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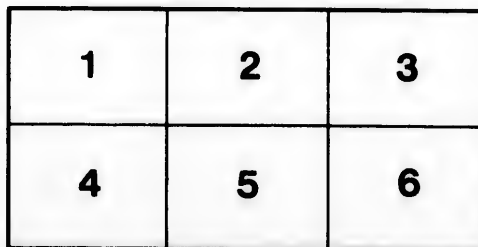
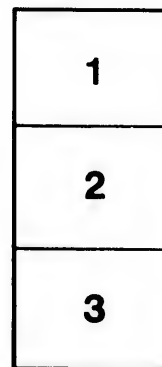
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The Capture of Vincennes.

1779.

BY GEORGE ROGERS CLARK.

FROM GENERAL CLARK'S MEMOIRS.

“Everything being ready, on the 5th of February, after receiving a lecture and absolution from the priest, we crossed the Kaskaskia River with one hundred and seventy men, marched about three miles and encamped, where we lay until the [7th], and set out. The weather wet (but fortunately not cold for the season) and a great part of the plains under water several inches deep. It was difficult and very fatiguing marching. My object was now to keep the men in spirits. I suffered them to shoot game on all occasions, and feast on it like Indian war-dancers, each company by turns inviting the others to their feasts, which was the case every night, as the company that was to give the feast was always supplied with horses to lay up a sufficient store of wild meat in the course of the day, myself and principal officers putting on the woodsmen, shouting now and then, and running as much through the mud and water as any of them. Thus, insensibly, without a murmur, were those men led on to the banks of the Little Wabash, which we reached on the 13th, through incredible difficulties, far surpassing anything that any of us had ever experienced. Frequently the diversions of the night wore off the thoughts of the preceding day. We formed a camp on a height which we found on the bank of the river, and suffered our troops to amuse themselves. I viewed this sheet of water for some time with distrust; but, accusing myself of doubting, I immediately set to work, without holding any consultation about it, or suffering anybody else to do so in my presence; ordered a pirogue to be built immediately, and acted as though crossing the water would be only a piece of diversion. As but few could work at the pirogue at a time, pains were taken to find diversion for the rest to keep them in high spirits. . . .

In the evening of the 14th., our vessel was finished, manned, and sent to explore the drowned lands on the opposite side of the Little Wabash, with private instructions what report to make, and, if possible, to find some spot of dry land. They found about half an acre, and marked the trees from thence back to the camp, and made a very favorable report.

“ Fortunately, the 15th happened to be a warm, moist day for the season. The channel of the river where we lay was about thirty yards wide. A scaffold was built on the opposite shore (which was about three feet under water), and our baggage ferried across, and put on it. Our horses swam across, and received their loads at the scaffold, by which time the troops were also brought across, and we began our march through the water. . . .

“ By evening we found ourselves encamped on a pretty height, in high spirits, each party laughing at the other, in consequence of something that had happened in the course of this ferrying business, as they called it. A little antic drummer afforded them great diversion by floating on his drum, etc. All this was greatly encouraged; and they really began to think themselves superior to other men, and that neither the rivers nor the seasons could stop their progress. Their whole conversation now was concerning what they would do when they got about the enemy. They now began to view the main Wabash as a creek, and made no doubt but such men as they were could find a way to cross it. They wound themselves up to such a pitch that they soon took Post Vincennes, divided the spoil, and before bedtime were far advanced on their route to Detroit. All this was, no doubt, pleasing to those of us who had more serious thoughts. . . . We were now convinced that the whole of the low country on the Wabash was drowned, and that the enemy could easily get to us, if they discovered us, and wished to risk an action; if they did not, we made no doubt of crossing the river by some means or other. Even if Captain Rogers, with our galley, did not get to his station agreeable to his appointment, we flattered ourselves that all would be well, and marched on in high spirits. . . .

“ The last day's march through the water was far superior to anything the Frenchmen had an idea of. They were backward in speaking; said that the nearest land to us was a small league called the Sugar Camp, on the bank of the [river?] A canoe was sent off, and returned without finding that we could pass. I went in her myself, and sounded the water; found it deep as to my neck. I returned with a design to have the men

