchasers be forced to post bonds for their good behavior. But the British authorities would never have allowed this. As a result of the convict influx we hear for the first time in America widespread complaints that crime was increasing and that standards of behavior had deteriorated. All this was blamed on Britain.

Indeed the historian notes with a certain wry amusement, as the century progressed, an American tendency to attribute everything good in their lives to their country and their own efforts, and to attribute anything which went wrong to Britain. Certainly, America showered blessings on its people, as English newcomers noticed. One visitor said that 'Hoggs in America feed better than Hyde Park duchesses in England.' Another called the country `a place of Full Tables and Open Doors.' Miss Eliza Lucas, much traveled daughter of an English army officer,

discoursed eloquently in a letter home of 'peaches, nectarines and mellons of all sorts extremely fine and in profusion, and their oranges exceed any I ever tasted from the West Indies or from Spain or Portugal.' There were many more, and better, vegetables than were available in England. German immigrants were particularly good at producing in quantity and for market, at low prices, apples, pears, quinces, chestnuts, and a wide range of strawberries, raspberries, huckleberries, and cherries for preserves. Ordinary people filled their stomachs with beef, pork, and mutton, as well as 'jonny cake' and 'hoe cake.' A contributor to the *London Magazine* in 1746 thought the American country people 'enjoy a Life much to be envied by Courts and Cities.' And there were always new evidences of nature's bounty to those who looked hard enough for it. Clever Miss Lucas, left in charge of a South Carolina plantation, took advantage of a parliamentary bounty on indigo, raised to sixpence a pound in 1748, to experiment successfully with a crop. Thanks to her, the Carolinas were exporting 1,150,662 pounds of it in 1775, and it became the leading staple until displaced by cotton after the Revolution.

While the pioneers pushed inland, opening up new sources of wealth, and gradually creating the demographic base from which America could take off into an advanced industrial economy, the cities of the coast were coining money and spending it. The queen of the cities was Philadelphia, which by mid-century had become the largest in the entire British Empire, after London. Its Philosophical Society (1743) was already famous and its Academy (1751) burgeoned into the great University of Pennsylvania. New York City was also growing fast and was already the melting-pot in embryo. By 1700 the English and the Huguenots outnumbered the original Dutch inhabitants: half a century later, many of the Dutch had become Anglicans and all were bilingual or English-speaking. They had been joined by multitudes of Walloons and Flemings, Swedes, Rhineland Protestants, Norwegians, and North Germans, as well as Scotch and English Calvinists and Quakers, freed slaves, Irish, and more Dutch. By mid-century the Lower Hudson, including East and West Jersey, joined as the royal colony of New Jersey in 1702, was a collection of communities-Dutch in Harlem and Flatbush, lowland Scots in Perth Amboy, Baptist settlers from New Hampshire in Piscataway, New England Quakers in Shrewsbury, Huguenots in New Rochelle, Flemings in Bergen, New Haven Puritans in Newark and Elizabeth, and pockets of Scotch, Irish, and Germans upriver, as well as many Dutch-Albany was a Dutch town then, though English-speaking. It was already competing with French Montreal for the Indian and wilderness trade in furs, with an offshoot at Fort Oswego on Lake Ontario.

The economic and political freedom enjoyed in English America, with its largely unrestricted enterprise, self-government, and buccaneering ways, was already reflected in growth-rates which made Canada, in which the French state had invested a huge effort but also a narrow system of controls, seem almost static. By 1750 there were well over 100,000 in the Hudson Valley alone, compared to only 60,000 in the vast St Lawrence basin, and New York City was four times the size of Quebec. And unlike inward-looking and deadly quiet Quebec, New York and its politics were already noisy, acrimonious, horribly factionridden, and undoubtedly democratic.

The venom of New York politics led to America's first trial for seditious libel in 1735, when John Peter Zenger, who had founded New York's *Weekly Journal* two years earlier, was locked up for criticizing the governor, William Cosby, and finally brought to trial after ten months behind bars. Zenger was by no means America's first newspaper publisher. That honor goes to the postmaster of Boston, William Campbell, who set up the *News-Letter* in 1704 to keep friends scattered around the Bay Colony informed of what was going on in the great world. By mid-century more than a score of newspapers had been started, including the *Philadelphia American*

*Weekly Mercury* (1719), the Boston *New England Courant* (1721), started by Benjamin Franklin's elder brother James, and Franklin's own *Pennsylvania Gazette*, which he acquired in 1729. There was also an Annapolis paper, the *Maryland Gazette* (1727), and the *Charlestown South Carolina Gazette* (1732). It is significant that Zenger, or rather his lawyer, Andrew Hamilton of Philadelphia, put forward truth as his defense. That would not have been admitted in an English court where anything was criminally libelous, whether it was true or not, which fostered 'an ill opinion of the government.' Indeed, it was an axiom of English law, in seditious libel, that 'the greater the truth, the greater the libel.' In Zenger's case the judge tried to overrule his defense, but the jury acquitted him all the same-and that was the last of such prosecutions. This in itself was an indication of what critics of society could get away with in the heady air of colonial America-prosecutions for criminal libel continued in England until the 1820s and even beyond.

Not all these cities were booming or bustling. Charleston, the only city in the South for more than a century, had little over 8,000 people in 1750, but it was spacious, tree-shaded, elegant, and free-spending, with a recognizable gentry living in town mansions and parading in their carriages. Annapolis was another gentry town, though even by 1750 it had only 150 households. It was brick-built with paved streets, as good as any in Boston, and had fine shops selling silverware, gold, well-made furniture, and paintings. Not only did it have its own newspaper, it also sported a bookstore-publisher from 1758. By the 1740s it was holding regular concerts and claimed its own gifted composer, the Rev. Thomas Bacon (1700-68 ), who also compiled *The Laws of Maryland*. In June July 1752 it had a theatrical season in which visiting professional players performed Gay's *Beggar's Opera*, the great London hit, and a piece by Garrick. A permanent theater was opened in 1771, the first in all the colonies to be brick-built. Its opening night was attended by a tall young colonel called George Washington. Its Tuesday Club, attended chiefly by clerics and professional men, was the center of scientific inquiry. Williamsburg, which became the capital of Virginia Colony in 1699, developed into a similar place, small, elegant, select, with a conscious air of cultural superiority, generated from its William and Mary College, the second oldest in the colonies (1693). Its main building was designed by Sir Christopher Wren, architect of St Paul's Cathedral in London.

These miniature red-brick cities were adorned by the rich of the Chesapeake with fine town houses. Many of them were modeled on one built in Annapolis by the secretary of Maryland Colony, Edmund Jennings, a magnificent building set in 4 acres of gardens at the foot of East Street. Another with splendid gardens-and no fewer than thirty-seven rooms-was built by William Pace. The chimneys of James Brice's mansion towered 70 feet above street-level. Many of the finest houses were the work of the local architect-craftsman William Buckland, credited with turning the place into the 'Athens of America.' Annapolis had an English-style Jockey Club from 1743, which supervised the regular race-meetings and was the meeting-place of local breeders. By the third quarter of the century over 100 English-bred horses of Arab strains had reached the Chesapeake and the gentry could attend races held near both these elegant cities-they were within commuting range. City artisans had cockfighting. But, as in England, the artisans went to the races if they could afford it, and the gentry certainly attended cockfights.

For boom you went to Baltimore, then the fastest-growing city in America, probably in the world. In 1752, it was nothing much-twenty-five houses, 200 people. Less than twenty years later it was the fourth-largest city in America. Its jewel was its magnificent harbor, which made it the center for Virginia-Maryland tobacco exports to Glasgow (European end of the trade), all-purpose trade with the West Indies, and ships loaded with imports from all over Europe. On top



of the hill overlooking the harbor, enormous flags, each from a different shipping company, announced major arrivals from the ocean. Fells Point was one of the most crowded shipping wharves on earth, backed by 3,000 houses, most of brick, two or three stories high. Later, the haughty French aristocrat Francois Alexis de Chateaubriand conceded that entering Baltimore harbor was like 'sailing into a park.' There was a downside to all this bustle, needless to say. Land values shot up astronomically and people complained the cost of living was higher than London's and much higher than in Paris. There was a terrific stench from the harbor at low tide and the streets near it were crowded with Indian, black, and white whores-also said to be high-priced and insolent. On the other hand there were not one but two theaters, and the Indian Queen Hotel on the corner of Market and Hanover streets was one of the best in the western hemisphere by the 1790s: excellent food, boots and shoes polished by assiduous blacks if left outside the rooms, and slippers provided free for guests.

There also grew up in colonial America, beginning in the last decades of the 17th century and progressing in stately fashion and growing confidence in the 18th century, a country-house culture, modeled on England's but with marked characteristics of its own. To begin with, these baroque-Georgian-Palladian houses were almost invariably at this date built on navigable rivers and creeks, to serve the plantation export economy. The wharf was as important as the drawing-room indeed, without the wharf the elaborate furniture, imported from London or Paris or made in New England, could not be afforded. These grand houses arose naturally from the economic activities which sustained them and were not plonked artificially in the midst of a capdoffing countryside like Blenheim or Chatsworth or Althorp in England. Nor, until the arrival of the plutocracy after the Civil War, were American country houses on anything like the same scale as the English aristocracy's. Except when the Dutch patroons built them, they were rarely of stone. But in the deployment of brick the American house-builders, amateur and professional, have rarely been excelled.

The greatest early 18th-century house in America was Rosewell, erected by Mann Page (1691-1730) in 1726 on the York River. Page married a Carter, of the family of 'King' Carter (1663-1732), the famous and rapacious agent of Lord Fairfax, proprietor of the Northern Neck of Virginia. Carter amassed 300,000 acres of prime land, and he gave his fancy son-in-law, Page, 70,000 of them. Page had this superb house built using the designs in Colin Campbell's Vitruvius Britannicus-published in London 1715-25 and quickly shipped across the Atlantic-as models. Page overspent, his grand house was unfinished when he died in 1730, and his debts exceeded the value of all his property, slaves included. Moreover, Rosewell, having triumphantly survived the horrors of the Civil War, was burned down in 1916. But its ruins compel one to believe that, in its day, 'there [was] nothing like it in England.'

Almost as grand, and still in excellent condition (and open to the public) is Hampton, near Baltimore. This was built (from 1783) by Charles Ridgeley (1733-90) and testifies to the failure of the British authorities to carry out their intention of preventing the American colonies from becoming a major iron-producer. Ridgeley was not only a planter with 24,000 slave-worked acres, but the owner of a large ironworks. That was where most of his money came from. Maryland not only had rich iron-ore deposits but plentiful hardwoods for making charcoal and fast streams for power. As early as 1734-7 it shipped 1,977 tons of pig-iron to England; by the 1740s it had a huge forge and made bar-iron as well as pigs; by the 1750s it had multiple furnaces and forges: in 1756 there were six ironworks in Baltimore County alone. Then it began to push inland, with rich members of the local elite, like Daniel Dulany, Benjamin Tasker, and Ridgeley, buying up gigantic blocks of iron-bearing land by patent, then moving in Swiss-

German and Scots-Irish workmen, as well as slaves for the heavy work. This glorious iron-master's house was held by six generations of Ridgeleys until, in 1948, it was bought by the National Park Service and made available to visitors.

There were equally fine, and many more, country houses built in the 18th century in Virginia, by members of the 100 leading families-Byrds, Carters, Lees, Randolphs, Fitzhughes, and so on- of which many, such as Westover, Stratford, and Shirley, survive. Drayton Hall, built 1738-42, on the Ashley River, a good example of the way local American architects used classical models, is based on Palladio's Villa Pisani, happily survived the Revolutionary and Civil wars and is now part of the American Trust for Historical Preservation. Another, rather later masterpiece, now part of Johns Hopkins University, is Hoewood, a Baltimore classical villa erected by the famous Charles Carroll of Carrolltown (1737-1832), grandest of the Revolutionary politicians. These houses and mansions sometimes contained fine libraries of ancient and modern works. A visitor described William Byrd II's library at Westover as 'consisting of nearly 4,000 volumes, in all Languages and Faculties, contained in 23 double-presses in black walnut ... the Whole in excellent Order.' He added, admiringly: 'Great Part of the books in elegant Bindings and of the best Editions and a considerable Number of them very scarce.' This opulent pile also still exists, though the interiors have been remodeled.

The men who owned these country houses, and others like them along the James, the Connecticut, and the Hudson, and the neat and in some cases spacious city houses in Boston and New Haven, Albany and New York, Philadelphia, Charleston, Williamsburg, Annapolis, and Baltimore, would in England have sat in the House of Commons, 'to keep up the consequence of their families,' as Dr Samuel Johnson put it. In some cases they would have sat in the House of Lords, with a writ of individual summons to parliament. In the American colonies they played a similar role, the main difference being that they were usually forced to consort with a host of lesser folk, many of whom could barely write their names, in helping to run the country. American colonies had their elites everywhere. There were immense differences in wealth and social customs, especially in the South and notably between the Tidewater grandees and the farmers of the piedmont and the inland valleys. Sometimes these grandees behaved as if they owned the place. Thus, in early South Carolina, the Tidewater elite did not even have a House of Assembly but met in one another's houses, just as if they were Whig dukes holding Cabinet dinners in London. But that kind of thing did not last. Rich Americans who got too uppity or tried to pull a rank they did not in law possess were soon reminded that America was a society where all freemen were equal, or liked to think they were anyway. One of the effects of slavery was to make even poor whites assertive about their rights. They felt they were of consequence because they were complacently aware of a huge servile class below them.

To 18th-century Frenchmen or Spaniards, who were familiar with the uniform manner in which their own colonies were directed, with an omnipresent state, a professional bureaucracy, and only the most nominal element of local representation, the British colonies in America must have seemed bewildering, chaotic, and inconsistent in the way they were run. The system was empirical and practical rather than coherent. It evolved almost organically, in the way English institutions had always evolved. No two colonies were quite the same. The system is worth examining in a little detail both because of its bearing on the events leading up to the American Revolution, and because of its influence on the way the American Republic developed thereafter.

Originally all the colonies had been divided into two categories: trading or commercial companies, run like primitive joint-stock corporations, or proprietary companies run by one or more great landed estate-owners. All had charters issued directly by the crown. Without these

two forms of ownership, which involved a high degree of self-government, the colonies would never have got going at all, because the English crown, unlike the crowns of France and Spain, was simply not prepared to pour out the prodigious amounts of cash needed. So the English state got its colonies largely for nothing and this successful stinginess continued to condition the thinking of British governments throughout the 18th century. They did not expect to have to pay for the empire or, if they did, they expected those who lived in the empire to refund the money through taxes. However, having set up these quasi-independent and self-supporting colonies in the early and mid-17th century, the crown began to wrest back some degree of control before the end of it. From Charles II to William III, they revoked or refused to renew charters-there was always a perfectly good excuse-and turned both commercial and proprietary colonies into crown ones. By 1776 only two commercial colonies (Connecticut and Rhode Island) and two proprietary colonies (Maryland and Pennsylvania) were left. It is true that Massachusetts was also still operating under a royal charter, but it was governed as a royal province.

This ought to have given the crown a great deal of power, at any rate in the nine colonies it controlled directly. In practice, English meanness in colonial matters again frustrated London's ability to control what happened. In each colony, the governor constituted the apex of the pyramid of power-and it is characteristic of the profound constitutional conservatism America has inherited from England that the fifty members of the United States are still run by governors. But the actual power of the colonial governors was less than it looked in theory, just as today the state governors of the federal republic are severely limited in what they can do. In the crown colonies the governors were appointed by the King on the advice of his ministers. In the proprietary colonies they were chosen by the proprietors, though the King had to approve. In the charter colonies they were elected, though again royal approval was needed. All were treated in some ways with deference, as viceroys. But whereas in the Spanish and French colonies they had not only enormous legal powers but the means to enforce them, in America they were not even paid by the crown. In every case except Virginia, their salaries were determined and paid by the colonial assemblies, who, true to the tradition of British meanness, kept these stipends small. They were often grudgingly and tardily paid too. Nor did they have many valuable perks and privileges. Most of them seem to have been able and-amazingly for the 18th century-honest. But they were not, on the whole, great, forceful, self-confident, or masterful men. That in itself made a difference to the degree of authority exercised over the people of the colonies.

The governors were caught between two quite different and often opposed forces. On top of them, but exercising power from distant London, was the crown. Colonies were supervised by the Privy Council, which operated through a Commission, variously called for trade or plantations and, from the days of William III, the Board of Trade and Plantations (1696-1782), which continued to be in charge of American policy until the end of the Revolutionary War. It was handicapped by the fact that it did not actually pay the governors (or in many cases appoint them) and it was very rare indeed for any of its members, or officials, to have set foot in America. The instructions it issued to governors were not always clear, or sensible, or consistent, and were often beyond their power to carry out. On the other hand, the crown tended to see governors as weak, ineffectual, demanding, and 'expensive servants,' always quarreling with the planters, provoking rebellions, or getting themselves involved in Indian wars through needless brutality and insensitive actions. The Crown usually sided with the Indians in cases of dispute and sometimes even with white rebels. When Governor Berkeley, who had run away from Nathaniel Bacon and his followers, turned on them savagely after Bacon died, Charles II

exclaimed in exasperation: 'That old fool has taken away more lives in that naked country than I did here for the murder of my father.'

The governors, of course, did not rule alone. Each had some kind of council, which formed the executive or administrative body of the colony and constituted the upper chamber (like the House of Lords) of its assembly. They were appointed by the crown (in royal colonies) or by the proprietors, and their numbers varied-ten in Rhode Island, twenty-eight in Massachusetts. They also had judicial functions and (with the governor) served as courts of appeal, though certain important cases could be appealed again to the Privy Council in London. A good, firm-minded governor could usually get his council solidly behind him.

It was a different matter with the Houses of Burgesses (or whatever they were called), the lower chambers of the assemblies. The first one dated from as far back as 1619. All the colonies had them. Most of them were older than any working parliaments in Europe, apart from Britain's. They aped the House of Commons and studied its history assiduously, especially in its more aggressive phases. Most of these assemblies kept copies of one or more volumes, for instance, of John Rushworth's Historical Collections, which documents the struggles of the Commons against James I and Charles I and was regarded by royalists as a subversive book. Whenever the Commons set a precedent in power-grabbing or audacity, one or other assembly was sure to cite it.

However, there was an important different between the English parliament and the colonial assemblies. England had never had a written constitution. All its written constitutional documents, like Magna Carta or the Bill of Rights, were specific ad hoc remedies for crises as they arose. They were never intended, nor were they used, as guides for the present and future. All the English had were precedents: their constitutional law operated exactly like their common law, organically The Americans inherited this common law. But they also had constitutions. The Fundamental Orders of Connecticut (1639) was the first written constitution not only in America but in the world. Written constitutions were subsequently adopted by all the colonies. It is vital to grasp this point. It was the constitutions as much as the assemblies themselves which made the colonies unique. In this respect they could be seen as more 'modern' than England, certainly more innovatory. Its constitution was what made Connecticut, for instance, separate from and independent of Massachusetts, its original 'Mother.' Having a constitution made a colony feel self-contained, mature, almost sovereign. Having a constitution inevitably led you to think in terms of rights, natural law, and absolutes, things the English were conditioned, by their empiricism and their organic approach to change, not to trouble their heads about. That was 'abstract stuff.' But it was not abstract for Americans. And any body which has a constitution inevitably begins to consider amending and enlarging it-a written constitution is a sign post pointing to independence.

The early establishment of assemblies and written constitutions-self-rule in fact-arose from the crown's physical inability, in the first half of the 17th century, to exercise direct control. The crown was never able to recover this surrender of power. Nor could the English deny the Americans the fruits of their own past. Their parliament had waged a successful struggle against the crown in the 1640s and acquired powers which could never subsequently be taken away. The colonial assemblies benefited from this. In 1688 the Glorious Revolution turned a divine-right monarchy into a limited, parliamentary one. The colonies participated in this victory, especially in New York, Massachusetts, and Maryland, which overthrew the royal government of James ii and replaced it by popular rule. When William III, the beneficiary of the Glorious Revolution, sought to reorganize the English colonies on Continental lines, he found it impossible and was

forced to concede their rights to assemblies. These were all further milestones along a road which led only in one direction, to ultimate independence.

In constitutional terms, the story of the first half of the 18th century in the American mainland colonies is the story of how the lower, elected houses of each assembly took control. The governor had the power of veto over legislation and he was expected, using his council members sitting in the upper chamber, to take the lead, with the elected assemblies deferentially subordinate. The reverse happened. In 1701 the Pennsylvania elite extracted from William Penn a charter of privileges which made it the most advanced representative body in America. When South Carolina ceased being a proprietary colony and became a crown one in the 1720s, which might in theory have led to a diminution of popular power, the House of Burgesses exploited the handover to increase its influence. In the first three decades of the 18th century, lower houses not only in Pennsylvania and South Carolina but in New York and Massachusetts also waged constitutional battles with governors, councils, and the crown, blocked orders, and, on the whole, determined the political agenda. In every colony, the lower houses increased their power during the first fifty years of the 18th century, sometimes very substantially. They ordered their own business, held elections, directed their London agents, and controlled the release of news to the press. They claimed and got the sole right to frame and amend money Bills, and so to raise or lower taxes. They controlled expenditure by specific allocations-something the British parliament could not do because of the huge power of the Treasury-and this meant they appointed and paid money commissioners and tax-collectors, regulated the fees of the administration, and subjected all officials, including the governor, to annual salary regulations. In fact, unlike the House of Commons, they gradually acquired all kinds of executive responsibilities and began to think of themselves as government.

It was not a one-way struggle by any means. Governors, on behalf of the crown, tried to cling on to their prerogative powers-to appoint judges and regulate the courts, to summon, dissolve, or extend assemblies. They made efforts to build up 'court parties' or buttress conservative factions among the burgesses, especially in New Hampshire, Maryland, and Massachusetts. In Virginia and New York, governing councils managed to retain power over land policy, an important source of patronage. As elsewhere in the British Empire, they tried divide and rule. Squabbles between coastal elites and up-country men were perennial. Franchises were heavily weighted in favor of property owners. So were constituency boundaries. For instance, in Pennsylvania, the three 'old' counties of Chester, Bucks, and Philadelphia elected twenty-six deputies to the legislature, the five frontier ones only ten. The young Thomas Jefferson, himself frontier-born, complained that 19,000 men 'below the falls' legislated for more than 30,000 elsewhere. But in most cases the majority of adult males had votes. The further from the coast, the more recent the settlement, the more the franchise became democratic. In practice, it was impossible to enforce any regulation which most people did not like. In the towns mobs could form easily. There were no police to control them. There was the militia, to be sure. And most members of the mob belonged to it!

But there was no real need for mobs. People were too busy, making money, pushing themselves upwards. A growing number got experience of local government, being elected to one office or another, sometimes several. If Americans, in an economic sense, were already predominantly middle class by 1760, the colonies were also in many respects a middle-class democracy too." But this applied more to New England, especially Massachusetts, than to, say, Virginia, where a good deal of deference remained. It is a fact that most people elected to the assemblies, especially in the South, and certainly most of the men who set the tone in them and

took a leading legislative and executive part, were vaguely gentry. They were fluent orators, by virtue of their education, and spoke the language of political discourse-very significant in the 18th century, on both sides of the Atlantic. Lesser men, even those proud to call themselves 'free-born Americans,' looked up to them. This was important, because it gave such members of the political elite self-confidence, made them feel they 'spoke for the people' without in any way being demagogues.'

Bearing all these factors in mind, it was inevitable that the lower houses would eventually get the upper hand in all the colonial assemblies. And so they did, but at different speeds. The chronological scorecard reads as follows. The Rhode Island and Connecticut Houses of Representatives were all-powerful from well before the beginning of the 18th century. Next came the Pennsylvania House, building on its 1701 Charter of Privileges, and so securing complete dominance in the 1730s, despite the opposition of governors. The Massachusetts House of Representatives actually shared in the selection of the council under its new charter of 1691 that was unique-and in the 1720s it became paramount in finance. By the 1740s it was dominant in all things. The South Carolina Commons and the New York House of Assembly came along more slowly, and trailing behind them were the lower houses in North Carolina, New Jersey, and Virginia-in fact Virginia's burgesses did not get on top until about the mid-1750s. In Maryland and New Hampshire the victory of the lower house had still not been achieved by 1763. But every one had got there by 1770 except remote and under-populated Nova Scotia. The movement was all in one direction-towards representative democracy and rule by the many.

This triumph of the popular system had one very significant consequence for everyday life. It meant that the American mainland colonies were the least taxed territories on earth. Indeed, it is probably true to say that colonial America was the least taxed country in recorded history. Government was extremely small, limited in its powers, and cheap. Often it could be paid for by court fines, revenue from loan offices, or sale of lands. New Jersey and Pennsylvania governments collected no statutory taxes at all for several decades. One reason why American living standards were so high was that people could dispose of virtually all their income. Money was raised by fees, in some cases by primitive forms of poll-tax, by export duties, paid by merchants, or import duties, reflected in the comparatively high price of some imported goods. But these were fleabites. Even so, there was resentment. The men of the frontier claimed they should pay no tax at all, since they bore the burden of defense on behalf of everyone. But this argument was a self-righteous justification of the fact that it was hard if not impossible to get them to pay any tax at all. Until the 1760s at any rate, most mainland colonists were rarely, if ever, conscious of a tax-burden. It is the closest the world has ever come to a no-tax society. That was a tremendous benefit which America carried with it into Independence and helps to explain why the United States remained a low-tax society until the second half of the twentieth century.

By the mid-18th century, America appeared to be progressing rapidly. It was unquestionably a success story. It was to a large extent self-governing. It was doubling its population every generation. It was already a rich country and growing richer. Most men and women who lived there enjoyed, by European standards, middle-class incomes once the frugality and struggles of their youth were over. The opportunities for the skilled, the enterprising, the energetic, and the commercially imaginative were limitless. Was, then, America ceasing to be 'the City on the Hill' and becoming merely a materialistic, earthly paradise? Had Cotton Mather's Daughter Prosperity destroyed her Mother Religion? A visitor might have thought so. In Boston itself, with its '42 streets, 36 lanes and 22 alleys' (in 1722), its 'houses near 3,000, 1,000 brick the rest timber,' its

massive, busy 'Long Wharf' which ran out to sea for half a mile and where the world's biggest ships could safely berth in any tide, the accumulation of wealth was everywhere visible. True, the skyline was dotted with eleven church spires. But not all those slender fingers pointing to God betokened the old Puritan spirit. In 1699 the Brattle Street Church had been founded by rich merchants, who observed a form of religion which was increasingly non-doctrinaire, was comfortably moral rather than pious, and struck the old-guard Puritans as disgustingly secular. A place like Philadelphia was even more attached to the things of this world. It had been founded and shaped by Quakers. But the Quakers themselves had become rich. A tax-list of 1769 shows that they were only one in seven of the town's inhabitants but they made up half of those who paid over £100 in taxes. Of the town's seventeen richest men, twelve were Quakers. The truth is, wherever the hard-working, intelligent Quakers went, they bred material prosperity which raised up others as well as themselves. The German immigrants, hard-working themselves but from a poor country still only slowly recovering from the devastation of the Thirty Years War, were amazed at the opportunities the Quaker colony presented to them. One German observer, Gottlieb Mittelberger, summed it up neatly in 1754: 'Pennsylvania is heaven for farmers, paradise for artisans, and hell for officials and preachers. Philadelphia may have already acquired twelve churches by 1752. But it had fourteen rum distilleries.

However, though Puritanism was in decline in 18th-century America, and the power of the old Calvinist dogmas-and the controversies they bred-were declining, religion as a whole was not a spent force in the America of the Enlightenment. Quite the contrary. In fact American religious characteristics were just beginning to mature and define themselves. It could be argued that it was in the 18th century that the specifically American form of Christianity-undogmatic, moralistic rather than credal, tolerant but strong, and all-pervasive of society-was born, and that the Great Awakening was its midwife. What was the Great Awakening? It was, is, hard to define, being one of those popular movements which have no obvious beginning or end, no pitched battles or legal victories with specific dates, no constitutions or formal leaders, no easily quantifiable statistics and no formal set of beliefs. While it was taking place it had no name. Oddly enough, in the first major history of America, produced in the middle decades of the 19th century, George Bancroft's *History of the United States* (1834-74), the term Great Awakening is never used at all. One or two modern historians argued that the phrase, and to some extent the concept behind it, was actually invented as late as 1842, by Joseph Tracey's bestselling book, *The Great Awakening: a History of the Revival of Religion in the Times of Edwards and White field*.

Whatever we call it, however, there was a spiritual event in the first half of the 18th century in America, and it proved to be of vast significance, both in religion and in politics. It was indeed one of the key events in American history. It seems to have begun among the German immigrants, reflecting a spirit of thankfulness for their delivery from European poverty and their happy coming into the Promised Land. In 1719, the German pastor of the Dutch Reformed Church, Theodore Frelinghuysen, led a series of revival meetings in the Raritan Valley. 'Pietism,' the emphasis on leading a holy life without troubling too much about the doctrinal disputes which racked the 17th century, was a German concept, and this is the first time we find non-English-speaking immigrants bringing with them ideas which influenced American intellectual life. It is also important to note that this Protestant revival, unlike any of the previous incarnations of the Reformed Religion, began not in city centers, but in the countryside. Boston and Philadelphia had nothing to do with it. Indeed to some extent it was a protest against the religious leadership of the well-fed, self-righteous congregations of the long-established towns. It

was started by preachers moving among the rural fastnesses, close to the frontier, among humble people, some of whom rarely had the chance to enjoy a sermon, many of whom had little contact with structured religion at all. It was simple but it was not simplistic. These preachers were anxious not just to deliver a message but to get their hearers to learn it themselves by studying the Bible; and to do that they needed to read. So an important element in the early Great Awakening was the provision of some kind of basic education in the frontier districts and among rural communities which as yet had no regular schools.

A key figure was William Tennent (1673-1745), a Scotch-Irish Presbyterian who settled at Neshaminy, Pennsylvania, in the 1720s, where he built what he called his Log College, a primitive rural academy teaching basic education as well as godliness. This was 'Frontier Religion' in its pristine form, conducted with rhetorical fireworks and uproaring hymn-singing by Tennent and his equally gifted son Gilbert, but also in a spirit of high seriousness, which linked knowledge of God with the spirit of knowledge itself and insisted that education was the high road to heaven. Many of Tennent's pupils, or disciples, became prominent preachers themselves, all over the colonies, and his Log College became the prototype for the famous College of New Jersey, founded in 1746, which eventually settled at Princeton.

As with most seminal religious movements in history, news of these doings spread by word of mouth and by ministers-some of them unqualified and without a benefice-traveling from one small congregation to another, rather than through the official religious channels. The minister at the Congregationalist church in Northampton, Massachusetts, Jonathan Edwards (1703-58), was intrigued by what he heard. Edwards was a man of outstanding intellect and sensibility, the first major thinker in American history. He was the son and grandson of Puritan ministers, and had gone to Yale almost as young (not quite thirteen) as Cotton Mather went to Harvard. Yet he graduated first in his class and made a name for himself there as a polymath, writing speculative papers on the Mind, Spiders, the Theory of Atoms, and the Nature of Being. His ability was such that, at the age of twenty-one, he was already head tutor of the college-virtually running it, in fact. But, when his grandfather died, Edwards took over his church in Northampton and labored mightily in what was a rather unrewarding vineyard until he learned to base his message not so much on fear, as the old puritan preachers did, as on joy.

It was not that Edwards neglected the element of 'salutary terror,' as he called it. He could preach a hellfire sermon with the best. He told sinners: 'The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect, over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked.' This particular sermon, published (in 1741) under the title *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*, was avidly read all over the colonies and committed to heart by many lesser evangelists who wanted to melt hardened hearts. But it was Edwards' nature, as an American, to stress not just God's anger but also his bounty to mankind, and to rejoice in the plenty and, not least, the beauty, of God's creation. Edwards put an entirely new gloss on the harsh old Calvinist doctrine of Redemption by stressing that God did not just choose some, and not others, but, as it were, radiated his own goodness and beauty into the souls of men and women so that they became part of him. He called it 'a kind of participation in God' in which 'God puts his own beauty, *ie* his beautiful likeness, upon their souls.' In a riveting discourse, *God Glorified in the Work of Redemption*, first published in 1731, he insisted that the happiness human beings find in the 'the Glorious Excellences and Beauty of God' is the greatest of earthly pleasures as well as a spiritual transformation. Through God we love beauty and our joy in beauty is worship. Moreover, this joy and knowledge of beauty, and through beauty God, is 'attainable by persons of mean capacities and advantages as well as those that are of the greatest



parts and learning.' It was part of Edwards' message that knowledge of God was education as well as revelation, that it was an aesthetic as well as a spiritual experience, and that it heightened all the senses. Edwards was not a simple evangelist but a major philosopher, whose works fill many thick volumes. But the core of his message, and certainly the secret of his appeal, then and now, and to the masses as well as to intellectuals, is that love is the essence of the religious experience.

In *A Treatise Concerning the Religious Affections* (1746) Edwards lists in detail the twelve signs by which true religious love and its false counterfeit can be distinguished, the most important of which is the ability to detect 'divine things' by 'the beauty of their moral excellency.' It is from 'the sense of spiritual beauty' that there arises 'all true experimental knowledge of religion' and, indeed, 'a whole new world of knowledge.'" Through this doctrine of love, Edwards proceeds to liberate the human will by demolishing the old Calvinist doctrine of determinacy and double-predestination. In his *The Freedom of the Will* (1754) Edwards insists that human beings are free because they act according to their perception and conviction of their own good. That will can be corrupted, of course, leading men and women to find the greatest apparent good in self and other lesser goods rather than in God. But earnest teaching can restore the purity of the will. At all events, all can choose: they are responsible for their choices and God will hold them accountable for it. But nothing is determined in advance-all is to be played for. What Edwards in fact was offering-though he did not live long enough to write his great *Summa Theologica*, which was to have been called *A History of the Work of Redemption*-was a framework for life in which free will, good works, purity of conduct, the appreciation of God's world and the enjoyment of its beauties, and the eventual attainment of salvation, all fitted, blended and fused together by the informing and vivifying energy of love. Here was indeed a frontier religion, for persons of all creeds and backgrounds and ethnic origins, native-born Americans and the new arrivals from Europe, united by the desire to do good, lead useful and godly lives, and help others to do the same in the new and splendid country divine providence had given them.

Edwards' earliest published sermons were widely read and discussed. What particularly interested fellow-evangelists, in England as well as America, was his remarkable account, *A Faithful Narrative* (1737), of the conversions his methods brought about in his own parish. One of the Englishmen he thus stirred was John Wesley, over in Georgia in the years 1735-8, to help General Oglethorpe evangelize the colonists and Indians. Another was George Whitefield (1714-70), also a member of the general's mission. Wesley was the greatest preacher of the 18th century, or certainly the most assiduous, but his preoccupation was mainly with the English poor. Whitefield, however, was a rhetorical and histrionic star of spectacular gifts, who did not trouble himself, as Wesley did, with organization. He simply carried a torch and used it to set alight multitudes. He found America greatly to his taste. In 1740 he made the first continental tour of the colonies, from Savannah in Georgia to Boston in the north, igniting violent sheets of religious flame everywhere. It was Whitefield, the Grand Itinerant as he was known, who caused the Great Awakening to take off. He preached, as he put it himself, 'with much Flame, Clearness and Power' and watched hungrily as 'Dagon Falls Daily Before the Ark.' He seems to have appealed equally to conventional Anglicans, fierce Calvinists, German pietists, Scotch-Irish, Dutch, even a few Catholics. A German woman who heard him said she had never been so edified in her life, though she spoke not a word of English. He enjoyed his greatest success in the Calvinist fortress of Boston, where the established churches did not want him at all. There he

joined forces with Gilbert Tennent, and an angry critic described how 'people wallowed in snow, night and day, for the benefit of their beastly brayings.'

When Whitefield left, others arose to 'blow up the Divine Fire lately kindled.' John Davenport (1716-57), a Yale man from Long Island, was perhaps the first of the new-style American personal evangelists. At public, open-air meetings in Connecticut he called for rings, cloaks, wigs, and other vain personal adornments to be thrown on the bonfire, together with religious books he denounced as wicked. He thus fell foul of the colony's laws against itinerant preaching, was arrested, tried by the General Assembly, judged to be mentally disturbed, and deported to Long Island. That did not stop him, or anyone else. Denied churches, the new evangelists preached in the open, often round camp-fires. Indeed they soon began to organize the camp-meetings which for two centuries were to be a salient part of American frontier religion. But many clergy welcomed these wild and earnest men. Even Anglican Virginia-its piedmont anyway-joined in the revival. People went to revival meetings, then started attending regularly in their own parish church, if there was one. If not, they clubbed together to set one up. Whitefield attracted enormous crowds-10,000 was not uncommon for him. It may be, as critics claimed, that only one in a hundred of his 'converts' stayed zealous. But he returned again and again to the attack-seven continental tours in the thirty years from 1740-and all churches benefited from his efforts, though the greatest gainers were the Baptists and the stranger sects on the Protestant fringes.

The curious thing about the Great Awakening is that it moved, simultaneously, in two different directions which were in appearance contradictory. In some ways it was an expression of the Enlightenment. One of the most important of the Anglican Awakeners, Samuel Johnson (1693-1772), who had been with Edwards at Yale-was his tutor in fact-was a typical Enlightenment clergyman. He said that reading Francis Bacon's *Advancement of Learning* left him 'like one at once emerging out of the twilight into the full sunshine of open day.' The experience, he said, freed him from what he called the 'curious cobweb of distributions and definition'-17th-century Calvinist theology-and from Bacon he went on to the idealism of the great Anglo-Irish philosopher Bishop Berkeley, who taught him that morality was 'the same thing as the religion of Nature,' not indeed discoverable without Revelation but 'founded on the first principles of reason and nature.' Johnson became the first president of King's College. The Awakening indeed had a dramatic impact on education at all levels. The Congregationalist minister Eleazar Wheelock (1711-79), one of the New England Awakeners, went on to operate a highly successful school for Indians, and this in turn developed into Dartmouth College (1769), which specialized in the classics. Charles Chauncy (1705-87), pastor of the First Church in Boston, originally opposed Edwards and his missions, setting out his views in *Thoughts on the State of Religion in New England* (1743) and other pamphlets. But the Awakening had its effect on him nonetheless, turning him away from the traditional structures of Christianity to what became Unitarianism. He lived just long enough to see the Anglicans of King's Chapel, Boston, adopt a non-trinitarian theology in 1785 and so become America's first Unitarian church. Ebenezer Gay (1696-1787), of Dedham, followed a similar trajectory. And in America, as in England, Unitarianism was, for countless intellectuals, a halfway house on the long road to agnosticism. Paradoxically, as a result of the Awakening, splits arose in many churches between those who endorsed it enthusiastically and those who repudiated its emotionalism, and the second group captured many pulpits and laid the foundations of American religious liberalism.

But if the Awakening, in itself and in the cross-currents it stirred up, was a movement towards a rational view of life, it was also a highly emotional experience for most of those who

participated in it-perhaps three out of four of the colonists. It was not just the fainting, weeping, and shrieking which went on at the mass meetings and round the campfires. It was the much less visible but still fundamental stirring of the emotions which Edwards aimed to produce. He urged a rebirth of faith, to create a New Man or a New Woman, rather as Rousseau was to do in France a generation later. He was fond of quoting the Cambridge Platonist John Smith: 'A true celestial warmth is of an immortal nature; and being once seated vitally in the souls of men, it will regulate and order all the motions in a due manner; as the natural head, radicated in the hearts of living creatures, hath the dominion and the economy of the whole body under it ... It is a new nature, informing the souls of men.'

This, and similar ideas, as presented by Edwards, had undoubted political undertones. Just as in France, rather later in the century, the combination of Voltairean rationalism and Rousseauesque emotionalism was to create a revolutionary explosion, so in America, but, in a characteristically religious context, the thinking elements and the fervid, personal elements were to combine to make Americans see the world with new eyes. There was a strong eschatological element in Edwards and many other preachers. Those who listened to him were left with the impression that great events were impending and that man-including American man-had a dramatic destiny. In his last work, going through the presses at the time of his death in 1758, he wrote: 'And I am persuaded, no solid reason can be given, why God, who constitutes all other created union or oneness, according to his pleasures ... may not establish a constitution whereby the natural posterity of Adam, proceeding from him, much as the buds or branches from the stock or root of a tree, should be treated as *one* with him.' Man was thus born in the image of God and could do all-his capacities were boundless. In human history, Edwards wrote, 'all the changes are brought to pass ... to prepare the way for the glorious issue of things that shall be when truth and righteousness shall finally prevail.' At that hour, God 'shall take the kingdom' and Edwards said he 'looked towards the dawn of that glorious day.'

The Great Awakening was thus the proto-revolutionary event, the formative moment in American history, preceding the political drive for independence and making it possible. It crossed all religious and sectarian boundaries, made light of them indeed, and turned what had been a series of European-style churches into American ones. It began the process which created an ecumenical and American type of religious devotion which affected all groups, and gave a distinctive American flavor to a wide range of denominations. This might be summed up under the following five heads: evangelical vigor, a tendency to downgrade the clergy, little stress on liturgical correctness, even less on parish boundaries, and above all an emphasis on individual experience. Its key text was Revelations 21:5: 'Behold, I make all things new'-which was also the text for the American experience as a whole.

If, then, there was an underlying political dimension to the Great Awakening, there was also a geographical one. It made not only parish boundaries seem unimportant but all boundaries. Hitherto, each colony had seen its outward links as running chiefly to London. Each tended to be a little self-contained world of its own. That was to remain the pattern in the Spanish colonies for another century, independence making no difference in that respect. The Great Awakening altered this separateness. It taught different colonies, tidewaters and piedmonts, coast and up-country, to grasp and appreciate what they had in common, which was a very great deal. As a symbol of this, Whitefield was the first 'American' public figure, equally well known from Georgia to New Hampshire. When he died in 1770 there was comment from the entire American press.

But even more important than the new geographical sense of unity was the change in men's attitudes. As John Adams was to put it, long afterwards: 'The Revolution was effected before the War commenced. The Revolution was in the mind and hearts of the people: and change in their religious sentiments of their duties and obligations.' It was the marriage between the rationalism of the American elites touched by the Enlightenment with the spirit of the Great Awakening among the masses which enabled the popular enthusiasm thus aroused to be channeled into the political aims of the Revolution-itself soon identified as the coming eschatological event. Neither force could have succeeded without the other. The Revolution could not have taken place without this religious background. The essential difference between the American Revolution and the French Revolution is that the American Revolution, in its origins, was a religious event, whereas the French Revolution was an anti-religious event. That fact was to shape the American Revolution from start to finish and determine the nature of the independent state it brought into being.

PART TWO

**‘That the Free Constitution Be  
Sacredly Maintained’**

Revolutionary America, 1750-1815

If the great awakening prepared the American people emotionally for Revolution and Independence the process was actually detonated by the first world war in human history. And, curiously enough, it was an American who struck the spark igniting this global conflict. George Washington (1732-99) was born on the family estate, Wakefield, in Westmoreland County, Virginia. Much of America's history was written in his antecedents. His founding ancestor was a clergyman expelled from his Essex living for drunkenness, who landed in Virginia in 1657 and married the prosperous Anne Pope. He was Washington's great-grandfather, remembered by the Indians as 'towntaker,' Caunotaucarius. Washington's father, Augustine or Gus, was a blond giant, living evidence of the fact that men grew taller in America than in England-though Gus sent his eldest son Lawrence, Washington's adored half-brother, to school in Appleby, England, to give him a bit of class. Gus had a large family and was only a moderately successful planter. He died when Washington was eleven, leaving 10,000 acres in seven parcels, with a total of forty-nine slaves. The core of it was Ferry Farm with 4,360 acres and ten slaves, in which his mother was left a half-interest and which she decided to keep and run. The Washingtons were so characteristic of the modest gentry families who carried through the Revolution that it is worth detailing the inventory of Gus's possessions on the eve of it. He had little plate-one soup spoon, eighteen small spoons, seven teaspoons, a watch, and a sword, total value £125 10s. The glassware was worth only £5 12s. The chinaware, which included two teasers, was valued at a mere £3 6s. There was a fine looking-glass in the hall, a 'screwtoire' (escritoire), two tables, one armchair, eleven leather-bottomed chairs, three beds in the parlour, an old table, three old chairs, an old desk, window curtains, and in the hall two four-poster beds with two more in the back room. In the chamber above the parlor were three old beds-making a total of thirteen beds in all (Gus had ten children by two wives). There were six good pairs of sheets, ten inferior ones, and seventeen pillow-cases, thirteen table-cloths and thirty-one napkins. Thirteen slaves were attached to the house, but only seven of them were able-bodied. These were the material circumstances in which Washington was nurtured.

Like his father, George Washington was big, six feet two. He had enormous hands and feet, red or auburn hair, a huge nose, high forehead, wide hips, narrow shoulders, and he used his height and bulk to develop an impressive presence which, with his ability to stay calm in moments of crisis, was the key to his ability to rule men, both soldiers and politicians.' He always took trouble with his appearance. He never wore a wig, which he thought unbecoming, but he dressed and powdered his hair carefully and tied it with a neat velvet ribbon called a solitary. He broke his teeth cracking nuts and replaced them by false ones of hippopotamus ivory and was self-consciously aware that they fitted badly. He would not venture on an expedition into the woods, as a young man, without nine shirts, six linen waistcoats, seven caps, six collars, and four neckcloths. His instincts were aristocratic and in time became regal. He rejected the new American habit, growing throughout the 18th century, of shaking hands with all and sundry, and instead bowed. He did not hesitate to use his physical strength to exert his will: he 'laid his cane over many of [his] officers who showed their men the example of running.' He could throw stones an immense distance and liked to demonstrate this gift to impress. His mother was a strong woman and he esteemed her. His father meant nothing to him. About 17,000 of Washington's letters have survived, and the father is mentioned in only two of them. He was, from an early age, his own father-figure.

Unlike his half-brother, Washington had only the most elementary education. His envious and critical Vice President John Adams was to write: 'That Washington was not a scholar was certain. That he was too illiterate, unread, unlearned for his station is equally past dispute.'

Washington himself said he suffered from 'consciousness of a defective education.' That was why he never attempted to write his memoirs. He said that young men of the gentry class brought up in Virginia, and 'given a horse and a servant to attend them as soon as they could ride' were 'in danger of becoming indolent and helpless.' But Washington was in no such temptation. He wanted to get on. There was a powerful drive in this big young man to better himself. He developed a good, neat, legible hand. To improve his manners, he copied out 110 maxims, originally compiled by a French Jesuit as instructions for young aristocrats. Thus: 'Sing not to yourself with a humming noise nor drum with your fingers and feet.' 'Kill no vermin, as fleas, lice, ticks etc in the sight of others.' 'When accompanying a man of great quality, walk not with him cheek by jowl but somewhat behind him, but yet in such a manner he may easily speak with you.'

Alas! It was Washington's misfortune and grievance that he knew no one 'of great quality.' He 'lacked interest,' as they said in the 18th century. 'Interest' was one of the key words in his vocabulary. Men were driven by it, in his opinion. He wrote of '*interest*, the only bonding cement.' It applied equally to men and nations. 'Men may speculate as they will,' he wrote, 'they may talk of patriotism ... but whoever builds upon it as a sufficient basis for conducting a long and bloody war will find themselves deceived in the end ... For a time it may of itself push men to action, to bear much, to encounter difficulties, but it will not endure unassisted by interest.' He thought it was 'the universal experience of mankind' that 'no nation can be trusted further than it is bound by interest.' It is important to grasp that Washington saw both the Revolution and the constitution-making that followed as the work of men driven mainly by self-interest. It was always his dynamic, and he felt no shame in it, following it until his own interest was subsumed in the national interest. The nearest he came to possessing interest himself was the marriage of his half-brother Lawrence to a daughter of Colonel William Fairfax, head of a branch of one of the grandest families in Virginia. Washington made every use he could of this connection. His brother-in-law George Fairfax, a young man with great expectations and a touch of Indian blood (like many Americans) was a role-model.

Washington discovered, aged sixteen, that for a young man of his background and modest education the next best thing to owning a lot of land was to become a land surveyor. A neat hand and the ability to draw maps, take measurements, and make calculations were all that was required. The fascination all Americans had in land, the constant speculation in it, the vast amount there was still to be occupied further west, ensured there would be no lack of occupation. His first job was to survey part of the Fairfax estate west of the Blue Ridge. This took him into the frontier district for the first time and he found he liked the life, the opportunities, even the danger. He joined the militia and found he liked that too. He was a natural soldier. In 1753, when he was twenty-one, the governor of Virginia, Robert Dinwiddie, sent Washington, with the rank of major, into the Ohio Valley, on behalf of the Ohio Company, a private-enterprise venture set up with government backing to develop the frontier districts. Washington's orders were to contact any French he found there and warn them they were straying on to British territory.

The following year was the critical one. Washington, with the rank of lieutenant-colonel and a force of Virginia volunteers and Indians, was sent back to the Ohio and instructed to build a fort at the Ohio Forks, near what is now Pittsburgh. He kept a detailed journal of this expedition. At the Forks he found the French had been before him and constructed Fort Duquesne. He built his own, which he called Fort Necessity-he was having an administrative battle with Governor Dinwiddie over pay and supplies-at Great Meadows. Then he fell in with a French detachment, under Lieutenant de Jumonville, and when the French ran for their muskets, 'I ordered my

company to fire,' Washington reported. His Iroquois Indians attacked with their tomahawks. Before Washington could stop the killing and accept the surrender of the French, ten of them were dead, including their commander.' This incident, *l'affaire Jumonville*, led to massive French retaliation and the outbreak of what was soon a world war. It raged in North America for six years, 1754-60, in Central and South America, in the Caribbean and the Atlantic, in India and the East, and not least in Europe, where it was known as the Seven Years War (1756-63). Detonating such a conflict made Washington famous, even notorious. Artlessly, he wrote to his brother Jack that he had not been daunted by his first experience of action: 'I heard the bullets whistle and, believe me, there is something charming in the sound.' This, together with material from Washington's reports and diaries, was published in the London Magazine, where King George II read it. The King was rather proud of his battlefield experience and snorted: 'By God, he would not think bullets charming if he had been used to hear many.' Voltaire summed it up: 'A cannon shot fired in America would give the signal that set Europe in a blaze.' In fact there was no cannon shot. Horace Walpole, in his *History of the Reign of George II*, was more accurate: 'The volley fired by a young Virginian in the backwoods of America set the world on fire.'

This global conflict finally brought to a head the competition between France and Britain to be the dominant power in North America. It was a conflict Britain was bound to win in the end because its American colonies, with their intensive immigration over many decades, their high birth-rate and natural population increase, their booming economy and high living-standards, had already passed the take-off point and were rapidly becoming, considered together, one of the fastest-growing and richest nations in the world. By comparison, the French presence was thinly spread and sustained only by continued military and economic effort from the French state. But it did not quite look like that at the time. The British colonists thought of themselves as encircled by French military power. It stretched from the mouth of the St Lawrence into Canada, down through the region of the Great Lakes and then along the whole course of the Mississippi to New Orleans which the French, with much effort, were developing as a major port. There were conflicting claims everywhere. Under the Treaty of Utrecht of 1713, concluding an earlier contest that Britain had won, the French renounced their claim to Hudson's Bay in Canada, but in fact had continued to trade in the region and build forts. Again, Utrecht had given the British 'Nova Scotia or Arcadie with its ancient boundaries,' and to them it meant all territory east of St Croix and north up to the St. Lawrence. But the French contested this and in 1750 built more forts to back up their point. Most important of all, from the viewpoint of the British colonies, the French claim to the whole of the Mississippi Basin was in flat contradiction to the claims of the colonies to extend their boundaries along the latitudes indefinitely in a western direction. In the south there were endless conflicting claims too, and a genuine fear that the French would gang up with the Spanish in Florida to attack Georgia.

Fear of France was the great factor which bound the American colonies to Britain in the mid-18th century. They regarded falling under the French flag as the worst possibility that could befall them. On the Atlantic coast, people from numerous nations had found themselves coming under British suzerainty-Spanish, French, Swedes, Dutch, Germans, Swiss-partly by conquest, partly by immigration, and none had found any difficulty in adjusting. By Continental standards Britain was a liberal state with a minimalist government and tradition of freedom of speech, assembly, the press, and (to some extent) worship. These advantages applied *a fortiori* in the colonies, where settlers often had little or no contact with government from one year's end to another. But for a British subject to shift from the Union Jack to the fleur-de-lys was a different matter. France still had a divine right absolutist monarchy. Its state was formidable, penetrative,



and demanding, even across the Atlantic. It conscripted its subjects and taxed them heavily. Moreover, it was a Catholic state which did not practice toleration, as thousands of Huguenot immigrants in the British colonies could testify.

The American colonies had played little part in the war against France during the reign of William III and Queen Anne. But since then the French military presence in North America had grown far more formidable. When war with Spain, quickly followed by war with France, broke out in 1740 (the War of the Austrian Succession, as Europe called it), the colonies were in the forefront of the action in North America. Not only did Oglethorpe's Georgians invade Spanish Florida but colonial militias, with Massachusetts and New York supplying most of the manpower, took the offensive against France and succeeded in capturing Louisburg. New England and New York were disgusted when the British agreed, at the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748, to hand the fortress back. Nor was colonial opinion impressed by British strategy and grip during the first phases of the world war which Colonel Washington inadvertently started. The British effort in North America was ill provided and ineffective, marked by many reverses. With William Pitt in power from 1758 things changed totally. He had close ties with London mercantile interests and he switched the war from a Continental one in Europe to an imperial one all over the world. He amassed big fleets and raised effective armies, he picked able commanders like General James Wolfe, and he enthused public opinion on both sides of the Atlantic. His armies not only pushed north up the Hudson and down the St Lawrence, but along the Ohio and the Allegheny too. Suddenly, with the fall of Quebec in 1759, French power in North America began to collapse like a house of cards. The Peace of Paris, 1763, confirmed it.

The treaty was one of the greatest territorial carve-ups in history. It says a lot for the continuing ignorance of European powers like Britain and France, and their inability to grasp the coming importance of continental North America, that they spent most of the peace process haggling over the Caribbean sugar-islands, which made quick returns in ready cash. Thanks to its command of the sea, Britain used the war to seize St Vincent, the Grenadines, Tobago, Dominica, St Lucia, Guadeloupe, and Martinique. The British sugar lobby, fearing overproduction, objected to keeping them all, so Britain graciously handed back Guadeloupe, Martinique, and St Lucia. In return, the French made no difficulty about surrendering the whole of Canada, Nova Scotia, and their claims to the Ohio Valley-'Snow for Sugar,' as the deal was called. Moreover, Britain, which now had no fear of a Spain evidently in irreversible military decline, was quite happy to hand Spain back its other conquests, Cuba and Manila. As part of a separate deal France gave Spain all of Louisiana to compensate it for losses in Florida to Britain. Thus more American territory changed hands in this settlement than in any other international treaty, before or since. The net result was to knock France out of the American hemisphere, in which retained only three small Caribbean islands, two in the fisheries, and negligible chunk of Guyana. This was a momentous geopolitical shift, huge relief to British global strategists, because it made Britain the master of North America, no longer challenged there by the most formidable military power in Europe. The hold Spain had on the lower Mississippi was rightly regarded as feeble, to be loosened whenever Britain saw fit. Suddenly, in the mid-1760s, Britain had emerged as proprietor of the largest empire the world had seen since Roman times-larger, indeed, in terms of territorial extent and global compass.

Did this rapid expansion bring a rush of blood to the heads of the British elite? One can put it that way. Certainly, over the next two decades, the characteristic British virtues of caution, pragmatism, practical common sense and moderation seemed to desert the island race, or at any

rate the men in power there. There was arrogance, and arrogance bred mistakes, and obstinacy meant they were persisted in to the point of idiocy. The root of the trouble was George III, a young, self confident, ignorant, opinionated, inflexible, and pertinacious man determined to be an active king, not just in name, like his grandfather George II, but in reality. George III however, was a sensible man, we aware of his considerable intellectual and constitutional limitations. He had employed great statesmen, when he could find them, like Sir Robert Walpole and William Pitt the Elder, who had helped to make Britain the richest and most successful nation in the world. George III employed second-raters and creatures of his own making, mere court favorites or men whose sole merit was an ability to manage a corrupt House of Commons. From 1763 to 1782, by which time the America colonies had been lost, it would be hard to think of a more dismal succession of nonentities than the men who, as First Lords of the Treasury (Prime Minister), had charge of Britain's affairs-the Earl of Bute, George Grenville, the Marquis of Rockingham, the Duke of Grafton and Lord North. And behind them, in key jobs, were other boobies like Charles Townshend and Lord George Germaine.

This might not have mattered quite so much if the men they face across the Atlantic had been of ordinary stature, of average competence and character. Unfortunately for Britain-and fortunately for America-the generation that emerged to lead the colonies into independence was one of the most remarkable group of men in history-sensible, broad-minded, courageous, usually well educated, gifted in a variety of ways, mature, and long-sighted, sometimes lit by flashes of genius. It is rare indeed for a nation to have at its summit a group so variously gifted as Washington and Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Adams. And what was particularly providential was the way in which their strengths and weaknesses compensated each other, so that the group as a whole was infinitely more formidable than the sum of its parts. They were the Enlightenment made flesh, but an Enlightenment shorn of its vitiating French intellectual weaknesses of dogmatism, anticlericalism, moral chaos, and an excessive trust in logic, and buttressed by the English virtues of pragmatism, fair-mindedness, and honorable loyalty to each other. Moreover, behind this front rank was a second, and indeed a third, of solid, sensible, able men capable of rising to a great occasion. In personal qualities, there was a difference as deep as the Atlantic between the men who led America and Britain during these years, and it told from first to last. Great events in history are determined by all kinds of factors, but the most important single one is always the quality of the people in charge; and never was this principle more convincingly demonstrated than in the struggle for American independence.

Poor quality of British leadership was made evident in the immediate aftermath of the collapse of French power in Canada by an exercise of power thoroughly alien to the English spirit-social engineering. Worried by the concentration of French settlers in Nova Scotia, British ministers tried to round up 10,000 of them and disperse them by force to other British colonies. This was the kind of thing which normally took place in Tsarist Russia, not on British territory. The Protestant colonies did not want the papist diaspora. Virginia insisted on sending its allotment, 1,100, to England. Some 3,000 escaped and went to Quebec, where in due course the British deported them-plus several thousand others-to a reluctant France. The spectacle of these wretched people being marched about and put into ships by redcoats, then replaced by phalanxes of Ulster Protestants, Yorkshire Methodists, and bewildered Scotch Highlanders-themselves marched from ship to inland allotments as though they were conscript members of a military colony-was repugnant to the established colonists. Might not the British authorities soon start to shove them around too, as though they were loads of timber or sacks of potatoes?"

By contrast, in American eyes, the British showed a consideration and delicacy towards the Indians which, the colonists felt, was outrageous. In their eyes, the management of the Indians was one field in which social engineering (as they called it 'polity' or 'policing') was not only desirable but essential. In dealing with the heart of America, now to dispose of as they saw fit, the British were faced with a genuine dilemma: how to reconcile three conflicting interests-the fur traders the colonies with their expanding-westward land hunger, and Britain's Indian allies, such as the Creeks, the Cherokees, and the Iroquois. There were enormous areas involved, none of them properly mapped. Lord Bute, in London, knew nothing about the subject-could not distinguish between a Cherokee and an Eskimo, though he knew all about highland clans-and was entirely dependent on on-the-spot experts like Sir William Johnson and John Stuart, who had Indian interests at heart. The government of Pennsylvania had recently used the term 'West of the Allegheny Mountains,' to denote land reserved for the Indians, presumably in perpetuity. The pro-Indian interest seized on this and persuaded the British government to apply it to the whole of North America. A royal proclamation of October 7, 1763 laid down the new boundary to separate the colonies from land reserved to the Indians. It forbade Americans to settle in 'any lands beyond the heads or sources of any of the rivers which fall into the Atlantic Ocean from the West or Northwest. In effect this would have created an Atlantic fringe America, inwardly blocked by an Indian interior. That was anathema to the colonies-it destroyed their future, at a stroke. In any case, it was out of date; countless settlers were already over the watershed, well dug in, and were being joined by more every day. The Proclamation noted this point and, to please the Indians, laid down that any 'who have either wilfully or inadvertently seated themselves upon any lands [beyond the line] must forthwith ... remove themselves.' This was more attempted social engineering, and with heavily armed settlers already scattered and farming over vast distances, there was no question of herding them east except at the point of the bayonet. To make matters worse, British Indian allies were permitted to remain in strength and in large areas well to the east of the line.

The Great Proclamation in short was not a practical document. It enraged and frightened the colonists without being enforceable; indeed it had to be altered, in 1771, to adjust to realities, by conceding settlement along the Ohio from the Great Forks (Fort Pitt or Pittsburgh) to the Kentucky River, thus blowing a great hole in the entire concept and in effect removing any possible dam to mass westward expansion. The Proclamation was one of Britain's cardinal errors. Just at the moment when the expulsion of the French had entirely removed American dependence on British military power, and any conceivable obstacle to the expansion of the colonies into the boundless lands of the interior, the men in London were proposing to replace the French by the Indians and deny the colonies access. It made no sense, and it looked like a deliberate insult to American sensibilities.

One American who was particularly upset by the Proclamation was George Washington. He saw himself as a frontiersman as well as a tidewater landowner. Access to land on the frontier was his particular future, as well as America's. The idea of consigning America's interior to the Indians for ever struck him as ridiculous, flying in the face of all the evidence and ordinary common sense. He disliked the Indians and regarded them as volatile, untrustworthy, cruel, improvident, feckless, and in every way undependable. He shared with every one of the Founding Fathers-this is an important point to note-a conviction that the interests of the Indians must not be allowed to stand in the way of America's development. We should not think of Washington as a natural rebel or an instinctive republican. Like most Americans of his class, he was neither. Like most of them, he was ambivalent about England, its crown, its institutions, and

its ways. He was fond of using the word 'Empire.' He was proud of England's. If anything his instincts were imperialist. He certainly considered the idea of a career in the British Empire. He had 'had a good war.' In 1756 he had been given the command of the Virginia Militia in frontier defense. In 1758 he led one of the three brigades which took Fort Duquesne. His success as a rising military commander under the British flag helped him to court and win the hand of a wealthy and much sought-after young widow, Martha Dandridge Custis (1732-1802), who had 17,000 acres and £20,000 in money.

It had long been Washington's ambition, which he made repeated efforts to gratify, to get a regular commission in the British Army. This might have changed his entire life because it would have opened up to him the prospect of global service, promotion, riches, possibly a knighthood, even a peerage. He knew by now that he was a first-class officer with the talent and temperament to go right to the top. His fighting experience was considerable and his record exemplary. But the system was against him. In the eyes of the Horse Guards, the headquarters of the British Army in London, colonial army officers were nobodies. American militias were dismissed with special contempt, both social and military. It was a cherished myth in London that they had contributed virtually nothing to winning the war in America and could not be depended on to fight, except possibly against ill-armed Indians. Washington's service actually counted against him, just as, a generation or so later, the young Arthur Wellesley (later Duke of Wellington) found himself dismissed by the Horse Guards as a mere 'sepoy general' because of his service in India. So Washington discovered that his colonial army commission was of no value and that he had no chance of getting a royal one.' It was an injustice and an insult and it proved to be the determining factor in his life and allegiance.

Washington's financial experiences also illustrated the way in which the American gentry class were inevitably turning against Britain. The marriage to Martha and the death of his half-brother and his widow made Washington master of Mount Vernon and transformed him from a minor planter into a major landowner. He lived in some style, with thirteen house-servants plus carpenters and handymen about the building. In the seven years from 1768 alone, the Washingtons entertained over 2,000 guests. He did all the things an English gentleman, and the Virginians who aped them, might be expected to do. He bred horses. He kept hounds-Old Harry, Pompey, Pilot, Tartar, Mopsey, Duchess, Lady, Sweetlips, Drunkard, Vulcan, Rover, Truman, Jupiter, June, and Truelove. He set up a library and ordered 500 bookplates from London, with his arms on. He and Martha had no children but he was kind to the step-children she brought with her, ordering fine toys from London: 'A Tunbridge teaset,' reads one list, 'three Neat Tunbridge Toys, a neat book, fashionable tea chest, a bird on bellows, a cuckoo, a turnabout parrot, a grocer's shop, a neat dressed wax baby, an aviary, a Prussian Dragoon, a Man Smoking, and six small books for children.'

But he was not an English gentleman, of course; he was a colonial subject, and he found the system worked against him as a landowner too. He had to employ London Agents, Robert Cary & Co-every substantial planter did-and his relations with them made him anti-British. English currency regulations gave them an advantage over Virginia planters and they tended to keep them in debt with interest mounting up. Any dealings with London were expensive because of the complexity, historical anomalies, and obscurantism of the ancient administration there, which had evolved like a weird organism over centuries. Americans were not used to government. What they had-for instance, the lands offices-was simple, efficient, and did its business with dispatch. London was another universe. The Commission of Customs, the Secretary-at-War, the Admiralty, the Admiralty Courts, the Surveyor General of the King's Woods and Forests, the

Postmaster-General, the Bishop of London-all were involved in the colonies. The Admiralty alone had fifteen branches scattered all over a city which was already 5 miles wide. There were bureaucratic delays and a five-week voyage added to each end. As Edmund Burke was to put it, 'Seas roll and months pass between order and execution.'

On top of this there was taxation. Like all Americans, Washington paid few taxes before the mid-1760s and resented those he did pay. Now the British government proposed to put colonial taxation on an entirely new basis. The Seven Years War was the most expensive Britain had ever waged. Before it, the national debt had stood at £60 million. It was now-1764-£133 million, more than double. The interest payments were enormous. The British Treasury calculated that the public debt carried by each Englishman was £18, whereas a colonial carried only 18 shillings. An Englishman paid on average 25 shillings a year in taxes, a colonial only sixpence, one-fiftieth. Why, argued the British elite, should this outrageous anomaly be allowed to continue, especially as it was the American colonies which had benefited more from the war?

George Grenville, now in charge of British policy, was a pernickety and self-righteous gentleman determined to correct this anomaly by introducing what he called 'Rules of Right Conduct' between Britain and America. As Burke said, he 'had a rage for regulation and restriction.' His attack was two-pronged. First, he determined to get Americans to pay existing taxes, which were indirect, customs duties and the like. In the English-speaking world, normally law-abiding, evading customs was a universal passion, practiced by high and low, rich and poor. The smugglers who pandered to this passion formed huge armies of rascally seamen, who fought pitched battles on the foreshore and sometimes well inland with His Majesty's Customs Service, who became equally brutal and ruthless in consequence (and still are). But if the English evaded customs duties, the Americans largely got off scot-free because the Colonial Customs Service was inefficient and corrupt. It cost more than it collected. Its officials were almost invariably absentees whose work was done, or not done, by deputies. It was popularly supposed that the duties thus lost amounted to £700,000 annually, though the true figure was nearer £500,000. Grenville's so-called Sugar or Revenue Act of 1764 halved the duty on molasses but provided for strict enforcement. Officials were ordered to their posts. A new Vice-Admiralty Court was set up in Halifax, Nova Scotia, to impose harsh penalties. Suddenly, there were a lot of officious revenue men everywhere. One critic, Benjamin Franklin, reported to the Boston elders that low-born and needy people were being given these jobs a anyone better would not take them:

Their necessities make them rapacious, their offices make them proud and insolent, their insolence and rapacity make them odious and being conscious they are hated they become malicious; their malice urges them to a continual abuse of the inhabitants in their letters of administration, presenting them as disaffected and rebellious, and to encourage the use of severity) as weak, divided, timid and cowardly Government believes all; thinks it necessary to support and countenance its officers; their quarrelling with the people is deemed a mark and consequence of their fidelity ... I think one may clearly see, in the system of customs now being exacted in America by Act of Parliament the seeds sown of a total disunion of the two countries."

Franklin's neat summary says it all. But soon there was more. Grenville thought it monstrous that India should pay for itself by having its own taxes and paying its bills, netting large profits for the English gentlemen lucky enough to have posts there, whereas America was run at a thumping loss. So he devised (1765) a special duty for America called the Stamp Act. This was an innovation, which made it horribly objectionable to Americans, who paradoxically were very conservative about such things. It caused exactly the same outrage among them as Charles I's

Ship Duty had caused among the English gentry in the years leading up to the Civil War-and this historical parallel did not escape the notice of the colonists. To make matters worse, for some reason which made obscure sense to Grenville's dim calculations, the duty fell particularly hard on two categories of men skilled in circulating grievances-publicans (who had to pay a registration fee of £1 year) and newspapers (who had to print on stamped paper). Grenville had a gift for doing the wrong thing. His Sugar Act cost £8,000 in administrative costs for every £2,000 raised in revenue. His Stamp Act cost a lot in administration too but raised nothing. It proved unenforceable. Colonial assemblies pronounced it unconstitutional and unlawful. The irresistible popular catchphrase 'No taxation without representation' was heard. The stamps were publicly burned by rioters. One stamp master, Zachariah Hood, had to ride so hard from Massachusetts for protection in the British garrison in New York that he killed his horse under him. Unless the redcoats did it, there was no force prepared to curb the riots. Moreover there were plenty of people in London, led by Pitt, ready to agree with the colonists that parliament had no right to tax them in this way. So the Stamp Act was repealed. That was rightly seen in America as weakness. Parliament then compounded its error by insisting on passing a Declaratory Act asserting its sovereignty over America. That made the dispute not just financial but constitutional.

It is now time to see the origins and progress of the breakdown between Britain and America through the eyes of a man who was involved in all its stages and did his considerable best to prevent it-Benjamin Franklin. One of the delights of studying American history in the 18th century is that this remarkable polymath, visionary, down-to-earth jack-of-all-trades pops up everywhere. There were few contemporary pies into which he did not insert a self-seeking finger. We know a lot about him because he wrote one of the best of all autobiographies. He was born in Boston in 1706, youngest son of a family of seventeen sired by a tallow-chandler immigrant from Oxfordshire. His parents lived to be eighty-four and eighty-seven, and all this was typical of the way America's population was exploding with natural growth-in Philadelphia Franklin met Hannah Miller, who died at 100 in 1769, leaving fourteen children, eighty-two grandchildren and 110 great-grandchildren. Franklin had only two years' schooling, then went to work for his elder brother James' printing business. He became a lifelong autodidact, teaching himself French, Latin, Italian, Spanish, maths, science, and many other things. At the age of fifteen he started writing for James' newspaper, the *New England Courant*. His mentor was another self-taught multiple genius, Daniel Defoe, but he learned self-discipline from yet another polymath, Cotton Mather. James was twice in trouble with the authorities for his critical articles, and jailed; Benjamin was a rebel too-'Adam was never called Master Adam,' one of his articles went. 'We never read of Noah Esquire, Lot Knight and Baronet, nor of the Rt Hon. Abraham, Viscount Mesopotamia, Baron of Canaan.' James' paper banned, it reappeared with Benjamin as editor-proprietor, but he soon rebelled against James too and left for Philadelphia.

This was now effectively the capital of the colonies and bigger than Boston. Franklin thrived there. In 1724 the governor of Pennsylvania, Sir William Keith, sent him to England for eighteen months and he returned full of ideas and new technology. By the age of twenty-four he was the most successful printer in America's boom-city, owner of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, and currency-printer to the Assembly, 'a very profitable job and a great help to me.' He persuaded other young, selfeducating artisans to form a 'Junto or Club of the Leather Aprons,' which set up a circulating library-the first in America and widely imitated-which was notable for its paucity of religious books and its plethora of do-it-yourself volumes of science, literature, technology, and history." Franklin worked hard at improving his adopted city. He helped set up its first police or

watch. He became president of its first fire-insurance company and its chief actuary, working out the premiums. He took a leading part in paving, cleaning, and especially lighting the streets, designing a four-sided Ventilated Lamp and putting up whale-oil street-lights. With others, he founded the American Philosophical Society, equivalent of England's famous Royal Society, the city's first hospital, and, not least, the Academy for the Education of Youth, which became the great University of Pennsylvania. It had a remarkable liberal curriculum for its day-penmanship, drawing, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, 'and even a little Gardening, Planting, Grafting and Inoculating.' It was also used to cultivate English style, especially 'the *clear* and the *concise*.'

Franklin fathered two illegitimate children, took on a common-law wife, kept a bookshop importing the latest pamphlets from London ('Let me have everything, good or bad, that makes a Noise and has a Run'), became postmaster, and, from 1733, made himself a national figure with his *Poor Richard's Almanac*, a calendar-diary with mottoes, aphorisms, and poems. He pinched the idea from Swift but made it his own. It was original in two distinct senses, both highly American. First, it introduced the wisecrack-the joke which imparts knowledge or street-wisdom, as well as makes you laugh. Second, it popularized the notion, already rooted in America, of the Self-Made Man, the rags-to-riches epic, by handing out practical advice. Franklin's 'Advice to a Young Tradesman written by an Old One' (1748) sums up the Poor Richard theme: 'Remember that time is money ... remember that credit is money ... The way to Wealth is as plain as the Way to Market. It depends chiefly on two words, *Industry* and *Frugality*.' The *Almanac* sold 10,000 copies a year, one for every 100 inhabitants, and a quarter-million over its lifespan, becoming the most popular book in the colonies after the Bible. Extracts from it, first printed in 1757 under the title *The Way to Wealth*, have gone through over 1,200 editions since and youngsters still read it. By 1748 Franklin was able to put in a partner to run his business, retiring on an income of £476 a year to devote the rest of his life to helping his fellow-men and indulging his scientific curiosity.

His activities now multiplied. He crossed the Atlantic eight times, discovered the Gulf Stream, met leading scientists and engineers, invented the damper and various smokeless chimneys-a vexed topic which continued to occupy him till the end of his life-designed two new stoves, but refused to patent them from humanitarian principles, invented a new hearth called a Pennsylvania Fireplace, manufactured a new whale-oil candle, studied geology, farming, archeology, eclipses, sunspots, whirlwinds, earthquakes, ants, alphabets, and lightning conductors. He made himself one of the earliest experts on electricity, publishing in 1751 an eighty-six-page treatise, *Experiments and Observations on electricity made in Philadelphia*, which over twenty years went into four editions in English, three in French and one each in German and Italian, giving him a European reputation. As one of his biographers put it, 'He found electricity a curiosity and left it a science.' But he also had fun, proposing an Electricity Party: 'A turkey is to be killed for our dinner by an electric shock, and roasted by an electrical jack, before a fire kindled by the electrified bottle; when the healths of all the famous electricians in England, Holland, France and Germany are to be drunk in electrified bumpers, under the discharge of guns from an electrified battery.'

Honors accrued: a Fellowship of the Royal Society, degrees conferred not only by Yale, Harvard, and William and Mary but by Oxford and St Andrews. He corresponded with sages all over the civilized world and in time belonged to twenty-eight academies and learned societies. As Sir Humphry Davy acknowledged: 'By very small means he established very grand truths.' He came to politics comparatively late. He was elected to the Pennsylvania Assembly in 1751 and two years later was appointed deputy postmaster-general for all the colonies. This made him, for the first time, think of the American continent as a unity. But it was the British Act forbidding

new iron forges in the colonies which drew him into the great argument. His *Observations Concerning the Increase in Mankind, People of Countries etc* (published 1754) noted the much higher population increase in America and he predicted that 'within a century' America would have more people, 'a glorious market wholly in the power of Britain.' So it was wrong to restrain colonial manufactures: 'A wise and good mother will not do it.' He added, setting out for the first time the theory of the dynamic frontier: 'So vast is the territory of north America that it will require many ages to settle it fully; and till it is settled, labor will never be cheap here, where no man continues long a laborer for others but gets plantation of his own, no man continues long a journeyman to a trade but goes among those new settlers and sets up for himself.'

It was this line of thought, and further experience as a commissioned negotiator with the Indians on the Ohio, and during the war, which led Franklin to propose a general government of the mainland colonies except for Georgia and Nova Scotia. He thought such a federated government should deal with defense, frontier expansion, and Indian affairs. A Grand Council, elected by delegates from all the colonial assemblies in proportion to tax paid, would have the power to legislate, make peace and war, and pay a president-general. London was not hostile to the idea, but not one of the assemblies showed an interest, so the British government proceeded no further. Franklin later noted, sadly, in his *Autobiography*: 'I am still of the opinion it would have been happy for both sides of the water if it had been adopted. The colonies, so united, would have been sufficiently strong to have defended themselves [against the French]; there would have been no need of troops from England; of course, the subsequent pretence for taxing America, and the bloody contest it occasioned, would have been avoided.' Alas, 'the assemblies did not adopt it, as they all thought there was too much *prerogative* in it, and in England it was judged to have too much of the *democratic*.'

Franklin never abandoned this idea. He was still at this stage (like young Washington) an imperialist, advocating a huge, self-contained Anglo-American empire, pushing to the Pacific by land and sea—a Manifest Destiny man, though under the crown. It was only in the late 1750s, after much wartime experience, when he went to London a representative of the Pennsylvania Assembly (which was at loggerhead with the Penn family, still proprietors) that he began to realize the enormous intellectual and constitutional gap, as wide as the Atlantic itself which separated Americans from the English ruling class. He had a talk with Earl Granville, Lord President of the Council, who told him, to his astonishment, that 'The King in Council is legislator for the Colonies, and when His Majesty's instructions come there, they are the law of the land.' Franklin continued: 'I told him this was new doctrine to me. I had always understood from our charters that our laws were to be made by our assemblies, to be presented indeed to the King for his royal assent, but that being once given the King could not repeal or alter them. And as the assemblies could not make permanent laws without his assent, [so] neither could he make a law for them without theirs. He assured me I was totally mistaken.' This is a very revealing exchange. There is no doubt that all Americans took exactly the same view of the position as Franklin, and that this view reflected the practice of over a century. There is equally no doubt that ministerial and parliamentary opinion in England, judges, bureaucrats—the lot—took Granville's view. What was to be done?

The constitutional impasse was aggravated by a gradual breakdown in order in some of the colonies, caused by a variety of factors some of which had nothing to do with disagreements between America and London but which nonetheless made them more serious. In 1763 a powerful Indian chief called Pontiac, a former ally of the French who had been exasperated beyond endurance by the consequences of the British conquest, formed a grand confederacy of



various discontented tribes, and ravaged over a thousand miles of the frontier, destroying every fort except Detroit and Pittsburgh. The violence ranged from Niagara to Virginia and was by far the most destructive Indian uprising of the century. Over 200 traders were slaughtered. It took three years to put down the uprising, which was achieved only thanks to regular British units, deployed at considerable expense. Only four colonies, New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Virginia, made any attempt to assist. On top of this came the violent refusal to pay the Stamp Tax, which many rightly saw as a triumph of mob rule.

There were other outbreaks, some trivial, some serious, but all constituting a threat to a system of government which was clearly outmoded and in need of fundamental reconstruction. For instance, at the end of 1763 a gang of Scotch-Irish frontiersmen, from Paxton and Donegal townships, carried out an atrocious massacre of harmless Indians, some of them Christians, and many of whom had taken refuge in the workhouse at Lancaster. They slaughtered another group of 140 Indians, converted by the Moravians, who had been taken for safety to Province Island on the Schuylkill River. They threatened to march on Philadelphia and slaughter the Quakers too, for they saw them as 'Indian-lovers' who would prevent the development of the frontier and the freeing of land for settlement. Franklin was asked to organize the defence of the city against the 'Paxton Boys,' mustered the militia-six companies of foot, two of horse, and a troop of artillery-and eventually persuaded the rioters to disperse. But there was not the will to punish even the ringleaders, and Franklin, no friend of the Indians but disgusted by what had happened, had to content himself with writing a bitter pamphlet denouncing 'the *Christian White Savages*.' There was yet more violence when Charles Townshend, on behalf of the British government, returned to the financial attack (he was Chancellor of the Exchequer) with a new series of duties, on glass, lead, paint, and tea, in 1767. The colonies responded with what they called Nonimport Agreements, in effect a boycott of British goods. But a considerable amount of tax was collected this time-£30,000 a year, at a cost of £3,000-and this encouraged the British authorities to press on. The port and town of Boston became the center of resistance, which was increasingly violent, with individual attacks on customs officials, and mob raids on customs warehouses and vice-admiralty courts.

The effect of these outrages on British opinion was disastrous. There was a call for 'firmness.' Even those generally sympathetic to the colonists' case called for a strong government line, not ruling out force. Pitt, now Earl of Chatham, laid down: 'The Americans must be subordinate ... this is the Mother Country. They are children. They must obey, and we prescribe.' The Earl of Shelburne, cleverest and wiliest of the London politicians, wanted the civilian governor of New York, Sir Henry Moore, replaced by 'a Man of a Military Character, who would act with Force or Gentleness as circumstances might make necessary.'" The view of the British military men, especially of the foreign mercenary commanders, like Colonel Henri Boughet, who put down the Pontiac Rising, was that the American militias were useless and that, however gifted the colonists might be at playing noisy politics, they were no good at fighting. By the late 1760s Britain had about 10,000 troops in the theater, regulars and German mercenaries, based in Jamaica, Halifax, and the mainland colonies, and costing about £300,000 a year. Why not use them?

Just as the British despised the colonial militias, so they refused to recognize the constitutional or moral legitimacy of the colonial assemblies. Lord North, Prime Minister from 1770, a man dismissed by Dr Johnson in the words 'He fills a chair' with 'a mind as narrow as the neck of a vinegar-cruet,' criticized the Massachusetts constitution as a whole because it depended on 'the democratik part.' His minister in charge of colonial matters, Lord George Germaine, took an

even more contemptuous view: 'I would not have men in mercantile cast every day collecting themselves together and debating on political matters.' This view was shared by the generals. General Guy Carleton, governor of Quebec, warned where it was all leading: 'A Popular Assembly, which preserves its full Vigor, and in a Country where all Men appear nearly on a Level, must give a strong bias to Republican Principles.' General Gage summed up the conclusion: 'The colonists are taking great strides towards independence. It concerns great Britain by a speedy and spirited Conduct to show them that these provinces are British Colonies dependent on her and that they are not independent states.'

The upshot was that the British garrison in Boston, the most 'difficult' of the colonial cities, was suddenly increased by two whole regiments. That, as Franklin put it, was 'Setting up a Smith's Forge in a Magazine of Gunpowder.' On March 3, 1770, a sixty-strong mob of Boston youths started to snowball a party of redcoats. There was a scrimmage. Some soldiers fired, without orders, killing three youths outright and wounding others, two of whom later died. Britain and its colonies were under the rule of law and for soldiers to open fire on civilians without a previous reading of the Riot Act was to invite charges of murder or manslaughter. Ten years later, indeed, the whole of central London was given over to the mob because of the timidity of the military authorities for this reason. In this case the commander of the redcoats, Captain Preston, was put on trial; so were some of his men. But there was no conclusive evidence that an order was given, or who fired the shots, so all were acquitted, though to appease the Bostonians two of the men were branded. This was to hand the colonists the first of a whole series of propaganda victories-the story of the 'Boston Massacre,' as it was called, and the failure of Britain to punish those responsible. Sam Adams and Joseph Warren skillfully verbalized the affair into a momentous act of deliberate brutality, and Paul Revere engraved an impressive but entirely imaginary image of the event for circulation through the eastern seaboard.

The American Revolution was the first event of its kind in which the media played a salient role-almost a determining one-from first to last. Americans were already a media-conscious people. They had a lot of newspapers and publications, and were getting more every month. There were plenty of cheap printing presses. They now found that they had scores-indeed hundreds-of inflammatory writers, matching the fiery orators in the assemblies with every polysyllabic word of condemnation they uttered. There was no longer any possibility of putting down the media barrage in the courts by successful prosecutions for seditious libel. That pass had been sold long ago. So the media war, which preceded and then accompanied the fighting war, was one the colonists were bound to win and the British crown equally certain to lose.

Boston was now the center of outright opposition to British colonial rule. We can look at it through the eyes of its most distinguished and certainly most acrimonious son, John Adams (1735-1826), who was then in his thirties and a prominent lawyer of the city. Adams came from Quincy, the son of a fourth-generation Bay Colony farmer, and was as impregnated with the self-righteous, opinionated, independent-minded, and contumacious spirit of Massachusetts as anyone who had ever crossed the Common. He was a Harvard graduate and had the high-minded sense of intellectual superiority of that famous academy, and his sense of importance had been much increased by his marriage in 1764 to Abigail Smith of Weymouth, an able, perceptive, charming, and socially prominent lady. The proto-Republicans of Boston called themselves Whigs, in sympathy with the London parliamentary critics of the British government, such as Edmund Burke and Charles James Fox, and Adams became a prominent Whig at the time of the Stamp Act agitation. He published, anonymously, four notable articles attacking the British authorities in the *Boston Gazette*, and he later brought out under his own name *A Dissertation on*

*the Canon and Feudal Law* (1768), which argued that the tax was unconstitutional and unlawful and so invalid. It says a lot for the fair-mindedness of Britain in these years before the conflict broke out openly that Adams published this philippic in London. But it is important to note that Adams, then and later, was not a man who believed in force if arguments were still listened to. Unlike his cousin Sam Adams, and other men of the mobs, he deplored street violence in Boston and, as a lawyer, was prepared to defend the soldiers accused of the 'Massacre.' The breaking-point for him came in 1773-4 when North, by an extraordinary act of folly, made British power in Boston look not only weak, vindictive, and oppressive, but ridiculous.

The origins of the Boston Tea Party had nothing to do with America. The East India Company had got itself into a financial mess. To help it to extricate itself, North passed an Act which, among other things, would allow the company to send its tea direct to America, at a reduced price, thus encouraging the 'rebels' to consume it. Delighted, the harassed company quickly dispatched three ships, loaded with 298 chests of tea, worth £10,994 to Boston. At the same time, the authorities stepped up measures against smuggling. The American smuggling interest, which in one way or another included about 90 percent of import-export merchants, was outraged. John Hancock (1737-93), a prominent Boston merchant and political agitator, was a respectable large-scale smuggler and considered this maneuver a threat to his livelihood as well as a constitutional affront. He was one of many substantial citizens who encouraged the Boston mob to take exemplary action.

When the ships docked on December 16, 1773, a crowd gathered to debate what to do at the Old South Meeting House. It is reported 7,000 people were jammed inside. Negotiations were held with the ship-masters. One rode to Governor Hutchinson at his mansion on Milton Hill to beg him to remit the duties. He refused. When this news was conveyed to the mob, a voice said: 'Who knows how tea will mingle with salt water?' Sam Adams, asked to sum up, said 'in a low voice,' 'This meeting can do nothing more to save the country.' The doors were then burst open and a thousand men marched to the docks. There had been preparations. An eyewitness, John Andrews, said that 'the patriots' were 'cloath'd in blankets with the heads muffled, and coppercolor'd countenances, being each arm'd with a hatchet or axe, and a pair of pistols.' The 'Red Indians' ran down Milk Street and onto Griffith's Wharf, climbed aboard the *Dartmouth*, chopped open its teachests, and then hurled the tea into the harbor, 'where it piled up in the low tide like haystacks.' They then attacked the *Eleanor* and the *Beaver*. By nine in the evening all three ships had been stripped of their cargo. Josiah Quincy (1744-75), one of the leading Boston pamphleteers and spokesmen, said: 'No one in Boston will ever forget this night,' which will lead 'to the most trying and terrific struggle this country ever saw.' John Adams, shrewdly noting that no one had been injured, let alone killed, saw the act, though one of force, as precisely the kind of dramatization of a constitutional point that was needed. As he put it: 'The people should never rise without doing something to be remembered, something notable and striking. This destruction to the tea is so bold, so daring, so firm, intrepid and inflexible, and it must have so important consequences, and so lasting, that I can't but consider it an epoch of history.'

Adams was quite right. The episode had the effect of forcing everyone on both sides of the Atlantic to consider where they stood in the controversy. It polarized opinion. The Americans, or most of them, were exhilarated and proud. The English, or most of them, were outraged. Dr Johnson saw the Tea Party as theft and hooliganism and produced his maxim: 'Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel.' In March 1774, on the invitation of the government, parliament closed the port of Boston to all traffic and two months later passed the Coercive Acts. These punitive measures, paradoxically, were accompanied by the Quebec Act, a highly liberal measure which

gave relief to the Canadian Catholics and set Upper and Lower Canada firmly on the road to self-government and dominion status. It was designed to keep the Canadians, especially the French-speaking ones, loyal to the crown, and succeeded; but it infuriated the American Protestants and made them suspicious that some long-plotted conspiracy was afoot to reimpose what John Adams called 'the hated despotism of the Stuarts.' In the current emotional atmosphere, anything could be believed. At all events, these legislative measures, which included the compulsory quartering of troops on American citizens in Boston and elsewhere, were lumped together by the American media under the term the 'Intolerable Acts.' They mark the true beginning of the American War of Independence.

We must now shift the eyewitness focus yet again and see how things appeared to Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826), then in his early thirties and already a prominent politician in Virginia. He came from the same background as George Washington, and was related to many families in the Virginia gentry, such as the Randolphs and the Marshalls. His father, Peter Jefferson, was a surveyor who mapped the Northern Wilderness part of Lord Fairfax's great domain. Jefferson was one of ten children and owed a great deal to his devoted elder sister Jane, who taught him to read books and, equally important, to love music. He learned to play the violin well and carried a small instrument with him on all his travels. He delighted to sing French and Italian songs. When he went to William and Mary College, aged sixteen, he was already fluent in Latin and Greek, and could ride, hunt, and dance well. He had a gift for friendship and became a devoted pupil of his Scots teacher, William Small, as well as a disciple of the gifted Virginia jurist George Wythe, seventeen years his senior. Small secured for the college the finest collection of scientific instruments in America and the two together, said Jefferson, 'fixed the destinies of my life.' Wythe was another of the enterprising polymaths whom America produced in such numbers at this time and had many clever guests at his house. Jefferson was in some ways the archetypal figure of the entire Enlightenment, and he first learned to blossom in Wythe's circle.' In terms of all-round learning, gifts, sensibilities, and accomplishments, there has never been an American like him, and generations of educated Americans have rated him higher even than Washington and Lincoln. A 1985 poll of members of the Senate showed that conservative and liberal senators alike regarded him as their 'favorite hero.'

We know a great deal about this remarkable man, or think we do. His *Writings*, on a bewildering variety of subjects, have been published in twenty volumes. In addition, twenty-five volumes of his papers have appeared so far, plus various collections of his correspondence, including three thick volumes of his letters to his follower and successor James Madison alone.' In some ways he was a mass of contradictions. He thought slavery an evil institution, which corrupted the master even more than it oppressed the chattel. But he owned, bought, sold, and bred slaves all his adult life. He was a deist, possibly even a sceptic; yet he was also a 'closet theologian,' who read daily from a multilingual edition of the New Testament. He was an elitist in education-'By this means twenty of the best geniuses will be raked from the rubbish annually'-but he also complained bitterly of elites, 'those who, rising above the swinish multitude, always contrive to nestle themselves into places of power and profit.' He was a democrat, who said he would 'always have a jealous care of the right of election by the people.' Yet he opposed direct election by the Senate on the ground that 'a choice by the people themselves is not generally distinguished for its wisdom.' He could be an extremist, glorying in the violence of revolution: 'What country before ever existed a century and a half without rebellion? ... The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural

manure.' Yet he said of Washington: 'The moderation and virtue of a single character has probably prevented this revolution from being closed, as most others have been, by a subversion of that liberty it was intended to establish.'

No one did more than he did to create the United States of America. Yet he referred to Virginia as 'my country' and to the Congress as 'a foreign legislature.' His favorite books were *Don Quixote* and *Tristram Shandy*. Yet he lacked a sense of humor. After the early death of his wife, he kept-it was alleged-a black mistress. Yet he was priggish, censorious of bawdy jokes and bad language, and cultivated a weare-not-amused expression. He could use the most inflammatory language. Yet he always spoke with a quiet, low voice and despised oratory as such. His lifelong passion was books. He collected them in enormous quantity, beyond his means, and then had to sell them all to Congress to raise money. He kept as detailed daily accounts as it is possible to conceive but failed to realize that he was running deeply and irreversibly into debt. He was a man of hyperbole. But he loved exactitude-he noted all figures, weights, distances, and quantities in minute detail; his carriage had a device to record the revolutions of its wheels; his house was crowded with barometers, rain-gauges, thermometers and anemometers. The motto of his seal-ring, chosen by himself, was 'Rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God.' Yet he shrank from violence and did not believe God existed.

Jefferson inherited 5,000 acres at fourteen from his father. He married a wealthy widow, Martha Wayles Skelton, and when her father died he acquired a further 11,000 acres. It was natural for this young patrician to enter Virginia's House of Burgesses, which he did in 1769, meeting Washington there. He had an extraordinarily godlike impact on the assembly from the start, by virtue of his presence, not his speeches. Abigail Adams later remarked that his appearance was 'not unworthy of a God.' A British officer said that 'if he was put besides any king in Europe, that king would appear to be his laquey.' His first hero was his fellow-Virginian Patrick Henry (1736-99), who seemed to be everything Jefferson was not: a firebrand, a man of extremes, a rabblouser, and an unreflective man of action. He had been a miserable failure as a planter and storekeeper, then found his metier in the lawcourts and politics. Jefferson met him when he was seventeen and he was present in 1765 when Henry acquired instant fame for his flamboyant denunciation of the Stamp Act. Jefferson admired him no doubt for possessing the one gift he himself lacked-the power to rouse men's emotions by the spoken word.

Jefferson had a more important quality, however: the power to analyze a historic situation in depth, to propose a course of conduct, and present it in such a way as to shape the minds of a deliberative assembly. In the decade between the Stamp Act agitation and the Boston Tea Party, many able pens had set out constitutional solutions for America's dilemma. But it was Jefferson, in 1774, who encapsulated the entire debate in one brilliant treatise-*Summary View of the Rights of British America*. Like the works of his predecessors in the march to independence James Otis' *Rights of the British Colonists Asserted* (1764), Richard Bland's *An Inquiry into the Rights of the British Colonists* (1766), and Samuel Adams' *A Statement of the rights of the Colonies* (1772) Jefferson relied heavily on Chapter Five of John Locke's *Second Treatise on Government*, which set out the virtues of a meritocracy, in which men rise by virtue, talent, and industry. Locke argued that the acquisition of wealth, even on a large scale, was neither unjust nor morally wrong, provided it was fairly acquired. So, he said, society is necessarily stratified, but by merit, not by birth. This doctrine of industry as opposed to idleness as the determining factor in a just society militated strongly against kings, against governments of nobles and their placemen, and in favor of representative republicanism.

Jefferson's achievement, in his tract, was to graft onto Locke's meritocratic structure two themes which became the dominant leitmotifs of the Revolutionary struggle. The first was the primacy of individual rights: 'The God who gave us life, gave us liberty at the same time: the hand of force may destroy, but cannot disjoin them.' Equally important was the placing of these rights within the context of Jefferson's deep and in a sense more fundamental commitment to popular sovereignty: 'From the nature of things, every society must at all times possess within itself the sovereign powers of legislation.' It was Jefferson's linking of popular sovereignty with liberty, both rooted in a divine plan, and further legitimized by ancient practice and the English tradition, which gave the American colonists such a strong, clear, and plausible conceptual basis for their action. Neither the British government nor the American loyalists produced arguments which had a fraction of this power. They could appeal to the law as it stood, and duty as they saw it, but that was all. Just as the rebels won the media battle (in America) from the start, so they rapidly won the ideological battle too.

But they had also to win the emotional battle-the war for men's hearts-before they could begin the battle of bayonets. In the events leading up to the fighting, ordinary men and women in America were roused by a number of factors. There was the desire for a republic-the commitment to place each selfish and separate interest in the search for the *res publica*, 'the public thing,' the common good. Let us not underestimate this. It was strongly intuited by a great many people who could barely write their names. It was vaguely associated in their minds with the ancient virtue and honor of the Romans. When James Otis gave the address at the public funeral of 'the fallen' of the Boston Massacre, he wore a toga. And republicanism was a broad concept-every man could put into it the political emotions he felt most keenly. But there was also fear. The early 1770s were marked by recession throughout the English-speaking world. There were poor crops in England in 1765-73, with a primitive cyclical downturn, 1770-6. A fall in English purchasing-power hit American exports in most colonies, and this came on top of economic disruption caused by boycotts. Exports from New England hit the 1765 high only twice in the decade 1765-75, after many years of uninterrupted increases. Exports from Virginia and Maryland fell below the 1765 high every year until 1775. There was distress in England, which stiffened the resolve of parliament to 'make the Americans pay.' But there was profound unease among Americans that the exactions of the British government were bringing the good times-most colonists had never known anything else-to a close.

There was another fear, and a more deep-rooted one. Next to religion, the concept of the rule of law was the biggest single force in creating the political civilization of the colonies. This was something they shared with all Englishmen. The law was not just necessary-essential to any civil society-it was noble. What happened in courts and assemblies on weekdays was the secular equivalent of what happened in church on Sundays. The rule of law in England, as Americans were taught in their schools, went back even beyond Magna Carta, to Anglo-Saxon times, to the laws of King Alfred and the Witanmagots, the ancient precursor of Massachusetts' Assembly and Virginia's House of Burgesses. William the Conqueror had attempted to impose what Lord Chief Justice Coke, the great early 17th-century authority on the law, had called 'The Norman Yoke.' But he had been frustrated. So, in time, had Charles I been frustrated, when he tried to reimpose it, by the Long Parliament. Now, in its arrogance and complacency, the English parliament, forgetting the lessons of the past, was trying to impose the Norman Yoke on free-born Americans, to take away their cherished rule of law and undermine the rights they enjoyed under it with as much justice as any Englishman! Lord North would have been astonished to learn he was doing any such thing, but no matter: that is what many, most, Americans believed. So

Americans now had to do what parliamentarians had to do in 1640. 'What we did,' said Jefferson later, 'was with the help of Rushworth, whom we rummaged over for revolutionary precedents of those days.' So, in a sense, the United States was the posthumous child of the Long Parliament.

But Americans' fears that their liberties were being taken away, and the rule of law subverted, had to be dramatized-just as those old parliamentarians had dramatized their struggle by the Grand Remonstrance against Charles I and the famous 'Flight of the Five Members.' Who would play John Hampden, who said he would rather die than pay Ship Money to King Charles? Up sprang Jefferson's friend and idol, Patrick Henry. As a preliminary move towards setting up a united resistance of the mainland colonies to British parliamentary pretensions, a congress of colonial leaders met in Philadelphia, at Carpenters Hall, between September 5 and October 26, 1774. Only Georgia, dissuaded from participating by its popular governor, did not send delegates. Some fifty representatives from twelve colonies passed a series of resolutions, calling for defiance of the Coercive Acts, the arming of a militia, tax-resistance. The key vote came on October 14 when delegates passed the Declarations and Resolves, which roundly condemned British interference in America's internal affairs and asserted the rights of colonial assemblies to enact legislation and impose taxes as they pleased. A common American political consciousness was taking shape, and delegates began to speak with a distinctive national voice. At the end of it, Patrick Henry marked this change in his customary dramatic manner: 'The distinction between Virginians and New Englanders are no more. I am not a Virginian but an American.' Not everyone agreed with him, as yet, and the Continental Congress, as it called itself, voted by colonies rather than as individual Americans. But this body, essentially based on Franklin's earlier proposals, perpetuated its existence by agreeing to meet again in May 1775. Before that could happen, on February 5, 1775, parliament in London declared Massachusetts, identified as the most unruly and contumacious of the colonies, to be in a state of rebellion, thus authorizing the lawful authorities to use what force they thought fit. The fighting had begun. Hence when the Virginia burgesses met in convention to instruct their delegates to the Second Continental Congress, Henry saw his chance to bring home to all the revolutionary drama of the moment.

Henry was a born ham actor, in a great age of acting-the Age of Garrick. The British parliament was full of actors, notably Pitt himself ('He acted even when he was dying') and the young Burke, who was not above drawing a dagger, and hurling it on the ground to make a point. But Henry excelled them all. He proposed to the burgesses that Virginia should raise a militia and be ready to do battle. What was Virginia waiting for? Massachusetts was fighting. 'Our brethren are already in the field. Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have?' Then Henry got to his knees, in the posture of a manacled slave, intoning in a low but rising voice: 'Is life so dear, our peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God!' He then bent to the earth with his hands still crossed, for a few seconds, and suddenly sprang to his feet, shouting, 'Give me liberty!' and flung wide his arms, paused, lowered his arms, clenched his right hand as if holding a dagger at his breast, and said in sepulchral tones: 'Or give me death!' He then beat his breast, with his hand holding the imaginary dagger. There was silence, broken by a man listening at the open window, who shouted: 'Let me be buried on this spot!' Henry had made his point.

By the time the Second Continental Congress met, the point of no return had been reached. Benjamin Franklin, who saw himself-rightly-as the great intermediary between Britain and America, better informed than any other man of attitudes and conditions on both sides of the Atlantic, had been in London in 1774 trying to make peace and in particular presenting a petition

to the Privy Council to have the unpopular Governor Hutchinson of Massachusetts removed. He still believed in a negotiated compromise. But he got no thanks for his pains. His petition coincided with the Boston Tea Party and the inflaming of English opinion. He was fiercely attacked by Alexander Wedderburn, North's Attorney-General, a man typical of the British hardliners who made a deal impossible. Wedderburn, to Franklin's amazement, attacked him as 'the leader of disaffection,' a rebel 'possessed with the idea of a great American republic.' The petition was dismissed as 'groundless, vexatious and scandalous,' and to add insult to injury Franklin was peremptorily fired from his job as deputy postmaster-general. He saw Burke, and agreed with him that the British Empire was 'an aggregate of many states under a common head,' but he agreed with Burke also that the notion was now out of date-'the fine and noble China Vase, the British Empire,' had been shattered. He saw Chatham, but found the old man degenerated into a windbag, who talked but did not listen, and counted for little now. Sadly, Franklin set sail for Philadelphia on March 20, 1775, convinced there was nothing more he could do in London to make the peace.

When Franklin got to Philadelphia on May 5-five days before the Second Continental Congress was due to meet-the first shots had been fired. On April 19, sixteen companies of redcoats were dispatched on what one of their officers called 'an ill-planned and ill-executed' expedition to seize patriot arms-dumps in Lexington and Concord. They failed to get the arms, and in a series of confused engagements got the worse of it, losing seventy-three dead and over 200 wounded or missing (American casualties were forty-nine dead, thirty-nine wounded, and five missing). John Adams was profoundly disturbed at the losses. It was 'the most shocking event New England ever beheld.' He saw it as the microcosm of all the tragedy of civil war-'the fight was between those whose parents but a few generations ago were brothers. I shudder at the thought, and there is no knowing where these calamities will end.' But his cousin Sam, hearing the first gunfire, called out: 'What a glorious morning this is-I mean, for America.' The patriotic media machine seized on the skirmishes with delight and presented them as a major victory, and proof that colonial militias could stand up to veterans.

