

not less than in those of his own, he possessed in an eminent degree many of the higher qualities of an accomplished diplomatist. Hence it was of the first importance that his services should be secured to the interest of the crown, which might thus, by the efficient aid of an emissary in disguise, perfect its plans without the hazard of detection. At the close of the interview, the boats were released, and permission granted to dispose of the cargo. A generous display of hospitality on the part of the governor and citizens soon succeeded. Costly feasts and brilliant assemblages became the daily entertainments to which Wilkinson was invited. Permission was also granted him to 'introduce into Louisiana, free of duty, many western articles of trade which were adapted to the market.'

"The sudden and growing intimacy between the Spanish governor and the American planter had been remarked by many and excited a suspicion of intrigue between the two. It was slyly insinuated that something beyond commercial privileges was in negotiation, but with its objects and entire extent they were as yet imperfectly acquainted. Nothing was at that time disclosed further than that Wilkinson had written a dissertation respecting the political interests of Spain and the inhabitants of the United States dwelling in the regions upon the western waters. This was addressed to Miro, to be forwarded to the king of Spain, with whom he desired it to be known that he was then negotiating for the free navigation of the Mississippi. But it has been asserted, and certainly not without proof, that this communication was intended by Wilkinson to conceal a different design, indorsed by Miro, and to which but few others were privy.

"Gardoqui, the Spanish minister in Philadelphia, without the knowledge of Miro, and, therefore, without concert of plan, had conceived the project of settling Louisiana by emigration from the United States. By this means he hoped to draw to the interest of the Spanish crown the people of Kentucky, which should result in her secession from the Union, with other districts then similarly disaffected.

To Pierre d'Argès, Gardoqui committed the execution of his scheme. By authority of the cabinet at Madrid, he invited the inhabitants of Kentucky, and those dwelling along the Cumberland, to remove to West Florida and the Florida district of Lower Louisiana, and place themselves under the protection of Spain. Liberal grants of land, with extensive privileges, were offered to all who desired to better their condition, and as a greater inducement to those owning property, slaves, stock, farming utensils, and provisions for two years were to be admitted free; while a duty of twenty-five *per cent.* was levied upon property imported into the colony for trade or consumption.

"But the plan of the Spanish representative threatened a collision with that