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transported on board the canoes to the Sugar Camp, which I knew would spend the whole day and ensuing night, as the vessels would pass slowly through the bushes. The loss of so much time, to men half-starved, was a matter of consequence. I would have given now a great deal for a day's provision or for one of our horses. I returned but slowly to the troops, giving myself time to think. On our arrival, all ran to hear what was the report. Every eye was fixed on me. I unfortunately spoke in a serious manner to one of the officers. The whole were alarmed without knowing what I said. I viewed their confusion for about one minute, whispered to those near me to do as I did: immediately put some water in my hand, poured on powder, blackened my face, gave the war-whoop, and marched into the water without saying a word. The party gazed, and fell in, one after another, without saying a word, like a flock of sheep. I ordered those near me to begin a favorite song of theirs. It soon passed through the line, and the whole went on cheerfully. I now intended to have them transported across the deepest part of the water; but, when about waist deep, one of the men informed me that he thought he felt a path. We examined, and found it so, and concluded that it kept on the highest ground, which it did; and, by taking pains to follow it, we got to the Sugar Camp without the least difficulty, where there was about half an acre of dry ground, at least not under water, where we took up our lodging. The Frenchmen that we had taken on the river appeared to be uneasy at our situation. They begged that they might be permitted to go in the two canoes to town in the night. They said that they would bring from their own houses provisions, without a possibility of any persons knowing it; that some of our men should go with them as a surety of their good conduct; that it was impossible we could march from that place till the water fell, for the plain was too deep to march. Some of the [officers?] believed that it might be done. I would not suffer it. I never could well account for this piece of obstinacy, and give satisfactory reasons to myself or anybody else why I denied a proposition apparently so easy to execute and of so much advantage; but something seemed to tell me that it should not be done, and it was not done.

“The most of the weather that we had on this march was moist and warm for the season. This was the coldest night we had. The ice, in the morning, was from one-half to three-quarters of an inch thick near the shores and in still water. The morning was the finest we had on our march. A little

after sunrise I lectured the whole. What I said to them I forget, but it may be easily imagined by a person that could possess my affections for them at that time. I concluded by informing them that passing the plain that was then in full view and reaching the opposite woods would put an end to their fatigue, that in a few hours they would have a sight of their long-wished-for object, and immediately stepped into the water without waiting for any reply. A huzza took place. As we generally marched through the water in a line, before the third entered I halted, and called to Major Bowman, ordering him to fall in the rear with twenty-five men, and put to death any man who refused to march, as we wished to have no such person among us. The whole gave a cry of approbation, and on we went. This was the most trying of all the difficulties we had experienced. I generally kept fifteen or twenty of the strongest men next myself, and judged from my own feelings what must be that of others. Getting about the middle of the plain, the water about mid deep, I found myself sensibly failing; and, as there were no trees nor bushes for the men to support themselves by, I feared that many of the most weak would be drowned. I ordered the canoes to make the land, discharge their loading, and play backward and forward with all diligence, and pick up the men: and, to encourage the party, sent some of the strongest men forward, with orders, when they got to a certain distance, to pass the word back that the water was getting shallow, and when getting near the woods to cry out, 'Land!' This stratagem had its desired effect. The men, encouraged by it, exerted themselves almost beyond their abilities; the weak holding by the stronger. . . . The water never got shallower, but continued deepening. Getting to the woods, where the men expected land, the water was up to my shoulders; but gaining the woods was of great consequence. All the low men and the weakly hung to the trees, and floated on the old logs until they were taken off by the canoes. The strong and tall got ashore and built fires. Many would reach the shore, and fall with their bodies half in the water, not being able to support themselves without it.

"This was a delightful dry spot of ground of about ten acres. We soon found that the fires answered no purpose, but that two strong men taking a weaker one by the arms was the only way to recover him; and, being a delightful day, it soon did. But, fortunately, as if designed by Providence, a canoe of Indian squaws and children was coming up to town, and took through part of this plain as a high way. It was

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discovered by our canoes as they were out after the men. They gave chase, and took the Indian canoe, on board of which was near half a quarter of a buffalo, some corn, tallow, kettles, etc. This was a grand prize, and was invaluable. Broth was immediately made, and served out to the most weakly with great care. Most of the whole got a little; but a great many gave their part to the weakly, jocosely saying something cheering to their comrades. This little refreshment and fine weather by the afternoon gave new life to the whole. Crossing a narrow deep lake in the canoes, and marching some distance, we came to a copse of timber called the Warrior's Island. We were now in full view of the fort and town, not a shrub between us, at about two miles' distance. Every man now feasted his eyes, and forgot that he had suffered anything, saying that all that had passed was owing to good policy and nothing but what a man could bear; and that a soldier had no right to think, etc.,—passing from one extreme to another, which is common in such cases. It was now we had to display our abilities. The plain between us and the town was not a perfect level. The sunken grounds were covered with water full of ducks. We observed several men out on horseback, shooting them, within a half mile of us, and sent out as many of our active young Frenchmen to decoy and take one of these men prisoner in such a manner as not to alarm the others, which they did. The information we got from this person was similar to that which we got from those we took on the river, except that of the British having that evening completed the wall of the fort, and that there were a good many Indians in town.