Adams, Franklin, Jefferson, and Washington met on May 11 in Philadelphia, when the Second Continental Congress assembled. Franklin had known Washington twenty years before, during the Seven Years War. But most of the rest were strangers, many of them young men. He noted that 'the Unanimity is amazing.' But that was unanimity for resistance. Only a minority yet thought in terms of outright independence. The rich John Dickinson of Maryland (1732-1808) wanted a direct appeal to King George to give Britain a last chance, and drafted an Olive Branch Petition. But even former moderates thought this pointless. John Adams, with characteristic *ad hominem* bitterness, dismissed it as 'the product of a certain great fortune and piddling genius' giving 'a silly cast to our doings.' He thought 'Power and artillery are the most efficacious, sure and infallible conciliatory measures we can adopt. Franklin sadly agreed with him. Knowing what he did of British political opinion, he was moving to the view that independence was the only solution, and he busied himself preparing for a long war, seeing to the printing of currency, the manufacturing of gunpowder, and the designing of an independent postal system. He drew up Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union, which carried his defense union scheme a great deal further and was an early blueprint for the United States Constitution itself. This was to include besides the Thirteen Colonies (Georgia had now joined the Congress), Canada, the West Indies, and even Ireland if it wished. Though sad about the break with Britain, he was confident that America's huge economic and demographic strength-he was one of the few people on either side who appreciated its magnitude-would make it a certain victor, though he thought it should



look for allies immediately. He wrote confidently to the English radical Joseph Priestley: 'Britain, at the expense of 3 millions, has killed 150 Yankees this campaign, which is £20,000 a head. During the same time, 60,000 children have been born in America.'

In the meantime, though, everyone agreed that an army was needed to bring Britain to the negotiating table. Dr Joseph Warren of Massachusetts, president *pro tempore* of the Congress, who was soon to pay for his patriotism with his life at Bunker's Hill, put it succinctly:

'A Powerful Army on the side of America is the only means left to stem the rapid Progress of a Tyrannical Ministry.' But who was to command it? Since the clashes at Lexington, the large, imposing delegate from Virginia, General Washington, had taken to appearing in the uniform of an officer in the Fairfax Militia. He was the only member of the Congress in martial attire. He had been a leading critic of British rule since the Great Proclamation. He called the Stamp Act 'legal thievery.' He blamed Britain for falling tobacco prices, which was his 'interest.' He refused to buy British-made articles for his estate. His wife and step-children no longer got presents from London. He set his people to manufacture substitutes. As long ago as 1769 he had advocated forming an American army, though only as 'a last resort.' He strongly disapproved of the Boston Tea Party, which seemed to him a disorderly affair, a needless provocation which gave Britain an excuse to 'rule with a high hand.' But the 'Intolerable Acts' resolved his doubts. The last straw was a British ruling that generous land-grants to officers who served in the Seven Years War applied only to regulars-this invalidated his large claims to Western lands. If ever a man now had an 'interest' in going to war, he did. He told John Adams: 'I will raise one thousand men, subsist them at my own expense, and march myself at their head, for the relief of Boston.' He made it plain he was enthusiastic for fighting. He told fellow-delegates that he regarded the Indians as a sufficient menace-'a cruel and bloodthirsty enemy on our backs.' But this told in his favor. The delegates were experienced, serious men. They did not want to be led by a hothead. They liked the look of Washington. He was described as 'Six foot two inches in his stockings and weighing 175 pounds ... His frame is padded with well-developed muscles, indicating great strength.' And again: 'In conversation he looks you full in the face, is deliberative, deferential and engaging. His demeanor at all times composed and dignified. His movements and gestures are graceful, his walk majestic.' Moreover, he was 'generally beloved.'

Adams gives us a blow-by-blow account of how a commander-in-chief was chosen. He himself was by now in a fever of martial emotions: 'Oh, that I were a soldier,' he recorded in his diary. '[But] I will be! I am reading Military Books!' Washington, he said, 'by his great experience and abilities in military matters, is of great service to us.' Adams tried to maintain, twenty-seven years later, that his foresight was responsible for Washington's election. Actually there was not much choice. His only rivals were Israel Putnam, now serving as a major-general, who was too old at fifty-seven; and Artemus Ward, in temporary command of the provisional army at Cambridge, described as 'a fat old gentleman.' According to the Congressional minutes, Washington was chosen unanimously." Washington, who whatever his faults was never arrogant or pushy, was so overwhelmed by his selection that he was unable to write his letter of acceptance, but dictated it to Isaac Pemberton, in whose hand it is, apart from the signature. He refused a salary and asked only for expenses. This was received with great approval, and it is clear from the minutes that the delegates intended him to be treated as more than a mere general. He was to be leader. 'This Congress,' they read, 'doth now declare that they will maintain and assist him and adhere to him, the said George Washington Esquire, with their lives and fortunes in the same cause.'

On June 14 Congress agreed to raise six companies on the Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia frontier, to be paid for by itself (as opposed to any individual state), and to be termed the 'American Continental Army.' Washington was instructed to draw up regulations for the new force. By July 3, the general was at Cambridge, taking charge. One of the reasons the New Englanders had been so keen to choose him was that they had, so far, borne the brunt of the fighting. They were anxious that Virginia, the most populous state, should be fully committed too. By his prompt move to the Boston theater of war, Washington showed he accepted the logic of this and that he intended to fight a continental struggle for an entire people and nation.

But was it a nation yet? Three days after Washington took over the army, Congress issued a formal Declaration of the Causes and Necessity for Taking Up Arms. This rejected independence. As late as January 1, 1776, when the first Grand Union flag was raised over Prospect Hill in Boston, it consisted of thirteen alternating red and white stripes with, in the left-hand corner, a red, white, and blue Union Jack. But the measures taken by Congress, far from compelling Britain to negotiate, as they hoped, had the opposite effect. General Gage, the last royal governor of Massachusetts, wrote home: 'Government can never recover itself but by using determined measures. I have no hopes at present of any accommodation, the Congress appears to have too much power and too little inclination [and] it appears very plainly that taxation is not the point but a total independence.' Acting on his advice, George iii proclaimed all the colonies in a state of rebellion.

At this point an inspired and rebellious Englishman stuck in his oar. Thomas Paine (1737-1809) was another of the self-educated polymaths the 18th century produced in such large numbers. He was, of all things, a customs officer and exciseman. But he was also a man with a grudge against society, a spectacular grumbler, what was termed in England a 'barrack-room lawyer.' In a later age he would have become a trade union leader. Indeed, he was a trade union leader, who employed his fluent and forceful pen on behalf of Britain's 3,000 excisemen to demand an increase in their pay, and was sacked for his courage. He came to America in 1774, edited the Pennsylvania Magazine, and soon found himself on the extremist fringe of the Philadelphia patriots. Paine could and did design bridges, he invented a 'smokeless candle'-like Franklin he was fascinated by smoke and light-and at one time he drew up a detailed topographical scene for the invasion of England. But his real talent was for polemical journalism. In that, he has never been bettered. Indeed it was more than journalism; it was political philosophy, but written for a popular audience with a devastating sense of topicality, and at great speed. He could pen a slashing article, a forceful, sustained pamphlet, and, without pausing for breath, a whole book, highly readable from cover to cover.

Paine's pamphlet *Common Sense* was on the streets of Philadelphia on January 10, 1776, and was soon selling fast all over the colonies. In a few weeks it sold over 100,000 copies and virtually everyone had read it or heard about it. Two things gave it particular impact. First, it was a piece of atrocity propaganda. The first year of hostilities had furnished many actual instances, and many more myths, of brutal conduct by British or mercenary soldiers. Entire towns, like Falmouth (now Portland, Maine) and Norfolk, had been burned by the British. Women, even children, had been killed in the inevitable bloody chaos of conflict. Paine preyed on these incidents: his argument was that any true-blooded American who was not revolted by them, and prepared to fight in consequence, had 'the heart of a coward and the spirit of a sycophant.' Crude though this approach was, it went home. Even General Washington, who had read the work by January 31, approved of it. Second, Paine cut right through the half-and-half arguments in favor of negotiations and a settlement under British sovereignty. He wanted complete independence as

the only possible outcome. Nor did he try to make a distinction, as Congress still did, between a wicked parliament and a benign sovereign. He called George III 'the royal brute.' Indeed, it was Paine who transformed this obstinate, ignorant, and, in his own way, well-meaning man into a personal monster and a political tyrant, a bogey-figure for successive generations of American schoolchildren. Such is war, and such is propaganda. Paine's *Common Sense* was by no means entirely common sense. Many thought it inflammatory nonsense. But it was the most successful and influential pamphlet ever published.'

It was against this explosive background that Thomas Jefferson began his finest hour. By March, Adams noted that Congress had moved from 'fighting half a war to three quarters' but that 'Independence is a hobgoblin of so frightful a mien that it would throw a delicate person into fits to look it in the face.' By this he was referring to opponents of outright independence such as John Dickinson and Carter Braxton, who feared that conflicts of interest between the colonies would lead to the dissolution of the union, leaving America without any sovereign. But the logic of war did its work. The British introduced not just German but-heavens above!-Russian mercenaries, allegedly supplied by the Tsar, the archetypal tyrant, who had equipped them with knouts to belabor decent American backs. More seriously, they were inciting slaves to rebel, and that stiffened the resolve of the South. On June 7 the Virginia Assembly instructed Richard Henry Lee to table a resolution 'That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States,' which was seconded by Adams on behalf of Massachusetts. At this stage Pennsylvania, New York, South Carolina, and New Jersey were opposed to independence. Nonetheless, on June 11 Congress appointed a committee of Franklin, Adams, Roger Sherman, Robert Livingston, and Jefferson to draft a Declaration of Independence 'in case the Congress agreed thereto.'

Congress well knew what it was doing when it picked these able men to perform a special task. It was aware that the struggle against a great world power would be long and that it would need friends abroad. It had already set up a Committee of Correspondence, in effect a 'Foreign Office,' led by Franklin, to get in touch with France, Spain, the Netherlands, and other possible allies. It wanted to put its case before the court of world opinion,' and needed a dignified and well-argued but ringing and memorable statement of what it was doing and why it was doing it. It also wanted to give the future citizens of America a classic statement of what their country was about, so that their children and their children's children could study it and learn it by heart. Adams (if he is telling the truth) was quite convinced that Jefferson was the man to perform this miracle and proposed he be chairman of the Committee, though in fact he was the youngest member of it (apart from Livingston, the rich son of a New York judge). He recorded the following conversation between them. Jefferson: 'Why?' Adams: 'Reasons enough.' 'What can be your reasons?' 'Reason first: you are a Virginian, and a Virginian ought to appear at the head of the business. Reason second: I am obnoxious, suspect and unpopular. You are very much otherwise. Reason third: you can write ten times better than I can.' All this was true enough.

Jefferson produced a superb draft, for which his 1774 pamphlet was a useful preparation. All kinds of philosophical and political influences went into it. They were all well-read men and Jefferson, despite his comparative youth, was the best read of all, and he made full use of the countless hours he had spent poring over books of history, political theory, and government. The Declaration is a powerful and wonderfully concise summary of the best Whig thought over several generations. Most of all, it has an electrifying beginning. It is hard to think of any way in which the first two paragraphs can be improved: the first, with its elegiac note of sadness at dissolving the union with Britain and its wish to show 'a decent respect to the opinions of

mankind' by giving its reasons; the second, with its riveting first sentence, the kernel of the whole: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.' After that sentence, the reader, any reader-even George III-is compelled to read on. The Committee found it necessary to make few changes in Jefferson's draft. Franklin, the practical man, toned down Jefferson's grandiloquence-thus truths, from being 'sacred and undeniable' became 'self-evident,' a masterly improvement. But in general the four others were delighted with Jefferson's work, as well they might be.

Congress was a different matter because at the heart of America's claim to liberty there was a black hole. What of the slaves? How could Congress say that 'all men are created equal' when there were 600,000 blacks scattered through the colonies, and concentrated in some of them in huge numbers, who were by law treated as chattels and enjoyed no rights at all? Jefferson and the other members of the Committee tried to up-end this argument-rather dishonestly, one is bound to say-by blaming American slavery on the British and King George. The original draft charged that the King had 'waged a cruel war against human nature' by attacking a 'distant people' and 'captivating and carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere.' But when the draft went before the full Congress, on June 28, the Southern delegates were not having this. Those from South Carolina, in particular, were not prepared to accept any admission that slavery was wrong and especially the acknowledgment that it violated the 'most sacred rights of life and liberty.' If the Declaration said that, then the logical consequence was to free all the slaves forthwith. So the slavery passage was removed, the first of the many compromises over the issue during the next eighty years, until it was finally resolved in an ocean of tears and blood. However, the word 'equality' remained in the text, and the fact that it did so was, as it were, a constitutional guarantee that, eventually, the glaring anomaly behind the Declaration would be rectified.

The Congress debated the draft for three days. Paradoxically, delegates spent little time going over the fundamental principles it enshrined, because the bulk of the Declaration presented the specific and detailed case against Britain, and more particularly against the King. The Revolutionaries were determined to scrap the pretense that they distinguished between evil ministers and a king who 'could do no wrong,' and renounce their allegiance to the crown once and for all. So they fussed over the indictment of the King, to them the core of the document, and left its constitutional and ideological framework, apart from the slavery point, largely intact. This was just as well. If Congress had chosen to argue over Jefferson's sweeping assumptions and propositions, and resolve their differences with verbal compromises, the magic wrought by his pen would surely have been exorcized, and the world would have been poorer in consequence. As it was the text was approved on July 2, New York still abstaining, and on July 4 all the colonies formally adopted what was called, to give it its correct title, 'The Unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States of America.' At the time, and often since, Tom Paine was credited with its authorship, which did not help to endear it to the British, where he was (and still is) regarded with abhorrence. In fact he had nothing to do with it directly, but the term 'United States' is certainly his. On July 8 it was read publicly in the State House Yard and the Liberty Bell rung. The royal coat of arms was torn down and burned. On August 2 it was engrossed on parchment and signed by all the delegates. Whereupon (according to John Hancock) Franklin remarked: 'Well, Gentlemen, we must now hang together, or we shall most assuredly hang separately. Interestingly enough, Cromwell had made the same remark to the Earl of Manchester at the beginning of the English Civil War 136 years earlier.'

It is a thousand pities that Edmund Burke, the greatest statesman in Britain at that time, and the only one fit to rank with Franklin, Jefferson, Washington, Adams, and Madison, has not left us his reflections on the Declaration. Oddly enough, on July 4, the day it was signed, he noted that the news from America was so disturbing 'that I courted sleep in vain.' But Burke was at one with Jefferson, in mind and still more in spirit. His public life was devoted to essentially a single theme-the exposure and castigation of the abuse of power. He saw the conduct of the English Ascendancy in Ireland as an abuse of power; of the rapacious English nabobs in India as an abuse of power; and finally, at the end of his life, of the revolutionary ideologues who created the Terror in France as an abuse of power. Now, in 1776, he told parliament that the crown was abusing its power in America by 'a succession of Acts of Tyranny.' It was 'governing by an Army,' shutting the ports, ending the fisheries, abolishing the charters, burning the towns: so, 'you drove them into the declaration of independency' because the abuse of power 'was more than what ought to be endured.' Now, he scoffed, the King had ordered church services and a public fast in support of the war. In a sentence which stunned the Commons, Burke concluded: 'Till our churches are purified from this abominable service, I shall consider them, not as the temples of the Almighty, but the synagogues of Satan." In Burke's view, because power had been so grievously abused, America was justified in seeking independence by the sword. And that, in essence, is exactly what the Declaration of Independence sets forth.

With Independence declared, and the crown dethroned, it was necessary for all the states to make themselves sovereign. So state constitutions replaced the old charters and 'frameworks of government.' These were important not only for their own sake but because they helped to shape the United States Constitution later. In many respects the colonies-henceforth to be called the states-had been self-governing since the 17th century and had many documents and laws to prove it. Connecticut and Rhode Island already had constitutions of a sort, and few changes were needed to make them sovereign. Then again, many states had reacted to the imposition of parliamentary taxation from 1763 by seizing aspects of sovereignty in reply, so that the total gestation period of the United States Constitution should be seen as occupying nearly thirty years, 1763-91." The first state to act, in 1775, was Massachusetts, which made its charter of 1691 the basis. Others followed its lead: New Hampshire and South Carolina in 1775, then Virginia, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and North Carolina in 1776, and Georgia early in 1777. New York was the first to adopt a reasonably strong executive. Massachusetts decided it liked the idea, and drafted a revised constitution. The new draft was submitted to a popular referendum in March 1777, the first in history, but rejected 9,972-2,083. Then elections were held for a constitutional convention, which produced the final version of 1780, adopted by a two-thirds vote.

The Massachusetts constitution (as amended) was the pattern for others. All but two, Pennsylvania and Georgia, were bicameral, and these two changed their minds, 1789-90. In all the lower house was elected directly, and the upper house was elected directly too in all but one, Maryland, which had an electoral college. All but one, South Carolina, had annual elections for the lower house, and many had popularly elected executives and governors. Twelve required electors to own property, usually 50 acres, which was nothing in America. In three you had to prove you paid taxes. All but one required property qualifications from office-seekers. The percentage of white adult males enfranchised varied from state to state but the average electorate was four times larger than in Britain. All in all, they amounted to popular sovereignty and were very radical indeed for the 1770s. They had an immediate and continuing impact all over Europe and Latin America. One constitution, Pennsylvania's, initially went further in a radical direction.

Franklin claimed parentage (though it was probably written by Paine's follower, James Cannon) and took it proudly with him when he went to France, where the liberal bigwigs gasped in admiration: as Adams put it, 'Mr Turgot, the Duc de la Rochefoucauld, Mr Condorcet and many others became enamored with the constitution of Mr Franklin.' But it proved 'inconvenient' and was deradicalized in 1790. But by that time it had done its insidious work in French Revolutionary heads.

While the states were making themselves sovereign, the Continental Congress had also to empower itself to fight a war. So in 1776-7, it produced the Articles of Confederation, in effect the first American Constitution. In drafting it, delegates were not much concerned with theory but were anxious to produce practical results. So, oddly enough, although Americans had been discussing the location of sovereignty with the British for over ten years, this document made no effort to locate it in America and nothing was said of states' rights. It was unanimously agreed that the Congress should control the war and foreign policy, and the states the rest-what it called 'internal police.' Thomas Burke of North Carolina proposed an article stating that each state 'retained its sovereignty, freedom and independence, and every power, jurisdiction and right, which is not by this Confederation expressly delegated to Congress.' This was approved by eleven of thirteen delegations and became Article II. But Burke himself later stated: 'The United States ought to be as one Sovereign with respect to foreign Powers, in all things that relate to War or where the States have a common interest.' So the question was left begged." The whole thing was done in a hurry and finished on November 15, 1777. But ratification was slower; in fact Maryland did not ratify till March 1, 1781, by which time experience had demonstrated plainly that a stronger executive was needed, and that in turn made the case for a new, and more considered, constitution.

In the meantime, the urgent work of liberating and building the new country had necessarily passed from the men of the pen to the men of the sword. The War of Independence was a long war, lasting in effect eight and a half years. It was a war of attrition and exhaustion. The issue was: could the Americans hold out long enough, and maintain an army in the field of sufficient caliber and firepower, to wear out and destroy Britain's willingness to continue a struggle, and pay for it, which was actually begun in order to save the British taxpayer money? Here was the basic paradox of the war, which in the end proved decisive. The British had no fundamental national interest in fighting the war. If they won, it merely brought more political problems. If they lost, it hurt little but their pride. Few, outside London, were interested in the outcome; it made remarkably little impact on the literature, letters, newspapers, and diaries of the time. Certainly, no one volunteered to fight it. A few Whigs were passionate in opposing the war. But they had no popular support. Nor had the King and his ministers in waging it. There were no mass meetings or protests. No loyal demonstrations either. It was a colonial war, an imperialist war, which in a sense had more in common with the future Vietnam War or the Soviet war in Afghanistan, than with the recent Seven Years War. It was the first war of liberation.

In view of this, the American patriots were fortunate in their commander-in-chief. Washington was, by temperament and skills, the ideal commander for this kind of conflict. He was no great field commander. He fought in all nine general actions, and lost all but three of them. But he was a strategist. He realized that his supreme task was to train an army, keep it in the field, supply it, and pay it. By doing so, he enabled all thirteen state governments, plus the Congress, to remain functioning, and so to constitute a nation, which matured rapidly during the eight years of conflict. Somehow or other, legislatures functioned, courts sat, taxes were raised, the new

independent government carried on. So the British were never at any point fighting a mere collection of rebels or guerrillas. They were up against an embodied nation, and in the end the point sank home. It was Washington who enabled all this to happen. And, in addition, he gave the war, on the American side, a dignity which even his opponents recognized. He nothing common did, or mean, or cruel, or vengeful. He behaved, from first to last, like a gentleman.

His resources were not great. At no point did his total forces number more than 60,000 men, subject to an annual desertion rate of 20 percent. He was always short of everything-arms, munitions, cannon, transport, clothes, money, food. But he managed to obtain enough to keep going, writing literally hundreds of begging letters to Congress and state governments to ensure there was just enough. He was good at this. In some ways running an army was like running a big Virginia estate, with many things in short supply, and make-do the rule. He remained always calm, cool, patient, and reassuring with all. As Jefferson testified, he had a hot temper-what red-haired man does not?-but he kept it mostly well under control. He had to take on many of the administrative responsibilities which Congress should have handled but, being weak executively, did not. He got through a vast amount of paperwork. He had some good people to help him. Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben did the drill side of the army, and in effect served as Washington's chief-of-staff. From early 1777 he had as his secretary and principal ADC a brilliant young New Yorker from the West Indies, Alexander Hamilton (1755-1804). Colonel Hamilton had already served with distinction as an artillery officer, and he proved to be the most effective aide any American commander-in-chief has ever had. But essentially Washington had to do it all himself.

He was much criticized, then and later. Adams asked: 'Would Washington ever have been Commander of the Revolutionary Army or President of the United States if he had not married the rich widow of Mr Curtis?' General Charles Lee was amazed anyone called him great: 'He is extremely prodigal of other men's blood and a great economist of his own.' One close observer, Jonathan Boucher, summed him up: 'He is shy, silent, stern, slow and cautious, but has no quickness of parts, extraordinary penetration, nor an elevated style of thinking ... He seems to have nothing generous or affectionate in his nature.' A French observer, Ferdinand Bayard, said he lacked human animation: 'He moved, spoke and acted with the regularity of a clock.' But another Frenchman, General Marqui de Barbe-Marbois, testified: 'I have never seen anyone who was more naturally and spontaneously polite. He could be compassionate, and a great actor too. Elias Boudinot, in charge of prisoners-of-war, who went to Washington in 1778 to plead for clothing for them, reported: 'In much distress, with Tears in his Eyes, he assured me that if he was deserted by the Gentlemen of the Country, he would despair. He could not do everything-he was General, Quartermaster and Commissary. Everything fell on him and he was unequal to the task. He gave me the most positive Engagement, that if I could contrive any mode for their support and Comfort, he would confirm it as far as it was in his Power.'" But he could also relax, an eyewitness reporting from his HQ: 'He sometimes throws and catches a ball for whole hours with his aides-de-camp.'

With Washington deliberately fighting a war of endurance, the British strategy made no sense. Indeed it is arguable that Britain had no discernible, and certainly no consistent, strategy from beginning to end. It is a mystery that the British, with their political genius, and their very uncertain touch with military affairs, should have rejected a political solution and put all their trust in a military one. Lord George Germaine, placed in charge of the war by North, had no military gifts. But then he had no political gifts either. He believed that the American militias could never be any good, and that the Tory loyalists greatly outnumbered the revolutionary

patriots. How could he possibly know? He had never set foot in America. And it never occurred to him to go there and see for himself what needed to be done, or whether an honorable compromise could be negotiated. No member of the government ever thought of crossing the Atlantic on a fact-finding mission. At various times, generals were given powers to treat, but only after the rebels had agreed to lay down their arms. What good was that? In fact the generals were frequently changed, a sure sign of mismanagement. First Gage came and went, then Admiral Richard Howe and his brother General William Howe shared a joint command-an absurd arrangement-then General Burgoyne and Marquis Cornwallis were given separate and unrelated armies-another absurdity-both of which they lost. Far from getting the chance to negotiate after a rebel surrender, the British generals in fact were instructed to make concessions only after they were involved in disasters-exactly the other way round. Much of the fault for these egregious errors lay with George III, a man who had never seen a shot fired in anger, who had never been abroad and who never even saw the sea until he was an old man.

The British commanders were not starved of manpower. Some 30,000 mercenaries were sent out. But this was probably counterproductive, since their conduct outraged even the Tory loyalists. When the two Howes were operating in New York in 1776, they had no fewer than seventy-three warships, manned by 13,000 seamen, and transports loaded with 32,000 troops. That was a big expedition by British standards. But none of the large resources Britain put into the war produced long-term results, or indeed any at all. It might have been different if George III or North had picked one really first-class general, and given him unlimited military and political authority, on the spot. But such a person would almost certainly have concluded that the war was folly, and negotiated an end to it. As it was, all the generals (not the admirals) were second-rate, and it showed.

The course of the war is soon told. The first winter 1775-6, when the conflict was concentrated around Boston, was inconclusive and enabled Washington to organize his army. The Howes' strategy in New York in 1776 was to take the city, cut off New England from the south, then destroy the rebellion at its heart, in Massachusetts. To frustrate this, Washington ferried his army from Manhattan to Brooklyn and dug in on the Heights. Howe outflanked him and Washington lost 1,500 men to Howe's 400. Washington was lucky to get 9,000 men back to Manhattan. But Howe failed to surround the American army and destroy it, and Washington escaped to New Jersey and across the Delaware. These were the times that 'tried men's souls,' as Tom Paine wrote in his topical tract, *The Crisis*. In fact, Washington fought a successful winter campaign, killing or capturing 1,000 German mercenaries at Trenton, defeating the garrison at Princeton, then retiring in good order to Morristown in late January 1777. Howe now moved south, descending on Philadelphia, and beating Washington at Brandywine on September 11, 1777.

Meanwhile General John Burgoyne, commanding in Canada, had defeated a second American army, under Richard Montgomery, which had moved north in the hope of raising allies along the St Lawrence. But the Canadians, whether British-descended Protestants or French-descended Catholics, were not interested. They had got a good deal from Britain in 1774 and they remained loyal, now and later. So Burgoyne was able to move onto the offensive. But he was a rash man. In June 1777 he shipped 7,000 men, British, loyalists, Indians and Brunswickers, across Lake Champlain and then down the Hudson. The aim should have been to catch Washington in a pincer with Burgoyne forming one arm and Howe the other. But no such plan was concocted. Instead, Burgoyne soon got into difficulties. He lost two minor actions on September 19 and October 7, then found himself surrounded and surrendered at Saratoga on October 17, 1777. That led to the first genuine British offer of terms-turned down, naturally. Washington's army



managed to survive another winter. It shrank during the cold weather, which he spent mainly in winter quarters, but expanded again in the spring, and each year it was better. He and it learned from their mistakes and he gradually secured longer terms of service for his men, better pay for them, stricter articles of war, which allowed him to hang men in extreme cases, more artillery, better transport, and reliable supplies."

By February 1778, Franklin's mission to Europe to secure allies was bearing fruit. In France he was perhaps the most successful of all American envoys. When he had been in England, the English ruling class, perhaps put off by his rustic clothes, plebeian manners, and artisanal background (and accent) would not admit him to their homes, with one or two exceptions. The French aristocracy, whether from Anglophobia, intellectual snobbery—they were much more familiar with his learned work—or sheer curiosity, treated him as a lion. He seemed to them another Rousseau, and a more piquant one, being an American exotic rather than a mere Swiss. He was sponsored by Jacques-Donatien de Chaumont, a rich businessman with extensive American interests who spent 2 million livres of his own fortune in aid to the patriots. The Comte de Segur found positive virtue and nobility in his mean appearance: 'His clothing was rustic, his bearing simple but dignified, his language direct, his hair unpowdered. It was as though the simplicity of the classical world, the figure of a thinker of the time of Plato, or a republican of the age of Cato or Fabius, had suddenly been brought by magic into our effeminate and slavish age, the 18th century.' By an extraordinary conjunction, the notion of the Americans as the new Romans hit a culturally fashionable note—just at this precise moment, the rococo was suddenly yielding to the classical revival and Franklin seemed a man of the new wave. As a matter of fact, his style of living was not all that modest, either. The Duc de Croy might enthuse over the humble dinners he served to his high-born guests—'Everything breathed simplicity and economy as befitted a philosopher'—but Franklin had 1,041 bottles of wine in his cellar in 1778, rising to 1,203 before he left. He had nine indoor servants and spent freely, justifying his luxuries with a typical American moral: 'Is not the hope of one day being able to purchase and enjoy luxuries a spur to labor and industry?' Adams, parsimonious and puritanical, snorted that 'The life of Dr Franklin [in Paris] was a Scene of continual dissipation,' and he suspected, probably with reason, that Franklin was enjoying women as well as good food and drink.

So what? The mission was a success, even more so with popular than with official opinion and *le gratin*. Jacques Necker, the great banker who was put in charge of the finances in 1776, was against involvement. He predicted it would prove financially disastrous, as it did. So was Louis XVI, on the grounds that 'it is my profession to be a royalist.' But they were overruled by the Duc de Choiseuil, the chief minister, the Comte de Vergennes, the Foreign Minister, and leaders of public opinion like de Beaumarchais, author of fashionable comedies like *The Barber of Seville* and *The Marriage of Figaro*, who organized public subscriptions to buy 'arms for America,' as well as pushing the government to provide more.

So from the spring of 1778 America was no longer alone. Nantes became the American supply base in Europe. Nearby, the Department of Marine built a special foundry to cast cannon for America. In July 1778 alone one wealthy merchant sent ten ships to Boston, loaded with munitions. In 1782 he sent thirty. The news of Saratoga spurred the signing of a Treaty of Amity and Commerce. Louis XVI graciously received Franklin, who was wigless, swordless, and wearing the rusty old brown coat in which he was savaged by Wedderburn—sweet revenge!" And France's decision persuaded the Spanish and Dutch to join in, though Spain merely backed France in the hope of recovering Gibraltar and was never a formal ally of men it considered rebels who might corrupt its own colonies.

French intervention, by land and sea, raised the stakes for Britain but brought no early end to the war. Admiral Comte d'Estaing appeared with a fleet off the American coast in the summer of 1778 but failed to beat Admiral Howe. The next year he made an attempt, in conjunction with an American force, to take Savannah in October, but failed again. After another indecisive winter, Sir Henry Clinton, who had replaced Howe, took Charleston and 5,500 American prisoners under Benjamin Lincoln, the biggest single loss the patriots suffered in the entire war. This was in May 1780. Three months later, on August 16, Lord Cornwallis beat another American force, under General Horatio Gates, at Camden. Clinton now returned to New York, his main base, leaving Cornwallis to command in the south. Cornwallis invaded North Carolina, but his loyalist force was destroyed at King's Mountain on October 7, 1780. The following January 1781, Banastre Tarleton's Tory Legion was beaten at Cowpens, losing 900 men, by General Daniel Morgan. Cornwallis also suffered heavy casualties at Guildford Courthouse two months later, though he held the field. None of these battles was decisive or even particularly important, but they had a cumulative effect in eroding Britain's will to continue the war.

Then Cornwallis made a strategic mistake. He decided to concentrate his forces at Yorktown on the coast. Clinton strongly disagreed with this move, which made Cornwallis' army vulnerable if ever the French were able to concentrate their naval forces and so deprive Britain, for the first time, of command of the sea. That is exactly what happened. The French by now had a substantial force of 5,500 under the Comte de Rochambeau, based on Rhode Island. More important, the Comte de Barras had a naval force operating from Newport. In the summer of 1781 Admiral de Grasse hurried up from the West Indies with twenty ships of the line and a further 3,000 soldiers. He arrived in time to transport Washington's army, plus a French force under the Marquis de Lafayette, from the Chesapeake to the James River, thus concentrating an enormous conjunction of land- and sea-power around Cornwallis' armed camp. To make matters worse for the British, it was joined by De Barras' naval squadron from Newport. The waters around Yorktown were now controlled by the French fleet, and an attempt by Admiral Thomas Graves, sent from New York to break the blockade, failed. He was obliged to return to New York. Britain no longer could reinforce its armies by sea, at any rate in the western North Atlantic, and this was catastrophic for its whole method of fighting the war. Cornwallis, with 8,000 men, faced a Franco-American army of 17,000, well provided with artillery. He was short of supplies, but it was his exposure to the guns which persuaded him to surrender on October 19, 1781.

So the British, who had begun the war with an enormous superiority in trained men and guns and with complete control of the sea, ended it outnumbered, outgunned, and with the French ruling the waves. They still controlled New York, Savannah, and Charleston, but the catastrophe at Yorktown knocked the stuffing out of the British war-party. On March 19, 1782, North resigned, making way for a peace coalition which contained Shelburne, Fox, and Burke. Happily for all concerned, a series of brilliant British victories against France and Spain—the lifting of the Spanish siege of Gibraltar, success in India, and, above all, Lord Howe's destruction of De Grasse's fleet at the Battle of the Saints on April 12, thus saving the British West Indies and restoring Britain's absolute command of the seas, made it easier for Britain to swallow its pride and accept an independent America.

Franklin was sent back to Paris to open negotiations with Vergennes, on behalf of France, and Thomas Grenville, the clever, erudite Foxite son of the 'Stamp Act' Grenville, on behalf of Britain. Franklin was both the architect and the hero of the Peace of Paris. The 'four points' he set out in July 17 became the basis of the agreement: first, outright independence of the United

States, and withdrawal of all British forces; second, Canada to remain British and a definitive boundary to be drawn; third, agreement on the boundaries of all Thirteen States; and, finally, freedom for fishing off Newfoundland-the first international fisheries agreement.

What is so fascinating about these talks, and the background to them, is the ambivalence of British attitudes to America and vice versa. A short time before, Britain's back had been against the wall, with not only France, Spain, and the Netherlands actively making war against it, but with the League of Armed Neutrality-Russia, Denmark, and Sweden-also hostile and poised to attack. Franklin was planning with the French Ministry of Marine a series of attacks on the English coasts, with John Paul Jones in charge of the naval forces and Lafayette of an invasion army. British resources were stretched thin all over the world. The French had two divisions, totaling 40,000 men, ready for the invasion, and sixty-four Franco-Spanish ships, mounting 4,774 guns, to escort them. Against this, Sir Charles Hardy's Channel Fleet had only thirty-eight ships with 2,968 guns. Lord Barrington, the British War Secretary, said there was no one in England-all the best generals were overseas-fit to command an anti-invasion army. It was wind and sickness, hitting the Franco-Spanish fleet hard, which probably averted a Channel crossing.

Then, in no time at all, there were persistent rumors of a dramatic *renversement d'alliances*, in which Britain would concede the United States sovereignty and both powers would attack France and Spain, driving them out of North America completely. America had already found them treacherous and unreliable allies, and after all Britain was its main trading partner, and Britain's control of the oceans a precondition of American prosperity. Once America was recognized as independent by the British, the two nations had far more to agree about than to dispute, and in these rumors-nothing came of them of course-we can trace the distant foreshadowing of the Monroe Doctrine forty years later. At the peace talks, the French were surprised at the readiness of the British to make concessions to America. Vergennes declared: 'The British buy peace rather than make it. Their concessions exceed all that I could have thought possible.' That was Franklin's doing: he persuaded the British to be generous to America and in return he abandoned France and signed a separate peace on November 30, 1782. During the celebrations at Passy an exchange between a French guest and one of the British delegates, Caleb Whitefoord, made the point. The flattering Frenchman stressed the growing greatness of America, predicting that 'the thirteen United States would form the greatest empire in the world.' Whitefoord: 'Yes, Monsieur, and they will all speak English, every one of 'em.' From the fires of the war, phoenix-like, sprang that mysterious and long-lived creature, still with us, the Anglo-American Special Relationship.

The consequences of this second world war were profound and reverberated for years. It is worth looking at them for a moment from a global perspective, because of their effects on subsequent American history. All things considered, Britain emerged from the long conflict comparatively unscathed. The people were not emotionally involved, there were no soul-scars. Many interests, not just the Whigs, had been against it all along and the merchants in particular were anxious to end it and get on with the Atlantic trade. If anything, the war boosted the British economy, which entered the decade of the 1780s-the take-off point of the first Industrial Revolution-in roaring form. The war ended mercantilism once and for all. The ideas of Adam Smith-who had been strongly opposed to a coercive policy throughout-triumphed, and with the formation of the great peacetime ministry by William Pitt the Younger at the end of 1783, Smith was now a welcome visitor in 10 Downing Street and his free-trade ideas began to take over British policy. Britain was now in the process of becoming the world's first great industrial power and the victory for

Smith's notions of free-enterprise capitalism and a world market was good news both for America's farmers and for its infant manufactures.

The war was a disaster for the old-style European monarchies. Spain emerged from the Peace of Paris (1763) with nothing, with its crown poorer and weaker and its great viceroalties in Central and South America looking increasingly to the North for example and inspiration. The big loser was France. It, too, got nothing from the peace. The war cost it a billion livres and ruined its credit with the bankers of Europe. As Necker predicted, it did irretrievable damage to France's public finances and compelled the bankrupt monarchy to take the road which led to the calling of the Estates General, the Fall of the Bastille, the Terror, the Republic, military dictatorship, and two decades of disastrous wars. All the wealthy aristocrats and leading merchants who had helped America with their personal fortunes lost everything too, and one or two had to be put on a pauper's payroll by a grudging Congress. The French ruling class learned the hard way not to meddle with republicanism. The Comte de Segur, who served in America, summed it up: 'We walked gaily over a carpet of flowers which concealed from us the abyss.' But he was comparatively lucky. Admiral d'Estaigne, who brought the first French fleet to the American coast, died by the guillotine.

The war brought to the Thirteen States, now united after a fashion, immense miseries, losses, benefits, and unexpected blessings. There were winners and losers. Chief among the losers, especially in the long term, were the Indians. At the time of the Declaration of Independence, about 200,000 Indians lived east of the Mississippi, grouped in eighty five nations. Their instinct was to stay neutral. One Iroquois chief told the governor of Connecticut in March 1775: 'We are unwilling to join on either side ... for we love you both-Old England and New.' Once the war started, however, both sides sought Indian help and it was usually the British who got it. They had defended Indian interests in the past and the Indians' intuition told them that an independent America would be unrestrained in permitting western white expansion. So about 13,000 fought for Britain, and if Sir William Johnson, greatest of Britain's Indian agents, who was 'Honorary Chief of the Six Nations,' had not died in 1774, the Indian alliance would have been much more effective. His son John and his nephew Guy did their best, however, and the Indians felt they had fought a hard and successful war on the whole. Their dismay at the Peace of Paris was all the more bitter, therefore. Britain abandoned them. At Niagara, the British envoys were told by the Indian chiefs: 'If it were really true that the British had basely betrayed them by pretending to give up [our] country to the Americans, without our consent or consulting them, it was an Act of Cruelty and Injustice that only the Christians were capable of doing.' The Americans interpreted the treaty as giving them the right of conquest, and set to with a will. Federal agents told the Delawares and Wyandots in 1785: 'We claim the country by conquest, and are to give, not to receive.' The Indians of the great plains lost too. They had originally been protected from western expansion by French claims to the Mississippi. That barrier had gone in 1763. Then the British came to their rescue by the Great Proclamation. Now that, too, was null and void. They were on their own.

For the slaves, the consequences of the Revolution were mixed. By forcing the Thirteen States to pool their resources and minimize their differences, the war necessarily obliged the New Englanders, who were growing increasingly restive about the 'organic sin' of slavery, a phrase coined during the Great Awakening, to overlook it for the time being. Hence even Adams, already passionately opposed to slavery, agreed without argument to omit the slavery passage from the Declaration of Independence. That was clearly a defeat for the slaves, and worse was to come in the process of constitution-making. Moreover, the number of slaves actually increased

and their distribution spread during and immediately after the conflict. It is a melancholy fact that the number of slaves in Virginia actually doubled between 1755 and the end of the war in 1782. That was mainly through natural increase and longevity-though this in itself testified to the healthy and in some ways comfortable conditions they enjoyed in the South: slaves lived there twice as long as in Africa and 50 percent longer than in South America. Despite this, most of the South emerged from the war impoverished as a result of military occupation, naval attacks, civil war between patriots and Tories, war with the Indians, and the flight of thousands of slaves to the British Army and freedom. Many Southerners felt the only way they could restore their fortunes was by the strict restoration of slavery and its rapid expansion. That is indeed what happened. Slave-owners, pushing westwards, as they could now do with increasing freedom, took their slaves with them into Kentucky and Tennessee, South Carolina and Georgia. So, even before the great cotton revolution, the slave South was expanding. With the demand for slaves rising, more were imported direct from Africa-100,000 in the years 1783-1807.

On the other hand, the new climate of liberty and even equality undoubtedly caused many people, especially in the North, to look afresh at the extraordinary anomaly of holding men and women in perpetual slavery in a land which had just won its freedom. The movement to end slavery in some states began even before the crisis. In 1766 Boston instructed its representatives in the Assembly to 'move for a law to prohibit the importation and purchasing of slaves for the future,' and other towns in New England did the same. In 1771 a prohibitory law did pass, but Governor Hutchinson would not sign it. However, in December that year Lord Mansfield, Chief Justice, delivered in London his famous ruling that slavery was 'so odious' an institution that nothing 'could be suffered to support it but positive law.' That made slavery unlawful in England under the common law, and since most American colonies adhered to the common law too, the legal drift was plainly against it. In 1773 Pennsylvania (under the influence of Quakers) and in 1774 Rhode Island and Connecticut passed laws prohibiting the slave trade. The General Articles of Association adopted by the First Continental Congress in 1774 had an anti-slave-trade clause which pledged the members 'neither [to] import nor purchase any slave imported after the first day of December next,' after which time it was agreed 'wholly [to] discontinue the slave trade' and 'neither [to] be concerned in it ourselves' nor to 'hire our vessels, nor sell our commodities or manufactures to those who are concerned in it.' Laws permitting manumission or removing existing restraints on it were passed by five states between 1786 and 1801, and these included slave states like Kentucky and Tennessee. Virginia had allowed manumission even before, in 1782, and 10,000 were freed almost immediately. Maryland followed in 1783 and a generation later over 20 percent of its blacks were free.

During the Revolutionary War, and as a direct result of the climate it produced, all the Northern states except New York and New Jersey, following Britain's lead, took steps to outlaw slavery itself. In 1780 Pennsylvania enacted the first (gradual) emancipation law in American history and others followed, New Jersey being the last to do so before the Civil War. In addition to positive laws, the common law worked in favor of the slaves during these years, as it had in England. In 1781, in *Brom and Bett v. John Ashley*, Elizabeth Freeman, called Bett, argued that a phrase in the new 1780 Massachusetts constitution saying that all individuals were 'born free and equal' applied just as much to blacks as to whites. She won the case, and this and other decisions brought slavery in Massachusetts to an end. On top of all this, the constitutional struggle and the war gave birth to mass agitation in England, which soon spread to America and elsewhere, in the organized antislavery movement, led by Samuel Wilberforce and the 'Clapham Sect.' They

ultimately drove the law through parliament, which outlawed the international slave trade in 1807.

The consequence for white Americans were mixed too. Like most 'wars of liberation' the American War of Independence was a bitter civil war too. One contemporary guess divided the people into three: the patriots, one-third, the Tory loyalists, one-third, and the remainder prepared to go along with either party. It is likely, however, that those who declined to take an active part were fully half the nation, the militants being almost equally divided, though the Tories, by their very nature, lacked leaders and the extremism which drove the liberators. They looked to leadership from England and were poorly served. They were the biggest losers of all. Indeed, they lost everything-jobs, houses, estates, savings, often their lives. Some families were severed for ever, a typically tragic example being Franklin's. His son William, governor of New Jersey, stayed loyal, and Franklin cut him out of his will, which stated: 'The part he acted against me in the late war, which is of public notoriety, will account for me leaving him no more of an estate he endeavored to deprive me of.' William died in exile, destitute, in 1813. Another, typical, loser was Philip Richard Fendall, one of the fourth generations of Fendalls who farmed on the lower Western Shore of Charles County, Maryland. When he boarded ship for England, he surrendered his career as a merchant, his income as county clerk, his profits from a 700-acre tobacco plantation on the Potomac, his 'large, elegant brick dwelling house' which was in 'a beautiful healthy situation, and commands an extensive view up and down the river'-everything in fact. What became of him we do not know.

Most loyalists in the Thirteen States had no alternative but to stay where they were and swallow their feelings. Of course this worked both ways. In Jamaica, Barbados, and Grenada, the local assemblies declared their sympathy with the patriots, but British naval supremacy prevented them from doing anything more. Bermuda and the Bahamas remained formally loyal but would have shifted if the patriots had been able to offer military help. Florida was loyal because it needed British protection from Spain. Recent research shows that the loyalists were strongest, in proportion to population, in Georgia, New York, and the largest number of loyalists, having three or four times more supporters of the crown than any other colony/state. Royalists remained relatively strong in New Jersey and Massachusetts, weaker in Rhode Island, North Carolina, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and New Hampshire, and impotent in Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware.

Loyalty or patriotism was determined to some extent by ethnic origins and religion. People of English origins were divided by temperament, as they had been in the English Civil War 130 years before. The Scots Highlanders who were clannish and had recently arrived with generous land-grants, were fanatically loyal. Scots Lowlanders were also loyal, though less so. Irish and Scotch-Irish (Ulstermen) were fanatically anti-British, if they were Catholic and still more (at this stage) if they were Presbyterian. The Dutch were divided. The Germans were neutral, tending to go along with the prevailing mood in their locality. The Huguenots were patriots. Religion was a big factor, as it was and is in everything connected with America. The Quakers of Pennsylvania were inclined to side with the King but were prevented by their pacifism from fighting for him. In Philadelphia Benjamin Franklin found great difficulty in persuading Quakers to serve in the civil defense forces, man the fire-brigade, or tend the wounded. The Roman Catholics were patriots. The first Catholic bishop in America, Bishop John Carroll of Baltimore, actually went on a mission to Canada to try to persuade Canadian Catholics to help or at least remain neutral.

The Anglicans, the religious group least affected by the Great Awakening, were predominantly loyalist, except in Virginia. They were particularly loyal in New York, the biggest single center of support for the crown. Of course this was due to some extent to the fact that New York was a major British base and many had a direct economic motive for supporting the crown-Washington's 'interest' at work again. The same was true to a limited extent of Boston and Newport, Rhode Island. But New York was also, at that time, an Anglican stronghold. Charles Inglis, a leading New York Anglican, called the war 'the most causeless, unprovoked and unnatural [rebellion] which ever disgraced any country.' But the Anglicans were weakened and frustrated by the failure to introduce bishops and a hierarchy. And it is important to remember that America, as a whole, was a religious breakaway from Anglicanism. Research reveals that in 1780, the Anglicans had 406 churches. The Presbyterians had 495, and the Congregationalists were by far the largest with 749. In this sense, Anglican arrogance in the early 17th century came home to roost in the 1770s, and James I had not been so far wrong when he called the settlement of America 'a seminary for a seditious parliament.' If you equate the Congregationalists with the Presbyterians (both being Calvinist), George III was not far wrong either when he called the Revolution 'a Presbyterian Rebellion." The English church and state lost the political and military battle because they had already lost the religious battle.

On the whole the loyalists were not successful in organizing resistance to the rebellion. In North Carolina, the loyalist David Fanning led an effective guerrilla war for a time against the patriotic leader Governor Thomas Burke, both engaging in terror and counter-terror. In South Carolina, Thomas Brown, who had been tortured by the extremist republican Sons of Liberty, also gave the patriots a hard time. Another successful loyalist leader was Joseph Galloway of Philadelphia. The loyalists fought hard in Georgia and in the North Carolina back-country, where 1,400 Highland Scots seized upper Cape Fear but were badly beaten by the patriot militia, which had cannon. They were let down by the second-rate British commanders, as were most of the other loyalist bands. Other loyalists were discouraged by the bad behavior of mercenaries and British troops-in New Jersey, for instance, a center of loyalism, 2,700 signed a loyalty oath to the King but were put off from doing more by military looting. Other loyalists were silenced by patriot terror-leaders like Colonel Charles Lynch of Virginia, who invented lynching, which in his day was thirty-nine lashes rather than hanging. All the loyalists felt betrayed by the British at the peace. The fate of the loyalist blacks was pitiful. Some 800 Virginia slaves fled north following Governor Lord Dunmore's promise of freedom. They went to New York, where they joined thousands of others who worked for the British garrison. When the troops departed in 1783 they were left to their own resources and most of them fled further, to Nova Scotia. About 1,000 black loyalists were shipped to Sierra Leone, the first of many attempts to repatriate ex-slaves to West Africa. Thousands of loyalists went to England and tried to file claims for compensation. A total of 3,225 claims were eventually dealt with in London and 2,291 awards of compensation made-a miserable total compared with the vast numbers who lost all.

The most important consequence of the loyalist diaspora was felt in Canada. The total number of loyalists who left the United States may have been as high as 80,000. Some went to England; others to crown colonies in the West Indies. But the vast majority emigrated north to Canada where they caused a radical shift in its demography. Until then British Upper Canada had been thinly held and the total English-speaking population was outbalanced by French-speaking Lower Canada. Both remained loyal to the crown during the struggle but the influx of fierce loyalists was crucial in binding Canada to the crown and also in making it a predominantly

English-speaking country. So if Britain lost America it gained Canada, a point reinforced in the war of 1812.

The overwhelming majority of loyalists remained in the United States, but not necessarily in their old localities. Large numbers moved from Virginia, Maryland, the Carolinas, and Georgia to more northerly states, especially Pennsylvania and New York. Others moved west, into and across the Appalachians, into Tennessee, Kentucky, and the Ohio Valley. The war, then, diluted the pure English stock of the American population somewhat but, more importantly, it mixed everyone up more, dissolving old patterns and forming new ones, and so adding heat to the melting-pot process which was already at work transforming people from innumerable ethnic and religious backgrounds into full-blooded American citizens.

The war, indeed, was a transforming drama, which left deep psychological and physical scars on a much tried people, as well as ennobling ones. The women were the big sufferers in this long, divisive, bitter conflict, bearing the brunt of the poverty to which hundreds of thousands were reduced, at least for some years. We hear of Betsy Ross stitching her flag, Abigail Adams writing to her husband in Philadelphia in 1776, 'remember the ladies,' and the clever black girl Phyllis Wheatley writing her poetry. Modern feminist historians pick on certain highlights of the women's struggle to aid the patriots, such as the pro-Revolutionary statement signed by all the women of Edenton, North Carolina, which declared: 'We the ladys of Edenton do hereby Solemnly Engage not to Conform to that Pernicious Custom of Drinking tea, or that we the aforesaid Ladys will not promote the wear of any Manufacture from England until such times as all Acts which tend to Enslave this our Native Country shall be Repealed.'

But that was window-dressing. Most women had a hard, tragic war, losing brothers and sons and fathers and homes and sometimes seeing their families bitterly divided for ever. A more typical story, one suspects, than that of the non-tea-drinking ladies of Edenton was Mrs Elizabeth Jackson's of Waxhaw Settlement, South Carolina. She was from Carrickfergus and her husband Andrew from Castlereagh, both part of a big Ulster immigration of 1765. She had three sons, the last, Andrew, being posthumous, for her husband died soon after they settled. She raised them in grim poverty and stern, English-hating rectitude. Andrew, aged six, remembered crying. 'Stop that, Andrew,' Mrs Jackson admonished him. 'Do not let me see you cry again. Girls were made to cry, not boys.' 'What were boys made to do, Mother?' 'To fight.' All three sons were encouraged by their mother to serve in the Revolutionary War, Andrew being only twelve when he enlisted in 1779. The eldest son, Hugh, died on active service, aged sixteen. Andrew and his second brother, Robert, were both flung into a prisoner-of-war camp and slashed with the sword of a British officer: 'The sword reached my head, and has left a mark there as durable as the skull, as well as on the fingers'-all this for refusing to clean the officer's boots. Andrew Jackson carried these scars to his dying day as a reminder of English brutality. His brother was more seriously wounded and died soon after being released. Finally, in 1782, Mrs Elizabeth Jackson, who had been nursing the American wounded in an improvised hospital, contracted an infection and died too, leaving young Andrew an orphan of the war. He remembered every word of the dying advice of this grim woman: 'Avoid quarrels as long as you can without yielding to imposition. But sustain your manhood always. Never bring a suit in law for assault or battery or defamation. The law affords no remedies for such outrages that can satisfy the feelings of a true man [but] if you ever have to vindicate your honor, do it calmly.'

This kind of suffering, and the bitterness it engendered, makes us thankful for the French intervention, which helped to bring the war to an end. Without it, the civil war-guerrilla war phase might have dragged on for many years, further envenomed by British-inspired servile



revolts and Indian raids. That is what happened in South and Central America a generation later, when the wars between the rebels and Spain and between pro- and anti-royalist elements went on for decades, leading to Caesarism, military rule, army mutinies and revolts, and every variety of cruelty. The nature of the revolutionary struggle in Latin America helps to explain the weaknesses and instability of the independent civil societies which arose from it and the political role played by the military almost to this day. The United States has been spared this. But it was touch and go. There were some ugly incidents during and immediately after the war. Congress, with its weak, indeed virtually non-existent executive, was a thoroughly bad war-manager. There was no proper currency and, in effect, rapid inflation. Washington in practice managed the war as well as commanded, and without him there would have been a social as well as a military break down. Yet at one point, at the end of 1777, there were rumors he would be replaced by Gates, who had beaten Burgoyne. Washington himself thought that there was a plot, led by Thomas Conway (the 'Conway Cabal') and that Gates was privy to it. But nothing came of it.

After Yorkstown, feelings among some officers about the undersupplying of the army owing to Congressional weakness and negligence led to pressures on Washington to take power-exactly the kind of movement which was to ruin independence in Latin America. Colonel Lewis Nicola, an Irish-born Huguenot, wrote to Washington urging him to 'take the crown.' The general wrote that the letter 'left him with painful sensations.' He admitted the army was short of supplies, but he said he would work to remedy things 'in a constitutional way.' With the war effectively over but many men still under arms and pay in arrears, there was a near-mutiny on March 10, 1783 at Washington's camp. It was led by twenty-four-year-old Major John Armstrong, who wrote the Newburgh Addresses, protesting at Congress's treatment of its army and urging the officers not 'to be tame and unprovoked when injuries press down hard upon you.' But only the younger officers were involved in this business, which has been described as 'the only known instance of an attempted coup in American history.' But Washington called all the disaffected officers together and persuaded them to put their complaints through regular channels. He was a great persuader. Three months later, in June, the last in a string of mutinies occurred when several hundred angry soldiers actually surrounded the State House in Philadelphia where both Congress and the Executive Council of Pennsylvania State were meeting. But this military mob dispersed on the approach of a regular army unit under General Robert Howe.

The least suspicion of Caesarism was finally scotched by the prompt and decisive manner in which Washington himself terminated his military duties. On December 23, 1783 he presented himself at the Philadelphia State House, where Congress sat, drew a note he had written from his pocket and held it with a hand that visibly shook. He read out: 'Mr President [he was addressing the presiding officer, Thomas Mifflin], the great events on which my resignation depended having at length taken place, I have now the honor of offering my sincere congratulations to Congress and of presenting myself before them in order to surrender into their hands the trust committed to me, and to claim the indulgence of retiring from the service of my country ... and bidding an Affectionate Farewell to this August body under whose orders I have so long acted, I here offer my commission, and take my leave of all the employments of public life.' At this point, he took his commission from his uniform coat, folded the copy of his speech and handed both papers to Mifflin. He was self-consciously imitating Cincinnatus handing back his sword. He then shook hands with every member of Congress, mounted his horse, and rode through the night to Mount Vernon, reaching it the next morning.

With the British gone and Washington back in Mount Vernon, how was America to govern itself? It did not miss monarchy. The British crown was only a parliamentary monarchy anyway; 18th-century Britain was a semi-republic in many ways. When Benjamin Rush, the radical doctor who ran Washington's army medical services, was on a prewar visit to England, the attendant at the House of Lords (parliament was in recess) allowed him to disport himself on the throne 'for a considerable time' and Rush found himself 'seized with a kind of horror.' The Americans, wrote Jefferson, 'shed monarchy with as much ease as would have attended their throwing off an old and putting on a new suit of clothes.' Monarchy did not make much practical sense in a country without an aristocracy. America had a sort of ruling class-in Virginia, about one man in twenty-five was a 'gentleman,' further north one in ten and the distinction mattered less. In Virginia about 8 percent of the population controlled a third of the land, so there was a class divide based on wealth. Distinctions in status were reflected in careless speech. Even Washington spoke of ordinary farmers as the 'Grazing Multitude.' His aide, Hamilton, referred to the 'unthinking populace.' John Adams termed them the 'common herd of mankind,' and Gouverneur Morris felt ordinary people 'had no morals but their interests.' But this was just club talk. Virtually all American landowners engaged in trade. For once they rejected a saying of Locke's, 'Trade is wholly inconsistent with a gentleman's calling.' In fact New Yorkers stood the adage on its head, merchants listing themselves in directories as 'gentlemen,' if they were prosperous enough. And, since it cost only £400 to set yourself up as a merchant in New York, as opposed to £5,000 in England-that was why so many emigrated-there were plenty of 'gentlemen' in Manhattan. In country districts, money was short, credit hard to get, monetary instruments crude, so rich landowners, if they had it, lent money out-Charles Carroll of Annapolis lent £24,000 to neighbors. This worked as a kind of bastard feudalism, supplemented by family links, so that a really rich man, especially in Maryland and the South, had a following. But the kind of clientage taken for granted by English dukes in their districts, supplemented by pocket boroughs, simply did not exist. There was no top tier in white society-no bottom tier either.

Then again, anyone deciding how America was to be governed had to take account of what was perhaps the most pervasive single characteristic of the country-restlessness. Few people stayed still for long. Mostly they were moving upwards. And vast numbers were moving geographically too. A British observer noted, wonderingly, that Americans moved 'as their avidity and restlessness incite them. They acquire no attachment to Place; but wandering about Seems engrafted in their Nature; and it is weakness incident to it that they Should forever imagine the Lands further off, are Still better than those upon which they are already Settled.' This mobility acted as an economic dynamic-restlessness was one reason the American economy expanded so fast, as new, and often better, land was brought into production and new economic growth-centers created almost overnight in frontier districts. But constant moving broke up settled society, worked against hierarchy and 'respect,' and promoted assumptions of equality.

There is a lot of evidence that farmers' money incomes rose during the war as food was sold to armies for cash. Spending habits grew more luxurious-farmers' wives demanded not only tea but tea-sets. Merchants 'set up their carriage.' The same thing was happening in England-read Jane Austen's novels-but in America it started lower down the socioeconomic scale. And in America there were fewer of the moralists who, in England, deplored the spread of luxuries among the common people. On the contrary: America was already developing the notion that all were entitled to the best if they worked hard enough, that aiming high was not only morally acceptable but admirable. Silk handkerchiefs, feather mattresses, shop-made dresses, imported bonnets-why shouldn't people have them? 'The more we have the better,' enthused James Otis, 'if we can

export enough to pay for them.' Ebenezer Baldwin, a little more sharply, agreed: 'We have no such thing as a common People among us. Between Vanity and Fashion, the Species is utterly destroyed.'

It was a short step from admitting ordinary folk had a right to the best to giving them a full share in government-and giving it to them not grudgingly but eagerly. Words like 'husbandman,' 'yeoman,' 'esquire' quickly dropped out of use, being replaced by 'citizen'-a decade before the French Revolutionaries took it up. Collectively, the citizens were the 'Publick,' a new word coming into fashion. 'Cato' wrote: 'Ordinary people [are] the best judges, whether things go well or ill for the Publick.' Cato thought: 'Every ploughman knows a good government from a bad one.' Jefferson agreed: 'State a problem to a ploughman and a professor. The former will decide it often better than the latter, because he had not been led astray by artificial rules.' John Adams invented a hick-farmer archetype, Humphrey Ploughjogger, and extolled his sense and shrewdness in newspaper articles. He was 'made of as good a Clay as the so-called Great Ones of the world.' 'The mob, the herd and the rabble, as the Great always delight to call them,' were, wrote Adams, 'by the unalterable laws of god and Nature, as well entitled to the benefit of the air to breathe, light to see, food to eat, clothes to wear, as the nobles or the king.'" All that was necessary was to educate them, to add knowledge to their native wit.

It was the great merit of the new egalitarian spirit in America that it consciously placed education right at the front of national priorities. Adams wrote that the settlement of America was part of a providential plan 'for the illumination of the ignorant and emancipation of the slavish part of mankind,' first in America, then all over the world. Stanhope Smith, president of Princeton, believed that a combination of 'republican laws' and education would effect a general moral improvement in the population and create a 'society of habitual virtue.' Virtue, said Ezra Styles, could be taught, like any other art. And it was education, said Adams, which made the gentleman, not birth or privilege. He and most of the key men in the Revolution were first-generation gentlemen, made such by their ability to read and make use of books and by their mastery of the pen-Adams' cousin Sam, Jefferson, Rush, John Marshall, James Madison, David Ramsay, John Jay, James Wilson, Benjamin Franklin. Adams' father had been 'an ungentle farmer'-he himself had become a gentleman by going to Harvard. Jefferson, though from a much higher starting-place in society, had also been the first in his family to go to college. Ultimately, all would do so: then indeed America would be a republican commonwealth of taste, art, manners, and above all virtue. It was education which would make the republican structure and the democratic content of the new union of states engines of peaceful progress. In the 1830s Macaulay was to say that, in England, education was engaged in a race to civilize democracy before it took over. But it is worth remembering that the American elite grasped this point-and did something about it-half a century before.

In the meantime, the republican structure had to be created as a matter of urgency. The wartime system was a series of improvisations and obviously not good enough. The original idea of the United States was a coming together of the states, as sovereign bodies, to create an umbrella-state over them, to do certain things as the states should delegate to it. The people did not come into this process, except insofar as they elected state legislatures. It is important to grasp the point: the original revolution, a military and political one, which produced this improvised form of Congressional government, was followed by a second revolution, this time a constitutional one, which produced the United States Constitution as we know it. The second revolution began during the war and it was (in the old English tradition) an organic development, in response to need. In October 1777 Congress decided it had to create Boards of War, Treasury,

and the Admiralty, with professional staffs, simply to get things done. This was the beginning of executive government. Courts had to be created to hold Admiralty appeals from state courts. This was the beginning of the federal judiciary. In September 1779, the doctrine of US citizenship began to emerge. There was the first suggestion, as war supplies ran out, that Congress had the power to coerce mean or uncooperative states-the doctrine which ultimately was to enable President Lincoln lawfully to coerce the Confederacy.

The biggest formative force was financial need. The improvised currency broke down under the pressures of war. Inflation started to accelerate. These were the evils which, in Latin America during the next generation, were to poison the youth and malform the maturity of the Spanish-speaking republics. The men of New York, already emerging as a center of 'sound,' that is expert, finance, were determined not to allow this to happen. Gouverneur Morris, Philip Schuyler, Alexander Hamilton, and James Duane got together to propose what would later be termed a 'federalist solution,' that is a strong government pledged to an honest currency. They believed in government deliberately creating the framework in which the economy could develop and expand rapidly by sponsoring an advanced banking system, managing credit, and promoting fiscal efficiency. They got their ideas from Britain and Adam Smith, and the man who advanced them most confidently, Alexander Hamilton, first gave them expression in his 'Continentalist Letters,' published in 1781-2.

That was the beginning of the debate on the Constitution. So who was this Hamilton, who began it? He was born in 1755 in the small West Indian island of Nevis, and it is vital to remember that he was not an American, except by adoption, and could never have become president, though he was in some respects better fitted for the job than any other of the Founding Fathers. In a sense he was the archetypal self-made man of American mythology-born out of wedlock, deserted by a no-good father, left an orphan at thirteen by the death of his mother, he was helped by friends and relatives to find his way to New York where, at seventeen, he entered King's College (later Columbia University). There he thrived and absorbed a mass of political, historical, constitutional, and forensic knowledge which made him one of the sharpest lawyers of his generation. He was soon in the thick of the Revolutionary agitation as a speaker and churner-out of pamphlets, having a gift for rapid writing for print unequaled by any of the time, even Paine and Franklin. He joined the army, found himself in the artillery, where he quickly mastered the art of gunnery, became a lieutenant, saw action repeatedly, attracted the attention of the Commander-in-Chief, and so served on Washington's staff, as his best and closest ADC for five years. Washington was his hero, his 'aegis,' as he put it. Washington, in turn, found him the best executive officer in the army, a man who could be trusted to carry out the most difficult staff-duty with efficiency and speed, who was full of ideas, brave to a fault, and absolutely loyal.

Hamilton left Washington's staff to command a battery at Yorktown (it was the guns which made Cornwallis' surrender unavoidable), and he undoubtedly saw more military action than any other of the great Constitution-makers. But he never quite strikes one as a typical American, or even an extraordinary one. He might perhaps have been more at home in the House of Commons and in Pitt's Cabinet of the 1780s. He had no fear of kingship as such: if it worked, use it. He was an empiric, a pragmatist on the English model, and his instinct was always to look at how England did things and see if America would be well advised to follow suit, *ceteris paribus*. He was a disciple not so much of Locke as of Hobbes, a man who believed that society was inherently chaotic and in need of a strong Leviathan-figure (whether a man or an institution) to 'keep them all in awe.' In 1780 he married Elizabeth Schuyler, daughter of a major-general and large-scale Hudson Valley landlord. Once demobilized, he started a highly successful law

practice, served in Congress 1782-3, and put himself in the forefront of those demanding a stronger national government.

Within the government it was Hamilton's ally, Robert Morris, Superintendent of Finance, who pushed for reforms. In 1781-2 he produced a tax and finance program to provide funds and a stable currency, and he went outside government to organize support, in Congress, in business, and even in the army. Morris and Hamilton realized that, now all British impediments to westward expansion had been removed, selling land to eager farmers was one way the federal government, or the general government as they still called it, could finance itself-but only if individual states relinquished to the federal center control over Western lands. Up to the Revolutionary War, the states had admitted no western limit to their claims. In 1780, however, they had agreed in principle that all western territory would be 'settled and formed into distinct republican states, which shall become members of the federal union, and have the same rights of sovereignty, freedom and independence as the other states.'

The 1783 Peace of Paris doubled the size of the United States, adding the western territories to the Atlantic states. But the size, number, and boundaries of the new states had to be determined, together with the constitutional procedure to bring them into the Union. A committee of Congress under the chairmanship of Jefferson was appointed to settle this, and in 1784 it reported that the Western territories should be divided into fourteen new states-including Assenisipia, Cherroonesus, Metropotamia, Miochigania, and Washington. Congress did not like these weird names and dropped them. But in its ordinance of 1784 it laid down that the territories should have temporary governments (managed by Congress) until each had a free population equal to that of the least populated of the existing states. At that point it could apply for admission. This came into effect only after each state had formally ceded all its Western claims. The Land Ordinance of 1785 defined how this new federal land was to be surveyed and sold. Finally, the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 dealt with the northern sector of the West and made more specific the process of state-creation. First, a governor, secretary, and judges would be appointed to the territory by Congress. The second stage began when a district acquired 5,000 adult free males; it could then elect an assembly and nominate a list of candidates from which Congress chose a governing council, though it retained the right of veto over legislation and still appointed the governor. The third stage began when population passed the 60,000-free-inhabitants mark, when it could petition to become a state.

This ordinance or law was the last passed under the old Articles of Confederation, and many objected to it on the ground that it lodged political power in the hands of Eastern legislators or company promoters rather than Western squatters-it was centralist rather than democratic. So it was. But then the whole question of Western lands inevitably tended to strengthen the power of the federal government, as Hamilton spotted, because it gave it direct authority over a huge spread of territory as big as the existing states-much bigger as it turned out-which it could rule like an imperial power, and support by selling off bits to settlers. That was a geographical fact, which made it inevitable that the federal center would strengthen itself as time went by. It was the states themselves which sold the pass on state sovereign rights when they renounced their sovereignty over Western lands and handed it over to Congress. However, for the time being individual states carried out all kinds of sovereign acts which logically belonged to a central authority-they broke foreign treaties and federal law, made war on Indians, built their own navies, and sometimes did not trouble themselves to send representatives to Congress. They taxed each other's trade while failing to pay what they had promised to the Congressional

coffers. That, of course, was at the root of the collapse of credit and the runaway inflation. All agreed: things could not go on this way.

At this point, yet another Founding Father emerged from the shadows into the bright lights of national prominence. James Madison (1751-1836) was born in 1751 in Virginia, the son of a fairly prosperous planter, who had him educated by private tutors before dispatching him to Princeton in 1771. There he was a classmate of Aaron Burr (1756-1836) and with two budding authors, Hugh Henry Brackenridge (1748-1816) and Philip Freneau (1752-1832), produced a remarkable 'Poem of the Rising Glory of America,' reflecting the view of their generation of educated elitists that leadership in culture was inevitably passing westward from Europe to America, which would be the theater of 'the final stage ... of high invention and wondrous art, which not the ravages of time shall waste.' Freneau indeed has often been called, with justice, 'the poet of the American Revolution.' Madison, however, can be called, with equal justice, the constitutionalist of the Revolution, for he did more than Jefferson or even Hamilton to ensure that the United States got a workable system of government. He had read Francis Bacon's famous essay, 'Of Honor and Reputation,' which discussed the hierarchy of 'categories of fame and honor,' placing at the top of it 'founders of states and commonwealths, such as Romulus, Cyrus and Caesar.' It was his good fortune, as John Quincy Adams was to write a few years later, to join this select company, being 'sent into life at a time when the greatest lawgivers of antiquity would have wished to live. How few of the human race have ever enjoyed an opportunity of making an election of government-more than of air, soil or climate-for themselves and their children? When, before the present epoch, had three millions of people full power and a fair opportunity to form and establish the wisest and happiest government that human wisdom can contrive?' It was, Madison congratulated himself, 'a period glorious for our country and, more than any preceding one, likely to improve the condition of man'-hence to be privileged to write the constitution was 'as fair a chance of immortality as Lycurgus gave to that of Sparta.'

Madison was a frail man, whose physique prevented him from serving in the army. In 1776 he was elected to the Virginia state convention where, in the drafting of the new state constitution, he made his first gift to the vernacular of American constitutional law by suggesting that the phrase 'toleration of religion' be given a positive twist by being changed to 'the free exercise of religion'-an important improvement, with many consequences. That year, as a member of the state executive council, he first met Jefferson, formed a friendship with him which lasted for the rest of Jefferson's life, and produced an exchange of letters of which over 1,250 survive, one of the great correspondences of history and by a long way the most important series of political letters, between two leading statesmen, ever to have been written. There is no more agreeable way of learning about how history was made during this half-century than by browsing in the three grand volumes in which these letters are printed. It is important to remember, in judging the contributions made by each of these two great men, the extent to which one influenced the other, at all times.

The stages by which the United States Constitution was created were as follows. The efforts by Morris and Hamilton to reform the existing Confederation, especially in finance, had produced no fundamental response. In 1783 Madison turned his hand to the problem, producing a three-point plan of reform, less radical in some ways than the Morrison-Alexander scheme, but introducing the concept of popular elections for the first time (with the slave element in the population of states counting as three-fifths of whites, per capita-the formula eventually adopted). Nothing much came of this either, at the time. Then accident intervened, as it often

does in great historical events. Virginia and Maryland were rowing over the navigation of the Potomac, which both claimed the legal right to direct. In this confusion, importers were taking the opportunity to evade customs-dues. Matters came to a head at the end of 1783 and Madison, who looked after national affairs for the Virginia government, proposed that negotiating commissioners be appointed by both states. Washington, a born conciliator, was delighted to give them hospitality at Mount Vernon, from March 25, 1785. There they ranged well beyond their mandate, settling not only navigational and naval differences between the two states but customs, currencies, regulation of credit, and many other topics.

The conference was so successful that Pennsylvania was roped in on the Potomac issue, and Madison skillfully brought the agreements to the attention of Congress, which ratified them. He then put through a motion for Virginia to invite commissions from all states to meet and discuss 'such commercial regulations as may be necessary to their common interest and their permanent harmony.' The meeting took place at Annapolis on three days in September 1786 and only five states actually sent commissioners. But it did some important preparatory work and lobbying, and it enabled Madison to get to know Hamilton and both to put their heads together to see how to proceed further. Madison was a cautious, deliberative man, Hamilton a plunger, an audacious adventurer. He built onto Madison's tentative scheme of constitutional revision, which dealt only with economic issues, a broader plan, inviting state delegates to Philadelphia in May 1787, 'to devise such further provisions as shall appear to them necessary to render the constitution of the Federal Government adequate to the exigencies of the Union.' It set no limit on the things the Convention might discuss.

However, if Hamilton gave the momentum for constitutional reform a decisive push, it was Madison who provided the Convention's agenda, by presenting the Virginia Plan. The new element in this, of fundamental importance, was that the national government ought to operate directly on the people (rather than through the mediating agency of the states) and that it ought to receive its authority directly from the people (rather than from the states). In other words the sovereign people-it was Madison who coined the majestic phrase 'We, the People'-delegated authority both to the national government and to the states, thereby giving it the power to act independently in its own sphere, as well as imposing restrictions on the actions of the states. This could be described as the most important constitutional innovation since the Declaration of Independence itself. Madison proposed that the limiting power should be exercised by a federal power of veto on state laws. This was rejected, as smacking too much of the old royal veto. But the principle was accepted, and limitations on the power of the states imposed by the federal Constitution have been accepted as a fundamental mechanism of the federal system. In Madison's scheme, such power was legitimized by the federal government drawing authority directly from the votes of the people. The positive point was of comparable importance to the negative point of limiting state authority because it knocked the bottom out of the subsequent states' rights argument (of John C. Calhoun and others) that only the states themselves conferred power on the federal government, and could remove it just as comprehensively. But the people conferred power too, and it was on that basis that President Lincoln was later able to construct the moral and legal case for fighting a war to hold the Union together. All this was Madison's doing.

The Convention met in Philadelphia again and sat for four months, breaking up on September 17, 1787, its work triumphantly done. Its success owed a lot to the fact that all the states had been writing or improving their own constitutions over the past decades and so many of the men attending were experts at the game. Of those attending, forty-two had sat in the Continental

Congress or the congresses held under the Articles of Association. Most were planters, landowners or merchants; a number had served in the army; there were twenty-six college graduates-nine from Princeton alone-but probably the most important single element were the lawyers. It was Hamilton who pointed out the significance of this, both at the time and later in the *Federalist* (number 35), in one of his newspaper essays. All the Constitution-makers distinguished between private interests and an autonomous public interest, representing republican ideals-the *res publica* itself. Washington, who presided over the Convention, but who wisely confined his activity to insuring order and decorum, stuck to his view that most men were guided by their own private interests: to expect ordinary people, he said, to be 'influenced by any other principles but those of interest, is to look for what never did and I fear never will happen ... The few, therefore, who act upon Principles of Disinterestedness are, comparatively speaking, no more than a drop in the ocean.' That was true, agreed Hamilton; nonetheless, there was a class of people in society who, as a 'learned profession,' were disinterested-the lawyers. Unlike farmers, planters, and merchants, they had no vested economic interest to advance and therefore formed a natural ruling elite and ought to form the bedrock of public life. Madison complemented this argument by asserting (a point he also repeated in the *Federalist* (number 10) that, whereas the states represented local interests, the federal government and Congress represented the national or public interest, and would mediate between them. Hence, concluded Hamilton, it would be natural and right for state legislatures to be dominated by planters, merchants, and other interest-groups but for the Congress to be dominated by the lawyers. Though America's ruling elite, insofar as it still existed in the 1780s, intended for the new Constitution to provide rule by gentlemen, what it did in fact produce was rule by lawyers-a nomocracy.

There was a fair spectrum of opinion in the Convention. There were extreme federalists, who wanted a centralized power almost on the lines of a European state like Britain-Gouverneur Morris of New York, James Wilson of Pennsylvania, Rufus King of Massachusetts, and Charles Pinckney of South Carolina. On the other hand, there were some states' rights extremists like Luther Martin of Maryland. The existence of these two opposing groups had the effect of making Hamilton (the pro-federalist) and Madison (who was closer to Jefferson) seem moderates, and therefore to strengthen their influence. But the atmosphere of the Convention was positive, constructive, and reasonable at all times. Even those who formed, as it were, the opposition-such as Elbridge Gerry, who refused to sign the Constitution, and Edmund Ralldolph, who likewise declined to sign though, unlike Gerry, he supported ratification-were helpful rather than obstructive. These were serious, sensible, undoctinaire men, gathered together in a pragmatic spirit to do something practical, and looking back on a thousand years of political traditions, inherited from England, which had always stressed compromise and give-and-take.

The Convention moved swiftly because these practical men were aware of the need to get the federal power right as quickly as possible. The previous autumn, a dangerous revolt of debt-ridden farmers, many of whom had fought in the Continental Army and were well provided with crude weapons, had developed in rural Massachusetts. Under the leadership of Daniel Shays (1747-1825), a bankrupt farmer and former army captain, they had gathered at Springfield in September and forced the state Supreme Court to adjourn in terror. In January Shays led 1,200 men towards the Springfield arsenal to exchange their pitchforks for muskets and seize cannon. They were scattered, though many of them were still being hunted in February 1787, shortly before the Convention met. The net effect of Shays' Rebellion was to force the Massachusetts legislature to drop direct taxation, lower court fees, and make other fiscal concessions to the mob. But it also reminded everyone attending in Philadelphia that the Confederation, as it stood,



was powerless to protect itself, or any of the states, from large-scale domestic violence, and that this absence of a central power was itself a limitation on state sovereignty, as the humiliating climb-down of the Massachusetts legislature demonstrated. The pressure, then, was on to get a federal constitution written-and adopted.

Hence the Convention set to with a will. An analysis of the voting shows that the mechanics of compromise operated throughout-in 560 roll-calls, no state was always on the losing side, and each at times was part of the winning coalition. Broadly speaking, the Virginia Plan was adopted, and in this sense Madison can be called the author of the United States Constitution. A rather weaker version, from New Jersey, was rejected. On the other hand, the federalists, led by Hamilton, could make no real progress with their proposal for a strong central government on European lines. Amid many compromises, there were three of particular importance. In early July, the so-called Connecticut Compromise was adopted on the legislature. This gave the House of Representatives, directly elected by popular votes in the localities, the control of money Bills, and a senate, particularly charged with foreign policy and other matters, to represent the states, with two senators for each state, chosen by the individual legislatures.

In August the Convention turned its attention to the knotty problem of slavery, which produced the second major compromise. The debating was complex, not to say convoluted, since the biggest slave-holder attending, George Mason, attacked the institution and especially the slave-trade. Article 1, section 9, grants Congress the power to regulate or ban the slave-trade as of January 11, 1808. On slavery itself the Northerners were prepared to compromise because they knew they had no alternative. Indeed, as one historian of slavery has put it, 'It would have been impossible to establish a national government in the 18th century [in America] without recognising slavery in some way.' The convention did this in three respects. First, it omitted any condemnation of slavery. Second, it adopted Madison's three-fifths rule, which gave the slave states the added power of counting the slaves as voters, on the basis that each slave counted as three-fifths of a freeman, while of course refusing them the vote as such-a masterly piece of humbug in itself. Third, the words 'slave' and 'slavery' were deliberately avoided in the text. As Madison himself said (on August 25), it would be wrong 'to admit in the Constitution the idea that there could be property in men.'

The third compromise, in early September, was perhaps the most important of all in the long run, dealing as it did with the election of the president. Although federalists like Hamilton lost the general battle about the nature of the state, which remained decentralized rather than concentrated, they won a significant victory over the presidency. Hamilton won this by tactical skill, compromising on the election procedure-if no candidate got a majority of the popular vote, the House elected one from among the top three, voting by states, not as individuals. Each state was further given the right to decide how to choose its electoral college. This appeared to be a gesture to the states, balancing the fact that the president was directly elected by the people. But it left open the possibility of popular participation. Thus in practice the president was elected independently of the legislature. Moreover he was given a veto (offset by a two-thirds overriding rule) over Congressional legislation, and very wide executive powers (offset to a limited degree by the requirement that the Senate should 'advise and consent').

Almost by accident, then, America got a very strong presidency-or, rather, an office which any particular president could make strong if he chose. He was much stronger than most kings of the day, rivaled or exceeded only by the 'Great Autocrat,' the Tsar of Russia (and in practice stronger than most tsars). He was, and is, the only official elected by the nation as a whole and this fact gave him the moral legitimacy to exercise the huge powers buried in the constitutional thickets.

These powers were not explored until Andrew Jackson's time, half a century on, when they astonished and frightened many people; and it is perhaps fortunate that the self-restraint and common sense of George Washington prevented any display of them in the 1790s, when they would certainly have led to protest and constitutional amendment. As it was, the new republic got a combined head of state and head of government entrusted with formidable potential authority.

Although the Convention worked with some speed, which was necessary, and desirable for its own sake-too long debates on constitutions lead to niggling and confusion of issues-it worked deliberately. The making of the United States Constitution ought to be a model to all states seeking to set up a federal system, or changing their form of government, or beginning nationhood from nothing. Alas, in the 200 and more years since the US Constitution was drawn up, the text itself has been studied (often superficially) but the all-important manner in which the thing was done has been neglected. The French Revolutionaries in the next decade paid little attention to how the Americans set about constitution-making-what had this semi-barbarous people to teach Old Europe? was the attitude-and thirty years later the Latin Americans were in too much of a hurry to set up their new states to learn from the history of their own hemisphere. So it has gone on. The federal constitutions of the Soviet Union (1921) and of Yugoslavia (1919) were enacted virtually without reference to the American experience, and both eventually provided disastrous and bloody failures. It was the same with the Central African Federation, the Federation of Malaysia, and the West Indies Federation, all of which had to be abandoned. The federal structure of the European Union is likewise being set up with no attempt to scrutinize and digest the highly successful American precedent, and attempts to persuade the European constitution-makers to look at the events of the 1780s are contemptuously dismissed.

Just as important as the process for drawing up the Constitution was the process of ratifying it. In some ways it was more important because it went further to introduce and habituate the country to the democratic principle. Article VII of the Constitution provided for the way it was to be adopted, and resolutions passed by the Convention on September 17, 1787 set out a four-stage process of ratification. The first was the submission of the document to the Congress of the old Confederation. This was done on September 25, and, after three days of passionate debate, federalists (who supported ratification) and anti-federalists (who wanted it rejected) agreed to send the Constitution to the individual states, the second stage, without endorsing or condemning it. The third stage was the election of delegates in each state to consider the Constitution, and the fourth was ratification by these conventions of at least nine of the Thirteen States. When the ninth state signified its acceptance, the Constitution then became the basic law of the Union, irrespective of what other states did.

This introduction of the rule of majority, as opposed to unanimity, itself signified the determination of the federalists to create a forceful and robust government. Majority rule made fast action possible. It reflected the desire that the ratification process proceed briskly, and the hope that quick ratification by key states early in the day would stampede the rest into acquiescence. It was a high-risk strategy, obviously. If any of the four biggest states, Virginia, Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania, let alone all of them, rejected the Constitution, ratification by all the rest would be meaningless. But the federalists thought they could be pretty sure of the Big Four. Again, the Constitution took an even bigger risk in insisting ratification had to be by popular, specially elected conventions rather than by state legislatures. This was to introduce the people-democracy indeed-with a vengeance. But it was felt that approval by state legislators was not enough. Here was a fundamental law, affecting everyone in the nation and

their children and grandchildren and generations to come. The people ought to participate, as a nation, in deciding whether to endorse it, and the ratification process itself would encourage them to look beyond the borders of their own states and consider the national interest as well as their own. This was a wise decision, again with momentous consequences, because once the people had thus been invited onto the political stage, and asked their opinion, they could never be pushed into the wings again.

Ratification by convention also had the effect of inviting a grand public debate on the issue, and in a way this was the most significant aspect of the whole process. If Jefferson, Madison, and Adams were right in believing that education, virtue, and good government went together, then there was a positive merit in getting not just state legislatures but the people themselves to debate the Constitution. The wider the discussions, the more participants, the better-for public political debate was a form of education in itself, and a vital one. If, in the 1760s and early 1770s, the Americans, or their representatives, had been allowed to debate with the British, or their representatives, on the proper relationship between the two peoples, the Revolution might have been avoided. Words are an alternative to weapons, and a better one. But a debate was refused, and the issue was put to the arbitrament of force. The Americans had learned this lesson (as indeed had the British by now) and were determined to give words their full play. In the next decade the French were to ignore the lesson, at the cost of countless lives and ideological bitterness which reverberates to this day.

So that ratification process was a war of words. And what words! It was the grandest public debate in history up to that point. It took place in the public square, at town meetings, in the streets of little towns and big cities, in the remote countryside of the Appalachian hills and the backwoods and backwaters. Above all it took place in print. America got its first daily newspaper in 1783 with the appearance of the Philadelphia *Evening Post*, and dailies (often ephemeral) and weeklies were now proliferating. Printing and paper, being completely untaxed, were cheap. It cost little to produce a pamphlet and the stages carried packets of it up and down the coast. Americans were already developing the device (eventually to be called the syndicated column) of getting articles by able and prominent writers, usually employing pseudonyms like 'Cato ' 'Cicero ' 'Brutus ' 'Publius ' 'A Farmer,' 'A Citizen of New York,' and 'Landholder,' circulated to all newspaper editors, to use as they pleased. So literally thousands of printed comments on the issues were circulated, and read individually or out loud to groups of electors, and then discussed and replied to. It was the biggest exercise in political education ever conducted. An important issue was felt to be at stake, which went beyond the bounds of the Constitution as such. As Hamilton, writing as 'Publius,' put it, the process was to determine 'whether societies of men are really capable or not, of establishing good government by reflection and choice, or whether they are forever destined to depend, for their political constitutions, on accident and force.'

The federalists were led by Alexander Hamilton, the most active of all, James Madison, who came second, John Jay, John Marshall, James Wilson, John Dickinson, and Roger Sherman. They had the initial advantage that George Washington was known to favor ratification, and his name carried weight everywhere. Franklin was also a declared supporter, and he counted for a lot in Philadelphia, the biggest city. Hamilton, Madison, and Jay produced jointly the *Federalist*, a series of eighty-five newspaper essays, much reproduced and printed in book form in 1788. Hamilton was the principal author and collectively they represent the first major work of political theory ever produced in America, discussing with great clarity and force such fundamental questions of government as the distribution of authority between the center and the periphery,

between government and people, and the degree to which the constituent elements of government, executive, legislature, and judiciary, ought to be separate. It is the one product of the great debate which is still widely read. How widely it was read, and understood, at the time is debatable. It certainly served as a handbook for speakers on the federalist side before and during the ratification conventions. In that sense it was very important.

The most popular publication on the federalist side was John Jay's *Address to the People of the State of New York*, which was reprinted many times, and another bestseller, as a pamphlet, was the major speech made by James Wilson on November 24, 1787 to the Pennsylvania convention. It was Wilson who put the stress on election and representation as the core of the constitution. That, he argued, was what distinguished this new form from the ancient orders of Athens and Rome and the curious mixture of voting and inherited right which made up the British Constitution. 'The world,' he wrote, 'has left to America the glory and happiness of forming a government where representation shall at once supply the basis and the cement of the superstructure. For representation, Sir, is the true chain between the people and those to whom they entrust the administration of the government.' After Madison, Wilson's was the most important hand in shaping the Constitution, and after Hamilton's his was the most important voice in getting it accepted.

The anti-federalists, such as Patrick Henry, Richard Henry Lee, George Mason, John Hancock, James Monroe, Elbridge Gerry, George Clinton, Willie Jones, Melancton Smith, and Sam Adams, were formidable individually but lacked the cohesive force of the federalists. Their objections varied and they appeared unable to agree on an alternative to what they rejected. The *Letters of Brutus*, probably written by Robert Yates, Otis Warren's *Observations on the New Constitution*, the anonymous *Letters from the Federal Farmer to the Republican* and Luther Martin's *General Observation* contradict each other and leave a negative impression. One pamphleteer, signing himself 'A Republican Federalist,' equated the proposed Congress with the British: 'The revolution which separated the United States from Great Britain was not more important to the liberties of America, than that which will result from the adoption of a new system. The *former* freed us from a *foreign subjugation*, and there is too much reason to apprehend that the *latter* will reduce us to a *federal domination*.' This fear of Big Government was allied to a widespread conviction, which the anti-federalists articulated, that the new federal congress and government would quickly fall into the hands of special interests and groups who would oppress the people. Hamilton's notion of lawyers as a disinterested class formed by nature to run the center did not impress. As Amos Singeltary of Massachusetts put it, 'These lawyers, and men of learning, and monied men, that talk so finely, and gloss over matters so smoothly, to make us poor illiterate people swallow down the pills, expect to get into Congress themselves: they expect to be the managers of this Constitution, and get all the power and the money into their own hands, and then they will swallow up all us little folks, like the great Leviathan.'

But the alternative some anti-federalists proposed, of Small Government on the lines of the Swiss cantons, did not go down well. After all, America had experienced small government already, during the war and since, and most people knew it had not worked well-would not have worked at all without Washington. The problem, during the war and since, had not been too much government but too little. That was a very general view, in all states; and fear of Big Government was further mitigated by a general assumption that, once the new Constitution was in force, Washington would again be summoned to duty and would prevent its power from being abused just as once he had made good its lack of powers. Where the anti-federalists struck home was in stressing that the new Constitution said little or nothing about rights, especially of the

individual. But the federalists admitted this defect, and they agreed that, once the Constitution was ratified, the first thing was to draw up and pass a Bill of Rights which (as a constitutional amendment) would require the consent of three-quarters of the states and would thus be sure to satisfy the vast majority.

With this qualification in mind, the ratification procedure began. The first five ratifications took place December 1787-January 1788: Delaware (unanimous), Pennsylvania (46-23), New Jersey and Georgia (unanimous), and Connecticut (128-40). In Massachusetts, the two leading anti-federalists, Sam Adams and John Hancock, negotiated a rider to ratification under which the state agreed to accept the Constitution on condition it was amended with a Bill of Rights. This went through in February 1788 (187-168). All the other states adopted this device, and insured the acceptance of the Constitution, though making it imperative that the rights provisions be adopted quickly. Maryland ratified in April (63-11), South Carolina in May (149-73), New Hampshire (57-47) and Virginia (89-79) in June, and New York in July (30-27). That made eleven states and insured the Constitution's adoption. North Carolina's ratification convention adjourned in August 1788 without voting, and Rhode Island refused to call a convention at all. But the virtual certainty that amendments would be introduced guaranteeing rights persuaded both states to change their minds: North Carolina ratified November 1789 (195-77) and Rhode Island May 1790 (34-32).

Thus, in the end, the ratification by states was unanimous, and the Constitution was law. Benjamin Franklin, who had attended every session of the Constitutional Convention and who had actually fathered the idea that the House should represent the people and the Senate the states, hailed the adoption of the Constitution with a memorable remark: 'Our Constitution is an actual operation,' he wrote to a friend in Europe, 'and everything appears to promise that it will last: but in this world nothing can be said to be certain but death and taxes.'

Congress now had to enact rights. Some states had already done so, so there were precedents. The federalists who wrote the Constitution were chary on the subject. Individual rights were presumed to exist in nature-that was the basis on which the Declaration of Independence had been drawn up-and a formal, legal statement of them might imply the extension of government into spheres in which it did not and should not operate. 'The truth is,' Hamilton wrote in the *Federalist*, 'the Constitution is itself, in every rational sense, and to every useful purpose, a bill of rights.' That was a shrewd point and it may be that enacting individual rights formally has proved, especially in the 20th century, a greater source of discord than of reassurance. But Hamilton and the others went along with the general feeling, very strong in some states and especially in the backwoods and country districts, that rights must be enumerated and spelt out.

Hence Madison, who had originally opposed what he called 'parchment barriers' against the tyranny of interests or of the majority, relying instead upon structural arrangements such as the separation of powers and checks and balances, now set about the difficult task of examining all the amendments insisting on rights put forward at the ratifying conventions, and various bills of rights enshrined in state constitutions, and coming up with a synthesis. He also had a complete model in the shape of the Virginia Declaration of Rights (1776), written by the anti-federalist George Mason. Early in the first session of the new Congress in 1789, Madison produced drafts of ten amendments. The first amendment, the most important, prohibits legislative action in certain areas, giving citizens freedom of religion, assembly, speech, and press, and the right to petition. The next seven secure the rights of property, and guarantee the rights of defendants accused of crimes. The ninth protects rights not specifically enumerated. The tenth, reinforcing

this, insists that 'the powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people.' The ratification proceeded smoothly and on December 15, 1791, when Virginia ratified, the Bill of Rights became part of the Constitution.

Two more matters remained to be determined. Should representatives be paid? They never had been in England, except sometimes by localities. The states varied. Franklin, who was rich, argued before the convention of 1787 that no salaries be paid-in his self-made-man way he thought the right to represent should be earned and paid for by the ambitious individual. But he was turned down. Even the Pennsylvania Assembly paid 'compensation' for loss of earnings. There was no issue on which the Founding Fathers were more divided. Many 'gentlemen,' such as lawyers, found they could not hold office and make a living, so they demanded salaries, and then complained they were too low. Hamilton, though rich, spoke for them. John Adams had a high view of the dignity of public officials. When he was first sent to England as minister he refused to take a hand with the ship's pumps, like everyone else, 'arguing it was not befitting a person who had public status.' This claim, so un-American (one might think), makes one suppose that Adams would be against salaries. But he was not. He thought it was perks and privileges which produced evil in public men. Without salaries, he said, public office would become the monopoly of the rich. He thought it disgraceful that Washington had been allowed to serve as commander-in-chief without being paid. Jefferson shared Washington's view, adhering to what he called the 'Roman principle.' 'In a virtuous government,' he said, 'public offices are what they should be, burthens to those appointed to them, which it would be wrong to decline, though foreseen to bring with them intense labor, and great private loss.'" In general, the Southerners were against salaries, the Northerners in favor. The North won, and it was decided even senators should be paid. The amount was left to Congress, which fixed on \$6 a day. It seemed high to critics, but then the first Congress met in New York City, where the cost of living was 'outrageous.' In any event congressmen were soon grumbling it was too little, as were senators, who thought they should be paid more than mere members of the House.

What nobody seems to have bothered much about was the cost of electioneering. This could be enormous in 18th-century England, up to £100,000 for a single contest, sometimes even more. Nor was it just an English problem. When George Washington was first elected a Virginia burgess in 1758, it cost him £40 for 47 gallons of beer, 35 gallons of wine, 2 gallons of cider, half a pint of brandy, and 3 barrels of rum-punch. These electioneering costs were going up in both countries all the time and in England parliament was slowly coming to grips with the problem and disqualifying MPs for bribing electors with drink and money. It is curious, and disappointing, that the gentleman-politicians who created the United States did not tackle the problem of election-costs right at the start, and thus save their successors a great deal of trouble-and cash.

By agreeing to let each state send two senators to Congress, the Founding Fathers built states' rights into the representational process. The House, on the other hand, was to represent the people, and it was agreed that each state was to have at least one Congressman and not to exceed one for every 30,000 persons (excluding Indians not paying taxes and allowing for the three-fifths rule for slaves). A census was to take place every ten years to determine the numbers and thus the total and distribution of congressmen. In 1787, for the first Congress, there were sixty-five congressmen, Rhode Island and Delaware getting one each, Georgia and New Hampshire three each, New Jersey four, Connecticut and North and South Carolina five each, New York and Maryland six, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania eight each, and Virginia ten. But America was

changing and expanding so fast that this allocation was out of date within a year or two. For one thing, more territories were clamoring to get statehood. Vermont had been declared independent in 1777 by delegates from areas originally called New Connecticut and it pinched bits of New Hampshire and New York, neither of which was ready to yield them. Settlers who wanted to get a valid title for their lands did not know which state to apply to. Vermont was virtually neutral during the Revolutionary War, though Britain withdrew any claim to its territory, and it considered signing a separate treaty with Britain and claiming a Swiss-style neutral status. It remained aloof until New Hampshire (1782) and New York (1790) withdrew their land claims. Then it applied to and joined the Union in 1791. So when the Congressional structure was reordered in 1793, as a result of the 1790 census, Vermont was given two seats.

There was a long and acrimonious row over the Virginia backcountry-'that dark and bloody land' as it was (perhaps unfairly) called-eventually resolved when Virginia withdrew its claims and the new state of Kentucky was admitted in 1792 and given two seats. The Pennsylvania back-country, organized as the independent state of Franklin, and regarded by North Carolina as a rebellious, landgrabbing illegality, collapsed in 1788, and had to be reorganized by Congress as the Southwest Territory in 1790. Settlers poured in and it soon passed the 60,000 mark and was admitted as the state of Tennessee, though not till 1796. Hence, in the 1793 reconstruction, fifteen states were represented in Congress and the number of House seats was raised to 105, Virginia now getting nineteen, Massachusetts fourteen, Pennsylvania thirteen, and New York ten. The 1790 census revealed that the population of the United States was increasing even faster than optimists like Franklin guessed-it was now 3,929,827. Ten years later, at the end of the century, the census shows a jump to 5,308,483, which was a 35 percent growth in a decade, and double the 1775 estimate.

This rapid growth gratified many but alarmed some, including the elite. Franklin, who worried himself about the dangers of over-population a generation before Malthus systematized them, did not object to settlers of English descent breeding fast but was disturbed by the prospect of the Englishness of America being watered down by new, non-English, and non-white arrivals. It was one reason he objected to the slave-trade and slavery itself: 'Why increase the sons of Africa by planting them in America,' he asked, 'where we have so fair an opportunity, by excluding all blacks and tawnys, of increasing the lovely white and red?' His mind reaching forward as always, he feared a future world in which the white races, and especially the English, would be swamped:

The number of purely white people in the world is proportionately very small. All Africa is black or tawny; Asia chiefly tawny; America (exclusive of the newcomers) wholly so. And in Europe the Spaniards, Italians, French, Russians and Swedes [sic] are generally of what we call a swarthy complexion; as are the Germans also, the Saxons only excepted, who with the English make the principal body of white people on the face of the earth. I would wish their numbers were increased ... But perhaps I am partial to the complexion of my country, for such kind of partiality is natural to mankind.

He was not at all happy about the number of Germans coming to America, especially to Pennsylvania, where they tended to vote en bloc, the first instance of ethnicity in politics. 'Why should the Palatine boor be suffered to swarm into our settlements and, by herding together, establish their language and manners to the exclusion of ours? Why should Pennsylvania, founded by the English, become a colony of aliens, who will shortly be so numerous as to Germanise us, instead of us Anglicising them?' He wanted language qualifications 'for any Post of trust, profit or honor.' He also considered monetary rewards to encourage Englishmen to

marry the German women, but dismissed the idea for 'German women are generally so disagreeable to an English eye that it would require great portions to induce Englishmen to marry them.' These views were by no means unusual among the founders. Neither Washington nor Jefferson wanted unlimited or even large-scale immigration.

Defining what constituted an American citizen was not easy. As early as 1776, New Hampshire and South Carolina, writing their new constitutions, laid down that all state officers must swear an oath 'to support, maintain and defend' the provisional constitution. Six months later, Congress, in adopting independence, replaced loyalty to the crown by loyalty to the nation: 'All persons residing within any of the United Colonies, and deriving their protection from the laws of the same, owe allegiance to the said laws, and are members of such colony ... [and] all persons, members of or owing allegiance to any of the United Colonies ... who shall level war against any of the said colonies ... or be adherents to the King of Great Britain ... are guilty of treason against any such colony.'

This did not settle what citizenship was, however. Indeed the term was then new and little understood. The assumption was that everyone belonged to his or her particular state and thence derived their citizenship of the United States, a view later categorized by justice Joseph Story (1779-1845) of the Supreme Court, who laid down that 'Every citizen of a State is *ipso facto* a citizen of the United States.' Most states had citizenship rules of one kind or another. But what of immigrants coming to the country from outside? The federal Constitution of 1787 laid down a national standard of naturalization by Act of Congress. Several Acts were passed, in 1795, 1798, and again in 1802, before Congress felt it had got the formula right, the main difference being the length of residence required before the applicant got nationality-the first criterion, two years, was considered too short, the next, fourteen, too long, and finally five years was judged right. The federal Constitution, and the states, reserved citizenship to whites, implicitly excluding blacks (even if free) and still-tribalized Indians, regarded as belonging to foreign nations. White women were citizens except for voting purposes, a rule which was not changed till 1920. Blacks did not get automatic citizenship till 1868, Indians not till 1924. But the most important point was that the new country, like the old colonies, continued to admit immigrants virtually without restriction, and they continued to come, in ever growing numbers.

After five years, most immigrants got the vote, for, as a result of the Revolution, America was rapidly becoming democratic. The Founding Fathers might insist on checks and balances and take precautions against 'the tyranny of the majority,' but though constitutions are made by educated elites, what actually happens on the ground is usually determined by ordinary people. Their demands, as citizens and taxpayers, turned on its head the Revolution slogan 'No taxation without representation.' If the King of England was not allowed to tax Americans without giving them representation, why should states tax any American citizen without giving him a vote about how his taxes were raised and spent? Most states readily agreed. In New York State the federalists, who generally opposed what one of their leaders, Chancellor James Kent, called 'the evil genius of democracy,' fought a determined rearguard action to retain a freehold property qualification, at any rate for the electors of the state Senate. Kent argued that, while everyone else was worshipping 'the idol of universal suffrage,' New York should set an example and maintain property as qualification because it was 'a sort of moral and independent test of character in the electorate, which we could get at in no other practicable mode,' and only voters of sound character could defend society against 'the onrushing rabble.' But he was answered that making distinctions between one set of Americans and another, especially one based on ownership of land, was 'an odious remnant of aristocracy,' a system of 'privilege,' running



directly contrary to the principle that in a true republic 'there is but one estate-the people.' Kent was thus driven to fall back on the argument that property qualifications were needed to protect 'the farmers.' But that made farmers into a mere interest, and why should farming, as an interest, get more protection than any other? Manning the barriers against democracy was a losing cause as early as the 1780s and by 1800 was a lost one. By 1790 five states permitted all males (in some of them only white males) the vote for some or all offices, provided they paid tax. These states, and others, increasingly recognized residency, rather than land-ownership, as the qualification for 'attachment' to the state, and most set the period as two years (some, one).

It struck Europeans as amazing that, after arriving, penniless, from a country where they could never have a vote at all, even if their ancestors had lived there a thousand years, and however rich they grew, they could get off a ship in New York, cross the Hudson to New Jersey, and exercise a vote the following year-in five they would be voting for the president. New Jersey was particularly free and easy. From 1776 it had given the vote to all 'worth' 50 pounds after a year's residence and election officials even permitted women to vote if they thus qualified (until 1809). The wartime inflation made the old property qualification pretty meaningless anyway, and states like North Carolina and New Hampshire, with poll-taxes and taxpayer qualifications, adopted near-universal male suffrage as a matter of course. By 1783 the eligible electorate in the states ran from 60 to 90 percent, with most states edging towards the 100 percent mark. New states, like Kentucky, automatically embraced universal white male adult suffrage when they were admitted, if not before. But while states rapidly enfranchised white males, they usually disenfranchised free blacks at the same time. Rhode Island, true to its tradition of being odd man out, alone resisted the democratic flood. Its qualification of a \$134 freehold-the dollar had been fixed by law in 1792-was enforced increasingly fiercely and half the male citizens were disenfranchised.

