

can emissary had been himself deceived. Yet he was reluctant to believe that Wilkinson, although willing to become a traitor to the Union, could also prove a traitor to Spain. Perhaps an over-weening confidence had induced him to promise what he never could perform. It might be that, full of zeal, and persuaded, from the experience of the past, that he could bring round to his own opinions the chief men of Kentucky, he had declared in anticipation that he had won over many of them. But still, it was a fact, that he had never once approached them on the main question, and now that encountering invincible obstacles and, above all, personal risks, it might be his desire to avail himself of the motive set forth in his letter to cover his precipitation.

“‘Nevertheless,’ said Miro,¹ ‘I am of the opinion that the said brigadier-general ought to be retained in the service of his majesty, *with an annual pension of two thousand dollars, which I have already proposed in my confidential dispatch, number forty-six, because the inhabitants of Kentucky, and the other establishments on the Ohio, will not be able to undertake any thing against this province without his communicating it to us, and without his making, at the same time, all possible efforts to drive them from any bad designs against us, as he has already done recently.*’ Miro concludes by recommending that a pension be granted to Sebastian, ‘*because I think it proper,*’ said he, ‘*to treat with this individual, who will be able to enlighten me on the conduct of Wilkinson, and on what we have to expect from the plans of the said brigadier-general.*’

“We have at length arrived at a point in the history of this intrigue which renders it unnecessary to pursue it further. *The key is disclosed which unlocks the door of mystery, and reveals other truths which for half a century have been enveloped in darkness and doubt; Wilkinson pensioned to guard the interests of Spain, and Sebastian to betray his confederate Wilkinson.*

“Time rolled on. Kentucky had been admitted into the Union [June 1, 1792] as an independent state. Wilkinson bore the commission of a lieutenant-colonel, signed by George Washington, and was in actual command of the American forces. The announcement of his appointment spread consternation among his enemies, and elated his confederates. The question was repeatedly asked: ‘By whom was he recommended?’ ‘By myself,’ replied Colonel Marshall, who had been his most formidable opponent. He considered Wilkinson, he said, well qualified for the commission he bore; that while he remained unemployed by the government, he regarded him as dangerous to the tranquillity of Kentucky, perhaps to her absolute safety. If his commission did not secure his fidelity, it would place him under control in the midst of faithful officers whose vigilance would make him harmless, if it did not make him honest.”²

¹ Gayarre, vol. iii., p. 286.

² Marshall's history of Kentucky, vol. ii., p. 391. The Blennerhassett papers. By William H. Sanford. Cincinnati, 1864, pp. 63-75; 79-87; 90, 92-95.