A remarkable letter has survived which gives an indication of how the arrival of democracy was seen by one highly intelligent American. It was written in 1806 to the Italian nationalist Philip Mazzei by Benjamin Latrobe, an Englishman who had settled in Philadelphia ten years before and had become America's first professional architect. He wrote:

After the adoption of the federal constitution, the extension of the right of Suffrage in all the states to the majority of all the adult male citizens ... has spread actual and practical democracy and political equality over the whole union ... The want of learning and science in the majority is one of those things which strike foreigners who visit us very forcibly. Our representatives to all our Legislative bodies, National as well as of the States, are elected by the majority *unlearned*. For instance from Philadelphia and its environs we sent to Congress not one man of letters. One of them indeed is a lawyer but of no eminence, another a good Mathematician but, when elected, he was a Clerk in a bank. The others are plain farmers. From the next county is sent a Blacksmith, and from just over the river a Butcher. Our state legislature does not contain one individual of superior talents. The fact is, that superior talents actually excite distrust.

But Latrobe was not discouraged. America was about 'getting on,' and he was getting on very well. He admitted that 'to a cultivated mind, to a man of letters, to a lover of the arts [America might] present a very unpleasant picture.' But 'the solid and general advantages are undeniable.' 'There is no doubt whatsoever,' he concluded, 'that [democracy] produces the greatest sum of human happiness that perhaps any nation ever enjoyed.'

Since the arrival of democracy made the 'tyranny of the majority,' feared by Jefferson, Madison, and others, a real threat, who was to protect minorities-or indeed the ordinary citizen

confronted by the federal Leviathan? The Bill of Rights went some way. But that depended for its efficacy on enforcement by the courts. Considering the importance the Founding Fathers attached to the separation of powers, and their insistence that the judiciary, along with the executive and legislature, was one of the tripods on which government must rest, the Convention paid little attention to it. Indeed, perhaps the most important provision in the Constitution dealing with the judiciary came about by accident, and is a classic example of Karl Popper's Law of Unintended Effect. Luther Martin, the great states' rights champion, proposed that instead of a federal veto on state laws, federal laws and treaties should be 'the supreme law of the individual states,' whose courts 'bound thereby in their decisions, anything in the respective laws of the individual states to the contrary notwithstanding.' This obscure formulation was accepted unanimously and would have made state courts the authority, in each state, on questions of federal law. This would have been a decisive victory for the states, and altered the whole course of American history. But in subsequent wrangling over the judiciary, especially the provisions for inferior federal courts, the proposal was amended to make state constitutions, as well as law, subordinate to the federal Constitution and the laws and treaties enacted by Congress. This made all the difference in the world, though its importance does not seem to have been grasped at the time.

Indeed the Constitution really left the detailed provision for a judiciary to the first Congress, which in 1789 enacted the judiciary Act. This law, written mainly by Oliver Ellsworth (1745-1807), the agile Connecticut lawyer who had earlier put together the 'Connecticut Compromise,' is a remarkable piece of work because it has remained virtually unchanged for over two centuries. It created a bottom tier of federal district courts, usually matching state lines, and a middle level of three circuit courts, composed of two Supreme Court justices plus a district judge, who traveled to hear cases twice a year. They heard appeals from district courts and gave a first hearing to cases involving different states-a system which endured until 1891. The Act also formally set up the Supreme Court, as envisaged in the Constitution, with one chief and five associate justices, nominated by the president and confirmed by the Senate. (It had changed size repeatedly, being reduced from six to five in 1801, increased to seven in 1807, to nine in 1833, to ten in 1863, reduced to eight in 1866 and increased to nine in 1869, but otherwise functioning in the same manner.) But Ellsworth's Act, probably inadvertently, gave the Supreme Court an additional right of great importance, the executive power of ordering federal officials to carry out their legal responsibilities.

These aspects of the judiciary's role, however, were little pondered at the time. It is a serious criticism of the Founding Fathers that they devoted insufficient attention to the role judges might play in interpreting a written constitution, and took no steps either to encourage or to inhibit judicial review. The truth is, they were brought up in the English tradition of the common law, which the judges were constantly modifying as a matter of course, to solve new problems as they arose. They did not appreciate that, with a written constitution, which had never existed in England, judge-made law assumed far greater significance, with almost limitless possibilities of expansion, and should have been dealt with in the Constitution. As it was, and is, the American federal judiciary have always been, in a sense, a law unto themselves, evolving organically as, in their wisdom, they saw fit. The process began shortly after the Constitution came into effect. In England, law and politics had always been closely enmeshed, and America had followed that pattern. Until the second half of the 16th century, English governments had always been presided over by the Lord Chancellor, the head of the law, and only gradually had the judiciary and the government bifurcated, and even then incompletely, with the Lord Chancellor continuing to sit in

the Cabinet, as he still does. The Founding Fathers decided on a complete and formal separation of powers but they did not follow the logic of this course and insist on separating, at a personal level, judicial sheep from political goats. Thus the early chief justices tended to be professional lawyer-politicians, who saw running the court as merely a step on a public ladder which might lead to higher things rather than as the culmination of a legal career placing the occupant high above all political temptations.

The first Chief Justice, John Jay, was primarily a politician, who resigned in 1795 to run for the governorship of New York. The second, John Rutledge (1739-1800), resigned before he could even be confirmed by the Senate, in order to take up what was then regarded as a higher post on the South Carolina Supreme Court. The third, Oliver Ellsworth himself, served 1796-1800 but then resigned to take up a diplomatic post in Paris. One of the Supreme Court justices, Samuel Chase, engaged openly in politics while sitting on the bench. This applied lower down too. Of the twenty-eight judges on the federal district courts during the 1790s, only eight had held high judicial office, but all had been prominent politicians. There was, however, a strong desire, first articulated by Alexander Hamilton, that federal judges should stand above the political battle, should be primarily experts, dedicated to interpreting the law as the ultimate protection of the citizen's rights, rather than politicians engaged in the hurly-burly of making it. There was a complementary feeling among the judges themselves that they should be the new priests of the Constitution, treating it as the secular Ark of the Covenant and performing quasi-sacramental functions in its service. That meant a withdrawal from politics, into a kind of public stratosphere. This hieratic notion was gradually gaining ground in the 1790s, displacing the more robust view of the Revolutionary democrats that, in a republic, any citizen was fit to discharge any public duty, if voted into it. The federal judges, it began to be mooted, were 'special,' remote, godlike defenders of the public interest and the private rights of all, who sat in the empyreum. But for this to become generally accepted doctrine, confirmed by events, we have to await the arrival of Chief Justice John Marshall in 1801. We will deal with that shortly.

In the meantime, what of the real priesthood, the real religion of the people? We have said nothing, so far, about the part played by the churches, or by Christianity, as such, in the constitution-making. As we have seen, America had been founded primarily for religious purposes, and the Great Awakening had been the original dynamic of the continental movement for independence. The Americans were overwhelmingly church-going, much more so than the English, whose rule they rejected. The Pilgrim Fathers had come to America precisely because England had become immoral and irreligious. They had built the 'City on the Hill.' Again, their descendants had opted for independence and liberty because they felt their subjugation was itself immoral and irreligious and opposed to the Providential Plan. There is no question that the Declaration of Independence was, to those who signed it, a religious as well as a secular act, and that the Revolutionary War had the approbation of divine providence. They had won it with God's blessing and, afterwards, they drew up their framework of government with God's blessing, just as in the 17th century the colonists had drawn up their Compacts and Charters and Orders and Instruments, with God peering over their shoulders. How came it, then, that the Constitution of the United States, unlike these early documents in American history, lacks a religious framework, as well as a religious content? The only reference to religion in the document is in Article VI, Section 3, which bans any 'religious Test' as a 'Qualification to any Office,' and the only mention of God is in the date at the end-'In the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty seven.' Even the wretched irreligious English had an

established church and a head of state crowned in a sacramental ceremony and a parliament which began its proceedings, each day, with a prayer. The American Constitution's first substantial reference to religion comes only in the First Amendment, which specifically rejects a national church and forbids Congress to make 'any law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.' How do we explain this seeming anomaly?

There is no doubt that if the United States Constitution had been drawn up in 1687 it would have had a religious framework and almost certainly provided for a broad-based Protestantism to be the national religion. And if it had been drawn up in 1887 it would have contained provisions acknowledging the strong spirit of religious belief and practice in America and the need for the state to nurture and underpin it. As it happens, by a historical accident, it was actually drawn up at the high tide of 18th-century secularism, which was as yet unpolluted by the fanatical atheism and the bloody excesses of its culminating storm, the French Revolution. Within a very few years, this tide began to ebb, and the religious spirit to flood back. In France this was marked by Chateaubriand's epoch-making book *Le Genie du Christianisme* (1802), in Britain by the formation of the Clapham Sect in the early 1790s, and, the same decade in the United States, by the start of the Second Great Awakening. But in 1787, the new religious impulses, which were to make the 19th century into one of the great ages of religious activity and commitment, were not yet felt. Thus the actual language of the Constitution reflects the spirit of its time, which was secular.

It also reflects the feelings of some of the most prominent of the Founding Fathers. Washington himself, who presided at the convention, was probably a deist, though he would have strenuously denied accusations of not being a Christian, if anyone had been foolish enough to make them. He rarely used the word 'God,' preferring 'Providence' or 'the Great Ruler of Events.' He was not interested in doctrine. Sometimes he did not trouble himself to go to church on Sunday, rare in those days. He wrote of immigrants, whom he did not much like in general: 'If they are good workmen, they may be of Asia, Africa or Europe. They may be Mohammedans, Jews or Christians of any sect, or they may be atheists.' He regarded religion as a civilizing force, but not essential. Later hagiographers, such as Parson Weems and Bishop William Meade, tried to make out Washington as more religious than he was-Weems relates that he was found praying in a wood near Valley Forge, by Quaker Poots, and Meade has him strongly opposed to swearing, drinking, dancing, theater-going, and hunting-all untrue. In fact Washington's adopted son, Parke Curtis, in his book about his father, has chapters on hunting and on balls and theater-visits. The most notable aspect of Washington's approach to religion was his tolerance-again, unusual for the time.

Franklin was another deist, though much more interested in religion than Washington was. His approach to it reflected America's rising impatience with dogma and its stress on moral behavior. He wrote to his father in 1738: 'I think vital religion has always suffered when orthodoxy is more regarded than virtue; and the scriptures assure me that at the last day we shall be examined not on what we *thought* but on what we *did*; and our recommendation will be that we did good to our fellow creatures.'" In his characteristically American desire to hustle things along, he felt that religious practices simply took up too much time. He particularly disliked long graces before meals-one should be enough for the whole winter, he felt. He took the trouble to abridge the Book of Common Prayer, producing much shorter services-the time saved on Sunday, he argued, could be then spent studying improving books. His *Articles of Belief and Acts of Religion* (1728) contains a form of religious service he invented whose climax is the singing of Milton's 'Hymn to the Creator,' followed by readings from a book 'discursing on and exciting to *Moral Virtue*.'

He summed up his faith six weeks before he died in a letter to Ezra Stiles, saying he followed the precepts of Christ while doubting his divinity, that he believed in a Supreme Being and 'doing Good to his other Children.'

Of the Founding Fathers, the man least affected by religion was Jefferson. Some people indeed classified him not just as a deist but as an atheist. In 1800 the *New England Paladin* wrote that 'Should the infidel Jefferson be elected to the Presidency, the *seal of death* is that moment set on our holy religion, our churches will be prostrated and some infamous prostitute, under the title of the Goddess of Reason, will preside in the Sanctuaries now devoted to the worship of the Most High.' But this was electoral propaganda. Jefferson was no more an atheist than the much maligned Walter Raleigh, whom he resembled in so many other ways too. And, strongly as he sympathized with the French Revolution, at any rate for a time, he deplored its anti-religious excesses. He believed in divine providence and confided to John Adams, in spring 1816: 'I think it is a good world on the whole, and framed on Principles of Benevolence, and more pleasure than pain dealt out to us.' Jefferson and his follower Madison certainly opposed Patrick Henry's attempt to get the Virginia legislature to subsidize the churches, but in the whole of their long and voluminous correspondence, amounting to 2,000 printed pages, it is impossible to point to any passage, by either of them, showing hostility to religion. What they both hated was intolerance and any restriction on religious practice by those who would not admit the legitimacy of diverse beliefs.

Madison, unlike Jefferson, saw an important role for religious feeling in shaping a republican society. He was a pupil of John Witherspoon (1723-94), president of the New Jersey College at Princeton, and author of a subtle and interesting doctrine which equated the religious polarity of vice/virtue with the secular polarity of ethics/politics-politics understood in their Machiavellian sense." Witherspoon seems to have given Madison a lifelong interest in theology. Letters to friends (not Jefferson) are dotted with theological points-he advised one to 'season' his studies 'with a little divinity now and then'-and his papers include notes on the Bible he made in the years 1772-5, when he undertook an extensive study of Scripture. He carried around with him a booklet, *The Necessary Duty for Family Prayer, with Prayers for Their Use*, and he himself conducted household prayers at his home, Montpelier. Deist he may have been, but secularist-no.

The same can be said for the great majority of those who signed the Declaration of Independence, who attended the Constitutional Convention, and who framed the First Amendment. An investigation by the historian W. W. Sweet revealed that, of the last group, eight were Episcopalians, eight Congregationalists, two Roman Catholics, one Methodist, two Quakers, one a member of the Dutch Reformed Church, and only one a deist. Daniel Boorstin discovered that of the Virginians who composed the State Constitutional Convention, over a hundred, only three were not vestrymen. Among the Founding Fathers and First Amendment men were many staunch practicing Christians: Roger Sherman and Oliver Ellsworth of Connecticut, Caleb Strong and Elbridge Gerry of Massachusetts, William Livingston of New Jersey, Abraham Baldwin of Georgia, Richard Bassett of Delaware, Hugh Williamson of North Carolina, Charles Pinckney of South Carolina, John Dickinson and Thomas Mifflin of Pennsylvania, Rufus King of Massachusetts, David Brearley of New Jersey, and William Few of Georgia.

Even the doubting and the unenthusiastic were quite clear that religion was needed in society, especially in a vast, rapidly growing, and boisterous country like America. Washington served for many years as a vestryman in his local Anglican church, believing this to be a pointed gesture of solidarity with an institution he regarded as underpinning a civilized society. Franklin wrote to

Tom Paine, rebuking him for dismissing religion as needless: 'He who spits in the wind spits in his own face ... If men are wicked with religion, what would they be without it?' Both men constantly brought providence into their utterances, especially when talking of America. They may not have thought of Americans as the chosen people, like the Pilgrim Fathers, but they certainly believed that America was under some kind of divine protection. John Adams shared this view. The day the Declaration of Independence was signed, Adams wrote to his Abigail: 'The second day of July 1776 will be the most memorable epoch in the history of America ... it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as a great anniversary festival. It ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance, by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty.' Adams had been deflected from a career in the church by a spasm of rationalism in 1755, but he never changed his opinion that belief in God and the regular practice of religion were needful to the good society: 'One great advantage of the Christian religion,' he wrote, 'is that it brings the great principle of the law of nature and nations, love your neighbour as yourself, and do to others as you would that others should do to you-to the knowledge, belief and veneration of the whole people. Children, servants, women as well as men are all professors in the science of public as well as private morality ... The duties and rights of the citizen are thus taught from early infancy to every creature.' Madison held exactly the same view, and even Jefferson would have endorsed it. All these men believed strongly in education as essential to the creation of a workable republic and who else was to supply the moral education but the churches? The Founding Fathers saw education and religion going hand in hand. That is why they wrote, in the Northwest Ordinance of 1787: 'Religion, morality and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, Schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.'

It is against this background that we should place the opening sentence of the First Amendment, 'Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.' This guarantee has been widely, almost willfully, misunderstood in recent years, and interpreted as meaning that the federal government is forbidden by the Constitution to countenance or subsidize even indirectly the practice of religion. That would have astonished and angered the Founding Fathers. What the guarantee means is that Congress may not set up a state religion on the lines of the Church of England, 'as by law established.' It was an anti-establishment clause. The second half of the guarantee means that Congress may not interfere with the practice of any religion, and it could be argued that recent interpretations of the First Amendment run directly contrary to the plain and obvious meaning of this guarantee, and that for a court to forbid people to hold prayers in public schools is a flagrant breach of the Constitution. In effect, the First Amendment forbade Congress to favor one church, or religious sect, over another. It certainly did not inhibit Congress from identifying itself with the religious impulse as such or from authorizing religious practices where all could agree on their desirability. The House of Representatives passed the First Amendment on September 24, 1789. The next day it passed, by a two-to-one majority, a resolution calling for a day of national prayer and thanksgiving.

It is worth pausing a second to look at the details of this gesture, which may be regarded as the House's opinion of how the First Amendment should be understood. The resolution reads: 'We acknowledge with grateful hearts the many signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peacefully to establish a constitutional government for their safety and happiness.' President Washington was then asked to designate the day of prayer and thanksgiving, thus inaugurating a public holiday, Thanksgiving, which Americans still universally enjoy. He replied: 'It is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of

Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His mercy, to implore His protection and favor ... That great and glorious Being who is the beneficent author of all the good that was, that is, or that ever will be, that we may then unite in rendering unto Him our sincere and humble thanks for His kind care and protection of the people.'

There were, to be sure, powerful non- or even anti-religious forces at work among Americans at this time, as a result of the teachings of Hume, Voltaire, Rousseau, and, above all, Tom Paine. Paine did not see himself as anti-religious, needless to say. He professed his faith in 'One god- and no more.' This was 'the religion of humanity.' The doctrine he formulated in *The Age of Reason* (1794-5) was 'My country is the world and my religion is to do good.'" This work was widely read at the time, in many of the colleges, alongside Jefferson's translation of Volney's skeptical *Ruines ou Meditations sur les revolutions des empires* (1791), and similar works by Elihu Palmer, John Fitch, John Fellows, and Ethan Allen. *The Age of Reason* was even read by some farmers, artisans, and shopkeepers, as well as students. As one Massachusetts lawyer observed, it was 'highly thought of by many who knew neither what the age they lived in, nor reason, was.' With characteristic hyperbole and venom, John Adams wrote of Paine: 'I do not know whether any man in the world has had more influence on its inhabitants or affairs for the last thirty years than Tom Paine. There can be no severer satire on the age. For such a mongrel between pig and puppy, begotten by a wild boar on a bitch wolf, never before in any age of the world was suffered by the poltroonery of mankind, to run through such a career of mischief. Call it then The Age of Paine.'

As it happened, by the time Adams wrote this (1805), Paine's day was done. His 'age' had been the 1780s and the early 1790s. Then the reaction set in. When Paine returned to America in 1802 after his disastrous experiences in Revolutionary France, he noticed the difference. The religious tide was returning fast. People found him an irritating, repetitive figure from the past, a bore. Even Jefferson, once his friend, now president, gave him the brush-off. And Jefferson, as president, gave his final gloss on the First Amendment to a Presbyterian clergyman, who asked him why, unlike Washington and Adams (and later Madison), he did not issue a Thanksgiving proclamation. Religion, said Jefferson, was a matter for the states: 'I consider the government of the United States as interdicted from intermeddling with religious institutions, their doctrines, disciplines, or exercises. This results from the provision that no law shall be made respecting the establishment of religion, or the free exercise thereof, but also from that which reserves to the states the powers not delegated to the United States. Certainly no power over religious discipline has been delegated to the general government. It must thus rest with the states as far as it can be in any human authority.' The wall of separation between church and state, then, if it existed at all, was not between government and the public, but between the federal government and the states. And the states, after the First Amendment, continued to make religious provision when they thought fit, as they always had done.

With the enactment of the Bill of Rights, the process of constitution-making was completed and it now remained to operate it. That had begun on the first Wednesday in January 1789, when presidential electors were chosen in the different states. They met on the first Wednesday in February to elect, and the first Wednesday in March was chosen 'for commencing proceedings under the said Constitution.' New York was the chosen place and that is where the first permanent government of the new nation began. Electors were chosen on the assumption that they would cast their votes for Washington, and that he was prepared to accept the duty. Where contests were staged they were for Congressional seats. The anti-federalists did not oppose

Washington for president, who was elected unanimously. They did consider putting up George Clinton for vice-president, but in the event John Adams was easily elected. Washington was notified of his election in April and immediately set off for New York, though not before confiding to a friend: 'from the moment when the necessity [of accepting the presidency] had become more apparent, and as it were inevitable, I anticipated in a heart filled with distress, the ten thousand embarrassments, perplexities and troubles to which I must again be exposed in the evening of a life already nearly consumed in public cares ... none greater [than those produced] by applications for appointments ... my apprehension has already been too well justified.'

Actually the patriarch protested too much. He was quite prepared to be president and made an excellent one. His disloyal and acerbic vice-president, Adams, might call him Old Muttonhead, but Washington knew very well what he was doing. And the first thing he had to do was to get the national finances in order. That meant appointing Hamilton the first Secretary of the Treasury, and giving him a free hand to get on with the job. The financial mess into which the new nation had got itself as a result of the Revolutionary War and the subsequent failure to create a strong federal executive can be briefly summarized. In 1775 Congress authorized an issue of \$2 million of bills of credit called Continentals to finance the war. By 1779 (December) \$241.6 million of Continentals had been authorized. This was only part of the borrowing, which also included US Loan Certificates, foreign loans, bills of credit issued by the states, and other paper debts. Together they produced the worst inflation in United States history. By 1780 the Continentals were virtually valueless. When the war died down in 1782, Congress sent commissioners round the country to investigate claims against Congress and the army, and revalue them in terms of hard money. This produced a figure of \$27 million. Under the Articles of Confederation Congress had no power to raise revenue. The states did, but were reluctant to come to Congress's aid. So throughout the 1780s interest payments on the debt were met only by issuing more paper. The new Constitution of 1787 of course gave Congress the power to tax, but by the beginning of 1790 the federal government's debt had risen to \$40.7 million domestic and \$13.2 million foreign. The market price of government paper (that is, proof of debt) had fallen to from 15 to 30 cents in the dollar, depending on the relative worthlessness of the paper. This consequence of inflation and improvidence was precisely the kind of disaster which was to hit all the Latin American republics when they came into being in the next generation, and from which some of them have never recovered to this day. Somehow, the United States, which sprang from the stock of England, whose credit rating was the model for all the world, had to pull itself out of the pit of bankruptcy.

That was Hamilton's contribution to the founding of the nation. It was of such importance that it ranks him alongside Washington himself, Franklin, Jefferson, Madison, and Adams as a member of the tiny elite who created the country. All these men derived from John Locke the notion that security of one's property was intimately linked to one's freedom. Inflation, by making federal and state paper money valueless, was a direct assault on property and therefore a threat to liberty. John Adams wrote: 'Property must be secured, or liberty cannot exist.' Hamilton made the same point: 'Adieu to the security of property, adieu to the security of liberty.' Believing this, Hamilton acted quickly. In January 1790 he submitted his 'Report on the Public Credit' to Congress. This was accepted after a lot of debate and one curious by-product of the negotiations was that the government accepted the proposal of Jefferson and his followers that the new national capital should be on the banks of the Potomac, in return for their support of Hamilton's proposals. Hamilton solved the problem of the Continentals, now valueless, by giving one dollar for every hundred, the embittered people who held them counting themselves lucky to



get anything at all. The rest of the domestic debt, and the whole of the foreign debt, was fully funded, being rescheduled as long-term securities payable in gold.

Hamilton also had the federal government, as part of his scheme, shoulder the burden of the debts of the states, on the same terms. This was denounced as unfair, because some states had already paid their debts, and the less provident ones seemed to profit from their tardiness. But that could not be helped; the all-important object was to get rid of the burden of debt once and for all and start afresh with sound credit. That was also Hamilton's reply to those who said the scheme was expensive. So it was-but not in the long run. The United States was already a rich country. It was probably already, in per-capita terms, the richest country in the world, even though Britain was emerging as the world's first great industrial power. Being rich, it could afford to pay to restore its creditworthiness, which meant that in future America could borrow cheaply and easily on world markets to finance its expansion. Congress took Hamilton's word for it, the scheme was adopted, and events proved him right. In 1791, when the plan came into effect, American debt per capita (adjusted to 1980s dollars) was \$197, a figure it was not to reach again until during the Civil War. By 1804 it had fallen to \$120 and in 1811 to \$49. As a result, when America wanted to borrow \$11.25 million in 1803, to finance the Louisiana Purchase, and thus double the size of the country, it had no trouble at all in raising the money, at highly favorable rates. By then, of course, poor Hamilton was a back number (he was killed in 1804). But he had made the United States solvent and financially respected, and set it on the greatest arc of growth in history.

The debt-funding was the first of Hamilton's policies to be put forward because it was the most urgent. But he followed it with three other reports to Congress, on the excise, on a national bank, and on manufactures. To raise money to fund the debt and pay the expenses of the federal government, he had already imposed, in 1789, an import tariff on thirty commodities, averaging 8 percent *ad valorem* and a 5 percent rate on all other goods. Added to this, he proposed in 1791, and Congress agreed, to an excise tax, chiefly on whiskey. This was a dangerous move. The frontiersmen, all of whom made whiskey, and who treated it as a kind of currency-almost their only cash-saw this as an attack on their very existence. They did not see why they should pay taxes anyway, since they regarded their intermittent warfare with the Indians, fought on behalf of all, as discharging their duties to the nation in full. They were armed, aggressive, and self-righteous-most of them were poor too-and they hated the Excise Act just as much as their fathers had hated the Stamp Act. Violence and refusal to pay began in 1791 and became habitual. In July 1794 law officers tried to summon sixty notorious tax-evaders to trial at the federal court in Philadelphia. The result was a riot: the mob burned the chief tax-collector's home and killed a United States soldier. There were open threats to leave the Union. Governor Mifflin of Pennsylvania refused to send in the militia, as Hamilton had requested. The Treasury Secretary, backed by the President, decided to treat the violence as treason-rebellion, and Mifflin's behavior as a defiance of federal law and a challenge to the new constitutional order. Hamilton demanded, and the President agreed, that 15,000 militiamen from not only Pennsylvania but Maryland, Virginia, and New Jersey, be called up and deployed. Under the command of General Henry Lee, and with Hamilton breathing fire and slaughter in attendance, 12,900 men-a larger force than Washington had ever commanded-marched across the Alleghenies in the autumn. The rebels, faced with such an enormous army, naturally melted away, and Hamilton had great difficulty in rounding up a score of insurgents for punishment. According to Jefferson, who poured scorn on the entire proceedings, this was a case of 'the Rebellion that could never be Found.' Two 'ringleaders' were convicted of treason, but Washington spared them from hanging.

Hamilton thought he had made his point and that the government had gained 'reputation and strength.'

Following his reports on the debt and the excise, Hamilton introduced two more in 1791, on a national bank and on manufacturing industry. The bank was not a new idea. England had created a national bank in the 1690s, which had successfully acted as a lender of last resort and an underwriter of the national money supply. In 1781 Congress had chartered the Bank of North America as the first private commercial bank in the country and the first to get government incorporation. This was a scheme of Robert Morris, who, as superintendent of finance, had been Hamilton's predecessor. The Bank opened in Philadelphia in 1782 with Franklin, Jefferson, Hamilton, James Monroe, and Jay among its original stockholders and depositors. It paid Washington's army and buttressed the faltering finances of the government. Hamilton's plan was more ambitious. His Bank of the United States was more like the Bank of England, a true central bank chartered for twenty-one years, with a board of twenty-five, a main office, and eight branches, serving as the government's fiscal agent. Most of its stock was held by the government, which was also its principal customer. Jefferson protested that the Constitution made no provision for a central bank, and that in creating such a federal institution the government was acting *ultra vires*. He also protested, even more vehemently, against Hamilton's fourth report on manufactures. In effect, Hamilton, building on Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, but going well beyond it, proposed that the federal government should deliberately and systematically promote the industrialization of the United States. Smith had opposed such state interference in the free-enterprise, capitalist economy as a throwback to mercantalism. Hamilton did not disagree in general, but thought that 'priming the pump' was necessary for a small, new nation, overshadowed by the manufacturing power of its former imperial ruler, Great Britain. He intended such help to be temporary, until American industry could stand on its own feet.

Jefferson and his friends protested against the scheme not on grounds of economic theory but for much more fundamental reasons. He believed that the new republic would flourish only if the balance of power within it was held by its farmers and planters, men who owned and got their living from the soil. His reasoning was entirely emotional and sentimental, and had to do with the Roman republic, where Cicero had made the same point. Farmers, he believed, were somehow more virtuous than other people, more staunch in their defense of liberty, more suited to run a *res publica*. Deliberately to create a huge manufacturing 'interest,' with thousands of money-grubbing manufacturers and merchants, clamoring for special privileges and tariffs, seemed to him the road to moral ruin. Hamilton scoffed at such (to him) puerile reasoning. But many important politicians, especially in the South, agreed with Jefferson. Patrick Henry, for instance, who was opposed to the centralization inherent in the Constitution anyway, linked the proposals for the creation of the central bank to what he called 'a monied interest.' 'In an agricultural country like this,' he remonstrated, 'to erect, and concentrate, and perpetuate a large monied interest [must be] fatal to American liberty.' It was 'the first symptom of a spirit which must either be killed, or will kill the Constitution of the United States.'

The farmers and planters of the South hated Philadelphia and its rich Quakers, they hated New York and its rich lawyers, and, most of all, they hated Boston and its rich merchants and shipowners, many of whom were already joining with the Northern churches in calling for an end to slavery throughout the United States. They noted that the Boston rich-the Cabots, the Lowells, the Jacksons, the Higginsons-were right behind Hamilton. These were the clever gentry who had bought the public paper at 15 or 20 percent and, thanks to Hamilton, had it redeemed at par. Farmers, large or small, had a long history of hatred for banks in the United States, which

went back to the times when specie or currency of any kind had been hard to get hold of, and the British government had frustrated local attempts to create credit. Now, almost everything that Hamilton did further inflamed them. They were not impressed by Hamilton's triumphant claim that government issues were not floating over par-whom did that benefit, except the money-men? Nor did they think much of his promise that federal effort would be put into industrializing the South as well as the North-Eli Whitney's 1792 invention of the cotton gin, which immediately revolutionized cotton-planting, made such changes, in their view, unnecessary and undesirable. So two parties began to form in the new state-North versus South, farmers versus manufacturers, Virginia versus Massachusetts, states' rights men versus federalist centralizers, old versus new. Jefferson protested that he had no wish to found a party: 'If I could not go to heaven but with a party, I would not go there at all.' But that is what, in the 1790s, he did.

It may be asked: was Jefferson the Leader of the Opposition then? No: he was the Secretary of State in Washington's administration. Strictly speaking, he was Hamilton's superior in the government pecking-order. In fact, Hamilton had more power. At this stage in the evolution of government, the Treasury ran everything not specifically covered by other departments. It ran the Post Office, for instance. It employed 325 people, more than half the federal civil service. Hamilton was always thinking of additional reasons for bureaucratic empire-building. Jefferson was jealous of him. Just as, in England, Pitt was a high-powered financial statesman, cold, hard, unemotional, and interested chiefly in efficiency, beloved of the City of London and the Stock Exchange, and Charles James Fox was a libertarian romantic, who did not care a damn for the price of Consols or the credit of the pound sterling, but who watered the Tree of Liberty with his copious tears, so Hamilton, America's Pitt, and Jefferson, America's Fox, were at opposite poles of the political temperament. It was characteristic of Hamilton that he deplored the revolutionary events in Paris, and entirely typical of Jefferson that he applauded them.

The difference between Hamilton and Jefferson was as much temperamental as intellectual. Jefferson came from a secure background of landowning privilege, going back generations. Hamilton's background was so insecure and, to him, mysterious that we know more about it than he did. He thought he was born in 1757; in fact it was 1755.

What happened was this. His mother, Rachel Faucette or Faucitt or Fawcette or Fawcet or Foztet-it was spelt in a score of different ways, just as Raleigh, the founder of Virginia, was spelt in ninety-six different ways-married at sixteen an old fellow, John Leweine, Levine, Lavien, Lawein etc., said to be 'a smallish Jew.' At the age of twenty-one she left her husband and set up house with an itinerant Scotsman called James Hamilton, a drifter and failure, who promptly drifted away. In 1759 Levine sued for divorce, alleging 'several illegitimate children.' Divorce was granted but, under Danish law, which was then the common law of Nevis and the Leeward Islands, Rachel did not have the right to remarry. So Hamilton was never legitimized. As we have seen, his career as a self-made man was spectacular, but the illegitimacy ate into his soul. He hated poverty, which he equated with the forces of darkness, and therefore he avoided or tried to ignore or despised the poor, who reminded him of it.

Small, red-haired, blue-eyed, Hamilton had an intensity about him which made him both admired and genuinely feared. He gave his opinions with a frankness which, in America, was already becoming a political liability. 'Every man ought to be supposed a knave,' he wrote, 'and to have no other end, in all his actions, but private interest. *By this interest we must govern him* and, by means of it, make him cooperate to public good, notwithstanding his insatiable avarice and ambition.' This was the gutter-philosophy of the West Indies, where the racial mix was a minestrone of buccaneering and sly skulduggery, and where it was war of every man against

every man-and woman. It was distinctly unAmerican, where the inherent goodness and perfectibility of human nature was taken for granted. Hamilton despised this as 'hogwash.' He was infuriated by rich, well-born, secure men like Jefferson paying court to the poor, saying everyone was equal and acting upon it-or, more likely, pretending to act upon it. To Hamilton this was dangerous moonshine. He wanted an elite, an aristocracy, to keep 'the turbulent and uncontrollable masses' in subjection. But the elite had to be tough-minded, motivated by its own self-interest. The state had to conciliate it, as in England, by 'a dispensation of regular honors and emoluments,' to give it 'a distinct, permanent share of the government,' to keep 'the imprudence of democracy on a leash.'

Believing this, Hamilton wanted a permanent senate, elected indirectly and serving for life-rather like a House of Lords composed of life peers. He admired many other aspects of the British Constitution, the only one, he once said, which 'united public strength with personal security.' He was thus labeled 'reactionary,' and in a sense he was. But he was also a man of the future. He thought the state system a ridiculous relic of the past which might prevent America becoming 'a great empire.' Tiny states like Rhode Island and Delaware made no sense to him. He knew, from his wartime experience as Washington's right hand, how selfishly and stupidly the states could behave even in moments of great crisis.

Hamilton, like Jefferson, was a mixture of contradictions-a hater of democracy who fought for the republic; a humbly born colonial who loved aristocracy, a faithful servant of Washington who insulted the 'great booby' behind his back, a totally honest man who winked at the speculation of his friends, a monarchist who helped to create a republic, a devoted family man who conducted (and admitted) an amorous adventure. He told General Henry Knox, his Cabinet colleague and Secretary of War, 'My heart has always been the master of my judgment.' This was true in a sense: Hamilton was impulsive-why else would a man who hated dueling finally get himself killed in a duel? But his heart and Jefferson's were different. Hamilton's heart beat warmly in opposition to his deeply cynical view of mankind; Jefferson's was wholly in tune with his rosy, almost dewy-eyed idealization of human nature. Hamilton had been called 'a Rousseau of the right.' Jefferson admitted that Hamilton was 'a host in himself,' that he was 'of acute understanding, disinterested, honest, and honorable in all private transactions, amiable in society and duly prizing virtue in private life.' But he was, said Jefferson, 'so bewitched and perverted by the British example as to be under the conviction that corruption was essential to the government of a nation.' The truth is, Hamilton was a genius-the only one of the Founding Fathers fully entitled to that accolade-and he had the elusive, indefinable characteristics of genius. He did not fit any category. Woodrow Wilson was later to define him, with some justice, as 'A very great man, but not a great American.' But, if unAmerican, he went a long way towards creating, perhaps one should say adumbrating, one of the central fixtures of American public life-the broad conjunction of opinion which was to become the Republican Party.

Equally, Jefferson's growing opposition to the whole trend Hamilton's financial and economic policy and his constitutional centralism, gave birth to what was to become in time the Democratic Party, although in its first incarnation it was known, confusingly to us, as the Republican Party. The early 1790s were, in a sense, the end of American innocence, the undermining of the confident if unrealistic belief that the government of a vast, prosperous country could be conducted without corruption. Hamilton never had any illusions on that score-to him, man was always a fallen creature; he was a true conservative in that sense. But to the Jeffersonians it came as a shock. It should be said that Jefferson, true to his divided nature, was a man of pacts and compromises and deals. It was he who brokered the deal on funding the debt

whereby the Southerners, in exchange for their votes got the federal capital located on the Potomac. But, he would reply, there was no personal gain in this.

The first shocked awareness of personal corruption is reflected in the diaries of Senator William Maclay of Pennsylvania, who recorded the earliest instances of deliberate leaking of sensitive government information to favored individuals on the day the 'Report on the Debt' was published, January 14, 1790: 'This day the "Budget" as it was called was opened in the House of Representatives. An extraordinary rise of certificates has been remarked for some time past. This could not be accounted for, neither in Philadelphia nor elsewhere. But the report from the Treasury [proposing that certificates be repaid at par] reveals all.' The next week he noted: 'Hawkins of North Carolina said as he came up he passed two expresses with very large sums of money on their way to North Carolina for purposes of speculation in certificates. Wadsworth has sent off two small vessels for the Southern states on the errand of buying up certificates. I really fear that members of Congress are deeper in this business than any others.' To members of the American political class, especially Southerners, this was the first real proof of the existence and unscrupulousness of the 'money power,' the huge, occult, octopus-like inhuman creature associated with banks-especially the central bank-New York, Boston, the North, England and the City of London, and unrepugnant, unAmerican attitudes of every kind. This nightmare conspiracy would haunt generations of Democratic politicians in years to come, and it was in the 1790s that it made its first appearance.

Thus Washington's first administration, the earliest true government in America's history, was an incompatible coalition. Washington saw nothing wrong in this, at first. He was head of state as well as head of government and felt that his administration should reflect all the great interests in the nation, North and South, agriculture, commerce, and manufactures-should be in fact a geographical amalgam of the new nation. Of course there would be conflicts: how could it be otherwise with such a vast country? Washington agreed with South Carolina's William Loughton on the new state: 'We took each other with our mutual bad habits and respective evils, for better for worse. The northern state adopted us with our slaves, and we adopted them with their Quakers.' The United States was like a marriage. It was better, in Washington's view, to have interests reconciled and disputes mediated in Cabinet, than to have open warfare between parties, and government and opposition, as in England. Besides, the American system was different. Because of the separation of powers, members of the administration were not also members of Congress, answerable to it in person, as in the House of Commons. Washington found, in practice, that the more separate the powers were, the better. One aspect of government he handled personally was the making of treaties. When he was in the process of negotiating his Indian Treaty he agreed to appear before the Senate. This was a goodwill gesture because he did not need to under the Constitution. He was mortally offended when his explanations of what he was doing, instead of being accepted, were greeted by a decision to refer it all to a select committee, before which he was expected to appear again. He 'started up in a violent fret,' exclaiming 'This defeats every purpose of my coming here.' And he refused to do so, ever again. In future he referred treaties to Congress only when they were completed-as the Constitution provided.

With the powers separated, then, Washington judged it better to contain all the main factions within his administration. In practice, with Adams, as vice-president, speaking for New England, this meant he balanced Hamilton (New York) and the War Secretary Henry Knox (1750-1806), a vast, happy, fat man who had started out as a Boston bookseller but had become Washington's most reliable and trustworthy general-both of them ardent federalists-against Jefferson, Secretary

of State, and Edmund Randolph (1753-1813), also from Virginia, who were both states' rights men. Those were the six men who met to decide government policy. These gatherings were called Cabinet meetings, as in England, though, as in England, they had no legal or constitutional standing. They took place at Washington's house, 39 Broadway, just round the corner from Wall Street. It would be hard to overemphasize the informality and small scale of this first administration. Washington had to create it from scratch. That did not worry him, because he had had to do exactly the same thing with the army in 1776. The scale of the job was nothing: until the second half of the 1790s he employed more people on his Mount Vernon estate than in the whole of the central executive of his government.

We think of Washington as old when he became President but in fact he was only fifty-seven. He was a bit of an actor, however, and liked to play the Old Man card when convenient. Thus, with an awkward Cabinet meeting he would pretend to fumble for his glasses and say: 'I have already grown grey in the service of my country-now I am growing blind.' He would also pretend to lose his temper. He was 'tremendous in his wrath,' wrote Jefferson, who was taken in. When his integrity was impugned at a Cabinet meeting he would 'by God them, saying 'he had rather be on his farm than to be made Emperor of the World, by God! etc.' Jefferson said: 'His heart was warm in its affections, but he exactly calculated every man's value and gave him a solid esteem proportional to it.' He wrote 'better than he spoke' being 'unready.' Jefferson thought Washington pessimistic-he would give the Constitution a fair trial but was so distrustful of men and the use they would make of their liberty that he believed America would end up with something like the British Constitution.

Jefferson argued that Washington's distrust of the people led him to erect ceremonial barriers between himself and the public-'his adoption of the ceremonies of levees, birthdays, pompous meetings with Congress [was] calculated to prepare us gradually to a change he believed possible.' That strikes the historian as nonsense, especially if he compares it with the fantastically elaborate preparations Bonaparte was to make a decade later for precisely that end. Washington did not have an elaborate household-only fourteen in all. His secretariat was tiny. He had to borrow money to set the whole thing up, as it was. It is true he bowed instead of shaking hands. But that was his nature-he had always done it. Jefferson later accused Washington, at a public ball, of sitting on a sofa placed on a dais, almost like a throne. But he had this only on hearsay and it was probably untrue. It is true also that, as President, he gave grand, dull dinners, of many courses. The sharp-tongued Senator Maclay recorded: 'No cheering ray of convivial sunshine broke through the cloudy gloom of settled seriousness. At every interval of eating or drinking, he played on the table with a knife and fork, like drumsticks. But then Maclay had a nasty word about everyone-Adams was 'a monkey just put into breeches,' Gouverneur Morris was 'half-envoy, half-pimp,' Madison (only five feet four inches) was 'His Littleness.'

And, finally, it is true that when traveling as President-he made two extensive progresses, to the North and to the South-Washington cut an unusual figure by American standards. His white coach was secondhand but had been recently rebuilt by Clarke Brothers of Philadelphia for \$950, his coachman was a tall, well-built Hessian called John Fagan, who sat on a leopard skin-covered box, and he traveled with Major Jackson, his ADC, his valet, two footmen, a mounted postillion riding behind, plus a light baggage waggon and five saddle-horses, including his favorite charger, Prescott, a magnificent white mount of sixteen hands who had been with the President on many a bloody and dangerous occasion. This equipage arrived in localities and towns at a cracking pace with many a trumpet blast, to the delight of the locals, for whom it was their only glimpse of a president in the whole of their lives. Jefferson seems, in retrospect, more of a New

England puritan killjoy than a Virginia gentleman for protesting at this modest display. Nor did it save the President from occasional great discomfort and even peril to his life on several occasions during these official journeys, including a near-drowning on crossing the Severn a mile from Baltimore-'I was in imminent danger from the unskilfulness of the hands and the dullness of her sailing,' he recorded crossly-and a plunge, white coach and all, into the Ocquoquam Creek. Traveling around rough-hewn America in the 1790s it was impossible for anyone, however grand, to keep his dignity for long. The wonderful thing about Washington was that, even in the midst of travel, or while listening to an endless series of fifteen toasts (plus speeches) at a rustic dinner in Maryland, he retained the respect of all. One of his staff, Tobias Lear, said he 'was almost the only man of an exalted character who does not lose some part of his respectability on an intimate acquaintance.'

Despite the differences within the Cabinet, and the stealthy emergence of two great parties in the state-both of them represented in it-there was general agreement that Washington's presidency had been a success. Both Adams and Jefferson, on behalf of North and South, and both factions, strongly urged Washington to stand again. That might not have been decisive, for in 1792 Washington was almost painfully anxious to return to Mount Vernon. But he was persuaded by the ladies. Washington responded strongly to intelligent, perceptive women. He preferred them even to clever, able young men like Hamilton. His favorites were Henrietta Liston, the sweet and intuitive wife of the Scotsman Robert Liston, the British envoy, and Eliza Powell, wife of the former mayor of Philadelphia, Sam Powell. In 1790 the national capital had been removed from New York to Philadelphia (where it remained until Washington itself began to emerge in 1800) and Mrs Powell wanted her grand friend to preside there in state. So she persuaded the President to lean to the side of duty rather than inclination, and her wiles tipped the balance.'69 Mrs Liston may have helped to sway him too-she took the view, as did most of the British elite, that Washington was a 'sensible' man, unlike some of the Revolutionaries, a man whose 'good feelings' and 'bottom' added 'respectability' to America as a negotiating partner and possible future friend.

During his second term, Washington leaned more heavily on the federalists and took less trouble to conciliate the others. A break with Jefferson was probably inevitable, as Washington's monumental patience wore thin. Towards the end of Washington's first term, Madison, identified as Jefferson's closest political associate, had emerged virtually as leader of the opposition in Congress. In 1791, even before the election, the two men had gone on a so-called 'botanizing expedition' up the Hudson, where they had conferred with a motley group of malcontents-Aaron Burr (1756-1836), a sharp-faced New York lawyer, enemy and opponent of Hamilton there, who was using an organization called the Sons of St Tammany to build up a factional city machine; George Clinton (1739-1812), son of an Irish immigrant, the fiercely oppositional governor of the state; and various members of the Livingston family, a grand New York dynasty who, for reasons mysterious to Hamilton and the President, aligned themselves with the 'rabble.' This was the first party-political convention in American history, for the opposition New Yorkers formed a coalition with the states' rights Virginians and one result of the new alliance was a decision to bring Madison's old classmate, Philip Freneau, to Philadelphia to run the opposition newspaper, the *National Gazette*. His editorials infuriated the President.

What brought matters to a head was the outrageous behavior of the increasingly radical and bloodthirsty government in France, and in particular of their irresponsible ambassador. On November 29, 1792, before Washington's second term had even begun, the sansculottes in Paris

issued a Revolutionary decree declaring, 'War with all kings and peace with all peoples.' Edmond Charles Genet, an excitable enrage, as the Paris extremists were labeled, arrived to implement it so far as America was concerned. When Britain and France went to war soon afterwards Washington hastily declared America's neutrality. But that was not Genet's idea or, at first, Jefferson's. Genet arrived in Philadelphia with a clap of broadsides from the Revolutionary frigate *L'Ambuscade*, a dwarfish, dumpy man with dark red hair, coarse features, and a huge mouth from which issued forth a constant stream of passionate oratory in seven languages. Without even waiting to present his credentials he summoned the Americans to 'erect the *Temple of Liberty* on the ruins of *palaces and thrones*.' The mistake was characteristically French, to assume they are always the first to think of anything new. Genet forgot that America had already erected its own temple of liberty and had no palaces and thrones left to ruin.

Of course there were extremists in America-transatlantic Jacobins. Oliver Wolcott, Hamilton's Assistant Secretary at the Treasury and a federalist pillar, sneered at 'our Jacobins' who 'suppose the liberties of America depend upon the right of cutting throats in France.' Such people made up the patriotic French Society, one of over thirty such organizations which sprang up. Freneau's newspaper office at 209 Market Street, Philadelphia, almost under Washington's indignant nose, was a kind of headquarters to all of them, and to Genet's posturings. The French envoy set about recruiting men to join the French armed forces and to man privateers to prey on British commerce. He boasted to his Paris superiors: 'I excite the Canadians to break the British yoke. I arm the *Kentukois* and propose a navel expedition which will facilitate their descent upon New Orleans.' Annoyed by Washington's indifference to his cause, soon turning into active hostility, he threatened to 'appeal from the President to the People.'

Jefferson, who had at first welcomed the 'French monkey,' now turned from him in embarrassment, found himself with a migraine-a recurrent complaint of Jefferson's in moments of crisis and perplexity-and took to his bed. Washington, outraged by Genet's threats, found his Secretary of State, instead of administering an instant rebuke to the envoy of France and demanding his recall, unavailable and engaged in what looked like malingering. He wrote to Jefferson in fury: 'Is the minister of the French Republic to set the Acts of this Government at defiance, with impunity, and then threaten the executive with an appeal to the people? What must the world think of such conduct, and of the government of the United States for submitting to it?' Jefferson found himself obliged to offer his resignation, just before a Cabinet meeting which decided that Genet must be recalled and during which the President exploded in fury at a satire in Freneau's newspaper entitled 'The funeral of George Washington' and depicting 'a tyrannical executive laid low on the guillotine.' Washington 'ByGodded' them all, said he would 'rather be in his grave' than President, and accused the opposition-eying Jefferson-of 'an impudent desire to insult him.'

As it happened, Genet never left. The purging of the Girondins and the triumph of the 'Mountain' in Paris suddenly put him in danger of the guillotine himself and he begged to be allowed to stay. Washington gave him grudging permission and he promptly married the daughter of George Clinton, became a model citizen in upstate New York, and lived to read the first volume of George Bancroft's monumental *History of the United States* in -1834. Jefferson was replaced by Randolph, originally supposed to be a supporter of the deposed Secretary of State, now increasingly (according to him) a mere creature of the President: 'the poorest chameleon I ever saw, having no color of his own and reflecting that nearest to him. When he is with me, he is a Whig. When with Hamilton, he is a Tory. When with the President he is what he thinks will please him.' But Randolph did not last long. An intercepted French diplomatic



dispatch, deliberately fed to Washington by his Secretary of State's enemies, appeared to reveal him soliciting French bribes in return for bending American policy in the direction of Paris. Washington fell into the trap, treated Randolph with great deviousness and duplicity-he could be very two-faced when he chose-and suddenly pounced and accused him of treason: 'By the eternal God ... the damndest liar on the face of the earth!' Randolph had no alternative but to go, instantly, though it shortly became clear-and historians have since confirmed-that he was guiltless of anything except a little boasting to the French that he was the man in the administration who called the tunes. Washington realized too late he had made a mistake and inflicted an injustice on an old colleague, and the whole episode sickened him of politics. As his second term drew to an end, there was no doubting the finality of his determination to retire for good.

Although Washington's administration demonstrated, especially towards its close, that the rise of party was irresistible, that bipartisan politics, however desirable, simply did not work and that, in the utopian republic, it would 'never be glad confident morning again,' it was on the whole a remarkable success. Not only did it restore the nation's credit, repay its debts, construct a workable financial system, and install a central bank, it also steered the country through a number of tricky problems. In 1789 the nation for the first time was alerted to possible responsibilities in the Pacific northwest when an Anglo-Spanish dispute over fur-trading rights on Vancouver Island ended in the Nootka Sound Convention (1790). Washington, while keeping the country neutral, laid down the policies which were to become America's norm in this part of the world and eventually to lead to a peaceful partition of the northwest, between the United States and British Canada, which eliminated Spain (and Russia) completely.

Washington also pursued a cautiously neutral policy during the first phase of the great war which pitted the crowns of Europe against Revolutionary France from 1793. He took the opportunity to send Chief Justice Jay to London to tie up the loose ends left by the Treaty of Paris a decade before. Jay's Treaty (1794) was treated by Washington's critics-including Jefferson-as an absurd victory for British diplomacy. It was nothing of the sort. It provided for British evacuation of the northwest posts, which had allowed Canadian traders to control the fur-routes and prevented full settlement of the Ohio Valley; it opened a limited West Indies trade for American vessels; it gave America a 'most favored nation' status in British trade; and, in general, it gave a boost both to America's own exports and commercial trading and to British exports into the United States, thus swelling Hamilton's revenues from import duties. It was one of those commercial treaties which enormously benefited both signatories while hurting neither, and the opposition outcry in Congress-mainly inspired by pro-French sentiment-makes little sense to the historian today. On the basis of Jay's Treaty, Washington sent his minister in England, Thomas Pinckney (1750-1828), to Madrid to negotiate a comparable arrangement with Spain. Pinckney's treaty secured major concessions-Spain's acknowledgment of America's boundary claims east of the Mississippi and in East and West Florida and, equally important, America's right of access to and transit through New Orleans, the strategic port at the mouth of the Mississippi. By these two treaties, in fact, all the last remaining obstacles to full-scale American westward expansion into the Ohio and Mississippi valleys were removed.

At the same time, the last years of the 1780s and the Washington administration saw an enormous increase in the maritime commerce of the United States. American ships penetrated the West Indies on a large scale, first trading with the Dutch and French Islands, then after Jay-Pinckney with the Spanish and above all the British colonies. In 1785 the *Empress of China*, the first American trader to penetrate the Far East, returned from Canton to New York, followed two

years later by the Salem-based *Grand Turk*. This coincided with the opening up of the New England-northwest (Oregon) route by Captain Robert Gray (1755-1806), the great American trader and circumnavigator in 1787-90, whose pioneering activities in Oregon were the foundation for all American's subsequent claims to the area. It started a valuable triangular commerce: New England manufacturers to the northwest Indians, their furs to China, and then China tea to Boston. When Washington took office in 1789, an observer noted that of forty-six ships in Canton, eighteen were American; when Washington stood for a second term, the China trade had doubled and, when he finally left office, it had trebled.

Internal economic activity boomed correspondingly in the Washington years. Hamilton's policy of encouraging manufactures was not built on nothing. When Franklin got back to Philadelphia from Paris in 1785, he was astonished at the changes-new stagecoach routes, coal, iron, and woolen industries flourishing, frantic speculation everywhere. The states issued major charters to thirty-three companies-and huge enterprises were set up to build key bridges, turnpikes, and canals. In 1787 the first American cotton factory was built at Beverley, Massachusetts. The next year the first woolen factory followed at Hartford, with a £1,280 capital raised on the open market in £10 shares. Steam was coming and in 1789, already, John Fitch was experimenting in Philadelphia with a working steamship. Washington did not want America to become a manufacturing country like Britain any more than Jefferson did, and for the same reasons, but he was a realist and knew it was coming. He was also a military man who knew how important it was for the United States to have modern military equipment, including the latest warships and cannon, and how closely this was linked to military capacity. So, with all due misgivings, he backed Hamilton's industrial policy, and it was during his presidency that America achieved takeoff into self-sustaining industrial growth.

Washington gave a public valediction to the American people by means of a farewell address, the text which filled an entire page of the *American Daily Advertiser* on September 19, 1796. There is a bit of a mystery about this document. Washington wrote a rough draft of his declaration, intended as his political testament and considered advice to the nation, in May, and sent it to Hamilton for his approval. Hamilton rewrote it, and both men worked on the text. So it is a joint venture, from two men who had been intimately associated for twenty years and knew each other's thoughts. Some of the phrases are clearly Hamilton's. But the philosophy as a whole is his master's. The result is an encapsulation of what the first President thought America was, or ought to be, about.

He has three main points. He pleads at length, and passionately, against 'the baneful effects of the Spirit of Party.' America, he says, is a country which is united by tradition and nature: 'With slight shades of difference, you have the same Religion, Manners, Habits and Political Principles. The economies of North and South, the eastern seaboard and the western interior, far from dividing the nation, are complementary.' Differences, arguments and debates there must be. But a common devotion to the Union, as the source of 'your collective and individual happiness,' is the very foundation of the state. Central to this is respect for the Constitution: 'The Constitution which at any time exists, till changed by an explicit and authentic act of the whole People, is sacredly obligatory on all.' The fact that the people have 'the power and right to establish Government' presupposed 'the duty of every individual to obey it.' Hence, 'all obstructions to the execution of the Laws, all combinations and associations, under whatever plausible character, with the real design to direct, control, counteract or awe the regular deliberation and action of the constituted authorities, are destructive of this fundamental principle, and of fatal tendency.'

This is a very strong statement of the moral obligations of all citizens to comply with the decisions of duly constituted government, enforcing the laws constitutionally enacted by Congress. It was a solemn reminder by Washington, as the result of eight years' experience as chief executive, that America was a country under the rule of law. With the law, it was everything; without the law, it was nothing. And it was well that Washington made it in such forceful terms. Future presidents were able to take courage from it when dealing with powerful acts of defiance-Andrew Jackson when confronted with South Carolina's claim to the right to nullify federal law and Abraham Lincoln when faced with the unconstitutional act of secession by the South. The statement was typical of Washington's understanding of American government-its range was severely limited but, within those limits, its claims (under God) were absolute.

Second, Washington stressed the wisdom of keeping clear of foreign entanglements. He was proud of the fact that he had kept the United States out of the great war engulfing Europe, though under pressure from both sides to join in. America must seek 'harmony' and 'liberal intercourse' with all nations. It must trade with all on terms of equality. It must maintain 'a respectable defensive posture,' underwritten 'by suitable establishments' (of force). It might form 'temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies.' But in general the United States must pursue its global course with friendship-if reciprocated-to all, enmity and alliance with none. Isolation? Not at all. Independence-yes.

Finally, Washington-in the light of the dreadful events which had occurred in Revolutionary France-wished to dispel for good any notion that America was a secular state. It was a government of laws but it was also a government of morals. 'Of all the dispositions and habits which led to political prosperity,' he insisted, 'Religion and Morality are indispensable supports.' Anyone who tried to undermine 'these firmest props of the duties of Men and Citizens' was the very opposite of a patriot. There can be no 'security for property, for reputation, for life if the sense of religious obligation *desert* the oaths which are the instruments of investigation in the Courts of Justice.' Nor can morality be maintained without religion. Whatever 'refined education' alone can do for 'minds of peculiar structure'-he was thinking of Jefferson no doubt-all experience showed that 'national morality' cannot prevail exclusion of religious principle.' In effect, Washington was saying that America, being a free republic, dependent for its order on the good behavior of its citizens, cannot survive without religion. And that was in the nature of things. For Washington felt, like most Americans, that his country was in a sense chosen and favored and blessed. Hence he would 'carry to the grave' his 'unceasing vows' that 'Heaven may continue to you the choicest tokens of its beneficence-that your Union and brotherly affection may be perpetual-and that the free Constitution, which is the work of your hands, may be sacredly maintained.'

The whole stress of Washington's presidency, underlined by his farewell, was on the absolute necessity to obey the Constitution. As he said on many occasions, he did not seek or want any more power than the Constitution gave him; but, when needful, he did not want any less either. It should be obeyed in letter and spirit. America was the first major country to adopt a written constitution. That Constitution has survived. where so many imitations all over the world have failed, not my because it was democratically constructed and freely adopted by the people, but precisely because it has been obeyed-by both government and people. All kinds of paper constitutions have been drawn up, perfect in design and detail-the Constitution of the Soviet Union is the classic example-but have become nugatory because the government has not obeyed them and the people have therefore lost faith in their reality. Washington insisted that the

executive must follow the constitution in all things, and he expected Congress and people to do likewise. It was in this respect, above all, that the first President led America to an auspicious start.

When Washington retired there were still fundamental aspects of the constitution waiting to be brought to life, in particular the role of the judiciary. That began under the second President, John Adams. Cantankerous, unloved, and quarrelsome, Adams was not the best choice to succeed the eirenic and universally respected general. But he was very senior. He had been through it all. He had served as vice president. He was also from New England, awaiting its 'turn.' In Philadelphia a kind of caucus of federalist politicians, mostly congressmen, decided it had to be Adams. They added Pinckney's brother to the slate, partly because he was from South Carolina, and therefore balanced the slate, partly because his treaty was popular. Hamilton, neither eligible nor willing to run himself, did not like Adams and believed he would be difficult to manage. He preferred Pinckney and engaged in a furtive plot to have Southern votes switched and get him in ahead of Adams. But it misfired, and as a result the New Englanders dropped Pinckney. Adams won, by seventy-one electoral votes; but Jefferson, who 'stood' for the Republicans-he refused to allow the word 'ran' as undignified, preferring the English term-got almost as many, sixty-eight, and therefore became vice-president. Adams, quite liking Jefferson despite their differences, but not wishing to have him aboard, labeled Hamilton, whom he held responsible, 'a Creole bastard'-Adams' wife Abigail, more decorously, called him 'Cassius-trying to assassinate Caesar.' Adams, despite his low opinion of Old Muttonhead, tried hard to maintain the continuity of his Government, keeping on Washington's old crony Timothy Pickering as secretary of state (though eventually obliged to sack him) and promoting Hamilton's able deputy, Oliver Wolcott, to the Treasury. Adams even went so far as to keep up Washingtonian pomp, dressing for his inauguration in an absurd pearl-coloured suit adorned with a sword and a huge hat with cockade. But he was a fat little man, who 'looked half Washington's height.' For the first but by no means the last time in presidential history, his best physical and social asset was his splendid spouse.

Adams' presidency was dominated by one issue-peace or war? Could America stay out of the global conflict? On this point he was at one with Washington: at almost any cost, America should stay neutral. Adams underlined this section in the Farewell Address, and caused the whole to be read out every February in Congress, a tradition maintained until the mid-1970s when, in the sudden collapse of presidential authority after Watergate, it lapsed. It was Adams' great merit as president that he kept America out of the war, despite many difficulties and with (as he saw it) a disloyal Cabinet and vice-president. Jefferson worked hard to have the government come to the aid of France and republicanism. Hamilton, outside the government but with his creatures inside it, hoped to exploit the war by destroying what remained of the Spanish and French empires in North America. He called for an enormous standing army of 10,000 and got the aged Washington to lend a certain amount of support to the idea. Adams accused Hamilton of intriguing to be made head of it and proclaim a dictatorship of what he termed 'a regal government.' This was exaggeration. But it was true that he had visions of personally marching a large professional force through the Louisiana Territory and into Mexico, turning all these 'liberated lands' over to American settlement. Adams thought this was all nonsense. He believed that all North America would fall into the United States' hands, like ripe plums, in the fullness of time, but it would be outrageous, and unrepugnant, and anyway expensive, to conquer the continent now. Like England, he believed in 'wooden walls,' a strong navy (to

protect New England trade), freedom of the seas, and 'holding the balance.' So he tried to keep the army small and build ships-in New England yards of course.

Adams and his friends believed he was superbly, perhaps uniquely, qualified intellectually to be president. His crony Benjamin Rush wrote in his autobiography that Adams possessed 'more learning, probably, both ancient and modern, than any man who subscribed to the Declaration of Independence.' American children who grew up in the early 19th century were told that, except for Franklin, Adams was without an intellectual superior among the Founding Fathers. This may well have been true, and Adams' writings and letters are a wonderful brantub of sharp *apercus*, profound observations, and fascinating conjectures. His experience was unique. He had been a commissioner to France, 1777-9, then negotiator in Holland, 1780-2, had negotiated, with Jefferson and Jay, the Treaty of Paris, 1782-3, had been America's first envoy to Britain, 1785-8, and as vice-president had assisted Washington, as far as his short temper would allow, in all things. If ever a man had been trained for the First Magistracy it was Adams. But he was ill suited to the office. Though he earnestly strove to maintain himself above party and faction, he was a man of passionate opinions and even more emotional likes and dislikes, mainly personal. He thought Hamilton 'the incarnation of evil.' He did not believe Jefferson was evil but he considered him a slave to 'ideology.' This was Adams' hate-word. It seems to have been coined by a French *philosophe*, Destutt de Tracy, whom Jefferson admired greatly. At his vice-president's promptings, Adams read the man and had a good laugh. What was this delightful new piece of French rubbish? What did 'ideology' stand for? 'Does it mean Idiotism? The Science of Non Compos Mentisism? The Art of Lunacy? The Theory of Deliri-ism?' He put his finger instantly on the way that-thanks to Jefferson and his ilk-ideology was creeping into American life by attributing all sorts of mythical powers and perceptions to a nonexistent entity, 'The People.' When politicians started talking about 'The People,' he said, he suspected their honesty. He had a contempt for abstract ideas which he derived from the English political tradition but to which he added a sarcastic skepticism which was entirely American, or rather Bostonian.

Adams believed that democracy-another hate-word-was positively dangerous, and equality a fantasy which could never be realized. He had no time for actual aristocracies-hated them indeed-but he thought the aristocratic principle, the rise of the best on merit, was indestructible and necessary. As he put it, 'Aristocracy, like waterfowl, dives for ages and rises again with brighter plumage. He noted that in certain families, young men were encouraged to take an interest in public service, generation after generation, and that such people naturally formed part of an elite. Unlike European aristocracies, they sought not land, titles, and wealth, but the pursuit of republican duty, service to God and man. He was thinking of such old New England families as the Winthrops and the Cottons-and his own. And of course the Adamses became the first of the great American political families, leaders in a long procession which would include the Lodges, Tafts, and Roosevelts. He brought up his son, John Quincy Adams, to serve the state just as old Pitt had brought up his son William, the Younger Pitt, to sit eventually on the Treasury Bench in the Commons. All this was very touching, and the historian warms to this vain, chippy, wild-eyed, paranoid, and fiercely patriotic seer. But, whatever they think, presidents of the United States should not publicly proclaim their detestation of democracy and equality. That leaves only fraternity, and Adams was not a brotherly man either. He was much too good a hater for that.

The truth is Adams, like his enemy Hamilton, was not made to lead America, though for quite different reasons. Adams was very perceptive about the future. He had no doubts at all that America would become a great nation, possibly the greatest in the world, with a population 'of

more than two hundred million.' But he did not want to see it. He hated progress, change, the consequences of science and technology, inventions, innovation, bustle. It was not that he despised science. Quite the contrary. Like most of the Founding Fathers, he admired and studied it. He believed in what he called the 'science of government' and he ingeniously worked into his constitutionalism a variety of scientific metaphors, particularly the principle on which the balance rested. Believing wholeheartedly in educating the young republic, he thought students should be taught science, both theoretical and applied: 'It is not indeed the fine arts our country requires,' he noted, 'but the useful, the mechanical arts.' But he loathed the physical, visual evidence of life in a progressive country. 'From the year 1761,' he wrote to Rush, 'now more than fifty years, I have constantly lived in an Enemy's Country. And that without having one personal enemy in the world, that I know of.'

This tremendously unAmerican dislike of progress was compounded by the purgatory Adams suffered from being dislocated. He was devoted to New England, especially 'the neighborhood of Boston' and his own town, Quincy. Being in Europe, as envoy, was an adventure and in some ways a delight for a man who has a taste for the Old World, but being forced to live outside New England in restless, self-transforming America was punishment. One feels for these early presidents, with their strong local roots, being sentenced to long exile in temporary accommodation before the White House was built and made cozy. Washington hated New York. Philadelphia was marginally better but was then the biggest city in the entire New World, dirty, noisy, and anathema to a country gentleman. Before his presidency was over, Adams was compelled to leave Philadelphia to set up his government shop in the new, barely begun capital of Washington, where the vast, endless streets, which mostly contained no buildings of any kind, were unpaved, muddy cesspools in winter, waiting for summer to transform them into mosquito-infested swamps. Washington in fact is built on a swamp and, then and now, specialized in gigantic cockroaches, which terrified Abigail. She was often ill, and demanded to be sent back to Quincy, and Adams used the excuse of tending her to hurry there himself and try to conduct government from his own house. He found the business of creating a new capital commensurate with America's future profoundly depressing, laying it down that the country would not be 'ready for greatness' in 'less than a century.' One has a vivid glimpse of Adams, towards the end of his presidency, sitting in the unfinished 'executive mansion,' still largely unfurnished and requiring 'thirteen fires' constantly replenished just to keep out the cold and damp, surrounded by packing-cases and festooned with clotheslines that Abigail used for drying the wash.

However, before leaving the presidency, which, as we shall see, he did most reluctantly despite all its discomforts, Adams made a selection of vital significance, perhaps the most important single appointment in the whole history of the presidency. John Marshall (1755-1835) was a Virginian frontiersman, born in a log cabin on the frontier. Like many early Americans he combined a modest background with honorable lineage, being of old stock, related to the Lees, the Randolphs, and the Jeffersons. His father was prominent in state politics. Marshall fought in the Revolution, but as a result of the crisis he had little formal education apart from a brief spell at William and Mary College. But he set up as a lawyer in Richmond-the Americans were never inhibited by the trade union restrictions of the English Inns of Court system from nailing their name-plates to the wall-and soon showed, by his brilliant advocacy in court, that he was made for forensic life. He and Adams got on well together. They were both confirmed and cerebral federalists, believing in strong government, hierarchy based on merit and no nonsense about states' rights. They did not like nonsense in social life either, beyond the formality needed to keep the executive and the judiciary respected. Marshall, like Adams, was an elitist-but he did

not look the part. He was tall, loose-limbed, and raw-boned, badly dressed, none too clean, a great gossip and gregarious. Wit he had too, and charm-in some ways he was a prototype for Lincoln.

Adams, in his desperate struggles to keep America out of the war, and especially to avoid sliding into a war with France by sheer accident and bad luck-the French remained provocative and difficult-sent John Marshall, together with Pinckney and Elbridge Gerry, to Paris on an embassy. They got short shrift from Charles-Maurice Talleyrand, the atheist ex-bishop and aristocrat who was now the hired gun of the Revolutionaries in foreign affairs. He objected strongly to Jay's treaty as pro-British and forced the commissioners to deal with plebeian underlings, whom they referred to contemptuously as X, Y, and Z. The French understrappers demanded a 'loan' of \$12 million francs as a condition of opening serious talks, accompanied by a further, personal 'gift' of \$250,000 to Talleyrand himself. Pinckney is said to have replied: 'No, not a sixpence-millions for defense but not one cent for tribute.' (The last bit was *esprit d'escalier* and actually coined by Robert Harper, a brilliant dinner-orator and neologist who also named Liberia and its capital Monrovia.) As a result, undeclared war broke out and Adams' new navy-he had thirty-three warships by the end of the century-came in handy in engagements with French commerce-raiders in the West Indies and Mediterranean. Adams had been unhappy about his Secretary of State's handling of the XYZ Affair-he thought Pickering was being manipulated by Hamilton-and in 1800 he sacked him and replaced him by Marshall. Finally, on the eve of his own departure, he decided the best way he could perpetuate his spirit was by making Marshall chief justice. This worked very well, Marshall holding the office for thirty-four years, surviving four of Adams' successors and living to cross swords with the redoubtable Andrew Jackson, a man for whom Adams had a peculiar hatred.

We must now look forward a little to assess the full significance of this remarkable man and his impact on American history. If one man can be said to have wedded the United States indissolubly to capitalism, and particularly to industrial capitalism, it was Marshall. Except for Hamilton, all the Founding Fathers, Adams included, were suspicious of capitalism, or suspicious of banks anyway; some hated banks. And the Southerners hated industry. Even Washington disliked Hamilton's report on manufactures. But Marshall approved of capitalism, he approved of banks, he approved of industry-the lot. He thought they were essential to the future wellbeing of the United States people and that therefore their existence must be guaranteed under the Constitution. It was, as he saw it, his job as chief justice to insure this. Marshall, like the Founding Fathers, put his trust in property as the ultimate guarantor of liberty. But, unlike the Fathers, he did not distinguish morally and constitutionally between types of property.

The Founders, particularly the Virginians, Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, *et al.*, equated property, as a moral force, with land. Their views were articulated by John Taylor (1753-1824), like them a Virginia landowner who served in the Senate and published in 1814 a monumental work of 700 pages, *An Inquiry into the Principles and Policy of the United States*. Taylor distinguished between 'natural' property, such as land, and 'artificial property' created by legal privilege, of which banking wealth was the outstanding example. He saw the right to issue paper money as indirect taxation on the people: 'Taxation, direct or indirect, produced by a paper system in any form, will rob a nation of property without giving it liberty; and by creating and enriching a separate interest, will rob it of liberty without giving it property.' Paper-money banking benefited an artificially created and parasitical financial aristocracy at the expense of the hard-working farmer, and this 'property-transferring policy invariably impoverishes all laboring

and productive classes.' He compared this new financial power with the old feudal and ecclesiastical power, with the bankers using 'force, faith and credit' as the two others did religion and feudality. What particularly infuriated Taylor was the horrible slyness with which financiers had invested 'fictitious' property, such as bank-paper and stock, with all the prestige and virtues of 'honest' property.

Taylor's theory was an early version of what was to become known as the 'physical fallacy,' a belief that only those who worked with their hands and brains to raise food or make goods were creating 'real' wealth and that all other forms of economic activity were essentially parasitical. It was commonly held in the early 19th century, and Marx and all his followers fell victim to it. Indeed plenty of people hold it in one form or another today, and whenever its adherents acquire power, or seize it, and put their beliefs into practice, by oppressing the 'parasitical middleman,' poverty invariably follows. Taylor's formulation of the theory fell on a particularly rich soil because American farmers in general, and the Southerners and backwoodsmen in particular, already had a paranoid suspicion of the 'money power' dating from colonial times, as we have seen. So Taylor's arguments, suitably vulgarized, became the common coin of the Jeffersonians, later of the Jacksonians and finally of silver-standard Democrats and populists of the late 19th century, who claimed that the American farmer was being 'crucified on a cross of gold.' The persistence of this fallacy in American politics refutes the common assumption that America is resistant to ideology, for if ever there were an ideology it is this farrago.

Fortunately Marshall set his face against it, and he had the power-or rather he acquired the power-to make his views law. His view of how the American Republic should function was clear and consistent. He had read Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* as soon as it was published in America and it inspired in him a healthy revulsion against the mob which lasted till his dying day. The people might not always constitute a mob. But they were always to be distrusted as an unfettered political force. The role of the Constitution therefore was to fence the people in. In Marshall's analysis, the popular power in America was essentially vested in the states, for they had been the first, in his own lifetime, to enfranchise the masses. Hence he was not only a federalist but a centralist, who thought the primary role of the general government was to balance the power of the mob which was latent in the states. The Constitution may not have said this explicitly. But the thought was implicit in its provisions, and it was the role and duty of the federal judiciary to reveal the hidden mysteries of the Constitution by its decisions. Thus he asserted, for the first time, the right of the Supreme Court to play its full part in the constitutional process by its powers of interpretation. As he put it in one of his judgments, 'We must never forget it is a Constitution we are expounding ... something organic, capable of growth, susceptible to change.' Marshall was a graceful persuader with a subtle and resourceful mind, fertile in sinewy arguments, expressed with a silver tongue and a pen of gold. He lived very close to his brethren during the six or eight weeks the court sat in Washington, all of them residing together in the same modest boarding house so that, as his biographer said, Marshall was 'head of a family as much as he was chief of a court. He was absolutely dominant among his colleagues, though less learned than some of them. During his thirty-four years as head of the court it laid down 1,100 rulings, 519 of which he wrote himself, and he was in a dissenting minority only eight times.

Next to Burke, Marshall revered Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*. He was closer to its spirit than Hamilton, believing the state should be chary of interfering in the natural process of the economy. Left to themselves, and with the law holding the ring so that all were free to exert the utmost of their powers, industrious men and women were capable unaided of fructifying



America's vast resources and making it the richest country on earth. It was capitalism, not the state, which would conquer, tame, and plant the Mississippi Valley and still further west. All it required was a just, sensible, and consistent legal framework so that entrepreneurs could invest their capital and skills with confidence. Marshall had none of Taylor's reluctance to acknowledge 'artificial' property. It was the market, not sentiment, which defined wealth, provided it were honestly acquired. It was the duty of the court so to interpret the Constitution that the rights of property of all kinds were properly acknowledged, and capitalism thus enabled to do its job of developing the vast territories which Almighty God, in his wisdom, had given the American people just as he had once given the Promised Land to the Israelites.

In this work, Marshall saw it as his primary function to provide property with the security which (in his view) was increasingly threatened by the legislatures of the states with their one-man, one-vote democracy and their consequent exposure to the demagoguery of irresponsible and propertyless men. That meant making the muscle of the Supreme Court felt in every state capital-and indeed in Congress itself. He set the parameters for his work as early as 1803, when in *Marbury v. Madison* he asserted the constitutional power of the Court to engage in judicial review of both state and federal legislation and, if needs be, to rule it unconstitutional. Viewing, as he did, the Constitution as an instrument of national unity and safety, he claimed that it not only set forth specific powers but created its own sanctions by implied powers. These sanctions were particularly necessary when, with the spread of the suffrage, politicians made populist assaults on lawful property to curry favor with the mob. To Marshall it made little difference whether an actual rabble stormed the Bastille by force or a legislative rabble tried to take it by unconstitutional statute. His first great blow for property came in 1810 in *Fletcher v. Peck*, when he overturned the popular verdict by ruling that a contract was valid whatever ordinary men might think of its ethics. Fourteen years later, in the key case of *Gibbons v. Ogden*, he struck a lasting blow for entrepreneurial freedom by ruling that a state legislature had no constitutional right to create a steamboat monopoly. This interpretation of the Commerce Clause (Article I, Section 8) of the Constitution insisted that the US Congress was supreme in all aspects of interstate commerce and could not be limited by state law in that area. He wrote: 'The subject is as completely taken from the state legislatures as if they had been expressly forbidden to act on it.'

In 1819 alone there were three cardinal Marshall rulings in favour of property. Early in February his Court ruled, in *Sturges v. Crowninshield*, that a populist New York State bankruptcy law in favor of debtors violated the Constitution on contracts. The same month, in *Dartmouth College v. Woodward*, the Court laid down that a corporation charter was a private contract which was protected from interference by a state legislature. The most important case came in March, in a battle between the state of Maryland and the federal bank, or rather its Maryland branch. In *McCulloch v. Maryland* the Court had to rule not only on the right of a state to tax a federal institution but on the right of Congress to set up a federal bank in the first place. The judgment came down with tremendous majesty on the side of the central power, and the lawful status of the federal bank, which thus survived and flourished, until the great populist Andrew Jackson-the rabble incarnate and enthroned, in Marshall's view-destroyed it.

In the light of subsequent history, it is easy for us to applaud Marshall's work as saving the United States from the demagogic legislative and governmental follies which made property insecure in Latin America, and so kept it poor and backward. Marshall's rulings made the accumulation of capital possible on a scale hitherto unimaginable and he can justly be described as one of the architects of the modern world. But it did not seem so at the time to Jefferson and his friends. To Jefferson's delight, John Taylor himself lambasted the Court's ruling in

*McCulloch* as an 'outrageous' vindication of 'artificial' property. Taylor's pronouncement, wrote Jefferson, was 'the true political faith, to which every catholic republican should steadfastly hold.' He saw Marshall and his Court as the dedicated enemies of American republicanism: 'The judiciary of the United States is the subtle corps of sappers and miners constantly working underground to undermine the foundations of our confederated fabric. They are construing our Constitution from a general and special government to a general and supreme one alone.'

However, it must not be thought the supporters of a strong central authority had it all their own way. On the contrary. Federalism, as a political movement, was a declining force round the turn of the century, precisely because it was a party of the elite, without popular roots, at a time when democracy was spreading fast among the states and thus beginning to determine the federal executive power too. Adams' valedictory appointment of Marshall as chief justice was a huge blow struck for the federalist principle but Adams was the last of the federalist presidents and he could not get himself re-elected. He was very much in two minds whether to run. Not only did he hate Washington and the horrible, damp presidential mansion, he also thought the job intolerable-the President. he warned his son (also in time an uneasy president), 'has a very hard, laborious and unhappy life.' He laid down: 'No man who ever held the office of president would congratulate a friend on obtaining it.' He ran a second time because he did not want Jefferson to hold the job. There was nothing personal in this: Jefferson was one of the few politicians whom Adams did not actually hold in contempt-liked him, in fact, albeit they were totally different in views and styles of life. But Adams thought Jefferson's view of the Constitution and role of government wholly mistaken-the two men were 'the North and South Poles of the American Revolution'-and he was terrified Jefferson's sentimentality would involve America in a war on France's side which would inevitably lead to conflict with Britain and the destruction of New England's trade.

So Adams ran-and much good it did him. A few weeks before the election, Hamilton, his fellow-federalist and ex-colleague, published an extraordinary pamphlet, *A Letter from Alexander Hamilton Concerning the Public Conduct and Character of John Adams Esq, President of the United States*. It began, 'Not denying to Mr Adams patriotism and integrity and even talents of a certain kind,' and went on to assert that he was 'unfit for the office of Chief Magistrate,' on account of his eccentricity, lack of sound judgment, inability to persevere, 'vanity beyond bounds,' and 'a jealousy capable of discoloring every subject. The pamphlet was so violent that it has been described as an act of political suicide on Hamilton's part, indicating he was quite unsuited to high office himself. But there is no denying that it harmed Adams too. To be fair to Hamilton, he intended it for private circulation among federalist leaders but (as was foreseeable) it fell into enemy hands, in the shape of Aaron Burr, who promptly insured it had the widest possible circulation.

Adams was in a lot of other trouble in any case. In the age of the French Revolution, which had its unscrupulous agents and credulous sympathizers in every civilized country, America, like Britain, had felt obliged to take steps to protect itself. In 1798 Congress had passed, with Adams' approval, the Alien and Sedition Acts. These four measures limited freedom of the press and speech and restricted the activities of aliens, especially French and Irish. They were part of the paranoia of the decade, which infected both sides of the revolutionary argument and predictably led to ludicrous results. In the first case which came before the courts, Luther Baldwin of New Jersey was convicted and fined \$100 for wishing that a wad from the presidential saluting-cannon might 'hit Adams in the ass.' As in England, ordinary people cared little about such measures, which affected only the chattering classes. But Jefferson, albeit a member of the

government, and his friend Madison, drafted a series of resolutions, passed by the Virginia legislature and copied in Kentucky, which asserted that the Acts were unconstitutional and that the states 'have the right and are in duty bound to interpose for arresting of the evil.' The proper remedy, they went on, was for individual states to proceed to the 'nullification' of 'such unauthorised acts.' This is the first we hear of the Doctrine of Nullification, which was to haunt the republic for decades to come. At the time it had less public impact than the increases in taxation made inevitable by Adams' construction of a substantial navy, especially a direct tax on houses, slaves, and land, which hit farmers, planters, and city-dwellers alike, and even provoked a feeble insurrection known to historians as Fries' Rebellion.

The 1800 election is often referred to as the first contested presidential election but evidence of the contest is scarce. Jefferson, true to his determination to 'stand' rather than 'run,' remained at his home, Monticello, throughout. Adams, now toothless, was incapable of making a public speech. The issue was decided by Jefferson's standing mate, Burr, whose Tammany organization carried New York, the swing state. So Jefferson beat Adams by seventy-three votes to sixty-five. But Burr also got seventy-three votes and under the Constitution the House had to decide which of them was president. After much skulduggery, the federalists voted for Jefferson, after private assurances that he would allow many federalist office-holders to keep their jobs.

Jefferson, the exalted idealist, thus began his presidency with a bit of a deal. Indeed it was his fate all his public life to be forced-some would say that he chose-to compromise in order to obtain his objectives. He was a means-justifies-the-end casuist. He owed his presidency not just to Burr, who was manifestly a political crook and the first machine-politician in America, but to Elbridge Gerry (1744-1814) of Massachusetts, who was the second, and, as governor of the state, the inventor of gerrymandering. Jefferson raises a lot of difficulties for the historian. He is fascinating because of the range of his activities, the breadth of his imaginative insights, and the fertility of his inventions. But his inconsistencies are insurmountable and the deeper they are probed the more his fundamental weaknesses appear. Jefferson suffered from what were clearly psychosomatic migraines all his life-and many other ills, real and imaginary, too; he was a monumental hypochondriac-and these tended to increase, as the dislocations in his personality, beliefs, and practices became more pronounced.

Jefferson's fundamental difficulty can be simply explained: he was a passionate idealist, to some extent indeed an intellectual puritan, but at the same time a sybarite, an art-lover, and a fastidious devotee of all life's luxuries. From claret to concubinage, there was no delight he did not sample, or rather indulge in habitually. This set his views and practices in constant conflict. Slavery was a case in point: its dark shadow penetrates every corner of his long life. One should be very careful in judging the Virginia Founding Fathers without making the imaginative leap into their minds on this issue. Slavery, to those involved in it as planters, was not just a commercial, economic, and moral issue: it was an intimate part of their way of life. The emotional vibrations it set up in their lives (and in the lives of their household slaves) are almost impossible for us to understand. But we have to accept that they were subtly compounded of love and fear, self-indulgence and self-disgust, friendship and affection, and (not least) family ties. When Jefferson married the rich widow, Martha Wayles Skelton, and brought her to Monticello, then already a-building, it is likely that he had a black mistress installed there as a household servant. When Martha's father, John Wayles, died, she inherited 11,000 acres and fourteen slaves. Wayles had had a mulatto mistress, Betty Hemings, by whom he had quadroon children who, under the laws of Virginia, were slaves by birth. So Jefferson's wife was in intimate daily

contact not only with her own servile half-brothers and sisters, one of whom at least worked in the house, but with her husband's concubine. Some Southern white women put up with this kind of thing, others were deeply grieved, others seemed unconcerned. What Jefferson thought we do not know-in all his voluminous writings he never discusses his own sexual relations with black or colored women. But he was clearly torn in two. We know he came to hate miscegenation, as the source of endless misery for all concerned.

He also hated slavery, feared it, reviled it, privately at least, and sought in vain both to curtail it publicly and to cut it out of his own life. His *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1781) is such an outspoken denunciation of slavery on almost every ground that he told James Monroe that he hesitated to publish it, because 'the terms in which I speak of slavery and of our Constitution [in Virginia] may produce an irritation which will revolt the minds of our countrymen against the reform of these two articles, and thus do more harm than good.' He argued that slavery was not just an economic evil, which destroyed 'industry,' but a moral one which degraded the slave-owners even more than the slave. He wanted outright abolition, and none of the future abolitionists from the North argued more fervently or more comprehensively against the 'peculiar institution.' Friends, including Virginians, urged him to publish and he did so, insuring that a number of copies were put in the library of William and Mary College, so that the young would read it.

Though an emancipationist in theory, however, Jefferson did nothing in practice to end slavery, either as governor of Virginia or as the revisor of its law-code. Nor, as secretary of state, as vice-president, or as a two-term president, did he do anything effective to end the slave-trade. He accepted the Southern contention that emancipated slaves could never be allowed to live as freemen in the Southern states. The liberated blacks would have to form a separate and independent country-preferably in Africa-to which 'we should extend our alliance and protection.' One reason Jefferson shared this Southern view was that he agreed with most Southern whites that blacks were quite different and in some ways inferior. They 'secrete less by the kidneys and more by the glands of the skin, which gives them a very strong and disagreeable odor.' They 'require less sleep.' Their sexual desires are 'more ardent' but lack 'the tender, delicate mixture of sentiment and sensation' displayed by whites. They are 'much inferior' in reason, though equal in memory. Jefferson said he had never heard of a black person who could paint a picture, write a musical composition, or 'discover a truth.' He thought it would not be possible to find any 'capable of tracing and comprehending the investigations of Euclid.' Jefferson, one need hardly say, was not a bigoted racist. One of the grand things about him was that he was always open-minded to new evidence. It is significant that he disagreed with virtually all Americans of his day in rating the Indians as the equals of the whites in ability. And when he was sent specimens of mathematical work by Benjamin Banneker, a free black planter in Maryland, he not only altered his views on this point but gleefully sent the manuscript off to the Marquis de Condorcet, secretary of the Paris Academy of Sciences, saying he was 'happy to inform you that we have now in the United States a negro ... who is a very respectable mathematician.' Jefferson hoped that more Bannekers would emerge to prove that any apparent inferiority of blacks 'does not proceed from any differences in the structure of the parts on which the intellect depends' but 'is merely the effect of their degraded condition.' He did not, however, change his opinion that freed blacks could not remain in the South.

Nor did Jefferson ever get round to doing anything for his own slaves, such as emancipating them. The reason was pitifully simple: money. Jefferson was never in a financial condition to indulge his conscience. Indeed, in an unsuccessful attempt to increase the income from his

estates, he actually bought more slaves. When one of his slaves ran away he offered a reward for his capture. When he was about to return from his embassy to Paris, and his black slave-cook wished to remain there as a freeman, Jefferson persuaded him to come back to Monticello as a slave-he could not afford to lose the cook's 'artistry.' He wrote: 'The whole commerce between master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the more boisterous passions, the most unremitting despotism on the one part, and degrading submission on the other ... indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, that his justice cannot sleep for ever.' But if Jefferson's principles were strong, his appetites were stronger. And his debts were stronger still. Jefferson borrowed money all his life and, however much he hated the English, his indebtedness to two large London banking houses steadily increased. It is a curious and not entirely explicable fact that Southern slave-holding and indebtedness went together. The fact that a ship, from Boston or London itself-or France-could easily call at the plantation wharf and deposit on credit the latest European delicacies and luxuries was a standing temptation few Southern gentlemen could resist. Jefferson's temptations were more complex than most of his peers, for in addition to French wines, brandies, liqueurs and cheeses, hams and pates, vintage port from Bristol, coats and shirts from Savile Row, and porcelain from Wedgwood and Doulton, there were endless books, some of them very expensive, accumulating to form the finest library, 15,000 volumes, on the western side of the Atlantic. All these, and the growing interest on the debts, had to be paid for by the sweat of his slaves.

Jefferson's expensive tastes might not have proved so fatal to his principles had he not also been an amateur architect of astonishing persistence and eccentricity. Architecture always tells us a great deal about the political state of a nation. This maxim has never been better illustrated than in America during the last quarter of the 18th century and the first of the 19th. And, in this general illustration, Jefferson and his Monticello provide a vivid particular example. Even more than its growing wealth, the new self-confidence felt in America just before, during, and still more after the Revolution and the securing of Independence, expressed itself in ambitious building-programs by its planter aristocracy (and their city associates) who now saw themselves as a ruling class. As befits their Roman republican principles, their taste was overwhelmingly classical. They went back for models both to antiquity and to Renaissance reinterpretations of classical forms. In particular they looked to Palladio. His *Four Books of Architecture*, published (1738) in English translation, lavishly illustrated by his designs, must have been in more American gentlemen's libraries than any other book of its kind. Palladio popularized a two-story pedimented portico, with ionic columns on the lower level and doric columns above. He also favored the so-called 'colossal portico' where vast columns arise without interruption from the floor of the porch to the pediment and roof.

Classical villas were going up steadily in America in the years just before the break with England-the Longfellow House in Cambridge, Massachusetts (1759) for instance or Mount Pleasant (1763), on the Schuylkill, described by John Adams as 'the most elegant country seat in the Northern colonies.' Also on the Schuylkill was Landsdowne, erected by Governor Penn of Pennsylvania, the first to introduce Palladio's two-storied pedimented portico. It was widely imitated and, when Independence came, this flamboyant architectural device, and the still more impressive colossal portico, became, and remain, symbols of America's triumphant discovery of itself. Some of these swagger-houses were built from scratch. Others, like Washington's own Mount Vernon, had a huge portico added (1777-84). An even bigger swagger-portico was added to Woodlands, the magnificent mansion built by the politician William Hamilton in 1787-90. With the end of the war, the creation of the Constitution, and, still more, the establishment of an

efficient central government and the recovery of American credit, the passion for villa-building intensified. The Schuylkill, near America's richest city, Philadelphia, like the Thames to the west of London, was soon dotted with these delectable edifices, every few hundred yards.

The Schuylkill villa-rush became a positive stampede in 1793 when the worst outbreak of yellow fever in America's history killed one in ten of Philadelphia's inhabitants. Between 1793 and 1810 scores of villas emerged, each with its own pleasure-gardens or landscaped park, so that, said a visitor, 'The countryside [near Philadelphia] is very pleasant and agreeable, finely interspersed with genteel country seats, fields and orchards, for several miles around.' That is exactly the impression the new American ruling class wished to convey. None more so than Jefferson, who studied and practiced not only statesmanship but architecture all his life. Unfortunately, his divided nature, the simultaneous existence in his personality of incompatible opposites, his indecisiveness, his open-mindedness and changeability, combined to turn his building activities, especially at Monticello, into a nightmare saga. His plan to create a Palladian villa of his own design first unfolded in 1768 and work continued for virtually the rest of his life, the building being finished, insofar as it ever was, in the winter of 1823-4.

It is just as well that Jefferson had no sense of humor: he constitutes in his own way an egregious comic character, accident-prone and vertiginous, to whom minor catastrophes accrued. Almost from the start, the house was lived in, and guests invited there, though it was, by grandee standards, uninhabitable. When Jefferson became president, work on the house had proceeded for over thirty years, but half the rooms were unplastered and many had no flooring. One guest, Anna Maria Thornton, was surprised to find the upper floor reached by 'a little ladder of a staircase ... very steep' (it is still there). On the second floor, where she slept, the window came down to the ground so there was no privacy but it was so short she had to crouch to see the view. The entrance hall had a clock perched awkwardly over the doorway, driven by cannon-ball weights in the corners, and with a balcony jutting out at the back.

The house was full of ingenious but amateurish Heath Robinson devices such as this, many of which do not work to this day. The library consisted not of shelves but of individual boxes stacked on top of each other, a weird arrangement. The dining-room looked into the tea-room and was only closed off by glass doors, shut in cold weather. The Dome Room proved an insoluble problem. There was no way to heat it, as a chimney flue would have marred its external appearance-the whole point of its existence-so Jefferson could not install a stove. Hence it was never used. The ice-house, attached to the main building, must have been one of the most awkward structures ever devised. It was filled, unusually, by cisterns but they were riddled by leaks and in Jefferson's day only two out of four ever held water. The chimneys proved too low and blew smoke into the house; the fires smoked too and gave out little heat. Jefferson was too jealous of Count Rumford's fame to install a 'Rumford,' the first really elegant drawing-room fireplace, so much admired by Jane Austen. He insisted on producing his own design, which did not work. The bedrooms were mere alcoves. Jefferson was constantly being delivered the wrong wood, or too much wood, or too little wood, and when he got the right wood one of several fires destroyed the kiln for drying it. As originally built, his bedroom accorded him no privacy at all, a curious oversight considering he had a passion for being alone and unobserved. Thereafter the search for privacy became an obsession in the many changes of design, and in the end he built two large porticoes, which did not fit into the Palladian design at all and were merely screens for his bedroom. Contemporaries assumed they were there so that his alleged mistress, Sally Herrings, could slip in and out of his chamber unobserved. Whether this was so we cannot now judge because they were removed in 1890.

His workmen, Messrs Neilson, Stewart, Chisholm, Oldham, and Dinsmore, required infinite patience as Jefferson changed his mind repeatedly. Often a finished bit had to be redone to accommodate a new gimmick Jefferson had just invented—a concealed miniature lift to haul wine up from the cellars into the dining-room, for example, or a mysterious pulley-system which, in theory, made the tea-room doors open of their own accord. On the other hand, Jefferson conveyed his ever changing instructions to them in copious letters, written on terms of complete equality. And many of the workmen were incompetent anyway. Richard Richardson, his carpenter-columnist, could not get the columns of the swagger-portico straight, despite many tries. Jefferson was very forgiving. He was also good-natured. When he was president, he was expected by Oldham to look after his petty financial affairs in Washington, and Jefferson cheerfully obliged.

The total cost of the house over more than half a century must have been enormous but it is impossible to compute the exact or even an approximate sum. All his life, Jefferson kept accounts, lists, and records in overwhelming quantity, covering all his activities in minute detail. His financial records are particularly copious. Yet, as they do not epitomize or balance, they convey little useful information. With a bit of research, Jefferson could have discovered, down to the last cent, what he had spent on any day of his life. But he never knew what he was worth or how much he was in debt. As he told his secretary, William Short, his true financial position remained a mystery to him. It was in fact deplorable and grew steadily worse from the 1770s onwards. As the editors of his memorandum books put it, 'The daily ritual of recording pecuniary events gave Jefferson an artificial sense of order in his financial world.' In this respect Jefferson's accounts were a microcosm of the present-day federal budget, listing every detail of expenditure in tens of thousands of pages and millions of words, which obscures the fact that the government is adding to the national debt at the rate of \$10,000 a second.

The story of Jefferson's financial downfall is a melancholy one. He should have saved money when he was president, living free and earning \$25,000 annually for eight years. But he left office more in debt than when he entered it, and over \$10,000 more than he thought. He assigned \$2,500 a year, the income from his Bedford estates—half his landed profits—to pay the debts off; but they mysteriously rose. In 1815 he negotiated with Congress to sell them his library for \$24,000, to form the basis of the Library of Congress. But this cleared less than half his borrowings, which then began to rise again. It was not all his fault. In 1819 William Carey Nicholas, the rascally father-in-law of Jefferson's grandson, Jefferson Randolph, pressured him into endorsing notes for \$20,000. The next year Nicholas defaulted and Jefferson became liable for the lot. This coincided with the financial collapse of 1819 which made it impossible for Jefferson to sell lands and slaves, now his only option. In his last years visitors noticed that Monticello was 'old and going to decay,' the gardens 'slovenly.' His attempt to sell it in a lottery failed and when he died his debts were over \$100,000. Jefferson's original plan had been to give all his slaves manumission at his death. That had to be scrapped. Jefferson Randolph, as heir, felt he had no alternative but to sell his grandfather's 130 slaves in 1827, splitting up families and separating mothers and children in the process, to achieve the maximum cash total. The next year he tried to sell Monticello itself, but there were no bidders and the house was vandalized. It is a miracle that it survived at all. Happily in 1834 it came into the hands of the Levy family, who maintained it for ninety years until, in the fullness of time (1923), it was bought by the Jefferson Memorial Foundation for \$500,000. Now it is restored and glorious and a Historic Home—and a remarkable monument to the divided nature and peculiarities of its illustrious begetter.

In the light of this saga of debt, it is amazing that Jefferson was as good a president as he contrived to be. In fact he managed to reduce the national debt by 30 percent. This was no doubt mainly due to the continuing effects of Hamilton's refunding measures, but Jefferson's minimalist ideas of central government had something to do with it too. Once Jefferson took up office, all the ceremonial grandeur of the Washington presidency, kept up by Adams, was scrapped. We hear no more of the white coach. Dress swords were discarded. Jefferson traveled on horseback and his clothes were plain, not to say slovenly at times. Not only was he unguarded, his house in Washington was open to all-comers. One visitor reported that he arrived at eight o'clock in the morning, without any letters of introduction, and was immediately shown into the President's study, where he was received with courtesy and left highly pleased with the affability, intelligence and good sense of the President of America.

What is perhaps even more remarkable is that Jefferson let it be known that anyone could write to him with their suggestions, observations, or complaints, and that their letters would receive his individual attention. All they had to pay was the cost of the paper and the ink, as Jefferson agreed to pay the postage on receipt. This was an astonishing concession, for depending on the distance, postage then cost from 8 to 35 cents for each sheet of paper, at a time when laborers worked for a dollar a day. The President's generosity encouraged prolixity, many correspondents writing him letters of a dozen sheets or more. Though Jefferson had a secretary, he insisted on opening, reading, answering, and filing all these letters himself. As he never in his life threw anything away, they are all still in existence and many of them have recently been edited. Jefferson's replies, registered on a smudged copier or traced by a more efficient polygraph of his own devising, have also survived.

The letters the President received were political ('Thomas Jefferson, you infernal villain'), supplication for office ('Could it be possible to Give a Youth of my Age the Appointment of a Midshipman in the Navy?'-this purporting to come from four-year-old Thomas Jefferson Gassaway), pleas from widows ('You will no Doubt think Me posest of a Deal of asurance for adressing you, but Neacesary has no Law'), requests for money ('The hope which is kindled from the very ashes of despair alone emboldens me to address you'), appeals from imprisoned debtors and victims of miscarriages of justice ('I Rote to you for assistance not for Relesement'), death threats which read as though they had been written by the young Tom Sawyer ('The retributive SWORD is suspended over your Head by a slender Thread-BEWARE!') and pure abuse ('Thomas Jefferson you are the damnedest fool that God put life into, God dam you'). Taken together, these letters give an extraordinarily vivid glimpse into American lives in the first decade of the 19th century. All except the merely abusive got a reply in Jefferson's hand, even anonymous writers receiving this courtesy provided they gave some sort of address. Some of the replies were long and detailed, some contained money, others embodied careful inquiry into a particular grievance or request. Jefferson was not the only great man to take trouble with correspondents. His contemporary the Duke of Wellington also replied to thousands of letters, most of them from strangers, in his own hand, often by return of post. But Jefferson's conscientious care is without parallel-he was a man of truly heroic civility.

Just occasionally the attention the President paid to his correspondence proved invaluable. He wrote: 'I consider anonymous letters as sufficient foundation for inquiry into the facts they communicate.' On December 11, 1805 he received one such, signed 'Your Friend,' seeking 'to give you a warning about Burr's intrigues ... be thoroughly persuaded B. is a new Catilina.' Burr, as Jefferson had long known, was an unscrupulous adventurer and he was most embarrassed to have such a rogue as his vice-president during his first term. He forced Burr to keep his distance



and the only occasion when the Vice-President came into prominence was when he presided, *ex officio*, at the impeachment of Supreme Court Justice Samuel Chase (1741-1811). It was Jefferson's greatest grievance against his predecessor that Adams had filled up all the court vacancies with ardent federalists, some of them being appointed only days before he left office. Chase was particularly obnoxious to Jefferson's party and his overbearing manner and abusive remarks while judging cases arising out of the hated Alien and Sedition Acts led to a demand for his impeachment in 1804, which Jefferson foolishly encouraged. It is the only time Congress has ever attempted to remove a member of the Supreme Court in this way and the episode demonstrated painfully that impeachment is not an effective method of trying to curb the Court for political reasons. Burr did not distinguish himself and the process failed. He was, accordingly, dropped from the ticket when Jefferson was reelected, George Clinton being chosen instead.

As it happened, even before the election Burr was secretly engaged in various anti-Union intrigues, notably a plan by Senator Timothy Pickering and Massachusetts hardliners to take New England out of the Union. They wanted New York with them too, obviously, and for this purpose it was necessary to get Burr elected governor of the state. But Hamilton frustrated this scheme on the grounds that Burr was 'a dangerous man and one who ought not to be trusted with reins of government.' These remarks got into print and Burr challenged Hamilton to a duel at Weehawken, New Jersey (July 11, 1804). Hamilton strongly disapproved of dueling but felt he could not in honor decline the challenge. His conscience, however, forbade him to shoot at his opponent. Burr killed him without compunction, thus removing from the chessboard of American power one of its most baroque and unpredictable pieces.

Burr went into hiding in Virginia, reemerged, went west, and there embarked on a series of plots to create a new, independent state from Spanish Mexico. Such schemes seem childish to us. But they were not uncommon as the Spanish-American empire disintegrated during these years and romantic adventurers abounded. (Not for nothing did the young Lord Byron consider joining in the scramble for pieces of Spain's rotting imperial flesh.) Burr went further, however, and sought to detach parts of Trans-Appalachian America to join his proposed kingdom. This was treason against the United States, and Jefferson, forewarned, had him arrested and charged. The trial took place in 1807 under Chief Justice Marshall, who, as we have seen, was no friend of the President. It was a highly partisan affair. To embarrass the President, Marshall allowed him to be subpoenaed to appear, and testify under oath. Jefferson refused, invoking, for the first time, executive privilege. Marshall countered by placing a narrow construction on the constitutional law of treason and Burr was acquitted. That was the end of him as a political figure, however, and the episode demonstrated that even a states' rights president like Jefferson was determined to uphold federal authority as far as it legally stretched.

Indeed as president, Jefferson proved himself more assertive and expansionist than he would have believed possible in the 1790s. It was another instance of his contradictions. In the Western Mediterranean, where Barbary pirates from Algiers, Tunis, Morocco, and Tripoli preyed on Western shipping, Jefferson abandoned Adams' policy of following the British example, and paying tribute, and instead sent the ships Adams had built-and which he had opposed-to blockade Tripoli (1803-5) and teach it a lesson. He also sent a land expedition (1804) of American marines and Greek mercenaries across the desert, under the command of William Eaton, the US consul in Tunis-thus producing one theme of the American Marine Corps' marching-song. The Arab beys were the largest-scale slave-merchants (of whites as well as blacks and browns) in the world and hitting them was one way Jefferson could work off his

frustrations at not doing anything about American slavery. It certainly aroused the envy of Admiral Nelson, then British naval Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean, who was a passionate anti-slaver and was longing to have a crack at the beys. It was also the first example of America's willingness to take the initiative in upholding civilized standards of international behavior-an excellent portent for the future.

More astonishing still is the fact that Jefferson, who saw America's future as that of a medium-sized agrarian republic with no ambitions to great-power status, succeeded in doubling the size of the nation at a stroke. Spain's decision to transfer Louisiana back to France, which was first rumored in Washington early in Jefferson's presidency, immediately rang the alarm-bells. Spain's control of New Orleans and the outlet of the Mississippi was a constant irritant. But Spain was weak and could be bullied. France was the strongest military power on earth and might be tempted to recreate the North American empire it had ceded in 1763. 'Nothing since the Revolutionary War has produced such uneasy sensations through the body of the nation,' Jefferson wrote (April 1802); it was 'the embryo of a tornado.' He added, 'There is on the globe one single spot, the possessor of which is our natural and habitual enemy. It is New Orleans, through which the produce of three-eighths of our territory must pass to market.' His Secretary of State, Madison, agreed. The Mississippi, he wrote, is 'the Hudson, the Delaware, the Potomac, and all the navigable rivers of the United States, formed into one stream.'

Jefferson instructed Robert Livingston, his envoy in Paris, to open immediate negotiations with the Bonapartist government to see whether there was any possibility of France's allowing the United States to mitigate the peril, or at least insure access to the sea through New Orleans, by some kind of territorial bargain or purchase. He sent James Monroe to Paris to assist in the deal-if there was one. The French still held Talleyrand's view that America was a rich cow, which could be milked, and it was the first time Washington was prepared to wave the Almighty Dollar in the greedy faces of foreigners. But Jefferson was gloomy about the outcome; 'I am not sanguine,' he wrote, in obtaining a cession of New Orleans for money.' Then, in April 1803, the French Foreign Minister, on Bonaparte's terse instructions, offered America the whole of Louisiana, the entire Mississippi valley, New Orleans-the lot-for \$15 million, cash down. Jefferson could hardly believe his luck and immediately set about applying to the hated banks, the masters of 'artificial' property, for the money. The deal was concluded in time for the President to announce it on July 4, 1803, the twenty-sixth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Not only did it double the size of America, making it a country as large as Europe, it also removed the last doubts about western expansion and made it virtually certain that America would double in size again in the next few decades. Never before, or since, in history has such an extraordinary territorial cash-bargain been concluded. The Americans were not sure even how much land they had got, but when Livingston asked the French to indicate the exact boundaries of their cession, Talleyrand sourly replied: 'I can give you no direction. You have made a noble bargain for yourselves and I suppose you will make the most of it.' He was, of course, right. As it turned out, America got another 828,000 square miles and 1,000 million acres of good land. Jefferson's only doubt was the constitutionality of the purchase. His federal opponents indeed, reversing their usual view, claimed that the Constitution did not authorize the purchase of foreign territory. But Jefferson for once abandoned his constitutional timidity and begged Congress to accept.

Jefferson admitted privately he was breaking the Constitution, justifying himself in a letter to John Breckinridge in a characteristic means-justifies-the-end manner: If the French kept Louisiana America would have to 'marry ourselves to the British fleet and nation.' Hence:

I would not give one inch of the Mississippi to any nation, because I see in a light very important to our peace the exclusive right to its navigation ... the Constitution has made no provision for our holding foreign territory, still less for incorporating foreign nations into our Union. The Executive, in seizing the fugitive occurrence which so much advances the good of their country, have done an act beyond the Constitution. The Legislature, in casting behind them metaphysical subtleties, and showing themselves like faithful servants, must ratify and pay for it, and throw themselves on their country in doing for them unauthorised what we know they would have done for themselves had they been in a situation to do it.

This is a very important statement in American history, showing that even a strict constitutionalist like Jefferson was prepared to dismiss the Constitution's provisions as 'metaphysical subtleties' if they stood between the United States and what would soon be called its Manifest Destiny to occupy the entire northern half of the hemisphere. After Louisiana, the rest of the United States' enormous acquisitions-or depredations, depending on the viewpoint-would follow almost as a matter of course. At all events Congress approved Jefferson's decision on October 20, 1803 and early the following year a territorial government was set up. Eight years later Louisiana was admitted to the Union, the first of thirteen states to be carved from this immense godsend.

That the Louisiana affair was not merely a fortuitous aberration in Jefferson's thinking is proved by his decision, even before the purchase was arranged, to ask Congress secretly to authorize and finance an expedition to explore overland routes to the American Pacific coast. He had nurtured this idea since boyhood and ten years before, as secretary of state, he had tried to persuade the French naturalist Andrew Michaux to explore 'a river called Oregon' and find 'the shortest and most convenient route of communication between the US & the Pacific Ocean.' He now commanded his secretary, Meriwether Lewis (1774-1809), to lead an exploratory team to sort out and map the concourse of huge rivers flowing westward on the other side of the watershed from the Mississippi-Missouri headwaters.

Lewis picked his army colleague William Clark (1770-11838) to join him, and they assembled and trained a party of thirty-four soldiers and ten civilians outside St Louis in the winter of 1803, before setting off on a three-year journey. Thanks to a remarkable Shoshone Indian woman, Sacajawea (1786-1812), who acted as guide and interpreter, they crossed the continental divide safely, found the Columbia River and, on November 8, 1805, gazed on the broad Pacific. Lewis went back by the same route (with detours), Clark through the Yellowstone, and they met again at Fort Union, the junction of the Yellowstone and Missouri. They then went down the Missouri, arriving back at St Louis on September 23, 1806. Both reported back in triumph to the President: 'In obedience to your orders we have penetrated the Continent of north America to the Pacific Ocean, and sufficiently explored the interior of the country to affirm with confidence that we have discovered the most practicable route which does exist across the Continent by means of the navigable branches of the Missouri and Columbia rivers. It was one of the most successful and comprehensive geographical adventures ever undertaken, which brought back a mass of economic, political, military, scientific, and cartographical information recorded in copious journals and maps. Jefferson was delighted, as well he might be: the story of the West had begun. Five years later, John Jacob Astor (1763-1848), a German-born adventurer who had entered America in 1784, became a fur-trader, and formed the American Fur Company (1808) and the Pacific Fur Company (1810), founded the first trading post, Astoria, on the Pacific itself (1811)

in the Columbia estuary. Within a few months it had been reported in the leading St Louis newspapers that 'it appears that a journey across the Continent of N. America might be performed with a wagon, there being no obstruction in the whole route that any person would dare call a mountain. Thus the concept and the route of the Oregon Trail came into existence.

Since during his presidency Jefferson had in effect created the Deep South and laid the foundations of the West, it is disappointing to relate that his period in office ended in failure and gloom. But so it was, because neither he nor Madison knew how to steer the United States through the troubled waters of the Napoleonic Wars. The truth is, they were emotionally involved, a fatal propensity in geopolitics. In 1803 the renewal of the great war between republican France and the royalist coalition led by Britain made it possible for the United States to get Louisiana cheap but in other respects it was a disaster for a commercial and maritime power such as America had now become. Britain's victory at Trafalgar in November 1805, in which the Franco-Spanish battlefleet was destroyed, made it supreme at sea. Bonaparte's victories against Austria and Russia at Friedland (1807) put the whole of Continental Europe at his mercy. In order to destroy British exports, gold from which financed the resistance to his tyranny, he imposed what was known as the Continental System, a punitive embargo on British goods. The British responded with their Orders in Council which allowed British blockading fleets to impound even neutral ships, caught violating an elaborate set of rules designed to hit France and its allies commercially. Jefferson in turn passed the Non-Importation Act (April 1806), which banned most British goods and embargoed all non-American shipping.

It is important to realize that all three parties were divided on these measures. The mechanics and economics of international trade were little understood. Policies, shaped in ignorance, often produced the opposite effect of that intended. Bonaparte's Continental System led to trouble with most of his allies and satellites and did his cause more harm than Britain's. The Orders in Council, ill understood and difficult to enforce, harmed Britain's trade most. The Non-Importation Act failed completely, though it certainly angered Britain. The commercial clauses of Jay's treaty expired in 1807 and Monroe, now envoy in London, failed to get sufficient backing from Jefferson and Madison to reach a settlement. The result was a series of incidents between British warships and United States vessels culminating in a naval battle off Norfolk in which the British frigate *Leopard*, searching for deserters serving on US ships, forced the American frigate *Chesapeake* to strike its colors, seized four men aboard, and hanged one of them. The fury caused by this incident, visible from America's shore, was such that if Congress had been sitting war must have followed. Jefferson himself was confused. His intellect told him that Britain and America, being both major maritime and trading powers, had a mutual interest in enforcing the freedom of the seas and the free exchange of traffic and goods at all ports—something the Continental System challenged. The two powers should have worked out a sensible joint policy and renewed Jay's treaty on its basis. But all Jefferson's republican emotions tugged him in the direction of France, and his hatred of monarchy blinded him to the fact that Bonaparte's military dictatorship—adumbrating the totalitarian tyrannies of the 20th century—was an infinitely greater threat to individual liberties than Britain's constitutional and parliamentary crown.

Jefferson managed to keep America out of war for the time being, but in order to respond to the war-fever in some way he got Congress, in December 1807, to pass the Embargo Act, virtually without discussion, which effectively ended all American overseas commerce by forbidding US ships to leave for foreign ports. How Congress failed to throw out this absurdity is a mystery. While American ships remained in harbor, their crews idle and unpaid, smuggling

flourished and British ships had a monopoly of legitimate trade. By a cunning piece of legal legerdemain Bonaparte impounded \$10 million of American goods on the ground that he was assisting Jefferson's embargo. It was the most serious political mistake of Jefferson's entire career because it led the Northern shipping and manufacturing interests to assert, with some plausibility, that the government was being run in the interests of the 'Virginia Dynasty' and its slave-owning planters by a pack of pro-French ultra-republican ideologues. The government was forced to capitulate, backtracking by getting Congress to pass the Non-Intercourse Acts (1809), which got some commerce going again but left everyone's feelings, at home and abroad, raw and inflamed.

The damage to Jefferson's reputation caused by the miseries of the embargo, and the often cruel and disreputable attempts to enforce it, is reflected in the angry letters which poured into his office and which he read with mounting distress. 'Take off the Embargo, return to Carters Mountain and be ashamed of yourself and never show your head in Publick Company again.' 'I am Sir a Friend to Commerce and No Friend to your Administration.' 'Mr President if you know what is good for your future welfare you will take off the embargo.' 'Look at the Situation in the Country when you Took the Chair and look at it now. I should think it would make you sink with despair and hide yourself in the Mountains.' 'You are bartering away this Countrys rights honor and Liberty to that infamous tirant of the world (Napolien).' 'I have agreed to pay four of my friends \$400 to shoat you if you dont take off the embargo.' 'Here I am in Boston in a starving condition ... you are one of the greatest tirants in the whole world.' Jefferson endorsed some of these letters 'abusive' or 'written from tavern scenes of drunkenness.' But others were detailed and circumstantial accounts of the distress caused, such as one written on behalf of 4,000 penniless seamen in Philadelphia-'Sir we Humbly beg your Honor to Grant us destrs Seamen Sum relaf for God nos what we will do.' Some were from destitute seamen's wives claiming that their children were without bread. There were over 300 petitions signed by many hands, multiple threats-one from '300 yankee youths between 18 & 29'-'If I dont cut my *throat* I will join the English and fight against you. I hope, honored sir, you will forgive the abrupt manner in which this is wrote as I'm damn'd mad.' One of many desperate letters says the writer has been forced to steal food to feed his children and intends to 'take to highway robbing.

Jefferson, who had been an optimist up to the turn of the century, was now gloomy, shaken, and demoralized. During his final months in office, government policy disintegrated, with desperate legislative expedients passing backwards and forwards between the two Houses of Congress, and between Congress and executive, in confused attempts to get off the hook of the embargo. Finally, under the pretense of standing up to both France and Britain, Congress passed the Non-Intercourse Act (1809), which effectively repealed the embargo. Jefferson wearily signed it into law on March 2, writing to his friend Pont de Nemours: 'Within a few days I retire to my family, my books and my farms [at Monticello] ... Never did a prisoner, released from his chains, feel such relief as I shall on shaking off the shackles of power. The truth is, he had virtually ceased to be in charge of affairs during the last few months of his presidency, and he left office a beaten man.

But worse was to come. Madison had been preparing for the pres dencv all his life. First-born son of the wealthiest planter in Orange County, he came from the summit of the civilized Virginia gentry. He had been elaborately educated, especially under the great Witherspoon at Princeton. He had studied history, political theory, and economics all his life, as well as the classics. He had known Jefferson since 1776 and the two men's intimate correspondence is a

political and literary education in itself. Small, industrious, moderate, soft-spoken, seeing all sides of the question, trying always to conciliate and reach the golden mean, he was 'a model of neo-classical self-command,' seeking a dream, as the poet Robert Frost has said, 'of a new land to fulfill with people in self-control.' He had served in the House of Burgesses and in Congress, helped draft the Virginia constitution and its Statute of Religious Freedom, assisted at the Mount Vernon Conference, the Annapolis Convention, and the Constitutional Convention, where, more than any other man there, he was the author of the US Constitution itself. He had written twenty-six of the *Federalist Papers* and was the principal architect of the Bill of Rights. He had been a notable leader of the Jeffersonians in Congress and had served his master as secretary of state. He even, unlike Jefferson, had a sense of humor. When, as secretary of state, he had to entertain the Tunisian envoy, come to Washington to negotiate on behalf of the Barbary pirates, and granted the Arab's request for concubines for his elevenstrong party, he put down the cost as 'appropriations for foreign intercourse' (Jefferson was not amused). His wife, Dorothea or Dolley (1768-1849), was a beautiful girl from North Carolina who made herself the first great Washington hostess. But Madison proved a classic illustration of Tacitus' maxim *omnium consensu capax imperii nisi imperasset*. He was no good.

It was a measure of Madison's executive awkwardness that, in his inaugural address, he set out his aims in a sentence he seemed unable to end and which eventually consisted of 470 words and proved difficult to read. At the reception afterwards in the F Street residence, Dolley was in ravishing beauty-'drest in a plain cambric-dress with a very long train, plain round the neck without any handkerchief, and beautiful bonnet of purple velvet, and white satin with white plumes-all dignity, grace and affability.' Dolley, who was 'very much in Charge of the little Man' (Madison seemed tiny, though he had a large head), finished decorating the new Executive Mansion, spending \$2,205 for knives, forks, 'bottle stands and andirons,' \$458 for a pianoforte and \$28 for 'a guitar.' She soon launched the White House's first 'drawingroom' receptions which, in her day, were celebrated-the men in 'black or blue coat with vest, black breeches and black stockings,' the ladies 'not remarkable for anything so much as for the exposure of their swelling breasts and bare backs." But, behind the glitter, there was endless confusion about how America should extricate itself from a maritime clash over rights which few people on either side of the Atlantic now understood. Madison wasted precious months, even years, in foolish expectation that the war would end or, more likely, that the parliamentary struggles in Britain would throw up a new ministry which would see things from America's viewpoint and scrap the measures against neutral ships.

Actually, it was not so much the divisions in British politics which made a compromise so difficult as the pressures and increasing sectionalism in America. It might be true, as Washington had said in his Farewell Address, that East, West, North, and South in America had much more in common than points of difference. But, in the short-tempered atmosphere aroused by the long European war and its Atlantic repercussions, the differences seemed insuperable. New England had virtually everything in common with British maritime interests. But the further south and west you traveled the more opinion-leaders you found who wanted a showdown with Britain as the road to expansion. Was not Canada to be had for the taking? And Florida? And the West Indies? And this was Madison's constituency. These states had elected him in 1808, and when he was reelected in 1812 his dependence on the South and West was even more marked. His opponent, Clinton, carried New York (twenty-nine electoral college votes), Massachusetts (twenty-two votes), Connecticut, New Jersey, New Hampshire, and other smaller states, making a total of eighty-nine votes. Madison had Virginia (twenty-five), Pennsylvania (twenty-five), and

a group of Southern and Western states, led by the Carolinas, Georgia, and Kentucky, making 128 votes. But the seven states which voted for Madison had a total of 980,000 slaves. These blacks had no voice in government whatever but each group of 45,000 added an electoral vote to the state where they were held, giving the cause of the South-and war-a total of twenty-one electoral votes. Thus the New England federalists claimed that the freemen of the North were at the irresponsible mercy of the slaves of the South.

Even so, war might have been averted. On June 18, 1812 Congress completed the formalities necessary for a declaration of war on Britain. Two days later in Westminster, Henry Brougham's motion for repealing the Orders in Council had elicited from Lord Castlereagh, on behalf of the government, a statement that they were suspended. Unfortunately, an inexperienced American charge d'affaires in London failed to get the news to Madison with the speed required. To judge by the letters which flew between Madison and his mentor Jefferson throughout 1812, while Madison drifted to war without much passion or eagerness, Jefferson believed that the time had come for a *reglement des comptes* with Britain and that America would make huge and immediate gains, especially 'the conquest of Canada.' With the advantage of hindsight, perhaps, we see both these two pillars of the republic, these upholders of white civilization, as irresponsible and reckless.

When the war began it consisted of three primary forms of hostility: an American invasion of Canada; the naval war on the Great Lakes and on the high seas; and opportunities presented to the South and the American settler interest to despoil the possessions of Britain's ally, Spain, and Spain's and Britain's Indian dependants. Washington pinned its high hopes on the first. But the invasion was based on two misapprehensions. The first was that Canada was a soft target. It consisted of two halves-Lower Canada in the east, overwhelmingly French-speaking, and Upper Canada, to the west and north, English-speaking but thinly settled. Madison and Jefferson believed that the French-speaking Canadians were an oppressed and occupied people, who identified with Britain's enemy, France, and would welcome the Americans as liberators. Nothing could have been more mistaken. The French Canadians were ultra-conservative Roman Catholics, who regarded the French Republic as atheism incarnate, Bonaparte as a usurper and Anti-Christ, and who wanted a Bourbon restoration, one of the prime aims of British war-policy. The Quebec Act of 1774 had given the French community wide cultural, political, and religious privileges and was seen as a masterpiece of liberal statesmanship. They thought that, if the invasion turned Lower Canada into a member-state of the United States, they would be republicanized and Protestantized. In Upper Canada, it is true, there were only 4,500 British troops and a great many recent American settlers. The British Commander-in-Chief, Sir Isaac Brock, thought many of them were disloyal and that his only course was to 'speak loud and think big.' In fact the majority of the English-speaking Canadians were old Tories, anti-republicans, or their sons and grandsons. Canada had resisted the blandishments of American republicanism even in the 1770s; reinforced since then by 100,000 loyalists and their teeming descendants, and by many recent arrivals from Britain, they had no wish to change their allegiance.

The illusions shared by the Virginian Dynasty are summed up in Jefferson's boast to Madison: 'The acquisition of Canada this year [1812] as far as the neighborhood of Quebec, will be a mere matter of marching, and will give us experience for the attack on Halifax the next, and the final expulsion of England from the American continent. Halifax once taken, every cockboat of hers must return to England for repairs.' The second grand illusion was the quality of the American militia, about which Madison had boasted in his inaugural-'armed and trained, the militia is the firmest bulwark of republics.' In the first place, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Hampshire

flatly refused to send their militias at all. New England did not exactly sit on its hands: it invested its money in London securities and did a good business selling supplies to the British forces. In return, the British declined to impose a blockade on New England, or even on New York until the end of the war. By that stage two-thirds of the beef consumed by the British Army was supplied from south of the border, chiefly Vermont and New York State.

The forces Madison dispatched on his 'march' turned out to be a rabble. The militiamen had done well, in the Revolutionary War, defending their own homes, but outside their native districts their amateurishness became evident. They had no discipline. Every man selected his own ground to pitch a tent. No pickets were posted, no patrols sent out at night. Both the militiamen and the volunteers, who had somewhat stricter terms of service, believed they had no legal duty to fight outside United States territory and at first refused to cross the border. A rumor spread among the Volunteers that, if they did so, they automatically became liable for five years' service. Many had never met Indian fighters before and were terrified of them, believing they tortured and massacred their prisoners. News of Indians in the vicinity led to wholesale desertions and even mutinies. The senior officers were hopeless. Major-General Stephen van Rensselaer of the New York Militia came from one of the oldest Dutch families, had inherited 150,000 acres, let to 900 tenant farmers each with 150 acres under crops, and was known as 'The Patron,' being 'Eighth in succession.' Grandee he may have been but his men refused to follow him into danger, and his attack from Niagara ended in ignominy. At Frenchdown, General James Winchester contrived to get himself defeated and surrounded, and surrendered his whole army, such as it was. Casualties from Indian attacks, disease, and exposure due to inadequate clothing and tents were high.

The generals blamed each other. General Peter B. Porter accused General Alexander Smyth, in the pages of the *Buffalo Gazette*, of arrant cowardice. They fought a comic-opera duel on Grand Island: no one was hurt but their buffoonery disgusted their men. Smyth was mobbed and his shortcomings posted on handbills. The militias often fought each other with more enthusiasm than they tackled the British. In the camp at Black Rock, Irish Greens from New York waged a pitched battle with the Southern Volunteers, and both turned on the regular troops sent to separate them. The civilian public jeered. The US Light Dragoons, raised in 1808 with the initials USLD on their caps, were branded 'Uncle Sam's Lady Dogs.' By the end of 1813 the invasion of Canada had been effectively abandoned and the British were occupying a large part of Maine.

Madison's forces did better at sea. On the Great Lakes, Oliver Hazard Perry (1785-1819) of Rhode Island built up an efficient little fleet and fought a battle with the British on Lake Erie on September 10, 1813. The *Lawrence*, his flagship, was so badly damaged that he had himself rowed to the *Niagara*, from which he continued the fight until the British squadron surrendered. Afterwards he sent a famous victory dispatch, celebrated for its brevity: 'We have met the enemy and they are ours.' On the high seas, American warships, both regulars and privateers, benefited enormously from the fact that their officers were appointed and promoted entirely on merit-one genuine advantage of republicanism-rather than on 'interest,' as in the Royal Navy. The US ships had all-volunteer crews, too, as opposed to press-ganged British ships. In 1813 and still more in 1814 American privateers did immense damage to British shipping in the western approaches to the British Isles. In an address to the crown, Glasgow merchants, who handled the bulk of the American tobacco trade, complained: 'In the short space of two years, above 800 vessels have been taken by that power whose maritime strength we have hitherto held in contempt.' It is true that the British could play the same game with American coastal shipping. Captain Marryat, later



the famous novelist, on the British frigate *Spartan*, sank or captured scores of American vessels in US inshore waters. But what shook the British Admiralty were the successes of American warships against regular units of the Royal Navy. American frigates were bigger, better designed, carried more guns, and had twice as many officers as their British equivalents. Marryat admitted that, ship for ship, the American Navy-manned, he pointed out, largely by British crews-was superior. George Canning, the British statesman, felt he had to tell the House of Commons: 'It cannot be too deeply felt that the sacred spell of the invincibility of the British navy has been broken by these unfortunate [American] victories.'

The naval war against Britain was the first in which Americans were able to demonstrate what was to become an overwhelming passion for high technology. This was the work of Robert Fulton (1765-1815), a genius of Irish ancestry born in Little Britain (now renamed Fulton Township) in Pennsylvania. His father died when he was tiny and his needy childhood was redeemed by an astonishing skill at drawing combined with inventive mechanical gifts-from the age of thirteen he made his own pencils, brushes, paints, and other materials. He studied under the leading Philadelphia portraitist, Charles Wilson Peale, who painted his new pupil, a tough, brooding young man with rage written all over his face. Precise skills in draftsmanship overlapped with scientific passion in those days-Fulton's younger contemporary, Samuel Morse, who was to transform telegraphy, also began as a portrait painter. Fulton's interest in propulsion began as soon as his art studies. In his teens he made a powerful skyrocket, designed a paddle-wheel, and invented guns.

Fulton had a lifelong hatred of the Royal Navy, which he saw as an enemy not just of American independence but of the freedom of the seas, to him the high road to human advancement. In 1798 he went to France in an attempt to sell to General Bonaparte a design for a submarine for use against the British. Oddly enough, as far back as 1776 a Yankee inventor, David Bushnell, had been awarded £60 for building a submarine-but it did not work when tried against British ships. Fulton's U-boat, with a crew of three, could submerge to 25 feet and was equipped with mines and primitive torpedoes. Like all his marine designs, it imitated the movements of a fish. The French promised him 400,000 francs if he sank a British frigate. But when the sub was tried in 1801 it too failed and the French lost interest.' He then had the audacity to go to London and try to sell submarines to the British Admiralty, promising to blow up the French invasion fleet then gathering at Boulogne (1803-4). The British too were keen at first, and one of Fulton's torpedoes actually succeeded in sinking a French pinnace, drowning its crew of twenty-two. But only the French knew this at the time. When Trafalgar ended the invasion scare, the Admiralty gave Fulton the brush-off.

Thus the War of 1812 came to Fulton as an emotional and professional godsend-he could now work for his own government. He was able to buy some powerful steam-engines made by the leading British maker, Boulton and Watt, and he planned to install them in enormous steam-driven surface warships. The project-ship, christened *Demologus* (1813), then *Fulton the First* (1814), was a twin-hulled catamaran with 16-foot paddles between the hulls. It was 156 feet long, 56 wide, and 20 deep and was protected by a 5-foot solid timber belt. With an engine powered by a cylinder 4 feet in diameter, giving an engine-stroke of 5 feet, this would have been the first large-scale armored steam-warship. The British were also working on a steam-warship at Chatham, but it was only a sloop. Fulton's new battleship was planned to carry thirty 32-pound guns firing red-hot shot, plus 100-pound projectiles below the waterline. With its 120 horsepower it could move at 5 miles an hour independent of the winds and, in theory at least, outclassed any British warship afloat. Stories of this monster, launched on the East River June 29, 1814, reached

Britain and grew in the telling. An Edinburgh newspaper doubled the ship's size, adding: 'To annoy an enemy attempting to board, it can discharge 100 gallons of boiling water a minute and, by mechanism, 300 cutlasses with the utmost regularity over her gunwales and work also an equal number of heavy iron pikes of great length, darting them from her sides with prodigious force.'

The British were also developing new weapons. In 1803 Colonel Henry Shrapnel invented the hollow-cased shot or 'Shrapnel Shell,' an anti-personnel weapon still in use. It was hoped to combine it with the new chemical rockets developed by William Congreve, son of the man who ran Britain's main arsenal at Woolwich. Whereas Fulton was known as 'Toots' because of the noises he made, Congreve was 'Squibb.' He created the Congreve Rocket in 1808 and by 1812 had developed an advanced version with a 42-pound warhead and a range of 3,000 yards, nearly 2 miles. He had in mind a 400-pounder with a 10-mile range. By 1813, when stories of the American attack on Canada and the burning of towns and villages reached Britain, there was outrage and calls for revenge. Captain Charles Pasley, the leading British geostrategist, proposed bombarding the American coastal towns. Robert Southey, the Poet Laureate, applauded the scheme, especially if put into effect with the new giant Congreves. He wrote to Sir Walter Scott that, if British peace proposals were not accepted, 'I would run down the [American] coast, and treat the great towns with an exhibition of rockets ... [until] they choose to put a stop to the illuminations by submission-or till Philadelphia, New York, Baltimore etc were laid in Ashes.'

Southey's suggestion, coming from a man not normally bloodthirsty, reflected the exasperation of the British people with war. In the spring of 1814 Bonaparte's regime collapsed and fighting in Europe ceased. The American war seemed a hangover from the past, an anomaly. The British were obsessed by beating Bonaparte but took no interest in the transatlantic conflict. When Francis Jeffrey, the famous editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, was in Washington in January 1814 and called on Madison, the President asked him what the British thought about the war. Jeffrey was silent. Pressed to reply, he said: 'Half the people of England do not know there is a war with America, and those who did had forgotten it.' But the British government were keen to tidy up loose ends all over the world and, in particular, get the frontier of Canada agreed once and for all, and a settlement in the West Indies. So they put out determined peace-feelers but, at the same time, rushed across the Atlantic forces released by the end of the war in Europe, with the aim of putting pressure on Madison.

In view of America's failure in Canada, Madison should have greeted the news of his French ally's defeat as a spur to get the best peace settlement he could as fast as possible. But he was dilatory and divided in himself, and his administration reflected this division. Monroe, his Secretary of State, was all for peace and thought pursuit of the war madness. But Madison had appointed General John Armstrong (1758-1843) his Secretary for War, with wide powers to direct the field armies and Armstrong was keen on victory. He had been ADC to Horatio Alger in the War of Independence, had political ambitions, and thought a ruthless policy might promote them. Monroe thought him a potential Bonaparte.' Armstrong sent an order to General William Harrison, the future President, with instructions to conciliate the Indians, turn them loose on the Canadians, and convert the British settlements on the Thames River into 'a desert.' He also gave General McClure discretion to burn Newark. Madison commanded the Thames order to be revoked, and he disavowed the burning of Newark. Terror was never official White House policy, and one colonel was court-martialled for a town-burning. Nevertheless, many settlers were murdered and their houses torched. Bearing in mind that Britain was now free to retaliate, with an enormous navy of ninety-nine battleships and countless smaller vessels, and with a large

army of Peninsular War veterans, Madison's conduct makes no sense. Moreover, he was warned. The British naval commander, Sir Alexander Cochrane, wrote to Monroe that, unless America made reparations for the 'outrages' in Upper Canada, his duty was 'to destroy and lay waste such towns and districts upon the [American] coast as may be found available.'

In view of this, the lack of preparations taken by Madison, Armstrong, or any of their commanders is remarkable. The actual landing by the British on the Chesapeake in August 1814 seems to have taken everyone by surprise. The assault ships under Sir George Cockburn succeeded in landing 5,000 troops under General Robert Ross and withdrawing them, largely unscathed, over a month later. When news of the British landing reached the capital, politicians and generals rushed about not quite knowing what they were doing. Madison himself, Monroe, Armstrong, the Navy Secretary William Jones, and the Attorney-General Richard Rush all made off to a hastily devised defensive camp outside the city, 'a scene of disorder and confusion which beggars description.' An eyewitness saw the President's wife, Dolley, 'in her carriage flying full speed through Georgetown, accompanied by an officer carrying a drawn sword.' She seems to have been the only person to have behaved with courage and good sense. She saved Gilbert Stuart's fine portrait of Washington, on the dining-room wall of the President's house, 'by breaking the frame, which was screwed to the wall, and having the canvas taken away.'

The British entered Washington, which was now undefended, on Wednesday, August 24. There was a good deal of cowardice as well as incompetence. Edward Codrington, a British naval officer involved in the operation, reporting events to his wife Jane, wrote: 'the enemy flew in all directions [and] scampered away as fast as possible.' Madison, he added, 'must be rather annoyed at finding himself obliged to fly with his whole force from the seat of government, before 1200 English, the entire force actually engaged.' He said that the Americans had 8,000 troops defending the Washington area but 'they ran away too fast for our hard-fagged people to make prisoners.' Madison himself was a fugitive. Dolley had to disguise herself: one tavern, crowded with homeless people, refused her admittance as they blamed her husband for everything. When she took refuge at Rokeby, the country house of Richard Love, his black cook refused to make coffee for her saying: 'I done heerd Mr Madison and Mr Armstrong done sold the country to the British.' The Middle States, like the West and North, had been strongly for the war. Yet their resistance to invasion was pitiful. As one American historian put it, 'In Maryland, Virginia and Pennsylvania there were living not far from 1.5 million of whites. Yet this great population remained in its towns and cities and suffered 5,000 Englishmen to spend five weeks in its midst without once attempting to drive the invaders from its soil.'

Hence the British were able to take their time about humiliating Washington. They fired a volley through the windows of the Capitol, went inside, and set it on fire. Next they went to the President's house, contemptuously referred to by federalists as 'the palace'-it was conspicuously unfinished and had no front porch or lawn-gathered all the furniture in the parlor, and fired it with a live coal from a nearby tavern. They also torched the Treasury Building and the Navy Yard, which burned briskly until a thunderstorm at midnight put it out. Cockburn had a special dislike for the *National Intelligencer*, which had published scurrilous material about him, and he set fire to its offices, telling the troops: 'Be sure that all the presses are destroyed so that the rascals cannot any longer abuse my name.' The troops pulled out at 9 P.M. the following day, by which time a cyclone and torrential rain had further confused the scattered American authorities and compounded the miseries of thousands of refugees. Madison finally found his wife at an inn at Great Falls and prepared to return to his smoldering capital, though as he confessed to Dolly, 'I know not where we are in the first instance to hide our heads.' In temporary quarters on

Eighteenth Street, Madison relieved his despair by sacking Armstrong and accepting the resignations of the Navy and Treasury secretaries. But where was he, and America, to look for a savior?

The savior soon-one might say instantly-appeared, but in a human shape that Madison, his mentor Jefferson, and the whole of the Virginia ruling establishment found mighty uncongenial, the very opposite of the sort of person who, in their opinion, should rule America. By 1814 Andrew Jackson, the twelve-year-old boy who had been marked for life by a British officer's sword, had made himself a great and powerful man, of a distinctively new American type. It is worth looking at him in some detail, because to do so tells us so much about life in the early republic. At seventeen, a hungry, almost uneducated orphan, he had turned to a life in the law. In frontier Tennessee, 'lawyering' was in practice a blend of land-grabbing, wheeler-dealing, office-seeking, and dueling. The frontier was rapidly expanding, rough, violent, and litigious. Jackson became a pleader in a court, attorney-general for a local district, then judge-advocate in the militia. Ten years later he was already deep in land-speculation, the easiest way for a penniless man to become rich in the United States, but he was almost ruined by an associate's bankruptcy. His breakthrough came in 1796, when he helped to create the new state of Tennessee, first as congressman, then as senator. He took office as a judge in the state's Superior Court and founded the first Masonic lodge in Nashville, where he settled in 1801, soon acquiring the magnificent estate of the Hermitage near by. His key move, however, was to get himself elected as major-general of the militia, the power base from which he drove his way to the top.

Jackson was known as a killer. His first duel, fought when he was twenty-one, arose from mutual court-room abuse-a common cause-and ended with Jackson firing into the air. But thereafter, like Burr, he usually shot to kill. Jackson fought many duels on account of his marriage, in 1790, to Rachel Robards, an older divorced woman, a substitute mother, whom he loved passionately and fiercely defended until her death. Rachel's divorce proved invalid and the Jacksons, jeered at, were forced to go through a second marriage ceremony. In 1803, when Jackson was a senior judge in Knoxville, the governor of the state, John Sevier, sneered at Rachel and accused Jackson of 'taking a trip to Natchez with another man's wife.' 'Great God!' responded Jackson, 'do you dare to mention *her* sacred name?' Pistols were drawn-the men being aged fifty-eight and thirty-six respectively-and shots were fired but only a passer-by was injured. Ten days later, however, there was another, bloodier gunfight with various members of Sevier's family. In 1806 Jackson fought a formal duel with Charles Dickinson, being wounded himself and leaving his opponent to bleed to death. In 1813 Jackson was involved in a series of knock-on duels and fights which led to a violent melee in the streets of Nashville, fought with swordsticks, guns, daggers, and bare fists-Thomas Hart Benton, later a famous senator, was another of those involved-the participants rolling, bleeding and bruised, in the dust. Most of Jackson's duels, in which he faithfully carried out his mother's dying injunction, struck a squalid note.

The duels left Jackson's body a wreck. Tall and thin (six feet one, weighing 145 pounds), with an erect body crowned by an upstanding thatch of bright red hair, Jackson had a drawn, pain-lined face from which blue eyes blazed furiously, and his frame was chipped and scarred by the marks of a violent frontier existence. Dickinson's bullet broke two of Jackson's ribs, buried itself in his chest carrying bits of cloth with it, could never be extracted, and caused a lung abscess which caused him pain for decades. In the Benton duel he was hit in the shoulder, barely saved his arm, and, again, the ball could not be prized out, remaining embedded in the bone and provoking osteomyelitis. In 1825 Jackson, who was accident-prone, stumbled on a staircase,

ripped the wound open and caused massive bleeding from which he nearly died and which recurred occasionally all the rest of his life. On top of these hideous scars and bits of metal in his anatomy, Jackson had endemic malaria compounded by dysentery, contracted on campaign. For the first, and for his aching wounds, he took sugar of lead, both externally and internally-a horrifyingly drastic remedy-and for the second, huge doses of calomel which rotted his teeth. Jackson met these misfortunes with stoicism, even heroism. He anticipated the hemorrhages by opening a vein; he would 'lay bare his arm, bandage it, take his penknife from his pocket, call a servant to hold the bowl and bleed himself freely.' His acceptance of pain deepened his resolution but left further scars on his psyche and intensified his rages. His unforgettably fierce but frail figure thus became an embodiment of angry will, working for America's grand but ruthless purposes.

The first to reel before the impact of Jackson's bitterness were the Indians. Most people in the West and South wanted war because it would 'solve the Indian problem.' The new republic was ambivalent about Indians. The Constitution ignored them, saying only that Congress had the power 'to regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes.' Henry Knox, in charge of Indian affairs (as war secretary) in the provisional government and then in Washington's administration, had got Congress in 1786 to pass an ordinance which cut Indian country in two at the Ohio River. North of the Ohio and west of the Hudson was the Northern District; south of the Ohio and east of the Mississippi was the Southern District. Each was under a superintendent who felt some responsibility for his charges, as the British had done. But whereas the crown treated the Indians as 'subjects,' just like the whites (or blacks), the Americans could not regard them as 'citizens'-they were 'savages.'

However, it was one thing to divide the Indians on maps; quite another to get them to do what the government wanted. In the years after the Revolutionary War, the Indians often attacked advancing settlers with success, and efforts by the republic's young and tiny army were liable to end in abject failure. When Washington took over as president, there were only 100-odd regulars of all ranks, and the Creeks alone had between 3,500 and 6,000 warriors. In October 1790 the Indians repulsed General Josiah Harmer's army when it invaded western Ohio; they almost destroyed General Arthur St Clair's force in 1791 near what is now Fort Wayne, Indiana, killing half the 1,400 regulars and militia and sending the rest fleeing in panic. At the Battle of Fallen Timbers, August 20, 1794, Anthony Wayne and his mounted Kentucky Riflemen did something to redress the balance in a vicious engagement which lasted only forty minutes but forced the Shawnees and other tribes to sign the Treaty of Greenville (1795). But outright conquest was never an option. The Indians had to be subdued by treaties, promises, deception, attrition, disease, and alcohol.

The prevailing American view was that the Indians must assimilate or move west. This was a constitutional rather than a racist viewpoint. The United States was organized into parishes, townships, counties, and states. The Indians were organized not geographically but tribally. So organized, they lived in pursuit of game. But the game was gone, or going. They therefore had to detribalize themselves and fit into the American system. If they chose to do so, they could be provided with land (640 acres a family was a figure bandied about) and US citizenship. This was, in fact, the option countless Indians chose. Many settled, took European-type names, and, as it were, vanished into the growing mass of ordinary Americans. In any case there was no clear dividing line between 'redskins' and whites. There were scores of thousands of half-breeds, some of whom identified with the whites, and others who remained tribal. The bulk of the pure-bred

Indians seem to have preferred tribalism when they had the choice. In that case, said the settlers, you must move west, to where there is still game and tribalism is still possible.

The War of 1812 increased the leverage of the settlers-one reason why they favored it so strongly-because the British played the Indian card and therefore justified the most ferocious anti-Indian measures. The British pursued a systematic policy of organizing and arming minorities against the United States. They liberated black slaves wherever they could. In the region of the Apalachicola River, then the boundary between West and East Florida, the British major Edward Nicholas, with four officers and 108 Royal Marines, armed and to some extent trained over 4,000 Creeks and Seminoles, distributing 3,000 muskets, 1,000 carbines, 1,000 pistols, 500 rifles, and a million rounds of ammunition." The Indians themselves were divided on whether to take advantage of all this and attack American settlements. But the leader of their war party, the Shawnee Chief Tecumseh (1768-1813) was in no doubt. With his remarkable oratory, and the predictions of his brother, 'The Prophet,' he had organized a league of Indian tribes and he told their elite (mainly Creeks) in October 1811: 'Let the white race perish! They seize your land. They corrupt your women. They trample on the bones of your dead! Back whence they came, on a trail of blood, they must be driven! Back-aye, back to the great water whose accursed waves brought them to our shores! Burn their dwellings-destroy their stock-slay their wives and children that their very breed may perish! War now! War always! War on the living! War on the dead!'

When the war broke out, the militant Creeks, known as the Red Sticks (they carried bright red war-clubs), joined in enthusiastically, some of them traveling as far north as Canada to massacre the demoralized American invaders in late 1812. On their way home they murdered American settlers on the Ohio, and this in turn led to civil war among the Indians, for the Chickasaw, fearing reprisals, demanded that the southern Creeks punish the murderers. In the wild frontier territory north of the Spanish colonial capital of Pensacola, the American settlers, plus Indian 'friendlies,' attempted a massacre of the Red Sticks, led by the half-breed Peter McQueen, who had his own prophet in the shape of High-Head Jim. The attempt failed, and the whites retreated into the stockade of another half-breed, Samuel Mims, who was prowhite, 50 miles north of Mobile, on the Gulf. It was an acre of ground surrounded by a log fence, with slits for muskets and two gates. Inside were 150 militiamen, 300 whites, half-breeds and friendlies, and another 300 black slaves. Yet another half-breed, Dixon Bailey, was appointed commander. It must be grasped that, at this time, much of the Far South, especially near the coasts, was a lawless area anyway, where groups of men, whites, Indians, half-breeds, escaped slaves, mulattoes, banded together, running their own townships, changing sides frequently. Fort Mims was a typical pawn in this game. A slave who warned Bailey that the Red Sticks were coming was deemed a liar and flogged, and the stockade gates were actually open when 1,000 Sticks attacked. Bailey was killed trying to shut the gates and all except fifteen whites were slaughtered. 'The children were seized by the legs and killed by battering their heads against the stockading, the women were scalped, and those who were pregnant were opened while they were alive and the embryo infants let out of the womb.' The Creeks murdered 553 men, women, and children and took away 250 scalps on poles.

At this point Major-General Jackson was told to take the Tennessee militia smith and avenge the disaster. It was just the kind of job he liked and the opportunity for which he had been waiting. On Indians he had exactly the same views as the leader of the anti-British faction in the West, Henry Clay of Kentucky (1777-1852), Speaker of the House and organizer of what were known as the War Hawks. Clay, and John Caldwell Calhoun of South Carolina (1782-1850), the

most articulate spokesman of the Southerners, wanted every unassimilable Indian driven west of the Mississippi. Jackson agreed with that. He further argued that the states and the federal government should build roads as quickly as possible, thus attracting settlers who would secure any territory vacated by the Indians immediately. Jackson's Protestant forebears in Ulster had pursued exactly the same strategy against the 'Wild Irish.' When he got his orders, his arm was still in a sling from his latest duel but he hurried south, building roads as he went. With him were his bosom pal and partner in land-speculation, General John Coffee, who commanded the cavalry, and various adventurers, including David Crockett (1786-1836), also from Tennessee and a noted sharpshooter, and Samuel Houston (1793-1863), a Virginia-born frontiersman, then only nineteen.

These men, who were later to expand the United States into Texas and beyond, were bloodied in the Creek War. And bloody it was. On November 3, two months after the massacre, Jackson surrounded the 'hostile' village of Tallushatchee and sent in Coffee with 1,000 men to destroy it. Jackson later reported to his wife Rachel that Coffee 'executed this order in elegant stile.' Crockett put it more accurately: 'We shot them like dogs.' Every male in the village, 186 in all, was put to death. Women were killed too, though eighty-four women and children were taken prisoner. An eyewitness wrote: 'We found as many as eight or ten bodies in a single cabin.' Some had been torched, and half-consumed bodies were seen among the smoking ruins. 'In other instances, dogs had torn and feasted on the bodies of their masters.' A tenmonth-old Indian child was found clutched in his dead mother's arms. Jackson, who always had a fellow-feeling for orphans and who was capable of sudden spasms of humanitarianism in the midst of his most ferocious activities, adopted the boy instantly, named him Lyncoya, and had him conveyed to the Hermitage. He wrote to Rachel: 'The child must be well taken care of, he may have been given to me for some valuable purpose-in fact when I reflect that he, as to his relations, is so much like myself, I feel an unusual sympathy for him.'

A week later, Jackson won a pitched battle at Talladega, attacking a force of 1,000 Red Sticks and killing 300 of them. At that point some of his men felt enough was enough. The militia was obliged to provide only ninety days' service. The volunteers had engaged for a year but their term was running out. Both said they wanted to go home. They would either march home under Jackson, or mutiny and go home without him. This was the spirit which had ruined the Canada campaign and was already affecting other forces in the multipronged campaign against the Creeks. But Jackson was not going to let his angry will be frustrated by a few homesick barrack-room lawyers. He used the volunteers to frighten the militia men and his few regulars to frighten both. On November 17 he and Coffee lined the road and threatened to shoot any militiamen who started to march home. Back in camp he faced an entire brigade, his left arm in a sling, his right clutching a musket which rested on the neck of his horse, and said he would personally shoot any man who crossed the line he drew. He held the mob with his fierce glare until regulars with arms ready formed up behind him. When the volunteers, their time up, decided to move off on December 10, Jackson trained two pieces of artillery, loaded with grapeshot, on them, and when they failed to respond to his orders, he commanded the gunners, picked loyalists, to light their matches. At that the mutineers gave way. They hated Jackson, but they feared him more.

He wrote to Rachel that the volunteers had become 'mere whining, complaining Seditious and mutineers, to keep whom from open acts of mutiny I have been compelled to point my cannon against, with a lighted match to destroy them. This was a grating moment of my life. I felt the pangs of an affectionate parent, compelled from duty to chastise the child.' It is unlikely that Jackson felt any such emotion; he always rationalized his acts of passion in language from a

pre-Victorian melodrama. When John Woods, a militiaman of eighteen, refused an order, and grabbed a gun when arrested, Jackson had no hesitation in having him shot by firing-squad, with the entire army watching. He banned whiskey. He made his men get up at 3.30, his staff half an hour earlier, to forestall Indian morning raids. Senior officers who objected were sent home under arrest. The shooting of Woods was decisive. According to Jackson's ADC, John Reid: 'The opinion, so long indulged, that a militiaman was for no offense to suffer death was from that moment abandoned and a strict obedience afterwards characterised the army.'

Jackson thus welded into existence a formidable army, 5,000 strong, which paradoxically attracted volunteers. With this he attacked the Creeks' main fortress, at Horseshoe Bend, an awesome peninsula of 100 acres, almost surrounded by deep water, the land side defended by a 350-yard breastwork 5 to 8 feet high with a double row of firing holes across its neck. It was, wrote Jackson, 'well formed by Nature for defense, & rendered more secure by Art.' Jackson never underestimated the Indians and was impressed by their military ingenuity-'the skill which they manifested in their best work was astonishing.' The Creeks had 1,000 warriors inside the fort. Jackson began with diversions, such as fire-boats, then stormed the rampart, calculating that scaling-ladders, always awkward to use, were not needed. Ensign Sam Houston was the first man to get safely across the breastwork and into the compound. What followed the breach of the wall was horrifying. The Indians would not surrender and were slain. The Americans kept a body-count by cutting off the tips of the noses of the dead, giving a total of 557 in the fort, plus 300 drowned trying to escape in the river. The dead included three leading prophets in full war-paint. The men cuts strips of skin from them for harness. Jackson lost forty-seven whites and twenty-three friendlies.

After that it was simply a matter of using terror-burning villages, destroying crops-until the Indians had had enough. On April 14, 1814, Red Eagle, virtual paramount chief of the Creeks, surrendered. He told Jackson: 'I am in your power ... My people are all gone. I can do no more but weep over the misfortunes of my nation.' Jackson spared Red Eagle because he was useful in getting other Indians to capitulate. He was given a large farm in Alabama where, like other Indian planters, he kept a multitude of black slaves. Four months later Jackson imposed a Carthaginian peace on thirty-five frightened Indian chiefs. Jackson was an impressive and at times terrifying orator, who left the Indians in no doubt what would be their fate if they failed to sign the document he thrust at them. It forced the Creeks to part with half their lands-three-fifths of the present state of Alabama and a fifth of Georgia. Jackson wrote gleefully to a business partner: 'I finished the convention with the Creeks ... [which] cedes to the United States 20 million acres of the cream of the Creek Country, opening a communication from Georgia to Mobile.' He knew it was only a matter of time before the Americans got the rest. The Treaty of Fort Jackson was the tragic turning-point in the destruction of the Indians east of the Mississippi. Jackson now moved swiftly to safeguard his conquests from the Spanish and the British. He was fighting on behalf of the American settler class and he took no notice of orders (or the lack of them) from Washington. Before the end of August he had occupied Mobile and Fort Bower on the key to the south of it. When British land-sea forces moved into the area in mid-September, they found the fort strongly guarded and failed to take it. On November 7 Jackson occupied the main Spanish base at Pensacola. America and Spain were not at war and Jackson had no authority for this act of aggression, but Washington was still too shell-shocked to protest when his letter arrived telling them what he had done. Jackson's move frustrated the plan of the British force commander, Cochrane, to take Mobile and move inland, cutting off New Orleans. So instead he decided on a frontal assault. This gave Jackson his opportunity to become America's



first real hero since Washington. When he reached New Orleans on December 1 he found it virtually undefended. He worked swiftly. He formed the local pirates, who hated the Royal Navy, on whose ships they were periodically hanged, into a defensive unit. Hundreds of free blacks were turned into a battalion under white officers (but with their own NCOs). He paid them well. When his paymaster protested, Jackson told him: 'Be pleased to keep to yourself your opinions ... without inquiring whether the troops are white, black or tea.' He brought as many troops into the city as possible and, using his experience at the Horseshoe, built a main defense line of great strength and height. By the time the British, who had sixty ships and 14,000 troops, mostly Peninsula veterans, were ready to attack on January 8, 1815, New Orleans was strongly defended.

Even so, it could have been outflanked. And that was the British intention. Jackson's main defense was behind Rodriguez's Canal, a ditch 4 feet deep and 10 feet wide, which he reinforced by a high mud rampart. The British land commander, General Sir Edward Pakenham, a stupendously brave but impatient man-'not the brightest genius,' as his brother-in-law the Duke of Wellington put it-planned a two-pronged assault, up the almost undefended left bank of the Mississippi, to take the rampart from the rear, while his troops in front kept the defenders occupied. But the force landed in the wrong place and fell behind schedule. Pakenham decided he could not wait and, relying on the sheer professionalism of his veterans, decided on a frontal assault alone and fired the two Congreves which were the signal for attack. A frontal assault against a strongly defended position not enfiladed from the rear was a textbook example of folly which would have made Wellington despair. It became even more murderous when the leading battalion failed to bring up the fascines to fill the ditch and the ladders to scale the rampart. The result was a pointless slaughter of brave men. The advancing redcoats met a combination of grapeshot, canister-shell, rifles, and muskets, all skillfully directed by Jackson himself. The attack wavered and, in goading on their men, all three British general officers were killed-Pakenham on the spot, Sir Samuel Gibbs, commanding the attack column, fatally wounded, General Keane taken off the field writhing in agony from a bullet in his groin. By the time the reserve commander arrived to take over, the men were running and it was all over. Jackson lost only thirteen killed, the British 291, with another 484 missing and over a thousand wounded. Codrington, watching from HMS *Tonnant*, could only shake his head in disbelief at the debacle. 'There never was,' he wrote to his wife, 'a more complete failure.'

Thus ended one of the shortest and most decisive battles of history. Three days later the first rumors arrived that Britain and America had made peace. The British expedition continued to fight until formally notified, and on February 11 took Fort Bower, preparatory to occupying Mobile. But by the time Admiral Cochrane was ready to enter the town a dispatch-boat arrived with orders to cease hostilities, and in March his fleet sailed for home. The peace had actually been signed on Christmas Eve, in the 'neutral' town of Ghent, and it had taken six months to negotiate. It might have come sooner, had the American team been less ill assorted-a typical example of Madison's lack of realism. It consisted of the Treasury Secretary, Albert Gallatin, and the federalist Senator from Delaware, James Bayard-two men of opposing viewpoints on virtually all subjects. Then there was John Quincy Adams, the minister to St Petersburg and son of the second President, and Henry Clay, leader of the War Hawks. Clay was a Westerner from Kentucky, a thruster, not quite a gentleman, a drinker, gambler, and womanizer. Adams was a Harvard man and a Boston Brahmin, who had spent his life in embassies, was fluent in foreign languages and the diplomatic arts. He was also argumentative, puritanical and prissy, thin-skinned, quick to take offense, a superb hater, and constant compiler of enemies lists. His final

one, drawn up at the end of his life, consisted of thirteen men, including Jackson, Clay, John C. Calhoun, and Daniel Webster, who had `conspired together [and] used up their faculties in base and dirty tricks to thwart my progress in life.'

Adams got on badly with all his colleagues, who, he claimed, kept late hours and gambled all night, having been corrupted by Clay, whom Adams also accused of making a pass at a chambermaid. They disagreed on most of the peace-issues in dispute, representing as they did quite different regional interests. Happily, the British, having secured Canada, were not too concerned at driving a hard bargain. After their assault on Washington had `taught the Americans a lesson,' they were all for a quick settlement. The Washington disaster also spurred Madison and Monroe to hurry up the talks. Even before it, the banks in Philadelphia and Baltimore had gone bankrupt. The actual sack of Washington detonated a long-smoldering financial crisis, and the big banks in New York went under. The Treasury was empty, as Gallatin well knew. But in New England the federalists, their own banks sound, watched the ruin of the pro-war states and the confusion of the ruling Republicans with complacency. They held a convention of the New England states at Hartford, Connecticut, in December 1814. Contrary to rumor, they did not actively discuss secession, but they drew up plans to oppose any further war measures, including conscription and further restraints on trade.'

In October a weary Madison instructed a still wearier Monroe, who was looking after the War Department as well as his own-'for an entire month I never went to bed,' he complained-to try to get a settlement as quickly as possible with `the *status quo ante bellum* as the basis of negotiations.' The Duke of Wellington too thought there was nothing more to be gained by fighting and Lord Castlereagh, British Foreign Secretary, was equally anxious to be `released from the millstone of the American war.' In fact the *status quo* formula was the simplest solution to a war both sides now silently admitted should never have been started. So it was accepted. Such matters as Newfoundland fishery rights and navigation on the Mississippi were dropped. The actual issues of the war were ignored. All the Treaty of Ghent did was to provide for the cessation of hostilities immediately it was ratified; the release of prisoners; surrender of virtually all territory occupied by either side; the pacification of the Indians, and the more accurate drawing of boundaries, to be handed over to commissioners.

More by accident than design, the Treaty of Ghent proved one of history's great acts of statesmanship. After the signing, Adams remarked to one of the English delegates: `I hope this will be the last treaty of peace between Great Britain and the United States.'" It was. The very fact that both sides withdrew to their prewar positions, that neither could describe the war as a success or a defeat, and that the terms could not be presented, then or later, as a triumph or a robbery-all worked for permanency and helped to erase from the national memory of both countries a struggle which had been bitter enough at the time. And the absence of crowing or recrimination meant that the treaty could serve as a plinth on which to build a friendly, commonsense relationship between the two great English-speaking peoples.

The fact that Jackson's victory at New Orleans came too late to influence the treaty does not mean it was of no consequence. Quite the reverse. It too was decisive in its way for, though the treaty made no mention of the fact, it involved major strategic, indeed historic, concessions on both sides. Castlereagh was the first British statesman of consequence who accepted the existence of the United States not just in theory but in practice as a legitimate national entity to be treated as a fellow-player in the world game. This acceptance was marked by the element of unspoken trust which lay behind the treaty's provisions. America, for its part, likewise accepted the existence of Canada as a permanent, legitimate entity, not just an unresolved problem left

over from the War of Independence, to be absorbed by the United States in due course. Henceforth the road to expansion for both the United States and Canada lay not in depredations at each other's expense but in pushing simultaneously and in friendly rivalry towards the Pacific. In return, Britain gave the Americans the green light to expand as they wished anywhere south of the 49th parallel (a line adopted in 1818), at the expense of the Indians and the Spanish alike.

The significance of Jackson's victory was that it determined the way the Treaty of Ghent was interpreted and applied. Britain, along with most other nations, had not recognized the Louisiana Purchase, and acknowledged no American right to be in New Orleans, Mobile, or anywhere else on the Gulf of Mexico. Britain would have been at liberty to hand any of these territories back to Spain if it had been in possession of them, even under the terms of the Treaty of Ghent. And that, Monroe told Madison, was exactly what it would have done, had not Jackson won the battle. The effect of the victory was to legitimize the whole of the Louisiana Purchase in the eyes of the international community. Equally, Britain might have kept Fort Bower and turned it into another Gibraltar. As it was, Britain in effect renounced any such ambition provided America left Canada alone. There were, to be sure, sound economic reasons why Britain wanted friendly relations with the United States in the whole Caribbean area. The financial significance of the rich West Indian sugar islands was fast declining relative to Britain's rapid industrial expansion, based on finished cotton manufactures, for which the American South increasingly supplied the raw material. For America to expand south, placing more square miles under cotton, was in the interests of both countries. But it was the New Orleans victory which clinched Britain's switch of policy.

Equally, the Battle of New Orleans sealed the fate of the Indians of the South. Under Article IX of the Treaty of Ghent, America agreed to end the war against the Indians 'and forthwith to restore to such tribes ... all possessions ... which they have enjoyed ... in 1811 previous to such hostilities.' This clearly made the Fort Jackson Treaty invalid. This was Britain's view and Madison agreed with it. Jackson was told: 'The president ... is confident that you will ... conciliate the Indians upon the principle of our agreement with Great Britain.' But Madison had no grounds for such confidence. Jackson had no intention of giving the Indians back anything. And, now that the British forces had left the area, there was no one to compel him. When he simply ignored the Treaty of Ghent, Washington did nothing. Nor did the British. In fact the American settler interest had now received *carte blanche* to pursue its destiny-right to the Pacific. That, too, was the consequence of New Orleans. So Jackson was now the hero, recognized by the South and West as their champion, and by all Americans, who badly needed a successful martial figure to lift their national spirits, as the true successor to Washington. So the Revolutionary Era finally ended and a new figure strode onto America's stage, who was to take the nation into the era of democracy.

## PART THREE

### **‘A General Happy Mediocrity Prevails’**

Democratic America, 1815 -1850

**R**ight at the end of his life, Benjamin Franklin wrote a pamphlet giving advice to Europeans planning to come to America. He said it was a good place for those who wanted to become rich. But, he said, it was above all a haven for the industrious poor, for 'nowhere else are the laboring poor so well fed, well lodged, well clothed and well paid as in the United States of America.' It was a country, he concluded, where 'a general happy mediocrity prevails.' It is important for those who wish to understand American history to remember this point about 'happy mediocrity.' The historian is bound to bring out the high points and crises of the national story, to record the doings of the great, the battles, elections, epic debates, and laws passed. But the everyday lives of simple citizens must not be ignored simply because they were uneventful. This is particularly true of America, a country specifically created by and for ordinary men and women, where the system of government was deliberately designed to interfere in their lives as little as possible. The fact that, unless we investigate closely, we hear so little about the mass of the population is itself a historical point of great importance, because it testifies by its eloquent silence to the success of the republican experiment.

Early in the 19th century, America was achieving birth-rates never before equaled in history, in terms of children reaching adulthood. The 1800 census revealed a population of 5,308,843, itself a 35 percent increase over ten years. By 1810 it had leaped to 7,239,881, up another 36.4 percent. By 1820 it was 9,638,453, close to doubling in twenty years, and of this nearly 80 percent was natural increase. As one Congressman put it: 'I invite you to go to the west, and visit one of our log cabins, and number its inmates. There you will find a strong, stout youth of eighteen, with his Better Half, just commencing the first struggles of independent life. Thirty years from that time, visit them again; and instead of two, you will find in that same family twenty-two. That is what I call the American Multiplication Table.'

But with the end of the world war in 1815 high American birth-rates were compounded by a great flood of immigrants. It is a historical conjunction of supreme importance that the coming of the independent American republic, and the opening up of the treasure-house of land provided by the Louisiana Purchase and the destruction of Indian power by Andrew Jackson, coincided with the beginnings of the world's demographic revolution, which hit Europe first. Between 1750 and 1900 Europe's population rose faster than anywhere else in the world (except North America), from 150 million to over 400 million.' This, in turn, produced a huge net outflow of immigration: to South America, Russia, Australasia, Canada, South Africa, and above all the United States. The rush to America began after the Battle of Waterloo in June 1815 and continued right through the autumn and winter, the immigrant ships braving gales and ice. It accelerated in 1816, which in Europe was 'the year without a summer,' with torrential rain and even sleet and snow continuing into July and August and wrecking harvests, sending poor and even starving people to the coast to huddle in the transports. Ezekiah Niles (1777-1839), who ran *Niles's Weekly Register* from 1811 onwards, in many ways America's best journal of record at the time, calculated that 50,000 immigrants reached America in the year, though this figure was later revised downwards. His more careful calculation for 1817, based on shipping lists (the federal government, though it took censuses, did not yet publish statistics), produced a figure of 30,000 up to the end of the main season in September. Of this half went to New York and Philadelphia, though some went straight over the Appalachians into the Ohio Valley.

No authority on either side of the Atlantic was bothered with who was going where or how, though the British limited ship-carrying capacity to one passenger to every 2 tons of registry in their own ships. The sheer freedom of movement was staggering. An Englishman, without passport, health certificate or documentation of any kind-without luggage for that matter-could

hand over £10 at a Liverpool shipping counter and go aboard. The ship provided him with water, nothing else, and of course it might go down with all hands. But if it reached New York he could go ashore without anyone asking him his business, and then vanish into the entrails of the new society. It was not even necessary to have £10, as the British provided free travel to Canada, whence the emigrants could bum rides on coastal boats to Massachusetts or New York. There was no control and no resentment. One of them, James Flint from Scotland, recorded in 1818: 'I have never heard of another feeling than good wishes to them.' In the five years up to 1820, some 100,000 people arrived in America without having to show a single bit of paper.

The first check of this inflow-the end of innocence if you like-came with the catastrophic bank crash of 1819, the first financial crisis in America's history. Such a disaster was inevitable, granted the rate at which the country was expanding. In the years 1816-21 alone, six new states were created; in size and potential power it was like adding six new European countries. The United States was already creating for itself a reputation for massive borrowing against its limitless future. That meant a need for large numbers of banks, and they duly sprang up, good, bad, and indifferent (mostly the last two). The Jeffersonians hated banks, as we have seen, and in 1811 when the First Bank of the United States' charter expired, they controlled Congress and refused to renew it. That was foolish, because the states stepped into the vacuum thus created and happily chartered banks, whose numbers thus rose from 88 in 1811 to 208 two years later. Each state bank was allowed by the state legislature to issue bills up to three times its capital. But in practice there was no check on these issues. Hence, in good times at least, to get a charter to found a state bank was literally a license to print money. As critics like Jefferson and John Taylor claimed, a new kind of money power was coming into existence in America, which ran directly counter to the Founding Fathers' concept of an idyllic rural society based on landed property. During the War of 1812 America was awash with suspect \$2 and \$5 bills printed by these mushroom banks. Such gold as there was flowed straight into Boston, whose state banks were the most secure. By 1813 Boston notes were at a 9-10 percent premium in Philadelphia. The New England banks refused to take paper notes from the South and West at all. In 1814, with the burning of Washington and the virtual collapse of federal government, every bank outside New England was forced to suspend payment.

The remedy of Congress proved worse than the disease. It created (April 10, 1826) the Second Bank of the United States, bought 20 percent of its stock, and stipulated that the federal government appoint five of its twenty-five directors, but made little provision for supervising its operations. Moreover, its first president, William Jones (1760-1831), a former congressman and Madison's Navy Secretary, knew little about banking; his speciality was having dubious friends. He fitted beautifully into Taylor's demonology. Indeed, he managed to create a fragile boom which was a miniature foretaste of the Wall Street boom of the 1920s leading to the crash of 1929. Jones' boom was in land. From 1815 the price of American cotton rose rapidly and that in turn fed the land boom. At that time public land was sold primarily to raise revenue rather than to encourage settlers, who needed no encouragement anyway. Each was charged \$2 an acre in minimum blocks of 160 acres. But they only had to put 20 percent down, borrowing the rest from the banks on the security of the property. The \$2 was a minimum; in the South potential cotton land was sold at \$100 an acre in the boom years. The SBUS, fueling the boom by easy credit, allowed purchasers to pay even the second installment on credit, again raised on the security of the land, like a second mortgage. Jones, whose only concern seems to have been to pay high dividends, based on the total lent by his bank, ran this federal central bank like a bucket-shop. He actually allowed the SBUS to deal in 'racers,' short for Race Horse Bills. These

were bills of exchange paid for by other bills of exchange, which thus raced around rapidly from one debtor to another, accumulating interest charges and yielding less and less of their face value. It was a typical bit of 19th-century ruin-finance, beloved of novelists like Thackeray and Dickens, who used such devices to get their gullible heroes into trouble. This kind of paper explains why needy people actually got so little of the sums they undertook to repay. But then they probably could not repay anyway, which explains why the pyramid was bound to collapse.

Jones' easy-credit policy was further undermined by the activities of the SBUS's branch offices, some of which were run by crooks. In Baltimore the branch was run by two land speculators, James A. Buchanan and James W. McCulloch, who financed their speculations by taking out unsecured loans from their own bank (\$429,049 and \$244,212 respectively, with the First Teller borrowing a further \$50,000). In effect, this was to put their hand in the till. Here was a typical example of the general credit expansion Jones encouraged, raising the debt on public land from \$3 million in 1815 to over five times that amount (\$16.8 million) three years later. Some of this went into house purchases-it was the first urban boom in US history too. As many of the Latin American goldmines had been shut by their own war of independence against Spain, which was now raging, the relation of paper to gold was astronomical. Moreover, all the other banks followed Jones' example. Sensible men warned of what would happen. John Jacob Astor, who had now used his fur empire to build up a massive holding in Manhattan real estate, accused the SBUS of provoking runaway inflation. In a letter to Albert Gallatin (March 14, 1818) he said the SBUS had made money so cheap 'that everything else has become Dear, & the result is that our Merchants, instead of shipping Produce, ship Specie, so that I tell you in confidence that it is not without difficulty that Specie payments are maintained. The different States are going on making more Banks & and I shall not be surprised if by & by there be a general Blow Up among them.'

Astor was right about the state banks: Hezekiah Niles recorded that in 1815-19 all you needed to start a bank issuing paper money were plates, presses, and paper. It was enough to drive genuine counterfeiters out of business, though they still managed (according to Niles) to produce a lot of forged notes too. He said that counterfeit notes from at least 100 banks were freely circulated in 1819. Many of the new banks were in converted forges, inns, or even churches, thus adding blasphemy to gimcrack finance. By 1819 there were at least 392 chartered banks, plus many more unchartered ones, and the debt on public lands had jumped another \$6 million to stand at \$22 million. Suddenly, the cotton bubble burst, as Liverpool cotton importers, alarmed by the high prices, started shipping in Indian raw cotton in huge quantities. In December January 1819 the price of New Orleans cotton halved, and this in turn hit land prices, which fell from 50 to 75 percent. The banks then found themselves with collateral in land worth only a fraction of their loans, which were now irrecoverable. So the banks started to go bust. Jones compounded his earlier errors of inflation by abruptly switching to savage deflation, ordering the branches of the SBUS to accept only its own notes, to insist on immediate repayments of capital as well as interest, and by calling in loans.' This immediately doubled and trebled the number of state-chartered banks going bust, and the SBUS, their main creditor, secured their assets-the land-deeds of hundreds of thousands of farmers.

Many congressmen, seeing the future of their electors thus put into the power of a wicked central bank they had never wanted anyway, turned with fury on Jones. A Congressional committee soon discovered the Baltimore business. Jones and his entire board were forced to resign and an experienced money-man, Langdon Cheves (1776-1857), took over in March 1819 to find the SBUS what he called 'a ship without a rudder or sails or mast ... on a stormy sea and

far from land.' Cheves decided that the worst of all outcomes was for the SBUS to go bust too, so he intensified the deflationary policy and contrived, with some difficulty, to keep the SBUS's doors open, thus earning his title 'the Hercules of the United States Bank.' But everyone else had to pay for it. As one contemporary expert, William Goude, put it, 'The Bank was saved but the people were ruined.'

The result of the bank Blow Up was a crisis in manufacturing industry. The Philadelphia cotton mills employed 2,325 in 1816; by autumn 1819 all but 149 had been sacked. In New England the crisis was mitigated by sound banking but it was still acute and unemployment shot up. John Quincy Adams, always quick to strike a note of gloom, recorded in his diary on April 24, 1819: 'In the midst of peace and partial prosperity we are approaching a crisis which will shake the Union to its center. The news of trouble reached Europe too late to affect the 1819 sailings, so tens of thousands of immigrants continued to arrive, to find no work and rising hostility. One observer, Emanuel Howitt, wrote that 'the Yankees now [1819] regard the immigrant with the most sovereign contempt ... a wretch, driven out of his own wretched country, and seeking a subsistence in this glorious land. It would 'never be glad confident morning again.' In March 1819 Congress, in a panic attempt to stop ships arriving at New York and other ports, slapped a two-persons-for-5-tons rule on incoming ships, effective from September-the beginning of control. The State Department, in a prescript published in *Niles's Weekly Register*, announced its policy-lines: 'The American Republic invites nobody to come. We will keep out nobody. Arrivals will suffer no disadvantages as aliens. But they can expect no advantages either. Native-born and foreign-born face equal opportunities. What happens to them depends entirely on their individual ability and exertions, and on good for tune.'

There is something magnificent about this declaration, penned by John Quincy Adams himself. It epitomizes the spirit of laissez-faire libertarianism which pervaded every aspect of American life at this time-though, as we shall see, there were state interventionists at large too. Libertarianism was, of course, based upon an underlying, total self-confidence in the future of the country. There was something magnificent too about the speed and completeness with which America recovered from this crisis, which within a year or two seemed a mere mishap, a tiny blip on a rising curve of success. Mass immigration soon resumed, thanks this time to Ireland. Hitherto, America had taken in plenty of Ulster Protestants, but few from the Catholic south. But in 1821, when the Irish potato crop failed, one in an ominous series of failures culminating in the catastrophe of the mid-1840s, the British government tried to organize a sea-lift to Canada. There was panic in Mayo, Clare, Kerry, and Cork, where rumor had it the ships would transport them to convict bondage in Australia. But, once the truth was known, the idea of going to America, at virtually no cost, caught on in the poorest parts of Ireland. When the first letters reached home in 1822, explaining how easy it was to slip from Canada into America, and how the United States, albeit Protestant, gave equal rights to Catholics, the transatlantic rush was on. In 1825 50,000 Southern Irish applied for a mere 2,000 assisted places on a government scheme. It was a foretaste of the exodus which was to transport one-third of the Irish nation to America." This, in turn, was part of the process whereby the continuing English (and Welsh and Scottish) immigration to the United States was now balanced by new arrivals from outside Britain. The number of Continental Europeans rose from 6,000 to 10,000 a year in the early 1820s to 15,000 in 1826 and 30,000 in 1828. In 1832 it passed the 50,000-a-year mark and thereafter fell below it only twice. An Anglicized United States was gradually becoming Europeanized.'



Why did the immigrants come? One reason was increasingly cheap seapassages. Another was food shortages, sometimes widening into famines. The bad weather of 1816, and the appalling winters of 1825-6, 1826-7, and 1829-30, the last one of the coldest ever recorded, produced real hunger. The demographic-catastrophe theories of Thomas Malthus filtered downwards to the masses, in horrifyingly distorted form, and men wanted to get their families out of Europe before the day of wrath came. Then there was the tax burden. At the end of the Bonapartist Wars, all Europe groaned under oppressive taxation. A parliamentary revolt in 1816 abolished income tax in Britain, and in the 1820s duties were gradually reduced too. But in Europe it was the same old story of the state piling the fiscal burdens on the backs of poor peasants and tradespeople. This was compounded, on the Continent, by tens of thousands of internal customs barriers, imposing duties on virtually everything which crossed them.

By comparison, America was a paradise. Its army was one-fiftieth the size of Prussia's. The expense of government per capita was 10 percent of that in Britain, itself a country with a small state by Continental standards. There were no tithes because there was no state church. Nor were there poor rates-there were virtually no poor. An American farm with eight horses paid only \$12 a year in tax. Europeans could scarcely believe their ears when told of such figures. Not only were American wage-rates high, but you kept your earnings to spend on your family. Then there were other blessings. No conscription. No political police. No censorship. No legalized class distinctions. Most employers ate at the same table as their hands. No one (except slaves) called anyone 'Master.' Letters home from immigrants who had already established themselves were read aloud before entire villages and acted as recruitment-propaganda for the transatlantic ships. So, interestingly enough, did the President's annual messages to Congress, which were reprinted in many Continental newspapers until the censors suppressed them. As the *Dublin Morning Post* put it: 'We read this document as if it related purely to our concerns.'

But the most powerful inducement was cheap land. Immigrants from Europe were getting cheap land from all the old hunting grounds of the world's primitive peoples-in Australia and Argentina especially-but it was in the United States where the magic was most potent because there the government went to enormous trouble to devise a system whereby the poor could acquire it. In the entire history of the United States, the land-purchase system was the single most benevolent act of government. The basis of the system was the Act of 1796 pricing land at \$2 an acre. It allowed a year's credit for half the total paid. An Act of 1800 created federal land offices as Cincinnati, Chillicothe, Marietta, and Steubenville, Ohio, that is, right on the frontier. The minimum purchase was lowered from 640 acres, or a square mile, to 320 acres, and the buyer paid only 25 percent down, the rest over four years. So a man could get a big farm-indeed, by Continental standards, an enormous one-for only about \$160 cash. Four years later, Congress halved the minimum again. This put a viable family farm well within the reach of millions of prudent, saving European peasants and skilled workmen. During the first eleven years of the 19th century, nearly 3,400,000 acres were sold to individual farmers in what was then the Northwest, plus another 250,000 in Ohio. These land transfers increased after 1815, with half a million acres of Illinois, for instance, passing into the hands of small- and medium-scale farmers every year. It was the same in the South. In Alabama, government land sales rose to 600,000 acres in 1816 and to 2,280,000 in 1819. In western Georgia the state gave 200-acre plots free to lottery-ticket holders with lucky numbers. In the years after 1815, more people acquired freehold land at bargain prices in the United States than at any other time in the history of the world.

Individual success-stories abounded. Daniel Brush and a small group of Vermonters settled in Greene County, Illinois, in spring 1820. 'A prairie of the richest soil,' Brush wrote, 'stretched out

about four miles in length and one mile wide ... complete with pure springs of cold water in abundance.' Once a cabin, 16 by 24 feet, had been built, they began the hard task of breaking up the prairie. This done, Brush wrote, 'No weeds or grass sprung up upon such ground the first year and the corn needed no attention with plough or hoe. If got in early, good crops were yielded, of corn and fodder.' He added: 'Provisions in abundance was the rule ... no one needed to go supperless to bed. The Ten Brook family moved to what became Parke County, Indiana, in autumn 1822. There were twenty-seven of them altogether-three interrelated families, three single men, two teamsters, thirteen horses, twenty-one cows, two yoke-oxen, and four dogs. Their first priority was to build a strong cabin. The soil was rich but virgin. Working throughout the winter, they had cleared 15 acres by the spring and fashioned 200 fence-rails. They had 100 bushels of corn for winter-feed and spring planting. They put two more acres under potatoes and turnips. The spring brought seven calves, and that first summer they made forty 12-pound cheeses, sold at market for a dollar each. The harvest was good. They not only ground their own corn but made 350 pounds of sugar and 10 gallons of molasses from the same soil they cleared for corn. Their leader, Andrew Ten Brook, recounted: 'After the first year, I never saw any scarcity of provisions. The only complaint was that there was nobody to whom the supplies could be sold.'

The sheer fertility of the soil made all the backbreaking work of opening it up worth while. In the Lake Plains-parts of Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan-a vast glacier known as the Wisconsin Drift had in prehistoric times smoothed off the rocks and laid down a deep layer of rich soil containing all the elements needed for intensive agriculture. The settlers, steeped in the Old Testament, called it Canaan, God's Country, because it yielded a third more than the rest, known as 'Egypt.' Some of the settlements in the years after 1815 became celebrated for quick prosperity. One was Boon's Lick, a belt 60 miles wide on each side of the Missouri River which became Howard County in 1816. It boasted superb land, pure water, as much timber as required, and idyllic scenery. By 1819 the local paper, the *Missouri Intelligence*, produced at the little town of Franklin, offered a spring toast: 'Boon's Lick-two years since, a wilderness. Now-rich in cotton and cattle!' It was widely reputed to be the best land in all the West.

Moreover, the tendency was for the land price to come down-in the 1820s it was often as low as \$1.25 an acre. The modern mind is astonished that, even so, it was regarded as too high and there was a clamor for cheaper or even free land. Many settlers were termed 'squatters.' This simply signified they had got there first, paid over money immediately after the survey but before the land was 'sectionalized' for the market. They risked their title being challenged by non-resident purchasers-speculators. By the end of 1828 two-thirds of the population of Illinois were squatters. Their champion was Thomas Hart Benton (1782-1858), Senator 1821-51. He sensibly argued against a minimum price for Western lands, proposing grading by quality, and he insisted that settlers pay compensation for improvements, passing a law to this effect. In frontier areas, speculators were naturally hated and took a risk if they showed their faces. A Methodist preacher recorded at Elkhorn Creek, Wisconsin: 'If a speculator should bid on a settler's farm, he was knocked down and dragged out of the [land] office, and if the striker was prosecuted and fined, the settlers paid the fine by common consent among themselves. [But] no jury would find a verdict against a settler in such a case because it was considered self-defense. [So] no speculator dare bid on a settler's land, and as no settler would bid on his neighbor, each man had his land at Congress price, \$1.25 an acre.'

All the same, speculation and land dealing were the foundation of many historic fortunes at this time. And powerful politicians (and their friends) benefited too. When a popular figure like

General Jackson bid for a potentially valuable town lot, no one bid against him. He acquired his estate and became a reasonably wealthy man through land sales, though by the end of the war he had ceased to be interested in money. His aide, General Coffee, formed the Cypress Land Company, bought land at Muscle Shoals, and laid out the town of Florence, Alabama, where speculators and squatters bid up the government minimum to \$78 an acre." Others in the Jackson camp made fortunes this way. The New York politician Martin Van Buren (1782-1862), who became Jackson's Secretary of State, also grew rich through land deals: he got large parcels of land in Otsego County for a fraction of their true value-one 600-acre parcel he bought for \$60.90-and he knocked down land cheap at Sheriff's Auctions when settlers were sold up for non-payment of taxes." Of course some land speculation was parasitical and downright antisocial. But large-scale speculators were indispensable in many cases. They organized pressure on Congress to put through roads and they invested capital to build towns like Manchester, Portsmouth, Dayton, Columbus, and Williamsburg. A lot of speculation was on credit, and speculators went bust if they could not sell land quickly at the right price. That was how big groups like the one organized by Sir William Pulteney, the English politician, acquired huge tracts. His agent spent over \$1m building infrastructures-stores, mills, taverns, even a theater. A group of bankers from Amsterdam formed the Holland Land Company, which acquired 4 million acres in northwest New York and western Pennsylvania, put in roads and other services, and eventually (1817) made a profit by selling off land in 350-acre plots at \$5 an acre (on ten years' credit). But most settlers preferred cheaper land to the use of an infrastructure which they could create for themselves. Moses Cleveland, agent of the Connecticut Land Company, managed to sell good land at a dollar an acre, with five years' credit, and to found the village named after him which became in time a mighty city. It was from Cleveland that William Henry Harrison (1773-1841) played a major role in creating the new state of Ohio, then moved on to Indiana, and finally became America's ninth President.

There is an important historical and economic point to be noted here. Men always abuse freedom, and 19th-century land speculators could be wicked and predatory. But Congress, true to its origins, was prepared to take that risk. It laid down the ground rules by statute and then, in effect, allowed an absolutely free market in land to develop. It calculated that this was the best and quickest way to get the country settled. And it was proved right-freedom worked. In South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, the British authorities interfered in the land market in countless ways and from the highest of motives, and as a result these countries-some of which had even bigger natural advantages than the United States-developed far more slowly. One British expert, H. G. Ward, who had witnessed both systems, made a devastating comparison before a House of Commons committee in 1839. In Canada, the government, fearing speculators, had devised a complex system of controls which actually played straight into their hands. By contrast, the American free system attracted multitudes who quickly settled and set up local governments which soon acted as a restraining force on antisocial operators. The system worked because it was simple and corresponded to market forces. 'There is one uniform price at \$1.25 an acre [minimum]. No credit is given [by the federal government]. There is a perfect liberty of choice and appropriation at this price. Immense surveys are carried on, to an extent strangers have no conception of. Over 140 million acres have been mapped and planned at a cost of \$2,164,000. There is a General Land Office in Washington with 40 subordinate district offices, each having a Registrar and Receiver ... Maps, plans and information of every kind are accessible to the humblest persons ... A man if he please may invest a million dollars in land. If he miscalculates it is his own fault. The public, under every circumstance, is the gainer.'

He was right and the proof that the American free system worked is the historic fact-the rapid and successful settlement of the Mississippi Valley. This is one of the decisive events in history. By means of it, America became truly dynamic, emerging from the eastern seaboard bounded by the Appalachians and descending into the great network of river valleys beyond. The Mississippi occupation, involving an area of 1,250,000 square miles, the size of western Europe, marked the point at which the United States ceased to be a small, struggling ex-colony and turned itself into a major nation.'

The speed with which representative governments were set up was an important part of this dynamism. In addition to Kentucky and Tennessee, the first trans-Appalachian states, Ohio became a state in 1803, Louisiana in 1812, Indiana in 1816, Mississippi in 1817, Illinois in 1818, Alabama in 1819, Missouri in 1821, Arkansas in 1836, Michigan in 1837. Insuring rapid progress from territory to state was the best way Washington could help the settlement, though under the Constitution it could also build national roads. The first national road, a broad, hardened thoroughfare across the Appalachians, was open in 1818 as far as Wheeling, whence settlers could travel along the Ohio River. By the early 1830s the road had reached Columbus, Ohio. Further south, roads were built by state and federal government in collaboration or by thrusting military men like General Jackson, who in 1820, as commander of the Western Army, strung a road between Florence, Alabama, and New Orleans, the best route into the Lower Mississippi area. There were also the Great Valley Road, the Fall Line Road, and the Upper Federal Road. They were rough by the standards of the new McAdam-Telford roads in Britain but far superior to anything in Latin America, Australasia, or trans-Ural Russia, other vast territories being settled at this time. In addition there were the rivers, most of them facing in the direction of settlement. Even before the steamers came, there were hundreds, then thousands, of flatboats and keelboats to float settlers and their goods downriver. By 1830 there were already 3,000 flatboats floating down the Ohio each year. In 1825 the completion of the Erie Canal, which linked the Atlantic via the Hudson River to the Great Lakes, made easy access possible to the Great Plains. It also confirmed New York's primacy as a port, especially for immigrants, as they could then proceed, via the Canal, straight to new towns in the Midwest. From that point on steamboats were ubiquitous in the Mississippi Valley, not only bringing settlers in but taking produce out to feed and clothe the people of America's explosive cities-only 7 percent of the population in 1810, over a third by mid-century.

The pattern of settlement varied enormously but salient features were common. With every township, the first structure to be built was a church, to serve farming families already scattered around. Then came a newspaper, running off copies even when townfolk were still living in tents. Then came traders, doubling up as bankers when required, then proper bankers and lawyers at about the same time. The lawyers lived by riding with the local judge on a horseback circuit, by which they became well known, and they sat in the legislature the moment it was set up-so the grip of the attorneys was firm from the start. Justice was fierce and physical, especially for thieves, above all for horse-thieves. By 1815, the pillory, ears cut off and nailed up, and branding on the cheek were becoming rare. But whippings were universal. The tone of settlers' justice was epitomized in Madison County, Tennessee in 1821 when a local thief, 'Squire' Dawson, was sentenced 'to be taken from this place to the common whipping-post, there to receive twenty lashes well laid on his bare back, and that he be rendered infamous, and that he then be imprisoned one hour, and that he make his peace with the state by the payment of one cent.' There we have it-imprisonment was costly, fining pointless when the miscreant had no money, but there was no shortage of bare back.

A typical growth-point was Indianapolis. It was laid out in 1821. The next year it had one two-story house. By 1823 it still had only ninety families but it had already acquired a newspaper, an important engine of urban dynamics. By 1827 the population topped the 1,000 mark, and twenty-one months later a visitor wrote: 'The place begins to look like a town-about 1,000 acres cut smooth, ten stores, six taverns, a court-house which cost \$15,000, and many fine houses.' Elijah Miles, who moved to the Sangamon River country in 1823, left a record of how he founded Springfield. It was then only a stake in the ground. He marked out an 18-foot-square site for a store, went to St Louis to buy a 25-ton stock of goods, chartered a boat, shipped his stock to the mouth of the Sangamon, and then had his boat and goods towed upriver by five men with a 300-foot tow-rope. Leaving his goods on the riverside-'As no one lived near, I had no fear of thieves'-he walked 50 miles to Springfield, hired waggons and teams, and so got his stuff to the new 'town,' where his store was the first to open. It was the only one in a district later divided into fourteen counties, so 'Many had to come more than 80 miles to trade.' Springfield grew up around him. They built a jail for \$85.75, marked out roads and electoral districts or 'precinks' as they called them, and levied a tax on 'horses, neat cattle, wheeled carriages, stock in trade and distillery.' By 1824 the town had its own roads, juries, an orphanage, a constable, and a clerk. The key figure in such developments was often the county clerk, who doubled as a schoolteacher, being paid half in cash, half in kind.

Although churches were the first structures to go up in most townships, religion flourished without them if necessary. The Second Great Awakening, which started in the 1790s, was essentially a frontier affair, carried out by traveling evangelists, who often held giant camp meetings. The first of these was at Cane Ridge, near Lexington, Kentucky, in 1801, which became the prototype for many more. It was organized by Barton Stone (1772-1844), a Maryland Presbyterian, who described in great detail the evangelical enthusiasm created by these open-air gatherings, where preachers whipped up the participants into frenzies of worship. Stone divided their antics into what he called 'exercises.' Thus in the 'Falling Exercise,' 'The Subject would generally, with a piercing scream, fall like a log on the floor, earth or mud, and appear as dead.' In 'The jerks,' 'when the head alone was affected, it would be jerked backwards and forwards, or from side to side, so quickly that the features of the face could not be distinguished. When the whole system was affected I have seen the person stand in one place, and jerk backwards and forwards in quick succession, their head nearly touching the floor behind and before.' Then there was the 'Barking Exercise'-'A Person affected by the jerks, especially in his head, would often make a grunt or bark, if you please, from the suddenness of the jerk.' There was also the Laughing Exercise ('loud, hearty laughter ... it excited laughter in no one else'), a Running Exercise ('the subject running from fear'), a Dancing Exercise ('the smile of heaven shone on the countenance of the subject'), and the Singing Exercise, the sounds issuing not from the mouth but the body-'such music silenced every thing.' These antics may make us laugh, but the fact is they have set the pattern for one form of revivalism for 200 years and are repeated almost exactly by congregations receiving the Toronto Blessing in the 1990s. And the frontier men and women of Cane Ridge and other camp gatherings had some excuse for indulging in these religious ecstasies: they had no other form of entertainment whatever. Religion not only gave meaning to their lives and was a consolation in distress, it was the only relief from the daily hardship of work.

Lyman Beecher (1775-1863), a New Haven Presbyterian who went west and became president of the Cincinnati Theological Seminary-among his other accomplishments was fathering thirteen

children, one of them being Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*-believed that this revivalist spirit was essential to the creation of the rapidly expanding American nation. Based upon a free market in land and everything else, it was necessarily driven by a strong current of materialistic individualism, and only religious belief and practice, hot and strong, could supply the spiritual leavening and community spirit-could, in effect, civilize this thrusting people. Religion, politics, and culture all went together, he argued, 'and it is plain that the religious and political destiny of the nation is to be decided in the west.' Revivalism, what is now called fundamentalism, was the only way the scattered frontiersmen and women could be reached and gathered. But when the itinerant preachers passed on, all the churches benefited. Some of the older churches, especially the Episcopalians, sniffed at camp-meetings, saying 'More souls are begot than saved there,' but that was because they failed to adapt their evangelism to the new trends. It was the uninhibited Methodists who profited most from revivalism, keeping up the passionate intensity and drumming it into regular, settled congregations. By 1844 they were the biggest church in the United States. Next came the Baptists, radiating from Rhode Island and its great theological seminary, later Brown University (1764). Like most Calvinist sects, they split from time to time, generating such factions as Separatist and Hard-Shell Baptists, but they were enormously successful in the South and West. By 1850 they had penetrated every existing state and had a major theological college in almost all of them.

But revivalism did more than recruit for the existing churches. It created new ones. Thus one Baptist, William Miller (1782-1849), was inspired by the Second Great Awakening to conduct a personal study of the scriptures for two years, and in 1818 declared that 'all the affairs of our present state' would be wound up by God in a quarter of a century, that is in 1844. He recruited many thousands of followers, who composed a hymn-book, *The Millennial Harp*, survived 'The Great Disappointment' when nothing happened in the appointed year, and even the death of their founder. In 1855 they settled at Battle Creek, took the title Seventh-Day Adventists six years later, and eventually, with 2 million worldwide members, became the center of a vast vegetarian breakfast-cereal empire created by John H. Kellogg (1852-1943), first president of Battle Creek College and one of the earliest modern nutritionists.

The way in which the Adventists popularized cereals throughout the world was typical of the creative (and indeed commercial) spirit of the sects which sprang out of the Second Great Awakening. This kind of intense religion seemed to give to the lives of ordinary people a focus and motivation which turned them into pioneers, entrepreneurs, and innovators on a heroic scale. Kellogg himself was the protege of Ellen G. Harmon (1827-1915), a simple teenager who conceived her vision of sanctified breakfast-food while in a religious transport. And what could be more American than cornflakes, a nutritious food with moral overtones made from the Indian crop which saved the lives of the Pilgrim Fathers? Another very ordinary young man was Joseph Smith (1805-44) born on a hard-scrabble farm in Vermont, who caught a whiff of spirituality from the Second Great Awakening in Palmyra in upstate New York, where in 1827 the Angel Moroni showed him the hiding place of a set of golden tablets. From behind a curtain and with the aid of seer-stones called Urim and Thurim he translated the mystic utterances they contained, which others transcribed to his dictation. This 500-page *Book of Mormon*, put on sale in 1830 (at which point Moroni removed the original plates), describes the history of America's pre-Colombian people, who came from the Tower of Babel, crossing the Atlantic in barges, but survived only in the form of Mormon and his son Moroni, who buried the plates in AD 384. The language of the Book clearly derives from the King James Bible but the narrative, with its

tribulations overcome by courage and persistence, fits into frontier life well and the movement attracted thousands.

Smith was murdered by an Illinois mob in 1844 but his successor Brigham Young (1801-77), another Vermonter and a man of immense determination (and appetites) and considerable skills of organization, led the Biblical 'remnant' in a historic trek over the plains and mountains to Salt Lake City, 1846-7, where he virtually created the territory of Utah, of which Washington made him governor in 1850. When he proclaimed the doctrine of polygamy in 1852, taking himself twenty-seven wives who bore him fifty-six children, President James Buchanan removed him from office. The row over polygamy (eventually renounced in 1890) delayed Utah's admission as a state until 1896 but it could not prevent Young and his followers from expanding their Church of Latter Day Saints into a world religious empire of over 3 million souls and making the people of Utah among the richest, best educated, and most consistently law-abiding in the United States. In no other instance are the creative nation-building possibilities of evangelical religion so well illustrated.

Some of the by-products of the Second Great Awakening verged on the cranky. When fervent Americans were stirred up by a camp-meeting or a passing preacher, and they found Baptism or Methodism too tame, they had a wide choice of spicier beliefs. The esoterical reinterpretation of the scriptures produced in thirty-eight huge volumes by the 18th-century philosopher Emanuel Swedenborg became an immense quarry into which American sect-founders burrowed industriously for decades. Mesmerism and homeopathy came from Europe but were eagerly adopted and adorned with rococo additions in America. Spiritualism was definitely home-grown. In 1847, John D. Fox, a Methodist farmer who had been 'touched' by the Second Awakening, moved into a Charles Adams house in Hydesville, New York, and the two youngest daughters quickly established contact with a Rapper, at the command 'Here, Mr Splitfoot, do as I do.' Less than two centuries before, this kind of girlish joke-hysteria might have led to witchhunting as at Salem in the 1690s. In mid-19th-century America, already keen on sensation and media-infested, it led to the two girls being signed up by the circus-impresario P. T. Barnum (1810-91) and Horace Greeley (1811-72), the great editor of the *New York Tribune*. So Spiritualism was born. It seems to have had a strong attraction, right from the start, for political liberals, like Robert Owen, son of the utopian community-founder. Owen read a paper about it at the White House in 1861 which led to Abraham Lincoln's memorable observation at the end: 'Well, for those who like that sort of thing, I should think it is just about the sort of thing they would like.' This did not prevent Mrs Lincoln taking it up after the President's death-with its ability to communicate with the dear departed it had a natural attraction for widows. By 1870 Spiritualism had 11 million followers, not only in America but throughout Europe, and it attracted outstanding intellectuals, like Victor Hugo and William James.

Many of these new sects, which sprang out of the fervor of the 1810s and 1820s, tackled not only the problem of death, like Spiritualism, but the even more everyday problem of pain. America was already developing one of its most pronounced characteristics, the conviction that no problem is without a solution. Faith-healing flourished in the American mid-century, and Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910), who suffered dreadful pain in her youth, for which the doctors could do nothing, believed she had been relieved by a Mesmerist, P. P. Quimby; and from this she created her own system of spiritual healing based upon the belief that mind is the only reality and all else an illusion. After her third marriage to Mr Eddy, a first-class businessman, her creed began to flourish on sound commercial principles. She opened the First Church of Christ Scientist in Boston in 1879, followed by the Metaphysical College in 1881 and what became one

of America's greatest newspapers, the *Christian Science Monitor*. It quickly spread into 3,200 branches in forty-eight countries. Here again was overwhelming evidence of the new American phenomenon-the way in which religious belief, often of a strange and (some would say) implausible character, produced hugely creative movements with a strong cultural and educational content. Even the most bizarre of these sects founded schools, training colleges for teachers and evangelists, and even universities. Some of America's greatest institutions of higher education have their origins in the Second Great Awakening. It was, for instance, the leading theologian of the Awakening, Charles Grandison Finney (1792-1875), who created Oberlin College in Ohio. The Awakening gave an impulse to Unitarianism, which had come to America in the 1770s and opened King's College Chapel in Boston. The American Unitarian Association was formed in 1825 and quickly radiated all over America. With its rationalist and undogmatic approach to theology and its low-key ritual it particularly attracted intellectuals and scientists, and those of its members with a romantic and utopian disposition tended to set up rustic communities devoted to high thinking and simple living. Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-82), who moved into the sect from Calvinism, wrote to the British sage Thomas Carlyle in 1840: 'We are all a little wild here with numberless projects of social reform. Not a reading man but has a draft of a new community in his pocket.' Emerson had a finger in a pie of one such, Brook Farm, in West Roxbury, founded by a Boston Unitarian minister, George Ripley. It included on its agricultural committee the novelist Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-64)-of whom more later-and had a printing press, a kiln for artistic pottery, and a workshop for making furniture. Needless to say it ended in bankruptcy and was cuttingly dismissed by Carlyle, who epitomized Ripley as 'a Socinian minister who left the pulpit to reform the world by growing onions.'

One writes 'needless to say' but in fact many of the religious-utopian communities, especially the German ones, flourished mightily as commercial or farming enterprises and survive today as models of moral probity, communal tidiness, and capitalist decorum. But others commercialized themselves out of religion altogether. A group of German Pietists under George Rapp (1757-1847) settled in a community at Harmony, Pennsylvania, in 1804, right at the beginning of the Second Awakening. They practiced auricular confession, among other things, and proved highly successful farmers and traders. But as they strictly opposed marriage and procreation, they eventually ceased to exist. At the other end of the sexual spectrum was Oneida Community in western New York, founded by John Humphrey Noyes (1811-86). This originally began as a socialist community, practicing free love, or what was known as 'complex marriage'-procreation, as distinct from other 'sexual transactions,' was decided communally-and the children were brought up as in a kibbutz. The community made itself rich by manufacturing steel traps but eventually lost its faith and became a prosperous corporation.

It is a curious fact that some of these religious sects had very ancient origins but it was only in the free air and vast spaces of America that they blossomed. Thus a medieval sect which in the 14th century developed a Shaking Dance as a form of its ritual (probably derived, via the Crusades, from a Moslem revivalist group known vulgarly as the Whirling Dervishes), continued to shake as Protestant Huguenots in 16th-century France, were expelled by Louis XIV, came to England, mated with a Quaker sect, and became the Shaking Quakers, and were finally brought to America by 'Mother' Anne Lee (1736-84), the visionary daughter of a Manchester blacksmith. These Shakers took advantage of the Second Awakening to develop a number of highly successful utopian communities, distinguished by separation of the sexes, who lived in distinct dormitories, and amazing Spiritualist seances, leading to apparitions, levitation, and spectral voices. They had a frenzied group dance, distantly derived from the Huguenot *camisard*. It was



characteristic of the Shakers in their American manifestation that they took the principle of minimalist government to its ultimate conclusion-their many communities, of 100 or more, lived in happiness and content without taxes, spending nothing on police, lawyers, judges, poor-houses, or prisons. They even dispensed with hospitals, believing they had 'special powers' to cure sickness-that may explain, of course, why they are now extinct. (As their founder Miss Lee, known as Mother Ann, believed herself to be 'The Female Principle in Christ,' Jesus being 'The Male Principle,' and taught that the Second Coming would be marked by an assumption of power by women, the sect, whose full title is 'The United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Coming (The Millenarian Church),' is due in a feminist age for a revival.)

The existence of these angular sects, and many others, in addition to the half-dozen or so great 'imperial' religions of American Protestantism, inevitably raised the question, early in the 19th century if not before, of how, granted America's doctrine of religious toleration, all could be fitted into the new republican society. Curiously enough Benjamin Franklin, far-sighted as always, had thought about this problem as early as 1749 when he published his *Proposal Relating to the Education of Youth* in Pennsylvania. He thought the solution was to treat religion as one of the main subjects in the school/college curriculum and relate it to character-training. A similar view was advanced by Jonathan Edwards when president of Princeton. It was, in effect, adopted by the greatest of all American educationalists, Horace Mann (1796-1859), when he began to organize the public school system in Massachusetts. Mann graduated from Brown, became a Unitarian, and, from 1837, was appointed the lawyer-secretary to the new Massachusetts Board of Education. At such he opened the first 'normal' school in the United States at Lexington in 1839, and thence reorganized the entire primary and secondary education system of the state, with longer terms, a more scientific and 'modern' pedagogy, higher salaries and better teachers, decent, clean, and properly heated schoolhouses, and all the elements of a first-class public school system. Massachusetts' framework served as a model for all the other states and Mann, by propaganda and legislative changes during his period in Congress, 1848-53, led the movement which established the right of every American child to a proper education at public expense. Thus the state took over financial responsibility for the education of the new and diverse millions by absorbing most primary and secondary schools (though not tertiary colleges; in 1819 Marshall's Supreme Court, bowing to the eloquence of Daniel Webster (1782-1852), rejected the right of the New Hampshire legislature to interfere in the running of Dartmouth College, thus establishing once and for all the freedom of all America's privately funded universities).

That meant that the true American public school, in accordance with the Constitution, was non-sectarian from the very beginning. Non-sectarian, yes: but not non-religious. Horace Mann agreed with Franklin and the other Founding Fathers that generalized religion and education were inseparable. Mann thought religious instruction in the public schools should be taken 'to the extremest verge to which it can be carried without invading those rights of conscience which are established by the laws of God, and guaranteed by the constitution of the state.' What the schools got was not so much non-denominational religion as a kind of lowest-common-denominator Protestantism, based upon the Bible, the Ten Commandments, and such useful tracts as Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. As Mann put it, in his final report to the state of Massachusetts, 'that our public schools are not theological seminaries is admitted ... But our system earnestly inculcates all Christian morals. It founds its morals on the basis of religion; it welcomes the religion of the Bible; it allows it to do what it is allowed to do in no other system, to speak for itself.' Hence, in the American system, the school supplied Christian 'character-

building' and the parents, at home, topped it up with whichever sectarian trimmings they thought fit (or none).

Naturally there were objections from some religious leaders. On behalf of the Episcopalians, the Rev. F. A. Newton argued that 'a book upon politics, morals or religion, containing no party or sectarian views, will be apt to contain no distinctive views of any kind, and will be likely to leave the mind in a state of doubt and skepticism, much more to be deplored than any party of sectarian bias.' That might apply to dogmatic theology but in terms of moral theology the Mann system worked perfectly well, so long as it was conscientiously applied. Most Episcopalians, or any other Protestants, would now happily settle for the Mann system of moral character-building if they could. So Newton's objections, which were not widely shared, were brushed aside. A more serious question was: how were Roman Catholics, or non-Christians like the Jews, to fit in?

There had been Catholics in America since the foundation of Maryland (1632), and in 1790 Father John Carroll (1735-1815) had been consecrated Bishop of Baltimore with authority over the 40,000 Catholics then in the United States. The following year he founded Georgetown College, America's first Catholic university. But it was only with the arrival of the southern Irish, and Continental Catholics in large numbers, that Catholicism began to constitute a challenge to Protestant paramountcy. New dioceses testified to its expansion even in the South-Charleston 1820, Mobile 1829, Natchez 1837, Little Rock 1843, Galveston 1847-and in Boston and New York City Irish-dominated communities became enormous and potent. The new Catholics brought with them certain institutions which infringed the American moral consensus in the spirit, if not exactly in the letter, almost as much as Mormon polygamy. One was the convent, which provoked a species of Protestant horror-literature infused almost with the venom of the Salem witch-trials. A journal called the *Protestant Vindicator* was founded in 1834 with the specific object of exposing Catholic 'abuses,' the convent being a particular target. The next year saw the publication in Boston of *Six Months in a Convent* and, in 1836, of the notorious *Maria Monk's Awful Disclosures of the Hotel Dieu in Montreal*. It was written and published by a group of New York anti-Catholics who followed it up with *Further Disclosures* and *The Escape of Sister Frances Patrick, Another nun from the Hotel Dieu nunnery in Montreal*. Unlike Continental anticlerical literature about monks and nuns, a genre going back to Rabelais in the 16th century, the *Maria Monk* saga was not directly pornographic but it had something of the same scurrilous appeal. *Maria Monk* herself was no fiction-she was arrested for picking pockets in a brothel and died in prison in 1849-but her book had sold 300,000 copies by 1860 and it is still in print today, not only in the United States but in many other countries. Nor was Protestant hostility confined to paperbacks. In 1834, even before *Maria* made her appearance, a convent of Ursuline nuns was burned down by a Boston mob and those responsible were acquitted-Protestant juries believed Catholic convents had subterranean dungeons for the murder and burial of illegitimate children.

There were also widespread fears of a Catholic political and military conspiracy, fears which had existed in one form or another since the 1630s, when they were associated with the designs of Charles I, and which had been resurrected in the 1770s and foisted on George III. In the 1830s, Lyman Beecher, so sensible and rational in many ways, included in his *Plea for the West* details of a Catholic plot to take over the entire Mississippi Valley, the chief conspirators being the pope and the Emperor of Austria. Samuel Morse, who was not particularly pro-Protestant but had been outraged when, during a visit to Rome, his hat had been knocked off by a papal guard when he failed to doff it as the pope passed, added plausibility to Beecher's theory by asserting that the reactionary kings and emperors of Europe were deliberately driving their Catholic

subjects to America to promote the takeover. This, combined with labor disputes brought about the willingness of poor Catholic immigrants to accept low rates of pay, led to the founding in 1849 of a secret-oath-bound society, the Order of the Star-Spangled Banner, which flourished in New York and other cities. It was geared to politics by opposing the willingness of the Democratic Party machine to cater for Catholic votes and when its members were questioned about its activities they were drilled to answer 'I Know Nothing.' The Know Nothing Party had a brief but phenomenal growth in the early 1850s, especially in 1852, when it triumphed in local and state elections from New Hampshire to Texas. In 1856 it even ran ex-President Millard Fillmore as a national candidate, but it was doomed by its proslavery Southern leadership.

The Catholics were thus put on the defensive. And some of them, in any event, had reservations about the Horace Mann approach to education. The most incisive Catholic convert of the time, Orestes Brownson (1803-76), argued that the state had no obligation to educate its citizens morally and that to do so on a lowest-common-denominator basis would promote a bland, platitudinous form of public discourse. America, he argued, needed the provocation and moral judgments which only Biblical religion could provide and the stimulation of religious controversy between competing sects. But most American Catholics, then and later, wanted badly to win the acceptance of fellow-Americans by fitting into the citizenship formula. And, less defensively and more enthusiastically, they accepted the fact that America had a free market in religion as well as everything else. From the 1830s they competed eagerly to build the most churches and schools and colleges, to display the largest congregations, win the most converts, and demonstrate that Catholics were more American and better citizens than members of other sects.'

The Jews did not proselytize like the Catholics but they competed in other ways and they were just as anxious to demonstrate their Americanism. In 1654 the French privateer *St Catherine* brought twenty-three Jewish refugees from Recife in Brazil to the Dutch colonial town of New Amsterdam. The governor, Peter Stuyvesant, protested to the Dutch West India Company against the settlement of what he called 'a deceitful race' whose 'abominable religion' worshiped 'the feet of mammon.' They were denied all rights of citizenship and forbidden to build a synagogue. But when New Amsterdam fell to the English in 1664 and became New York, the Jews benefited from a decision taken under the English Commonwealth regime, later confirmed by Charles II, to allow them to acquire all the rights of English citizenship 'so long as they demean themselves peaceably and quietly, with due obedience to His Majesty's laws and without scandal to his government.' Some early statutes and proclamations, stressing religious liberty, included only 'those who profess Christianity' in this freedom of worship. But in fact the Jews were never directly persecuted on American soil and the great governor of New York, Edmund Andros, went out of his way to include Jews when he promised equal treatment to all law-abiding persons 'of what religion soever.' As in England, the issue of Jewishness was not raised. Jews simply came, enjoyed equal rights, and, it seems, voted in the earliest elections; they held offices too.

Jews settled in other areas, beginning with the Delaware Valley. Some difficulties arose when the Jews wished to have their own cemetery in New York. But in 1677 one was opened in Newport, Rhode Island-later the subject of one of Longfellow's finest poems-and New York got its own five years later. In 1730 the Shearith Israel Congregation of New York consecrated its first synagogue and a particularly handsome one was built in Newport in 1763, now a national shrine. Even in colonial times, Jews' existence in America was fundamentally unlike the life they lived in Europe. There, they had their own legal status, ran their own courts, schools, shops, paid their own special, heavier taxes, and usually lived in ghettos. In America, where there was no

religiously determined law, there was no reason why Jews should operate a separate legal system, except on matters which could be seen as merely internal religious discipline. Since in America all religious groups had equal rights, there was no point in constituting itself into a separate community. All could participate fully in a communal society. Hence from the start the Jews in America were organized not on communal but on congregational lines, like the other churches. In Europe, the synagogue was merely one organ of the all-embracing Jewish community. In America it was the only governing body in Jewish life. American Jews did not belong to the 'Jewish community,' as in Europe. They belonged to a particular synagogue. It might be Sephardi or Ashkenazi and, if the latter, it might be German, English, Polish, or 'Holland,' all of them differing on small ritual points. Protestant groups were divided on similar lines. Hence a Jew went to 'his' synagogue just as a Protestant went to 'his' church. In other respects, Jews and Protestants were simply part of the general citizenry, in which they merged as secular units. Thus the Jews in America, without in any way renouncing their religion, began to experience integration for the first time. And this inevitably meant accepting the generalized morality of the consensus, in which religious education was 'character-training' and part of the preparation for living an adult republican life.

But if even Roman Catholics and Jews could join in the American republican moral consensus, there was one point on which it broke down completely-slavery. One sees why St Paul was not anxious to tackle the subject directly: once slavery takes hold, religious injunctions tend to fit its needs, not vice versa. On the other hand, the general thrust of the Judeo-Christian tradition tended to be anti-slavery, and that was why it had slowly disappeared in Europe in the early Middle Ages. In America the moral and political dilemma over slavery had been there right from the start, since by a sinister coincidence 1619 marked the beginning of both slavery and representative government. But it had inevitably become more acute, since the identification of American moral Christianity, its undefined national religion, with democracy made slavery come to seem both an offense against God and an offense against the nation. Ultimately the American religious impulse and slavery were incompatible. Hence the Second Great Awakening, with its huge intensification of religious passion, sounded the death-knell of American slavery just as the First Awakening had sounded the death-knell of British colonialism.

Religion would have swept away slavery in America without difficulty early in the 19th century but for one thing: cotton. It was this little, two-syllable word which turned American slaveholding into a mighty political force and so made the Civil War inevitable. And cotton, in terms of humanity and its needs, was an unmitigated good. Thus do the workings of mysterious providence balance good with evil. Until the end of the 18th century, the human race had always been unsuitably clothed in garments which were difficult to wash and therefore filthy. Cotton offered an escape from this misery, worn next to the skin in cold countries, as a complete garment in hot ones. The trouble with cotton was its expense. Until the industrialization of the cotton industry, to produce a pound of cotton thread took twelve to fourteen mandays, as against six for silk, two to five for linen, and one to two for wool. With fine cotton muslin, the most sought after, the value-added multiple from raw material to finished product was as high as 900. This acted as a spur to mechanical invention. The arrival of the Arkwright spinning-machine and the Hargreaves jenny in the England of the 1770s meant that, whereas in 1765 half a million pounds of cotton had been spun in England, all of it by hand, by 1784 the total was 12 million, all by machine. Next year the big Boulton & Watt steam engines were introduced to power the cotton-spinning machines. This was the Big Bang of the first Industrial Revolution. By 1812 the

cost of cotton yarn had fallen by 90 percent. Then came a second wave of mechanical innovation. By the early 1860s the price of cotton cloth, in terms of gold bullion, was less than 1 percent of what it had been in 1784, when the industry was already mechanized. There is no instance in world history of the price of a product in potentially universal demand coming down so fast. As a result, hundreds of millions of people, all over the world, were able to dress comfortably and cleanly at last.

But there was a price to be paid, and the black slaves paid it. The new British cotton industry was ravenous for raw cotton. As the demand grew, the American South first began to grow cotton for export in the 1780s. The first American cotton bale arrived in Liverpool in 1784. Then, abruptly, at the turn of the century, American exports were transformed by the widespread introduction of the cotton gin. This was the invention of Eli Whitney (1765-1825). He was a case, common at this time, of a natural mechanical genius. He came from a poor farm in Massachusetts and discovered his talent by working on primitive agricultural machinery. Then he worked his way through Yale as an engineer. In 1793, while on holiday at Mulberry Grove, Savannah, the plantation of Mrs Nathaniel Green, he became fascinated by the supposedly intractable problem of separating the cotton lint from the seeds-the factor which made raw cotton costly to process. Watching a cat claw a chicken and end up with clumps of mere feathers, he produced a solid wooden cylinder with headless nails and a grid to keep out the seeds, while the lint was pulled through by spikes, a revolving brush cleaning them. The supreme virtue of this simple but brilliant idea was that the machine was so cheap to make and easy to operate. A slave on a plantation, using a gin, could produce 50 pounds of cotton a day instead of one. Whitney patented his invention in 1794 but it was instantly pirated and brought him in eventually no more than \$100,000-not much for one of history's greatest gadgets. But by 1800-10 his gins had made the United States the chief supplier of cotton to the British manufacturing industry's rapidly rising demand. In 1810 Britain was consuming 79 million pounds of raw cotton, of which 48 percent came from the American South. Twenty years later, imports were 248 million, 70 percent coming from the South. In 1860 the total was over 1,000 million pounds, 92 percent from Southern plantations. During the same period, the cost (in Liverpool landing prices) fell from 45 cents a pound to as low as 28 cents.

It testifies to the extraordinary fertility of American genius that the country could produce two such men as Whitney and Fulton in one generation. It is a matter of fine judgment who was the more creative. Whitney is often associated solely with the cotton gin. That is a grave injustice to his genius. Indeed he is a fascinating example of the complex impact one man can have on history. Whitney was a dour, single-minded Puritan type, a lifelong bachelor interested only in his job, a secular hermit, driven by the Calvinist work-ethic. He lived simply in a farmhouse and his 'factory' was never more than a series of crude workshops, a cottage industry, at Mill Rock, New Haven. But he had many assistants and apprentices, some of whom did not like working as hard as he did, until they dropped asleep on the floor. They ran away and he had to chase them to get them back. He built a firearms factory in 1798 but was always short of capital. Congress denied his petition to get his gin patent renewed and, during the war of 1812, he had to go direct to President Madison for money. America had no proper capital market at this time. Whitney thought not merely in terms of single new ideas but of whole processes. He grasped that the way to produce machinery or products in vast quantities at low prices was to achieve interchangeability of parts, uniformity, standardization, on a scale never before imagined. He called this the 'American System.' His firearms factory was the first realization of it.

Whitney's determination to introduce this system was adamant and was laughed at by the British and French ordnance officers to whom he explained it. They said it denied the craftsman's individuality. Well, of course it did. But labor costs in America were so high that the craftsman was a luxury. Whitney realized that for America to overtake Britain in manufactures it was necessary to bypass the craftsman with a workforce of easily trained, semi-skilled men recruited from the waves of immigrants. America was a place where an industrial worker could save up enough in three years to buy a farm, and no immigrant would stay in the city in manufacturing industry if he could become an independent, landowning farmer. So the thrust to reduce the industrial headcount was enormous, and Whitney showed the way ahead. His 'American System' caught on in the earliest stages of the American Industrial Revolution. As early as 1835, the British politician and industrialist Richard Cobden, visiting America, said that its labor-saving machinery was superior to anything in Britain. By the 1850s, British experts marveled at what they found in the United States-standardized products mass-produced by machine methods including doors, furniture, and other woodwork, boots, shoes, plows, mowing machines, wood screws, files, nails, locks, clocks, small-arms, nuts, bolts-the list was endless." Virtually all this industry was located north of the slaveline. So if Whitney's cotton gin enabled the slave-system to survive and thrive, his 'American System' also gave the North the industrial muscle to crush the defenders of slavery in due course.

The huge growth in the cotton industry made possible by Whitney's genius-it rose at 7 percent compound annually-soon made cotton not only America's largest export but the biggest single source of its growing wealth. It also created 'the South' as a special phenomenon, a culture, a cast of mind. And this in turn was the consequence of General Jackson's destruction of Indian and Spanish power in the lower Mississippi Valley. The Treaty of Fort Jackson was only the first of five in which the Indians were deprived of virtually all the land they had in the whole of this vast area. The Old South-the Carolinas, Virginia, Georgia-was not suited to growing cotton on a large scale; if anything it was tobacco country. The new states Jackson's ruthlessness brought into being, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana, now constituted the Deep South where cotton was king. The population of the states multiplied threefold in the years 1810-30. It was internal migration, settlers moving from New England, where land was now scarce and the Old South, where it was exhausted. James Graham, a North Carolina tobacco planter, wrote to a friend on November 9, 1817: 'The *Alabama Fever* rages here with great violence and has *carried off* vast numbers of our Citizens.'

This migration moved the plantation system from Virginia, the Carolinas, and coastal Georgia to West Georgia, West Tennessee, and the Deep South. But both Old and New South were still linked by chains of slavery. Before the cotton boom, the price of slaves in America had been falling-in the quarter-century 1775-1800 it dropped by 50 percent. In the half-century 1800-50 it rose in real terms from about \$50 per slave to \$800-\$1,000. For every 100 acres under cotton in the Deep South, you needed at least ten and possibly twenty slaves. The Old South was unsuited to cotton but its plantations could and did breed slaves in growing numbers. The US Constitution had prevented Congress from abolishing the slave-trade (as distinct from slavery itself) until 1808. In fact all the states had ended the legal importation of slaves by 1803, and Congress was able to exercise the power to ban the trade from 1808. This had the effect of further increasing the value of the home-bred variety, and slave-breeding now became the chief source of revenue on many of the old tobacco plantations.

The Founding Fathers from Virginia who owned slaves, like Jackson and Madison, and who hated slavery, had taken consolation from their belief that it was an outmoded and inefficient

institution which would die out naturally or be easy to abolish. Madison `spoke often and anxiously of slave property as the worst possible for profit.' He used to say that Richard Rush's 10-acre free farm near Philadelphia brought in more money than his own 2,000-acre one worked by slaves. And it is true that in Russia serfdom, the form of slavery practiced there, was economically outmoded and slowly dying. But in America Madison's views were out of date by 1810. It is a horrible fact that modern economics and high technology do not always work in favor of justice and freedom. Thanks to slavery, a cotton plantation could be laid out and in full production in two years. It was possible to harvest a crop even in one year, and `a man who stood in a wilderness fewer than 12 months ago now stood at a dock watching his crop load out for the English factory towns.' The frontiersman thus became part of a commercial economy and `cotton made it possible for a man to hang a crystal chandelier in his frontier log cabin.' Early in 1823 a man in western Georgia planted cleared land with cotton, sold it in May with the crop established, cleared land in Alabama that autumn, planted and sold the farm, and then repeated the process in Mississippi; he ended up with 1,000 good acres freehold, which had cost him \$1,250 and two years' work. But of course this rapidity would have been impossible without slavery, which made it easy to carry your workforce with you and switch it at will. Slaves made fortunes for those who owned and skillfully exploited them. There were thousands of small planters as well as big ones. A few plantations were worked by the white families which owned them. But over 90 percent had slaves. By the early 1820s a new kind of large-scale specialist cotton plantation, worked by hundreds of slaves, began to dominate the trade.

The big plantations were in turn supplied by specialist, highly commercial slave-breeding plantations. With monogamous marriages, only 10-15 percent of female slaves produced a child a year. Plantations which sold slaves for the market insured regular provision of sires for all nubile females, so that up to 40 percent of female slaves produced a child each year. The notion that Southern slavery was an old-fashioned institution, a hangover from the past, was false. It was a product of the Industrial Revolution, high technology, and the commercial spirit catering for mass markets of hundreds of millions worldwide. It was very much part of the new modern world. That is why it proved so difficult to eradicate. The value of the slaves themselves formed up to 35 percent of the entire capital of the South. By mid-century their value was over \$2 billion in gold; that was one reason compensation was ruled out-it would have amounted to at least ten times the entire federal budget.

With so much money invested in slavery it was not surprising that the South ceased to apologize for slavery and began to defend it. This was a slow process to begin with. In 1816 James Monroe (1758-1831), Madison's right-hand man, succeeded him as president after an easy election. He was the last of the great Virginia dynasty and he shared with his predecessors the anomaly that he owned slaves all his life but wanted to abolish slavery. He had been born in the famous Westmoreland County, attended William and Mary, served in the Revolutionary War, studied law with Jefferson, served with the Virginia legislature and the Continental Congress, had been senator, envoy in France, governor of Virginia, had negotiated the Louisiana Purchase, and then done eight years as secretary of state. As president he was surprisingly popular, if only because he was a change from the unsuccessful Madison, and he was reelected in 1820 almost unanimously. Monroe was a dull man, very conservative in most things, the last President to wear a powdered wig, knee-breeches, and cocked hat, soft-spoken, well-mannered, prudish, and careful. Jefferson said that, if turned inside out, he would be found spotless.

Monroe is known to history chiefly as the author of the Monroe Doctrine (1823), of which more later. He ought to be better known for his promotion of the scheme to solve the slavery

problem by repatriating freed blacks to Africa. This was not just a humbugging tactical move on the part of conscience-stricken slave-owners like himself. It was also backed by the powerful Evangelical anti-slavery lobby in Britain, who set up the first repatriation colony in Sierra Leone. So it was a 'liberal' solution, or seemed so at the time. In 1819 Monroe supported Congressional legislation to set up a similar, American-sponsored colony in West Africa, to be called Liberia. Being a Jeffersonian he could not actually bring himself to allow the United States to purchase land for this purpose. But he assisted in other ways, so that when the colony got going in 1824 its capital was named Monrovia after him. Some freed slaves did go to Liberia, where they immediately set themselves up as a ruling caste over the local Africans, a prime source of the country's poverty and its ferocious civil wars, which continue to this day. American blacks seem to have realized instinctively that it would not work, that they were better off in America even as slaves than in Africa. They were scared of being sent there. Ten years after its foundation, Madison sold sixteen of his able-bodied slaves to a kinsman for \$6,000, they giving 'their glad consent' because of 'their horror of Liberia.'

By the time of Monroe's presidency, however, many Southern whites, especially their political leaders, were brazenly defending slavery, not as an unavoidable evil but as a positive blessing for blacks and whites alike. Christian churchmen joined in this campaign as best they could. As early as 1822 the South Carolina Baptist Association produced a Biblical defense of slavery. There was a notable closing of Southern Christian ranks after the black preacher Nat Turner led a Virginia slave-revolt in 1831, in which fifty-seven whites were killed. In 1844 Bishop John England of Charleston provided an elaborate theological justification to ease the consciences of Catholic slave-owners.

To understand the level of sophistication, and the passionate sincerity, with which slavery was defended we must look at the case of John C. Calhoun (1782-1850) of South Carolina. Calhoun was one of the greatest of all American political figures, a distinguished member of both Houses of Congress, a superb orator, a notable member of the Cabinet, and a political theorist of no mean accomplishment. His *Disquisition on Government and Discourse on the Constitution and Government of the United States* (published together in 1851) deserve to rank with Jefferson on Virginia and the writings of Woodrow Wilson. Calhoun was of Ulster Scots-Irish origin, son of a semi-literate Indian fighter, born a penniless boy with natural good looks, enormous charm, and wonderful brainpower, very much in the tradition of Edmund Burke and Richard Brinsley Sheridan, taking to politics as if he had been born to the purple. In the year of Jefferson's inauguration, he was an eighteen-year-old farmer with virtually no formal education. Ten years later he had graduated brilliantly from Yale, got himself elected to Congress, and found a beautiful bride, Floride Bouneau, heiress to a large plantation in Abbeville, South Carolina. Studying Calhoun's life gives one a striking picture of the way Americans of strong character transformed themselves in a mere generation. In his childhood, life in the Carolina backwoods was wild-literally: the last panthers were not killed till 1797 and the state paid bounties for their skins, and wolfskins too. One maternal uncle had been killed by the Tories in cold blood (his mother, like Jackson's, was a bitter hater of the English), another had been 'butchered by thirty sabre-cuts and a third immured for nine months in the dungeons of St Augustine.' His grandmother had been murdered and one of his aunts kidnapped by Indians. There were many ambushes and scalpings, and his father's old hat, with four musket holes in it, was a family treasure. Despite a lack of education, his father became an expert surveyor (like Washington) and built up a holding of 1,200 acres. But they were poor. A contemporary historian, the Rev.



Charles Woodmason, said the 'cabins swarmed with children' but 'in many places have naught but a gourd to drink out of, not a plate, knife or spoon, glass, cup or anything.' The Calhouns were among those who organized the church and school, served as justices, and tried to civilize the place a little. In those days justice was do-it-yourself, carried out by bands known as the Regulators, who hanged murderers and thieves. Calhoun's father was a tax-collector who also supervised elections, and served in the state legislature for thirty years. He owned thirty-one slaves and referred to 'my family, black and white.' He died when Calhoun was only thirteen, so the boy had to run the estate as a teenager and at the same time get himself through Yale.

Calhoun had two years at college, where he studied law and revealed his obstinacy, clashing with the president, Timothy Dwight, over politics-Dwight was anti-Jefferson. The boy's dissertation was 'The Qualifications Necessary to Make a Statesman.' He had them. He was probably the ablest public man America ever produced and it is not surprising that there were later rumors that he was the real father of Abraham Lincoln. (But the same was said of John Marshall.) Calhoun got to Washington via Charleston politics. In those days it was an uproarious place, a man's town, the women taking refuge in church. It was also the slave capital of the hemisphere-40 percent of Africans came through Charleston, 'the Ellis Island of Black Americans.'

Calhoun grew up six feet two with stiff black hair standing straight up from his head. He read himself into literature, classical and modern, and used his prodigious memory to good effect. His manners were those of the best kind of 18th-century gentleman. The journalist Ann Royall was dazzled by what she called his 'personal beauty' and 'frank and courteous manners-a model of perfection.' Harriet Martineau called him the 'Iron Man,' inflexible in his principles and conduct 'the only way to get him to change his mind was to appeal to his honor.' His enemy Daniel Webster called him 'a true man.' George Ticknor said he was 'the most agreeable man in conversation in Washington.' Margaret Bayard Smith referred to his 'splendid eye' and his face 'stamped with nature's aristocracy.'

In his life, oratory, and writings, Calhoun tried to tackle one of the great problems of the modern age: how to reconcile centralized and democratic power with the demands of people in unequal and different communities, small and large, to control their own lives. The problem has not been solved to this day, even theoretically. He argued that the political war against the South, and slavery, was being fought mainly by powerful lobbies rather than by the democratic wish of the people: he detected, very early on, the threat to American democracy represented by the lobby system, already growing. Thanks to the slaves he and his wife owned, he could pursue a public career, first in Charleston, then in Washington, of completely disinterested public service. Exactly the same argument had been used in defense of slavery in 5th-century BC Athens.

The incongruities of this defense were revealed in a striking passage written by an Englishman, G. W. Featherstonehaugh, who was in the Carolinas in 1834. A traveling companion told him: 'In the North every young man has to scramble rapaciously to make his fortune but in the South the handing down of slave plantations from father to son breeds gentlemen who put honor before profit and are always jealous of their own, and are the natural friends of public liberty.' The speaker, an educated man from South Carolina College, cited Calhoun as an example of what he meant. He had 'the dignity which had belonged to Southern gentlemen from Washington down to the present time.' He had 'never been known to do a mean action in his life.' In public life he 'never omitted a chance to vindicate the Constitution from the attempts of sordid people to violate its intentions.' This disquisition was interrupted by the arrival of the coach, which had a captured runaway slave in chains on its top. Inside Featherstonehaugh

was joined by a white man in chains and a deputy sheriff. The man was about to be hanged for killing a slave in a card-game. The sentence had been passed on him not for murder but for breaking the law against gambling with slaves. A bottle was handed around and they all got drunk, as equals. So 'shut up as I was in a vehicle with such a horrid combination of beings,' he reflected on the cultural paradoxes of the Old South. The traveler was later entertained by Calhoun in his mansion, Fort Hill; it was 'like spending an evening in a gracious Tuscan villa with a Roman senator.'

In Congress 1811-17, Calhoun instantly made his mark as an eloquent War Hawk and was soon chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs. After serving Monroe as secretary of war, 1817-25, he won election as vice-president and ran the Senate 1825-32. He favored the War of 1812 because he wanted America to annex Florida and Texas and turn them into slave states. We come here to the key mechanism in the political battle over slavery-the need of the South to extend it, state by state, in order to preserve its share in the power-balance of Congress. The South felt it could not sit still and fight a defensive battle to preserve slavery, because the population of the North was rising much faster and non-slave states were being added all the time. Once the non-slave states controlled not just the House but the Senate too, they could change the Constitution. So the South had to be aggressive, and it was that which eventually led to the Civil War. As we have seen, the Constitution said little about slavery. Article I, stating the three-fifths rule, merely speaks of 'free persons' and 'other persons' (slaves). But more significant was Article IV, Section 2, Paragraph 3: 'No person held to Service or Labor in one State, under the Laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in Consequence of any Law or Regulation therein, be discharged from such Service or Labor, but shall be delivered up on Claim of the Party to whom such Service or Labor may be due.' This obliged free states to hand over runaways. The South was terrified of a constitutional amendment abolishing this clause which would lead to a mass escape of slaves across its unpoliced borders. The constitutional duty to hand over escaped slaves caused more hatred, anger, and venom on both sides of the slave line than any other issue and was a prime cause of the eventual conflict. And it was fear of losing this constitutional guarantee which determined the tactics of the South in creating new states.

In February 1819 Congress faced a demand from Missouri to become a state, as its population had passed the 60,000 mark. There were then eleven slave and eleven free states. The line between them was defined by the southern and western boundaries of Pennsylvania. This line had been determined by a survey conducted by the English astronomers Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon in 1763-7, to settle disputes between Pennsylvania and Maryland. So it was known, then and ever after, as the Mason-Dixon Line, the boundary between freedom and slavery, North and South. By 1819 slavery, though still existing in some places in the North, was rapidly being extinguished. But no attempt had yet been made to extend the dividing line into the Louisiana Purchase territory, let alone beyond it, though the area was being rapidly settled. Missouri already had 10,000 slaves and was acquiring more. It was obviously going to become another slave state if allowed statehood.

A New York congressman now introduced an anti-slavery measure, which prohibited the introduction of more slaves into the Territory, and automatically freed any slaves born after it became a state on their twenty-fifth birthday. In short, this would have turned Missouri from a slave territory into a free state. The measure passed the House, where the free states already had a majority of 105 to 81, but was rejected by the Senate, where the numbers were equal, 22-22. The Senate went further and agreed to statehood being given to Maine, which had long wanted to be separate from Massachusetts, and which of course was free, provided Missouri were admitted

as a slave state, thus keeping the balance in the Senate 26-26. This was agreed on March 2, 1820 by a narrow vote in the House. But a further crisis arose when the proslavery majority in Missouri's constitutional convention insisted it contain a clause prohibiting free blacks and mulattos from settling in the new state. This infringed Article IV, Section 2, of the Constitution of the United States: 'The Citizens of each State shall be entitled to all Privileges and Immunities of Citizens in the Several States.' Free blacks were citizens of a number of states, including slave states like North Carolina and Tennessee-indeed they even voted there until taken off the rolls in the 1830s.

Might the row over slavery in Missouri have led to a breakdown in the Union? Some people thought it could. Jefferson wrote to a friend: 'This momentous question, like a firebell in the night, awakened and filled me with terror. I considered it at once as the knell of the Union.' There had been some in New England who wanted secession over the War of 1812. Would the South now secede over the refusal of the North to agree to the extension of slavery? John Quincy Adams, now Secretary of State, thought this the logical and even the moral solution. Adams did not see how North and South could continue to live together. He noted grimly in his diaries in March 1820 a conversation he had had with his Cabinet colleague, Calhoun (then War Secretary). Calhoun told him that in his state, South Carolina, 'domestic labor was confined to the blacks and such was the prejudice that if he, who was the most popular man in the district, were to keep a white servant in his house, his character and reputation would be irretrievably ruined ... It did not apply to all kinds of labor-not for example to farming. Manufacturing and mechanical labor was not degrading. It was only manual labor, the proper work of slaves. No white person could descend to that. And it was the best guarantee of equality among the whites.' Adams commented savagely on Calhoun's admissions: 'In the abstract, [Southerners] say that slavery is an evil. But when probed to the quick on it they show at the bottom their soul's pride and vainglory in their condition of masterdom.'

Adams' moral condemnation of the South ignored the fact that, throughout the North, discrimination against blacks was universal and often enshrined in statutes. In Pennsylvania, for instance, special measures were taken to guard against black crime, the governor of the state insisting that blacks had a peculiar propensity to commit assaults, robberies, and burglaries. Both Ohio and Indiana had a legal requirement that, on entering the state, a black must post a bond for \$500 as a guarantee of good behavior. In 1821 New York State's constitutional convention virtually adopted manhood suffrage: anyone who possessed a freehold, paid taxes, had served in the state militia, or had even worked on the state highways could vote-but only if he was 'white.' It actually increased the property qualification for blacks from \$100 to \$250. Pennsylvania also adopted manhood suffrage in 1838, but on a 'whites only' basis. Anti-black color bars were usual in trade unions, especially craft ones. Adams was well aware that in Europe the North's color bars already shocked educated people. When he was minister in St Petersburg, nobles who were quite happy to beat one of their serfs to death with the knout looked down on Americans as uncivilized because of their treatment of blacks-a foretaste of 20th-century anti-Americanism. He noted (August 5, 1812): 'After dinner I had a visit from Claud Gabriel the black man in the Emperor [Alexander I]'s service, who went to America last summer with his wife and children, and who is now come back [to St Petersburg] with them. He complained of having been very ill-treated in America, and that he was obliged to lay aside his superb dress and saber, which he had been ordered to wear, but which occasioned people to insult and beat him.' It was already known for 'reactionary' European regimes to pay honors to American blacks as a way of demonstrating the hypocrisy of American egalitarianism.

Adams did not deny the humbug of much Northern opposition to slavery but brushed it aside and concentrated on the main issue: the absolute need to end it as a lawful institution. It was his view that slavery made Southerners, who had a sense of masterdom that Northerners did not feel, look down on their fellow-Americans, thus undermining the Union at its very heart. He noted: 'It is among the evils of slavery that it taints the very sources of moral principle. It establishes false estimates of virtue and vice.' Hence, he concluded, 'If the union must be dissolved, slavery is precisely the question on which it ought to break!' Adams was apocalyptic on slavery. He dismissed the African colonization schemes which Madison and other Southern moderates favored as contemptible attempts to pass the responsibility for their crimes onto the federal government-they were, he snarled, 'ravenous as panthers' to get Congress to fund their guilt-ridden schemes. He noted sardonically that, in another of his heart-to-hearts over slavery with Calhoun, the latter admitted that, if the Union dissolved over the issue, the South would have to form a political, economic, and military alliance with Great Britain. 'I said that would be returning to the colonial state. He said Yes, pretty much, but it would be forced upon them.' To the furiously moral Adams, it was only to be expected that the evil defenders of a wicked institution should, in order to perpetuate it, ally themselves with the grand depository of international immorality, the British throne. To him, if the Union could be preserved only at the price of retaining slavery, it were better it should end, especially since in the break-up slavery itself would perish:

If slavery be the destined sword in the hands of the destroying angel which is to sever the ties of this union, the same sword will cut asunder the bonds of slavery itself. A dissolution of the Union for the cause of slavery would be followed by a servile war in the slave-holding states, combined with a war between the two severed portions of the Union ... its result must be the extirpation of slavery from this whole continent and, calamitous and devastating as this course of events must be, so Glorious would be the final issue that, as God should judge me, I dare not say it is not to be desired.

With high-placed statesmen talking in the exalted and irreconcilable terms that Adams and (to a lesser extent) Calhoun employed, it is a wonder that the United States did not indeed break up in the 1820s. And if it had done the South would undoubtedly have survived. It was then beyond the physical resources of the North to coerce it, as it did in the 1860s. Moreover, Calhoun was probably right in supposing that Britain, for a variety of reasons, would have come to the rescue of the South, preferring to deal with America as two weak entities, rather than one strong one. The course of American history would thus have been totally different, with both North and South racing each other to the Pacific, recruiting new territory, just as Canada and the United States did on either side of the 49th parallel. However, it must be noted that Adams came from Massachusetts and Calhoun from South Carolina, the two extremist states. Many Americans believed-General Grant was one-that, when Civil War finally came, these two states bore the chief responsibility for it; that, without them, it could have been avoided. These were, on both sides of the argument, the ideological states, the upholders of the tradition of fanaticism which was one part of the American national character, and a very fruitful and creative part in many ways. But there was the other side to the national character, the moderate, pragmatic, and statesmanlike side, derived from the old English tradition of the common law and parliament, which taught that ideological lines should not be pursued to their bitter and usually bloody end, but that efforts should be made to achieve a compromise always.

This second tradition, upheld for so long by the Virginia patricians, the Washingtons and Madisons, now fell firmly into the capable hands of a man from the new West, Kentucky's Henry Clay. Henry Clay is a key figure in the period 1815-50, who three times averted complete breakdown between North and South by his political skills. He was also a man of extraordinary energy and ability, perhaps the ablest man, next to Calhoun, who never quite managed to become president of the United States-though, God knows, he tried hard enough. Clay was from Virginia, as American as they came. The Clays got to Jamestown in 1613 (from Wales) and Clay was fifth generation. His mother was third generation. Clay was born in 1777, to a Baptist preacher and tobacco farmer with a 464-acre homestead and twenty-one slaves in the low-lying marshlands or Slashes. His father hated the British, especially Colonel Banastre Tarleton, who ravaged the area, and they hated him: it was Clay's story that redcoats desecrated his father's grave, looking for treasure. When he was four his father died, and Clay inherited two slaves from him (and one from his grandfather). So he owned slaves until his death in 1852 but called slavery a 'great evil,' imposed by 'our ancestors,' and that it was against the Constitution, which, in his opinion, extended equality to blacks 'as an abstract principle.' If, he said, America could start all over again, slavery would never be admitted. Clay's desperate attempts to hold the balance within the Union on slavery made him a particular favorite of Abraham Lincoln, who, during his famous debates with Stephen A. Douglas, quoted Clay forty-one times.'

It was Clay's fate to be born to and live with extraordinary personal tragedy. Of his eight sisters and brothers, only two survived childhood and his widowed mother was an embittered woman in consequence. So was his wife, Lucretia Hart. Of their eleven children, two, Henrietta and Laura, died in infancy, Eliza at twelve, Lucretia at fourteen, Susan at twenty, Anne at twenty-eight; the eldest son, Theodore, spent most of his life in a lunatic asylum, and the second, Thomas, became an alcoholic; the third, Henry Jr, a brilliant graduate of West Point, in whom Clay put all his hopes, was killed in the Mexican War. Clay regarded his background as poverty-stricken and for political purposes exaggerated it. He said he was a 'self-made man,' a term he invented, 'an orphan who never recognised a father's smile ... I inherited [nothing but] infancy, ignorance and indigence.' He regretted to the end of his days that he never learned Latin and Greek-'I always relied too much on the resources of my genius' (Clay was not a conspicuously modest man). On the other hand, Clay had beautiful handwriting and, after working as an errand boy and drugstore clerk, he went to work in the Virginia Chancellery under the great George Wythe, who had trained Jefferson, Monroe, and Marshall. Wythe turned Clay into a capable lawyer and a polished gentleman. So Clay got into Richmond society, where he broke hearts and made enemies as well as connections.' But Virginia swarmed with underemployed lawyers, so Clay went to Kentucky to make his fortune.

'The dark and bloody ground' was an Indian name for Kentucky, but it fitted the origins of this border state. Settlers there were described as 'blue beards, who are rugged, dirty, brawling, browbeating monsters, six feet high, whose vocation is robbing, drinking, fighting and terrifying every peaceable man in the community.' Clay was six feet too and could fight with the best of them. He was slender, graceful, but ugly: 'Henry's face was a compromise put together by a committee' and was distinguished by an enormously wide mouth, like a slash. He used this mouth often, to eat and drink prodigiously, to shape his superbly soft, melodic, caressing voice, and to do an extraordinary amount of kissing. As he put it, 'Kissing is like the presidency, it is not to be sought and not to be *declined*.' His opponents said his prodigiously wide mouth allowed him an unfair advantage: 'the ample dimensions of his kissing apparatus enabled him completely to *rest* one side of it while the other was on active duty.' If women had had the vote Clay would

have experienced no difficulty in becoming president every time he chose to run. As it was, having arrived in Kentucky in 1797 at the age of twenty-an excellent time to invest one's youth in this burgeoning territory-he promptly married into its leading establishment family. Within a few years he was the outstanding member of its state legislature, the highest-paid criminal lawyer in the state, a director of its main bank, professor of law and politics at Transylvania University, and the owner of a handsome property, Ashland, his home and solace for the rest of his life. He even served two brief terms in the United States Senate, but it was not until he was elected to the House in 1810 that his national career began.

Clay was probably the most innovative politician in American history, to be ranked with Franklin, Jefferson, Hamilton, and Madison as a political creator. A year after getting to the House he was elected its Speaker. Hitherto, the House had followed the English tradition, whereby the Speaker presided impartially and represented the collective consensus. Clay transformed this essentially non-political post into one of leadership, drilling and controlling a partisan majority and, in the process, making himself the most powerful politician in the country after the President. This made him a key figure in promoting the War of 1812 and also in negotiating the Treaty of Ghent; and, somehow or other, he escaped any blame for the war's disasters and returned from Ghent in triumph. This led him to think he ought to be secretary of state to the new President, Monroe. When the job went to John Quincy Adams instead, Clay organized and led in the House a systematic 'loyal opposition'-another political innovation.

Clay was both principled and unprincipled. That was why other public men found it so difficult to make up their minds about him. (The ladies had no difficulty; they loved him.) His colleagues in the House and later in the Senate saw him as dictatorial and sometimes resented the way he used his authority to promote his views and ambitions. They saw the advantages of the strong leadership he provided. When he was in charge, the House functioned efficiently and fairly. Whenever he chose to stand, he was always voted into the speakership by large majorities. Later, in the Senate, the bulk of his colleagues always looked to him to take the lead. He was extraordinarily gifted in making what was in many ways a flawed system of government to work. He knew more about its nuts and bolts than any of his predecessors. Moreover, he had charm. Men who knew him only by repute were overwhelmed when they came across him face to face. A friend said to Thomas Glascock of Georgia: 'General, may I introduce you to Henry Clay?' 'No, sir, I am his adversary and choose not to subject myself to his fascination.' Calhoun, who became a mortal opponent in rhetorical duels of great savagery, admitted through clenched teeth: 'I don't like Clay. He is a bad man, an imposter, a creator of wicked schemes. I wouldn't speak to him but, *by God, I love him!*'

Like many politicians, Clay tended to confuse his personal advancement with the national interest. But once in Washington he quickly developed, and thereafter extended throughout his life, a body of public doctrine which made him one of the pillars of the new republic. He believed that the liberty and sovereign independence of the hemisphere should be the prime object of American foreign policy. The United States should secure its economic independence from Europe by enlarging its own manufacturing sector. For this reason he got Congress in 1816 to enact the first American protective tariff and pressed for what he termed the 'American System' (of state intervention), under which state and federal governments would build roads, canals, and harbors to hasten industrialization, speed westward expansion, and bind the Union together." There was, to be sure, a large element of self-interest in this. Clay's estate grew hemp, a Kentucky staple, and needed both protection from European hemp imports and good roads to take it east cheaply. Equally he was one of those in Congress who helped to create the Second

Bank of the United States. It just so happened he was paid the huge retainer of \$6,000 a year to fight the SBUS's cases in Kentucky, and borrowed money from it when necessary-indeed he was also loaned large sums by J. J. Astor, another prime beneficiary of the American System. But Clay clearly believed with every fiber of his being that America could and must become a leading industrial power, and that such expansion would eventually make it the greatest nation on earth. Just as John Marshall laid down the legal basis for American capitalism, so Clay supplied its political foundations.

Clay was a passionate man. That, one suspects, is one reason people liked him. Despite all his political skills he could not always keep his temper in check. Tears jumped easily into his eyes. So did rage. When Humphrey Marshall, cousin and brother-in-law of the Chief Justice, and an even bigger man than Clay (six feet two) called Clay a liar in the Kentucky legislature, Clay tried to fight him on the floor of the House but was separated by a giant man with a strong German accent 'Come poys, no fighting here, I vips you both'-and the two antagonists crossed the river into Ohio to fight a duel, Clay getting a flesh wound in the thigh during a fusillade of shots (happily pistols were very inaccurate in those days). Clay pursued women relentlessly all his life, drank and gambled heavily ('I have always paid peculiar homage to the fickle goddess'), and, above all, danced. He was probably the most accomplished dancer among the politicians of his generation, with the possible exception of the South American Liberator, Simon Bolivar. Like Bolivar, when Clay was excited he loved to dance on the table at a banquet, and on one Kentucky occasion an eyewitness described how he gave 'a grand Terpsichorean performance ... executing a *pas seul* from head to foot of the dining table, sixty feet in length ... to the crashing accompaniment of shivered glass and china.' Next morning he paid the bill for the breakages, \$120, 'with a flourish. Dancing indeed was a frontier craze in the America of the 1820s and 1830s-it was about the only entertainment they had-and laid the foundation for the extraordinary proficiency which enabled the United States, in the late 19th and 20th centuries, to produce more first-class professional dancers than any other country in the world, including Russia. When Clay was in Washington he adopted a different accent, watched his grammar (not always successfully), took delicate pinches of snuff while speaking, played with his gold-rimmed eyeglasses, and generally did his gentleman act. On the frontier, however, he was rambunctious, a true Kentuckian, and dancing was part of the performance.

It seemed to Clay ridiculous that Congress should allow the slavery issue, which it was unwilling to resolve fundamentally by banning it once and for all (as he wished), to obstruct the admission of Missouri, the first territory to be carved out of the Louisiana Purchase entirely west of the Mississippi. It was part of his American System to develop the Midwest as quickly as possible, so that America could continue its relentless drive to the Pacific before anyone else came along. If Missouri could not make itself viable without slavery, so what? He knew that in Kentucky, if he and his wife gave up their slaves, they would have to abandon their estate as uncompetitive and move-just as Edward Coles had had to sell up and move to Illinois, where he became the state's second governor. It was Clay's view that, in God's good time, slavery would go anyway, and developing the West using the American System would hasten the day. Meanwhile, let Missouri be admitted and prosper.

Hence Clay, by furious and skillful activity behind the scenes and on the House floor, ensured that Maine and Missouri were admitted together, along with a compromise amendment prohibiting slavery in the Louisiana Purchase north of latitude 36.30 (March 1820). And by even greater prodigies of skill he resolved the constitutional question provoked by the extremists in the Missouri convention by what is known as the Second Missouri Compromise, the local

legislature solemnly pledging never to enact laws depriving any citizen of his rights under the US Constitution (February 1821). As a result President Monroe was able to sign Missouri's admission to the Union in August. This was the first of three compromises Clay brokered (the others were 1833 and 1850) which defused the periodic explosion between North and South and postponed the Civil War for forty years. Indeed Senator Henry S. Foote, who had watched Clay weave his magic spells to disarm the angry protagonists in Congress, later said: 'Had there been one such man in the Congress of the United States as Henry Clay in 1860-1, there would, I am sure, have been no Civil War.'

Clay followed up the Missouri Compromises by encouraging President Monroe to play a positive part in the liberation struggle against Spain in Latin America by giving the revolutionary governments rapid recognition and any diplomatic help they needed. That, too, was part of the American System, in which the United States not only made itself strong and independent in the north, but excluded the rapacious European powers from the center and the south. What Clay did not know was the extent to which the British Foreign Secretary, George Canning, also an enthusiastic supporter of Latin American independence (for British commercial purposes), was pushing Monroe to take the same line and to declare openly that France and Spain were no longer welcome in the hemisphere. On December 2, 1823, as part of his message to Congress, Monroe announced the new American policy. First, the United States would not interfere in existing European colonies. Second, it would keep out of Europe, its alliances and wars. Third, 'the American continents ... are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonisation by the European powers.' Fourth, the political systems of Europe being different to that of the United States, it would 'consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety.' This declaration, which in time was known as the Monroe Doctrine, became progressively more important as America thanks to Clay's American System-acquired the industrial and military muscle to enforce it.

In the light of his successful supra-party activities, Clay believed he had earned the right to be president. But then so did many other people. The Monroe presidency has been described, at the time and since, as the 'Era of Good Feelings,' the last time in American history when the government of the country was not envenomed by party politics. But a case can also be made for describing the Monroe presidency, and the rule of John Quincy Adams which formed its appendage, as the first great era of corruption in American politics. Many Americans came seriously to believe, during it, that their government, both administration and Congress, was corrupt, and this at a time when in Britain the traditional corruption of the 18th-century system was being slowly but surely extruded. By corruption, Americans of the 1820s did not simply mean bribes and stealing from the public purse. They also meant the undermining of constitutional integrity by secret deals, the use of public office to acquire power or higher office, and the giving of private interests priority over public welfare. But the public thought that plenty of simple thieving was going on too. Indeed, two members of the government, Calhoun at the War Department, and William Crawford (1772-1834), the Treasury Secretary, more or less openly accused each other of tolerating, if not actually profiting from, skulduggery in their departments.

The atmosphere in Monroe's administration during its last years was poisonous, not least because Calhoun, Crawford, and Adams, its three principal members, were all maneuvering to succeed their boss. As a consequence there was particular bitterness over patronage and appointments. Adams' diary records a ferocious quarrel between Crawford and Monroe on



December 14, 1825. The two men had met to discuss appointments to the Customs, always contentious because of the rising volume of cash handled and the opportunities for stealing it. Monroe was obstructive and when Crawford rose to go he said contemptuously: 'Well, if you will not appoint the persons well qualified for the places, tell me who you will appoint that I may get rid of their importunities.' Monroe replied 'with great warmth, saying he considered Crawford's language as extremely improper and unsuitable to the relations between them; when Crawford, turning to him, raised his cane, as if in the attitude to strike, and said: "You damned infernal old scoundrel," Mr Monroe seized the tongs at the fireplace in self-defense, applied a retaliatory epithet to Crawford and told him he would immediately ring for servants himself and turn him out of the house ... They never met afterwards.'

To assist their presidential prospects, both Crawford and Calhoun used agents in their departments, whose duty it was to dispense money, as political campaigners; they were given gold and silver but allowed to discharge payments in paper as a reward. Since each knew what the other was doing and circulated rumors to that effect, these activities became public knowledge. Then again, Crawford allowed one of his senatorial supporters to inspect government land offices, at public expense, during which tour he made speeches supporting Crawford's candidacy. Various members of the administration, it was claimed, had been given 'loans' by businessmen seeking favors, loans which were never repaid. But Congress was corrupt too. Senator Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri served as 'legal representative' of Astor, on a huge retainer, and managed to push through the abolition of the War Department's 'factory' system, which competed with Astor's own posts. The fact that the War Department's system was corrupt, as Benton easily demonstrated, was not the point: what was a senator doing working for a millionaire? Benton was not the only one. The great Massachusetts orator, Daniel Webster (1782-1852), received a fat fee for 'services' to the hated Second Bank of the United States. Webster has been described by one modern historian as 'a man who regularly took handouts from any source available and paid the expected price.' Astor seems to have had financial dealings with other men high in public life; indeed he even loaned \$5,000 to Monroe himself; this was eventually repaid though not for fifteen years. He lent the enormous sum of \$20,000 to Clay during the panic year 1819 when credit was impossible to come by. Clay, like Webster, served the Bank for money while Speaker. About this time, America's growing number of newspapers began to campaign vigorously about Washington's declining standards. The *Baltimore Federal Republican* announced that navy paymasters were guilty of 'enormous defalcation,' only 'one of innumerable instances of corruption in Washington.' The New York Statesman denounced 'scandalous defalcation in our public pecuniary agents, gross misapplications of public money, and an unprecedented laxity in official responsibilities.'

The evident corruption in Washington, coming on top of the financial crisis of 1819, persuaded the victor of New Orleans, General Jackson, that it was high time, and his public duty, to campaign for the presidency and engage in what he called 'a general cleansing' of the federal capital. He did not think it practicable to return to the Jeffersonian ideal of a pastoral America run by enlightened farmers. He wrote in 1816: 'Experience has taught me that manufactures are now as necessary to our independence as to our comfort.' But clearly a return to the pristine purity of the republic was imperative. So Jackson became the first presidential candidate to grasp with both hands what was to become the most popular campaigning theme in American history- 'Turn the rascals out.' Unfortunately for Jackson, if his own hands were clean-how could they not be? He had barely set foot in Washington-there were quite different objections to his candidature. His victory at New Orleans had enabled him to become a kind of unofficial viceroy

or pro-consul in the South. As such, he had destroyed Indian power there and, in effect, confiscated their lands. No one objected to that of course. But on March 15, 1818 his troops began an undeclared war against Spain by invading Florida, which the feeble Spanish garrisons were incapable of defending. He even promised Monroe, 'I will ensure you Cuba in a few days' if Washington lent him a frigate-but Monroe refused to oblige. Under pressure from his Secretary of State Adams, an enthusiastic imperialist, Monroe gave Jackson's war against Florida tacit support, though he later denied collusion and said he was sick at the time. In a modern context, of course, Jackson's activities-plainly against the Constitution, which gave the right to make peace or war exclusively to Congress-would have been exposed by liberal-minded journalists. In 1818, the general would have seized such reporters and imprisoned or expelled them, or possibly hanged them for treason. In any case there were no liberal-minded journalists then, at least on Indian or Spanish questions. All were bellicose and expansionary. On February 8, 1819 Congress was happy to endorse the *fait accompli* by rejecting a motion of censure on Jackson, and the territory was formally conveyed by Spain to the United States on July 17, 1821.

Nevertheless, Jackson was not without prominent critics, notably Henry Clay. As part of his opposition campaign against the Monroe administration, Clay accused it of allowing Jackson to behave like a Bonaparte. And when Jackson made it clear he was campaigning for the presidency in 1824, Clay dismissed him as a 'mere military chieftain.' 'I cannot believe that killing 2,500 Englishmen at New Orleans qualifies for the various, difficult and complicated duties of the First Magistracy,' he wrote. Jackson, he said, was 'ignorant, passionate, hypocritical, corrupt and easily swayed by the basest men who surround him.' Jackson brushed aside these charges at the time-though he did not forget them: Clay jumped right to the top of his long enemies lists and remained there till Jackson died-and concentrated on rousing 'the people.' Jackson may have been a military autocrat but what differentiated him from the *caudillos* of Latin America, and the Bonaparte figures of Europe, is that he was a genuine democrat. He was the first major figure in American politics to believe passionately and wholly in the popular will, and it is no accident that he created the great Democratic Party, which is still with us. As governor of Florida territory (thanks to his high-handed methods, Florida did not become a state till 1845), Jackson ruled that mere residence was enough to give an adult white male the vote. In more general terms, he said in 1822 that every free man in a nation or state should have the vote since all were subject to the laws and punishments, both federal and state, and so they 'of right, ought to be entitled to a vote in making them.' He added that every state legislature had the duty to adopt such voting qualifications as it thought proper for 'the happiness, security and prosperity of the state' (1822).

Jackson argued that the more people who had a presidential vote the better since, if Washington was rotten, that gave them the remedy: 'The great constitutional corrective in the hands of the people against usurpation of power, or corruption by their agents, is the right of suffrage; and this when used with calmness and deliberation will prove strong enough-it will perpetuate their liberties and rights.' Jackson thought the people were instinctively right and moral, and Big Government, of the kind he could see growing up in Washington, fundamentally wrong and immoral. His task, as he saw it, was to liberate and empower this huge moral popular force by appealing to it over the heads of the entrenched oligarchy, the corrupt ruling elite. This was undoubtedly a clear, simple political strategy, and a winning one, if the suffrage was wide enough.

It is not clear how far this great innovation in American politics-the introduction of the *demos*-was Jackson's own doing or the work, as Clay said, of the unscrupulous men who manipulated him. His ignorance was terrifying. His grammar and spelling were shaky. The 'Memorandums'

he addressed to himself are a curious mixture of naivety, shrewdness, insight, and prejudice. His tone of voice, in speech and writings, was sub-Biblical. 'I weep for my country,' he asserted, often. Banks, Washington in general, the War Department in particular, and his massed enemies were 'The Great Whore of Babylon.' Hostile newspapers poured on him what he called 'their viols of wrath.' He himself would 'cleans the orgean stables.' By contrast, his aide, Major John Eaton (1790-1854), who became a US senator in 1818, and acted as Jackson's political chief-of-staff and amanuensis, was a skilled writer. He turned the 'clean up Washington' theme into a national campaign, the first modern election campaign, in fact. In early summer 1823, Eaton wrote a series of eleven political articles signed 'Wyoming,' for the *Columbian Observer* of Philadelphia. They were reprinted as a pamphlet, *Letters of Wyoming*, and reproduced in newspapers all over the country. The theme, worked out in specific detail and couched in impressive rhetoric, was that the country had fallen into the 'Hands of Mammon' and that the voters must now insure that it returned to the pure principles of the Revolution.

Jackson was attacked in turn in this newspaper and pamphlet warfare, the most damaging assault coming from the highly respected former Treasury Secretary, Albert Gallatin, who asserted that whenever Jackson had been entrusted with power he had abused it. With the appalling example of Latin America in mind, Gallatin reminded voters: 'General Jackson has expressed a greater and bolder disregard for the first principles of liberty than I have ever known to be entertained by any American.' This line, too, was widely reproduced. Yet Jackson, despite the warnings, proved an outstanding candidate, then and later. Tall, slender, handsome, fierce, but also frail and often ill-looking, he made people, especially women, feel protective. With his reputation for wildness and severity, his actual courtesy, when people finally met him, was overwhelming. Daniel Webster testified: 'General Jackson's manners are more presidential than those of any of the candidates ... my wife is for him decidedly.' It was the first case, in fact, of presidential charisma in American history.

The presidential election of 1824 was an important landmark for more than one reason. Originally there were five candidates; Crawford, Calhoun, Clay, Adams, and Jackson. But Calhoun withdrew to become vice-presidential candidate on both tickets, and a stroke rendered Crawford a weak runner: he came in a poor third. In the event it was a race between Adams and Jackson. The electoral college system was still a reality but this was the first election in which popular voting was also important. In Georgia, New York, Vermont, Louisiana, Delaware, and South Carolina, the electors of the president were chosen by state legislatures. Elsewhere there were already statewide tickets, though voting by districts still took place in Maine, Illinois, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Maryland. The number of electors was larger than ever before, though with the country prosperous again there was no wrathful rising of the people-and America was already showing a propensity towards low turnouts, or low registrations of eligible voters. In Massachusetts, where Adams was the Favorite Son, only 37,000 votes were cast, against 60,000 for governor the year before. In Ohio, where 76,000 turned out for the governorship race earlier in the autumn, only 59,000 voted for the presidency. Virginia had a white population of 625,000: only 15,000 voted and in Pennsylvania only 47,000 voted, though the population had already passed the million mark. All the same, with 356,038 votes cast, Jackson, with 153,544, emerged the clear leader. Adams, the runner-up, was 40,000 votes behind, with 108,740. Jackson also won more electoral college votes, having ninety-nine, against eighty-four for Adams, forty-one for Crawford, and thirty-seven for Clay. He carried eleven states, against seven for Adams. By any reckoning, Jackson was the winner. However, under the Twelfth Amendment, if no presidential candidate scored a majority of the electoral votes, the issue had to be taken to the

House of Representatives, which picked the winner from the top three, voting by states. That, in practice, made Clay, Speaker of the House, the broker. As fourth-runner, he was now excluded from the race. But he determined he would decide who won it, and profit accordingly.

The House was due to meet February 9, 1825. Jackson reached Washington on December 7, 1824, after a twenty-eight-day journey from Tennessee. In a letter to his old army crony John Coffee, he claimed the place was thick with rumors of a deal but he was taking no part in any political talks: 'Mrs Jackson and myself go to no parties [but remain] at home smoking our pipes.' (This was a formidable operation: his wife had clay pipes but Jackson smoked 'a great Powhatan Bowl Pipe with a long stem,' puffing out until the room was 'so obfuscated that one could hardly breathe.') Clay's people put out feelers, asking what office was likely to go to their principal if Jackson was elected. Later, Jackson was asked to confirm this rumor: 'Is that a *fact*?' Jackson: 'Yes, Sir, such a proposition *was* made. I said to the bearer, "Go tell Mr Clay, tell Mr. Adams, that if I go to that chair, I go with clean hands."' However, Adams and Clay were less squeamish, naivety, shrewdness, insight, and prejudice. His tone of voice, in speech and writings, was sub-Biblical. 'I weep for my country,' he asserted, often. Banks, Washington in general, the War Department in particular, and his massed enemies were 'The Great Whore of Babylon.' Hostile newspapers poured on him what he called 'their viols of wrath.' He himself would 'cleans the orgean stables.' By contrast, his aide, Major John Eaton (1790-1854), who became a US senator in 1818, and acted as Jackson's political chief-of-staff and amanuensis, was a skilled writer. He turned the 'clean up Washington' theme into a national campaign, the first modern election campaign, in fact. In early summer 1823, Eaton wrote a series of eleven political articles signed 'Wyoming,' for the *Columbian Observer* of Philadelphia. They were reprinted as a pamphlet, *Letters of Wyoming*, and reproduced in newspapers all over the country. The theme, worked out in specific detail and couched in impressive rhetoric, was that the country had fallen into the 'Hands of Mammon' and that the voters must now insure that it returned to the pure principles of the Revolution.

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Jackson's wrath exploded. He wrote the same evening: 'So you see the Judas of the West has closed the contract and will receive the thirty pieces of silver. His end will be the same. Was there ever witnessed such bare-face corruption?' The cry, 'Corrupt Bargain,' was uttered and taken up all over the country. It became the theme for Jackson's next presidential campaign, which began immediately. The way in which Jackson, having got most suffrages, most electoral votes, and most states, was robbed of the presidency by a furtive deal seemed to most people to prove up to the hilt what he had been saying about a corrupt Washington, which he had been 'elected' to purify. So it was the electorate, as well as Jackson, which had been swindled. Clay did not help matters. Instead of keeping a dignified silence, he produced various, and contradictory, explanations for his giving the presidency to Adams. Jackson exulted: 'How little common sense this man displays! Oh, that mine enemy would write a book! ... silence would

have been to him wisdom.' We shall probably never know whether there *was* a 'corrupt bargain.' Most likely not. But most Americans thought so. And the phrase made a superb slogan.'"

In spring 1825 the Tennessee legislature nominated Jackson as their president for the race of 1828, and another new tradition in America began: the endless election campaign. The charge of a corrupt bargain went far to undermine the legitimacy of the Adams presidency. Jackson announced that, having hitherto regarded Adams as a man of probity, 'From that moment I withdrew all intercourse with him.' A huge political fissure opened between the administration and the Jacksonites. From that point opposition in Congress became systematic. The modern American two-party system began to emerge. All over what was already an enormous country, and one which was expanding fast, branches of a Jacksonian popular party began to form from 1825. Scores of newspapers lined up behind the new organization, including important new ones like Duff Green's *United States Telegraph*. As the political system polarized, more and more political figures swung behind Jackson. In New York, the master of the Tammany machine, Martin Van Buren (1782-1862), Benton and Calhoun, Sam Houston of the West, the Virginia grandee John Randolph of Roanoke (1773-1833), George McDuffie (1790-1851) of South Carolina, Edward Livingstone (1764-1836), the boss of Louisiana-all these men, and others, assembled what was to become one of the great and enduring popular instruments of American politics, the Democratic Party.

The *Telegraph*, chief organ of the new party, was head of a network of fifty others, in all the states, which reproduced its most scurrilous articles. Those who believe present-day American politics are becoming a dirty game cannot have read the history of the 1828 election. Americans have always taken a prurient interest in what goes on in the White House, particularly if public money is involved. Even the mild Monroe, incensed by an inquiry about spending on interior decoration by Congressman John Cocke of Tennessee, a Jacksonian chairman of one of its committees, 'desired the person who brought him the message to tell Cocke he was a scoundrel and that was the only answer he would give him.' Adams, blameless in this respect anyway, was subjected to still more minute investigations. A White House inventory revealed that it contained a billiard table and a chess-set, paid for (as it happened) out of Adams' own pocket. Congressman Samuel Carson of North Carolina demanded to know by what right 'the public money should be applied to the purchase of Gambling Tables and Gambling Furniture?' That question, parroted in the *Telegraph* and its satellites, sounded dreadful in New England and the Bible Belt. The *Telegraph*, anxious to portray Adams as a raffish fellow, instead of the grim old stick he actually was, dragged up an ancient story from his St Petersburg days which had him presenting to Tsar Alexander I an innocent young American girl-he had been 'the pimp of the coalition,' it claimed.

Oddly enough, the one shocking aspect of Adams' tenure of the White House-or so it might seem to us-his daily swims stark naked in the Potomac, attended by his black servant Antoine in a canoe, went unreported. It was by no means a tame river and on June 13, 1825 Adams was nearly drowned when the canoe capsized, losing his coat and waistcoat and having to scramble back to the White House in his pants, shoeless. But a Philadelphia paper complained that, in the humid summer weather, he wore only a black silk ribbon round his neck instead of a proper cravat, and that he went to church barefoot. Adams did not have a happy time in the White House. He dreaded being buttonholed in the street. He seems to have spent several hours every day receiving members of the public, who arrived without appointment or invitation, many with tales of woe. He recorded: 'The succession of visitors from my breakfasting to my dining hour,

with their variety of objects and purposes, is infinitely distressing.' He had `many such visitors' as a Mrs. Weedon, who `said she had rent to pay and if she could not pay it this day, her landlord threatened to distrain upon her furniture.' Of a visit from Mrs. Willis Anderson, whose husband was serving ten years for mail robbery, he noted: `I had refused [to help] this woman three times and she had nothing new to allege. I desired her not to come to me again.' Two weeks after the importunate Mrs. Anderson, Adams had a visit from a Mr. Arnold, who said he had been traveling and found himself in Washington without money. He would be `much obliged' if the President would provide him with the cash to get back to Massachusetts, `which I declined.' There is no indication that President Adams had much time to use his Gambling Furniture.

However, the administration papers were not slow in lashing back at Jackson. The *National Journal* asserted: `General Jackson's mother was a *Common Prostitute*, brought to this country by British soldiers! She afterwards married a *Mulatto Man*, by whom she had several children, of which number *General Jackson is one!*' Jackson burst into tears when he read this statement, but he was still more upset by attacks on the validity of his marriage to Rachel. He swore he would challenge to a duel, and kill, anyone he could identify being behind the rumors. He meant Clay of course. (On his deathbed, Jackson said the two things he most regretted in his life were that `I did not hang Calhoun and shoot Clay.') In fact, on a quite separate issue, Clay and Randolph did fight a duel on the Potomac banks, just where the National Airport now stands: neither was hurt but Clay's bullet went through Randolph's coat (he bought the Senator a new one). When Jackson got information that a private detective, an Englishman called Day, was nosing around Natchez and Nashville looking at marriage registers, he wrote to Sam Houston that, when he got information about Clay's `secret movements,' he would proceed `to his political and perhaps his actual destruction.' Clay was certainly warned by friends that gunmen were after him. Jackson went so far as to have ten prominent men in the Nashville area draw up a statement, which filled ten columns in the *Telegraph*, testifying that his marriage to Rachel was valid. That did not stop the administration producing a pamphlet which asked: `Ought a convicted adulteress and her paramour husband be placed in the highest offices in the land?' The *Telegraph* replied by claiming that Mr. and Mrs Adams had lived in sin before their marriage and that the President was an alcoholic and a sabbath-breaker.

The Presidential campaign of 1828 was also famous for the first appearance of the `leak' and the campaign poster. Adams complained: `I write few private letters ... I can never be sure of writing a line which will not some day be published by friend or foe.' Anti-slavery New England was regaled by a pamphlet entitled *General Jackson's Negro Speculations, and his Traffic in Human Flesh, Examined and Established by Positive Proof*. Even more spectacular was the notorious `Coffin Handbill,' printed for circulation and display, under the headline `Some Account of Some of the Bloody Deeds of General Jackson,' listing eighteen murders, victims of duels or executions he had carried out, with accompanying coffins. Harriet Martineau related that in England, where these accusations circulated and were generally believed, a schoolboy, asked in class who killed Abel, replied, `General JACKSON, Ma'am.' Campaign badges and fancy party waistcoats had made their first appearance in 1824, but it was in 1828 that the real razzmatazz began. Jackson's unofficial campaign manager was Amos Kendall (1789-1869), editor of the *Argus of Western America*, who in 1827 had switched from Clay to Jackson. Jackson had long been known to his troops as Old Hickory, as that was `the hardest wood in creation.' Kendall seized on this to set up a nationwide network of `Hickory Clubs.' Hickory trees were planted in pro-Jackson districts in towns and cities and Hickory poles were erected in villages; Hickory canes and sticks were sold to supporters and flourished at meetings. There

were Hickory parades, barbecues, and street-rallies. Kendall had the first campaign song, 'The Hunters of Kentucky,' written and set to music. It told of the great victory of 1815 and of 'Packenham [sic] and his Braggs'-how he and his men would rape the girls of New Orleans, the 'beautiful girls of every hue' from 'snowy white to sooty'-and of how Old Hickory had frustrated his dastardly plans and killed him.

Jackson proved an ideal candidate, who knew exactly when to hold his tongue and when to give vent to a (usually simulated) rage. And he had the ideal second-in-command in Martin Van Buren, head of the Albany Regency, which ran New York State, a small, energetic, dandified figure, with his reddish-blond hair, snuff-colored coat, white trousers, lace-tipped orange cravat, broad-brimmed beaver-fur hat, yellow gloves, and morocco shoes. If Van Buren dressed like the young Disraeli, he had something Disraeli never possessed-a real, up-to-date political machine. Van Buren grew up in the New York of Aaron Burr and De Witt Clinton. New York politics were already very complex and rococo-outsiders confessed inability to understand them-but they were the very air the little man breathed. Burr had turned the old Jeffersonian patriotic club, the Society of Saint Tammany, where members came to drink, smoke, and sing in an old shed, into the nucleus of a Big City political organization. Clinton had invented the 'spoils system,' whereby an incoming governor turned out all office holders and rewarded his supporters with their jobs. New York was already politics on a huge scale-a man would hesitate between running for governor and running for president. Van Buren's genius lay in uniting Tammany with the spoils system, then using both to upstage first Burr, then Clinton, and rule the roost himself.

Van Buren was the first political bureaucrat. He came from the pure Dutch backwater of Kinderhook in Albany County, where the Rip Van Winkle stories originated, but there was nothing sleepy about him. His motto was: 'Get the details right.' His Tammany men were called Bucktails by their enemies, because of their rustic origins, but he taught them to be proud of their name and to wear the symbol in their hats, just as the Democrats later flaunted their donkey. Branching out from Tammany, he constructed an entire statewide system. His party newspapers in Albany, and in New York City, proclaimed the party line and supplied printed handbills, posters, and ballots for statewide distribution. The line was then repeated in the country newspapers, of which Van Buren controlled fifty in 1827. The line was set by the party elite of lawyers and placemen. Even by the 1820s, America, and especially New York, was a lawyers' paradise. Frequent sessions in New York's complex court circuit system kept the lawyers moving. Van Buren used them as a communications artery to towns and villages even in remote parts of the state. Officeholders appointed by the governor's council were the basis for party pressure groups everywhere. Van Buren's own views sprang from the nature of his organization. The party identity must be clear. Loyalty to majority decisions taken in party councils must be absolute. All measures had to be fully discussed and agreed, and personal interests subordinated to party ones. Loyalty was rewarded and disloyalty punished without mercy.

When Van Buren's Bucktails took over the state in 1821, he conducted a massacre of major officeholders at the council's very first meeting and thereafter combed through 6,000 lesser jobs removing Clintonians, federalists, and unreliable Bucktails. Clinton, who had invented the spoils system, let out a howl of rage. This kind of punishment-and-rewards system was the very opposite of what the Founding Fathers had envisaged; but it was the future of American politics. And Van Buren, like many American master-politicians since, was quite capable of combining party ruthlessness with high-mindedness. He was a political schizophrenic, admitting he abused power occasionally and vowing never to do it again (he did of course). He supported Clinton's great project of the Erie Canal, because he thought it was in the interests of New York and



America, despite the fact that the Canal, triumphantly completed on November 2, 1825, helped Clinton to regain the governorship-and massacre the Bucktails in turn. American political history has since thrown up repeated exemplars of what might be called the Van Buren Syndrome-men who could combine true zeal for the public interest with fanatical devotion to the party principle.

Most of 1827 the assiduous Van Buren spent building up the new Jacksonian Democratic Party, traveling along rotten roads in jolting carriages to win support from difficult men like Benton of Missouri, a great power in the West, the splendid but bibulous orator Randolph, who was often 'exhilarated with toastwater,' down to Georgia to conciliate old, sick Crawford, up through the Carolinas and Virginia and back to Washington. Thus, for the first time, the Democratic 'Solid South' was brought into existence. In February 1828 Clinton died of a heart-attack, clearing the way for Van Buren to become governor of New York State. He spent seven weeks in July and August, electioneering in the sticky heat of grim new villages upstate, taking basic provisions with him in his carriages, for none were to be had en route, complaining of insects, humidity, and sudden storms which turned the tracks into marshes. He brought with him cartloads of posters, Jackson badges (another innovation), Bucktails to wear in hats, and Hickory sticks. He was the first American politician to assemble a team of writers, not just to compose speeches but to draft articles for scores of local newspapers. Artists and writers who supported the Jackson campaign included James Fenimore Cooper, the sculptor Horatio Greenough, Nathaniel Hawthorne, the historian George Bancroft, William Cullen Bryant, then the leading American poet, and another well-known poet William Leggett. Apart from Ralph Waldo Emerson, most of America's writers and intellectuals seem to have backed Jackson-the first time they ganged up together to endorse a candidate. As Harriet Martineau put it, Jackson had the support of the underprivileged, the humanitarians, the careerists, and 'the men of genius. Adams confided bitterly in his diary: 'Van Buren is now the great electioneering manager for General Jackson [and] has improved as much in the art of electioneering upon Burr, as the state of New York has grown in relative strength and importance in the Union.' Adams was safe in New England but he could see-already-that the South plus New York made a formidable combination. This was the first popular election. In twenty-two of the twenty-four states (Delaware and Rhode Island still had their legislatures choose college electors), the voters themselves picked the president. Except in Virginia they were equivalent to the adult male white population. A total of 1,155,340 voted, and Adams did well to get 508,064 of them, carrying New England, New Jersey, and Delaware, and a majority of the college in Maryland. Even in New York he got sixteen out of thirty-six college votes because Van Buren, despite all his efforts, carried the state by a plurality of only 5,000. That gave Adams eighty-three electoral votes in all. But Jackson got all the rest and a popular vote of 647,276. So Jackson went to Washington with a clear popular mandate, ending the old indirect, oligarchical system for ever.

The manner of the takeover was as significant as the result. In those days voting for president started in September and ended in November, but the new incumbent did not take office till March. Washington was then a slow, idle, Southern city. Designed by Pierre L'Enfant and laid out by the surveyor Andrew Ellicott (1764-1820), it was in a state of constant constructional turmoil but contrived to be sleepy at the same time. Its chief boast was its 91,665 feet of brick pavement, though it also had, at the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and 13th Street, the Rotondo, with its 'Transparent Panoramic View of West Point and Adjacent Scenery.' Banquets for the legislators, which were frequent, began at 5.30 P.M. and progressed relentlessly through soup, fish, turkey, beef, mutton, ham, pheasant, ice cream, jelly, and fruit, taken with sherry, a great many table wines, madeira, and champagne. There was, besides, much drinking of sherry

cobblers and gin cocktails, slings made with various spirits, juleps, snakeroot bitters, timber doodly, and eggnogs. Most politicians lived in boarding houses, most of them decorous, a few louche. But there were already hostesses who set the tone which was oligarchical, elitist, and essentially Virginian Ascendancy.

To Jackson, then, it was a hostile city and he arrived there President-elect, on February 11, 1829, a sad and bitter man. Early in December his wife Rachel had gone to Nashville to buy clothes for his new position. There, she picked up a pamphlet defending her from charges of adultery and bigamy. Hitherto the General had concealed from her the true nature of the smear campaign waged against her honor, and the shock of discovery was too much. She took to her bed and died on December 22. To his dying day Jackson believed his political enemies had murdered her and he swore a dreadful revenge. He put up at Gadsby's Boarding House. He was not alone. From every one of the twenty-four states his followers congregated on the capital, 10,000-strong army of the poor, the outlandish, the needy, above all the hopeful. Washingtonians were appalled as these people assembled, many in dirty leather clothes, the 'inundations of the northern barbarians into Rome.' They drank the city dry of whiskey within days, they crammed the hotels, which tripled their prices to \$20 a week, they slept five in a bed, then on the floors, spilling over into Georgetown and Alexandria, finally into the fields. Daniel Webster wrote: 'I never saw such a crowd here before. Persons have come 500 miles to see General Jackson and *they really seem to think the country has been rescued from some general disaster.*' But most wanted jobs. Clay joked sardonically about the moment 'when the lank, lean, famished forms, from fen and forest and the four quarters of the Union, gathered together in the halls of patronage; or stealing by evening's twilight into the apartments of the president's mansion, cried out with ghastly faces and in sepulchral tones, "give us bread, give us Treasury paper, give us our reward!"'

The inaugural itself was a demotic saturnalia, reminiscent of scene from the early days of the French Revolution but enacted against a constitutional background of the strictest legality. It was sunny and warm, the winter's mud, 2 feet deep in places, beginning to dry. By 10 A.M. vast crowd, held back by a ship's cable, had assembled under the East Portico of the unfinished Capitol. At eleven, Jackson emerged from Gadsby's and, escorted by soldiers, walked to the Capitol in a shambling procession of New Orleans veterans and politicians, flanked by 'hacks, gigs, sulkies and woodcarts and a Dutch waggon full of females.' At noon, by which time 30,000 people surrounded the Capitol, the band played 'The President's March,' there was a twenty-four-gun salute, and Jackson, according to one critical observer, Mrs Margaret Bayard Smith, bowed low to the People in all its majesty.' The President, with two pairs of spectacles, one on top of his head and other before his eyes, read from a paper words nobody could hear. Then he bowed to the people again and mounted a white horse to ride to his new mansion, 'Such a cortege as followed him,' gasped Mrs Smith, 'countrymen, farmers, gentlemen mounted and dismounted, boys, women and children, black and white, carriages, waggons and carts all pursuing him.'

Suddenly, to the dismay of the gentry watching from the balconies of their houses, it became obvious that the vast crowd in its entirety was going to enter the White House. It was like the sansculottes taking over the Tuilleries. A Supreme Court justice said those pouring into the building ranged from 'the highest and most polished' to 'the most vulgar and gross in the nation—the reign of *King Mob* seemed triumphant.' Soon the ground floor of the White House was crammed. Society ladies fainted, others grabbed anything within reach. A correspondent wrote to Van Buren in New York: 'It would have done Mr Wilberforce's heart good to see a stout black

wench eating a jelly with a gold spoon in the president's house.' Clothes were torn; barrels of orange punch were knocked over; men with muddy boots jumped on 'damask satin-covered chairs' worth \$150 each to see better; and china and glassware 'worth several thousand dollars' were smashed. To get the mob out of the house, the White House servants took huge stocks of liquor onto the lawn and the *hoi polloi* followed, 'black, yellow and grey [with dirt] many of them fit subjects for a penitentiary.' Jackson, sick of it all, climbed out by a rear window and went back to Gadsby's to eat a steak, already a prime symbol of American prosperity. He declined, being in mourning, to join 1,200 citizens at the ball in Signor Carusi's Assembly Rooms, a more sedate affair, ticket only. The scenes at the White House were the subject of much pious moralizing at Washington's many places of worship that Sunday, the pastor at the posh Unitarian Church preaching indignantly from Luke 19:41-'Jesus beheld the city and wept over it.'

Then came the rewards. One of Van Buren's sidekicks, Senator William L. Marcy, responding to the weeping and gnashing of teeth as the Old Guard were fired, told the Senate that such 'removals' were part of the political process, adding, 'To the victors belong the spoils of the enemy.' The phrase stuck and Jackson will always be credited with bringing the spoils system into federal government. Mrs Smith wrote bitterly of the expulsions: 'so many families broken up-and those of the first distinction-drawing rooms now dark, empty, dismantled.' Adams protested: 'The [new] appointments are exclusively of violent partisans and every editor of a scurrilous and slanderous newspaper is provided for.' It is true that Jackson was the first president to give journalists senior jobs-Amos Kendall for example got a Treasury auditorship. But Jackson partisans pointed out that, of 10,093 government appointees, only 919 were removed in the first eighteen months and over the whole eight years of the Jackson presidency only 10 percent were replaced. Moreover, many of those sacked deserved to be; eighty-seven had jail records. The Treasury in particular was full of useless people and rogues. One insider reported: 'a considerable number of the officers are old men and drunkards. Harrison, the First Auditor, I have not yet seen sober.' One fled and was caught, convicted, and sentenced. Nine others were found to have embezzled. Within eighteen months Kendall and other nosy appointees discovered \$500,000 had been stolen, quite apart from other thefts at the army and navy offices and Indian contracts. The Registrar of the Treasury, who had stolen \$10,000 but had been there since the Revolution, begged Jackson to let him stay. Jackson: 'Sir, I would turn out my own father under the same circumstances.' But he relented in one case when a sacked postmaster from Albany accosted him at a White House reception and said he had nothing else to live on. He began to take off his coat to show the President his wounds. Jackson: 'Put your coat on at once, Sir!' But the next day he changed his mind and took the man's name off the sackings list: 'Do you know that he carries a pound of British lead in his body?' Jackson's appointments turned out to be no more and no less corrupt than the men they replaced and historians are divided on the overall significance of bringing the spoils system to Washington.

Two of Jackson's appointments turned out disasters. The first was the selection of Samuel Swartwout as collector of customs in New York, which involved handling more cash than any other on earth, \$15 million in 1829. His claim to office was that he had backed Jackson in New York even before Van Buren. But he was a crooked old crony of Burr, who gambled on horses, stocks, and fast women. In due course he fled to Europe, taking with him \$1,222,705.09, the biggest official theft in US history, worse than all the peculations of the Adams administration put together.

An even more serious mistake was Jackson's sentimental decision to make his old comrade and crony Major John Eaton the War Secretary. The canny Van Buren, who knew Swartwout of old but had been unable to prevent his appointment, was even more uneasy about Eaton, whom he regarded as indiscreet, negligent, and the last man to keep a Cabinet secret. He was even more suspicious of Eaton's wife, a pretty, pert young woman of twenty-nine called Peggy, a known adulteress who had lived in sin with Eaton before Jackson ordered him to marry her. But the President, adoring spirited ladies who stood up to him in conversation, would not hear a word said against her.

This imprudent appointment set in motion a chain of bizarre events which were to change permanently the way in which America is governed. The well-informed Amos Kendall dismissed rumors that Peggy was a whore; she was, he said, merely egotistical, selfish, pushy, and 'too forward in her manners.' But the other Cabinet wives, older and plainer, hated her from the start and insisted she had slept with 'at least' twenty men, quite apart from Eaton, before her second marriage to him. If old Rachel had lived, she might have kept the Cabinet matrons in line (or, more likely, quashed the appointment in the first place). But her place had been taken by the twenty-year-old Emily Donelson, wife of Jackson's adopted son. Emily had been accustomed to managing a huge Southern plantation and was not in the least daunted by running the White House with its eighteen servants. But she would not stay in the same room with Peggy, who, she said, 'was held in too much abhorrence ever to be noticed.' Mrs Calhoun, wife of the Vice-President and a grand Southern lady, would not even come to Washington in case she was asked to 'meet' Mrs Eaton. Adams, for whom the Peggy Eaton row was the first nice thing to happen since he lost the presidency, recorded gleefully in his diary that Samuel D. Ingham, the Treasury Secretary, John M. Berrien, the Attorney General, John Branch, the Navy Secretary, and Colonel Nathan Towson, the Paymaster-General, had all 'given large evening parties to which Mrs Eaton is not invited ... the Administration party is slipped into a blue and green faction upon this point of morals ... Calhoun heads the moral party, Van Buren that of the frail sisterhood.' The fact is, Van Buren was a bachelor, with no wife to raise objections, and he, and the British ambassador, another bachelor, gave the only dinner parties to which Peggy was invited.

The battle of the dinner-parties, what Van Buren called the 'Eaton Malaria,' was waged furiously throughout the spring and summer of 1829. It became more important than any other issue, political or otherwise. Jackson's first big reception was a catastrophe, as the Cabinet wives cut Peggy dead in front of a delightedly goggling Washington *gratin*. At one point the President laid down an ultimatum to three Cabinet members: they must ask Mrs Eaton to their wives' dinner-parties or risk being sacked. He thought Clay had organized it all but patient work by Van Buren showed that the wives, and Emily, had had no contact with Clay. Jackson then referred darkly to a 'conspiracy' organized by 'villians' and 'females with clergymen at their head.' The clergymen were the Rev. Ezra Stile Ely of Philadelphia and the Rev. J. M. Campbell, pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Washington, which Jackson often attended. Both believed the gossip, and Jackson had both of them to the White House to argue them out of their suspicions. He exchanged some striking letters with Ely on the subject and engaged in amateur detective-work, rummaging up 'facts' to prove Peggy's innocence and having investigators consult hotel registers and interview witnesses. At 7 P.M. on September 10, 1829, he summoned what must have been the oddest Cabinet meeting in American history to consider what he termed Eaton's 'alleged criminal intercourse' with Peggy before their marriage. Both Ely and Campbell were bidden to attend. The meeting began with a furious altercation between Campbell and the President on whether Peggy had had a miscarriage and whether the Eatons had been seen in bed

in New York or merely sitting on it. The Cabinet sat in speechless embarrassment as the clergyman droned on, often interrupted by Jackson's exclamations: 'By the God eternal!' and 'She is as chaste as a virgin!' Campbell finally rushed out of the room in a rage, saying he would prove his accusations in a law court, and the Cabinet meeting broke up in confusion.

The episode testifies more to Jackson's irrational loyalty than to his common sense. As might have been foreseen, he never contrived to force Mrs Eaton on Washington society. She was a worthless woman anyway. Her black page, Francis Hillery, later described her as 'the most compleat Peace of deception that ever god made, and as a mistres it would be cruelty to put a dum brute under her Command.' Her ultimate fate was pitiful. When Eaton died in 1856, leaving her a wealthy widow, she married an Italian dancing-master, Antonio Buchignani, who defrauded her of all her property and ran off with her pretty granddaughter. But she changed the way America is governed.

One of the most fascinating aspects of history is the way power shift from formal to informal institutions. The Cabinet system, which itself began in Britain as an informal replacement of the old Privy Council, was adopted by George Washington in the 1790s and was still functioning under John Quincy Adams. Jackson, however, was the first president to be elected by a decisive popular mandate and, in a sense, this gave him the moral right to exercise the truly awesome powers which the US Constitution confers to its chief executive. From the outset, an informal group of cronies began to confer with him in the entrails of the White House. They included Kendall, his old aide Major Lewis, his adopted son Donelson, Isaac Hill, the former editor of the New Hampshire *Patriot*, and two members of the official Cabinet, Eaton and Van Buren. Jackson's enemies called it the 'Kitchen Cabinet' and declared it unconstitutional.

Jackson began to lean more and more on this group as he became slowly convinced that opposition to Peggy was not just moral but political, orchestrated by Calhoun and his wife Floride, who had finally come to Washington to make trouble. Van Buren encouraged this conspiracy theory. Not for nothing was he known as the 'Little Magician.' Behind his spells was the deep, often hidden, but steadily growing antagonism between North and South. Van Buren stood for the commercial supremacy of the industrial North, Calhoun for the extreme version of states' rights. It was not difficult for the Secretary of State to persuade his President that the notion of sovereignty being peddled by Calhoun was a mortal threat to the Union itself, and that the VicePresident, using Mrs Eaton as a pretext, was behind a much wider 'conspiracy' to subvert Jackson's Cabinet. Jackson slowly came to accept this notion and in April 1831 he acted, following a plan of Van Buren's. To avoid suspicion, Van Buren resigned. Then almost all the other Cabinet ministers were sacked and replaced, leaving Calhoun isolated to serve the rest of his term. Van Buren's reward was to be made heir apparent, getting first the vice-presidency (during Jackson's second term), then the reversion of the presidency itself.

Meanwhile the Kitchen Cabinet governed the country. It had no agenda. Its membership varied. Outsiders thought its most important figure was Kendall. He certainly wrote Jackson's speeches. The General would lie on his bed, smoking his fearsome pipe and 'uttering thoughts.' Kendall would put them into presidential prose. Congressman Henry A. Wise termed Kendall 'the President's *thinking* machine, and his *writing* machine-aye, and his *lying* machine.' Harriet Martineau, reporting Washington gossip, said 'it is all done in the dark...work of goblin extent and with goblin speed, which makes men look about with a suspicious wonder, and the invisible Amos Kendall has the credit for it all.' Very likely Kendall had much less power than was ascribed to him. But he symbolized what was happening to government. The old Cabinet had

been designed to represent interests from all over the Union and its members were a cross-section of the ruling class, insofar as America had one-they were gentlemen. The Kitchen Cabinet, by contrast, brought into the exercise of power hitherto excluded classes such as journalists. Kendall despised Washington society, which he accused of trying to ape London and Paris. He thought 'late dinner' was 'a ridiculous English custom,' drinking champagne instead of whiskey 'uppety,' low-cut evening dresses 'disgusting.'

The idea of men like Kendall helping to rule America was appalling to men like Adams. But there it was. Jackson had successfully wooed the masses, and they now had their snouts in the trough. Jackson not only set up a new political dynasty which was to last, with one or two exceptions, up to the Civil War. He also changed the power-structure permanently. The Kitchen Cabinet, which proliferated in time into the present enormous White House bureaucracy and its associated agencies, was the product of the new accretion of presidential power made possible by the personal contract drawn up every four years between the president and the mass electorate. That a man like Kendall came to symbolize these new arrangements was appropriate, for if Jackson was the first man to sign the new contract with democracy, the press was instrumental in drawing it up.

Ordinary people did not care much whether they were ruled by a formal Cabinet or a kitchen one, as long as that rule was light. And, under Jackson, it was. He let the economy expand and boom. As a result, the revenue from indirect taxation and land sales shot up, the meager bills of the federal government were paid without difficulty, and the national debt was reduced. In 1835 and 1836, it was totally eliminated, something which has never happened before in a modern state-or since. There is no doubt that electors liked this frugal, minimalist, popular style of government, with no frills and no pretensions to world greatness. In 1831 Jackson was reelected by a landslide, the first in American presidential history. The luckless Clay was his main opponent. It is a curious fact that, although Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe had all been Masons, Clay was the only one whose Masonry was held against him (perhaps because he never went to church), especially in New York. So in 1832 Clay had to face an anti-Mason candidate, Thurlow Weed, who got a popular vote of 101,051, which would have gone mainly to Clay. Clay campaigned frantically, and oscillated between Kentucky and Washington, much of the time with his wife and grandson, four servants, two carriages, six horses, a jackass, and a big shepherd dog-all to no avail. He got 437,462 to Jackson's 688,242 votes, and in the electoral college the margin was even greater-a mere 49 to Jackson's 219.

This was the beginning of the Jacksonian Democratic dominance. Jackson virtually appointed his successor, Van Buren, and though Van Buren failed to get reelected in 1840 because of a severe economic crisis, that was the only blip in the long series of Democratic victories. The Democrats returned with James K. Polk or 'Little Hickory' as he was known, in 1844, with Zachary Taylor in 1848 (who, dying in office, was succeeded by Millard Fillmore), and then by two solid Jacksonians, Franklin Pierce, 1852, and James Buchanan, 1856. In effect, Jackson, or his ideas, ruled America from 1828 to the Civil War.

And what were these ideas? One was Union. No one was ever stronger for the Union than Jackson, not even Lincoln himself. Jackson might be a slave-owner, a small government man, a states' rights man and, in effect, a Southerner, or a Southwesterner, but first and foremost he was a Union man. He made this clear when portions of the South, especially South Carolina, threatened to leave the federal Union, or nullify its decisions, unless Washington's economic policy was tailored to fit Southern interests. The South, being a huge exporter of cotton and tobacco, was strongly in favor of low tariffs. The North, building up its infant industry, wanted

tariffs high. Congress had enacted its first protective high tariff in 1816, over Southern protests. In 1828 it put through an even higher one, the 'Tariff of Abominations,' which made US tariffs among the highest in the world and hit Britain, the South's main trading-partner. South Carolina was particularly bitter. From being one of the richer states, it feared becoming one of the poorest. It lost 70,000 people in the 1820s and 150,000 in the 1830s. It blamed high tariffs for its distress. Jackson did his best to get tariffs down and 'he 1832 Tariff Act was an improvement on the Abominations. But it did not go far enough to satisfy the South Carolinians and their leader, Calhoun. In November 1832 the state held a constitutional convention which overwhelmingly adopted an Ordinance of Nullification. This new constitutional device, inspired by Calhoun, ruled the Tariff Acts of 1828 and 1832 to be unconstitutional and unlawful and forbade all collection of duties in the state from February 1, 1833. Its legislature also provided that any citizen whose property was seized by the federal authorities could get a court order to recover twice its value.

To fight this battle in Washington, Calhoun quit the administration finally by resigning the vice-presidency and was promptly elected senator. In reply, Jackson (with all the authority of a newly reelected president) issued a Nullification Proclamation on December 10 which stated emphatically that 'The power to annul a law of the United States, assumed by one state, [is] *incompatible with the existence of the Union, contradicted expressly by the letter of the Constitution, unauthorized by its spirit, inconsistent with every principle on which it was founded, and destructive of the great object for which it was formed*' (Jackson's italics). The Constitution, he added, 'forms a *government*, not a league.' It was 'a single nation' and the states did not 'possess any right to secede.' They had already surrendered 'essential parts of [their] sovereignty,' which they could not retract. Their citizens were American citizens primarily, and owed a prime obedience to its Constitution and laws. The people, he said, were sovereign, the Union perpetual. This, coming from a man who was born in South Carolina, and had been an anti-federalist all his life, was an amazing statement of anti-states' rights principle, and was to make it infinitely easier for Lincoln to fight for the Union in 1860.

Jackson went further. As chief executive, he had to enforce the laws passed by Congress, and that included collection of the tariffs: 'I have no discretionary powers on the subject; my duty is emphatically pronounced in the Constitution.' He spoke to the people of South Carolina directly. They were being deceived by 'wicked men'-he meant Calhoun-who assured them they would get away with it. He, as president, wanted to disillusion them before it was too late: 'Disunion by force is *treason*' and would be put down with all the strength of the federal government. It would mean 'civil strife' and the necessary conquest of South Carolina by federal forces. Indeed, he rather implied that any ringleaders would be tried for treason and hanged-and in private that is exactly what he threatened to do to his former Vice-President. He requested Congress to pass a Force Bill. He followed this up with a whole series of military measures-moving three divisions of artillery, calling for volunteers, mobilizing militias. He ordered the head of the army, General Winfield Scott, to Charleston Harbor, where Fort Moultrie and Castle Pinckney were reinforced, and a battleship and seven revenue cutters took up station in the harbor. He also organized, within the state, a pro-Union force which he hoped, if it came to war, would act and disarm the traitors. They responded to his proclamation: '*Enough!* What have we to fear? We are right and God and Old Hickory are with us.'

The existence of an armed Unionist party within the state was one reason why the Nullifiers were forced to hesitate. Another was the failure of any other Southern state to join the South Carolina legislature in its measures to defy the tariff. But a third was Henry Clay, the 'Great Compromiser.' On February 12, 1833, just as South Carolina was planning, in effect, to secede,

he brought forward an ingenious measure which progressively reduced the tariff to 20 percent by 1842. This was not as much as South Carolina wanted but it was enough to save its face. Jackson signed both the Force Act and the Compromise Tariff on March 1, 1833, and immediately afterwards South Carolina withdrew its Nullification Law. Needless to say, Clay got no thanks from either Jackson or Calhoun for getting them off their respective hooks. But the pending conflict between North and South was put off for another two decades and the power, strength, and rights of the Union publicly vindicated. The South was never quite the same again after this enforced climb-down by its most extreme state.' The fact is, Jackson had asserted, as president, that the Union could not be dissolved by the unilateral action of a state (or group of states), and the challenger had been forced to comply, implicitly at least.

If Jackson's democratic America was implacable with Southern separatism, it was even more relentless in destroying the last remnants of Indian power and property east of the Mississippi. Of course Jackson was not alone. White opinion-and black for that matter: the blacks found the Indians harsher masters than anyone-were virtually united in wanting to integrate the Indians or kick them west, preferably far west. Jackson had destroyed Indian power in the Southeast even before he became president. And, under Monroe, Indian power south of the Great Lakes was likewise annihilated by General Lewis Cass (1782-1866), hero of the 1812 War and governor of Michigan Territory 1813-21. In August 1825 Cass called a conference of 1,000 leaders of all the Northwest tribes at Prairie du Chien and told them to settle their tribal boundaries. Once this was done, he made compulsory deals with each tribe separately. In 1826 he forced the Potawatomi to hand over an enormous tract in Indiana. The Miami handed over their lands in Indiana for \$55,000 and an annuity of \$25,000. Other separate tribal deals were similar. In the years 1826-30 the Indians were forced to surrender not only their old land but their new reservations, as the settlers poured in to take over. There was a substantial Indian uprising in 1829, but it was put down by overwhelming force, Washington for the first time using steam gunboats on the Great Lake! just as the British were using them to build up their empire all over the world. As a result of this 'Gunboat Diplomacy,' the Indians were pushed across the Mississippi, or left in small pockets, an 190,879,370 acres of their lands passed into white hands at a cost of a little over \$70 million in gifts and annuities.'

Cass was a sophisticated man, who later held high posts in diplomacy and politics. He was one of the few Indian-fighters who actually set down his views on the subject-an essay entitled 'The Policy and Practice of the United States and Great Britain in their Treatment of Indians,' published in the *North American Review*, 1827. He said he could not understand why the Indians, after 200 years of contact with the white man, had not 'improved.' It was a 'moral phenomenon-it had to be-since 'a principle of progressive improvement seems almost inherent in human nature.' But 'the desire to ameliorate their condition' did not seem to exist in 'the constitution of our savages. Like the bear and deer and buffalo in his own forests, the Indian lives as his father lived, and dies as his father died. He never attempts to imitate the arts of his civilised neighbors. His life passes away in a succession of listless indolence, and of vigorous exertion to provide for his animal wants or to gratify his baleful passions ... he is perhaps destined to disappear with the forests.'

In fact the Indians varied enormously. The Creeks, Cherokees, Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Seminoles, who bore the brunt of white aggression, had long been known as the 'Five Civilized Tribes.' John Quincy Adams, who was always hostile to Indians, had to admit that a delegation of Cherokees who came to see President Monroe in 1824 were 'most civilised.' 'These men,' he recorded, 'were dressed entirely according to our manner. Two of them spoke English with good



pronunciation and one with grammatical accuracy. '147 During a Cabinet discussion of what Monroe called 'the absolute necessity' that 'the Indians should move West of the Mississippi,' Calhoun, Secretary of War, argued that 'the great difficulty' was not savagery but precisely 'the progress of the Cherokees in civilisation.' He said there were 15,000 in Georgia, increasing just as fast as the whites. They were 'all cultivators, with a representative government, judicial courts, Lancaster schools and permanent property.' Their 'principal chiefs,' he added, 'write their own State Papers and reason as logically as most white diplomatists.'

What Calhoun said was true. The Cherokees were advancing and adopting white forms of social and political organization. Their national council went back to 1792, their written legal code to 1808. In 1817 they formed a republic, with a senate of thirteen elected for two year terms, the rest of the council forming the lower house. In 1820 they divided their territory into eight congressional districts, each mapped and provided with police, courts, and powers to raise taxes, pay salaries, and collect debts. In 1826 a Cherokee spokesman gave a public lecture in Philadelphia, describing the system. The next year a national convention drew up a written constitution, based on America's, giving the vote to 'all free male citizens' over eighteen, except 'those of African descent.' The first elections were held in summer 1828. A Supreme Court had been functioning five years. The first issue of the republic's own paper, the *Cherokee Phoenix*, appeared February 28, 1828. Its capital, New Echota, was quite an elaborate place, with a fine Supreme Court building, a few two-story red-brick homes, including one owned by Joseph ('Rich Joe') Van, which is still to be found near what is now Chatsworth, Georgia, and neat rows of log cabins.

The trouble with this little utopia-as the whites saw it-was that it was built as a homogeneous Indian unit. It mattered not to the whites that this self-contained community virtually eliminated all the evils whites associated with Indians. The *Phoenix* campaigned strongly against alcohol and there was a plan to enforce prohibition. The courts were severe on horse thieves. The authorities urged all Indians to work and provided the means. There were 2,000 spinning-wheels, 700 looms, thirty-one grist-mills, eight cotton gins, eighteen schools-using English and a new written version of Cherokee. The 15,000 Indians of this settled community owned 20,000 cattle and 1,500 slaves, like any other 'civilized' Georgians. But its very existence, and still more its constitution, violated both state and federal law, and in 1827 Georgia petitioned the federal government to 'remove' the Indians forthwith. The discovery of gold brought in a rush of white prospectors and provided a further economic motive. The election of General Jackson at the end of 1828 sealed the community's fate. In his inaugural address he insisted that the integrity of the state of Georgia, and the Constitution of the United States, came before Indian interests, however meritorious. A man who was prepared to wage war against his own people, the South Carolinians, for the sake of constitutional principles, was not going to let a 'utopia of savages' form an anomaly within a vast and growing nation united in a single system of law and government. And of course, with hindsight, Jackson was absolutely right. A series of independent Indian republics in the midst of the United States would, by the end of the 20th century, have turned America into chaos, with representation at the United Nations, independent foreign policies, endless attempts to overthrow earlier Indian treaties and territorial demands on all their white neighbors.

Some whites supported the Cherokee Republic at the time. When Congress, in response to the Georgia petition, decreed that, after January 1, 1830, all state laws applied to Indians, and five months later passed a Removal Bill authorizing the President to drive any eastern Indians still organized tribally across the Mississippi, if necessary by force, a group of missionaries encouraged the Cherokee Republic to challenge the law in the Supreme Court. But in *Cherokee*

*Nation v. Georgia*, the Marshall Court ruled that the tribe did not constitute a nation within the meaning of the US Constitution and so could not bring suit. The missionaries then counselled resistance and on September 15, 1831 eleven of them were convicted of violating state law and sentenced to four years' hard labor. Nine had their convictions overturned by submitting and swearing an oath of allegiance to Georgia. Two appealed to the Supreme Court and had their convictions overturned. But Georgia, encouraged by President Jackson, defied the Court's ruling. The end came over the next few years, brought about by a combination of force, harassment-stopping of annuities, cancellations of debts-and bribery. The Treaty of New Echota, signed in December 1835 by a greedy minority led by Chief Major Ridge, ceded the last lands in return for \$5.6 million, the republic broke up, and the final Cherokee stragglers were herded across the Mississippi by US cavalry three years later.

If Georgia hated Indians with self-serving hypocritical genuflections to the rule of law, the humbug of Arkansas was even more striking. It was the keenest of all the states to assert the superiority of white 'civilized' values over the 'savage' Cherokees, what its legislature denounced as a 'restless, dissatisfied, insolent and malicious tribe, engaged in constant intrigues.' Testimony from anyone with a quarter or more Indian blood was inadmissible in Arkansas courts. The state operated a system of apartheid with laws prohibiting dealings between whites and Indians. Yet ironically Arkansas was the most socially backward part of the United States. Its whites tended to be either solitaires-isolated hunters, trappers, and primitive farmers-or clannish, self-sufficient, and extremely violent. Its 14,000 inhabitants got a territorial government in 1819, but its courts and legislature were ruled by duels as much as by law or debate. In 1819 the brigadier general commanding the militia was killed in a duel and five years later the same happened to a superior court judge, his assassin being his colleague on the bench and the occasion a squalid game of cards. The Flanagan clan 'respected no law, human or divine, but were slaves to their own selfish lusts and brutal habits.' The Wylie clan were illiterate, 'wonderfully ignorant' and 'as full of superstition as their feeble minds were capable of, believing in Witches, Hobgoblins, Ghosts, Evil Eyes ... They did not farm, had no fences round their shanty habitations and appeared to have lived a roving, rambling life ever since the Battle of Bunker Hill when they fled to this wilderness.' Yet Arkansas was harder on the Indians than any other territory or state.

The sight of Indian families, expelled from Georgia and Arkansas, heading west with their meager possessions was not uncommon in the 1830s, a harsh symbol of the age of mass settlement. In winter 1831, in Memphis, Tennessee, Comte Alexis de Tocqueville, in America to study the penal system on behalf of the French government, watched a band of Choctaws being marshaled across the Mississippi. He wrote: 'The Indians had their families with them, and they brought in their train the wounded and the sick, with children newly-born and old men on the point of death.' He added: 'Three or four thousand soldiers drive before them the wandering race of aborigines. These are followed by the [white] pioneers who pierce the woods, scare off the beasts of prey, explore the course of the inland streams and make ready the triumphal march of civilisation across the desert.' Under President Jackson, he noted, all was done lawfully and constitutionally. The Indians were deprived of their rights, enjoyed since time immemorial, 'with singular felicity, tranquilly, legally, philanthropically, without shedding blood and without violating a single great principle of morality in the eyes of the world.' It was, he concluded, impossible to exterminate a race with 'more respect for the laws of humanity.'

Jackson finished the Indians east of the Mississippi, and effectively laid down the ground rules which insured that they would not survive as substantial units west of it either. But he did not

hate Indians: they were simply an anomaly. He did, however, hate banks, and especially the Second Bank of the United States. That was an anomaly too, and he was determined to remove it. It is often said that Jackson knew nothing about banks, and that is why he hated them. That is not true. He is, rather, an example of what Keynes meant when he said that the views of great men of the world, who believe themselves impervious to theory of any kind, are usually shaped by the opinions of 'some defunct economist' which have imperceptibly got into their heads. Jackson once said he had disapproved of banks, and especially central banks, ever 'since I read a book about the South Sea Bubble.' He had already read Adam Smith, and misunderstood him, and Taylor, whom he understood only too well. In the late 1820s his views-and Taylor's-were reinforced by an anti-banking ideologue called William M. Goude, who wrote widely about banking in the *New York Evening Post* and Jackson's favorite paper, the *Washington Globe*. Goude's book *A Short History of Paper Money and Banking in the United States* (1833), which summed up his theories, became one of the great bestsellers of the time. It was a book written against the 'city-slickers', the 'Big Men,' the 'money power,' which contrasted the hard-working farmer, mechanic, and storekeeper with the chartered, privileged banker: 'The practices of trade in the United States have debased the standards of commercial honesty ... People see wealth passing continuously out of the hands of those whose labor produced it, or whose economy saved it, into the hands of those who neither work nor save.' It was a plea for economic equality before the law, in effect for an end of chartering, and especially of federal chartering.

Jackson made ending the SBUS a major issue in the 1832 election and he felt that the landslide result gave him a clear mandate. It is important to grasp that Jackson spoke from his moral heart as well as his bank-hating head. The nation, he said, was 'cursed' with a bank whose 'corrupting influences' fastened 'monopoly and aristocracy on the Constitution' and made government 'an engine of oppression to the people instead of an agent of their will.' Only the elimination of the 'Hydra' could 'restore to our institutions their primitive simplicity and purity.' So Jackson's love of conspiracy theory and his taste for a moral crusade went hand in hand.

There was also a personal element, as there always was in Jackson's campaigns. He was certain-he 'knew for a fact'-that Clay was paid large sums by the SBUS. So was Daniel Webster, the sophisticated if long-winded Massachusetts orator who aroused all Jackson's suspicions and whom he was also certain-'knew for a fact'-was crooked. Not least, Nicholas Biddle (1786-1844), president of the Bank since 1822, was just the kind of person Jackson feared and despised, a cultivated, high-minded (that is, humbugging), aristocratic intellectual. Jackson was always wary of 'college men.' Biddle had been to two (University of Pennsylvania and Princeton). He came from an ancient, posh Quaker family of Delaware, and married into another. He patronized the arts and not only collected but actually commissioned paintings of naked women of the kind Amos Kendall felt was an outrage, paying the gifted American artist John Vandelyn (1775-1852) to do him a lubricious *Ariadne*. He had edited a literary and artistic magazine called *Port Folio*, founded the Athenaeum Library in Philadelphia, and commissioned leading architects-at what Jackson believed to be vast expense-to design all the SBUS's buildings in Greek Revival granite and marble. Biddle's favorite architect, Thomas Ustick Walter (1804-87), who built the best of the banks, was also employed by Biddle to enlarge and classify for him his house, Andalucia, on the Delaware, making it into one of the lushest and most beautiful homes in America and (to Jackson) a symbol flaunting the new money power.

Biddle was a first-class central banker, as good at his job as Marshall was at being chief justice, and the two men had similar ideas about how America should be developed, by a highly efficient, highly competitive capitalist system with easy access to the largest possible sources of

credit, that access to be maintained by strict fiscal and financial probity. Jackson did not care a damn about that. Marshall had supported the SBUS in one of his most important decisions and Jackson did not 'care a fig' for the reasons he advanced for his ruling. When Marshall finally died in 1835-not before time in Jackson's view-the President appointed as his successor his Attorney-General and crony Roger Brooke Taney (1777-1864), who conducted his court for thirty years on principles diametrically opposed to Marshall's." When the Senate and the House both reported favorably on the Bank and proposed to renew its charter even before it ran out, Jackson used his veto. The fact that the three greatest orators in the Senate, Clay, Calhoun, and Webster, all pronounced at length and with ornate circumlocution on its merits only reinforced Jackson's determination to destroy it. Brilliant orators they might be, he noted, but they were 'always on the losing side.'

Jackson was one of those self-confident, strong-willed people (one thinks of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher in our own time) who are not in the least disturbed if the overwhelming majority of 'expert opinion,' the 'right-thinking,' and the intelligentsia are opposed to their own deep-felt, instinctive convictions. He simply pressed on, justifying his veto by producing a curious constitutional theory of his own: 'Each public officer who takes an oath to support the Constitution swears that he will support it *as he understands it, and not as it is understood by others* ... The opinion of the judges has no more authority over Congress than the opinion of Congress has over the judges, and on that point the President is independent of both.' 'The fury of the right-thinking was unbounded. Biddle himself described Jackson, in his stupidity and ignorance giving vent to 'the fury of a chained panther biting the bars of his cage.' His statement was 'a manifesto of anarchy such as Marat or Robespierre might have issued to the mobs.' The Jacksonian press hailed it as a 'Second Declaration of Independence' and his organ, the *Globe*, said, 'It is difficult to describe in adequate language the sublimity of the moral spectacle now presented to the American people in the person of Andrew Jackson.'

With the election confirming and endorsing Jackson's standpoint (as he saw it), he proceeded to the next step-withdrawing all federal funds from the SBUS and ending its connection with central government. Whether this act was strictly constitutional was a matter of opinion, but Van Buren (now vice-president) warned him against it on prudential grounds. The SBUS was primarily a Philadelphia financial institution, which performed a useful national role balancing the growing money power of New York. If Jackson pulled the government out of Philadelphia, wasn't he in danger of falling into the hands of Wall Street? But Jackson brushed that aside too, and set Amos Kendall, of all people, busily to work finding alternative banks with which the administration could do business. Kendall fed him the rumor, which Jackson readily believed, that the SBUS's vaults were, in fact, empty of bullion, and that it was not a safe bank to do business with anyway. The fact that Senators Clay and Calhoun put together a committee to inspect the vaults and reported them full did not convince the President, coming from such a source. (He thereby inaugurated an American tradition which continues to this day: every year, the Daughters of the American Revolution send a committee of ladies to visit the vaults of Fort Knox, to ensure that America's gold is still in them.) Nor was Jackson impressed when two Treasury secretaries in turn flatly refused to carry out his orders to remove the deposits. He dismissed them both. Kendall, after a trawl through the financial community, came up with a list of banks willing to dare Biddle's wrath and take the SBUS's place. Jackson acted. And when, as a result, there were rumblings of trouble in the American economy-more pronounced after its federal charter ran out in 1836 and it was obliged to 'go private'-Jackson was adamant, rejecting Van Buren's plea for 'caution' with a gloriously characteristic reply: 'Were all the worshippers of

the golden Calf to memorialise me and Request a Restoration of the Deposits, I would cut my right hand from my body before I would do such an Act. The golden calf may be worshiped by others but, as for myself, I serve the Lord!

Biddle declared all along that, by forcing the SBUS out of its role as federal banker, Jackson would encourage a fever of speculation fueled by an expansion in the number of banks issuing paper and the quantity and quality of the paper they printed. That is exactly what happened, and the orgy was encouraged still further by Jackson's decision to hand the federal government's cash surplus, which accumulated when the national debt was paid off in 1835, back to the states. This amounted to \$2.8 million, and though described as a loan was understood to be an outright gift, treated as such and spent. The surplus was the result of government land sales jumping from \$1.88 million in 1830 to \$20 million in 1836, and as the land boom continued the states assumed that federal handouts would continue and increased their borrowing on the strength of it. Banks of all shapes and sizes, many with outright crooks on their boards, poured oil on the smoldering embers of inflation by keeping their presses roaring. In the meantime, nature intervened, as it usually does when men construct houses of straw, or paper. Bad weather in 1835 created a crop failure in many parts of America, and the consequences began to make themselves felt in 1836 with an unfavorable balance of trade against the United States, a withdrawal of foreign credit, and the need to pay suspicious foreign creditors, who did not like American paper, in gold and silver.

Jackson, who was nearing the end of his term, increased the tension by issuing, on July 11, 1836, a Species Circular, which directed that future payments for public lands must be made in specie. This move was made in a simple-minded desire to get back to 'sound' finance, but it had the predictable effect of making gold and silver even more sought after. Characteristically, it was cooked up in the Kitchen Cabinet and announced to the official Cabinet as a *fait accompli*. Most of its members objected, and so did Congress. The new Whig Party, recently formed in opposition to 'King' Jackson, on the lines of the old English Whigs who had opposed Stuart tyranny. objected noisily to this further exercise of presidential prerogative, which Clay said was exactly what a dictator would do, calling the circular an 'ill-advised, illegal and pernicious measure.' It was 'a bomb thrown without warning.' Its effects at end-1836 coincided, almost exactly, with the failure of big financial houses in London, the world financial capital. This in turn hit cotton prices, America's staple export. By the time Jackson finally retired in March 1837, handing over to his little heir apparent, Van Buren, America was in the early stages of its biggest financial crisis to date. By the end of May 1837 every bank in the country had suspended payment in specie. Far from getting back to 'sound money,' Jackson had merely paralyzed the system completely.

Before the panic became obvious Van Buren had squeezed through the presidency with a narrow victory made possible by the fact that the anti-Jackson Whigs fielded three candidates. Van Buren got 764,198 votes against a combined Whig total of 736,147. More important, he won fifteen states, making up 170 votes, while his nearest rival, William Henry Harrison (1773-1841), the victor of Tippecanoe (1811) and the Thames (1813), won only 73. So Van Buren was in the White House at last. His bitter Whig enemy in New York, Thurlow Weed (1797-1882), warned: 'Depend upon it, his Election is to be "the Beginning of the End."' So, through no fault of the Little Magician-who had opposed Jackson's financial policies throughout, so far as he had dared-it proved. He had worked long and hard for the presidency, being nice to everyone, concealing his intentions, 'rowing to his object with muffled oars' as John Randolph put it,

convinced that the .... great state of New York, whose champions, Hamilton, Burr, De Witt Clinton, and Co., had all failed to get to the White House, was due for its turn at last.

But as president Van Buren never had a chance. The financial panic, which deepened into a real depression, ruined all. The money in circulation (banknotes mainly) contracted from \$150 million in 1837 to barely over a third by the end of the decade. An enormous number of people, big and small, went insolvent, so many that Congress, in order not to clog the jails with them, passed a special bankruptcy law under which 39,000 people were able to cancel debts of \$441 million. The government itself lost \$9 million which, on Kendall's advice, it had deposited in Jackson's 'pet banks,' which now went bust. Worse, the depression lingered for five years. As land sales slumped, the federal government went into sharp deficit, and the national debt began to accumulate again-something it has done ever since. Most of Van Buren's energies went on an attempt to set up what he called an Independent Treasury-the nearest he could get to a central bank without actually repudiating Jackson's policy. He finally got it through Congress just as he had to run before the voters again, and the Depression made it certain he would lose.

If there were any justice in politics, Clay should have been the beneficiary, since he had opposed the Jacksonians for two decades and his warnings against the Dictator's absurd financial policies had been fully vindicated by events. But at the Harrisburg convention of the Whig Party-more a coalition of personal and local power-groups than a real party based on shared convictions-he was outmaneuvered and hornswoggled in the 'smoke-filled rooms,' the first time that phenomenon made its appearance in American history. Clay's supporters arrived with a plurality of delegates but on the final vote he was beaten by Harrison 148-90, his manager telling him: 'You have been deceived betrayed & beaten [by] a deliberate conspiracy against you.' The election itself was unique in American history, conducted in a carnival atmosphere in which programs and policies were scarcely discussed at all, and all was slogans, gimmickry and razzmatazz. Considering the country was supposed to be, indeed to some extent was, in deep depression, the frivolity was remarkable. But then the mid-19th century was an astonishing age of optimism and America was a resilient nation. Harrison campaigned as a rugged frontiersman, with his running mate John Tyler (1790-1862), a dyed-in-the-wool Virginian and states' rights man who had been alienated by Jackson's high-handed ways, being presented as an experienced and wily professional politician. So the Whig slogan was 'Tippecanoe and Tyler Too.' The Democrats retaliated by ignoring Tyler and branding General Harrison, who liked his noggin-or rather his joram-as 'The Log Cabin and Hard Cyder' candidate. The Whigs turned this to advantage by holding 'Log Cabin Rallies' at which hard cider was copiously served. They also created an electorally effective image of the dapper Van Buren as an effete New York dandy, drinking wine 'from his coolers of silver.' The actual popular vote was fairly close-1,275,000 to Harrison against 1,128,000 for Van Buren-but the college vote was a landslide, 234 to 60. The Whigs thus demonstrated, as the Democrats had already discovered, that picking a general paid electoral dividends.

Harrison was sixty-eight and said he would serve only one term. Clay turned down his invitation to become secretary of state again, saying he would rather remain in the Senate and expecting to succeed Harrison as president in 1844. So the golden-tongued, distinctly fishy Webster got the job instead. However, Harrison, having formed his Cabinet and celebrated his entry into the White House, was attacked by pneumonia and expired after only a month in office. That put Tyler in the White House and disrupted all Clay's long-term plans. However, he thought that, with Harrison dead, he could now control the Whig Party and dictate to Tyler what he ought to do-in particular to proceed immediately to the creation of a Third Bank of the United States.

But Tyler was no pushover. He too was a tall man, with a high 'retreating forehead,' with 'all the features of the best Grecian model,' and such a pronounced Roman nose that two Americans in Naples, present when a bust of Cicero was unearthed at an excavation, exclaimed with one accord: 'President Tyler!' So when Clay called on the new President and unwisely insisted 'I demand a bank *now!*' Tyler replied crushingly: 'Then, Sir, I wish you to understand this-that you and I were born in the same district; that we have fed upon the same food, and have breathed the same natal air. Go you now, then, Mr Clay, to your end of the avenue, where stands the Capitol, and there perform your duty to the country as you shall think proper. So help me God, I shall do mine at this end of it, as *I* shall think proper.' The two men never spoke again.

Nor was this the end of the damage inflicted by the wretched SBUS dispute. In 1841 Biddle's Bank, mortally wounded by the long Depression, finally tottered to its doom and closed its doors. Among its bad debts was a massive \$114,000 owed by Webster, the Secretary of State. Biddle was ruined, had to sell his splendid city mansion in Philadelphia, and was able to retain his 'perfect house' Andalusia thanks only to his rich wife's trustees. Even so, it soon wore a neglected look. The spiteful John Quincy Adams dined there and recorded: 'Biddle broods with smiling face and stifled groans over the wreck of splendid blasted expectations and ruined hopes. A fair mind, a brilliant genius, a generous temper, an honest heart, waylaid and led astray by prosperity, suffering the penalty of scarcely voluntary error.' Three years later the ruined banker was dead, old Jackson surviving him by a triumphant year.

Did having a central bank, or not having one, make much difference to America as a whole? It is hard to say. America had financial crises and recessions-all expanding countries do-but it always quickly recovered and went on remorselessly, pushing west, building up industries, creating farms. In 1800 there had been 450,000 American farms. By 1850 there were 1.5 million, a number which would grow steadily until it reached 6.4 million and a peak of 6.95 million in 1935. The Americans, recruited from all the people of Europe, were magnificent rough-and-ready farmers. The great epic of 19th-century America is the internal migration, the occupation and exploitation of the Middle and West. The biggest single factor was that the country was empty, land was cheap or free, credit was easy, the law left them virtually alone, and all was governed by a virtually unrestrained market and by their own ingenuity and energy. Nearly all these internal immigrants had already farmed in the East and they faced conditions they knew they could handle-this was a key point. Soils, shrubs, trees, and grasses were known to them, they were familiar with the weather, there was nearly always plenty of wood close at hand, and the water was there, in lakes and streams or in the table below the surface. They knew that all the old tricks of the farming trade they or their fathers had worked in the East, would work in the West, often better. That was the grand psychological certainty which made them pioneer. They had over two centuries of collective wisdom behind them, and science and machinery were coming along fast. In 1842 Samuel Forry published the first scientific work on the American climate. It was replaced by Lorin Blodget's hook on climatology in 1857, and by then the Smithsonian was systematically collecting data on climate.

The Smithsonian, in Washington, was the first institution for scientific research in America, made possible by an enormous gift of about \$500,000-more than any university endowment in the US then-by a British chemist, James Smithson. Despite the efforts of the strict constructionists like Calhoun to stop the federal government thus getting involved in research, John Quincy Adams and his friends managed to "get the gift accepted, the institute organized, and America's first 'pure' scientist, Joseph Henry (1797-1878), made its founding director in

1846. Thanks to him, Americans began to get short- and long-term weather forecasts, and projections based on historical averages, carefully compiled by the Smithsonian. Farmers were greatly assisted by the thoroughness with which the surveyor-general (originally called the geographer) and his teams worked. The surveyors were not merely geodetic workmen but good field-geographers, and each was obliged to put into his field-books, 'at their proper distances, all mines, salt-springs, salt-licks and mill-seats that shall come to his knowledge; and all water-courses, mountains and other remarkable and permanent things, over and near which such lines shall pass, and also the quality of the lands.' From a surprisingly early stage, considering the sheer size of the Midwest and West, American farmers-and prospectors-got detailed, high-quality maps.

Jefferson had spotted the central principle of American agriculture, that it had to be labor-intensive: 'In Europe the object is to make the most of their land; here it is to make the most of our labor, land being abundant.' Until about 1800, all that most farmers had were a low-quality, often hand-made, plow, harrow, hoe, shovel, fork, and rake. Charles Newbould of New Jersey patented the first American cast-iron plow in 1797. But this was a solid piece, and it was improved on by Jethro Wood of New York, who patented a metal plow with separate interlocking parts each of which could be replaced if broken. These advanced metal plows came into general use in the second half of the 1820s and their impact on productivity was immediate. They were combined, on virgin land, with steel mold-boards, needed to break up the matted grasses of the prairies, made from 1833 by John Lane of Chicago. All farmers had got metal plows by the 1830s. In Pittsburgh two factories were making 34,000 metal plows a year even in the 1830s and mass manufacturing brought prices down. In 1845 in Massachusetts alone there were seventy-three plow-making firms producing 61,334 plows plus other implements. Competition was intense and by 1855 they had merged into twenty-two firms while production had risen to 152,688 and prices had fallen sharply.

In 1833 Obed Hussey produced the first practical reaper, which could do 15 acres a day. But he was a poor businessman and it was the genius of Cyrus McCormick (1809-84) which led to the marketing of the first mass-produced reaper. He was of Ulster origin, who came from Pennsylvania into the Shenandoah Valley, then to Brockport, New York, on the Erie Canal, to be nearer the markets, and finally to Chicago in 1848. He was not merely a great inventor but a remarkable businessman. He sold his first reaper in 1834 and by 1860 was turning out 4,000 machines a year. At the International Exposition in Paris in 1855, to the astonishment of the Europeans, an American reaper cut an acre of oats in twenty-one minutes, a third of the time taken by Continental makes. By then there were already 10,000 machines in use on American farms. Two years later, the United States Agricultural Society held a national trial at the New York State Fair, entered by forty mowers and reapers. This display showed how far and quickly American manufacturers had gone in eliminating the bad features, such as side-draft, clogging, and the inability to get started in standing grain. The quantity of these giant, reliable machines, made possible by intense competition, explains why American grain was so cheap, outselling all European products whenever it could get under the tariff and quota barrier, and why production of large acreages was kept up during the Civil War when the armies took all the young men.

Progress was continual. As early as 1850 American farmer-inventors, after prodigious efforts, managed to attach a separator to a thresher, so the whole process of threshing and winnowing could be done by the same machine-the combine was well on its way. The horse hay-rake, doing the work of ten men, came in during the 1820s, in the 1830s speed-drills for sowing wheat, from 1840 the corn-planter and various types of cultivators. The census of 1860 reported: 'By the



Improved Plough, labor equivalent of one horse in three is saved. By means of drills, two bushells of seeds will go as far as three scattered broadcast, while the yield is increased six to eight bushells an acre. The plants come up in rows and may be tended by horse-roses ... The reaping machine is a saving of more than one third the labor when it cuts and rakes ... The threshing machine is a saving of two-thirds on the old hand-flail mode ... The saving in the labor of handling hay in the field and barn by means of horserakes and horse-hayforks is equal to one half.' And American inventors and farmers were the first to power farm-machinery with steam.

This mechanical impulse to labor-saving and scientific farming was backed by an intellectual thrust by no means confined to the Smithsonian. Washington had set the pattern of experimental farming, founding America's mule-raising industry with the help of high-quality asses sent him by Lafayette and the King of Spain. While he was still president, New York's Columbia College, a go-ahead place which had set up a medical school as early as 1767, created a professorial chair of Agriculture, Natural History, and Chemistry (1792). The first true agricultural college, the Dariner Lyceum, was established in Gardiner, Maine, in 1822, and in 1857 Michigan opened the earliest State College of Agriculture, the first of many. These in turn were backed up by New York's Society for Promoting Agriculture, Commerce, and the Arts (1781), and by the country fairs movement of Elkanah Watson (1758-1842), started in 1807 and inspiring the Berkshire Agricultural Society, the first of hundreds. New York was underwriting fairs with state money (\$20,000) as early as 1819. And finally there were the specialist publications of which the most important were the Baltimore weekly, the *American Farmer* (1819), the *Albany Cultivator* (1834), and, for the West, the *Prairie Farmer* of 1840. By mid-century, American farming was, next to Britain's, the most advanced technically in the world, and already overtaking Britain in mechanization.

It is important to realize that, with this successful introduction of capital-intensive farming in the United States, and with the gigantic annual additions of land under cultivation-unprecedented in world history-America remained primarily an agricultural country almost till the end of the 1850s. A number of factors were against industrialization: poor banking facilities, hampered (as we have seen) by political problems; a federal government which, between 1830 and 1860, was heavily influenced by Southern plantation owners who opposed further protection, a central bank, any idea of transcontinental transit systems-roads or rail-built for the North, and free land. After Marshall's death, the Supreme Court was also dominated by Southern interests who tended to be anti-capitalist. On the other hand, a number of factors pushed industrialization. The quarrel with Britain and the War of 1812 in the first two decades of the century gave native manufactures a start, reinforced by the early tariffs. Those of 1816, 1828, 1832-3, and 1842 were in varying degrees strongly protectionist, and undoubtedly benefited US manufactures greatly. Tariffs were scaled down in 1846 and still more in 1857, which put America in the front rank of the free-trading nations. But by then home manufactures were firmly established and an increasingly sophisticated and resourceful capital market had come into being. However, the main forces which industrialized America were the arrival of skilled labor from Europe and, above all, the rapid expansion of a huge domestic market.

It was Samuel Slater, an immigrant, induced to come to America by state bounties, who erected the first Arkwright-type cotton-mill at Pawtucket, Rhode Island, financed by Moses Brown, a Quaker merchant of Providence. Slater had been an apprentice of Arkwright and his arrival is the perfect example of the personal transfer of technology from Britain to the United States, repeated hundreds of times. But, as we have already seen, Americans were from the start highly inventive themselves. From 1790 to 1811 the US Patent Office reported an annual

average of seventy-seven registrations. By the 1830s it had jumped to 544 annually, by the 1840s to 6,480 and in the 1850s over 28,000 every year. Americans were using steam widely in Rhode Island and New Jersey even in the 1790s, and in 1803 were the first in the world to apply steam to a sawmill, an important point since wood was universally used for power-fuel in the US until the big coalmines began to come on stream in the 1850s. The steam engines were originally all imported Boulton & Watts from Britain but after Oliver Evans (1755-1819) of Philadelphia introduced a new high-pressure steam engine in 1802, Evans engines competed with imported ones, being used west of the Alleghenies in 1812. Five years later, American engines were being produced at Pittsburgh, Louisville, and Cincinnati, as well as on the coast. The census of 1830 showed that in Pennsylvania 57 out of 161 plants now used steam and 39 out of 169 in Massachusetts-the rest used cheap water-power, which was still the norm in New York, New Jersey, and elsewhere. You might say that, whereas mechanization in agriculture was accelerated by the need to save labor, industry in America was, to some extent, held back by the sheer abundance of nature-by ubiquitous water-power, easily harnessed, by seemingly inexhaustible quantities of wood near by, and by the teeming fisheries of the northwest Atlantic which continued to make sailing ships highly profitable.

It was not that America lacked instances of men operating at the limits of known technology in the first half of the 19th century, or even beyond them. Francis Cabot Lowell (1775-1817), having studied cotton technology in England, employed a mechanical genius called Paul Moddy who designed machines, set up at Waltham in 1814, which for the first time brought together all the processes of spinning and weaving in what became known as the Waltham System. There were other major American innovations-the first sewing machine, made by Elias Howe (1819-67), and the discovery in 1851 by William Kelly (1811-88) of how to decarbonize molten metal by forcing air through it, the so-called Bessemer process. But in general the American metallurgical industry remained basic for a long time because its main market was the do-it-yourself farming population. What they wanted was simply bar-iron which blacksmiths could work into machine parts for agricultural machinery and mills. Not until the late 1850s did iron-producers switch the bulk of their business to serving industry directly. The Singer Sewing-machine factory in New York, and others in Bridgeport and Boston were making 110,000 machines annually by 1860, but were exceptional. A more typical manufactured product was the wood-burning stove, of which 300,000 were made annually in the 1850s, iron axes, springs, bolts, wire, firearms, and locks. Processing foodstuffs soon became important in American manufacturing industry Cincinnati was the chief town for meat-packing until Chicago took over, and by 1850 tinning meat was conducted on a massive scale, with glue, fertilizers, bristles, candles, and soaps forming byproducts. By 1850 Cincinnati was catering for the largest whiskey market in the world-2 million gallons a year.

There was no doubt about Northern dominance. In terms of capita invested and still more in numbers employed, by 1860 New England the Middle States and the West outclassed the South by more than ten to one. But the sophistication of America's move into industry should not be exaggerated. Products, ideas, news, and innovation were still essentially spread by peddlers. One observer wrote in the 1820s: 'I have seen them on the peninsula of Cape Cod, and in the neighborhood of Lake Erie, distant from each other more than 600 miles. They make their way to Detroit, 400 miles further, to Canada, to Kentucky and, if I mistake not, to New Orleans and St Louis.' Until the 1850s, the United States was essentially a country of four occupational groups-farmers, planters, fishermen and peddlers.

Peddlers were important because continental America had to overcome the tyranny of distance—the paradox whereby sheer space narrows the lives of people living in scattered communities, far from each other and from urban centers. Happily the American people proved themselves wonderfully adept at overcoming this tyranny. If success in any one field has made America the world's greatest nation, it is transport and communications. The Constitution empowered the federal government to spend money under the 'general welfare' clause as well as under Article I, Section 7 (post offices and post roads, and regulation of interstate commerce). From 1808, when Albert Gallatin reported to Congress recommending sales of public lands to finance federal spending on canals and roads, Washington was fully involved in the transport business, usually in partnership with the states. A typical arrangement was with Ohio, at the time of its admission, 1803. Federal land sold within Ohio's borders was exempt from taxation for five years, and in return the federal government appropriated 5 percent of such sales for roads, three-fifths within the state and two-fifths over the mountains to the east. Similar deals were later made with Indiana, Missouri, and Illinois.

Some of these federal-financed roads were of the highest quality, like Telford's in Britain, often using his designs for road-furniture and bridges. The National Pike was the grandest. One historian wrote: 'Its numerous and stately stone bridges, with handsome stone arches, its iron mile-posts and its old iron gates, attest the skills of the workmen engaged in its construction, and to this day remain enduring monuments of its grandeur and solidity.' When its 834 miles had been completed it had cost \$6,821,200 and required thirty Acts of Congress, 7806-38. Such constructions always had to run the hazard of the Constitution, or of self-interested interpretations of it. Thus in 1831 President Jackson vetoed the Bill for a Maysville-Lexington road running for 60 miles entirely within Kentucky on the ground that it was unconstitutional for federal money to be spent for the advantage of a single state—in reality to spite Henry Clay. Turnpike mania was succeeded by canal mania, then by railroad mania in the increasingly successful efforts to reduce freight costs, an important part of the tyranny: it cost \$125 per ton on the Pennsylvania-Pittsburgh all-land route, a particularly expensive one, but on average it was \$10 per 100 miles in the 1820s, about the same as it cost to get a ton across the Atlantic.

Before rail came, it was water-transport which made America great, especially when steam supplied the driving force. Fulton went into the business of marrying steam to water-transport in 1807 when he got a twenty-year monopoly of routes in New York, followed by a similar one for New Orleans. These monopolies were happily soon destroyed in the Marshall Court but Fulton continued his steam pioneering. In 1811 he built a shipyard at Pittsburgh and launched the New Orleans, the first steamer on the Ohio. In 1815 Henry Sheve, probably the greatest of all navigators of the Mississippi, took a steamboat all the way up the river from New Orleans to Louisville in twenty-five days. To Pittsburgh it was originally 100 days. But this was soon reduced to thirty and the New Orleans-Louisville route to a mere five days (upstream). No single fact of nature played a bigger part in American progress than the Mississippi. It was one of the three great rivers of the world, but whereas the Nile is bordered by desert, except for a narrow strip on its lower half, and the Amazon by tropical rainforest which is still largely impassable, the Mississippi runs directly through the largest continuous area of high-quality agricultural land on earth, and is the main artery of this richly productive basin. It is an amazingly changeable river, depositing mud in colossal quantities, changing its shape continually, creating islands and peninsulas, and then destroying them, dragging inland towns directly onto the waterfront, pushing river ports miles inland, and making the business of navigating it one of the most exacting sciences on earth.

Many people, especially foreigners, were dismayed by their first contact with this vast and often terrifying river. Charles Dickens, writing of Cairo, one of its 'dismal towns,' called it:

The hateful Mississippi, circling and eddying before it, and turning off upon its southern course, a slimy monster, hideous to behold; a hotbed of disease, an ugly sepulchre, a grave uncheered by any gleam of promise ... An enormous ditch, sometimes two or three miles wide, running liquid mud, six miles an hour; its strong and frothy current choked and obstructed everywhere by huge logs and whole forest trees: now twining themselves together in great rafts, from the interstices of which a sedgy, lazy foam works up, to float upon the water's top; now rolling past like monstrous bodies, their tangled roots showing like matted hair; now glancing singly by like giant leeches; and now writhing round and round in the vortex of some small whirlpool like wounded snakes. The banks low, the trees dwarfish, the marshes swarming with frogs, the wretched cabins few and far apart, their inmates hollow cheeked and pale, the weather very hot, mosquitoes penetrating into every crack and crevice in the boat, mud and slime on everything: nothing pleasant in its aspects but the harmless lightning which flickers every night upon the dark horizon.

But to Mark Twain (1835-1910), it was 'the great Mississippi, the majestic, the magnificent Mississippi, rolling its mile-wide tide along, shining in the sun.' And Twain knew! It was the river which gave him his writer's name, from the words the rivermen called out when they sounded two fathoms. It was as Samuel Clemens, the teenager, that he learned the Mississippi river-pilot's trade in the 1850s, later (1883) setting it down in the best book ever written about a river, *Life on the Mississippi*.

At their peak, there were 6,000 steamers in the Mississippi fleets. They competed ferociously against each other in size, capacity, grandeur, gambling, girls, and, above all, speed. It was the spirit of burgeoning American capitalism, afloat. 'The boats going north,' wrote Twain,

always left New Orleans between four and five in the afternoon. From three PM onwards they would be burning rosin and pitch-pine to get ready, and a three-mile line of boats would produce a huge mushroom cloud of smoke over the city in consequence. Then the bells rang and they all slid into the river. This was an amazing sight, not to be seen once the Civil War started or forever after. Races between the two fastest steamers were advertised weeks in advance and watched all along the river, boats being stripped of non-essential weight and loaded exactly to get maximum speed. Wood boats were hitched alongside and towed so refueling could take place in progress.

The *Eclipse* was the fastest, doing the 1,440 miles New Orleans-Louisville in 1853 in four days, nine hours, and thirty minutes. In 1870, the *Robert E. Lee*, in a famous race with the *Natchez*, did the New Orleans-St Louis run, 1,218 miles, in three days, eighteen hours, and fourteen minutes. The craze for speed on the Mississippi was not without its human cost. In February 1830 the *Helen McGregor* was leaving Memphis, Tennessee, when the head of her starboard boiler cracked, and the explosion killed fifty souls, flayed alive or suffocated by the scalding steam. Burst boilers were the most common accidents which beset these steamers, sinking one-third of all boats up to the end of the 1830s. Officially, burst boilers killed 1,400 people up to the year 1850 but the real total was higher, and Dickens was advised to sleep at the stern of the boat if he wished to avoid being scalded to death. Losses on bars and snags led the federal government to spend \$3 million, 1820-60, on improving the four main rivers, the

Mississippi, Ohio, Missouri, and Arkansas. It was cash well spent-by 1852 the commerce on the Mississippi alone was worth \$653 976,000 annually.

Canals were built to link rivers, and early railroads to provide links where canalization was impracticable. Following the tremendous success of the Erie Canal opening in 1825-probably the outstanding example of a human artifact creating wealth rapidly in the whole of history-the states went into canal-making on a prodigious scale, borrowing vast sums (chiefly from Europe) to do it. Most state constitutions had to be rewritten in the 1820s to make this possible. In those days American credit in Europe was high, interest payments being substantial and handed over regularly. Most of these state canals were built and some succeeded in their purpose. But state debts mounted fast, from only \$12,790,728 in 1820 to over \$170 million in 1838 and \$200 million in 1840. Only seven states did not borrow to fuel the canal mania. The 1837 crash made it impossible for the states to pay interest on their debts and six of them-Mississippi, Louisiana, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Indiana, and Michigan-went so far as to repudiate their debts entirely, rather like bankrupt African states today, thus bringing eloquent cries of anguish from innocent European investors like the novelist W. M. Thackeray. At this point most states decided to get out of the transport business and hand over to private enterprise. So state constitutions were again rewritten to forbid state canal mania or any other spending passion.

Hence, though the first railroads were built to supplement the mainly state-owned canal system, rail was a field where private capital and publicly floated companies were dominant almost from the start. Steam-powered railroads had evolved in England from the coal industry, which America did not then have, but the United States was not far behind Britain in introducing major passenger lines. On July 4, 1828 Charles Carroll of Carrollton, the last survivor of those who signed the Declaration of Independence, turned the first spade on the Baltimore & Ohio, the earliest proper line, 13 miles of which were open by 1830. Three years later, the Charleston-Hamburg line in South Carolina, with 136 miles open, was already the longest in the world. The first engine to be built in America, the *Best Friend of Charleston*, traveled this route at 30 miles an hour without freight or at up to 30 miles an hour with four loaded cars. Construction started on what was to become the New York Central in 1830 and the big Pennsylvania line was completed four years later. All the major routes between the East Coast and the Mississippi Valley were completed by the 1840s and the first consolidation of multiple early routes began in 1853 with the New York Central, the same year the first rail service New York-Chicago opened. Benjamin Wright, the great engineer of the Erie Canal, denounced railroads as anti-individual: 'I consider a long line of railroad ... as being odious in this country, as a monopoly of the carrying, which it necessarily must be. A canal, on the other hand, is open to any man who builds a boat.' No one took much notice. The states even, to some extent, got involved in railroads-especially Pennsylvania, Michigan, South Carolina, and Georgia, though mainly in the early stages-and more money came from counties and towns, and even from the federal government, in the form of land deals with individual states. It is a curious fact that Georgia, for instance, actually ran the Chattanooga Choo-Choo till the 1870s. But private or publicly raised capital was the main provider of finance-\$1.25 billion of it in the thirty years 1830-60.

Beyond the rail-line, in the years 1830-60, were the stages, the fast carriers, and the telegraph. All developed with impressive speed and determination. Even before the California gold rush in the late 1840s, the Santa Fe Trail became the first path in advance of the Western frontier. With the rush, stage traffic from Independence, Missouri, to Santa Fe came into regular operation in 1849, with a monthly stage-mail to Salt Lake City the same year. In 1858, John Butterfield got a federal contract to carry mail overland from Memphis and St Louis to California, thus enabling

him to run a twice-weekly stage through Preston, El Paso, and Yuma to the Pacific Coast, taking twenty-five days. The Russell, Major & Waddell Company pioneered other routes and by the early 1860s it annually carried 75,000 oxen in 6,250 waggons in the freight business alone. By 1860 Russell's Pony Express, conducted on relays of horseback riders, carried mail from St Joseph, Missouri, to Sacramento, California, in ten days. This ruined the firm, however, and it ended up in the hands of Wells Fargo, which controlled much of the routing until the transcontinental railroads.

In the meantime, Samuel Morse (1791-1872), originally an artist-which was why he was in Rome when a papal guard knocked his hat off and made him fanatically anti-Catholic-and professor of design in New York College, conceived the idea of an electric telegraph in 1832 and built a practical machine in 1837. He had to pester Congress before it appropriated \$30,000 for a Washington-Baltimore line, opened in 1844. It was first used that spring to transmit news from the Whig and Democratic conventions, which met in Baltimore, to the capital. Then a private company was formed and moved in, opening its first line in 1846. Ezra Cornell (1807-74) was the organizing genius who formed the Western Union Telegraph Company (chartered 1856) and took the first line through to California in 1861-thus killing the Pony Express stone dead-and generating huge profits used to found Cornell University, which opened in 1868. A little belatedly, the railroads learned the value to them of the telegraph line and helped to finance its extensions running alongside their tracks. Thereafter the telegraph quickly became an indispensable tool of government, commerce, and many kinds of social communication, with the Associated Press, originally the New York AP (1827), taking full advantage to coordinate news and disseminate it nationwide. So, by the 1850s, the United States had an overall transportation system of great versatility and often of high density.

This transportation capacity, and the extraordinary powers of land-digestion shown by American settlers and farmers, combined to make the United States ever greedy for more territory. The vast tracts of the Louisiana Purchase, the conquest of Florida by Jackson-all these were not enough. By the 1830s the notion that America was destined to absorb the whole of the West of the continent, as well as its core, was taking hold. This was a religious impulse as well as a nationalist and ideological one-a feeling that God, the republic, and democracy alike demanded that Americans press on west, to settle and civilize, republicanize and democratize. In 1838 an extraordinary essay in the *Democratic Review*, entitled 'The Great Nation of Futurity,' set out the program:

The far-reaching, the boundless future will be the era of American greatness. In its magnificent domain of space and time, the nation of many nations is destined to manifest to mankind the excellence of divine principles: to establish on earth the noblest temple ever dedicated to the worship of the Most High-the Sacred and the True. Its floor shall be a hemisphere-its roof the firmament of the star-studded heavens-and its congregation the Union of many Republics, comprising hundreds of happy millions, calling and owning no man master, but governed by God's natural and moral law of equality, the law of brotherhood of 'peace and goodwill among men'.

The theme was taken up in Congress, especially in the 1840s, the Roaring Forties as they came to be called, certainly distinguished by the roaring of Americans for more lands to conquer. One congressman put it thus in 1845: 'This continent was intended by Providence as a vast theater on

which to work out the grand experiment of Republican Government, under the auspices of the Anglo-Saxon race.'

The actual term 'Manifest Destiny' was first used by John L. O'Sullivan in the *Democratic Review* of 1845, complaining of foreign interference and attempts aimed at 'limiting our greatness and checking the fulfillment of our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions.' Representative Duncan of Ohio said he feared federal government centralism, and the answer to this was expansion: 'To oppose the constant tendency to federal consolidation, I know of no better plan than to multiply States, and the further from the center of federal influence and attraction, the greater is our security.'" At the New Jersey State Democratic convention of 1844, Major Daveznac rhapsodized on this theme: 'Land enough! Land enough! Make way, I say, for the young American Buffalo-he has not yet got land enough! He wants more land as his cool shelter in summer-he wants more land for his beautiful pasture grounds. I tell you, we will give him Oregon for his summer shade, and the region of Texas as his winter pasture!' (*Applause.*)

O'Sullivan repeated his Manifest Destiny demand by predicting that it had to be fulfilled to accommodate 'that riot of growth in population which is destined, within a hundred years, to swell our numbers to the enormous population of *two hundred and fifty millions* (if not more),' a good guess, as it turned out. An editorial in the *United States Journal*, October 15, 1845, asserted: 'It is a truth, which every man may see, if he will but look-that all the channels of communication-public and private, through the schoolroom, the pulpit and the press are engrossed and occupied with *this one idea*, which all these forces are designed to disseminate-that we, the American people, are the most independent, intelligent, moral and happy people on the face of the earth.' This fact, and most Americans agreed it was a fact, gave ethical justification to the desire to expand the republic which promoted such happiness.

It should be added that an outspoken minority, especially among the churchgoers, opposed western expansion on social and moral grounds. After inspecting Louisville, the New England Unitarian minister James Freeman Clarke expressed alarm that, in the West, man was 'unbridled, undirected and ungoverned,' mothers encouraging their children to fight, women favoring dueling, judges gambling, while vice 'ate into the heart of social virtue.' Cornelius C. Felton of Harvard complained in 1842 that a population was growing up in the West 'with none of the restraints which fetter the characters of the working class in other countries.' Each man in the West considered himself 'a sovereign by indefeasible right and acknowledged no one as his better.' But that was the New England view. In the South, these feelings were considered virtues, to be encouraged. Besides, the South had an additional reason for pushing West-to extend slavery and to found more slave states and so maintain the balance of power in Congress.

With the 49th parallel limiting American expansion to the North, the obvious way to get more land was to dismember Mexico. It had always been menaced by the United States. President Jefferson had claimed it up to the Rio Grande. Then America backed down to the Colorado River, and then to the Sabine, accepted as the frontier by Secretary of State Adams in 1819. But East Texas had already been occupied by the same sort of national and racial oddities who congregated in Florida, and, while they still ruled these parts, the Spaniards had thought of giving up the East and concentrating on West Texas, where the ranching, which was what they most liked, was of high quality. In 1812, a filibuster group of Mexicans and Americans marched in from Louisiana, took San Antonio, and set up what they called the State of Texas. They were wiped out by a Spanish counterattack. A group of Bonapartist exiles set up another Texan republic in 1818, and a third proto-state was proclaimed by a group of Americans the next year.

Galveston Island was a pirate base. Then an independent Mexican government, having thrown out the Spanish by force, took over and gradually asserted its authority.

Some Americans in search of land cooperated with the new independent Mexican authorities. Moses Austin (1761-1821), born in Connecticut, moved to Missouri and then, having become a citizen of Spanish Louisiana, was allowed by the new Mexican government to found the Austin Colony, a huge block in the Colorado and Brazos basins, which he passed on to his son Stephen Fuller Austin (1793-1836). This colony consisted of prairies, woodlands, and river bottom lands of just the kind American settlers liked. The land was allocated in ranches of square leagues, according to the Spanish custom, that is 4,428-acre blocks-much bigger units than you could get in the United States, and for lower prices. By 1830 Austin had settled more than 5,000 Americans on his lands. Importing slaves to work the land was technically unlawful because Mexico had abolished slavery in 1824, but in practice it was allowed.

Then in 1830 the Mexican government suddenly halted immigration, imposed customs duties, reorganized Texas into three departments and set up military forts and garrisons. By this time three-quarters of the 30,000 people in Texas (including slaves) were Americans, and the western margin of America to the north was beyond the Colorado and 250 miles west of the Sabine. So Texas, as part of Mexico, looked increasingly anomalous. Austin behaved like a loyal Mexican citizen, as long as this was feasible. If Mexico had been stable things might have been different and its power survived. If the United States had been unstable, it might have been less acquisitive. But the historical fact is that Mexico was unstable and America was stable. Various transient Mexican governments made superficially brutal but intrinsically feeble attempts to impose their will and these merely had the effect of irritating the growing body of American settlers and driving them into rebellion. The big blow-up came in 1835, the American insurgents proclaiming the Republic of Texas on December 20 and naming Sam Houston, previously governor of Tennessee, to run their army.

The Mexican dictator, General Santa Ana, who had made his reputation with a military victory over the Spaniards in 1829, led a force of 5,000 regulars across the frontier of the self-proclaimed independent state on February 26, 1836. The same day Colonel William B. Travis (1790-1836) of South Carolina and James Bowie (1799-1836) of Burke County, Georgia-reputedly the inventor of the Bowie knife-retreated into the Alamo, a heavy-walled Spanish mission converted into a fort. With them were 1187 Texan desperados of the kind beloved by any healthy schoolboy, including Davy Crockett (1786-1836), a Tennessee congressman, who had served under Jackson in the Creek War and had arrived in Texas only a few days before. General Houston ordered Travis and Bowie to abandon their hopeless position but they declined. And when Santa Ana asked for their surrender, they answered with a cannon shot. The Mexicans then ran up the red flag, a traditional sign that no quarter would be given, and the attack commenced. It is said that over a thousand casualties were inflicted on the Mexicans, but within an hour the fort was in Santa Ana's hands and all the Americans were dead-Bowie bayoneted to death in his cot, where he was suffering from pneumonia, Travis riddled with musket balls next to a cannon, Crockett mutilated amid a pile of bodies of fellow-Tennesseans. The bodies of the dead combatants were thrown together on a pyre and burned.

Susannah Dickinson, wife of a blacksmith, was among a few civilians who survived to tell the tale. Santa Ana told her to inform the Texans that 'fighting is hopeless.' However, on April 21 General Houston mounted a surprise attack on Santa Ana's force on the banks of the San Jacinto River, near Galveston Bay. The Mexicans were scattered, Santa Ana was captured-in the arms of his mistress, Jenny-and he was forced to sign documents surrendering his entire army and



acknowledging the independence of Texas. The fighting was thus over in seven weeks. Independent Texas proceeded quickly to hold presidential elections, in which Houston defeated Stephen Austin, receiving 80 percent of the 6,000 votes cast. Houston had lived with the Indians in his youth and married an Indian girl. He was known as 'The Raven' and was said to drink 'a barrel of whiskey a day.' He was also an old friend and fellow-Tennessean of the President, General Jackson.

Jackson wanted Texas to be part of America. He also hated Mexicans. When, in the middle of a Cabinet meeting on June 28, 1836, he received a report from Commodore Dallas, US naval commander in the Mexican Gulf, about the indignities inflicted on the American consul and US citizens in Tampico by the Mexican authorities, he rapped out a characteristic order-without bothering to ask the rest of the Cabinet their views: 'Write immediately to Commodore Dallas, & order him to *blockade* the harbor of Tampico, & to suffer nothing to enter until they allow him to land and obtain his supplies of water & communicate with the Consul, & if they touch a hair of the head of one of our citizens tell him to *batter down and destroy their town & exterminate* their inhabitants from the face of the earth.' However, when he cooled down and consulted Kendall, he decided not to annex Texas as a new state, at the risk of outright war with Mexico, but to let things be for a time. Kendall told Jackson that he had to think of international opinion, which would note and resent land-grabbing by the American republic but would not object if, in due course, all were to drop into its lap: 'The time will come when Mexico will be overrun by our AngloSaxon race, nor do I look upon it as a result to be at all deplored. I believe it would lead to the amelioration and improvement of Mexico herself; but as guardians of the peace and interests of the United States we are not permitted to go to war through philanthropy or a design to conquer other nations for their own good.' Old Hickory pondered this pacific advice for a time and, surprisingly, agreed to follow it.

So Texas remained independent for a decade and flourished mightily, though continuing to press for its inclusion in the United States as a slave state. Jackson, now retired, coined in 1843, *a propos* of Texas, the saying that adding to America was 'extending the area of freedom'-although grabbing Texas from Mexico had already meant the legal reimposition of slavery there. In the meantime, President Tyler had been slowly moving towards the annexation of Texas, being anxious to ingratiate himself with the Southerners in order to secure his reelection in 1844, this time in his own right. Early in the election year, on February 28, 1844, a disaster occurred which had a profound political impact. Congress had been persuaded to provide funds to build a revolutionary new warship, the USS *Princeton*, the first to be driven by a propeller-screw, invented by a young Swedish engineer, John Ericsson. It had two enormous wrought-iron 12-inch guns, called 'Oregon' and 'Peacemaker.' To call a huge new gun such a name was an affront to providence, and during a gala trip down the Potomac which President Tyler had arranged for his Cabinet, diplomats, senators, and numerous grand ladies, 'Peacemaker' exploded, killing Secretary of State Abel Upshur, the Navy Secretary, and a New York State senator, and wounding a dozen others, including Senator Benton. The force of the explosion literally flung into the President's arms the beautiful Julia Gardiner, daughter of the dead state Senator, and she shortly afterwards became his wife. Equally, perhaps more, important, it enabled Tyler to reconstruct his Cabinet, excluding Northerners completely, and bringing in Calhoun as secretary of state. The object was twofold: to get Tyler the Southern ticket and to annex Texas.

The first maneuver did not succeed. The Democrats chose a Jackson protégé from Tennessee, James Knox Polk (1795-1849), who took a strong stand on the Manifest Destiny platform, and beat Henry Clay by 170 electoral college votes to 105 (the popular vote was closer: 1,337,243 to

1,299,062). Clay, having been an expansionist all his life, refused, for reasons which are still mysterious, to back the annexation of Texas. That was the main reason he lost. It was obvious the bulk of the nation, even the North, wanted Texas in the Union, whether or not it was a slave state. Tyler, still president, decided to outsmart Polk by gathering to himself the kudos for Texas' admission. His Secretary of State, Calhoun, had failed to get an annexation treaty approved by the necessary two-thirds vote of the Senate. (Two-thirds, overwhelmingly Northerners, voted against it.) Now Tyler, using the 'verdict' of the election as his justification, recommended that Texas be admitted by a joint resolution of both Houses, for which a simple majority was enough. This was done, February 28, 1845, and on his last day in the White House Tyler dispatched a courier to President Houston inviting Texas to become the twenty-eighth state.

Frustrated over Texas, Polk determined to add the riches and immensities of California to the Union and get the credit for it. And as a makeweight he wanted Oregon too. Polk came from North Carolina and was an expert mathematician. He had migrated to Tennessee, served in Congress, had four years as speaker, and two terms as governor. He was a lawyer, planter, and slave-owner and, now that Van Buren was dead politically, Jackson's heir, known as Young Hickory. But he had nothing in common with Jackson other than determination. He was a sour, stiff, elderly-looking man, with a sad, unsmiling face, who did nothing but work-eighteen hours a day in the White House, it was said. He was the first president killed by the office, though the choice was his. Like J. Q. Adams, whom he resembled, he kept a diary, though not such a nasty and interesting one. It is curious that he was despised in his lifetime and later underrated by historians. Within his self-set limits, he has a claim to be considered one of the most successful presidents. He did exactly what he said he would do. He said he would serve only one term, and he did. He said that, in that one term, he would do four things: settle the Oregon question, acquire California, reduce the tariff, and reestablish Van Buren's Independent Treasury, which the Whigs had abolished. He did all these things.

He also got America into war with Mexico and won it in record time. But first, knowing war with Mexico was likely, he and his Secretary of State, James Buchanan (1791-1868), determined to settle the Oregon question. It had a complicated history and involved an enormous mass of territory, only partly explored and mapped, beginning in the northern Rockies and ending on the Pacific coast. Most people did not even have a name for it until 'Oregon'-presumably of Indian origin-was popularized in a poem, 'Thanatopsis,' published by William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878) in 1817- Since the Treaty of 1814 the British and the Americans had agreed to leave the precise longitudinal frontier between Canada and the United States unresolved. President Monroe had assumed that the best solution was simply to extend the 49th parallel to the Pacific. All subsequent presidents had taken the same line. The area was largely the territory of the ancient Anglo-Canadian Hudson's Bay Company, and they had been operating south of the parallel for generations. On the other hand, American pioneers had been boring into the region and staking claims. Now, in the 'Roaring Forties,' with Americans whipping themselves into a nationalistic frenzy over Manifest Destiny, with 'Oregon Fever' taking settlers into the region by the thousand, with a government formed, a governor appointed, and a state capital, Oregon City, mapped out, the cry was 'All of Oregon or None,' supplemented by a bit of demotic geography, 'Fifty-Four-Forty or Fight.'

This last latitude would have shoved the US frontier right into what is now western Canada and given America the matchless harbor of Vancouver. Polk did not want, or expect, to get so much. He talked big. He told Congress that 'the American title to the country [he carefully did not say the whole of it] is clear and unquestionable.' He gave the Monroe Doctrine a new twist:

'The people of this continent alone have the right to decide their own destiny.' He said: 'The only way to treat John Bull is to look him straight in the eye.' But the last thing on earth he intended was to get into a scrap with Britain at a time when war with Mexico loomed. Moreover, it was unnecessary. The fur trade had declined in relative and absolute importance, and the Hudson Bay trapping areas south of the 49th were no longer of great consequence. Sir Robert Peel, the British Prime Minister, was enmeshed in his crowning struggle to repeal the Corn Laws and had no intention of wasting his energies on a strip of largely uninhabited territory in western Canada. The British public did not give a damn. By June 1846 Peel had split his party over Corn Law Repeal and was on his way out of office. One of his last acts was to settle for the 49th parallel and send a draft treaty to this effect to Washington. On June 15 Buchanan signed it for America and three days later it was ratified by the Senate after perfunctory debate. Ignored, the raucous Fifty-Four-Fortiers subsided. Thus are disputes involving vast territories settled, calmly and swiftly, when the two parties are both civilized states with a common language, fundamental common interests, and common sense.

By this time America was at war with Mexico. Looking back on it, it is easy to reach the conclusion that the Mexicans were foolish and the Americans hypocritical. Polk wanted war because he wanted California. But he did not want to start it. The Mexicans played straight into his hands by allowing their pride to overcome their prudence. Two days after Polk got to the White House the Mexican ambassador broke off relations and went home in protest at the annexation of Texas. That was silly, since Texas was a lost cause and, if the Mexicans wanted to retain California, or some of it, it was vital for them to keep up negotiations. Meanwhile Polk made his preparations. As early as June 1845 he got his Navy Secretary to send secret orders to Commodore Sloat, commanding the Pacific Station, that he was to seize San Francisco immediately he could 'ascertain with certainty' that Mexico was at war. In October, the War Secretary was instructed by Polk to write to Thomas O. Larkin, US consul in Monterey: 'Whilst the President will make no effort and use no influence to induce California to become one of the free and independent states of the Union, yet if the people should desire to unite their destiny with ours, they would be received as brethren, whenever this can be done without affording Mexico just cause for complaint.' At this time the numbers of American settlers and Mexican inhabitants were about equal, and the message was calculated to incite the Americans to take over, as they had in Texas.

However, in Polk's favor it has to be said that Mexico was a tiresome neighbor, always asking for trouble. It borrowed huge sums of money and then repudiated its debts. It had periodic civil wars in which the property of foreigners was pillaged. France had taken a much higher line with Mexico in 1839, sending a naval squadron to bombard San Juan de Ulua, in revenge for outrages. America had submitted its claims for compensation to an independent commission, which had awarded it \$3 million. In 1843 Mexico had agreed to pay this, plus accrued interest, in twenty installments, quarterly. But only three deadlines were met. In November 1845 Polk said he would put the whole series of issues on a 'businesslike basis:' America would assume responsibility for the debt if Mexico recognized the Rio Grande as the new border between the two countries; it would pay \$ 5 million for New Mexico; and 'money would be no object' if Mexico ceded California. On January 12, 1846, after another brief civil war, the new Mexican military government, which was violently anti-American, refused even to see the US minister plenipotentiary. The following day Polk ordered General Zachary Taylor (1784-1850), 'Old Rough-and-Ready,' to take up station with his army on the Rio Grande. By May Polk had concluded that war was inevitable and got his Cabinet to approve a war message to Congress. As

if on cue, the same evening, May 9, the Mexican army attacked a US unit on the 'American' side of the Rio Grande, killing eleven, wounding five, and taking the rest prisoner. The next day Polk was able to go to Congress boiling with simulated wrath. Even before the murders, he said, 'The cup of forbearance had been exhausted.' Now Mexico 'has passed the boundary of the United States, has invaded our territory, and shed American blood upon American soil.'

One of the few to protest about the provocation and hypocrisy of Polk was a new character on the American public scene, freshman Congressman Abraham Lincoln (1809-65), who argued that Polk had in effect started the war motivated with a desire for 'military glory ... that serpent's eye which charms to destroy,' and that, as a result, 'the blood of this war, like the blood of Abel, is crying to Heaven against him.' A good many New England intellectuals, antecedents of those who would protest against the Vietnam War in the 1960s, agreed with Lincoln. On the other hand, it is difficult now to conjure up the contempt felt by most Americans in the 1840s for the way Mexico was governed, or misgoverned, the endless coups and pronunciamientos, the intermittent and exceedingly cruel and often bloody civil conflicts, and the general insecurity of life and property. It made moral as well as economic and political sense for the civilized United States to wrest as much territory as possible from the hands of Mexico's greedy and irresponsible rulers.

The Mexican War of 1846 was important because of its consequences. But it also had a lot of high, and sometimes low, comedy. Polk tried to play politics with the war from start to finish. In the first place he allowed the slippery Santa Ana, who was in exile in Cuba, to return to Mexico, the general having promised him he would usurp power and give America the treaty it wanted. In fact Santa Ana, who always broke his promises, broke this one too and provided such serious resistance as the American army encountered. Polk, as Senator Benton wrote, wanted 'a small war, just large enough to require a treaty of peace, and not large enough to make military reputations, dangerous for the presidency.' Polk also wanted to fight the war on the cheap, starving Taylor of supplies at first, and putting volunteers on short engagements. Taylor protested, refused to budge until supplies arrived, then won a brilliant three-day battle at Monterey, taking the city. That worried Polk, who feared Taylor would get the Whig nomination in 1848. Polk then tried to appoint Senator Benton, of all people, as a political general to control the army. Congress would not have that. So he turned instead to General Winfield Scott (1786-1866), general-in-chief of the army. Scott was a Whig and politically ambitious too, but he served to balance Taylor and take some of the glory from him. He was known as 'Fuss-and-Feathers' because of his insistence on pipeclay and gleaming brass. Scott immediately got into a row with Polk's Secretary of War, William L. Marcy-the man who had coined the term the 'spoils system'-again over paucity of supplies, and, in reply to a quibbling letter from Marcy, he wrote that he had received it in camp 'as I sat down to take a hasty plate of soup.' This self-pitying phrase circulated in Washington, and got Scott dubbed 'Marshal Tureen.'

Fortunately for Polk, both Scott and Taylor were competent generals, and there was a dazzling supporting cast under them-Captains Robert E. Lee and George B. McClellan, Lieutenant Ulysses S. Grant and Colonel Jefferson Davis, all of whom distinguished themselves. In some ways Mexico was a dress-rehearsal for the professional military side of the Civil War. Taylor was supposed to strike for Mexico City across 500 miles of desert, with inadequate means. On March 9, 1847, Scott's army, also starved of equipment, landed at Vera Cruz without loss, the first big amphibious operation ever mounted by US forces. This was the short route to Mexico City. On May 15, having taken the second city, Puebla, Scott had to let a third of his army return home as their enlistments had run out. He insisted on waiting for more. Thus reinforced, he won

four battles in quick succession (Contreras, Churubusco, Molino del Rey and Chapultepec) in August and September and entered Mexico City on September 13, a marine unit running up the flag over 'the Halls of Montezuma.' Meanwhile, in California, John Charles Fremont (1813-90), with a party of sixty American freebooters, had raised a flag with a grizzly bear and star on a white cloth, and proclaimed the Republic of California (June 14, 1846). Fremont was an officer in the US Topographical Corps who had surveyed the Upper Missouri and Mississippi rivers (1838-41), eloped with Jessie Benton, pretty daughter of the US Senator, and headed three expeditions to the West, which involved exploring and mapping more territory than any other American-Western Wyoming (including Fremont Peak), all of California, the routes from Utah to Oregon, and most of Nevada and Colorado.

A month later Commodore John D. Stoen of the Pacific Fleet raised the American flag and proclaimed California US territory. The conquest of California was by no means bloodless, as in the south the Mexican peasants and the Indians revolted against the new American regime and had to be put down by force at the Battle of the Plains of Mesa outside Los Angeles, in January 1847. Nor was it easy to sign a peace treaty as there was no effective government in Mexico, by this stage, to negotiate one. Polk also had trouble with his negotiator, Nicholas P. Trist (1800-74), the Chief Clerk at the State Department, who disobeyed orders and was denounced by the President as 'an impudent and unqualified scoundrel.' However, he did succeed in finding a Mexican government and got it to sign the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo on February 2, 1848, so Polk swallowed his wrath and accepted the *fait accompli*. By this agreement Mexico accepted the Rio Grande frontier with Texas and handed over California and New Mexico. America agreed to pay off the indemnities and give Mexico an extra \$15 million.

It had not exactly been the cheap war Polk planned because he ended up with well over 100,000 men under arms, with 1,721 dead and another 11,155 wiped out by disease, and with a bill for \$97.7 million, plus the treaty payments. On the other side of the ledger, America got over 500,000 square miles of some of the richest territory on earth, making an extra million square miles if Texas is counted in. Five years later, Gadsden, by now Secretary of State under President Pierce, negotiated what is known as the Gadsden Purchase, whereby Mexico surrendered another 29,640 square miles on the southern borders of Arizona and New Mexico, for \$10 million. This rounded off the Manifest Destiny program, but it was essentially complete during Polk's presidency and he can fairly claim, when Oregon was counted in, to have added more territory to the United States than any other president, Jefferson (with the Louisiana Purchase) alone excepted.

California was an even greater prize than Texas. The name goes back to an imaginary island in a romance by Ordonez de Montalvo published in 1510. It was known to Cortez; Cabrillo made his way to San Diego in 1542; Drake touched there in 1579. But the permanent settlement by the Spanish did not begin until 1769, when the first of many *presidios* and Franciscan missions were established between San Diego and San Francisco. Considering the benevolence of its climate, the fertility of its soil, and its vast range of obvious natural resources, it is astonishing that the Spanish, then the Mexicans, did so little to make use of them. Other great powers had nosed around. In 1807 the Russians formed a plan to establish settlements in California (and at the mouth of the Columbia River and in Hawaii too), though nothing came of it. A few years later, however, the Russian-American Company was working near the Golden Gate, hunting seals. The British were interested too and, in the 1820s, had collaborated with the Americans in chasing the Russians out of the area. American agents in the area repeatedly warned Washington of the

feebleness of the Spanish (later the Mexican) hold on the area, and the desirability of securing San Francisco Bay, 'the most convenient, capacious and safe [harbor] in the world.' Lieutenant Wilkes of the US Navy, there in 1841 as part of a strategic survey of the Eastern Pacific, again stressed the marvels of San Francisco, 'one of the most spacious and at the same time safest ports in the world,' and underlined the vacuum of authority: 'Although I was prepared for anarchy and confusion, I was surprised when I found a total absence of all government in California, and even its forms and ceremonies thrown aside.'

The first American to penetrate California by the overland route had been Jedediah Strong Smith, 'the Knight of the Buckskin,' who, working for the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, had reached the San Gabriel mission on the Pacific coast in 1826. The first American settlers came two years later. But ordinary Americans began to learn of the wonder of the Far West only in the 1840s, when two gifted and adventurous writers reported on them. Richard Henry Dana Jr (1815-82) was a young Harvard man who shipped as a common sailor on a threemaster in 1834 for health reasons, voyaged the Pacific, and spent a year gathering hides on the California coast before returning to real life at the Harvard Law School. His *Two Years Before the Mast* (Boston, 1840) gave an unforgettable picture of San Francisco Bay in its pristine state: 'All around was the stillness of nature. There were no settlements on these bays and rivers, and the few ranches and missions were remote and widely separated ... On the whole coast of California there was not a lighthouse, a beacon or a buoy ... Birds of prey and passage swooped and dived about us, wild beasts ranged through the oak groves, and as we slowly floated out of the harbor with the tide, herds of deer came to the water's edge.'" This splendid book was widely read and made countless adventurous young men itch to get to the Far West.

Even more remarkable was the work of another Harvard Bostonian, Francis Parkman (1823-93), who set out in 1846 from St Louis to see for himself the reality of unspoiled life in this region, and especially to study the Indians, before the white man overwhelmed it. His travels began in what one modern historian has called 'the year of decision,' the watershed between the old and the new. Parkman carried three books, the Bible, *Shakespeare's Works*, and *The Collected Works of Byron*. He was himself a Byronic young man with an intense desire to see and experience the dangers of the Far West, pioneer trailing, a war between the Dakotas and the Snakes, and the need to move secretly through territory infested with Indian war parties. No one has ever conveyed better the loneliness, the danger, and the immensities of the Western spaces, and the occasional cataclysmic concentrations of wild life:

From the river bank on the right, away over the swelling prairie on the left, and in front as far as the eye could reach, was one vast host of buffalo. The outskirts of the herd were within a quarter of a mile. In many parts they were crowded so densely together that in the distance their rounded backs presented a surface of uniform blackness; but elsewhere they were more scattered, and from amid the multitude rose little columns of dust where some of them were rolling on the ground. Here and there a battle was going forward among the bulls. We could distinctly see them rushing against each other, and hear the clattering of their horns and their horse bellowing.

Parkman is romantic in that he consciously describes a life which he sees is now fragile-the buffalo will be hunted to extermination, the nomadic Indians will be corralled up in reservations, the sparse and primitive settlements will give way to towns and farms-but he is also unsentimental. He shows the Indians as they were: improvident, unreliable, sometimes

treacherous, vacillating, above all lazy, with the elderly females doing all the hard work. Thus, in a nomadic party of Ogillallahs,

The moving spirit of the establishment was an old hag of eighty. You could count all her ribs through the wrinkles of her leathery skin. Her withered face more resembled an old skull than the countenance of a living being, even to the hollowed, darkened sockets, at the bottom of which glittered her little black eyes. Her arms had dwindled into nothing but whipcord and wire. Her hair, half-black, half-grey, hung in total neglect nearly to the ground, and her sole garment consisted of the remnant of a discarded buffalo-robe tied round her waist with a string of hide. Yet the old squaw's meager anatomy was wonderfully strong. She pitched the lodge, packed the horses, and did the hardest labor in the camp. From morning till night she bustled about the lodge screaming like a screech-owl when anything displeased her.

Parkman's marvelous account of his excitements and privations, *The Oregon Trail*, published in 1849, was an immediate success both with literary New England and with the great public. But by that time the modern world had already overtaken the arcadia he described. The month before the Treaty with Mexico was signed, at Sutter's Mill in the Sacramento Valley, gold was discovered on January 24, 1848. A workman found tiny nuggets of gold in the mill-race. For some time the news was concealed while the few in the secret worked frenziedly to ice the veins and stake claims. By September, the East Coast papers were publishing reports from 'the California goldfields,' telling of 'nuggets collected at random and without any trouble.' The real rush started after President Polk, in his December 1848 message to Congress, boastfully confirmed 'the accounts of the abundance of gold' in the territory recently acquired'-by him.

That spring, scores of thousands went to California, from all over the world. Some went direct from Australia, which had had a gold rush of its own in the 1830s. The people of Cutler, in Maine, built and rigged their own ship and sailed her round the Horn to San Francisco Bay. Some went via the Panama Isthmus. More went over the Rockies by the Oregon and California trails. The early Forty-Niners got their gold by sifting off the gravel and soil using wire mesh-what they called 'panning' or 'placer' mining. Or they ran a stream through a 'long-tom' or sluice-box. That was the easy bit, and inspired the ditty: 'Oh California / That's the land for me / I'm off for Sacramento / With my washbowl on my knee.' But as the surface was worked out it became necessary to sink shafts and build crushing mills to grind the gold from the imprisoning quartz; that needed capital and organization. Many disappointed Forty-Niners went home in disgust, penniless-30,000 a year. But many more stayed because there were ample other opportunities in California, besides gold. Before the first strike, the non-Indian population of the territory was less than 14,000. By 1852 it was over 150,000. San Francisco had become a boomtown of 15,000 people, crowded with gamblers, financiers, prostitutes and wild women, actors and reporters, budding politicians and businessmen. It was free-for-all America at its best and worst.

The atmosphere of the mining camps is wonderfully conveyed in the stories of Bret Harte (1836-1901), a young man from Albany, New York, who was in California in 1854 where he worked on the Mother Lode and later went into printing and journalism in San Francisco. His 'The Luck of Roaring Camp' is the greatest of all mining stories. The prototype rush having taken place, there were plenty of others: Gold Hill, Colorado (1859), Virginia City, Nevada (1860), Orofino, Idaho (1861), Virginia City, Montana (1863), Deadwood, South Dakota (1876), Tombstone, Arizona (1877), Cripple Creek, Colorado (1891), and the great Alaska-Yukon rush, beginning at Nome in 1899. Nevada mining is described in glorious detail in another Mark

Twain masterwork, *Roughing It*, which has an exact description of all the mining processes then in use and the skulduggery, violence, greed, and disappointments which surrounded them.

But nothing could beat the original Forty-nine Rush for glamour and riches. The yield of gold in the first decade, 1848-58, was \$550 million. In the years 1851-5, California produced over 45 percent of the world's entire output of gold. It was a man's world, for fathers, sons, and brothers left to make their fortunes, telling their womenfolk to wait to be summoned. In 1851 Nevada County contained 12,500 white males, 900 females of various colors, 3,000 Indian coolies, and 4,000 Chinese cooks, laundrymen, and camp-workers. Lola Montez (1818-61), the Irish actress who had been the mistress of Louis I of Bavaria and had run his government, made her appearance, was a sensational success, and then retired to Grass Valley (her house is still there). When the editor of the *Grass Valley Telegraph* attacked her in print she literally horsewhipped him and he had to slink out of town. Grass Valley and Nevada City became centers of the richest and most continuous gold mining in California, with the North Star Mine, the Eureka, and the Empire setting the pace. Until the opening up of the Rand deep-level mines in South Africa in the 1930s, they were the most successful gold mines in history. Indeed, the California gold rush as a whole was a world-historical event of some importance. Until its gold came on the market, there had been a chronic shortage of specie, especially gold bullion, from which the United States, in particular, had suffered. Until the 1850s in fact there was no true gold standard simply because there was not enough gold to maintain it. Once California gold began to circulate, the development of American capital markets accelerated and the huge expansion of the second half of the century became financially possible. That too (it can be argued) was the work of the 'Unknown President Polk.'

The great California gold rush of 1849, attracting as it did adventurers from all over the world, was the first intimation to people everywhere that there was growing up, in the form of the United States, a materialistic phenomenon unique in history, a Promised Land which actually existed. Not that there was any shortage of routine, detailed information. Josiah T. Marshall's *Farmers and Immigrants Handbook: Being a Full and Complete Guide for the Farmer and Immigrant* (1845) was nearly 500 crammed pages. Minnesota set up a State Board of Immigration in 1855 and other states copied it. By 1864 Kansas was sending emissaries abroad to whip up enthusiasm among would-be immigrants. From the early 1840s railroads began obtaining both state and federal land for the use of immigrants. The Illinois Central advertised abroad; so did the Union Pacific and Northern Pacific. Railroad land departments organized trips for newspapermen and land-seekers and regularly dispatched agents all over Europe. By the 1850s a great deal of public and private money was being spent on telling the world about America.

There was also-more important, perhaps-word of mouth and traveler's tales. By European standards, wage-rates, even for unskilled men, were enormous. After about 1820, no one got less than a dollar a day in the cities. Farmhands got \$7.50 to \$15 a month, with full board. Thomas Mooney, an Irish visitor, asserted (1850): 'You can, as soon as you get a regular employment, save the price of an acre-and-a-half of the finest land in the world *every week*, and in less than a year you will have money to start for the West, and take up an 80-acre farm which will be yours for ever.' He calculated that a careful immigrant could save 7-8 English shillings a week. This was irresistible news. Immigration was going up all the time, allowing for fluctuations which reflected the trade cycle. After the first crisis dip in 1819, it rose to 32,000 in 1832 and 79,000 in 1837, then down following the credit panic, then up again to 100,000 in 1842, and then an immense increase, 1845-50, produced by bad winters in Europe, the Irish potato famine, and the



revolutions of 1848-9, which caused scores of thousands to flee. Never before or since was immigration so high per capita of the American population. The California gold rush sent it up to a record 427,833 in 1854, then the late-fifties panic sent it down with a crash to 153,640 in 1860. By that date there were 4 million foreign-born settlers in the United States, out of a total population of 27 million. They came from all over Europe, but mostly from Britain, Ireland, and Germany, the Irish staying east of the Alleghenies, the Germans pushing on into the Midwest to farm.

America was also admired for many other things in addition to high wage-rates and cheap land. First was the 'American Cottage,' a hit in Europe about 1800. Then came 'American Gardens.' From about 1815 what struck Europeans most was the size and luxury of American hotels. It is not so surprising that American hotels should have been big and comfortable: entire families lived in hotels for years, and in Washington DC it was rare for congressmen, senators, and Cabinet members to acquire their own houses before 1850. The first luxury hotel was Barnham's City Hotel in the boom-town of Baltimore, built 1825-6, which had no fewer than 200 bedrooms, twice as big as the largest in Europe. The Astor House in New York, built by J. J. Astor from 1832, had 309 bedrooms, plus-amazingly-no fewer than seventeen bathrooms. The Continental in Philadelphia (1858), which housed 800-900 people in suites, doubles, and singles, struck a new high in size and luxury (Europe's largest was then the Queen's, Cheltenham, 'the Grandest Hotel in Europe,' with 1uo rooms). American hotels were often distinguished and aggrandized by a central lobby, under a rotunda (the hotel atrium of the 1980s and 1990s is a rediscovery of this feature). The first such was the Exchange Coffee House Hotel in Boston, 1806-9, and the St Louis, in New Orleans, built in 1839, was a replica of this on a larger scale. The Palace Hotel in San Francisco, 1874-6, with its 850 bedrooms and 437 bathrooms, was so big that carriages could actually drive into the center, the coming-and-going forming an amusement for the other guests. It is significant that the influence of monumental American hotels gave rise to the first recorded complaint of Yankee cultural colonization, which came (needless to say) from a Frenchman; in 1870 Edmond de Goncourt lamented that Paris hotels were being 'Americanized.'

The new 'utopian' factories of New England were also much admired. The English novelist Anthony Trollope called Lowell 'the realisation of a commercial Utopia.' Harriet Martineau, the English economist, writing of Waltham, enthused: 'There is no need to enlarge on the pleasure of an acquaintance with the operative classes of the United States.'" In fact there was a strong authoritarian atmosphere in some of these 'model' factories, an adumbration of Henry Ford's system 1910-30. At Lowell in 1846, it was reported that operatives worked thirteen hours a day, from dawn till dusk in winter (but this is from a hostile account). Long hours were certainly common. In Rhode Island entire families, including small children, contracted to work for employers. What all observers recorded was the absence of begging. As one of them put it in 1839: 'During two years spent in traveling through every part of the Union, I have only once been asked for alms.' To Europeans, that seemed incredible, the real proof of a benevolent prosperity.

Americans were already associated with 'modernity,' with new ways of doing things. This applied particularly to social welfare and public works. The first big international success was Auburn Prison, New York State, in 1820. This pinched an idea from the big Paris bazaars and applied it to a penitentiary-top-lit galleries with massed stories of cells ranged on either side. Then in 1825, John Haviland joined this idea to Jeremy Bentham's panopticon prison idea of 1791, with a ground-plan formed by the spokes of a wheel and a central observation hall ranked

by galleries. (The spokes plan had already been used in the Maison de Force in Ghent, but that had no galleries.) This was typical of American-style utopianism and was so much admired that Haviland was asked to design prisons all over the United States. He specialized in prisons designed to accommodate huge new populations committing more crimes-and new crimes-and young criminals. Typical of his work was the Eastern Penitentiary in Philadelphia. Nearly all 'serious' visitors, such as Charles Dickens, Anthony Trollope, and W. M. Thackeray, who intended to write books about their travels, visited one or more prisons (as well as workhouses, homes for fallen women, and similar dismal but worthy places).

It was prisons which drew to America the most perceptive and influential of the European observers, Alexis de Tocqueville. Of noble descent, born in a Normandy chateau, he was nonetheless a liberal, in some ways a radical, whose object (he said) was 'to abate the claims of the aristocrats' and 'prepare them for an irresistible future'-which he saw to be emerging in America. In 1831 the new French 'liberal' government of Louis-Philippe, which had been delightedly hailed by President Jackson as the first real sign that his kind of democracy was spreading to Europe, gave de Tocqueville an unpaid commission to investigate American penology and write a report, which he published in 1833. He subsequently published his *Democracy in America*, part one in 1835, two in 1840. It has remained in print ever since.- The theme of the work is that 'The gradual development of the principle of equality is a Providential fact,' and he traces the implication in American institutions, both in theory and in practice. Volume one is mainly about America, and is tremendously optimistic; volume two is also about France, and tends to pessimism. But this work, and his copious letters, and his subsequent memoirs provide wonderful glimpses of American society in the 1830s.

The sharp-eyed and reflective Frenchman went from Boston to New Orleans with brief forays west of the Alleghenies, and did many of the usual things. He stayed in Boston's Fremont Hotel, built two years before, marveling at the 'private parlor' attached to each room, the slippers supplied while boots were being polished, and the terrific bellboys-though he also noted universal and disastrous bed-sharing in the interior. In Baltimore he dined with Charles Carroll-evidently a public monument to be visited by all, if sufficiently distinguished-and rejoiced at the way such aristocrats, unlike their European counterparts, accepted the new democracy graciously and even managed to get themselves elected by universal suffrage. He had an appalling time in the savage winter of 1831-2. In a letter to his mother he described how he had shared a Mississippi steamship with a crowd of Choctaw warriors being forcibly moved west:

There was a general air of ruin and destruction in this sight, something which gave the impression of a final farewell, with no going back; one couldn't witness it without a heavy heart. The Indians were calm but gloomy and taciturn. One of them knew English. I asked him why the Choctaws were leaving their country. 'To be free,' he answered. I couldn't get anything else out of him. Tomorrow we will set them down in the Arkansas wilderness. I must confess it is an odd coincidence that we should have arrived in Memphis to witness the expulsion, or perhaps the dissolution, of one of the last vestiges of one of the oldest American nations.

Shortly afterwards he came across Sam Houston, riding 'a superb stallion,' a man he described as 'the son in law of an Indian chief and an Indian chief himself.'

What makes de Tocqueville's account memorable is the way in which he grasped the moral content of America. Coming from a country where the abuse of power by the clergy had made

anticlericalism endemic, he was amazed to find a country where it was virtually unknown. He saw, for the first time, Christianity presented not as a totalitarian society but as an unlimited society, a competitive society, intimately wedded to the freedom and market system of the secular world. 'In France I had almost always seen the spirit of religion and the spirit of freedom pursuing courses diametrically opposed to each other,' he wrote, 'but in America I found that they were intimately united, and that they reigned in common over the same country.' He added: 'Religion ... must be regarded as the foremost of the political institutions of the country for if it does not impart a taste for freedom, it facilitates the use of free institutions.' In fact, he concluded, most Americans held religion 'to be indispensable to the maintenance of republican institutions.' And de Tocqueville noted on an unpublished scrap of paper that, while religion underpinned republican government, the fact that the government was minimal was a great source of moral strength:

One of the happiest consequences of the absence of government (when a people is fortunate enough to be able to do without it, which is rare) is the development of individual strength that inevitably follows from it. Each man learns to think, to act for himself, without counting on the support of an outside force which, however vigilant one supposes it to be, can never answer all social needs. Man, thus accustomed to seek his well-being only through his own efforts, raises himself in his own opinion as he does in the opinion of others; his soul becomes larger and stronger at the same time.

In de Tocqueville's view, it was education which made this spirit of independence possible. The Rev. Louis Dwight said to him that the Americans were the best-educated people in the world: '[Here] everyone takes it for granted that education will be moral and religious. There would be a general outcry, a kind of popular uprising, against anyone who tried to introduce a contrary system, and everyone would say it would be better to have no education at all than an education of that sort. It is from the Bible that all our children learn to read.' As a result of a liberal system of education and free access to uncensored books and newspapers, there were fewer dark corners in the American mind than elsewhere. Reflecting on his conversations in Boston, he noted: 'Enlightenment, more than anything else, makes [a republic] possible. The Americans are no more virtuous than other people, but they are infinitely more enlightened (I'm speaking of the great mass) than any other people I know. The mass of people who understand public affairs, who are acquainted with laws and precedents, who have a sense of the interests, well understood, of the nation, and the faculty to understand them, is greater here than any other place in the world.'

De Tocqueville, significantly, felt that the American syndrome-morality/independence/enlightenment/industry/success-tended not to work where slavery existed. He was shocked to find the French-speaking people of New Orleans infinitely more wicked and dissolute than the pious French Canadians, and blamed the infection of slavery, anti-freedom. Similarly, he contrasted 'industrious Ohio' with 'idle Kentucky': 'On both sides [of the Ohio River] the soil is equally fertile, the situation just as favorable.' But Kentucky, because of slavery, is inhabited 'by a people without energy, without ardor, without a spirit of enterprise.' He was led, he said, again and again to the same conclusion: leaving aside the slave states, 'the American people, taking them all in all, are not only the most enlightened in the world, but (something I place well above that advantage), they are the people whose *practical, political education is the most advanced.*'

The Americans certainly made tremendous, continuous, and heartbreakingly genuine efforts to become 'enlightened.' Even more than 19th-century Britain, America was a country of conscious self-betterment. The state was trying to make itself better; the people were trying too, not for want of urging. The great orator Daniel Webster took the occasion of the unveiling of the Bunker Hill monument in Boston (June 17, 1825) to intone: 'Our proper business is improvement. Let our age be the age of improvement. In a day of peace, let us advance the arts of people and the works of peace.' The 'works of peace' were proceeding all the time. Boston had gas street-lighting in 1822, almost as soon as London. It came to New York in 1823, to Philadelphia in 1837. But Philadelphia was ahead with piped water, getting it in 1799. By 1822 the Fairmount Waterworks had brought piped water to the entire city. This was amazing even by the standards in England, regarded then as the world pioneer in municipal utilities. Moreover, this magnificent waterworks, in the best classical architecture, expanded from the banks of the Schuylkill, and its grounds embraced a huge area of the country, and in order to preserve it from pollution Philadelphia ultimately created the largest urban park in the world, in the process preserving for posterity all the splendid riverside villas we have already described. There were, to be sure, early signs of skulduggery in the provision of municipal services. Aaron Burr's Manhattan Water Company (1799), the first to build a reservoir in New York, was in reality a front for an unlawful bank competing with Alexander Hamilton's Bank of New York (now the Chase-Manhattan). But, at this stage anyway, most services, public and private, were honest, competitive, and, by world standards, go-ahead. New York got its first omnibuses only a year after Paris and the same year as London, 1828-the first line was Wall Street-Greenwich Village. Philadelphia had buses three years later. America was also quick to imitate Britain's penny post, knocking down the steep prices the generous President Jefferson paid to 5 cents for half an ounce delivered at up to 300 miles (1846). Open competition was driving down prices relentlessly: thus the first penny newspaper dates from 1840, an amazing price by European (even British) standards at that time."

There was no doubt about the determination with which 'enlightenment' was pursued in the field of education, at all levels of American society. Since the colonial period, America had rejoiced in the highest rate of adult literacy in the world, higher even than Germany's. This was due primarily to the school reformers in the big cities. Horace Mann's work in Boston we have already noted, in the context of teaching religion. In 1806 the Public School Society of New York introduced the Lancaster system from England, in which 'pupil teachers' or monitors were used to give basic instruction to the thousands of new city children. From 1815 the society's 'model system' of public schools got state aid, and when New York State finally took over the system in 1853 it was providing education for 600,000 children. In the newer states, Ohio for instance, the sixteenth section of each planned township was devoted to education. But in the Western states, sheer distance made universal education difficult. In Louisiana the population density (1860) was only eleven per square mile; in Virginia (including what is now West Virginia) it was fourteen, by contrast with Massachusetts, where it was 127. Census data show that by 1840 some 78 percent of the total population was literate (91 percent of the white population), and this was mainly due to a rise in national school enrollment rates: from 35 percent in 1830 (ages five to nineteen), to 50.4 percent in 1850 and 61.1 percent in 1860. All the same, there were still 1 million adult illiterates in America in 1850, of whom 500,000 were in the South. Most of these illiterates were not new immigrants (though that too was a problem, because of language) but blacks, an early indication of trouble to come.

At the end of the 1760s, America, on the eve of Independence, had nine colleges, or universities as they were later called. All were denominational, though William and Mary was

partly secularized in 1779, when the professorships of Hebrew and Divinity were turned over to law and modern languages. The Presbyterians founded four new colleges in the 1780s, including Liberty Hall, which became the nucleus of Washington and Lee, and Transylvania Seminary, the first institution of higher education beyond the Appalachians. By that date Yale was taking in a freshman class of seventy, Harvard thirty-one, Princeton ten, Dartmouth twenty. Such early foundations bred scores of satellites-sixteen Congregationalist colleges sprang from Yale and twenty-five Presbyterian ones from Princeton, all before 1860. A total of 516 colleges and universities were scattered over sixteen states by the coming of the Civil War. (Some of these were short-lived: only 104 of this group were still flourishing at the end of the 1920s.) The state universities began with Jefferson's University of Virginia, and some of them had humble beginnings. Thus Michigan had one as early as 1817-the first in the West-but it was really a glorified high school until 1837, when it was moved to Ann Arbor and endowed with state lands proceeds. Another great state university, Wisconsin, was created at Madison in 1836. Curiously enough, such institutions enrolled more students than the big foundations of the East: even by the 1840s, a Western youngster had a better chance of going to college than a contemporary in the Eastern cities (Boston and Philadelphia excepted). Thus New York in 1846, with half a million population, enrolled only 241 new students at its two colleges.

Up to the 1780s, the overwhelming majority of college graduates went into the ministry, though politics claimed a surprising number (thirty-three out of fifty-five men attending the Constitutional Convention were graduates). During the 1790s, however, the balance swung in favor of the lawyers, and by 1800 only about 9 percent went into orders, with 50 percent going into the law. The influence of Germany, whose universities were the best on earth, was enormous. Between 1830 and 1860, for instance, virtually every young professor at Yale had spent a year in a German university. The rise of the Western university was very much influenced by government land policy. If a proceeds-from-land-sales arrangement was in force, a college would spring up overnight, and there was no difficulty in obtaining staff or attracting students. The big breakthrough came with the Morrill Act of 1862, which enabled state agricultural colleges to be founded using federal land funds, and in many cases these were quickly broadened into general universities.

This enlightened Act also benefited women. There were a few women's colleges before that date-Oberlin in Ohio, for instance, dates from 1833 and Georgia Female from 1838. But the Morrill Act encouraged the admission of women to state universities-Wisconsin admitted them from 1867 and Minnesota from 1869. By then some superb women's universities were competing-Vassar (1861), Minnesota (1869), Wellesley (1870). By 1872 women were admitted to ninety-seven colleges or universities and by 1880 they constituted one-third of all students, though over 70 percent of them were condemned to (or chose) teaching. The real shortage was in black higher education: only twenty-eight blacks had graduated by the time of the Civil War. Thereafter a few black colleges came into existence: Atlanta in 1865, Lincoln and Fisk in 1866, and Howard in 1867. By this time one in a hundred American adults was having a college education.

By any statistical standards, America made enormous progress in the first half of the 19th century in making itself 'enlightened.' But not everyone agreed with De Tocqueville that the country had succeeded. Fanny Trollope, herself a novelist and the mother of the more famous Anthony, was in the United States 1827-31, trying to earn a living for herself in Cincinnati and elsewhere. She had been married to a fanatical clergyman who had been unable to support her, and in consequence she took a cynical view of religion: she thought America had far too much of

it. The moral point, so important to De Tocqueville, entirely escaped her. What she noted was the manners. She thought it outrageous that the only form of garbage collection in Cincinnati were the pigs (this was true of New York, too, until 1830). She found it was 'petty treason' to call a servant such: 'help' was the only acceptable term, an early example of Political Correctness. Moreover, such was the American mobility of labor that it was impossible to hire a 'help' except for a short term, and in the process of engagement it was the 'help' not the mistress who dictated terms. Thus the first she engaged, when asked what she expected per annum, replied: 'Oh Gimini! You be a downright Englisher, sure enough. I should like to see a young lady engage by a year in America! I hope I shall get a husband before many months, or I expect I shall be an outright old maid, for I be most seventeen already. Besides, mayhap I may want to go to school. You must just give me a dollar and a half a week, and mother's slave, Phillis, must come over once a week, I expect, from the other side of the water to help me clean.'

Mrs Trollope started to write down such things, for her letters home, otherwise her London friends would not believe her; and from this came *Domestic Manners of the Americans*, published in 1832, which was an immediate bestseller on both sides of the Atlantic, made Mrs Trollope the most hated author in America, and still makes American hackles rise today. Her criticisms were all calculated to wound. The Americans were rude, ill-bred, pushy, and coarse. They had no fun and no sense of humor: 'I never saw a population so divested of gaiety: there is no trace of this feeling from one end of the Union to the other.' Americans were totally self-absorbed, uninterested in the outside world, and with a hugely inflated idea of their own importance and merits. The women were ignorant, the men disgusting. She excepted a few bookish men from this censure, adding that America was a signal proof of 'the immense value of literary habits' not only in 'enlarging the mind' but in 'purifying the manners.' She added: 'I not only never met a literary man who was a chewer of tobacco or a whiskey drinker, but I never met any who were not, who had escaped these degrading habits.'

Here we come to it; if there was one thing English visitors could not stand about America, it was the habit of spitting. The English middle and upper classes had cured themselves of public spitting in the 1760s-it was one of the great turning-points of civilization-so that by the 1780s, they were already censorious of the French, and other Continentals, for continuing it: Dr Johnson was particularly severe on this point. In the United States, however, the spitting habit was compounded by the business of chewing tobacco, which in the first half of the 19th century was carried on by three-quarters of the males and even by some females. Hence spitting became an almost continuous process, and where spittoons of enormous size were not provided in large numbers, the results were catastrophic to sensitive souls. It was the first thing all the English, from Dickens to Thackeray, noticed and commented on, and English lady travelers, like Mrs Trollope, were especially offended. When she, and others, were shown round the Senate, their eyes were glued to the gigantic brass spittoons attached to every member's desk.

That was a pity, because the Senate of those days, and for several decades afterwards, was a remarkable institution, perhaps the greatest school of oratory since Roman times. And its finest hour was 1850, when the last Great Compromise on slavery was debated, attacked, defended, and carried. The background was extremely complicated-the reader will have gathered by now that everything to do with slavery in America was complicated-and the Compromise itself was complex. The old Northwest Ordinance of 1787 had prohibited slavery in the new Northwest, and all the states created there were free. In most of the other acquisitions America had made, the whole of the Louisiana Purchase, Florida, and Texas, forms of slavery had existed under the French or Spaniards, so maintaining it there, or reimposing it as in Texas, did not appear so

horrific. But when what was eventually to become California, which had always been slave-free, was acquired in 1848, and some of the freebooters who were seizing power there proposed to make it a slave state, the Northern conscience was powerfully aroused. When President Polk submitted a money Bill to the House, asking for funds to make peace with Mexico (in effect to bribe Santa Ana), a Pennsylvania congressman, David Wilmot, added an amendment stipulating, and using the language of the Northwest Ordinance, that in any territory so acquired 'neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall ever exist.' Furious, Polk got his friends to table a counter-amendment, proposing that the Old Missouri Compromise line, running at latitude 36.30, should be extended and divide freedom and slavery in the new territories, as in the old. But the moderates who would have voted for this were denounced as traitors in the South or as Doughfaces (Northerners with Southern principles) in the North. So both were voted down by extremists. Wisconsin got statehood in 1848 with a free constitution, but Polk left office with the issue unresolved in Utah, New Mexico, and California.

From the so-called Wilmont debates, new principles emerged. The first was that Congress had the right to ban slavery wherever its jurisdiction extended-freedom was national, slavery only sectional. That was an important step forward. Both the Free Soil and the Republican Parties were later formed to enforce this doctrine. On the other hand, the Southerners also put forward a new doctrine: not only did Congress have no right to prohibit slavery in the territories, it had a positive duty to protect it there, once established. Calhoun now produced a new theory, reversing the constitutional practice of the past sixty years: newly acquired territories belonged to 'the states united,' not to the United States. Congress, he argued, was merely 'the Attorney to a Partnership' and every partner had an equal right to protection of his property on his territory. He denied that Lord Mansfield's 1772 ruling on slavery in England applied in America, where slaves were 'common law property.' To be sure Congress had prohibited slavery north of 36.30 in 1820-but that was unconstitutional. Slavery followed the United States flag, automatically, wherever it was planted. This doctrine was embodied in resolutions adopted by the Virginia legislature in 1847, later known as the 'Platform of the South.'

It also became the doctrine underlying the Supreme Court's fateful decision in the *Dred Scott Case* in 1857. Describing this takes us a little ahead of the California issue, but it is important to get its implications clear now. Scott was a Missouri slave who was taken (1834) by his master to places where slavery was prohibited by law. In 1846, Scott sued for his freedom in the Missouri courts, arguing that his four-year stay on free soil had given it to him. He won his case but the verdict was reversed in the state supreme court. He then appealed it to the federal Supreme Court, and Taney and his colleagues again ruled against him, for four reasons. First, since Scott was a negro and therefore not a citizen, he could not sue in a federal court. Second, as he was suing in Missouri, what happened in Illinois, under its law, was immaterial. Third, even so, Scott's temporary sojourn on free territory did not in itself make him free. Fourth, the original Missouri Compromise was unconstitutional since it deprived persons of their property (slaves) without due process of law and was therefore contrary to the Fifth Amendment. The *Dred Scott* ruling became of critical importance in the events leading up directly to the Civil War, which we will examine later. Here, it is enough to say that its reasoning followed, and gave constitutional legitimacy to (or appeared to do so), Calhoun's case. However, at this point it is important to remember one thing. Neither Congressman Wilmot nor Senator Calhoun regarded himself as extremist. Both thought they were putting forward defensive strategies, preemptive strikes as it were, to ward off aggression by the other side. And it is true that there were many more extreme

men (and women) in Massachusetts and South Carolina, determined to end slavery, or to maintain it, at literally any cost.

Disgusted by his failure to get a solution to the California admission problem, and worn out anyway, Polk made good his promise not to run again (dying soon after leaving the White House). The Democrats fielded a strong Manifest Destiny candidate in the shape of Lewis Cass (1782-1866), a Michigan senator who favored cheap land, squatters' rights, and all kinds of popular causes. The Whigs countered this by picking General Zachary Taylor (thus confirming Polk's fears of 'political generals'), whose victory at Buena Vista had made him a semi-legendary figure. Neither party had a proper platform, especially on the slavery issue. But Taylor came from Louisiana and had scores of slaves working on his estates. This infuriated three groups of Whigs: Van Buren's New Yorkers who called themselves 'Barnburners,' fanatical Massachusetts anti-slavery men who called themselves 'Conscience Whigs,' and another abolitionist group who called themselves the Liberty Party. They ganged up together, called themselves the Free Soil Party, and nominated Van Buren. In theory this should have split the Whig, anti-slavery vote, and let Cass and the Democrats in. In practice it had the opposite effect. In the election razzmatazz, Taylor was so identified with the South that he carried eight slave states. Cass, the Democrat, could manage only seven. Moreover, the free soilers split the Democratic as well as the Whig vote in New York and handed it to Taylor. He won by 1,360,099 to Cass's 1,220,544 (Van Buren getting only 291,263), and by 163 to 127 college votes.

This confused and confusing election brought to the White House a man whom Clay, who had now missed his last-ever chance to become president, dismissed as 'exclusively a military man,' with no political experience, 'bred up and always living in the camp with his sword by his side and his Epauettes on his shoulders.' By contrast, Clay characterized his friend Millard Fillmore (1800-74), the Vice-President, an experienced New York Tweed machine-man, as 'able, enlightened, indefatigable and ... patriotic.' Both these verdicts were soon put to the test. Clay was wrong about Taylor. He was not a mere general, nor was he a pro-slaver, as the South had hoped. He encouraged the Californians, who were anxious to get on with things and achieve constitutional respectability, to elect a free state administration. This was done all the more easily because the miners were overwhelmingly antislavery, fearing their jobs would be taken by slaves. On December 4, 1849, in his message to Congress, Taylor asked it to admit California immediately, and to stop debating 'exciting topics of sectional character'-he meant slavery-'which produced painful apprehensions in the public mind'-that is, talk and fear of secession.

Millard, by contrast, justified Clay's eulogium by presiding fairly and skillfully over the Senate, an important point since Congress, far from heeding the President's advice to steer off slavery, debated virtually nothing else in 1850. Then, on July 4, the President, having" presided over the ceremonies, gobbled down a lot of raw fruit, cabbages, and cucumbers-food 'made for four-footed animals and not Bipeds' as one observer put it-and gulped quantities of iced water (the heat and humidity were intense). It was probably the iced water that did it, though there was talk of poison. Five days later the President died in agony of acute gastroenteritis, and Fillmore took over. The new President, unlike Taylor, favored compromise over the California issue, and Senator Clay, in effect the administration's spokesman in Congress, was able to deliver it to him. By this time the debates had already lasted six months. Students of rhetorical form rate the speeches in the Senate as among the greatest in the entire history of Anglo-Saxon oratory, worthy to rank with the duels of Pitt and Fox, and Gladstone and Disraeli. In fact the three main protagonists were uttering their swansongs. Calhoun was dying, Clay was at the end of his immense career, and Webster became secretary of state in the Fillmore administration. Readers



can consult the record of the debates and decide for themselves who won. 14' The Senate was crowded and enthralled throughout and the spittoons had never been in such continuous use. But it is one of the sad things about congressional or parliamentary democracy that great speeches rarely make much difference to historical outcomes.

What the debates did make clear, however, was that secession by the South, if it did not get its way in making slavery 'safe for ever,' was a real possibility, and that it would not and could not be bloodless. That helped to smooth the road to compromise, which was piloted by old Clay, much assisted by a young Democratic senator, Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois (1813-61). Clay had originally hoped to get all the issues tied up together in one gigantic compromise, what he called an Omnibus Bill. The Senate would not wear it. Then Douglas divided it up into its five component bits, and got them all through separately. Senator Benton explained this by saying that the components 'were like cats and dogs that had been tied together by their tails for four months, scratching and biting, but being loose again, everyone ran off to his own hole and was quiet.' Possibly: there are many irrational and, in the end, inexplicable aspects to the whole controversy over slavery, and between North and South, which baffle historians, as they baffled most people in the middle at the time. The upshot is that Clay carried his last great Compromise in early September and on the 20th of the month Fillmore signed the five Bills into law.

In the Compromise, the most important sop to the South was a new Fugitive Slave Law. This made the capture and return of escaped slaves a matter for federal law and rendered it exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, for Northern states to evade their responsibilities under the Constitution. Second, to balance matters a bit, the anti-slavery lobby in the North was given the minor sop of the District of Columbia becoming an area where slave-trading was made unlawful. It was still possible to keep slaves in Washington, but not to buy or sell them there or hold them for sale elsewhere. If you marched slaves through the street in chains-a common sight up to now, which grievously shocked sensitive Northerners and all foreigners-you were inviting arrest. Third and fourth, both New Mexico and Utah became territories and the acts making them such left their slave- or free-state future vague, beyond insisting that their legislatures were to possess authority over 'all rightful subjects of legislation,' subject to appeal to federal courts. Finally, California entered the Union as a free state. This ended the Senate slave/free balance and ensured that in future Congress would have an anti-slavery majority in both Houses.

The crisis between North and South, having seethed and bubbled for months, suddenly went off the boil, just as it had done after the confrontation of 1819-20. Men on both sides, and still more women, relaxed as the horrific shadow of civil war suddenly disappeared, and they could get on with other things. And there was so much to do in mid-19th-century America, so many blessings to rejoice in and opportunities to seize! America was becoming not merely a wealthy country but in a growing number of ways a civilized and sophisticated one. The year 1850 is remarkable not merely for the apogee of Congressional oratory but for the long-delayed but sure and true beginnings of a great national literature. Considering how assertive politically America was, even in the mid-18th century, it was remarkably slow to assert itself culturally. Speech is a very democratic force: it is the demotic which penetrates upwards into the hieratic, not the other way round. 'Americanisms' had been appearing since the mid-17th century in the way ordinary people spoke, though the term was not coined until 1802, by a Scots immigrant, on the analogy of Scotticism. But Independence was declared, and the Constitution written, debated, approved,

and amended entirely in standard English, if anything with a slight touch of archaism, though spelling was already diverging.

In 1783-5 Noah Webster (1758-1843), a Yale-trained lexicographer and philologist from Connecticut, produced *A Grammatical Institute of the English Language*, the first part of which was extracted to form his *Spelling Book*, which gave standard American variations of English spelling forms for use in schools. In 1790 he produced his *Rudiments of English Grammar*, the first book to challenge the linguistic hegemony of Britain, in which he argued 'Now is the time, and *this* is the country, in which we may expect success, in attempting changes favorable to language, science and government.' But he discovered the hard way that it was easier to turn America from a monarchy into a republic than to force systematic language and spelling reform on a stubborn people who spoke as they felt. The same year he produced a volume of essays in his reformed spelling: 'essays and Fugitive Peeeces ritten at various times ... as will appear by their dates and subjects.' Readers laughed at him. Another language reformer, William Thornton, urged, in *Cadmus, or a Treatise on the Elements of a Written Language* (Philadelphia 1793), addressed to the American people: 'You have corrected the dangerous doctrines of European powers, correct now the language you have imported ... The AMERICAN LANGUAGE will thus be as distinct as its government, free from all the follies of unphilosophical fashion and resting upon truth as its only regulator.' He then gave the text in his new spelling-system. Practical Americans dismissed it as gibberish and went on talking, and changing, the English language as they had learned it from their parents.

Americans were immensely resourceful in making these changes, adapting, translating, inventing, and knocking about words to suit their needs and tastes. Some of these early neologisms were from the French, both from Canada and Louisiana: *depot*, *rapids*, *prairie*, *shanty*, *chute*, *cache*, *crevasse*. Some were from the Spanish of Florida and the Gulf: *mustang* (1808), *ranch* (1808), *sombrero* (1823), *patio* (1827), *corral* (1829), and *lasso* (1831). Americans resurrected obsolete English words like *talented* and invented ones like *obligate*. They adopted, for instance, the German words *dumm*, which became *dumb*, stupid. Words from their new political customs appeared: *mass meeting*, *caucus*, settlers' words like *lot* and *squatter*. The Lewis-Clark and other expeditions introduced a new crop: *portage*, *raccoon*, *groundhog*, *grizzly*, *backtrack*, *medicine man*, *huckleberry*, *war party*, *running-time*, *overnight*, *overall*, *rattlesnake*, *bowery*, and *moose*. Variant meanings were given to old English terms: *snag*, *stone*, *suit*, *bar*, *brand*, *bluff*, *fix*, *hump*, *knob*, *creek*, and *settlement*.

Then there was the wonderful fertility of the Americans in coining new phrases and amalgams: *keep a stiff upper lip* (1815), *fly off the handle* (1825), *get religion*-an important one, that-in 1826, *knockdown* (1827), *stay on the fence* (1828), *in cahoots* (1829), *horse-sense* (1832), and *barking up the wrong tree* (1833), plus less datable novelties: *take on*, *cave in*, *flunk out*, *stave off*, *let on*, *hold on*. As early as the 1820s Americans were trying to *get the hang of a thing* and insisting *there's no two ways about it*. The American thirst added many terms: *cocktail* (1806), *barroom* (1807), *mint julep* (1809), a *Kentucky Breakfast* (1822), defined as 'three cocktails and a chaw of terbacka,' and a *long drink* (1828). At varying speeds most of these new words and expressions crossed the Atlantic. By the time Webster came to produce his *An American Dictionary of the English Language* in two thick volumes in 1828, he was able to list 5,000 words not hitherto included in English dictionaries, including many Americanisms, and using definitions which Americans, rather than the British, recognized. He revised this standard work in 1840 to include 70,000 words instead of the original 38,000 and, suitably amended from

time to time, it has become second only to the Oxford English Dictionary as the prime authority on English words.

In the hieratic, as opposed to the demotic, the Americans were slower to become creative. In a notorious article in the *Edinburgh Review* of 1819, the great English wit and reformer the Rev. Sydney Smith hailed some American political innovations but argued that Americans 'during the thirty or forty years of their existence' had done 'absolutely nothing for the Sciences, for the Arts, for Literature or even for the statesman-like studies of Politics and Political Economy.' This was nonsense as regards the sciences, as we have seen, and Smith had obviously never read the *Federalist* or any of the great debates on the Constitution, which rivaled Burke in their penetrating analysis of basic political issues. He was wrong about literature, too, if one considers the works of Jonathan Edwards and Franklin. But it was odd, as he suggested, that independence had not brought about a corresponding *pleiade* of American literary stars.

Many Americans agreed with him. In 1818 the *Philadelphia Portfolio* published an essay by George Tucker, *On American Literature*, drawing attention to the contrast between the literary output of America, with 6 million people, and the performance of tiny countries like Ireland and Scotland-where were the American equivalents of Burke, Sheridan, Swift, Goldsmith, Berkeley, and Thomas Moore from Ireland, and Thomson, Burns, Hume, Adam Smith, Smollett, and James Boswell from Scotland? He pointed out that the two most distinguished novelists were Scott and Maria Edgeworth, both from little Scotland. He calculated that America produced on average only twenty new books a year, Britain (with admittedly a population of 18 million) between 500 and 1,000. In 1823, Charles Jared Ingersoll in an address to the American Philosophical Society, 'A Discourse Concerning the Influence of America on the Mind,' noted that 200,000 copies of Scott's Waverley novels had been printed and sold in the United States, while the American novel was almost nonexistent. The *Edinburgh* and the *Quarterly* were now printed in America and sold 4,000 copies each issue there, whereas the American equivalent, the *North American Review*, was unknown and unobtainable in London.

Even when the first real American literary personality emerged, in the shape of Washington Irving (1783-1859), he seemed to be guilty of the 'Cultural Cringe,' and based himself on English models, chiefly Scott and Moore, to a stultifying degree. When he traveled to Europe from 1815 onwards, he made himself heavily dependent on German literary sources too. His most famous character, Rip Van Winkle, and the Legend of Sleepy Hollow, published in *The Sketch Book* (1820), were taken straight from Christophe Martin Wieland and Riesbeck's *Travels Through Germany*-he merely expanded the Winkle tale and gave it an American setting. Irving was an enormous success in England, precisely because of his cringing and his deference to British cultural idol, such as Scott, and also because of his sensible attempts to stop American publishers pirating English copyrights. Irving sold well on both sides of the Atlantic, and seems to have earned from his writings the immense sum of \$200,000. Many towns, hotels, squares, steamboats, and even cigars were named after him. He was the first American to achieve celebrity in literature and when he died New York, his home city, closed down: there were 150 carriages in his funeral procession and 1,000 mourners crowded outside the packed church. President Jackson, who objected to his being made minister in Madrid, snarled: 'He is only fit to write a book, and scarcely that.' Behind the philistinism, one detects a note of all-American truth.

By contrast, the first great American novelist, James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851), was undoubtedly indigenous in his work and spirit. He grew up in a 40,000-acre tract of land in upper New York State, his father being a land investor and agent who at one time owned 750,000 acres and controlled much more. Cooper Sr wandered at will in what was then largely unexplored

country and wrote a *Guide to the Wilderness*. But this was published posthumously in 1810 because when young Cooper was twenty his father was shot dead at a political meeting-not uncommon in those days. Cooper's third novel, *The Pioneers* (1823), first of what became known as the Leatherstocking Tales, introduced his frontiersman hero, Natty Bumppo. The five books of the series, above all *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), made Cooper world-famous. Natty is the first substantial character in American fiction, a recurrent American ideal-type, putting his own special sense of honor and character above money and position-not so different from the Ernest Hemingway hero who would emerge almost exactly a century later. Cooper used his father's experiences as well as his own to recreate the American wilderness, fast disappearing even as he recorded it. The novels fascinated readers in the big East Coast cities, to whom all this was new and strange. Equally, perhaps more, important it brought home to literally millions of people in Europe what they assumed to be the realities of American frontier life. Germans in particular loved them: they were read aloud at village clubs. *The Pioneers* was published in Britain and France the same year it appeared in America and within twelve months it had found two rival German publishers-eventually thirty Germany publishing houses put out versions of the Leatherstocking tales. In France, where he was *le Walter Scott des sauvages*, eighteen publishers competed. Many Russian translations followed, and his works appeared in Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese and eventually in Egyptian, Turkish, and Persian. By the end of the 1820s, children all over Europe and even in the Middle East were playing at Indians and learning to walk 'Indian file.'

Yet in many respects Cooper was hostile to what America was becoming. He opposed mass immigration. Indian 'removal' was infinitely painful to him. He was backward-looking, conservative, and, in American terms, a hidebound traditionalist, who could not get over the demise of the old federal party. Today he would have been an extreme environmentalist. It was a point he made again and again in his novels that Natty and his friends killed wildlife only to eat, not for sport, still less because they feared the beasts and yearned for 'civility.' He was an elitist, a seer, an aristocrat of sorts, fiercely defending his property, loathing the vulgarity and populism of Jacksonian democracy and egalitarianism, which he assailed in a savagely hostile book, *The American Democrat* (1838). In many ways he was the first critic of the American way of life. The three novels he wrote in the 1840s, known as the Littlepage Trilogy (*Satanstoe*, 1845, *The Chairbearer*, 1845, *The Redskins*, 1846) presented the business of settling the Mississippi Valley as an affair of greed, destroying the pristine morality of the American ideal.

The first American intellectual and writer to go wholly with the mainstream American grain, in some ways the archetypal American of the 19th century, was Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-82), who consciously set out to reject cultural cringing, to 'extract the tape-worm of Europe from America's body,' as he put it, to 'cast out the passion for Europe by the passion for America.' He too went to Europe but in a critical and rejecting mood. Emerson was born in Boston, son of a Unitarian minister. He followed in his father's footsteps but threw off the cloth when he discovered he could not conscientiously 'administer the Lord's supper.' His skepticism, however, did not make him a critic of the essential moralism and religiosity of American secular life: quite the contrary. In seeking to Americanize literature and thought, he developed a broad identification with the assumptions of his own society which grew stronger as he aged and which was the very antithesis of the hostility of the European intelligentsia to the way things were run. After discovering Kant in Europe he settled in Concord, Massachusetts, where he developed the first native American philosophical movement, known as Transcendentalism, which he outlined in his book *Nature* (1836). It is a Yankee form of neo-platonism, mystical, a bit irrational, very

vague, and cloudy. It appealed to some fellow intellectuals but to very few ordinary people—even the educated found it hard to get the hang of it. All the same, they approved. They thought it grand that America had got its own proper intellectual at last. It was said his appeal rested 'not on the ground that people understand him, but that they think such men ought to be encouraged.' A year after he published *Nature*, he delivered a Harvard lecture, 'The American Scholar,' which Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809-94) was to call 'our intellectual declaration of independence.' The patriotic press loved it. The most influential newspaper, the *New York Tribune* of Horace Greeley (1811-72), promoted Emerson's Transcendentalism as a new kind of national asset, an all-American phenomenon, like Niagara Falls.

There was something a bit too good to be true about Emerson. The Scots critic Thomas Carlyle, who became a dear friend, described him as 'like an angel, with his beautiful, transparent soul.' Henry James later wrote of him, 'his ripe unconsciousness of evil ... is one of the most beautiful signs by which we know him'-though he added, cruelly: 'We get the impression of a conscience gasping in the void, panting for sensations, with something of the movements of the gills of a landed fish.' He astonished English intellectuals by insisting that Young America was sexually pure: 'I assured [Carlyle and Dickens] that, for the most part, young men of good standing and good education with us, go virgins to their nuptial bed, as truly as their brides.' His own sexual drive seems to have been weak. His first wife called him 'Grandpa.' His second wife's criticism of his lack of marital attentions were naively recorded in his journals. His poem 'Give All to Love' was thought daring but there is no evidence he gave himself. His own great extramarital friendship with a woman, Margaret Fuller, was platonic, or maybe neo-platonic, and not by her desire. His unconsciously revealing journal records a dream, in 1840-1, in which he attended a debate on marriage. One of the speakers, he recorded, suddenly turned on the audience 'the spout of an Engine which was copiously supplied ... with water, and whisking it vigorous about,' drenched everyone, including Emerson: 'I woke up relieved to find myself quite dry.'

But it is too easy to poke fun at Emerson. He was a good, decent man and his views, on the whole, made excellent sense. He married both his wives for prudential reasons and their property made him independent. Soundly invested, it also brought him an affinity with America's burgeoning enterprise system. He made what eventually became an unrivaled, and never repeated, reputation as a national sage and prophet, not so much by his books as through the lecture circuit. Almost from the earliest days of the century, public lectures became a key feature of American cultural life. As part of Washington Irving's cultural cringing he proposed that the British poet Thomas Campbell be hired to lecture in America to give 'an impulse to American literaform of entertainment in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia from 1815 but it was only from 1826, when Josiah Holbrook (1788-1854) founded the Lyceum Movement, that the habit spread everywhere. Holbrook had dabbled in industrial schools and agricultural colleges before he hit upon the lecture form as the best way to educate the expanding nation. Lyceums were opened in Cincinnati in 1830, in Cleveland in 1832, in Columbus in 1835, and then throughout the expanding Midwest and Mississippi Valley. By the end of the 1830s almost every considerable town had one. They had their own weekly newspaper, the *Family Lyceum* (1832), their Young Men's Mercantile Libraries, and they sponsored debating societies, aiming especially at young, unmarried men—bank clerks, salesmen, bookkeepers, and so forth—who then made up an astonishingly high proportion of the population of the new towns. The Movement aimed to keep them off the streets and out of the saloons, and to promote simultaneously their commercial careers and their moral welfare.

Emerson was the perfect star-attraction for this system. He was antielitist. He thought American culture must be egalitarian and democratic. Self-help was vital, in this as in all fields. He said that 'the first American who read Homer in a farm-house' performed 'a great service to the United States.' If he found a man out West, he said, reading a good book on a train, 'I wanted to hug him.' His own economic and political philosophy was identical with the public philosophy pushing Americans across the continent to fulfill their manifest destiny. Emerson laid down the maxims of this expansion: 'The only safe rule is found in the self-adjusting meter of demand and supply. Do not legislate. Meddle, and you snap the sinews with your sumptuary laws. Give no bounties, make equal laws, secure life and property, and you do not need to give alms. Open the doors of opportunity to talent and virtue and they do themselves justice; property will not be in bad hands. In a free and just commonwealth, property rushes from the idle and imbecile to the industrious, brave and persevering.'

It would be difficult to think of any doctrine more diametrically opposed to what was being preached in Europe at the same time, notably by Emerson's younger contemporary, Karl Marx. And Emerson's experience in the field repeatedly contradicted the way in which Marx said capitalists not only did but must behave. American owners and managers, said Marx, were bound to oppose their workers' quest for enlightenment. But when Emerson came to Pittsburgh in 1851, for example, firms closed early so the young clerks could go to hear him. His courses were not obviously designed to reinforce the entrepreneurial spirit: 'The Identity of Thought with Nature,' 'The Natural History of Intellect,' 'Instinct and Inspiration,' and so on. But one of the thrusts of his arguments was that knowledge, plus moral character, tended to promote business success. Many who attended expecting to be bewildered by the eminent philosopher found he preached what they thought was common sense. The *Cincinnati Gazette* described him as 'unpretending ... as a good old grandfather over his Bible.'

Emerson was a marvelous manufacturer of short sayings and pithy *obiter dicta*, many of which-'Every man is a consumer and ought to be a producer,' 'Life is the search after power,' '[Man] is by constitution expensive and ought to be rich,' 'A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds,' 'Whoso would be a man must be a nonconformist,' 'Hitch your waggon to a star'-struck his listeners as true, and when simplified and taken out of context by the newspapers passed into the common stock of American popular wisdom. It did not seem odd that Emerson was often associated in the same lecture series with P. T. Barnum, speaking on 'The Art of Money Getting' and 'Success in Life.' To listen to Emerson was a sure sign of cultural aspiration and elevated taste: he became, to millions of Americans, the embodiment of Thinking Man. At his last lecture in Chicago in November 1871, the *Chicago Tribune* summed it up: 'The applause ... bespoke the culture of the audience.' To a nation which pursued moral and mental improvement with the same enthusiasm as money, and regarded both as essential to the creation of its new civilization, Emerson was by the 1870s a national hero (though it is as well to recall his own saying, 'Every hero is a bore at last').

Washington Irving attained success by culture-cringing and getting a condescending nod of approval from the English literary elite. Emerson played the anti-English card and went all out to reflect the basic American ethos. But the first writer who managed to appeal equally both to simple American hearts and to the sophisticated audience of the entire English-speaking world was Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-82). He was a prodigy, born in Portland, Maine, educated privately, publishing his first poem at thirteen, and then at Bowdoin where, while still a student, he was told he was needed to teach languages and literature provided he went to Europe

and acquired cultural polish. So he learned French and German and Italian and in time became the most learned (so far) of American literary men, translating Dante, difficult Provencal poets, and German philosophy. He taught not just at Bowdoin but later at Harvard for eighteen years where, thanks to a rich second wife, daughter of a successful cotton-mill owner, he made Craigie House-the mansion his father-in-law provided on their wedding-a center of Cambridge intellectual society.

Longfellow's poems flowed from his pen in steady and stately succession, and his unique gift for resonant lines allowed him to enter into the minds and hearts, and stay in the memories, of the middle class on both sides of the Atlantic. None of his lyric contemporaries, not even Tennyson and Browning, found himself quoted so often: 'I shot an arrow in the air;' 'Life is real / Life is earnest;' 'Footprints in the sands of time;' 'A banner with a strange device;' 'The midnight ride of Paul Revere;' 'A Lady with a Lamp;' 'Ships that pass in the night;' 'Under a spreading chestnut tree;' 'It was the schooner Hesperus;' 'When she was good, she was very, very good;' 'Fold their tents like the Arabs, and silently steal away;' 'Something attempted, something done'-these golden phrases, and the thought behind them, passed into the language. It was Longfellow who attempted, with some success at the time, less since, to write America's first epic poem, *The Song of Hiawatha* (1855), in which he used the Finnish metrics of Kalavala to produce the American equivalent of Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*. Even more ambitious, in a way, was his successful attempt to sum up America's powerful (almost strident) message to the world in one short poem, 'The Building of the Ship:'

Sail on, O Union, strong and great!  
Humanity with all its fears,  
With all the hopes of future years,  
Is hanging breathless on thy fate!

Longfellow was no stranger to personal tragedy: he lost his first wife when she was still a young bride; his second, loved still more, was burned to death in 1861, and the poet was stricken and silent for a decade. He had many friends, had a sweet, decorous, and benign disposition, and lived a sheltered life in the comfort and safety of university New England. There were no sexual hang-ups in his life, no mysteries, no hidden, smoldering pits to be explored. So he has been largely ignored by 20th-century literary academics. But he was much loved in his day, by ordinary people in clapboard houses and Western cabins, as well as by the Boston literati. When his great poem in unrhymed English hexameters, *The Courtship of Miles Standish*, was published simultaneously (1858) in Boston and London, 15,000 copies were sold on the first day. The English treated him as a member of their grand poetical canon, awarding him degrees at Oxford and Cambridge, and he took tea with Queen Victoria, a privilege hitherto accorded to Tennyson alone. On his death he became the first American to have his niche in Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey. More important, perhaps, he played a notable role in making Americans familiar with Europe's poetical heritage-he was a transatlantic bridge in himself.

One of the few people who went for Longfellow in his day, in a notorious article called 'Longfellow and Other Plagiarists,' was Edgar Allan Poe (1809-49), who stood right at the other end of the worthiness and acceptability scale. Poe was a natural misfit who crammed an extraordinary quantity of misfortune into his short forty years of life. He was both a throwback to the Gothick Romanticism of the years 1790-1820 and an adumbrator of the Symbolism to come. He was born near Boston, the offspring of strolling players. He had a difficult, orphan childhood

under a rich foster-father who starved him of money; rebelled and ran away; got into West Point and was discharged 'for gross neglect of duty;' became a journalist, then an editor, but was sacked for drunkenness; nearly starved to death in a garret; married his thirteen-year-old cousin probably incestuously (that is without getting a license); led a *vie de boheme*, being hired and fired many times, by many publications; got into trouble with women; tried suicide; mourned his wife who died of TB; tried to give up drink; fell in love again and planned marriage; on the way north to bring his bride to the wedding at Richmond (where he was living), he stopped in Baltimore and, five days later, was discovered in a delirious condition near a saloon used as a voting-place-it is possible he was captured in a drunken condition by a mob who used him, as was then common, for the purpose of multiple voting.

Poe aroused rage, derision, contempt, and indignation among right-thinking fellow-Americans. Emerson dismissed him as 'the jingle Man.' James Russell Lowell (1819-91), his younger poetic contemporary, found his work 'three-fifths genius, two-fifths sheer fudge.' But, like Longfellow, though for wholly different purposes, he stuck thoughts, and still more images, into the minds not just of Americans but of people all over the world. Whether writing short stories or poems, his vivid and often horrific imagination worked powerfully on conscious and subconscious alike: 'The Pit and the Pendulum', 'The Raven' (for which he was paid \$2), 'The Premature Burial,' 'The Gold Bug,' 'The Bells,' 'The Fall of the House of Usher,' 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue,' 'A Descent into the Maelstrom,' 'Annabel Lee,' 'A Dream within a Dream'-there are ineffaceable images here. His influence was enormous: he was the first American writer who had a major and continuing impact on Europe. Baudelaire, Verlaine, Bierce, Hart Crane, Swinburne, Rossetti, Rilke-and many others-felt his transforming fruitfulness.

In some ways Poe seemed very unAmerican. Baudelaire wrote: 'America was Poe's prison.' Lacan and Derrida, while purloining him, deAmericanized him also. But it can equally well be argued that Poe was very American: that he both reflected and inspired some of the horrors and fantasies of life in the continental country which was emerging in his day, its mystery and violence and contrasts and silences: also its crowds and loneliness. Cranky and melancholy, a solitary man in a vast continent of space, nostalgic for a smaller, warmer world, but also looking ahead to the future marvels and horrors, Poe did indeed respond to the Gothick side of American life, which grew fast in the 19th century. His work was also a huge depository of ideas and dreams, later to be mined by generations of American popular writers, especially authors of detective stories and crime-thrillers, but also the scriptwriters of Hollywood horror-movies and cartoons. The world of Walt Disney, without the germinating seeds of Poe, would have been tamer, safer, and less threatening. In short, Poe arrived at a time when American culture was suddenly becoming complex, difficult to define, moving out of easy control, and immeasurably more exciting-and he added fundamentally to this new excitement.

It is notable in Poe's work that the hidden recesses of the mind, what might be called the psychological depths, are for the first time broached in American literature. But it is in the novels of Nathaniel Hawthorne that they begin to be thoroughly explored. In a sense Hawthorne was as American as it is possible to be. He was born in Salem. He came from a prominent Puritan family, who spelt the name Hawthorne and who provided one of the judges at the witchcraft trials. His father was a New England sea-captain who died young of yellow fever, leaving Hawthorne's mother to lead a long life of eccentric seclusion, which had a profound effect on the young writer's own tender and bizarre imagination. All his life Hawthorne felt overshadowed by his puritan forebears, and by the guilt and secrecy they created, so his genealogy was a grave burden to him, which he sought to exorcize in his novels, the first to reflect the workings of the



unconscious and to penetrate human psychology in its hidden recesses. He had a spell with fellow-oddities and writers amid the utopian onion-growing of Brook Farm, then spent most of his life as a customs official and consul. But always there was the shadow of guilt, and Salem.

Hawthorne transformed his Brook Farm experiences into *The Blithedale Romance*, and he used his judgmental ancestor as the villain in *The House with Seven Gables*. But it was the chance discovery of penitential material from the 17th century, found in the Salem Customs house, of which he was controller, that inspired his greatest, deepest, and most moving tale, *The Scarlet Letter*. It contains a key passage, written half a century before Sigmund Freud published his first book, which has been cited as containing the best and shortest summary of what the whole of psychotherapy is about:

If the doctor possesses native sagacity, and a nameless something more-let us call it intuition; if he show no intrusive egotism, nor disagreeable prominent characteristics of his own; if he have the power, which must be born with him, to bring his mind into such affinity with his patient's, that this last shall unawares have spoken what he imagine himself only to have thought; if such revelations be received without tumult, and acknowledged not so often by an uttered sympathy, but silence, an inarticulate breath, and here and there a word, to indicate that all is understood; if, to these qualifications of a confidant be joined the advantages afforded by his recognised character as physician-then, at some inevitable moment, will the soul of the sufferer be dissolved, and flow forth in a dark, but transparent stream, bringing all its mysteries into the daylight.

In his own day, Hawthorne charmed readers, not merely by his *Tanglewood Tales* and other children's stories, but by his emphasis on the bliss and tenderness of happy married life-the Hawthorne of his own day was cherished for the moral, delicate, spiritual, sentimental, and 'exquisite' qualities of his writing. But, as D. H. Lawrence pointed it in his deeply, perhaps surprisingly, penetrating study of American literature published in 1923, Hawthorne was a complex protomodernist psychologist of the depths whose 'blood knowledge' throbbed beneath the surface of the 'sunbeams' which the readers of his own day loved.

Hawthorne fitted into the kind of cultural gentility for which Longfellow stood, and even the meritocratic values Emerson trumpeted were not so remote from the comfortable middle-class lifestyle, based on family solidity, which Hawthorne seemed to epitomize, however much the hidden depths below them, which he examined, were full of future threats to mainstream American certitudes. But Walt Whitman (1819-92) was altogether harder for 19th-century America to rationalize or digest. He was born in the same year as Queen Victoria herself, from an old 17th-century founding family, with a touch of Dutch blood, which owned slaves until New York State abolished slavery. His father was a patriotic Long Island builder, who named three of Whitman's brothers George Washington, Andrew Jackson, and Thomas Jefferson. But of his father's eight children, one was defective, three were psychic disasters, and Walt was, or became, a homosexual. Homosexual acts were capital crimes in all the Thirteen Colonies, the Connecticut law code actually using the words of Leviticus (20:13) on which the legal condemnation was based: 'If a man also lieth with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them'-this statute, so worded, remained on the law books until well after Whitman's birth. At least five men were executed for sodomy in colonial times. After the Revolution, Jefferson proposed that the death sentence for such behavior be replaced by castration; but most states declined to follow his advice, and North Carolina retained the death penalty for sodomy until

1869. As late as 1897, a court in Illinois described sodomy as a crime 'not fit to be named among Christians.' Fear of the law was one reason Whitman told so many lies about himself—stories of secret marriages, of children, both legitimate and illegitimate, of a mistress kept in New Orleans, of love affairs with women providing keys to his poetry, which have confused biographers.

Whitman's homosexuality led to some furtive self-distancing from mainstream American life. But in many ways he was very much part of it. He took in, and wrote about, most aspects of 'modernity': industrialization, life in a giant metropolis, working men, clerks, craftsmen trying to make a living, pushing themselves up the ladder in a big city like New York. Whitman was typical of the city's lower-middle-class intellectuals: a journeyman printer by trade, a journalist who worked on no fewer than ten publications, a bit of a schoolmaster. New York did not yet have apartments: it was a city either of houses or of boardinghouses. With a population of 325,000 in 1841, it had enough of these lodgings to accommodate 175,000. That was Whitman's life; and in addition he worked for a time at Tammany Hall, then itself a boarding house with a grubby dining-room as well as the Democratic Party HQ. Whitman began as a proper city clerk with stiff white collars and a full black suit; his name was 'Mr Walter Whitman.' Later he sank into bohemia, became 'Walt Whitman,' dressed down to proletarianize himself, adopted demotic habits and turns of speech, made his friends among laborers, tram-conductors, farm-boys, ferry-sailors, finally left the boarding-house world, and bought a house in a working-class area, 'a little old shanty of my own,' which he filled with disordered documents, a kind of paper nest of indescribable squalor, in the middle of which he sat, keeping his hat on invariably, like a Quaker. He had no tie; his suits were homespun. He was not the first major writer to create a deliberately eccentric image for purposes of systematic self-promotion—that innovation had been Rousseau's—but he set about it with an American thoroughness which was certainly new. Indeed, he was in some ways an early version, in literary guise, of what was to become an American archetype—the commercial salesman.

Whitman first published his central work, *Leaves of Grass*, in 1855, when it consisted of twelve poems and ninety-five pages. He republished it, with as much fanfare as he could muster, in 1856, with additions, and this process of republication continued until the sixth edition, in 1881, had 293 poems and 382 pages. He reviewed his own poetry often, both anonymously and under pseudonyms, wrote articles about himself and promoted biographies. He planted news-stories. He said: 'The public is a thick-skinned beast and you have to keep whacking away on its hide to let it know you're there.' He was his own iconographer, promoting photos and portraits of himself and editing them. He built up his own biographical archive, a practice followed by Bertholt Brecht in the next century. He even designed his own tomb. He was the first American poet to employ free verse on a large scale, as a device for attracting attention, and the first to make a virtue of obscenity, thereby getting himself written about (and prosecuted). He conned Emerson into writing him a letter and then published it to boost himself. Emerson reacted by terming him 'half song-thrush, half alligator.' He described his own body as 'perfect,' a theme taken up by his votaries, who compared him to Christ; actually he was an ungainly youth who became an ugly old man. He got a letter from Tennyson but let it be known that it was so fulsome in his praise that modesty forbade him to publish it. He wrote a sixty-four-page promotional pamphlet to sell his third edition but did not acknowledge authorship till twenty-three years later. As visitors like Henry Thoreau discovered, he 'was not only eager to talk about himself but reluctant to have the conversation stray from the subject for long.' His crude literary behavior was termed by one Boston paper 'the grossest violation of literary Comity and courtesy that ever passed under our notice.'

All the same, Whitman demonstrated (as 'Papa' Hemingway was to do in the 20th century) that literary salesmanship and self-promotion, if pursued relentlessly and skillfully enough, can be as effective as any other kind. The first edition of *Leaves of Grass* sold only ten copies and Whitman had to give the rest away. But by the end of his life he was already a cult figure on both sides of the Atlantic, and his fame, and the interest in his work and personality, have continued to increase. He was, in short, despite his social and sexual heterodoxy, an all-American American, much more so, perhaps, than Longfellow, though unlike Longfellow's his verse has never been learned by heart and quoted—the one exception being his uncharacteristic 'O Captain! My Captain!' Of course Whitman's ascent to fame has been accelerated by the well organized support of the homosexual community, who have presented him as the literary talisman of inversion, just as Oscar Wilde is in England. But the essence of Whitman's more general appeal is something quite different: he can plausibly be presented as the first apostle of poetic modernity.

A country works hard and long, silently and obscurely, to achieve cultural maturity. But, when at last it comes, it comes suddenly, in a blinding flash, and thereafter all is changed for ever. Curiously enough, Emerson, who was very much part of this maturing process, summed it up brilliantly, in his volume of essays on genius, from Plato to Goethe, *Representative Men*: 'There is a moment in the history of every nation when, proceeding out of this brute youth, the perceptive powers reach their ripeness and have not yet become microscopic, so that man, at that instant, extends across the entire scale and, with his feet still planted on the immense forces of night, converses with his eyes and brain with solar and stellar creation. That is the moment of adult health, the culmination of power.'

American literature's moment of adult health came, with great and unexpected force, in the first half of the 1850s. The key year was 1850, the Year of Debate, when not only *Representative Men* itself but Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* were published, followed that autumn by *White-Jacket*, a novel by a self-made writer just coming into prominence: Herman Melville (1819-91), a New Yorker from an old but impoverished Anglo-Dutch family, who had been in turns bank clerk, store clerk, farmer, teacher, cabin-boy, whaler, naval seaman, and adventurer in the South Seas. *White-jacket* is the story of his life aboard a man-of-war. The next year, 1851, the summation of all his experiences, imagination, and energy, *Moby Dick*, telling the tale of the New England whalers, made its appearance, the first American fictional epic. The same year Hawthorne published his sinister *The House of the Seven Gables*. In 1852 Hawthorne followed it with his Brook Farm tale, *The Blithedale Romance*, and Melville with *Pierre*, both concerned with the American dilemma of combining idealism and practicality, and telling how, often enough, utopia is crushed by materialism.

It is the mark of a mature literature to produce unexpected works which are *sui generis*. This happened to America in 1854, when Henry Thoreau (1817-62), a Concord man of Puritan, Quaker, and Scotch stock, with a dash of Gallic blood, published his masterpiece, *Walden, or Life in the Woods*. Thoreau, a Harvard man, had been a teacher and assistant disciple to Emerson, describing himself as 'a mystic, a transcendentalist and a natural philosopher to boot.' From July 1845 to September 1847 he had lived in a hut he built near Walden Pond in the Concord woods, observing what transpired in nature and 'in the mind and heart of me.' His return to the simplicity of nature was interrupted (as he describes) by a day's imprisonment for refusing to pay a poll-tax to a government that was waging war against Mexico, a war he denounced as a mere scheme by slave-holders to extend slavery and enhance its political power. *Walden* is another book which could have come only from America, a work celebrating pioneering and closeness to nature in wild spaces, written by a tender and sophisticated scholar of Puritan descent. To complete this

American *pleiade*, Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* made its first appearance in 1855, as did Longfellow's *Hiawatha*.

Among these remarkable books, however, one stands out not so much for its literary quality as for its political influence. There has never been another book quite like *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Originally published serially in the *National Era*, it appeared in book form on March 20, 1852, selling 10,000 copies in its first week and 300,000 by the end of the year. The sales in Britain were even higher; 1,200,000 within twelve months. Its author, Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-96), came from a sprawling Connecticut family of teachers and clerics, married a clerical professor herself, and produced a sprawling family of her own. She took to magazine- and book writing, like hundreds of other American and British matrons of her class-Mrs Trollope was a typical example-to make ends meet and give her children a few treats. She had already built up a substantial popular reputation before she exploded the bomb which was *Uncle Tom*. The force of the blast surprised no one more than herself. Curiously enough, she was not really an abolitionist, at least when she wrote the book, and knew little about the South. Her only direct experience of slavery was a short visit to Kentucky, itself a border state. She seems to have got most of her information about slavery from black women servants, especially her cook, Eliza Buck, and from the abolitionist literature. It was not until the factual basis of her novel was challenged by angry Southerners that Mrs Stowe, helped by her brother, combed through newspaper reports of actual legal cases from the South. The result was a 259-page, densely printed compilation, *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which Stowe published in 1853, showing that the cruelties and injustices of which the novel complained were, in reality, far more severe than she had imagined.

By then the book was not merely a bestseller; it was also a phenomenon. The sales in Britain were particularly significant. An immense Sunday School edition, at the equivalent of 25 cents, meant that British schoolchildren had their ideas of America shaped by Eliza, Tom, Eva, Topsy, Dinah, Miss Ophelia, Augustine St Clair, and Simon Legree. When Stowe came to Britain in 1853 she was lionized by all classes. She received delegations and thank-offerings from the poor, the leading novelist Charles Kingsley hailed her as the 'founder of American literature' and her book as 'the greatest novel ever written,' and the Duchess of Sutherland presented her with a solid gold bracelet in the form of a slave's shackle." The truth is the British leaped at this opportunity to treat Americans, from whom they had received much preaching about democracy and equality, from visitors such as Senator Webster and Emerson, as morally suspect. So did the rest of the world, the novel being rapidly translated into more than forty languages. In Britain the success of the novel helped to ensure that, seven years later, the British, whose economic interest lay with the South, remained strictly neutral. But in the world as a whole it was the foundation stone of what, in the 20th century, became the mighty edifice of anti-Americanism. In the United States itself, the impact of the book was multiplied many times by the new American science of boosting and multimedia sales-pitching (a modern expression for what was, by the 1850s, a well-established process). The book was turned into statues, toys, games, handkerchiefs, wallpapers, cutlery, and plates. Its real popularity began when it appeared on the stage, in the form of songs and dramatized versions. 'Tom Shows' toured all the Northern and Western states. One of the highlights of the book, Eliza's escape, carrying her child across the Ohio into free territory, with the slave-catchers in close pursuit, became a key moment in early American drama. When the episode was staged at the National Theater in New York, an immense hush descended on the packed audience and an observer who looked around was astonished to see everyone, including society gentlemen and roughshirted men in the galleries, in tears. Uncle Tom was the greatest

tearjerker of the 19th century, beating even the death of Little Nell in *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1841) and *Black Beauty* (1877).

Stowe was lucky, in a way, to live at the time when American literature was only just maturing and most of it was still crude or grossly imitative of English fashions. She was no stylist, she loved melodrama (her mentor was Scott), and some of her effects would, and indeed did, make even Dickens blush. But she stuck out because she wrote in the American language and her theme was the great issue which was already beginning to dominate American politics to the exclusion of almost everything else. There was also the additional *frisson* of a woman writing about atrocities hitherto regarded as unspeakable. Readers, especially men, were not sure whether it was proper for a woman novelist to acknowledge that slaves were stripped naked and beaten, that slave women were the sexual property of their masters, and that slave-owners habitually fathered children of all colors. In the South this was precisely the line of attack critics took. One wrote: 'Granted that every accusation brought by Mrs Stowe is perfectly true ... the pollution of such literature to the heart and mind of women is not less.' The *Southern Quarterly* dismissed her work as 'the loathesome rakings of a foul fancy.' Another review read: 'The Petticoat lifts of itself and we see the hoof of the beast under the table.'

Fortunately for Stowe, Northern readers did not think she had gone too far. They found her descriptions more credible, perhaps, just because she was a woman-more so than the highly colored atrocity stories of the emancipationist press, written almost entirely by men, usually clerics. This conviction turned *Uncle Tom* into the most successful propaganda tract of all time. It was widely believed that Mrs Stowe was responsible for Lincoln's election, and so for the chain of events which led to the bombardment of Fort Sumter. When the towering President received Stowe, who was under five feet, at the Whit House in 1862-would that we had a photograph of that encounter-Lincoln said to her: 'So you're the little woman who wrote the boo that started this great war. But of course it was more complicated than that.'

## PART FOUR

### **‘The Almost Chosen People’**

Civil War America, 1850 -1870

The Civil War, in which are included the causes and consequences, constitutes the central event in American history. It is also America's most characteristic event which brings out all that the United States is, and is not. It made America a nation, which it was not so before. For America, as we have seen, was not prescriptive, its people forged together by a forgotten process in the darkness of prehistory, emerging from it already a nation by the time it could record its own doings. It was, rather, an artificial state or series of states, bound together by negotiated agreements and compacts, charters and covenants. It was made by bits of parchment, bred by lawyers. The early Americans, insofar as they had a nationality, were English (or more properly British) with an English national identity and culture. Their contract to become Americans-the Declaration of Independence-did not in itself make them a nation. On the contrary; the very word 'nation' was cut from it-the Southerners did not like the word. Significantly it was John Marshall, the supreme federalist, the legal ideologist of federalism, who first asserted in 1821 that America was a nation. It is true that Washington had used the word in his Farewell Address, but elliptically, and it was no doubt inserted by Hamilton, the other ideologue of federalism. Washington referred to 'the Community of Interest in one Nation,' which seems to beg the question whether America was a nation or not. And even Marshall's definition is qualified: 'America has chosen to be,' he laid down, 'in many respects and for many purposes, a nation.' This leads one to ask: in what respects, and for what purposes, was America not a nation? The word is not to be found in the Constitution. In the 1820s in the debates over the 'National Road,' Senator William Smith of South Carolina objected to 'this insidious word:' he said it was 'a term unknown to the origins and theory of our government.' As one constitutional historian has put it: 'In the architecture of nationhood, the United States has achieved something quite remarkable ... Americans erected their constitutional roof before they put up their national walls ... and the Constitution became a substitute for a deeper kind of national identity.'

Yes; but whose constitution: that as seen by the North, or the one which the South treasured-or the one, in the 1850s, interpreted by the southern-dominated Taney Supreme Court? The North, increasingly driven by emancipationists, thought of the Constitution as a document which, when applied in its spirit, would eventually insure that all people in America, whatever their color, black or white, whatever their status, slave or free, would be equal before the law. The Southerners, by which I mean those who dominated the South politically and controlled its culture and self-expression, had a quite different agenda. They believed the Constitution could be used to extend not so much the fact of slavery-though it could do that too-but its principle. Moreover, they possessed, in the Democratic Party, and in the Taney Court, instruments whereby their view of the Constitution could be made to prevail. They were frustrated in this endeavor by their impetuosity and by their divisions-that is the story of the 1850s.

For the South, the decade began well. True, the California gold rush had been, from their point of view, a stroke of ill-fortune, since the slavery-hating miners who rushed there frustrated the South's plan of making California a slave state. But in some other respects the Compromise of 1850 worked in their favor. For one thing it made it possible for them to keep the Democratic Party united, and since 1828 that party had been the perfect instrument for winning elections. All it had to do, to elect a president of its choosing, was to hold the South together and secure a reasonable slice of the North; then, with their own man in the White House, appointing new Supreme Court judges, they could keep the South's interpretation of the Constitution secure too.

For the election of 1852 the Democrats were able to unite round a campaign platform which promised 'to abide by and adhere to a faithful execution of the acts known as the Compromise Measures,' and for their candidate they picked a man peculiarly adapted to follow that same, 'a Northerner with Southern inclinations.'

Franklin Pierce (1804-69) was born in Hillboro, New Hampshire, had been to Bowdoin and practiced as a lawyer in Concord. So by rights he should have been an abolitionist and an Emersonian, a political Transcendentalist, and a thorough New Englander. But in reality he was a Jacksonian Democrat, another 'Young Hickory' and an ardent nationalist, all-out for further expansion into the crumbling Hispanic South, and thus to that extent a firm ally of the slavery-extendors. He had been a New Hampshire congressman and senator and had served assiduously in the Mexican War, of which (unusually in the North) he was an enthusiastic supporter, reaching the rank of brigadier-general. At the 1852 Democratic convention he emerged, after many votes, as the perfect Dark Horse compromise candidate, being nominated on the forty-ninth ballot. He is usually described as 'colorless.' When he was nominated, an old farmer-friend from New Hampshire commented: 'Frank goes well enough for Concord, but he'll go monstrous thin, spread out over the United States.' Nathaniel Hawthorne, who had been a close friend of Pierce at Bowdoin, called on Pierce after he was nominated, sat by him on the sofa, and said: 'Frank, what a pity ... But, after all, this world was not meant to be happy in-only to succeed in.' This story is apocryphal, but Hawthorne said something similar to Pierce in a letter in which he undertook to write Pierce's campaign biography. Horace Mann, who knew both, said of the proposed biography, 'If he makes out Pierce to be a great man or a brave man, it will be the greatest work of fiction he ever wrote.' Hawthorne agreed: 'Though the story is true, it took a romancer to do it.'

Hawthorne had to conceal two things: Pierce's drinking-it was said he drank even more than Daniel Webster, and he was certainly often drunk-and the fact that he hated Pierce's wife Jane. So did a lot of other people. The Pierces had two sons. Their four-year-old died in 1844; their surviving son was killed a month after the election in an appalling railroad accident, and Jane felt, and said, that the presidency had been bought at the cost of their son's life. Hawthorne burned documents about Pierce which were highly derogatory, commenting: 'I wish he had a better wife, or none at all. It is too bad that the nation should be compelled to see such a death's head in the preeminent place among American women; and I think a presidential candidate ought to be scrutinised as well in regard to his wife's social qualifications, as to his own political ones.' Jane was the daughter of the Bowdoin president and sister-in-law of its most distinguished professor: but women of academic families are not always congenial.' The fact is, Hawthorne hated most women, particularly if they had intellectual pretensions, which Jane certainly did: he said of women writers, 'I wish they were forbidden to write on pain of having their faces scarified with an oyster-shell!' At any rate, *The Life of Franklin Pierce* duly appeared, the tale of 'A beautiful boy, with blue eyes, light curling hair, and a serene expression of face,' who grew up to be a distinguished military man and a conciliatory politician, anxious to preserve the Union by reassuring the South and appealing to 'the majority of Northerners' who were 'not actively against slavery' to beware of what Hawthorne called 'the mistiness of a philanthropic system.'

Pierce won handsomely. The Whigs selected the Mexican War commander, General Winfield Scott, who like most generals was lost in the complex politics of ethnic America. He not only bellowed out his antislavery views, which the Whigs had allowed for, but turned out to be a strident nativist only happy with Americans of Anglo-Saxon stock, so he alienated the Germans and the Irish. In the end he carried only Tennessee, Kentucky, Vermont, and Massachusetts,



giving Pierce a landslide in the electoral college, though his plurality over all the other candidates (there were four vote-splitters) was only 50,000. In theory Pierce's Cabinet bridged North and South, since his Secretary of State, William Learned Marcy (1786-1857), was a member of the old Albany Regency, the New York politico who had egged on Jackson to enjoy 'the spoils of victory' in 1829. But Marcy did not care a damn about slavery and, as Polk's Secretary of War, had been a rabid architect of the war against Mexico. Again, Pierce's Attorney-General, Caleb Cushing (1800-79), though a Harvard-Massachusetts Brahmin, was primarily, like Marcy, a 'Manifest Destiny' man, and thus a Southern ally. On the other side, Pierce made Jefferson Davis (1808-89) secretary of war, and Davis was not merely a genuine Southerner but the future President of the Confederation. In practice, then, the Pierce administration was committed to policies which might have been designed to help the South.

The first expression of this policy was the Gadsden Purchase in 1853. This was Davis' idea, significantly. America was then discussing alternative possibilities for transcontinental railways and Davis was determined, for strategic as well as economic reasons, that the South should control one route. This required passage through a large strip of territory in what was then still northwest Mexico. Davis persuaded Pierce to send the South Carolina railroad promoter, Senator James Gadsden (1788-1858), to Mexico to promote the purchase of the strip. This was a dodgy business, as Gadsden had a financial interest in securing the purchase, which was made with US federal money-\$10 million for 45,000 square miles-and the Senate agreed to ratify the deal only by a narrow margin, partly because this extra territory automatically became slave soil. Indeed Davis' original idea, that Gadsden should buy not only the strip but the provinces of Tamaulipas, Nuevo Leon, Coahuila, Chihuahua, Sonora, and the whole of Baja (lower) California, was also on the cards but not proceeded with as the Senate knew these vast territories would have been turned into several new slave states, and would never have ratified the deal, the Senate now having a Northern majority, or rather an anti-slave one.

There were other possibilities for the South, however. They wanted Cuba, to turn it into an ideal slave state. 'The acquisition of Cuba,' wrote Davis, 'is essential to our prosperity and security.' He regretted that, in joining the Union, the Southern states had forfeited their right to make treaties and acquire new territories on their own, otherwise Cuba would already be in the Union, and slave soil. James Buchanan (1791-1866), who as Polk's secretary of state had been a leading mover in acquiring Texas, was now minister in London and intrigued and negotiated furiously in 1854 to have Cuba purchased and annexed. But nothing came of it-this was one of many occasions when Northerners in Congress frustrated the South's dream of an all American, all-slave Caribbean." There were various filibustering expeditions to seize by force what might be more difficult to acquire by diplomacy. Prominent in them was William Walker (1824-60), a Tennessee doctor and populist fanatic, who wanted to annex chunks of Latin America to the US, not to make them slave states but to give their peoples a taste of democracy. The 'gray-eyed man of destiny' entered Lower California in 1853 and proclaimed a republic, but Pierce was not hard-faced enough to allow that. Then Walker took his private army to Nicaragua and actually had himself recognized by the US in 1856. But that aroused the fury of another predator, Cornelius Vanderbilt (1794-1877), whose local transport system was being disrupted by Walker's doings, and as Vanderbilt had more money, he was able to force Walker to 'surrender' to the US Navy. Finally Walker turned to Honduras, but there the British navy took a hand and turned him over, as a nuisance, to a Honduran firing-squad.

Now that the Gadsden Purchase made a Southern railway route to California geographically possible, others were looking for northern routes, and this too had an important bearing on the

land strategy of the South. Senator Stephen Douglas of Illinois, who had helped Clay to draft the 1850 Compromise, was now chairman of the Senate Committee on Territories, and in that capacity he brought forward a Bill to create a new territory called Nebraska in the lands west of the Missouri and Iowa, the object being to get rails across it with an eastern terminus in the rapidly growing beef-and-wheat capital of Chicago. To appease the Southerners, he proposed to include in the Bill a popular sovereignty clause, allowing the Nebraskans themselves to decide if they wanted slavery or not. The South was not satisfied with this and Douglas sought to reassure them still further by not only providing for another territory and future state, Kansas, but repealing the old 1820 Missouri Compromise insofar as it banned slavery north of latitude 36.30. This outraged the North, brought up to regard the 1820 Compromise as a 'sacred pledge,' almost part of the Constitution. It outraged some Southerners too, such as Sam Houston of Texas, who saw that these new territories would mean the expulsion of the Indians, who had been told they could occupy these lands 'as long as grass shall grow and water run.' But Douglas, who wanted to balance himself carefully between North and South and so become president, pushed on; and President Pierce backed him; and so the Kansas-Nebraska Act passed by 113 to 100 in the House and 37 to 14 in the Senate, in May 1854.

Backing this contentious Bill proved, for Pierce, a mistake and ruled out any chance of his being reelected. It also led to what might be called the first bloodshed of the Civil War. Nebraska was so far north that no one seriously believed it could be turned into a series of free states. Kansas was a different matter, and both sides tried to build up militant colonies there, and take advantage of the new law which stated its people were 'perfectly free to form and regulate their domestic institutions in their own way, subject only to the Constitution.' The first foray was conducted by the New England Emigrant Aid Society, which in 1855-6 sent in 1,250 anti-slavery enthusiasts. The Southerners organized just across the border in Missouri. In October 1854 the territory's first governor, Andrew H. Reeder, arrived and quickly organized a census, as prelude to an election in March 1855. But when the election came, the Missourians crossed the border in thousands and swamped the polls. The governor said the polls were a fraud but did nothing to invalidate the results, probably because he was afraid of being lynched. Territorial governors were provided by Washington with virtually no resources or money, as readers of Chapter 25 of Mark Twain's *Roughing It*-which describes the system from bitter experience-will know. At all events the slavers swept the polls, expelled from the legislature the few antislavers who were elected, adopted a drastic slave-code, and made it a capital offense to help a slave escape or aid a fugitive. They even made orally questioning the legality of slavery a felony.

The anti-slavers, and genuine settlers who wanted to remain neutral, responded by holding a constitutional convention-elected unlawfully-drafted a constitution in Topeka which banned both slaves and freed blacks from Kansas, applied for admission to the US as a state, and elected another governor and legislature. Then the fighting began, a miniature civil war of Kansas' own. The Bible-thumping clergymen from the North proved expert gun-runners, especially of what were known as 'Beecher's Bibles,' rifles supplied by the bloodthirsty congregation of the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher. The South moved in guns too. In May 1856 a mob of slavers sacked Lawrence, a free-soil town, blew up the Free State Hotel with five cannon, burned the governor's house and tossed the presses of the local newspaper into the river. This in turn provoked a fanatical free-soiler called John Brown, a glaring-eyes fellow later described by one who was with him in Kansas as 'a man impressed with the idea that God has raised him up on purpose to break the jaws of the wicked.' Two days after the 'Sack of Lawrence,' Brown, his four sons, and

some others rushed into Pottawatomie Creek, a pro-slavery settlement, and slaughtered five men in cold blood. By the end of the year over 200 people had been murdered in 'Bleeding Kansas.'

The Lawrence outrage in turn provoked a breakdown of law in the Congress. The next day, May 22, Senator Charles Sumner (1811-74) of Massachusetts, a dignified, idealistic, humorless, and golden-tongued man who also had a talent for vicious abuse-the kind which causes wars-delivered a philippic in the Senate. One of the weaknesses of Congressional procedure was that, unlike the British parliament, where a speaker must go on until he finishes, senators were allowed an overnight respite then allowed to start again next morning, provoking their antagonized hearers beyond endurance. In his two-day speech, full of excitable sexual images, Sumner said what was going on in Kansas was 'the rape of a virgin territory [sprung] from a depraved longing for a new slave state, the hideous offspring of such a crime.' He made a particular target of Senator A. P. Butler of South Carolina, whom he accused of having 'chosen a mistress who ... though polluted in the sight of the world, is chaste in his sight-I mean the harlot, slavery.' One cannot help feeling that, in the run-up to the Civil War, sex played a major, if unspoken, part. All Northerners knew, or believed, that male slave-owners slept with their pretty female slaves, and often bought them with this in mind. Abraham Lincoln, aged twenty-two and on his second visit to New Orleans, saw a young and beautiful teenage black girl, 'guaranteed a virgin,' being sold, the leering auctioneer declaring: 'The gentleman who buys her will get good value for his money.' The girl was virtually naked, and the horrific scene made a deep impression on the young man. Southerners denied they fornicated with their female slaves, but they also (contradicting themselves) accused their Northern tormenters of sexual envy, which may have been true in some cases.

In any event Sumner's metaphors were provocative. Butler's nephew, Congressman Preston S. Brooks, fumed over the insults for two days, then attacked Sumner with his cane while he was writing at his desk in the Senate. Sumner was so badly injured, or traumatized, that he was ill at home for two years, his empty Senate desk symbolizing the stop-at-nothing violence of the Southern slavers. Equally significant was that Brooks, having been censured by the House, resigned and was triumphantly reelected, his admirers presenting him with hundreds of canes to mark his 'brave gesture,' though it was in fact a cowardly assault on an unarmed, older man. Here was a case of unbridled and inflammatory Northern words provoking reckless Southern aggression-a paradigm of the whole conflict.

Brooks' attack, and the support it received from the 'gentlemanly South,' reflected the aggressive politics of the slave states. The *Dred Scott* verdict by the Taney Court had given the South hope that the constitutional history of the country could be rewritten in a way that would make slavery safe for ever. All previous arrangements had left the South insecure-insecurity was at the very root of its violence. What the Southern militants, especially in South Carolina, wanted was a 'black code,' enacted by Congress and imposed on the territories. They were not so foolish as to hope they could reinstate slavery in New York and New England but they wanted abolitionism to be made illegal in some way. And they wanted not merely to open new territory in the South and West and outside the present borders of the US to slavery but also to reopen and relegalize the slave trade.

This forward plan received an important boost with the election of 1856. The Kansas-Nebraska Act destroyed the last remains of the crumbling Whig Party. In its place, phoenix-like, came the new Republicans, deliberately designed to evoke the memory of Jefferson, now presented as ,in anti-slaver, his attacks on slavery being eminently quotable, his ownership of slaves forgotten. At its nominating convention, the Republican Party passed over its chief anti-

slaver, William H. Seward (1801-72), as too extreme, and picked John Charles Fremont (1813-90), a South Carolina adventurer who had eloped with the daughter of old Senator Benton and then had innumerable near-death escapes in California, including a capital conviction for mutiny quashed by President Polk. The Republican slogan was 'Free Soil, Free Speech and Fremont.' The Democratic Party, rejecting Pierce as a sure loser, and Douglas as too all-things-to-all-men, picked James Buchanan, who concentrated on taking all the slave states and as much of the rest as he could. Old Fillmore, with Jackson's son-in-law Donelson as his running mate, popped up from the past as a splitter. That did for Fremont. So Buchanan, with a fairly united Democratic Party behind him, carried all the South plus New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Indiana, and California, making 174 college voters, against Fremont's 114. Buchanan was elected on a minority (45.3 percent) of the vote but his plurality over Fremont was wide, 1,838,169 to 1,341,264.

The new President was at heart a weak man, and a vacillating one, but he was not out of touch with the combination of imperialist and Southern opinion which, well led, would have ruled out any prospect of coercion of the South by the North. Whatever he said in public, Buchanan sympathized with the idea of adding new states to the South, even if slavers. In his message to Congress, January 7, 1858, Buchanan criticized Walker's filibustering in Nicaragua not because it was wrong in itself but because it was impolitic and 'impeded the destiny of our race to spread itself over the continent of North America, and this at no distant day, should events be permitted to take their natural course.' He followed this up by asking Congress to buy Cuba, despite the fact that the Spanish were demanding at least \$150 million for it (the Republicans blocked the plan). America had absorbed what was once Spanish-speaking territory of millions of square miles in California and Texas: why not the whole of Mexico and Central America? That was all part of the 'North American Continent,' to which the US was 'providentially entitled' by its Manifest Destiny.

Moreover, the price of slaves was rising all the time, despite the efforts of the Virginia slave-farms to produce more, and this in turn strengthened demands for a resumption of the slave-trade. Slave-smuggling was growing, and it was well known, and trumpeted in the South, that merchants in New York and Baltimore bought slaves cheap on the West African coast, and then landed them on islands off Georgia and other Southern states. So why not repeal the 1807 Act and legalize the traffic? That was the demand of the governor of South Carolina in 1856, and the Vicksburg Commercial Convention of 1859 approved a motion resolving that 'all laws, state or federal, prohibiting the African slave trade, ought to be repealed.' The first step, it was argued, was to have blacks captured from slave-ships stopped and searched by the US Navy-the current practice was to send them, free, to Liberia, which most of them did not like-sent to the South and 'apprenticed' to planters with good records. Representative William L. Yancey of Alabama asked: 'If it is right to buy slaves in Virginia and carry them to New Orleans, why is it not right to buy them in Cuba, Brazil or Africa, and carry them there?' If blacks would rather be slaves in the South than free men in Liberia, might it not be that other African blacks would prefer to come to the South, as slaves, rather than remain in the 'Dark Continent,' where their lives were so short and cheap?

Southerners argued that to take a black from Africa and set him up in comfort on a plantation was the equivalent, allowing for racial differences, of allowing a penniless European peasant free entry and allowing him, in a few years, to buy his own farm. The *Dred Scott Case*, by declaring the Missouri Compromise unconstitutional, and the Kansas-Nebraska Act together opened up enormous new opportunities for setting up slave-plantations and ranches, and therefore increased

the demand for slaves. Southerners argued that by resuming the slave trade the cost of slaves in America would be sharply reduced, thereby boosting the economy of the whole country. The aggressive message of the South was: slavery must be extended because it makes economic sense for America. But beneath this aggressive tone was the deep insecurity of Southerners who had no real moral answer to the North's case and knew in their hearts that the days of slavery were numbered.

That sense of insecurity was justified, because in the late 1850s it became obvious that dreams of a vast expansion of slavery to the west and into the Caribbean and other Hispanic areas were fantasies, and the reality was a built-in and continuing decline of Southern political power. Calhoun, in almost his dying words in 1850, had warned the South that if they did not act soon, and assert his theory of states' rights, if necessary by force, they were doomed to a slow death: they would never be stronger than they were, and could only get weaker. That was demonstrated to be good advice; in May 1858 the free state of Minnesota entered the Union, followed by another free state, Oregon, in February 1859, while Kansas, being a slave territory, was denied admission. So the Congressional balance, as Calhoun had foreseen, was destroyed for ever. The South was now outvoted in the Senate 36 to 30 and in the House the gap was enormous, 147 to 90.

Southerners' sense of insecurity was deepened by the fact that, while they boasted publicly that 'Cotton is King' and 'The Greatest Staple in the World,' they were painfully aware of the weaknesses of their cotton-slave economy. Most plantations were in debt or operated close to the margins of profitability. During the 1850s, world cotton prices tended to fall. More and more countries were producing raw cotton—a trend which would knock large nails in the South's coffin when the war began. In the light of economic hindsight, it can be seen that the plantation system, as practiced, was fundamentally unsound, and some planters grasped this at the time. Plantations absorbed good land and ruined it, then their owners moved on. There was an internal conflict in the South, as the newer estates in the Deep South were more scientific and efficient (and bigger), and thus tended to take black slave labor away from the tidewater and border areas, and push up the price of slaves. This, at a time of falling cotton prices, put further pressure on profit margins. As the price of slaves rose, slavery as an institution became more vital to the South: to the Deep South because they used slaves more and more efficiently, to the Old and border South because breeding high-quality, high-priced slaves was now far more important than raising tobacco or cotton. Professor Thomas R. Dew of William and Mary College, in his book *The Pro-Slavery Argument of 1852*, asserted: 'Virginia is a *negro-raising* state for other states: she produces enough for her own supply and 6,000 [annually] for sale.'

Actually, Virginia was living on its slave-capital: blacks formed 50 percent of the Virginia population in 1782, but only 37 percent in 1860s—it was selling its blacks to the Deep South. Virginia and other Old South or border states concentrated on breeding a specially hardy type of negro, long-living, prolific, disease-free, muscular, and energetic. In the 1850s, about 25,000 of these blacks were being sold, annually, to the Deep South." The 1860 census showed there were 8,099,000 whites in the South and 3,953,580 slaves. But only 384,000 whites owned the slaves: 10,781 owned fifty and more; 1,733, a hundred and more. So over 6 million Southern whites had no direct interest in slavery. But that did not mean they did not wish to retain the institution—on the contrary: poor whites feared blacks even more than the rich ones did. By 1860 there were already 262,000 free blacks in the Southern states, competing with poor whites for scarce jobs, and a further 3,018 were manumitted that year. Poor whites were keener than anyone on penal legislation against slaves: they insured no state recognized slave marriage in law, and five states

made it unlawful to teach slaves to read and write. In any event, small white farmers in the South were very much at the mercy of the big plantation owners and had to go along with them." Those who produced cotton, rice, sugar, tobacco, and slaves on a large scale were all-powerful. As one historian has put it, 'There was never in America a more perfect oligarchy of businessmen.'

Slavery was not the only issue between North and South. Indeed it is possible that an attempt at secession might have been made even if the slavery issue had been resolved. The North favored high tariffs, the South low ones; the North, in consequence, backed indirect taxation, the South direct taxation. It is significant that once the war began, the North, shorn of the South, immediately introduced high tariffs with the Morrill Act of 1861, and pushed through direct federal income tax too. There were huge differences of interest over railroad strategy. Increasingly, the railroad interests of the Northeast and the Northwest came into alignment in the 1850s, and this in turn led to an alliance between Eastern manufacturers seeking high tariffs and Western farmers demanding low-cost or free lands-both linked by lines of rail. This was the basis of the power of the new Republican Party, and the South saw it as a plot-indeed, it was what finished them. Many Southerners believed deeply in their hearts that the moral indignation of the North was spurious, masking meaner economic motives. As Jefferson Davis put it, 'You free-soil agitators are not interested in slavery ... not at all ... It is so that you may have an opportunity of cheating us that you want to limit slave territory within circumscribed bounds. It is so that you may have a majority in the Congress of the United States and convert the government into an engine of Northern aggrandisement ... you desire to weaken the political power of the Southern states. And why? Because you want, by an unjust system of legislation, to promote the industry of the North-East states, at the expense of the people of the South and their industry.'

Davis was reflecting a bitter conviction held by all 'thinking' men in the South: that the North, while accusing the South of exploiting the blacks, exploited the whole of the South systematically and without mercy. Their feeling was exactly the same as the resentment felt by the Third World towards the First World today. There was something inherent in a plantation economy which put it in a dependent position, with the capitalist world its master. There was, of course, no control by the state of national production and prices, of cotton or anything else. If world markets were high, profits rose, but there was then a tendency to reinvest them in increased production. If prices fell, the planters had to borrow. In either case, the South lacked liquid capital. So the planters fell into the hands of bankers, ending up dependent on New York or even the City of London.' The South lacked its own financial system, like the Third World today. When cotton made big profits, it spent them, as the Arab rulers today dissipate colossal oil revenues. And it was in a real sense milked, like the primary producers today in Africa and Latin America, at the same time accumulating massive debts it had no hope of repaying. In effect, the South had all the disadvantages of a one-crop economy. It had only 8 percent of US manufactures. It should have put up the money to open factories, and so provide employment for poor whites and diversify its economy at the same time. But there was no spare capital in the South itself, and the North had no intention of building factories there and competing against itself with low-wage, low-price products. So the South saw itself as the slave of a Union dominated by Northern capital. As the *Charleston Mercury* put it: 'As long as we are tributaries, dependent on foreign labor and skill for food, clothing and countless necessities of life, *we are in thralldom.*'

The Civil War was not only the most characteristic event in American history, it was also the most characteristic religious event because both sides were filled with moral righteousness for

their own cause and moral detestation of the attitudes of their opponents. And the leaders on both sides were righteous men. Let us look more closely at these two paladins, Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis. Lincoln was a case of American exceptionalism because, in his humble, untaught way, he was a kind of moral genius, such as is seldom seen in life and hardly ever at the summit of politics. By comparison, Davis was a mere mortal. But, according to his lights, he was a just man, unusually so, and we can be confident that, had he and Lincoln been joined in moral discussion, with the topic of slavery alone banned, they would have found much common ground.

Both men were also characteristic human products of mid-19th century America, though their backgrounds were different in important respects. Lincoln insisted he came from nowhere. He told his campaign biographer, John Locke Scripps of the *Chicago Tribune*, that his early life could be 'condensed into a single sentence from Gray's Elogy, "The short and simple annals of the poor." ' He said both his parents were born in Virginia and he believed one of his grandfathers was 'a Southern gentleman.' He also believed his mother was illegitimate, probably rightly. He was born in a log cabin in the Kentucky backwoods and grew up on frontier farms as his family moved westwards. His father was barely literate; his mother taught him to read, but she died when he was nine. Thereafter he was self-taught. His father remarried, then took to hiring out his tall lanky (six feet four and 170 pounds) son, for 25 cents a day. He said of his son: 'He looked as he had been rough-hewn with an axe and needed smoothing down with a jackplane.' Lincoln acquired, in the backwoods of Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois, and on the Ohio and the Mississippi, an immense range of skills: rafting, boating, carpentry, butchering, forestry, store-keeping, brewing, distilling, plowing. He did not smoke, chew tobacco, or drink. He acquired an English grammar, and taught it to himself. He read Gibbon, *Robinson Crusoe*, Aesop, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and Parson Weems' lives of Washington and Franklin. He learned the *Statutes of Illinois* by heart. He rafted down to New Orleans and worked his way back on a steamer. He visited the South several times and knew it, unlike most Northerners." He listened often to Southerners defend the 'Peculiar Institution' and knew their arguments backwards; what he had personally witnessed made him reject them, utterly, though he never made the mistake of thinking them insincere or superficial. He loved Jefferson, Clay, and Webster, in that order. He was a born storyteller, a real genius when it came to telling a tale, short or long. He knew when to pause, when to hurry, when to stop. He was the greatest coiner of one-liners in American history, until Ronald Reagan emerged to cap him. He was awkward-he always put his whole foot flat down when walking, and lifted it up the same way-but could suddenly appear as if transfigured, full of elegance. With one hand he could lift a barrel of whiskey from floor to counter. He was hypochondriac, as he admitted. He wrote an essay on suicide. He said: 'I may seem to enjoy life rapturously when I am in company. But when I am alone I am so often so overcome by mental depression that I never dare carry a penknife.'

Lincoln was a self-taught lawyer but his instincts were not for the cause. He said 'persuade your neighbors to compromise whenever you can ... As a peacemaker, the lawyer has a superior opportunity of being a good man. There will still be business enough. A worse man can scarcely be found than one who [creates litigation].' As a circuit lawyer, Lincoln fancied himself a Whig and stood for the state legislature. His first elective post, however, was as captain of volunteers in the Black Hawk War (1832), in which he came across five scalped corpses in the early morning: 'They lay heads towards us on the ground. Every man had a round red spot on the top of his head about as big as a dollar where the redskins had taken his scalp. It was frightful. But it was grotesque. And the red sunlight seemed to paint everything over.' But he held no grudge;

indeed he saved an Indian from being butchered. He was the first man to refer to Indians as 'Native Americans,' though in the then current usage the term referred to Americans of old Anglo-Saxon stock. He said to those who protested about German immigrants, and claimed the title for themselves: 'Who are the [real] Native Americans? Do they not wear the breechclout and carry the tomahawk? We pushed them from their homes and now turn on others not fortunate enough to come over so early as we or our forefathers.'

He did not win his first political election. And he had bad luck. He bought a store and set up as postmaster too. His partner, Berry, fled with the cash and Lincoln had to shoulder a \$1,100 burden of debt. Like Washington, he went into land-surveying to help pay it off. Then he was elected to the state assembly, serving eight years from the age of twenty-five to thirty-two. It met in Vandalia, its eighty-three members being divided into two chambers. Lincoln was paid \$3 for each sitting, plus pen, ink, and paper. His first manifesto read: 'I go for all sharing the privileges of government who assist in sharing its burdens. Consequently I go for admitting all whites to the right of suffrage who pay taxes or bear arms (by no means excluding females).' He belonged to a group of Whig legislators who were all six feet or over, known as the Long Nine. He got the state capital shifted to Springfield and there set up a law practice, making his name by winning a case for an oppressed widow. A colleague said: 'Lincoln was the most uncouth-looking man I ever saw. He seemed to have but little to say, seemed to feel timid, with a tinge of sadness visible in his countenance. But when he did talk all this disappeared for the time, and he demonstrated he was both strong and acute. He surprised us more and more at every visit.'

Lincoln's first love, Ann Rutledge, died of typhoid fever. That Lincoln was devastated is obvious enough; that his love for her persisted and prevented him from loving any other woman is more debatable. At all events, it is clear he never loved the woman he married, Mary Todd. She came from a grand family in Kentucky, famous since Revolutionary days for generals and governors. She was driven from it by a horrible stepmother, but never abandoned her quest for a man she could marry in order to make him president. Oddly enough, she turned down Stephen Douglas, then a youngish fellow-member of the Illinois Assembly, in favour of Lincoln, whom she picked out as White House timber. She said to friends: 'Mr Lincoln is to be president of the United States some day. If I had not thought so, I would not have married him, for you can see he is not pretty.' Lincoln consented, but missed the wedding owing to an illness which was clearly psychosomatic. This led to a sabre duel with Shields, the state auditor, which was called off when Lincoln scared his opponent by cutting a twig high up a tree. And this in turn led to reconciliation with Mary, and marriage, he being thirty-three, she twenty-four. His law partner, William H. Herndon, said: 'He knew he did not love her, but he had promised to marry her.'

It was an uncomfortable marriage of opposites, particularly since she had no sense of humor, his strongest suit. He liked to say: 'Come in, my wife will be down as soon as she gets her trotting-harness on.' He was a messy man, disorderly in appearance, she was a duster and polisher and tidier. She wrangled acrimoniously with her uppity white servants and sighed noisily for her 'delightful niggers.' 'One thing is certain,' she said, 'if Mr Lincoln should happen to die, his spirit will never find me living outside the boundaries of a slave state.' She hated his partner, his family, and his so-called office. Herndon said: 'He had no system, no order; he did not keep a clerk; he had neither library, nor index, nor cash-book. When he made notes, he would throw them into a drawer, put them in his vest-pocket, or into his hat ... But in the inner man, symmetry and method prevailed. He did not need an orderly office, did not need pen and ink, because his workshop was in his head.'



The Lincolns had four sons. Generations of Lincoln-admirers have played down the role of Mary in his life and career, easily finding spicy material illustrative of her shortcomings. But the likelihood is that he would never have become president without her. It took him four years, aged thirty-three to thirty-seven, to get into Congress, and but for her endless pushing he might have become discouraged. For his part, he did his best to behave to her gallantly. There is a touching photograph of her, taken in 1861, arrayed in her inaugural finery, wearing pearls. They were a set which Lincoln had just bought for her, paying \$530, at Tiffany's store on 550 Broadway: a seed-pearl necklace and matching bracelets for each arm. They are now in the Library of Congress."

Lincoln won a seat for Congress in 1847, by a big majority. The Whig Party gave him \$200 for his expenses. He handed back \$199.25, having bought only one barrel of cider. He rode to Washington on his own horse, and stayed with friends. But he served only one term-his of the Capitol, within sight of its windows, was 'a sort of negro stable where gangs of negroes were sold, and sometimes kept in store for a time pending transport to the Southern market, just like horses.' Lincoln was broad-minded, tolerant, and inclined to let things alone if possible, but he found this insult to the eye of freedom, literally within sight of Congress, 'mighty offensive.' The first law he drafted was a Bill to Abolish Slavery in the District of Columbia, to be enacted by local referendum (as we have seen it became part of the 1850 Compromise). At the end of his term, he returned contentedly to the law.

But the slavery issue would not let him rest, or stay out of politics. It was even more persistent than Mary Lincoln's pushing. Some notes have survived of his musings:

If A can prove, however conclusively, that he may, of right, enslave B, why may not B snatch the same argument, even prove equally, that he may enslave A? You say A is white and B is black-is it *color* then, the lighter having the right to enslave the darker? Take care-by this rule, you are to be slave to the first man you meet, with a fairer skin than your own. You do not mean *color* exactly? You mean the whites are *intellectually* the superior of the blacks, and therefore have the right to enslave them? Take care again-by this rule you are to be the slave of the first man you meet, with an intellect superior to your own.

As Herndon said, 'All his great qualities were swayed by the despotism of his logic.' There are many memorable descriptions of him lost in thought, turning things over in his mind.

Lincoln did a lot of this musing at home, a place in which he kept a low profile. Mary Lincoln said: 'He is of no account when he is at home. He never does anything except to warm himself and read. He never went to market in his life. I have to look after all that. He just does nothing. He is the most useless, good-for-nothing man on earth.' He replied, in his own way: 'For God, one "d" is enough, but the Todds need two.' He was often driven from his own house by Mary's anger. There are no fewer than six eyewitness descriptions of her furies, one relating to how she drove him out with a broomstick. He was never allowed to ask people to a meal, even or rather especially his parents. He wrote: 'Quarrel not at all. No man resolved to make the most of himself can spare time for personal contention ... Yield larger things to which you can show no more than equal right; and yield lesser ones, though clearly your own.' Mary felt his righteousness as well as his awkwardness: 'He was mild in his manner,' she said, 'but a terrible firm man when he set his foot down. I could always tell when, in deciding anything, he had reached his ultimatum. At first he was very cheerful, then he lapsed into thoughtfulness, bringing his lips together in a firm compression. When these symptoms developed, I fashioned myself accordingly, and so did all others have to do, sooner or later.'

That Lincoln, as his wife implied, had a huge will when intellectually roused to a moral cause is clear. This sprang from a compulsive sense of duty rather than ambition as such. The evidence suggests that he was obliged to reenter politics not because he was an anti-slavery campaigner but because, in the second half of the 1850s, the slavery issue came to dominate American politics to the exclusion of almost everything else. Each time the issue was raised, and Lincoln was obliged to ponder it, the more convinced he became that the United States was uniquely threatened by the evil, and its political consequences. In those circumstances, an American who felt he had powers-and Lincoln was conscious of great powers-had an inescapable duty to use them in the Union's defense. Lincoln did not see slavery in religious terms, as the 'organic sin' of the Union, as the Protestant campaigners of the North put it. Those close to him agreed he had no religious beliefs in the conventional sense. His wife said: 'Mr Lincoln had no faith and no hope in the usual acceptance of those words. He never joined a church. But still, I believe, he was a religious man by nature ... it was a kind of poetry in his nature.' Herndon said Lincoln insisted no personal God existed and when he used the word God he meant providence: he believed in predestination and inevitability.'

Lincoln came closer to belief in God, as we shall see, but in the 1850s he was opposed to slavery primarily on humanitarian grounds, as an affront to man's natural dignity; and this could be caused by religious sectarians as well as by slave-owners. In his boyish and youthful reading, he had conceived great hopes of the United States, which he now feared for. He wrote: 'Our progress in degeneracy appears to me to be pretty rapid. As a nation we began by declaring that "all men are created equal." We now practically read of "all men are created equal except negroes." When the Know-Nothings get control it will be "all men are created equal except negroes and foreigners and Catholics." When it comes to this, I shall prefer emigration to some country where they make no pretence of loving liberty-to Russia, for instance, where despotism can be taken pure, without the base alloy of hypocrisy.'" The state of America caused him anguish. He said to Herndon: 'How hard it is to die and leave one's country no better than if one had never lived for it! The world is dead to hope, deaf to its own death-struggle. One made known by a universal cry, what is to be done? Is anything to be done? Who can do anything? And how is it to be done? Do you never think of these things?'

But from this general sense of downward moral plunging, which had to be arrested, the slavery issue, and still more the South's determination to extend and fortify it, loomed ever larger. In an important letter to Joshua F. Speed, the storekeeper with whom he shared some of his most intimate thoughts, Lincoln dismissed the claim that slavery was the South's affair and Northerners 'had no interest' in the matter. There were, he said, many parts of the North, in Ohio for instance, 'where you cannot avoid seeing such sights as slaves in chains, being carried to miserable destinations, and the heart is wrung. It is not fair for you to assume that I have no interest in a thing which has and continually exercises, the power of making me miserable.' Lincoln was as much concerned for the slave-owner as for the slave-the institution morally destroyed the man supposed to benefit from it. It was thus more important, as Lincoln saw it, to end slave-owning than to end slavery itself. He said a Kentuckian had once told him: 'You might have any amount of land, money in your pocket, or bank stock, and while traveling around nobody would be any the wiser. But if you have a darky trudging at your heels, everybody would see him and know you owned a slave. It is the most glittering property in the world. If a young man goes courting, the only inquiry is how many negroes he, or she, owns. Slave-ownership betokens not only the possession of wealth but indicates the gentleman of leisure, who is above labor and scorns it.' This image of the strutting slave-owner, corrupted and destroyed by the

wretch at his heels, haunted Lincoln. He wept for the South in its self-inflicted moral degradation.

It was because slavery made him miserable, and because he thought it was destroying the nation, not least the South, that Lincoln reentered politics and helped to create the new Republican Party, primarily to prevent slavery's extension. Looking back with the hindsight of history, we tend to assume that slavery was a lost cause from the start and the destruction of the old South inevitable. But to a man of Lincoln's generation, the South appeared to have won all the political battles, and all the legal ones. So long as the Democratic Party remained united, the South's negative grip on the United States seemed unbreakable, and its power to make positive moves was huge. The creation of the Republican party, from free-soilers, Whigs, and many local elements, was the answer to the Democratic stranglehold on the nation, which had been the central fact of American political life since 1828. Lincoln failed to get into the Senate in 1855 and (as we have seen) Buchanan won the presidency in 1856. But it was by then apparent that the Republican Party was a potential governing instrument, and Lincoln's part in creating it was obvious and recognized.

At Bloomington on May 29, 1856, when the new Illinois Republican Party was inaugurated, Lincoln was called to make the adjournment speech and he responded with what all agreed was the best speech of his life. It was so mesmerizing that many reporters forgot to take it down. Even Herndon, who always took notes, gave up after fifteen minutes and 'threw pen and paper away and lived only in the inspiration of the hour.' Lincoln argued that the logic of the South's case, which was that slavery was good for the negroes, would be to extend it to white men too. Because of the relentless pressure of the South's arguments, Northerners like Douglas, Lincoln warned, were now yielding their case of 'the individual rights of man'-'such is the progress of our national democracy.' Lincoln said it was therefore urgent that there should be a union of all men, of whatever politics, who opposed the expansion of slavery, and said he was 'ready to fuse with anyone who would unite with him to oppose slave power.' If the united opposition of the North caused the South 'to raise the bugbear of disunion,' the South should be told bluntly, '*the union must be preserved in the purity of its principles as well as in the integrity of its territorial parts.*' And he updated the reply of Daniel Webster to the South Carolina nullifiers, as the slogan of the new Republican Party: 'Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable.' One eyewitness said: 'At this moment, he looked to me the handsomest man I had ever seen in my life.' Herndon recalled: 'His speech was full of fire and energy and force. It was logic. It was pathos. It was enthusiasm. It was justice, equity, truth and right set alight by the divine fires of a soul maddened by the wrong. It was hard, heavy, knotty, gnarly, backed with wrath.'

It was now only a matter of time before Lincoln became the champion of the new Republicans. The Senatorial election of 1858 in Illinois, when he was pitted against Douglas, the 'Little Giant,' provided the opportunity. On June 16 Lincoln, having been nominated as Republican candidate, laid down the strategy at the state convention in Springfield. Together with the Bloomington speech, it represents the essence of Lincoln's whole approach to the complex of political issues which revolved round slavery. He said that all attempts to end both the South's agitation for the right to extend slavery and the North's to abolish it had failed, and that the country was inevitably moving into crisis:

A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure half *slave* and half *free*. I do not expect the Union to be *dissolved*. I do not expect the House to *fall*. But I *do* expect it will cease to be divided. It will become *all* one thing, or *all* the

other. Either the *opponents* of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in course of ultimate extinction; or its *advocates* will push it forward, till it shall become alike lawful in *all* the states, *old* as well as *new*, *North* as well as *South* [Emphasis Lincoln's.]

The burden of the speech was a masterly summary of the legal and constitutional threats represented by the *Dred Scott* decisions and the Kansas-Nebraska Act, and Lincoln challenged Douglas-his main opponent in the state-to say clearly where he stood on both these issues. Lincoln said of his speech: 'If I had to draw a pen across my record, and erase my whole life from sight, and if I had one poor gift or choice left as to what I should save from the wreck, I should choose that speech and leave it to the world unerased.'

Lincoln was right to put his finger on Douglas, for he represented the spirit of compromise where it was no longer possible-where further attempts to evade the dread issue would play into the hands of the South and sell the pass. Lincoln objected strongly to Horace Greeley's plan to get Douglas into the Republican Party. He saw Douglas as an unprincipled man motivated solely by ambition. Eventually both North and South came round to Lincoln's view. But in 1858 Douglas was a much weightier politician than Lincoln, albeit a younger man. Only five feet high, but muscular and stocky, he was the son of a doctor but had done many things-laborer in his teens, a teacher at twenty, a lawyer at twenty-one, a state legislator and Secretary of State of Illinois, a judge of its supreme court, then a congressman, a senator before he was forty, a European traveler who had been received by the Tsar of Russia and the Queen of England, a rich man who had married two Southern heiresses. He traveled in princely fashion, by special train or coach, with a truck and field gun behind, which fired a salute when he arrived in any place he was due to speak. He drove to his engagements in a carriage with six horses and with thirty-two outriders. So Douglas was a grand man who looked down his nose at the uncouth Lincoln. But Lincoln was cunning when he wished to be. Annoyed by the conservative *Springfield Journal*, he persuaded it to publish an apology for Southern slavery and so ruined its reputation among right-thinking Illinois readers-it went out of business. Determined to get maximum publicity for his House Divided strategy, he provoked and teased and inveigled Douglas into giving him a series of public debates, from which Lincoln had everything to gain and very little to lose.

The Lincoln-Douglas debates were a series of seven encounters, August-October 1858, conducted throughout the state, with the Senate seat the prize. They were preceded and followed by bands and processions and attracted crowds of 10,000 or more, entire families traveling up to 30 miles to attend them. Both men were good debaters and they made a striking contrast of style, Douglas, meticulously dressed, exuding vigor, Lincoln shambling and awkward in word and gesture, then suddenly, without warning and for brief seconds, becoming godlike in his majestic passion. Douglas won the seat. But the debates eventually finished him, while they transformed Lincoln into a national figure. They were, also, an important process in educating the North in the real issues at stake, and this was of far greater historical importance than the Clay-Webster-Calhoun encounters of 1850.

The strength of Douglas was his warning that the path Lincoln was treading could lead to sectional discord on a scale the country had never known, and possibly civil war. His weakness was that he was never really prepared to say where he stood on slavery and was thus exposed, in debate, as trying to be all things to all men. He said: 'I do not care whether the vote goes on for or against slavery. That is only a question of dollars and cents. The Almighty himself has drawn across this continent a line on one side of which the earth must be for ever tilled by slave labor, whereas on the other side of that line labor is free.' Northerners might accept this-indeed had

always accepted it-as a convenient or inescapable fact-but they did not want it spelled out. To do so sounded amoral or even immoral. And most Americans, then as now, wanted to sound moral. Then again, Douglas said: 'When the struggle is between the white man and the negro, I am for the white man. When it is between the negro and the crocodile, I am for the negro.' That too played into Lincoln's hands: it was a remark which would do for a saloon but not for a public platform. Lincoln rightly saw that the debate, the entire controversy, had to be conducted on the highest moral plane because it was only there that the case for freedom and Union became unassailable. He pointed out again and again that even the South was, in its heart, aware that slavery was wrong. The United States had made it a capital offense half a century ago to import slaves from Africa, and that fact, over the years, had wormed its way into Southern attitudes, however much they might try to defend slavery. Hence, even in the South, the slave-dealer was treated with abhorrence. Slave-owners would not let their children play with his-though they would cheerfully see them playing with slave-children. And the South knew that not only slave-dealing was wrong but slavery itself-why else did they manumit: 'Why have so many slaves been set free, except by the promptings of conscience?' As for the *Dred Scott* decision, it was an aberration, which would shortly be set right, at the next presidential election: 'You can fool all the people some of the time, and some of the people all the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time.'

Lincoln's object was not merely to put his name and his case before the American people, as well as Illinois voters. It was also to expose the essential pantomime-horse approach of a man who tried to straddle North and South. He succeeded in both. He put to Douglas the key question: 'Can the people of a United States territory, in any lawful way, against the wish of a citizen of the United States, exclude slavery from its limits prior to the formation of a state constitution?' If Douglas said yes, to win Illinois voters, he lost the South. If he said no, to win the South, he lost Illinois. Douglas' answer was: 'It matters not what way the Supreme Court may hereafter decide as to the abstract question whether slavery may or may not go into a territory under the Constitution; the people have the lawful means to introduce it or exclude it as they please, for the reason that slavery cannot exist a day or an hour unless it is supported by the local police regulations.' This answer won Douglas Illinois but it lost him the South and hence, two years later, the presidency. Lincoln, normally a generous and forgiving man, had no time for Douglas and did not regret destroying his future career. He thought less of Douglas than he did of the Southern leaders. He said: 'He is a man with tens of thousands of blind followers. It is my business to make some of those blind followers see.'

The debates gave Lincoln precisely the impetus he needed. He quoted Clay many times and in a way he inherited Clay's mantle. The rhyme went: 'Westward the star of empire takes its way-the girls link onto Lincoln, their mothers were for Clay.' He was told: 'You are like Byron, who woke to find himself famous.' By 1859 he knew he ought to be president, wanted to be president, and would be president. The campaign autobiography he wrote December 20, 1859 is brief (800 words), plain, and self-dismissive, yet it exudes a certain confidence in himself and his purpose. He sums up his bid for the presidency in two laconic sentences: 'I was losing interest in politics, when the repeal of the Missouri Compromise aroused me again. What I have done since then is pretty well known.' William Henry Seward (1801-72) and Salmon Portland Chase (1808-73) were both initially considered stronger contenders for the Republican nomination than Lincoln. Seward, first governor then Senator for New York, was the leader of the abolitionists, who said he was 'guided by a higher law than the Constitution.' Chase was senator, then governor of Ohio, a free-soiler and Democrat who drafted the first Republican Party set of beliefs. Both had strong

claims but Lincoln had a big success in New York. At the Republican State convention in Decatur, Lincoln's cousin John Hanks did a remarkable if unconscious public relations job by holding a demonstration centered around two fence-rails which, he said, were among the 3,000 Lincoln had split thirty years before. He told stories of Lincoln's youth and his pioneering father-entirely fanciful in the latter's case-and made rail-splitting into a national symbol, from which Lincoln hugely benefited. Lincoln was in Springfield when a telegram arrived saying he had been nominated for president at the Republican National Convention in Chicago. He said: 'I reckon there is a little short woman down in our house that would like to hear the news.' He took his acceptance speech to the local school superintendent, who corrected a split infinitive.

The Democratic papers dismissed Lincoln as 'a third-rate lawyer,' 'a nullity,' 'a man in the habit of making coarse and clumsy jokes,' one who 'could not speak good grammar,' a 'gorilla.' And we have to remember that most of Lincoln's sayings and speeches, and even his letters, have been cleaned up a good deal before coming down to us. The feeling that he was too rough to be president was not confined to the South, or even to Democrats. But William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878), the anti-slavery poet and philosopher, who had helped to found the Republican Party, called him 'A poor flatboatman-such are *the true leaders of the nation*.' Lincoln had the Douglas Debates made into a little pamphlet, which he gave to people who asked his views. It served his purpose well. In dealing with the South's threat that his election would lead them to secede, he had already taken the bull by the horns in his speech at the Cooper Institution in New York City, February 27, 1860: 'You will not abide by the election of a Republican President! In that supposed event, you say, you will destroy the Union; and then, you say, the great crime of having destroyed the Union will be upon us! That is cool. A highwayman holds a pistol to my ear, and mutters through his teeth, "Stand and deliver!-or I shall kill you, and then you will be a murderer!"'

Using the political arithmetic of the previous thirty years, Lincoln should have been defeated. All the South had to do was to retain its links with the North, concentrate on keeping Jackson's old Democratic coalition together, and pick another Buchanan, or similar. But that was increasingly difficult to do, as the anti-slavers of the North raised the political temperature and the South replied with paranoia. Militant abolitionism dated from the early 1830s, when it became obvious that repatriating blacks to West Africa had failed-only 1,420 blacks had been settled in Liberia by 1831 and the number going there was declining. On January 11, 1831 William Lloyd Garrison (1805-79) began publishing the *Liberator* in Boston. It carried its motto on the front page: 'I am in earnest-I will not equivocate-I will not excuse-I will not retreat a single inch-*and I will be heard*.' Garrison said he relied wholly on moral persuasion and condemned force, but some of his fiercest attacks were launched on moderate abolitionists and he began a new round of militancy on the Fourth of July 1854 when he burned a copy of the Constitution with the words, 'So perish all compromises with tyranny.' Meanwhile the American Anti-Slavery Society (1833) had been organized by two New York merchants, Arthur and Lewis Tappan, in conjunction with the most sophisticated and effective of the abolitionist campaigners, Theodore D. Weld (1803-95), whose anonymous tract, *American Slavery As It Is* (1839) furnished the inspiration for *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Weld organized Oberlin as the first college to admit both blacks and women, and he married Angela Grimke, one of two South Carolina sisters who freed their slaves and moved north to campaign.

Initially there was a lot of opposition to the anti-slavery movement in the North, where most Northerners hated blacks and frequently subjected them to mass violence. But by the end of the 1830s a younger generation who took the morality of abolition for granted began to take up

positions and exercise influence. Emerson noticed 'a certain tenderness in the people, not before remarked.' As he put it, 'The young men were born with knives in their brain.' It was the beginning of liberal humanitarianism in the United States, and it took many forms, but slavery was the issue around which it concentrated. Increasingly, direct action of various kinds began to take over from propaganda alone. An underground developed to get escaped slaves across the borders on to free soil and protect them there. It was run by 'conductors' like Harriet Tubman (1821-1913), a Maryland slave who had escaped in 1849, the Quaker Levi Coffin (1789-1877), and the ferocious John Brown. There were about 1,000 conductors in all, and although their successes were numerically insignificant-not more than 1,000 a year after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, which made such operations increasingly risky-their effect on Southern morale was disproportionately great. Moreover, Southern slave-hunters, moving into Northern states in hot pursuit of fugitives, were highly unpopular especially when, as often happened, they grabbed the wrong black. From 1843 in Boston we get the first examples of an abolitionist mob releasing a recaptured fugitive slave by force. Whittier echoed the feelings of many with his lines:

No slave-hunt in our borders-no pirate on our strand!  
No fetters in the Bay State-no slave upon our land!

During the 1850s, moreover, Northern legislatures passed laws making it exceedingly difficult, and sometimes impossible, to enforce the provisions of the 1850 federal act. The fact is that Southern aggression was all the time pushing Northern moderates into more extreme positions, particularly when the threat to the North's freedom of action became apparent. As William Jay, son of Chief Justice Jay, put it, 'We commenced the present struggle to obtain the freedom of the slave-we are compelled to continue to preserve our own.' James G. Birney (1792-1857), another former slave-owner who favored a modern position and was the Liberty Party candidate in 1840, put the point thus: 'It has now become absolutely necessary that slavery should cease in order that freedom may be preserved in any portion of our land.'

As we have seen, from 1854 Kansas became the battleground of Southern extremists and anti-slavery activists. Indeed, it could be said that the Civil War started there. And it was inevitable, perhaps, that the kind of violence which became a daily occurrence in 'bleeding Kansas' should spread. In particular, John Brown, who had received much applause for his 'Pottawatomie Massacre'-'Brown of Pottawatomie' became a slogan of Northern militants-was given money and other help to set up a stronghold in the mountains of western Virginia to assist slaves traveling on the Underground Railroad. Not content with this, on October 16, 1859, with twenty men, he seized the US arsenal at Harpers Ferry. Two days later, Colonel Robert E. Lee and a regular army unit recaptured the post, killed ten of Brown's men, and made him prisoner. He was condemned to death and hanged on December 2. Some, including Lincoln, condemned Brown; others, including Emerson, hailed him as 'The new saint who will make the gallows glorious like the cross.' Brown's violent act completed the process of transforming the South, or at least its leadership class, into a tremulous and excitable body-a case of collective paranoia-which believed anything was preferable to a continuation of the present tension and fear. Some predicted a general rising of the slaves. Others looked to separation as the only safeguard of their property and way of life.

Against this background, the Democrats met for their presidential convention in April 1860 in Charleston, the South Carolina city which was the capital of Southern extremism. The

Southerners, in their fear and fury, accused the Northern Democrats of betraying them by failing to present slavery to the North as a positive good. On behalf of the North, George E. Pugh of Ohio replied: 'Gentlemen of the South, you mistake us-you mistake us-*we will not do it.*' When the South failed to get the platform it wanted, the delegations from the Gulf states, South Carolina and Georgia, walked out, splitting the Democratic Party right down the middle. The convention met again at Baltimore on June 18 and finally nominated Douglas on a moderate platform. The Southerners replied by nominating the Vice-President, John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky (1821-75), on a slavery platform. The Whigs reorganized themselves as the constitutional Union Party and nominated John Bell (1797-1869) of Tennessee as, in effect, the candidate of the border states. That meant four candidates. Essentially, however, it was a contest between Lincoln and Douglas in the North and Breckinridge and Bell in the South, since Lincoln could not hope to win Southern votes and Breckinridge had no support north of the Mason-Dixon Line.

In effect, a Lincoln victory was certain provided no untoward events intervened and provided he made no spectacular blunder. Hence all his friends and advisors warned him to keep out of the campaign and let the Republican Party do the work. So Lincoln worked behind the scenes to keep the Republican Party together, and left it to the Democrats, or rather the South, to commit political suicide. His only public appearance in the campaign was at Springfield in August where, pressed to orate, he simply said: 'It has been my purpose, since I have been placed in my present position, to make no speeches.' This gave him an almost Washingtonian detachment and saved him from misrepresentation. On November 6 Lincoln waited in the telegraph office until his victory in New York, signaled at 2 A.M. on the morning of the 7th, made his election certain. He got 1,866,452 votes against Douglas' 1,376,957; there had been 849,781 for Breckinridge and 588,879 for Bell. The result, in terms of electoral college votes, was somewhat different: Lincoln got 180, for he carried all but one of the free states, dividing New Jersey with Douglas (all the latter got, apart from Missouri). Breckinridge won all the slave states except Virginia, Tennessee, and Kentucky in the Upper South, which went to Bell. In ten of the Southern states Lincoln did not receive a single vote. Moreover, he was elected on a minority vote of 39.9 percent, the lowest since J. Q. Adams won the unlucky, ominous election of 1824. The nation was indeed divided.

If we now turn to Lincoln's principal opponent in the duel for the soul of America, we will see why it was that the South, having held so many cards in its hand, allowed itself to be exasperated into throwing away the game in a fit of temper. Jefferson Davis, Calhoun's political heir insofar as he had one, was president of the Confederacy from its reckless birth to its pitiful death-agony. He was flawed and blinkered both as man and as statesman, with huge weaknesses of judgment and capacity. But he was not small in any sense of the word. Six feet tall, slim, ramrod-straight, 'soldierly bearing, a fine head and intellectual face ... a look of culture and refinement about him,' he 'could infuse courage into the bosom of a coward, and self-respect and pride into the breasts of the most abandoned.' To his cause he brought a passion 'concentrated into a white heat, that threw out no sparks, no fitful flashes, glowing [instead] with an intense but not an angry glare.' These judgments by contemporaries were endorsed even by critics and enemies. Thomas Cobb of Georgia said, 'He is not great ... [but] the power of will he has, made him all he is.'

The conventional portrait of Davis, the man driven by willpower, is of an old-fashioned Southern gentleman. That is inexact. His middle name was Finis because he was born when his mother was forty-seven, the last of ten. He had a modern-style upbringing: his father rejected any



kind of corporal punishment, and the boy was cosseted by big sisters, and taught riding by his adoring big brothers, three of whom were old enough to have fought in the 1812 War. Jeff Davis was brought up to a simple, absolutist patriotism of a kind we would now find incomprehensible. When his father died, Davis' elder brother Joseph, a successful Mississippi cotton planter, took over the role of mentor and guardian. After an education under the Roman Catholic Dominican friars at Wilkinson County Academy and at the famous Transylvania University in Lexington, Kentucky, Davis went to West Point on the nomination of the War Secretary, Calhoun, thereafter his political model and leader. As a frontier officer, he fought the Indians and personally took the surrender of Black Hawk, made peace among the miners and war against his superiors. Stiff-necked and bellicose, he admitted: 'In my youth I was over-willing to fight.' His career was checkered with rows, courts-martial, and frustration at slow promotion. When he married the daughter of General Zachary Taylor, he left the army and Brother Joseph set him up as a planter. This too was frustrating. Joseph owned 11,000 acres and was a wealthy man, but the 800-acre Hurricane Estate he 'lent' or half-gave to Davis was small by Mississippi standards and he remained his brother's dependant.

It is important to grasp that, when Davis spoke of the benevolence of the slave-system in the South, he believed what he said totally and spoke from experience. Joseph, as a planter, was enlightened. None of his slaves was ever flogged. The slaves judged and punished themselves. Families were kept together. One testified: 'We had good grub and good clothes and nobody worked hard.' Another: 'Dem Davises never let nobody touch one of their niggers.' The community at Davis Bend on the river, said General Taylor, was 'a little paradise.' Davis shared to the full his brother's attitudes and was anti-blood sports to boot. He treated his black body-servant, James Pemberton, with exquisite courtesy and put him in charge of his plantation when he was away. He made a point of returning any salute from a black with an elaborate bow: 'I cannot allow any negro to outdo me in courtesy.' Not for him the swaggering society of New Orleans or Charleston. His only genuflection to Southern male habits was a propensity to challenge critics to duels, though he never actually fought any. To sleep with one of his slaves would have been to him an abomination. When his beloved wife Sarah Taylor died of malaria, he acquired a sadness that never left him, though he eventually married again, a beautiful girl, Varina, half his age. His melancholy was aggravated by poor health, including terrifying facial pains and chronic hepatitis which eventually left him blind in one eye. He suffered from insomnia and his chief pleasure was reading-Virgil, Byron, Burns, and Scott.

The overriding weakness of this seemingly civilized and well-meaning man was lack of imagination, compounded by ignorance. America in the 1840s and 1850s was already an immense country, but travel was still difficult, especially in the South, and expensive. It is hard for us to grasp how little Americans knew of the societies outside their region or indeed locality. Davis paid only one visit to New England and was surprised to find the people friendly. Until he became president of the Confederation he knew little of the South beyond his own part of Mississippi. He assumed that the treatment of slaves at Davis Bend was typical and refused to believe stories of cruelty: that was simply Northern malice and abolitionist invention. He was, like so many other well-read and well-meaning people in the South, the victim of its own policy of concentrating its limited media and publishing resources on indoctrinating its own people, and telling the rest of the world to go to hell. Davis was self-indoctrinated too; he had a passion for certitude.

On this narrowness of vision he built up a political philosophy which did not admit of argument. Blacks, he insisted, were better off as slaves in the South than as tribesmen in Africa:

'I have no fear of insurrection, no more dread of our slaves than I have of our cattle ... Our slaves are happy and contented.' Not only was it in the interests of blacks to be slaves, it was likewise to their benefit that slavery be extended. Davis never possessed more than seventy-four slaves and knew all of them well: it was his policy. He maintained it was wrong for whites to own more slaves than they could personally care for, as he did. If cruelty occurred, it was because sheer numbers undermined the personal owner-slave relationship. So the more slavery spread out geographically, the more humane it would be. This was his argument for dismantling Mexico, turning its territories into new states, and making slavery lawful there and even north of the Missouri Compromise line. Slave-owners must be able to take their slaves with them into new territories just as immigrants had always taken any other form of property with them, such as wagons or cattle. Joseph had drilled into him the fundamental principle: 'Any interference with the unqualified property of the owner in a slave was an abolition principle.'

Davis believed that the Southern case for slavery and its extension rested on firm moral foundations. Indeed he was morally aggressive, accusing the North of hypocrisy: 'You were the men who imported these negroes into this country. You enjoyed the benefits resulting from their carriage and sale; and you reaped the largest profits accruing from the introduction of the slaves.' Abolition was nothing but 'perfidious interference in the rights of other men.' He did not see the agreements of 1820 and 1850 as 'compromises' but as Southern concessions, the limit to which the South could reasonably be expected to go. Further limitations on slavery were merely Northern attacks on the South motivated not by morality but by envy and hatred: 'The mask is off: the question is before us. It is a struggle for political power.' The Constitution was on the South's side. The federal government had no natural authority: 'It is the creature of the States. As such it can have no inherent power; all it possesses was delegated by the States.' If what Davis called 'the self-sustaining majority' continued its oppressive and unlawful campaign against the South, the 'Confederation' as he called it should be dissolved: 'We should part peaceably and avoid staining the battlefields of the Revolution with the blood of a civil war.'

This philosophy, inherited from Calhoun and instilled by Brother Joseph, reexamined by Davis in his lonely musings, polished and consolidated over the years, he regarded as axiomatic. It is significant that he never saw himself as an extremist especially over breaking up the Union. He wrote: 'I was slower and more reluctant than others. I was behind the general opinion of the people [of Mississippi] as to the propriety of prompt secession.' But when his basic assumptions about slavery were challenged, he responded with paranoia. This sprang not just from his Southern conditioning but from a dominant streak of self-righteousness in his character. A variety of incidents in his early life, in the army, in his domestic and public quarrels show that, once he had made up his mind and adopted a position, he treated any attempt to argue him out of it as inadmissible, an assault on his integrity. As he put it to his second wife, Varina: 'I cannot bear to be suspected or complained of, or misconstrued after explanation.' That sentence sums up the tragedy of his life. Senator Isaac P. Walker of Wisconsin noted: 'He speaks with an air which seems to say "Nothing more can be said, I know it all, it must be as I think." ' Davis himself said he ignored press criticism: 'Proud in the consciousness of my own rectitude, I have looked upon it with the indifference which belongs to the assurance that I am right.'

All this suggests that Davis was better suited to a military than a political life. That was Varina's view: 'He did not know the arts of a politician, and would not practice them if understood.' Davis got into politics in his later thirties but the Mexican War gave him the chance to resume his army career. He was elected colonel of a regiment of Mississippi volunteers, had the foresight to equip them with the new Whitney rifle, was favored by his commanding general

and former father-in-law, General Taylor, saw action at Monterrey and Buena Vista, and distinguished himself in both these much publicized battles. The Mexican War, as we have noted, was the great proving ground for future American bigshots, both political and military. Davis was described by General Bliss, Taylor's chief-of-staff, as 'the best volunteer officer in the Army,' and President Polk offered him a general's commission. But he had been badly wounded in the foot at Buena Vista and chose instead to be nominated to the Senate.

In politics Davis found it natural to be called the 'Calhoun of Mississippi,' and, when the old fire-eater died, to assume Elijah's Mantle. It was equally natural, when his friend Franklin Pierce became president, to accept office as war secretary, where he became perhaps the most powerful voice in the Cabinet and a forceful administrator. But his weakness quickly made its appearance. He got into a series of arguments with his general-in-chief, Winfield Scott, mostly over trivialities. Scott was arrogant and self-righteous too, but Davis, as his political superior, might have been expected to behave with more sense and dignity. One of Davis' letters to Scott ran on for twenty-seven foolscap pages and was contemptuously described by its recipient as 'a book.' Everything fell into the hands of the press and made amazing reading. Scott closed his last letter: 'Compassion is always due to an enraged imbecile,' to which Davis replied that he was 'gratified to be relieved of the necessity of further exposing your malignity and depravity.' Reading this correspondence helps to explain why the Civil War occurred and, still more, why it lasted so long. It certainly suggests that Davis was not a man fit to hold supreme office at any time, let alone during a war to decide the fate of a great nation.

It was not that Davis was unperceptive. In some ways his views were advanced. He tended to take the progressive line on everything except slavery. That pillar of Bostonian anti-slavery rectitude, John Quincy Adams, commended him warmly for helping to get the Smithsonian set up. And Davis was well aware of some of the South's weaknesses, especially its lack of industry. Its one big industrial complex was the Tredegar Iron Works on the banks of the James River near Richmond. It had been, as it were, replicated from the South Wales Tredegar works in the 1830s, to serve the Southern railroads. It also made cannon, chains, and iron ships, and by 1859 was the fourth-largest ironworks in the United States, employing 800 people. But it was near bankruptcy because it was uncompetitive. It got its iron ore from Pennsylvania because Virginian sources were exhausted, and virtually all its copper and bronze and many parts and machinery had to be bought in the North or from abroad. It had to pay extra wages because white industrial workers hated employment in a slave state. They particularly objected to working alongside slaves, fearing to be replaced by them. The works was notable for high labor turnover, chronic labor shortages, and neglect of innovation. It survived at all only because it gave liberal, risky credit to Southern railroads. It seemed enormous, and so reassuring, to Southerners, but in the nation as a whole it was marginal. There was in the South no central, up-to-date industrial magnet to attract skilled labor and so compensate for the many deterrents.

By contrast, a hundred miles or so to the north there was the beginning of a vast manufacturing complex stretching from Wilmington to New York. From 1840 to 1860 this megalopolis was the most rapidly growing large industrial area in the world-and it was this complex which made inevitable, in military-economic terms, the South's ruin. Davis, knowing the South's weakness, began urging it, from about 1850 on, to start stockpiling arms and ammunition, to encourage immigration from the North, or to build railroads to transport its agricultural products itself, to create an industrial base to manufacture its own cotton goods, shoes, hats, blankets, and so on, and to provide state support for higher education so that its sons were not forced to go to Northern universities and adopt their ideas. What finally happened to the

South in the 1950s, Davis was urging in the 1850s. But slavery repelled capital and white skilled labor alike, and Southerners themselves did not want industrialization for many different reasons, most of all because they felt instinctively that it would mean the end of slavery and plantation culture. So Davis got no response to his pleas. In any case they were half-hearted and confused. His wish to 'educate' the South conflicted with his insistence that Southern textbooks be rewritten to eliminate opinions in conflict with the South's view of slavery, his desire that the South's children should learn from books which were 'Politically Correct' and 'indoctrinate their minds with sound impressions and views' and his determination to kick out 'Yankee schoolteachers.' Not for nothing did the New York Herald call him 'the Mephistopheles of the South.'

By seceding from the Democratic Party, the Southern states threw away their greatest single asset, the presidency. Then, by seceding from the Union, they lost everything, slavery first and foremost. Bell was right in proclaiming, throughout the election, that the only way the South could retain slavery was by staying in the Union. But that demanded 'a change of heart, radical and thorough, of Northern opinion in relation to slavery.' Up to the beginning of the campaign, Davis, realizing that Lincoln would win, made a desperate effort to get all the other three candidates to withdraw in favor of a compromise figure—a sympathetic Northerner, perhaps. Breckinridge and Bell agreed to stand down and so did Douglas' running mate, Benjamin Fitzpatrick. But Douglas, ambitious and self-centered—and blind—to the end, flatly refused. Thus Douglas made the Civil War inevitable. Or did he? Was it inevitable once Lincoln won?

One of the villains was Buchanan, the outgoing President, who in effect did nothing between the beginning of November 1860 and the handover to Lincoln in March. His message to Congress denied the right of secession but blamed the Republicans for the crisis—two incompatible opinions. He was lazy, frightened, confused, and pusillanimous. Thus four vital months were lost. His military dispositions, insofar as he made any, were inflammatory rather than conciliatory. Only two states wanted a civil war—South Carolina and Massachusetts. In the early 1830s over Nullification, the South California extremists failed to carry anyone else with them, the rest of the South being prepared to trust President Jackson, to see the South got justice. But now they would trust nobody. All the same, an armed struggle might have been averted. Had South Carolina persuaded only four or five other states to go with it, the secession would have fizzled out. If all fifteen of the slave states had seceded, the North would have been forced to give way and sue for a compromise. As it was, just enough joined South California to insure war. The real tragedy for America is that Lincoln, the man the South most hated, was exactly the man to get it to see reason, had he been given the chance. If he had been enabled by the Constitution to move into the White House immediately after his election, and assume full powers, all the weight of his intellect, and all the strength of his character, and all the genius of his imagination could have been brought to bear on the problem of exorcizing the South's fears. Instead, he had to sit, powerless (he used the interval to grow a beard), while the Union disintegrated, and by the time he took up command the process of secession was already taking place, and was irrevocable.

As early as November 10, only three days after the election results were received, the South Carolina legislature unanimously authorized the election of a state convention on December 6, to decide 'future relations between the State and the Union.' Eight days later, Georgia followed suit. Within a month every state of the South had taken the initial steps towards secession. When Congress reassembled on December 3, it listened to a plaintive grumble from Buchanan, who

said that he deplored talk of secession, but nothing could be done, by him anyway, to prevent it. Three days later South Carolina elected an overwhelmingly secessionist state convention which on December 20 declared that the state was no longer part of the Union. Davis himself tried to promote a compromise, then despaired of it. On January 7 the secession convention of his own state, Mississippi, met and on the 9th voted 84 to 15 to leave the Union. Two days before, the senators from Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, and Mississippi had met in caucus in Washington and decided to meet again in Montgomery, Alabama on February 15 to form a government. Like other senators, Davis made an emotional speech of farewell in Congress. Going south through Tennessee, he was asked to make a speech at his hotel, Crutchfield House, and did so. Whereupon the brother of the hotel's owner, William Crutchfield, told him he was a 'renegade and a traitor ... We are not to be hoodwinked and bamboozled and dragged into your Southern, codfish, aristocratic, Tory-blooded South Carolina mobocracy.' The crowd, many of them armed, backed these accusations-there was strong Union sentiment in the back-country and in the mountains.

Davis was promptly chosen general in Mississippi's army. Many, including his wife, wanted him to be commander-in-chief of the confederate forces, rather than president. He agreed with Varina. Meeting on February 4, the six states which had already seceded, South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, and Alabama, drew up a new constitution, which was virtually the same as the old except it explicitly recognized slaves as property. Robert Toombs (1810-85), Senator from Georgia, might have got the presidency, but he got publicly drunk several nights running. In the end Davis was chosen more or less unanimously. His journey from his home near Vicksburg to his inauguration in Montgomery was a sinister foretaste of the problems the South faced. The two cities were less than 300 miles apart, along a direct east-west road, but Davis, trying to get there more quickly by rail, had to travel north into Tennessee, then across northern Alabama to Chattanooga, south to Atlanta, and from there southwest to Montgomery, a distance of 850 miles around three-and-one-half sides of a square on half a dozen different railroads using three different gauges. No railway trunk lines bound the rebellious states together. The South had no infrastructure." Its railroad system was designed solely to get cotton to sea for export. There was virtually no interstate trade in the South, and so no lines to carry it. It took five railroad lines to get from Columbia to Milledgeville, for example; the railroads in Florida, Texas, and most of Louisiana had no connection at all with the other Southern states. The functional geography of the South, both natural and manmade, was against secession.

In his inaugural, Davis said the Confederacy was born of 'a peaceful appeal to the ballot box.' That was not true. No state held a referendum. It was decided by a total of 854 men in various secession conventions, all of them selected by legislatures, not by the voters. Of these 157 voted against secession. So 697 men, mostly wealthy, decided the destiny of 9 million people, mostly poor. Davis said he was anxious to show that secession was 'not a rich man's war and a poor man's fight,' but the fact is it was the really rich, and the merely well-to-do, both of whom had a major interest in the struggle, who decided to commence it, not the rest of the whites, who had no direct economic interest at all. And the quality of Southern leadership, intellectually at least, was poor. The reasons for secession, put into the declarations of each states, made no sense, and merely reflected the region's paranoia. Mississippi's said: 'the people of the Northern states have assumed a revolutionary position towards the Southern states.' They had 'insulted and outraged our citizens when traveling amongst them ... by taking their servants and liberating the same.' They had 'encouraged a hostile invasion of a Southern state to incite insurrection, murder and rapine.' South Carolina's was equally odd, ending in a denunciation of Lincoln, 'whose opinions

and purposes are hostile to slavery.' But most presidents of the United States had been hostile to slavery, not least Jefferson, the man whose opinions on the subject Lincoln most often quoted.

The Southern leaders assumed there were absolute differences between the peoples of North and South. In fact allegiances were of whom were killed-and her emotional sympathies were certainly with the South. Varina Davis' male relatives, the Howells, were all in the Union Army. Senator John J. Crittenden of Kentucky (1787-1863), who did his best to promote compromise, had two sons, both major generals, one serving in the Confederate, the other in the Union army. The best Union agent in Europe, Robert J. Walker, was a former senator from Mississippi, while the best Confederate agent, Caleb House, came from Massachusetts. General Robert E. Lee's nephew, Samuel P. Lee, commanded the Union naval forces on the James River, while another Union admiral, David Glasgow Farragut (1801-70), the outstanding maritime commander in the war, was born in Tennessee and lived in Virginia. The examples are endless. The young Theodore Roosevelt was made to pray for the North, the young Woodrow Wilson prayed for the South. There were, literally, millions of divided families, and the number of extremists on both sides probably did not amount to a hundred thousand all told.

It became a necessity, Jefferson Davis wrote to a Northern friend, January 20, 1861, 'to transfer our domestic institutions from hostile to friendly hands, and we have acted accordingly.' Lincoln could not exactly be called friendly towards the South-he was, rather, exasperated and sad. But he was not hostile. Southern leaders like Davis would not accept that Lincoln was hated by many abolitionists, like Wendell Phillips (1811-84), the rich Boston humanitarian ideologue, who called him 'the Slavehound of Illinois.' The most the Lincoln Republicans could do, and proposed to do, was to contain slavery. To abolish it in the 1860s required a constitutional amendment, and a three-quarters majority; as there were fifteen slave states, this was unobtainable. A blocking majority of this magnitude would still have been sufficient in the second half of the 20th century. It is worth noting that, at the time of secession, Southerners and Democrats possessed a majority in both houses of Congress, valid till 1863 at least. If protecting slavery was the aim, secession made no sense. It made the Fugitive Slave Act a dead letter and handed the territories over to the Northerners. The central paradox of the Civil War was that it provided the only circumstances in which the slaves could be freed and slavery abolished.

War was so obviously against the rational interests of the South that Lincoln did not consider it likely. His concern was to prevent the Republicans from appeasing the South by abandoning their platform and embracing Douglas' popular-sovereignty doctrine. Over and over again he repeated his message to Republican congressmen: 'Have none of it. Let there be no compromise on the question of *extending* sovereignty. Stand firm. The tug has to come and better now, than any time hereafter.' By tug, he meant confrontation and crisis, not war. If he had thought in terms of war when appointing his Cabinet, Lincoln would never have made Simon Cameron (1799-1889) his Secretary of War. Cameron was a millionaire banker and railroad tycoon, who was the overwhelming boss of Pennsylvanian Republicanism and he was appointed for entirely political reasons (his handling of army contracts led Lincoln to sack him and to a vote of censure in the House). Nor, probably, would he have made Seward Secretary of State and Chase Treasury Secretary. Lincoln knew a vertiginous time was ahead and he opted for a strong government rather than a warlike one.

Seward, a clever, persuasive man, believed the administration's best strategy was to leave the rebellious Deep South to stew in its own Confederate juice and concentrate on wooing the other slave states to remain faithful to the Union. But that would have meant letting the seven go, and Lincoln was determined to preserve the Union as it was, at all costs. That was the only thing

which, at this stage, he could see clear, and he stuck to it. This strategy, in turn, set off the mechanism of the war. On asserting its independence in December 1860, South Carolina called on the custodians of all federal property within the state to surrender it. Major Robert Anderson, the federal commander of the fortifications in Charleston Harbor, concentrated his forces in Fort Sumter and refused to act without instructions from Washington; President Buchanan, lax in most ways, likewise declined to have the federal forces evacuated. General F. W. Pickens of South Carolina thereupon trained his guns on the Fort. When Lincoln took over, the Cabinet deliberated on what to do. The Commander-in-Chief, General Scott, who might have been expected to be anxious to poke his old 'imbecile' enemy Davis in the eye, in fact advised doing nothing. Five out of seven members of Lincoln's Cabinet agreed with him. But Lincoln decided otherwise. His decision to send a relieving expedition by sea, carrying food but no arms or ammunition, and to inform General Pickens of what he was doing, demonstrated his policy of upholding the Union at any cost. The response of the Confederate forces, to fire on the Fort, and the flag, was a decision to secede at any cost. That began the war on April 12, 1861.

As the South was arming and recruiting, Lincoln had no alternative but to take steps too. 'The star-spangled banner has been shot down by Southern troops,' he said, and on April 15 asked for 75,000 volunteers (answered by 92,000 within days). This move by Lincoln was, curiously enough, the 'last straw' which pushed Virginia (and so North Carolina) into secession. This, too, was undemocratic since the state convention voted 88 to 55, on April 17, to submit an Ordinance of Secession to a popular plebiscite. However, the governor put the state under Confederate command without waiting for the vote. This event was decisive for many reasons. Virginia was the most important of the original colonies, the central element in the Revolutionary War, and the provider of most of the great early presidents, as well as of the US Constitution itself. For the state which had done more than any other to bring the Union into existence to leave it in such an underhand and unconstitutional manner was shabby beyond belief. It is astonishing that the Virginians put up with it. And of course many of them did not. The people of West Virginia, who had no slaves, broke off and formed a separate state of their own, acknowledged by Congress as the State of West Virginia in 1863.

General Lee, the state's most distinguished soldier, had been asked by Lincoln to become commander-in-chief of the Union forces. This was a wise choice and would have been a splendid appointment, for Lee was decent, honorable, and sensible as well as skillful. But Lee was a Virginian before anything else and he waited to see what Virginia did. When Virginia seceded, he reluctantly resigned his commission in the US Army, which he had served for thirty-two years. It seems to us quixotic but he felt he had no other option. He wrote to his sister in Baltimore and his brother in Washington DC: 'With all my devotion to the Union, and the feeling of loyalty and duty of an American citizen, I have not been able to make up my mind to raise my hand against my relatives, my children, my home.'

Arkansas seceded on May 6. The next day Tennessee formed an 'alliance' with the Confederacy, the only decision to be endorsed by popular vote. North Carolina, sandwiched between Virginia and South Carolina, had not much choice and joined on May 20. Missouri was divided but refused to join the Confederacy. Delaware was solid for the Union but shaky on coercion. Maryland too protested against coercion but declined to summon a state convention and so remained in the Union. Kentucky initially refused to send volunteers at Lincoln's request but by the end of 1861 had joined the Union war-effort. So only eleven out of the fifteen slave states formed the Confederacy.

In demographic terms, the Confederacy was at a huge disadvantage. The census of 1860 showed that the eleven Confederate states had a population of 5,449,467 whites and 3,521,111 slaves. Nearly 1 million of the white males served, of whom 300,000 were casualties. The nineteen Union states had a population of 18,936,579 and the four border states a further 2,589,533, plus 429,401 then-slaves, over 100,000 of whom served in the Union army, which altogether numbered 1,600,000. Moreover, during the war nearly a million further immigrants arrived in the North, of whom 400,000 served in the Union army. Some of the best Northern troops were German, Irish, and Scandinavian, as were some of the smartest officers-Franz Sigel, Carl Schurz (Germans), Philippe de Trobriand (French), Colonel Hans Christian Heg and Hans Matson (Norwegian), and Generals Corcoran and Meagher (Irish). The Union economic preponderance was even more overwhelming. If the North-South ratio in free males aged eighteen to sixty was 4.4:1, it was 10:1 in factory production, iron 15:1, coal 38:1, firearms production 32:1, wheat 412:1, corn 2:1, textiles 14:1, merchant-ship tonnage 25:1, wealth 3:1, railroad mileage 2.4:1, farm acreage 3:1, draft animals 1.8:1, livestock 1.5:1. The only commodity in which the South was ahead was cotton, 24:1, but this advantage was thrown away by overproduction (in the South) and stockpiling (outside the South) in the endless build-up to the crisis. Just before the war, Senator James Henry Hammond of South Carolina boasted: 'Cotton, rice, tobacco and naval stores command the world; and we have the sense to know it, and are sufficiently Teutonic to carry it out successfully. The North without us would be a motherless calf, bleating about, and die of mange and starvation.' The assumption in the South was that the coming of war would lead to an expansion of its economy, and a contraction of the North's. In fact, as was foreseeable, the reverse occurred. The South's economy shrank, the North's expanded, even faster than in the 1850s.

The South compounded its difficulties by weaknesses in its handling of finance, diplomacy, and internal politics, all of which had severe military consequences. First, it is a curious historical fact that most civil wars are lost by one side running out of money, and the American Civil War was an outstanding case in point. The South had no indigenous gold or silver supplies and no bullion reserves, and was entirely dependent on its own paper money. The North had the enormous advantage of a large, well-trained navy and, almost from the start, was able to impose a blockade, often ineffective at first but progressively tighter as the war proceeded. As a result, import and export taxes, the way of raising money traditionally preferred by the South, raised little. Import duties brought in only about \$1 million in specie during the entire war, and the Union navy was so vigilant in running down cotton-export ships that only about \$6,000 in specie was collected from cotton exports. With its limited capacity to produce armaments, the South was forced to shop abroad. France, always happy to supply arms to dodgy regimes, duly obliged but insisted on being paid in specie (as did independent gun-runners).

As his Treasury secretary, Davis appointed C. G. Memminger, a local South Carolina politician. This was an extraordinary choice: Memminger had virtually no experience of finance and, more important, lacked the creative ingenuity to surmount the almost insuperable difficulties of raising hard cash.' An initial war-loan of 8 percent, organized by a consortium of New Orleans and Charleston banks, raised \$15 million in specie, all of which was immediately sent abroad to buy arms. But subsequent loans were relative, then total, failures. A cottonbacked foreign loan, organized in London by Erlangers in January 1863, brought in disappointingly little, as a result of high charges and an imprudent attempt to bull the market. Hence Memminger resorted to the device of the improvident through the ages-printing paper. By the summer of 1861, \$1 million of Confederate paper currency was circulating. By December it was over \$30



million; by March 1862 \$100 million; August 1862 \$200 million; December 1862 \$450 million. In 1863 it doubled again to \$900 million and continued to increase, though later figures are mere guesswork. Gold was quoted at a premium over paper as early as May 1861 and was 20 percent premium by the end of the year. By the end of 1862 a gold dollar bought three paper ones and, by the end of 1862, no fewer than twenty.

In July 1846 Memminger, accused of making private profits on cotton-running, resigned in disgust, and Davis then appointed a real economic wizard called George A. Trenholm, a Charleston cottonmerchant who had proved extraordinarily adept at selling the South's staple. But by then it was too late: the South's finances were beyond repair. Inflation became runaway, the gold dollar being quoted at 40 paper ones in December 1864 and 100 shortly thereafter. Inflation, if nothing else, doomed the South. In the second half of the war Southerners showed an increasing tendency to use the North's money, as it inspired more confidence. Towards the end people cut themselves off from paper money altogether, and bought and sold in kind-even the government raised taxes and loans in produce. The only people with means to move around were those who had kept gold dollars. Davis was like everyone else. In the final weeks of the Confederacy he sent his wife Varina off with his last remaining pieces of gold, keeping one five-dollar coin for himself.

The South's diplomacy was as inept as its finance. Davis did not initially see the need for a major diplomatic effort since he believed the economic arguments would speak for themselves. The key country was Britain, because in the 1850s it had imported 80 percent of its cotton from America, and it had the world's largest navy, which could break the Union blockade if it wished. Davis accepted Senator Hammond's assertion: 'You dare not make war upon our cotton. No power on earth dares make war on it. Cotton is King.' But overproduction and stockpiling in anticipation of war led to a 40 percent oversupply of cotton in the British market by April 1861, before the war had properly begun. Britain got cotton from Egypt and India and, later in the war, from the United States itself, via the North. In the years 1860-5 Britain managed to import over 5 million bales of cotton from America, little of which was bought from the South directly. British manufacturers welcomed the opportunity to work off stocks and free themselves from dependence on Southern producers, whom they found difficult and arrogant. It is true the cotton blockade caused some unemployment in Lancashire and Yorkshire-by the end of 1862 it was calculated that 330,000 men and women were out of work in Britain as a result of the conflict. But they had no sympathy for the South. They identified with the slaves. They sent a petition to Lincoln: 'Our interests are identical with yours. We are truly one people ... If you have any ill-wishers here, be assured they are chiefly those who opposed liberty at home, and that they will be powerless to stir up quarrels between us.' Lincoln called their words 'An instance of sublime Christian heroism.'

The truth is, by opposing slavery and by insisting on the integrity of the Union, Lincoln identified himself and his cause with the two most powerful impulses of the entire 19th century-liberalism and nationalism. He did not have to work at a powerful diplomatic effort-though he did-as world opinion was already on his side, doubly so after he issued his Emancipation Proclamation. It was the South which needed to put an effort into winning friends. It was not forthcoming. Davis hated Britain anyway. The South had many potential friends there-the Conservative Party, especially its leading families, newspapers like *The Times*, indeed a surprisingly large section of the press. But he did not build on this. The envoys he sent were extremists, who bellowed propaganda rather than insinuated diplomacy. The British Prime Minister, Lord Palmerston, was a Whig-Liberal nationalist who played it cool: on May 13,

118611 he declared 'strict and impartial neutrality.' The North's naval blockade caused much less friction with Britain than the South had hoped, because it conformed strictly to British principles of blockading warfare, which the Royal Navy was anxious to see upheld for future use. The one really serious incident occurred in November 1861, when the famous explorer Captain Charles Wilkes (1798-1877), commanding the USS *San Jacinto*, stopped the British steamer *Trent* and seized two Confederate commissioners, John Slidell and James M. Mason. This caused an uproar in Britain, but Seward, as secretary of state, quickly defused the crisis by ordering the men's release, on the ground that Wilkes should have brought the ship into harbor for arbitration.

Added to improvident economics and incompetent diplomacy, the South saddled itself with a political system which did not work. It was a martyr to its own ideology of states' rights. Although Davis and his fellow-Southerners were always quoting history, they did not know it. Had they studied the early history of the republic objectively, they would have grasped the point that the Founding Fathers, in drawing up the Constitution, had to insure a large federal element simply because the original provisional system did not work well, in war or in peace. The Confederacy thus went on to repeat many of the mistakes of the early republic. Each state raised its own forces, and decided when and where they were to be used and who commanded them. To many of their leaders, the rights of their state were more important than the Confederacy itself. Men from one state would not serve under a general from another. Senior commanders with troops from various states had to negotiate with state governments to get more men. Davis had to contend with many of the identical difficulties, over men and supplies and money, which almost overwhelmed Washington himself in the 1770s-and he had none of Washington's tact, solidity, resourcefulness, and moral authority. Everyone blamed him, increasing his paranoia. As a former military man and war secretary, he thought he knew it all and tried to do everything himself. When he set up his office, he had only one secretary. His first Secretary of War, Leroy P. Walker, was a cipher. Visitors noticed Davis summoned him by ringing a desk bell, and Walker then trotted in 'exhibiting a docility that dared not say "nay" to any statement made by his chief.' Congress refused to take account of any of his difficulties and behaved irresponsibly-it was composed mainly of vainglorious extremists. Davis had more trouble with his congress than any Union president, except possibly Tyler. He vetoed thirty-eight Bills and all but one later passed with Congress overriding his veto. Lincoln had to use the veto only three times, and in each case it stuck.

But many of Davis' difficulties were of his own making. His constant illnesses did not help, as during them he became short-tempered and dictatorial. As his absurd row with Scott showed, he could not distinguish between what mattered and what was insignificant. Virtually all his early appointments, both Cabinet and army, proved bad. Davis resumed personal vendettas going back to the Mexican War and even to his West Point days. In the South, everyone knew each other and most had grudges. In picking senior commanders, Davis favored former West Point classmates, war-service comrades, and personal friends. Things were made even more difficult by each state demanding its quota of generals, and by muddles Davis made over army regulations. A lot of his bitterest rows with colleagues and subordinates had nothing to do with the actual conduct of the war. The Navy Secretary Stephen Mallory (1813-73), a Trinidadian and one of the few Confederate leaders who knew what he was doing, deplored the fact that 'our fate is in the hands of such self-sufficient, vain, army idiots.' Davis was not the man to run difficult generals, and he became almost insensate with rage when he was personally blamed for lack of men and supplies, above all lack of success. Varina admitted: 'He was abnormally sensitive to disapprobation. Even a child's disapproval discomposed him ... and the sense of mortification

and injustice gave him a repellent manner.' Faced with criticism he could not bear, he took refuge in illness.

A lot of Davis' strategic difficulties were his own fault. Despite conscripting 90 percent of its able white manpower, the South was always short of troops. In January 1862 its army rolls numbered 351,418, against a Unionist strength of 575,917. It reached its maximum in January 1864, when 481,180 were counted under the Confederate flag. Thereafter the South's army declined in strength whereas the North's rose, so that in January 1865 the respective numbers were 445,203 and 959,460.<sup>78</sup> That being so, Davis should have concentrated his smaller forces in limited areas. Instead, he took seriously and followed to the letter his inauguration oath to defend every inch of Confederate territory. This was an impossible task. It involved, to begin with, defending over 3,500 miles of coastline, without a navy to speak of. Texas alone had 1,200 miles of border. If Kentucky had seceded, it would have provided a simple water-border. For a time it kept out both sides, but eventually the Unionists menaced the South from there too. Missouri was also divided but its settled eastern reaches, centered on St Louis, were firmly Unionist, and that left an almost indefensible 300-mile straight-line border in northern Arkansas. Hence a large percentage of the Confederate army, perhaps a third or even more, was always employed on non-combative defensive duties when its active commanders were clamoring desperately for troops. It is true that the Unionists also used vast numbers of men on the gradually extending lines of communication-but then they had more men to use.

Early in the war the Confederate capital was moved from Montgomery to Richmond, mainly to insure that Virginia stayed committed to the fight. This was a mixed blessing. The polished Virginians regarded the South Carolinians, who formed the core of the government, as loudmouthed, flashy, dangerous extremists. They looked down their noses at the Davises. The ladies noted Varina's dark color and thick lips, comparing her to 'a refined mulatto cook' and called her the 'Empress,' a reference to the much-despised Eugenie, wife of the French dictator, Napoleon III. The Georgians, especially Thomas Cobb, were hostile to Davis: he was, said Cobb, as 'obstinate as a mule,' and they dismissed J. P. Benjamin (1811-84), the Attorney General and by far the ablest member of the Confederate government, as a 'Jew dog.' Senator Louis T. Wigfall of Texas was a strong Davis supporter until their wives fell out, whereupon Charlotte Wigfall, a South Carolina snob, called Varina 'a coarse, western woman' with 'objectionable' manners, and Wigfall preached mutiny and sedition in the Congress, often when drunk. Confederate Richmond gradually became a snakepit of bitter social and political feuds, and the Davises ceased to entertain.

Once Northern armies began to penetrate Confederate soil, the interests of the states diverged and it was everyone for himself, reflected in Richmond's savage political feuding. It is a curious paradox that ordinary Southerners, who had not been consulted, fought the war with extraordinary courage and endurance, while their elites, who had plunged them into Armageddon, were riven by rancorous factions and disloyalty, and many left the stricken scene long before the end. Davis was too proud, aloof, and touchy to build up his own faction. He thought it beneath him to seek popularity or to flatter men into doing their duty. Hence 'close friends sometimes left shaking their heads or fists, red with anger and determined never to call on him again.'" But at least he went down with the stricken cause, ending up in Unionist fetters.

It may be asked: all this being so, why did the South fight so well? Why did the war last so long? In the first place, it has to be understood that Lincoln was operating under many restraints. He did not seek war, want war, or, to begin with, consider he was in any way gifted to wage it. He

made a lot of mistakes, especially with his generals, but unlike Davis he learned from them. The South was fighting for its very existence, and knew it; there was never any lack of motivation there. The North was divided, bemused, reluctant to go to war; or, rather, composed of large numbers of fanatical anti-slavers and much larger numbers of unengaged or indifferent voters who had no wish to become involved in a bloody dispute about a problem, slavery, which did not affect them directly. Then there were the four border states, all of them slave-owning, whose adherence to the Union it was essential to retain. Lincoln, beginning with a professional army of a mere 15,000, was fighting a war waged essentially for a moral cause, and he had to retain the high moral ground. But he had also to keep the rump of the Union together. That meant he had to be a pragmatist without ever descending into opportunism. His great gift-perhaps the greatest of the many he possessed-was precisely his ability to invest his decisions and arguments with moral seamliness even when they were the product of empirical necessity. He was asked to liberate the slaves-what else was the war about? He answered: it was to preserve the Union. He realized, he knew for a fact, that if he did preserve the Union, slavery would go anyway. But he could not exactly say so, since four of his states wanted to retain it.

Some of Lincoln's generals, for military purposes, began to issue local emancipation decrees, hoping to get the Southern slaves to rise and cause trouble behind Confederate lines. Lincoln had to disavow these efforts as *ultra vires*. He hated slavery. But he loved the Constitution more, writing to a friend in Kentucky:

I am naturally anti-slavery. If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong. I cannot remember when I did not so think and feel, and yet I have never understood that the presidency conferred on me an unrestricted right to act officially on this judgment and feeling. It was in the oath I took that I would, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. I could not take the office without taking the oath. Nor was it my view that I might take an oath to get power, and break the oath in using the power.

He made public his intentions about slavery in an order disavowing an emancipation decree issued by General David Hunter. Declaring it 'altogether void' and rejecting the right of anyone except himself to liberate the slaves, he nonetheless made it publicly clear that such a right might well be invested in his presidential power: 'I further make it known that whether it be competent for me, as Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy, to declare the slaves of any State or States free, and whether at any time and in any case, it shall have become a necessity indispensable to the maintenance of the Government to exercise such supposed power, are questions which, under my responsibility, I reserve to myself, and which I cannot feel justified in leaving to the decision of commanders in the field.'

He followed this up by writing a reply to Horace Greeley, who had published a ferocious editorial in the *New York Tribune*, entitled 'The Prayer of Twenty Millions,' accusing Lincoln of being 'strangely and disastrously remiss' in not emancipating the slaves, adding that it was 'preposterous and futile' to try to put down the rebellion without eradicating slavery. Lincoln replied by return of post, without hesitation or consultation, and for all to read:

My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union and it is not either to save or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some slaves and leaving others alone I would do that. What I do about slavery and the

colored race I do because I believe it helps to save the Union ... I shall do less whenever I believe that what I am doing hurts the cause more whenever I believe doing more helps the cause.

In seeking to keep the Union together, and at the same time do what was right by the slaves, the innocent victims as well as the cause of the huge convulsive struggle, Lincoln was fully aware that the Civil War was not merely, as he would argue, an essentially constitutional contest with religious overtones but also a religious struggle with constitutional overtones. The enthusiasts on both sides were empowered by primarily moral and religious motives, rather than economic and political ones. In the South, there were standard and much quoted texts on negro inferiority, patriarchal and Mosaic acceptance of servitude, and of course St Paul on obedience to masters. In the events which led up to the war, both North and South hurled texts at each other. Revivalism and the evangelical movement generally played into the hands of extremists on both sides. When the war actually came, the Presbyterians, from North and South, tried to hold together by suppressing all discussion of the issue; but they split in the end. The Congregationalists, because of their atomized structure, remained theoretically united but in fact were divided in exactly the same way as the others. Only the Lutherans, the Episcopalians, and the Catholics successfully avoided public debates and voting splits; but the evidence shows that they too were fundamentally divided on a basic issue of Christian principle.

Moreover, having split, the Christian churches promptly went to battle on both sides. Leonidas Polk, Bishop of Louisiana, entered the Confederate army as a major-general and announced: 'It is for constitutional liberty, which seems to have fled to us for refuge, for our hearthstones and our altars that we fight.' Thomas March, Bishop of Rhode Island, preached to the militia on the other side: 'It is a holy and righteous cause in which you enlist ... God is with us ... the Lord of Hosts is on our side.' The Southern Presbyterian Church resolved in 1864: 'We hesitate not to affirm that it is the peculiar mission of the Southern Church to conserve the institution of slavery, and to make it a blessing both to master and slave.' It insisted that it was 'unscriptural and fanatical' to accept the dogma that slavery was inherently sinful: it was 'one of the most pernicious heresies of modern times.'

To judge by the hundreds of sermons and specially composed church prayers which have survived on both sides, ministers were among the most fanatical of the combatants from beginning to end. The churches played a major role in dividing the nation, and it may be that the splits in the churches made a final split in the nation possible. In the North, such a charge was often willingly accepted. Granville Moddy, a Northern Methodist, boasted in 1861: 'We are charged with having brought about the present contest. I believe it is true we did bring it about, and I glory in it, for it is a wreath of glory round our brow.' Southern clergymen did not make the same boast but of all the various elements in the South they did the most to make a secessionist state of mind possible. Southern clergymen were particularly responsible for prolonging the increasingly futile struggle. Both sides claimed vast numbers of 'conversions' among their troops and a tremendous increase in churchgoing and 'prayerfulness' as a result of the fighting.'

The clerical interpretation of the war's progress was equally dogmatic and contradictory. The Southern Presbyterian theologian Robert Lewis Dabney blamed what he called the 'calculated malice' of the Northern Presbyterians and called on God for 'a retributive providence' which would demolish the North. Henry Ward Beecher, one of the most ferocious of the Northern clerical drum-beaters, predicted that the Southern leaders would be 'whirled aloft and plunged downward for ever and ever in an endless retribution.' The New Haven theologian Theodore Thornton Munger declared, during the 'March through Georgia,' that the Confederacy had been

'in league with Hell,' and the South was now 'suffering for its sins' as a matter of 'divine logic.' He also worked out that General McClellan's much criticized vacillations were an example of God's masterful cunning since they made a quick Northern victory impossible and so insured that the South would be much more heavily punished in the end.

As against all these raucous certainties, there were the doubts, the puzzlings, and the agonizing efforts of Abraham Lincoln to rationalize God's purposes. To anyone who reads his letters and speeches, and the records of his private conversations, it is hard not to believe that, whatever his religious state of mind before the war again, he acquired faith of a kind before it ended. His evident and total sincerity shines through all his words as the war took its terrible toll. He certainly felt the spirit of guidance. 'I am satisfied,' he wrote, 'that when the Almighty wants me to do or not to do a particular thing, he finds a way of letting me know it.' He thus waited, as the Cabinet papers show, for providential guidance at certain critical points of the war. He never claimed to be the personal agent of God's will, as everybody else seemed to be doing. But he wrote: 'If it were not for my firm belief in an overriding providence it would be difficult for me, in the midst of such complications of affairs, to keep my reason in its seat. But I am confident that the Almighty has his plans and will work them out; and ... they will be the wisest and the best for us.' When asked if God was on the side of the North, he replied: 'I am not at all concerned about that, for I know the Lord is always on the side of the right. But it is my constant anxiety and prayer that I and this nation should be on the Lord's side.' As he put it, 'I am not bound to win but I am bound to be true. I am not bound to succeed, but I am bound to live up to the light I have.'

Early in the war, a delegation of Baltimore blacks presented him with a finely bound Bible, in appreciation of his work for the negroes. He took to reading it more and more as the war proceeded, especially the Prophets and the Psalms. An old friend, Joshua Speed, found him reading it and said: 'I am glad to see you so profitably engaged.' Lincoln: 'Yes. I *am* profitably engaged.' Speed: 'Well, I see you have recovered from your skepticism [about religion and the progress of the war]. I am sorry to say that I have not.' Lincoln: 'You are wrong, Speed. Take all of this book upon reason that you can, and the balance on faith, and you will live and die a happier and a better man.' As he told the Baltimore blacks: 'This Great Book ... is the best gift God gave to man.' After reading the Bible, Lincoln argued within himself as to what was the best course to pursue, often calling in an old friend like Leonard Swett, to rehearse pros and cons before a sympathetic listener.

Thus arguing within himself, Lincoln incarnated the national, republican, and democratic morality which the American religious experience had brought into existence-probably more completely and accurately than a man committed to a specific church. He caught exactly the same mood as President Washington in his Farewell Message to Congress, and that is one reason why his conduct in the events leading up to the war, and during the war itself, seems, in retrospect-and seemed so to many at the time-so unerringly to accord with the national spirit. Unlike Governor Winthrop and the first colonists, Lincoln did not see the republic as the Elect Nation because that implied it was always right, and the fact that the Civil War had occurred at all indicated that America was fallible. But, if fallible, it was also anxious to do right. The Americas, as he put it, were 'the Almost Chosen People' and the war was part of God's scheme, a great testing of the nation by an ordeal of blood, showing the way to charity and thus to rebirth.

In this spirit Lincoln approached the problem of emancipating the slaves. The moment had to be well chosen not merely to keep the border states in the war, and fighting, but because in a sense it marked a change in the object for which the war was being fought. Lincoln had entered

it, as he said repeatedly, to preserve the Union. But by the early summer of 1862 he was convinced that, by divine providence, the Union was safe, and it was his duty to change the object of the war: to wash away the sin of the Constitution and the Founding Fathers, and make all the people of the United States, black as well as white, free. Providence had guided him to this point; now providence would guide him further and suggest the precise time when the announcement should be made, so as to bring victory nearer.

Lincoln had weighed all the practical arguments on either side some time before he became convinced, for reasons which had little to do with political factors, that the slaves should be declared free, and laid his decision before the Cabinet on July 22. He told his colleagues he had resolved upon this step, and had not called them together to ask their advice but 'to lay the subject-matter of a proclamation before them.' Their response was pragmatic. Edwin M. Stanton (1814-69), Secretary of War, and Edward Bates (1793-1869), Attorney-General, urged 'immediate promulgation' for maximum effect. Chase thought it would unsettle the government's financial position. Postmaster-General Montgomery Blair (1813-83) said it would cost them the fall elections. Lincoln was unperturbed. The decision was taken: all that was now required was guidance over the timing. 'We *mustn't issue it* until after a victory,' he said, many times. That victory came, as he knew it would, on September 17, with Antietam. Five days later, on September 22, the Emancipation Proclamation, the most revolutionary document in United States history since the Declaration of Independence, was made public, effective from January 1, 1863. Despite an initially mixed reception, the ultimate impact of this move on the progress of the war was entirely favorable-as Lincoln, listening to the heeding of providence, knew it would be.

Political considerations-holding the Union together, putting his case before world opinion, in which emancipation played a key part, satisfying his own mind that the war was just and being justly pursued-were not the only considerations for Lincoln, or even the chief ones. The overriding necessity, once the fighting began, was to win, and that Lincoln found the most difficult of all. His problem was not providing the men and the supplies, or the money to pay for them. The money was spent on a prodigious scale, and soon exceeded \$2 million a day. At the outset of the conflict, the US public debt, which had risen slowly since President Jackson wiped it out, was a little under \$70 million. By January 11, 1866, when the end of the insurrection was officially proclaimed, it stood at \$2,773 million. But Congress was willing to vote heavy taxes including, for the first time, a tax on personal incomes of from 3 to 5 percent (it was phased out in 1872). All the same, payments in specie had to be suspended at the end of December 1861, and in February 1862 Lincoln signed an Act making Treasury notes legal tender. This was followed by the issue of greenbacks, so called on account of their color, both simple paper and interest-bearing.

The fluctuations in the value of government paper against gold were at times frenzied, depending on the military news, and some serious mistakes were made. In attempts to reduce inflation, Treasury Secretary Chase went in person to the Wall Street markets and sold gold, and he got Congress to pass an Act prohibiting contracts in gold on pain of fines and imprisonment. This crude and brazen attempt to interfere with the market proved disastrous. Chase was forced to resign, and his successor, William P. Fessenden (1806-69), quickly persuaded Congress to withdraw it. But on the whole inflation was kept under control and some of the wartime measures-the transformation of 1,400 state banks of issue into a much smaller number of national banks, 1863-4, for instance-were highly beneficial and became permanent.

The problem was generals who would fight-and win. General Scott, head of the army, was not a man of the highest wisdom, as we have seen; he was also seventy-five and ultra-cautious. The overall strategy he impressed on Lincoln was to use the navy to blockade the Confederacy, the number of vessels being increased from 90 to 650, and to divide the South by pushing along the main river routes, the Mississippi, the Tennessee, and the Cumberland. But there was a desire among lesser generals, especially Confederate ones, to have a quick result by a spectacular victory, or by seizure of the enemy's capital, since both Richmond and Washington were comparatively near the center of the conflict. In July 1861 one of Davis' warriors, General P. G. T. Beauregard (1818-93), a flashy New Orleans aristo of French descent, who had actually fired the first shots at Sumter, pushed towards Washington in a fever of anxiety to win the first victory. He was joined by another Confederate army under General Joseph E. Johnston (1807-91), and together they overwhelmed the Unionist forces of General Irvin McDowell (1818-85) at Bull Run, July 21, 1861, though not without considerable difficulty. The new Unionist troops ended by running in panic, but the Confederates were too exhausted to press on to Washington.

The battle had important consequences nonetheless. McDowell was superseded by General George B. McClellan (1826-85), a small, precise, meticulous, and seemingly energetic man who knew all the military answers to everything. Unfortunately for Lincoln and the North, these answers added up to reasons for doing nothing, or doing little, or stopping doing it halfway. His reasons are always the same; not enough men, or supplies, or artillery. As the North's overwhelming preponderance in manpower and hardware began to build up, McClellan refused to take advantage of it, by enticing the South into a major battle and destroying its main army. The War Secretary said of him and his subordinates: 'We have ten generals there, every one afraid to fight ... If McClellan had a million men, he would swear the enemy had two million, and then he would sit down in the mud and yell for three.' Lincoln agreed: 'The general impression is daily gaining ground that [McClellan] does not intend to do anything.' At one point Lincoln seems to have seriously believed McClellan was guilty of treason and accused him to his face, but backed down at the vehemence of the general's response. Later, he concluded that McClellan was merely guilty of cowardice. When Lincoln visited the troops with his friend O. M. Hatch, and saw the vast array from a high point, he whispered 'Hatch-Hatch, what is all this?' Hatch: 'Why, Mr Lincoln, this is the Army of the Potomac.' Lincoln (loudly): 'No, Hatch, no. *This is General McClellan's bodyguard.*'

The best thing to be said for McClellan is that he had close links with Allan Pinkerton (1819-84), the Scots-born professional detective, who had opened a highly successful agency in Chicago. During Lincoln's campaign for the presidency, and his inauguration, Pinkerton had organized his protection, and undoubtedly frustrated at least one plot to assassinate him. McClellan employed him to build up a system of army intelligence, part of which worked behind Confederate lines, with great success. It eventually became the nucleus of the federal secret service. But Lincoln seems to have known little of this. He believed, almost certainly rightly, that at Antietam in September 1862, McClellan, with his enormous preponderance, could have destroyed the main Confederate army, had he followed up his initial successes vigorously, and thus shortened the war. So he finally removed his non fighting general, and Pinkerton went with him; and the absence of Pinkerton's thoroughness was the reason why it proved so easy to murder Lincoln in 1865.

First Bull Run had mixed results for the Confederates. It appeared to be the doing of Beauregard, and so thrust him forward: but he proved one of the least effective and most troublesome of the South's generals. In fact the victory was due more to Johnston, who was a



resolute, daring, and ingenious army commander. On April 6-7, 1862, in the first major battle of the war at Shiloh, at Pittsburg Landing in Tennessee, Johnston hurled his 40,000 troops against General Ulysses S. Grant (1822-85), who had only 33,000. The first day's fighting brought overwhelming success to the Confederates but Johnston was wounded towards the end of it. That proved a disaster for the South: not only was their best general to date lost, but Grant turned the tide of battle the next day by leading a charge personally and the Confederates were routed. However, Johnston was not the only man brought to the fore by First Bull Run. During the melee, the officer commanding the South Carolina volunteers rallied his frightened men by pointing to the neighboring brigade commanded by General Thomas J. Jackson (1824-63) and saying: 'There stands Jackson like a stone wall.' The name stuck and Jackson's fame was assured. But it was inappropriate. Jackson was not a defensive commander but a most audacious and determined offensive one, with the true killer instinct of a great general. There was only one way the South might win the war. That was by enveloping and destroying in battle the main Unionist Army of the Potomac, taking Washington and persuading the fainthearts on the Unionist side-there were plenty of them-that the cost of waging the war was too high and that a compromise must be sought. Had Lincoln thus been deserted by a majority in Congress, he would have resigned, and the whole of American history would have been different.

Jackson was an orphan, the son of a bankrupt lawyer from Allegheny, Virginia. He was about as unSouthern as it was possible for a Virginia gentleman to be. As Grant put it, 'He impressed me always as a man of the Cromwell stamp, much more of a New Englander than a Virginian.' He was a Puritan. There is a vivid pen-portrait of him by Mrs James Chesnut, a Richmond lady who kept a war diary. He said to her dourly: 'I like strong drink-so I never touch it.' He sucked lemons instead and their sourness pervaded his being. He had no sense of humor, and tried to stamp out swearing and obscene joking among his men. He was 'an ungraceful horseman mounted on a sorry chestnut with a shambling gait, his huge feet with out-turned toes thrust into his stirrups, and such parts of his countenance as the low visor of his stocking cap failed to conceal wearing a wooden look.' Jackson had no slaves and there are grounds for believing he detested slavery. In Lexington he set up a school for black children, something most Southerners hated-in some states it was unlawful-and persisted in it, despite much cursing and opposition. His sister-in-law, who wrote a memoir of him, said he accepted slavery 'as it existed in the Southern States, not as a thing desirable in itself, but as allowed by Providence for ends it was not his business to determine.'

Yet, as Grant said, 'If any man believed in the rebellion, he did.' Jackson fought with a ferocity and single-minded determination which no other officer on either side matched. Mrs Chesnut records a fellow-general's view: 'He certainly preferred a fight on Sunday to a sermon. [But] failing to manage a fight, he loved next best a long, Presbyterian sermon, Calvinist to the core. He had no sympathy for human infirmity. He was the true type of all great soldiers. He did not value human life where he had an object to accomplish.' His men feared him: 'He gave orders rapidly and distinctly and rode away without allowing answer or remonstrance. When you failed, you were apt to be put under arrest.' He enjoyed war and battle, believing it was God's work, and he was ambitious in a way unusual for Southerners, who were happy-go-lucky except in defense of their beliefs and ways. Jackson would have liked to have been a dictator for righteousness. But, having won the terrifying Battle of Chancellorsville in May 1863, he was shot in the back by men of one of his own brigades, Malone's, who supposedly mistook him in the moonlight for a Yankee. After Jackson's death the Confederacy lost all its battles except Chickamauga.

Jackson was not the only superb commander on the Confederate side. Colonel John Singleton Mosby (1833-1916), who worked behind the Unionist lines, also had the killer instinct. Like many Southern officers, he was a wonderful cavalryman, but he had solid sense too. General Richard Taylor, son of President Taylor, who wrote the best book about the war from inside the Southern high ranks, summed it up: 'Living on horseback, fearless and dashing, the men of the South afforded the best possible material for cavalry. They had every quality but discipline.' Mosby would have none of that nonsense and was the first cavalryman to throw away his saber as useless and pack two pistols instead. He hated the Richmond set-up-'Although a revolutionary government, none was ever so much under the domination of red tape as Richmond'-and that was one reason he chose the sabotage role, remote from the order-chattering telegraph. The damage he did to the Unionist lines of communication was formidable and he was hated accordingly. On Grant's orders, any of his men who were captured were shot. In the autumn of 1864, for instance, General George Custer executed six of them: he shot three, hanged two, and a seventeen-year-old boy, who had borrowed a horse to join Mosby, was dragged through the streets by two men on horses and shot before the eyes of his mother, who begged Custer to treat the boy as a prisoner-of-war. This treatment stopped immediately Mosby began to hang his prisoners in retaliation.

Mosby was 'slender, gaunt and active in figure ... his feet are small and cased in cavalry boots with brass spurs, and the revolvers in his belt are worn with an air of "business." He had piercing eyes, a flashing smile, and laughed often but was always in deadly earnest when fighting. He was the stuff of which Hollywood movies are made and indeed might have figured in one since he lived long enough to see *Birth of a Nation*. He became a myth-figure in the North: he was supposed to have been in the theater when Lincoln was shot, masterminding it, and to have planned all the big railroad robberies, long after the war. But he was the true-life hero of one of the best Civil War stories. During a night-raid he caught General Edwin H. Stoughton naked in bed with a floozie and woke him up roughly. 'Do you know who I am, sir?' roared the general. Mosby: 'Do you know Mosby, General?' Stoughton: 'Yes! Have you got the -- rascal?' Mosby: 'No, but *he has got you!*'

Jackson and Mosby were the only two Confederate generals who were consistently successful. Jackson's death made it inevitable that Lee would assume the highest command, though it is only fair to Lee to point out that he was finally appointed commander-in-chief of the Southern forces only in February 1865, just two months before he was forced to surrender them at Appomattox. Lee occupies a special place in American history because he was the South's answer to the North's Lincoln: the leader whose personal probity and virtuous inspiration sanctified their cause. Like Lincoln, though in a less eccentric and angular manner, Lee looked the part. He radiated beauty and grace. Though nearly six feet, he had tiny feet and there was something feminine in his sweetness and benignity. His fellow-cadets at West Point called him the 'Marble Model.' With his fine beard, tinged first with gray, then white, he became a Homeric patriarch in his fifties. He came from the old Virginian aristocracy and married into it. His father was Henry Lee III, Revolutionary War general, Congressman and governor of Virginia. His wife, Anne Carter, was great-granddaughter of 'King' Carter, who owned 300,000 acres and 1,000 slaves. That was the theory, anyway. In fact Lee's father was also 'Light Horse Harry,' a dishonest land-speculator and bankrupt, who defrauded among others George Washington. President Washington dismissed his claim to be head of the United States Army with the brisk, euphemistic, 'Lacks economy.' Henry was jailed twice and when Robert was six fled to the Caribbean, never to return. Robert's mother was left a penurious widow with many children and the family's

reputation was not improved by a ruffianly stepson, 'Black Horse Harry,' who specialized in adultery.

So Lee set himself quite deliberately to lead an exemplary life and redeem the family honor. That was a word he used often. It meant everything to him. He led a blameless existence at West Point and actually saved from his meager pay at a time when Southern cadets prided themselves on acquiring debts. His high grades meant he joined the elite Corps of Engineers in an army whose chief occupation was building forts. He worked on taming the wild and mighty river Mark Twain described so well. Lee served with distinction in the Mexican War, ran West Point, then commanded the cavalry against the Plains Indians. It was he who put down John Brown's rebellion and reluctantly handed him over to be hanged. He predicted from the start that the 'War between the States,' as the South called, and calls, it, would be long and bloody. All his instincts were eirenic and, the son of an ardent federalist, he longed for a compromise which would save the Union. But, as he watched the Union Washington had created fall apart, he clung to the one element in it which seemed permanent-Virginia, from which both he and Washington had come and to which he was honor-bound. As he put it, 'I prize the Union very highly and know of no personal sacrifice I would not make to preserve it, *save that of honor!*'

Lee was a profound strategist who believed all along that the South's only chance was to entrap the North in a decisive battle and ruin its army. That is what he aimed to do. With Johnston's death he was put in command of the Army of Northern Virginia and ran it for the next three years with, on the whole, great success. He ended McClellan's threat to Richmond (insofar as it was one) in the Seven Days Battle, routed the Unionists at Second Bull Run (August 1862) but was checked at Antietam the following month. He defeated the Unionists again at Fredericksburg in December 1862 and again at Chancellorsville in May 1863. This opened the way for an invasion of Pennsylvania, heart of the North's productive power, which would force it to a major battle. That is how Gettysburg (July 1863) came about. It was what Lee wanted, an encounter on the grandest possible scale, though the actual meeting-point was accidental, both Lee and General George G. Meade (1815-72), the Unionist commander, blundering into it. Lee had strategic genius, but as field commander he had one great weakness. His orders to subordinate generals were indications and wishes rather than direct commands. As his best biographer has put it, 'Lee was a soldier who preferred to suggest rather than from confrontation. He insisted on making possible for others the freedom of thought and action he sought for himself.' This method of commanding a large army sometimes worked for Lee but at Gettysburg it proved fatal. On the first day the Confederate success was overwhelming, and on the second (July 2), General James Longstreet (1821-1904) led the main attack on the Union right but delayed it till 4 P.M. and so allowed Meade to concentrate his main force on the strongpoint of Cemetery Ridge. Some positions were secured, however, including Culp's Hill. Meade's counterattack on the morning of July 3 retook Culp's Hill and confronted Lee with the crisis of the battle. He ordered an attack on Cemetery Ridge but did not make it clear to Longstreet that he wanted it taken at any cost. Jackson would have made no bones about it-take the hill or face court-martial. The charge was led by the division commanded by General George E. Pickett (1825-75), with a supporting division and two further brigades, 15,000 in all. Longstreet provided too little artillery support and the assault force was massacred by enfilading Union artillery, losing 6,000 men. Only half a company of Pickett's charge reached the crest; even so, it would have been enough, and the battle won, if Longstreet had thrown in all his men as reinforcements. But he did not do so and the battle, the culmination of the Civil War on the main central front, was lost. Lee sacrificed a third of his men and the Confederate army was never

again capable of winning the war. 'It has been a sad day for us,' said Lee at one o'clock the next morning, 'almost too tired to dismount.' 'I never saw troops behave more magnificently than Pickett's division ... And if they had been supported as they were to have been-but for some reason not yet fully explained to me, were not-we would have held the position and the day would have been ours.' Then he paused, and said 'in a loud voice': 'Too bad! *Too bad!* OH! TOO BAD!"

General Meade was criticized for not following up Lee's retreating forces immediately and with energy, but that was easier said than done-his own men had been terribly mauled. But he was a reliable general and with him in charge of the main front on the Atlantic coast Lincoln could be satisfied. Meanwhile, the war in the West was at last going in the Union's favor. Lincoln's strategy was to neutralize as much of the South as he could, divide it and cut it into pieces, then subdue each separately. The naval war, despite the North's huge preponderance in ships, did not always go its way. The South equipped commercial raiders who altogether took or sank 350 Northern merchant ships, but this was no more than minor attrition. When the Union forces abandoned the naval yard at Portsmouth, Virginia, at the beginning of the war, they scuttled a new frigate *Merrimac*. The Confederates raised it, renamed it *Virginia*, and clad it in iron. It met the Union ironclad *Monitor* in Hampton Roads on March 9, 1862 in an inconclusive five-hour duel, the first battle of iron ships in history. But the Confederates were not able to get the *Virginia* into the Mexican Gulf, where it might have served a strategic purpose. They stationed more troops guarding its base than it was worth. The South could run the blockade but they never came near breaking it, and the brilliant campaign of Commodore David Farragut in the Gulf finally sealed the mouth of the Mississippi.

To the north, and in the Western theater, General Grant achieved the first substantial Union successes on land when he took Forts Henry and Donelson; and after Shiloh he commanded the Mississippi as far south as Vicksburg. The North now controlled the Tennessee River and the Cumberland and it took New Orleans and Memphis. But the South still controlled zoo miles of the Mississippi between Vicksburg and Port Hudson, Louisiana. Vicksburg was strongly fortified and protected by natural defenses. Attempts to take it, in May-June 1862 and again in December January 1863 failed. In May 1863 Grant made a third attempt, and after a fierce siege in which each side lost 10,000, he forced it to surrender the day after Meade won Gettysburg (July 4). Five days later Port Hudson fell, the entire Mississippi was in Union hands, and the Confederacy was split in two.

In Grant Lincoln at last found a war-winning general, and a man he could trust and esteem. Unlike the others, Grant asked for nothing and did not expect the President to approve his plans in advance and so take the blame if things went wrong.' Grant was an unprepossessing general. Lincoln said: 'He is the quietest little man you ever saw. He makes the least fuss of any man I ever knew. I believe on several occasions he has been in [the Oval Office] a minute or so before I knew he was there. The only evidence you have that he's in any particular place is that he makes things move.' Grant was born in 1822 at Point Pleasant, Ohio. His father was a tanner. In his day West Point was, as he put it, a place for clever, hard-working boys 'from families that were trying to gain advancement in position or to prevent slippage from a precarious place.'

Lee, an aristocrat of sorts, was unusual. In Grant's class of '43 were Longstreet, McClellan, and Sherman, among other Civil War generals-all of them meritocrats. The chief instructor in Grant's day, Dents Hart Mahan-father of the outstanding naval strategist-taught them that 'carrying the war into the heart of the assailant's country is the surest way of making him share its burdens and foil his plans.' Lee was never able to do this-Grant and Sherman did. Grant was

in the heat of the Mexican War, fighting at Palo Alto, Resaca, Monterrey, and Mexico City, and he learned a lot about logistics, later his greatest strength. But he hated and deplored the war, which he regarded as wholly unjust, fought by a Democratic administration in order to acquire more slave states, especially Texas. He saw the Civil War as a punishment on the entire country by God-'Nations, like individuals, are punished for their transgressions. We got our punishment in the most sanguinary and expensive war of modern times.'

Grant was a man with a strong and simple moral sense. He had a first-class mind. He might have made a brilliant writer-both his letters and his autobiography have the marks of genius. He made an outstanding soldier. But there were fatal flaws in his system of self-discipline. All his adult life he fought a battle with alcohol, often losing it. After the Mexican War, in civilian life, he failed as a farmer, an engineer, a clerk, and a debt-collector. In 1861 he was thirty-nine, with a wife, four children, a rotten job, and not one cent to his name, in serious danger of becoming the town drunk. He welcomed the Civil War because he saw it as a crusade for justice. It changed his life. A neighbor said: 'I saw new energies in him. He dropped his stoop-shouldered way of walking and set his hat forward on his forehead in a jaunty fashion.' He was immediately commissioned a colonel of volunteers and, shortly after, brigadier-general. He was not impressive to look at. He was a small man on a big horse, with an ill-kept, scrappy beard, a cigar clamped between his teeth, a slouch hat, an ordinary soldier's overcoat. But there was nothing slovenly about his work. He thought hard. He planned. He gave clear orders and saw to it they were obeyed, and followed up. His handling of movements and supplies was always meticulous. His Vicksburg campaign, though daring, was a model of careful planning, beautifully executed. But he was also a killer. A nice man, he gave no mercy in war until the battle was won. Lincoln loved him, and his letters to Grant are marvels of sincerity, sense, brevity, fatherly wisdom, and support. In October 1863 Lincoln gave Grant supreme command in the West, and in March 1864 he put him in charge of the main front, with the title of General-in-Chief of the Union army and the rank of lieutenant-general, held by no one since Washington and specially revived in Grant's favor by a delighted Congress.

Nevertheless, the war was not yet won, and it is a tribute to the extraordinary determination of people in the South, and the almost unending courage of its soldiers, that, despite all the South's handicaps, and the North's strength, the war continued into and throughout 1864, more desperate than ever. The two main armies, the Army of the Potomac (North) and the Army of Northern Virginia (South) had faced each other and fought each other for three whole years and, as Grant said, 'fought more desperate battles than it probably ever before fell to the lot of two armies to fight, without materially changing the vantage ground of either'-it was, indeed, a murderous foretaste of the impenetrable Western Front of World War One. What to do, then? Grant, after much argument with Lincoln, who steered him away from more ambitious alternatives, determined on a two-pronged strategy. One army under General William T. Sherman (1820-91), who had taken over from Grant as commander-in-chief in the West, would sweep through Georgia and destroy the main east-west communications of the Confederacy. Grant's main army would clear the almost impassable Wilderness Region west of Fredericksburg, Virginia, in preparation for a final assault on Lee's army. The Battle of the Wilderness began on May 5-6, 1864, while on the 7th Sherman launched his assault on Atlanta and so to the sea.

The Wilderness battle proved indecisive, though horribly costly in men, and three days later Grant was repulsed at Spotsylvania with equally heavy loss. At the end of the month Grant again attacked at Cold Harbor, perhaps the most futile slaughter of the entire war. In six weeks Grant had lost 60,000 men. Lee, too, had lost heavily-20,000 men, which proportionate to his resources

was even more serious than the North's casualties. Nonetheless, Lincoln was profoundly disturbed by the carnage and failure. The Speaker of the House, Schuyler Colfax, found him pacing his office, 'his long arms behind his back, his dark features contracted still more with gloom,' explaining: 'Why do we suffer reverses after reverses? Could we have avoided this terrible, bloody war? ... Is it ever to end?' Francis B. Carpenter, who was painting his *First Reading of the Emancipation Proclamation by President Lincoln*, described him in the hall of the White House, 'clad in a long morning wrapper, pacing back and forth a narrow passage leading to one of the windows, his hands behind him, great black rings under his eyes, his head bent forward upon his breast-altogether ... a picture of the effects of sorrow, care and anxiety.'

All the same, the noose was tightening round the South. Davis himself felt it. Even before Gettysburg, he had personally been forced to quell a food riot of hungry women in Richmond. Unionist troops overran his and his brother's property, taking the whites prisoner and allowing the blacks to go. Some 137 slaves fled to freedom leaving, on Davis' own estate, only six adults and a few children. His property was betrayed by a slave he trusted, the soldiers cut his carpets into bits as souvenirs, they drank his wine, stabbed his portrait with knives, and got all his private papers, spicy extracts from which duly appeared in the Northern newspapers. In Richmond, Davis had to sell his slaves, his horses, and his carriage just to buy food-ersatz coffee, ponies or corncakes, bread, a bit of bacon. Jeb Stuart, Davis' best cavalry commander, fell, mortally wounded. He had one good general, Lee, marking Grant; but Lincoln had two-and Sherman now took Atlanta, moved through Georgia, burning and slaughtering, and on December 21, 1864 was in Savannah, having cut the Confederacy in two yet again. By Christmas much of the South was starving. Davis had made Lincoln's job of holding the North together easier by proclaiming, for four years, that he would not negotiate about anything except on the basis of the North admitting the complete independence of the South. Now he again insisted the South would 'bring the North to its knees before next summer.' On hearing this rodomontade, his own Vice-President, Alexander Stephens (1812-83), told him in disgust he was leaving for his home and would not return-it was the beginning of the disintegration of the Confederate government.

Much of the South was now totally demoralized by military occupation. Sarah Morgan of Baton Rouge, who kept a diary, described the sacking of her house:

one scene of ruin. Libraries emptied, china smashed, sideboards split open with axes, three cedar chests cut open, plundered and set up on end; all parlor ornaments carried off. [Her sister Margaret's] piano, dragged to the center of the parlor had been abandoned as too heavy to carry off; her desk lay open with all letters and notes well thumbed and scattered around, while Will's last letter to her was open on the floor, with the Yankee stamp of dirty fingers. Mother's portrait half cut from the frame stood on the floor. Margaret, who was present at the sacking, told how she had saved father's. It seems that those who wrought destruction in our house were all officers!

The destruction in Georgia was worse. Like Grant, Sherman was a decent man but a fierce, killer general, determined to end the war and the slaughter as speedily as possible and, with this his end, anxious to demonstrate to the South in as plain a manner as he could that the North was master and resistance futile. He cut a swathe 60 miles wide through Georgia, destroying everything-railroads, bridges, crops, cattle, cotton-gins, mills, stocks-which might conceivably be useful to the South's war-effort. Despite his orders, and the generally tight discipline of his army in action, the looting was appalling and the atrocities struck fear and dismay into the stoutest Southern hearts.

Sherman's capture of Atlanta and his rout of the Southern army in Georgia came in time-just-to insure Lincoln's reelection. During the terrible midsummer of 1864 there had been talk, by 'Peace Democrats,' of doing a deal with Davis and getting control of both armies, thus ending both the rebellion and Republican rule. Many prominent Republicans thought the war was lost and wanted to impose Grant as a kind of president-dictator. He wrote to a friend saying he wanted 'to stick to the job I have'-and the friend showed it to Lincoln. Lincoln observed: 'My son, you will never know how gratifying that is to me. No man knows, when that presidential grub starts to gnaw at him, just how deep it will get until he has tried it. And I didn't know but what there was one gnawing at Grant.' The general put an end to intrigue by stating: 'I consider it as important to the cause that [Lincoln] should be reelected as that the army should be successful in the field.'

Sherman's successes in September, and his continued progress through Georgia, swung opinion strongly back in Lincoln's favor. The increasing desperation of the South, expressed in terrorism, bank-raids, and murder in Northern cities, inflamed the Northern masses and were strong vote-winners for the Republicans. The resentful McClellan fared disastrously for the Democrats. Lincoln carried all but three of the participating states and 212 electoral votes out of 233, a resounding vote of confidence by the people. He entered his second term of office in a forthright but still somber mood, in which the religious overtones in his voice had grown stronger. They echo through his short Second Inaugural, a meditation on the mysterious way in which both sides in the struggle invoked their God, and God withheld his ultimate decision in favor of either:

Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces; but let us judge not that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered; that of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes: 'Woe unto the world because of offenses! for it needs be that offenses come, but woe unto that man by whom the offenses cometh!' . . . Fondly do we hope-fervently do we pray-that this mighty scourge of war may pass away. Yet if God wills that it continue, until all the wealth piled by the bond-man's two-hundred-and-fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn by the lash shall be paid with another drawn by the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said 'the judgements of the Lord are true and righteous altogether'.

So Lincoln asked the nation to continue the struggle to the end, 'With malice to none, with charity to all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right.'

The Second Inaugural began the myth of Lincoln in the hearts of Americans. Those who actually glimpsed him were fascinated by his extraordinary appearance, so unlike the ideal American in its massive lack of beauty, so incarnate of the nation's spirit in some mysterious way. Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote (1862):

The whole physiognomy is as coarse a one as you would meet anywhere in the length and breadth of the state; but withal, it is redeemed, illuminated, softened and brightened by a kindly though serious look out of his eyes, and an expression of homely sagacity, that seemed weighted with rich results of village experience. A great deal of native sense, no bookish cultivation, no refinement; honest at heart, and thoroughly so, and yet in some sort, sly-at least endowed with a sort of tact and wisdom that are akin to craft, and would

impel him, I think, to take an antagonist in flank, rather than make a bull-run at him right in front. But on the whole I like this sallow, queer, sagacious visage, with the homely human sympathies that warmed it; and, for my small share in the matter, would as lief have Uncle Abe for a ruler as any man that it would have been practical to have put in his place.

Walt Whitman, looking at the President from a height in Broadway, noted 'his perfect composure and coolness-his unusual and uncouth height, his dress of complete black, stovepipe hat pushed back on the head, dark-brown complexion, seam'd and wrinkled yet canny-looking face, black, bushy head of hair, disproportionately long neck, and his hands held behind him as he stood observing the people.' Whitman thought 'four sorts of genius' would be needed for 'the complete lining of the Man's future portrait'-the eyes and brains and finger-touch of Plutarch and Aeschylus and Michelangelo, assisted by Rabelais.'

There is a famous photograph of Lincoln, taken at this time, visiting the HQ of the Army of the Potomac, standing with some of his generals outside their tents. These officers were mostly tall for their times but Lincoln towers above them to a striking degree. It was as if he were of a different kind of humanity: not a master-race, but a higher race. There were many great men in Lincoln's day-Tolstoy, Gladstone, Bismarck, Newman, Dickens, for example-and indeed master spirits in his own America-Lee, Sherman, Grant, to name only three of the fighting men-yet Lincoln seems to have been of a different order of moral stature, and of intellectual heroism. He was a strong man, and like most men quietly confident of their strength, without vanity or self-consciousness-and also tender. Towards the end of the war, Lincoln went to see Seward, his Secretary of State, a man with whom he often disagreed and whom he did not particularly like. Seward had somehow contrived to break both his arm and his jaw in a carriage accident. Lincoln found him not only bedridden but quite unable to move his head. Without a moment's hesitation, the President stretched out at full length on the bed and, resting on his elbow, brought his face near Seward's, and they held an urgent, whispered consultation on the next steps the administration should take. Then Lincoln talked quietly to the agonized man until he drifted off to sleep. Lincoln could easily have used the excuse of Seward's incapacity to avoid consulting him at all. But that was not his way. He invariably did the right thing, however easily it might be avoided. Of how many other great men can that be said?

Lincoln was well aware of the sufferings of those in the North who actively participated in the struggle. They haunted him. He read to his entourage that terrible passage from Macbeth in which the King tells of his torments of mind:

we will eat our meat in fear, and sleep  
In the affliction of these terrible dreams,  
That shake us nightly; better be with the dead  
Than on the torture of the mind to lie  
In restless ecstasy.

One man who was also well aware of the suffering was Whitman. Too old to fight, he watched his younger brother George, a cabinet maker, enlist for a 100-day stint which turned into four years, during which time he participated in twenty-one major engagements, saw most of his comrades killed, and spent five months in a horrific Confederate prison. Some 26,000 Union soldiers died in these dreadful stockades, and so great was the Union anger at conditions in them, especially at Andersonville, that its commandant, Major Henry Wirz, was the only Southerner to



be punished by hanging. Instead of enlisting, Whitman engaged himself in hospital service, first at the New York Hospital, then off Broadway in Pearl Street, later in Washington DC: 'I resigned myself / To sit by the wounded and soothe them, or silently watch the dead.'

In some ways the Civil War hospitals were bloodier than the battlefield. Amputation was 'the trade-mark of Civil war surgery.' Three out of four operations were amputations. At Gettysburg, for an entire week, from dawn till twilight, some surgeons did nothing but cut off arms and legs. Many of these dismemberments were quite unnecessary, and the soldiers knew it. Whitman was horrified by what happened to the wounded, often mere boys. He noted that the great majority were between seventeen and twenty. Some had pistols under their pillows to protect their limbs. Whitman himself was able to save a number by remonstrating with the surgeons. He wrote:

From the stump of the arm, the amputated hand,  
I undo the clotted lint, remove the slough, wash off the matter  
and blood.  
Back on his pillow the soldier bends with curv'd neck and side  
falling head,  
His eyes are closed, his face is pale, he dares not look on the  
bloody stump,  
And has not yet looked on it.

More arms and legs were chopped off in the Civil War than in any other conflict in which America has ever been engaged-but a few dozen fewer than might have been, but for Whitman. A paragraph in the *New York Tribune* in 1880 quoted a veteran pointing to his leg: 'This is the leg [Whitman] saved for me.'

Whitman calculated that, during the war, he made over 100 hospital visits or tours, some lasting several days, and ministered in one way or another to over 100,000 soldiers. His book of poems *Drum-Taps* records some of his experiences. Not everyone welcomed his visits. One nurse at the Armory Square hospital said: 'Here comes that odious Walt Whitman to talk evil and unbelief to my boys.' The scale of the medical disaster almost overwhelmed him-one temporary hospital housed 70,000 casualties at one time. Whitman considered the volume and intensity of the suffering totally disproportionate to any objective gained by the war. Others agreed with him. Louisa May Alcott (1832-88), later author of the famous bestseller *Little Women* (1868), spent a month nursing in the Washington front-line hospitals before being invalided home with typhoid, and recorded her experiences in *Hospital Sketches* (1863). This is a terrifying record of bad medical practice, of the kind Florence Nightingale had utterly condemned a decade before, including lethal overdosing with the emetic calomel. At many points her verdict and Whitman's concurred.

Yet it is curious how little impact the Civil War made upon millions of people in the North. When Edmund Wilson came to write his book on the conflict, *Patriotic Gore: Studies in the Literature of the American Civil War* (1962), he was astonished by how little there was of it. There were hymn-songs, of course: 'John Brown's Body,' Julia Ward Howe's 'Battle Hymn of the Republic,' to rally Northern spirits, Daniel Decatur Emmett's 'Dixie' to enthuse the South. The young Henry James was not there-he had 'a mysterious wound,' which prevented serving. Mark Twain was out west. William Dean Howells was a consul in Italy. It was quite possible to live in the North and have no contact with the struggle whatsoever. It is a notable fact that Emily Dickinson (1830-86), America's greatest poet, lived quietly throughout the war in Amherst

without it ever impinging on her consciousness, insofar as that is reflected in her poetry. Of her more than 1,700 poems, not one refers directly to the war, or even indirectly, though they often exude terror and dismay. She was educated at Amherst Academy and spent a year at Mount Holyoke Female Seminary: otherwise her life was passed at home, eventless, and for the last twenty-five years of her life in almost complete seclusion. Only six of her poems were published in her lifetime and evidently she did not consider it part of the poet's job to obtain publication. Effectively, she did not emerge as a writer at all until the 1890s, after her death. In a sense, her poetry is internal exploration and could have been written in almost any country, at almost any period of history, with one exception: the South in the 1860s. Had she lived in, say, Charleston or Savannah, she would have been forced to confront external reality in her verse. That is the difference between North and South.

But not only in cloistered New England was the war distant. In vast stretches of America, it had virtually no effect on the rapid development of the country. Not that Westerners were indifferent to the war. They favored the Union because they needed it. The South was protesting not only against the North's interference in its 'peculiar institution' but against the growth of government generally. But Westerners, for the time being at least, wanted some of the services that only federal government could provide. As the historian of the trails through Oregon and to California put it, 'Most pre-Civil War overlanders found the United States government, through its armed forces, military installations, Indian agents, explorers, surveyors, road builders, physicians and mail-carriers to be an impressively potent and helpful force.' Up to the outset of the Civil War, 90 percent of the US Army's active units were stationed in the seventy-nine posts of the transMississippi-7,090 officers and men in 1860. Withdrawal of many units once the war began made Westerners realize quite how dependent they were on federal power.

Lack of troops raised problems in the West and may have encouraged the Indians to take advantage. There were raids and massacres, and the settlers responded by raising volunteers and using them. They were less experienced at dealing with Indians than the regular units, and their officers were often prone to take alarm needlessly and overreact-all the good commanders were out east, fighting. What was liable to happen was demonstrated at Sand Creek in the Colorado Territory on November 29, 1864, just after Lincoln's reelection. Following Indian atrocities, a punitive column consisting of the Third Colorado Volunteers, under Colonel John M. Chivington, attacked a camp of 500 Cheyennes. Their leaders, Black Kettle and White Antelope, believed a peace treaty was in effect and said they had turned in their arms. The volunteers slaughtered men, women, and children indiscriminately, killing over 150, and returning to Denver in triumph, displaying scalps and severed genitals like trophies. This Sand Creek massacre was later investigated by a joint Committee of Congress, and Chivington condemned, though he was never punished. The Cheyennes retaliated brutally on several occasions, and on December 21, 1866, after the war was over, in combination with Lakotas and Arapahos, they ambushed and slaughtered eighty men under the command of Colonel William J. Fetterman, one of the worst defeats the US Army suffered at Indian hands.

In some ways the Civil War hastened the development of the West because, by removing the Southern-Democratic majority in both Houses of Congress, it ended a legislative logjam which had held up certain measures for decades and impeded economic and constitutional progress. For instance, the Californian engineer-promoter Theodore D. Judah, representing a group of San Francisco bankers and entrepreneurs, contrived in the spring of 1861, immediately after the Southerners had left Washington, to lobby the Pacific Railroad Act through Congress. This was entirely a venture to benefit the North and the Northwest. It involved the railroads receiving from

the federal government a 400-foot right of way, ten alternate sections of land for each mile of track, and first-mortgage loans of \$16,000 per mile in flat country, \$32,000 in foothills, and \$48,000 per mile in the mountains-an enormous federal subsidy, in effect, which would only have passed over Southern dead bodies. In the event, the subsidy did not prove enough for this giant undertaking and was increased by a further Act of Congress in 1864, the Southerners still being absent.

In fact the North and West got their revenge, during the Civil War, for the many defeats they had suffered at the hands of Southern legislators in the thirty-two years 1829-60. By 1850 the Southern plantation interests had come to see the cheap-land policy in the West as a threat to slavery. Their senators killed the Homestead Bill of 1852, and in 1860, after Southerners made unavailing efforts to kill a similar Bill, President Buchanan vetoed it. Thus a Homestead Bill became an important part of Lincoln's platform and in 1861 it marched triumphantly through Congress. This offered an enterprising farmer 160 acres of public land, already surveyed, for a nominal sum. He got complete ownership at the end of six months on paying \$1.50 an acre, or for nothing after five years' residence. This eventually proved one of the most important laws in American history, the consequences of which we will examine shortly. The removal of Southern resistance also speeded up the constitutional development of the West. Kansas entered the Union as a free state in 1861, Nevada in 1864, and Nebraska soon after the end of the war in 1867. Meanwhile the administration extended the territorial system over the remaining inchoate regions beyond the Mississippi. The Dakotas, Colorado, and Nevada territories were organized in 1861, Arizona and Idaho in 1863, and by 1870 Wyoming and Montana had also become formal territories on the way to statehood.

Out west, then, they just got on with it, and made money. The mining boom, which had cost the South any chance of California becoming a slave state, continued and intensified, thus pouring specie into Washington's war-coffers. The classic boomtown, Virginia City, emerged 7,000 feet up the mountains of Nevada, and was immortalized by Mark Twain. The gold and silver were embedded in quartz, and elaborate crushing machinery-and huge amounts of capital-were needed for the big-pay mines, the Ophir, Central, Mexican, Gould, and Curry. Experienced men from Cornwall, Wales, and the German mountains poured in. The Comstock Lode became the great mineralogical phenomenon of the age. It went straight through Virginia City, from north to south, and laboring men earned the amazing wages of \$6 a day, working in three shifts, round the clock. So, as Twain wrote, even if you did not own a 'piece' of a mine-and few did not-everyone was happy; 'Joy sat on every countenance, and there was a glad, almost fierce intensity in every eye, that told of the money-getting schemes that were seething in every brain and the high hope that held sway in every heart. Money was as plentiful as dust; every individual considered himself wealthy and a melancholy countenance was nowhere to be seen.'

Any shots fired in these parts had nothing to do with the Civil War but reflected the normal human appetites of greed, lust, anger, and envy. And, as Mark Twain put it, 'the thin atmosphere seemed to carry healing to gunshot wounds, and therefore to simply shoot your adversary through both lungs was a thing not likely to afford you any permanent satisfaction, for he would be nearly certain to be around looking for you within the month, and not with an opera glass, either.' The miners, most of whom were heavily armed, chased away any Indians who stood between them and possible bullion, ignoring treaties. Gold was found in 1860 on the Nez Perce Indians' reservation at the junction of the Snake and Clearwater rivers. The superintendent of Indian affairs reported: 'To attempt to restrain these miners would be like attempting to restrain the whirlwind.' With Washington's attention on the war, protection of reservations had a low

priority and the miners did what they pleased. They created the towns of Lewiston, Boise on the Salmon River, and in 1864 Helena. Idaho was a mining-created state; so was Montana, formed out of its eastern part, and Wyoming Territory. Nor was gold and silver the only lure-it was at Butte, Montana, that one of the world's great copper strikes was made. The miners were almost entirely young men between sixteen and thirty; the women nearly all whores. But it was creative: seven states, California, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Idaho, and Montana owe their origins to mining-and the key formation period, in most cases, was during the Civil War.

It was totally different in the South: there, nothing mattered, nothing could occur, but the war. Concern for the war, anxiety to win the war, was so intense that people forgot what it was really about. Davis himself forgot to the point where he was among the earliest to urge that slaves should be manumitted in return for fighting for the South. Resistance to this idea was, at first, overwhelming, on the ground that blacks would not or could not fight-this despite the fact that 180,000 blacks from the North were enlisted in the Union army and many of them fought very well indeed. Arguing with a senator who was against enlisting blacks at any price, Davis in exasperation declared: 'If the Confederacy falls, there should be written on its tombstone, "Died of a theory."' As the Union army sliced off chunks of the South and liberated its slaves, many flocked to join the army-apart from anything else, it was the only way they could earn a living. Slavery itself was breaking down, even in those parts of the South not yet under Union rule. Slaves were walking off the plantations more or less as they chose; there was no one to prevent them, and no one to hunt them once they were at liberty. There was no work and no food for them either. So they were tempted to cross the lines and enlist in the Union forces. Hence Davis redoubled his efforts to persuade the Confederate Congress to permit their enlistment. As he put it, 'We are reduced to choosing whether the negroes shall fight for us, or against us.'

Eventually on March 13, 1865, Congress accepted his arguments, but even then it left emancipation to follow enlistment only with the consent of the owner. Davis, in promulgating the new law, added a proviso of his own making it compulsory for the owner of a slave taken into war service to provide manumission papers. But by then it was all too late anyway. Granted the fact that slaves formed more than a third of the South's population at the beginning of the Civil War, their prompt conscription would have enormously added to the strength of the Confederate armies. And most of them would have been willing to fight for the South, too-after all, it was their way of life as well as that of the whites which was at stake. It is a curious paradox, but one typical of the ironies of history, that black participation might conceivably have turned the scales in the South's favor. But obstinacy and 'theory' won the day and few blacks actually got the chance to fight for their homeland.

The end of the Confederacy was pitiful. On April 1, 1865, Davis sent his wife Varina away from Richmond, giving her a small Colt and fifty rounds of ammunition. The next day he had to get out of Richmond himself. He went to Danville, to plan guerrilla warfare. By this point General Lee was already in communication with General Grant about a possible armistice, and had indeed privately used the word 'surrender,' but he continued to fight fiercely with his army, using it with his customary skills. He dismissed pressure from junior officers to negotiate, and as late as April 8 he took severe disciplinary action against three general officers who, in his opinion, were not fighting in earnest or had deserted their posts. But by the next morning Lee's army was virtually surrounded. He dressed in his best uniform, wearing, unusually for him, a red silk sash and sword. Having heard the latest news of the position of his troops, and the Union forces, he

said: 'Then there is nothing left me but to go and see General Grant and I would rather die a thousand deaths.'

The two generals met at Appomattox Court House, Grant dressed in 'rough garb,' spattered with mud. Both men were, in fact, carefully dressed for the occasion, as they wished to appear for posterity. The terms were easily agreed, Grant allowing that Southern officers could keep their sidearms and horses. Lee pointed out that, in the South, the enlisted men in the cavalry and artillery also owned their horses. Grant allowed those to be kept too. After Lee's surrender on April 9, Davis hurried to Greenboro to rendezvous with General Johnston's army. But in the meantime Johnston had reached an agreement with General Sherman which, in effect, dissolved the Confederacy. Davis gave the terms to his Cabinet, saying he wanted to reject them, but the Cabinet accepted them. Washington, however, did not, and the South had to be content, in the end, with a simple laying down of arms.

By this time Lincoln was dead. He had summoned Grant to hear his account of the surrender at Appomattox, and he beamed with pleasure when the general told him that the terms had extended not just to the officers but to the men: 'I told them to go back to their homes and their families and that they would not be molested, if they did nothing more.' Lincoln expected Sherman to report a similar surrender and he told Grant he expected good news as he had just had one of his dreams which portended such. Grant said he described how 'he seemed to be in some singular, indescribable vessel and ... he was moving with great rapidity to an indefinite shore.' Lincoln told his wife (April 14), who said to him, 'Dear husband, you almost startle me by your great cheerfulness,' 'And well may I feel so, Mary. I consider *this day*, the war has come to a close.'

On April 15 they went to a performance of the comedy *Our American Cousin* at Ford's Theater. Lincoln was no longer protected by Pinkerton, but Marshal Ward Hill Lamon, who often served as his bodyguard, begged him not to go to the theater or any similar place, and on no account to mingle with promiscuous crowds. That evening was particularly dangerous since it had been widely advertised that Grant, too, would join the President in his theater excursion. Name, date, time, place—all were published. John Wilkes Booth (1838-65), from an acting family of British origins, also noted for mental instability, and brother of the famous tragedian Edwin Booth, was a self-appointed Southern patriot. He had three days to organize the assassination, with various associates. He also planned to kill Seward and Vice-President Andrew Johnson (1808-75), regarded with peculiar abhorrence in the South because he was a Democrat and a Southerner, from Tennessee, the only Southerner who remained in the Senate in 1861—and accordingly rewarded with the vice-presidency in Lincoln's second term.

Booth had no difficulty in getting into the theater, and he obtained entry to the President's box simply by showing Charles Forbes, the White House footman on duty, his calling-card. He barred the door of the box, moved behind Lincoln, who was leaning forward, then aimed his Derringer at the back of the President's head and pulled the trigger. He then drew a knife, stabbing Lincoln's ADC, jumped from the box, breaking his ankle in the process, shouted 'Sic semper tyrannis,' the motto of the State of Virginia, and escaped through the back of the theater. Two weeks later he was shot and killed in Bowling Green, Virginia. Lincoln himself was taken to a nearby house where he lingered for nine hours, never regaining consciousness.

It is clear that Booth had links going back to Richmond but equally clear that Davis knew nothing about the assassination plot and would never have authorized it. But many at the time believed he was involved. His last days of liberty were clouded by rumors, including one that a price of \$100,000 was on his head and another that he was dressed as a woman. He was taken on

May 10. Almost his last words to his colleagues were that he was glad 'no member of his Cabinet had made money out of the war and that they were all broke and poor.' He himself gave his last gold coin to a little boy presented to him as his namesake. All he then had in his pockets was a wad of worthless Confederate scrip. His soldiers-captors jeered at him: 'We'll hang Jeff Davis from a sour apple tree.' Their commander, Major-General James Wilson, said later: 'The thought struck me once or twice that he was a mad man.'

Davis was put in heavy leg-irons and taken to Fort Monroe, opposite Norfolk, Virginia, where he was held for 720 days mostly in solitary confinement, and subjected to many humiliations, with bugs in his mattress and only a horse-bucket to drink from. None of this would have happened had Lincoln lived. Johnson, now president, insisted on this to prove to Northern opinion that he was not favoring a fellow-Southerner. On the other hand, he hated the idea, put forward by Stanton, the Secretary of War, and others, that Davis should be tried, convicted, and hanged. So he allowed Dr John J. Craven, who visited Davis many times in his cell and had long conversations with him, to smuggle out his diaries and have them written up by a popular writer, Charles G. Halpine. They appeared as *The Prison Life of Jefferson Davis*, presenting him as a tragic hero, aroused much sympathy, even in the North, and prepared the way for his release. Davis detested the book. He refused to ask for a pardon, demanding instead a trial which (he was sure) would lead to his acquittal and vindicate him totally. Instead, a writ of habeas corpus (which Lincoln had suspended but was now permitted again) got him out in May 1867. He then went to Canada, and wrote rambling memoirs, lived to bury all his sons, and died, full of years and honor-in the South at least-in 1889. His funeral, attended by a quarter of a million people, was the largest ever held in the South.

Lee, by contrast, was broken and tired and did not last long. When he died in 1870 people were amazed to learn he was only sixty-three. He spent his last years in the thankless job of running a poor university, Washington College, believing that 'what the South needs most is education.' He refused to write his memoirs, blamed no one, avoided publicity, and, when in doubt, kept his mouth shut. Legend has it that his last words were 'Tell Hill he *must* come up!' and 'Strike the tent!'. In fact he said nothing.

The end of the Civil War solved the problem of slavery and started the problem of the blacks, which is with America still. Everyone, from Jefferson and Washington onwards, and including Lincoln himself, had argued that the real problem of slavery was not ending it but what to do with the freed blacks afterwards. All these men, and the overwhelming majority of ordinary American whites, felt that it was almost impossible for whites and blacks to live easily together. Lincoln did not regard blacks as equals. Or rather, they might be morally equal but in other respects they were fundamentally different and unacceptable as fellow-citizens without qualification. He said bluntly that it was impossible just to free the slaves and make them 'politically and socially our equals.' He freely admitted an attitude to blacks which would now be classified as racism: 'My own feelings will not admit [of equality].' The same was true, he added, of the majority of whites, North as well as South. 'Whether this feeling accords with justice and sound judgment is not the sole question. A universal feeling, whether well- or ill-founded, cannot be safely disregarded.' He told a delegation of blacks who came to see him at the White House and asked his opinion about emigration to Africa or elsewhere, that he welcomed the idea: 'There is an unwillingness on the part of our people, harsh as it may be, for you free colored people to remain with us.' He even founded an experimental colony on the shores of San Domingo, but the dishonesty of the agents involved forced the authorities to ship the blacks back to Washington. All schemes to get the blacks back to Africa had been qualified or total failures,

for the simple reason that only a tiny proportion of them ever had the smallest desire to return to a continent for which, instinctively, they felt an ancestral aversion. Like everyone else, they wanted to remain in the United States, even if life there had its drawbacks.

That being so, what to do? And what to do with the rebellious South? On November 19, 1863, Lincoln had made a short speech at the dedication of the cemetery at Gettysburg. It consisted of only 261 words, and it did not make much impact at the time-the professional orator Edward Everett, president of Harvard, was the chief speaker on the occasion-but its phrases have reverberated ever since, and the ideas those few short words projected have penetrated deep into the consciousness of humanity. Lincoln reminded Americans that their country was 'dedicated to the proposition that all men were created equal' and that the war was being fought to determine whether a nation so dedicated 'can long endure.' Second, he referred to 'unfinished work' and 'the great task remaining before us.' This was to promote 'a new birth of freedom' in America, by which he meant 'government of the people, by the people, for the people.' Lincoln, then, thought the blacks should be treated as equals, politically and before the law; but at the same time he insisted that America was a democracy-and Southern whites, rebels though they might be, had as much right to participate in that democracy as the loyalists. How to reconcile the two?

Lincoln's intentions are known because, while still living, he had to deal with the problem of governing those parts of the South occupied by Union armies. He was clear about two things. First, political justice had to be done to the blacks. Second, the South must be got back to normal government as quickly as possible once the spirit of rebellion was exorcized. He proposed a general amnesty, to qualify for which 'politically accused persons' would have merely to take an oath to abide by the Constitution. A state government would be valid, and recognized by Washington, if not less than 10 percent of the voters who were on the rolls in 1860, and had taken the loyalty oath, voted for it. He wanted the occupying armies withdrawn as soon as possible, but he wanted the blacks on the voting rolls first: 'We must make voters of them before we take away the troops. The ballot will be their only protection after the bayonet is gone.' All this was set down in his Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction, issued December 8, 1863.

His first practical step was to get Congress to pass the Thirteenth Amendment. Its first section banned slavery and 'involuntary service' (except for crimes, after conviction by due process) anywhere in the United States, 'or any place subject to their jurisdiction.' Section Two empowered Congress 'to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.' Lincoln did not live to see the Amendment adopted by the three-quarters majority of the states that it required, but it was clear he was fully committed to the liberation of slaves and to entrusting them with the vote. It was also clear that he was in favor of the spirit of the Fourteenth Amendment, adopted in 1868, which wound up the unfinished business of the Civil War, by dealing with the eligibility for office of former rebels and the debts incurred by the Confederacy, but, above all, by making all born or naturalized citizens of the United States equal politically and judicially, and by making it unconstitutional for any state to 'deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.' This very important constitutional provision carried forward Lincoln's policy of justice to the blacks into the future, and became in time the basis for desegregation in the South.

Balancing this, it was abundantly clear that Lincoln wanted to exercise the utmost clemency. He intended to bind wounds. On April 14, 1865, his friend Gideon Welles described him as cheerful, happy, hoping for peace, 'full of humanity and gentleness.' His last recorded words on the subject of what to do with the South and the leaders of the rebellion were: 'No one must expect me to take any part in hanging or killing these men, even the worst of them. Frighten them out of the country, open the gates, let down the bars, scare them off. Enough lives have

been sacrificed; we must extinguish our resentments if we expect harmony and union. There is too much disposition, in certain quarters, to hector and dictate to the people of the South, to refuse to recognise them as fellow-citizens. Such persons have too little respect for Southerners' rights. I do not share feelings of that kind.'

However, Lincoln was dead, and the task of reconstruction fell on his successor, Andrew Johnson. Johnson agreed wholly with Lincoln's view that the South, consistent with the rights of the freed slaves, should be treated with leniency. But he was in a much less strong position to enforce such views. He had not been twice elected on a Northern Republican platform, fought and won a Civil War against the rebels, and held the nation together during five terrifying years. Moreover, he was a Southerner-and, until 1861, a lifelong Democrat. The fact that he had defied the whole might of the Southern establishment in 1861 by being the only Southern senator to remain in Washington when the South seceded was too easily brushed aside. So, too, was his profound belief in democracy. Johnson stood for the underdog. He had nothing in common with the old planter aristocracy who had willed the war and led the South to destruction. In many respects he was a forerunner of the Southern populists who were soon to make their entry on to the American scene.

He was born in Raleigh, North Carolina. His background was modest, not to say poor. He seems to have been entirely self-educated. At thirteen he was apprenticed to a tailor but ran away from his cruel master and came to Greeneville, Tennessee, where he plied his trade and eventually became its mayor. He was a typical Jacksonian Democrat, strongly in favor of cheap land for the poor-his passionate belief in the Homestead Act was a major factor in his breach with the Southern leadership in 1860-1. He was state representative and senator and governor, representative and senator in Congress, and finally (in Lincoln's first term) military governor of Tennessee from 1862. He was a brilliant speaker, but crude in some ways, with a vile temper. And he drank. At Lincoln's Second Inaugural, following his own swearing-in, Johnson, who had been consuming whiskey, insisted on making a long, rambling speech, boasting of his plebeian origins and reminding the assembled dignitaries from the Supreme Court and the diplomatic corps, 'with all your fine feathers and gewgaws,' that they were but 'creatures of the people.' Lincoln was disgusted and told the parade marshal, 'Do not let Johnson sneak outside.' Johnson began his term with a violent denunciation of all rebels as 'traitors' who 'ought to be hanged.' Then he proceeded to change tack and carry out what he believed were Lincoln's wishes and policies. There were three possible constitutional positions to be taken up about the South. The extreme position, urged on the White House and Congress by Senator Charles Sumner, the firebrand who had been caned in the Senate, and by Thaddeus Stevens (1792-1868), chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, was that secession had, in effect, destroyed the Southern states, which now had no constitutional existence, and it was entirely in the power of Congress to decide when and how they were to be reconstituted. Both men were, first and foremost, good haters, and they hated the South and wanted to punish it to the maximum of their power. And their power, in both Houses of Congress, was enormous. Second, there was the bulk of the Republican majority who took a somewhat more moderate position: the rebellion had not destroyed the Southern states but it had caused them to forfeit their constitutional rights, and it was up to Congress to determine when those rights should be restored, under the article of the Constitution guaranteeing all states a republican form of government. Finally there was the Lincoln-Johnson clemency position: this held that rebellion had not affected the states at all, beyond incapacitating those taking part in it from performing their constitutional duties, and that



this disbarment could be removed by executive pardon-as soon as this was done, normal government of the states, by the states, could follow.

Initially, Johnson was in a strong position to make this third position prevail. Not only was it manifestly Lincoln's wish, but he was called on to act alone, since it was against the practice of the United States political system for a Congress elected in the autumn of 1864 to be summoned before December 1865, unless by special presidential summons. He had, then, a free hand, but whether it was wise to exercise it without the closest possible consultation with Congressional leaders is doubtful. On May 29, 1865 Johnson issued a new proclamation, extending Lincoln's clemency by excluding from the loyalty oath-taking anyone in the South with property worth less than \$20,000. This was consistent with his general view that the South had been misled by its plantocracy and that it must be rebuilt by the ordinary people. In the early summer, he appointed provisional governors for each rebel state, with instructions to restore normalcy as soon as practicable, provided each state government abolished slavery by its own law, repudiated the Confederation's debts, and ratified the Thirteenth Amendment. This was quickly done. Every state found enough conservatives, Whigs, or Unionists, to carry through the program. Every state amended its constitution to abolish slavery. Most repudiated the Confederate debt. All but Mississippi and Texas ratified the Thirteenth Amendment. When all, including these two sluggards, had elected state officials, Johnson felt able to declare the rebellion legally over, in a proclamation dated April 6, 1866.

The new state governments behaved, in all the circumstances, with energy and sense. But there was one exception. They made it plain that blacks would not be treated as equal citizens-would, in fact, be graded as peons, as in some Latin American countries. They had freedom under the state constitutions, and provisions were made for them to sue and be sued, and to bear testimony in suits where a black was a party. But intermarriage with whites was banned by law, and a long series of special offenses were made applicable only to blacks. A list of laws governing vagrancy was designed to force blacks into semi-servile work, often with their old masters. Other provisions in effect limited blacks to agricultural labor. These Black Codes varied from state to state and some were more severe than others; but all had the consequence of relegating blacks to second-class citizenship. Plantation owners were anxious to get blacks to work as peons. Local black leaders encouraged them to sell their labor for what it would fetch, and so make freedom work. This feeling was encouraged by a new kind of federal institution, called the Freedmen's Bureau, set up under the aegis of the military, which spent a great deal of bureaucratic time, and immense sums of money, on protecting, helping, and even feeding the blacks. It was America's first taste of the welfare state, even before it was established by its European progenitor, Bismarck's Germany. The Bureau adumbrated the countless US federal agencies which were to engage in social engineering for the population as a whole, from the time of F. D. Roosevelt until this day. It functioned after a fashion, but it did not encourage blacks to fend for themselves, and one of the objects of the Black Codes was to supply the incentives to work which were missing.

All this caused fury among the Northern abolitionist classes and their representatives in Congress. They were genuinely angry that the Southern blacks were not getting a square deal at last, and more synthetically so that the Southern whites were not being sufficiently punished. Most Northerners had no idea how much the South had suffered already; otherwise they might have been more merciful. Congress had already passed a vengeful Reconstruction Bill in 1864, but Lincoln had refused to sign it. When Congress finally reassembled in December 1865, it was apparent that this spirit of revenge was dominant, with Sumner and Stevens whipping it up,

assisted by most of the Republican majority. It was clear that the President had the backing only of the small minority of Democrats. The majority promptly excluded all senators and representatives from the South, however elected, appointed a joint committee to 'investigate conditions' in the 'insurrectionary states,' and passed a law extending the mandate of the Freedman's Bureau. Johnson promptly vetoed this last measure, lost his temper, and denounced leading Republican members of Congress, by name, as traitors. When Congress retaliated by passing a Civil Rights Bill, intended to destroy much of the Black Codes, especially their vagrancy laws, Johnson vetoed that too. Congress immediately passed it again by a two-thirds majority, the first time in American history that a presidential veto had been overridden on a measure of importance. Thus the breach between the White House and Congress was complete. As Johnson had never been elected anyway, and had no personal mandate, his moral authority, especially in the North, was weak, and Congress attempted to make itself the real ruler of the country, rather as it was to do again in the 1970s, after the Watergate scandal.

The consequence was an unmitigated disaster for the South, in which the blacks ultimately became even greater victims than the whites. By June 1866, the Joint Committee reported on the South. It said that the Johnson state governments were illegal and that Congress alone had the power to reconstruct what it called the 'rebel communities.' It said that the South was 'in anarchy,' controlled by 'unrepentant and unpardoned rebels, glorying in the crime which they had committed.' It tabled the Fourteenth Amendment, already described, and insisted that no state government be accorded recognition, or its senators and representatives admitted to Congress, until it had ratified it. All this became the issue in the autumn 1866 mid-term elections. Johnson campaigned against it, but the vulgarity and abusive language of his speeches alienated many, and he succeeded in presenting himself as more extreme, in his horrible way, than his opponents. So the radical Republicans won, and secured a two-thirds majority in both Houses, thus giving themselves the power to override any veto on their legislation which Johnson might impose. The radicals were thus in power, in a sense, and could do as they wished by law. In view of this, the governments of the Southern states would have been prudent to ratify the Fourteenth Amendment. But, as usual, they responded to Northern extremism by extremism of their own, and all but one, Tennessee, refused.

To break this impasse, the dominant northern Radicals now attacked, with the only weapon at their disposal, the law. In effect, they began a second Reconstruction. Their object was partly altruistic-to give justice to the blacks of the South by insuring they got the vote-and partly self-serving, by insuring that blacks cast their new votes in favor of Republicans, thus making their party dominant in the South too. As it happened, most Republicans in the North did not want the blacks to get the vote. Propositions to confer it in the North were rejected, 1865-7, in Connecticut, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Ohio, and Kansas, all strong Republican states. But the Republican majority insisted nonetheless on forcing black voters on the South. In March July 1867 it pushed through Congress, overriding Johnson's veto, a series of Reconstruction Acts, placing what they called the 'Rebel States' under military government, imposing rigid oaths which excluded many whites from electoral rolls while insuring all blacks were registered, and imposing a number of conditions in addition to ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment, before any 'Rebel State' could be readmitted to full membership of the Union. It also made a frontal assault on the powers of the executive branch, in particular removing its power to summon or not to summon Congress, to dismiss officials (the Tenure of Office Act) and to give orders, as commander-in-chief, to the army. Fearing obstruction by the Supreme Court, it passed a further Act abolishing its jurisdiction in cases involving the Reconstruction Acts. Much of this

legislation was plainly unconstitutional, but Congress planned to make it efficacious before the Court could invalidate it.

This program, characteristic of the tradition of American fundamentalist idealism at its most extreme and impractical, had some unfortunate consequences. In Washington itself it led to a degree of bitterness and political savagery which was unprecedented in the history of the republic. In the debates of the 1840s and 1850s, Calhoun, Webster, Clay, and their colleagues, however much they might disagree even on fundamentals, had conducted their arguments within a framework of civilized discourse and with respect for the Constitution, albeit they interpreted it in different ways. And, in those days, Congress as a whole had treated the other branches of government with courtesy, until the Rebellion, by refusing to accept the electoral verdict of 1860, ruined all. Now the Republican extremists were following in the footsteps of the secessionists, and making a harmonious and balanced government, as designed by the Founding Fathers, impossible.

The political hatred which poisoned Washington life in 1866-7 exceeded anything felt during the Civil War, and it culminated in a venomous attempt to impeach the President himself. Johnson regarded the Tenure of Office Act as unconstitutional, and decided to ignore it by sacking Stanton, the War Secretary. Stanton had always been an unbalanced figure, politically, whom Lincoln had brought in to run the War Department simply because of his undoubted energy, drive, and competence. But with the peace Stanton became increasingly extreme in using military power to bully the South. He also, like the President, had an ungovernable temper and lost it often. Johnson saw him as the Trojan Horse of the Radical Republicans within his own Cabinet, and kicked him out with relish. The Republican majority retaliated by impeaching him, under Article I, Sections 1, 2, and 5, of the Constitution. Article II, Section 4, defines as impeachment offenses 'Treason, Bribery or other High Crimes and Misdemeanors.' This last phrase is vague. One school of thought argues it cannot include offenses which are not indictable under state or federal law. Others argue that such non-indictable offenses are precisely what an impeachment is for-political crimes against the Constitution which no ordinary statute can easily define.

The procedure for impeachment is that the House presents and passes an impeachment resolution and the Senate convicts, or not, by a two-thirds vote. Since 1789, the House has successfully impeached fifteen officials, and the Senate has removed seven of them, all federal judges.<sup>141</sup> Johnson was the first, and so far only, president to be impeached, and the experience was not edifying. Johnson was subjected during the proceedings to torrents of personal abuse, including an accusation that he was planning to use the War Department as a platform for a personal *coup d'etat*, and much other nonsense. An eleven-part impeachment resolution passed the House on February 24, 1868. There was then a three-month trial in the Senate, at the end of which he was acquitted (May 26, 1868) by 35 to 18 votes, the two-thirds majority not having been obtained. No constructive purpose was served by this vendetta, and the only political consequence was the discrediting of those who conducted it.

The consequences for the South were equally destructive. The Acts of March 1867 led to a new Reconstruction along Republican, anti-white lines. Registration was followed by votes calling conventions, and these by the election of conventions, the drafting of constitutions, and their approval by popular vote. But those who took part in this process were blacks, guided by Northern army officers, a few Northerners, and some renegade whites. This new electorate was organized by pressure groups called Union Leagues, which built up a Republican Party of the South. In fact, the state constitutional conventions were almost identical with Republican

nominating conventions. The new party and the imposed state were one. It was as though the North, with its military power, had imposed one-party dictatorships on all the Southern states. The vast majority of whites boycotted or bitterly opposed these undemocratic procedures. But for the time being there was nothing they could do. Only in Mississippi did they succeed in rejecting the new constitution.

By the summer of 1868 all Southern states except three (Texas, Mississippi, and Virginia) had gone through this second, Congressional-imposed Reconstruction, and by an Omnibus Act seven of them were restored to Congressional participation (Alabama had already passed the test). As a result of the disenfranchisement of a large percentage of Southern white voters, and the addition of black ones, organized as Republicans, the ruling party carried the elections of 1868. General Grant, who had been nominated unanimously by the Republican Convention as candidate, won the electoral college by 214 votes to 80 for the Democrat, Governor Horatio Seymour of New York (1810-86). Without the second Reconstruction, it is likely Grant would have lost, and some of the Republicans, such as Sumner and Stevens, admitted that Congress had recognized the eight Southern states in 1868 primarily to secure their electoral votes. Thus America, after abolishing the organic sin of slavery, witnessed the birth of an organic corruption in its executive and Congress.

These transactions at least had the merit of enabling Congress to bully the South into ratifying the Fifteenth Amendment, which stated that the right of American citizens to vote should not be denied or abridged 'on account of race, color or previous condition of servitude.' On the other hand, in evading its implications, Southerners could later cite, as moral justification, the fact that they had ratified it only under duress-especially true in Georgia, for instance, which had to be placed yet again under military occupation and Reconstructed for the third. The consequences for the South were equally destructive. The Acts of March 1867 led to a new Reconstruction along Republican, anti-white lines. Registration was followed by votes calling conventions, and these by the election of conventions, the drafting of constitutions, and their approval by popular vote. But those who took part in this process were blacks, guided by Northern army officers, a few Northerners, and some renegade whites. This new electorate was organized by pressure groups called Union Leagues, which built up a Republican Party of the South. In fact, the state constitutional conventions were almost identical with Republican nominating conventions. The new party and the imposed state were one. It was as though the North, with its military power, had imposed one-party dictatorships on all the Southern states. The vast majority of whites boycotted or bitterly opposed these undemocratic procedures. But for the time being there was nothing they could do. Only in Mississippi did they succeed in rejecting the new constitution.

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The South, its whites virtually united in hatred of their governments, hit back by force. The years 1866-71 saw the birth of the Ku Klux Klan, a secret society of vigilantes, who wore white robes to conceal their identities, and who rode by night to do justice. They were dressed to terrify the black community, and did so; and where terror failed they used the whip and the noose. And they murdered carpetbaggers too. They also organized race-riots and racial lynchings. They were particularly active at election-time in the autumn, so that each contest was marked by violence and often by murder. Before the Civil War, Southern whites had despised the blacks and occasionally feared them; now they learned to hate them, and the hate was reciprocated. A different kind of society came into being, based on racial hatred. The Republican governors used state power in defense of blacks, scalawags, and carpetbaggers, and when state power proved inadequate, appealed to Congress and the White House. So Congress conducted inquiries and held hearings, and occasionally the White House sent troops. But the blacks and their white allies proved incapable of defending themselves, either by political cunning or by force. So gradually numbers all, was a democracy, even in the South. Congressional Reconstruction gradually crumbled. The Democrats slowly climbed back into power. Tennessee fell to them in 1869, West Virginia, Missouri, and North Carolina in 1870, Georgia in 1871, Alabama, Texas, and Arkansas in 1874, Mississippi in 1875. Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina were held in the Republican camp only by military force. But the moment the troops were withdrawn, in 1877, the Republican governments collapsed and the whites took over again.

In short, within a decade of its establishment, Congressional Reconstruction had been destroyed. New constitutions were enacted, debts repudiated, the administrations purged, cut down, and reformed, and taxation reduced to prewar levels. Then the new white regimes set about legislating the blacks into a lowly place in the scheme of things, while the rest of the country, having had quite enough of the South, and its blacks too, turned its attention to other

things. Thus the great Civil War, the central event of American history, having removed the evil of slavery, gave birth to a new South in which whites were first class citizens and blacks citizens in name only. And a great silence descended for many decades. America as a whole did not care; it was already engaged in the most astonishing economic expansion in human history, which was to last, with one or two brief interruptions-and a world war-until the end of the 1920s.