“Our situation was now truly critical,—no possibility of retreating in case of defeat, and in full view of a town that had, at this time, upward of six hundred men in it,—troops, inhabitants, and Indians. The crew of the galley, though not fifty men, would have been now a re-enforcement of immense magnitude to our little army (if I may so call it), but we would not think of them. We were now in the situation that I had labored to get ourselves in. The idea of being made prisoner was foreign to almost every man, as they expected nothing but torture from the savages, if they fell into their hands. Our fate was now to be determined, probably in a few hours. We knew that nothing but the most daring conduct would insure success. I knew that a number of the inhabitants wished us well, that many were lukewarm to the interest of either, and I also learned that the grand chief, the Tobacco's

son, had but a few days before openly declared, in council with the British, that he was a brother and friend to the Big Knives. These were favorable circumstances; and, as there was but little probability of our remaining until dark undiscovered, I determined to begin the career immediately, and wrote the following placard to the inhabitants:—

“TO THE INHABITANTS OF POST VINCENNES:

“*Gentlemen*.—Being now within two miles of your village, with my army, determined to take your fort this night, and not being willing to surprise you, I take this method to request such of you as are true citizens and willing to enjoy the liberty I bring you to remain still in your houses; and those, if any there be, that are friends to the king will instantly repair to the fort, and join the hair-buyer general, and fight like men. And, if any such as do not go to the fort shall be discovered afterward, they may depend on severe punishment. On the contrary, those who are true friends to liberty may depend on being well treated; and I once more request them to keep out of the streets. For every one I find in arms on my arrival I shall treat him as an enemy.

“(Signed)

G. R. CLARK.”

“I had various ideas on the supposed results of this letter. I knew that it could do us no damage, but that it would cause the lukewarm to be decided, encourage our friends, and astonish our enemies. . . . We anxiously viewed this messenger until he entered the town, and in a few minutes could discover by our glasses some stir in every street that we could penetrate into, and great numbers running or riding out into the commons, we supposed, to view us, which was the case. But what surprised us was that nothing had yet happened that had the appearance of the garrison being alarmed,—no drum nor gun. We began to suppose that the information we got from our prisoners was false, and that the enemy already knew of us, and were prepared. . . . A little before sunset we moved, and displayed ourselves in full view of the town, crowds gazing at us. We were plunging ourselves into certain destruction or success. There was no midway thought of. We had but little to say to our men, except inculcating an idea of the necessity of obedience, etc. We knew they did not want encouraging, and that anything might be attempted with them that was possible for such a number,—perfectly cool, under

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proper subordination, pleased with the prospect before them, and much attached to their officers. They all declared that they were convinced that an implicit obedience to orders was the only thing that would insure success, and hoped that no mercy would be shown the person that should violate them. Such language as this from soldiers to persons in our station must have been exceedingly agreeable. We moved on slowly in full view of the town; but, as it was a point of some consequence to us to make ourselves appear as formidable, we, in leaving the covert that we were in, marched and counter-marched in such a manner that we appeared numerous. In raising volunteers in the Illinois, every person that set about the business had a set of colors given him, which they brought with them to the amount of ten or twelve pairs. These were displayed to the best advantage; and, as the low plain we marched through was not a perfect level, but had frequent risings in it seven or eight feet higher than the common level (which was covered with water), and as these risings generally run in an oblique direction to the town, we took the advantage of one of them, marching through the water under it, which completely prevented our being numbered. But our colors showed considerably above the heights, as they were fixed on long poles procured for the purpose, and at a distance made no despicable appearance; and, as our young Frenchmen had, while we lay on the Warrior's Island, decoyed and taken several fowlers with their horses, officers were mounted on these horses, and rode about, more completely to deceive the enemy. In this manner we moved, and directed our march in such a way as to suffer it to be dark before we had advanced more than half-way to the town. We then suddenly altered our direction, and crossed ponds where they could not have suspected us, and about eight o'clock gained the heights back of the town. As there was yet no hostile appearance, we were impatient to have the cause unriddled. Lieutenant Bayley was ordered, with fourteen men, to march and fire on the fort. The main body moved in a different direction, and took possession of the strongest part of the town.

"The firing now commenced on the fort, but they did not believe it was an enemy until one of their men was shot down through a port, as drunken Indians frequently saluted the fort after night. The drums now sounded, and the business fairly commenced on both sides. Re-enforcements were sent to the attack of the garrison, while other arrangements were making in town. . . . We now found that the garrison had known

nothing of us; that, having finished the fort that evening, they had amused themselves at different games, and had just retired before my letter arrived, as it was near roll-call. The placard being made public, many of the inhabitants were afraid to show themselves out of the houses for fear of giving offence, and not one dare give information. Our friends flew to the commons and other convenient places to view the pleasing sight. This was observed from the garrison, and the reason asked, but a satisfactory excuse was given; and, as a part of the town lay between our line of march and the garrison, we could not be seen by the sentinels on the walls. Captain W. Shannon and another being some time before taken prisoners by one of their [scouting parties], and that evening brought in, the party had discovered at the Sugar Camp some signs of us. They supposed it to be a party of observation that intended to land on the height some distance below the town. Captain Lamotte was sent to intercept them. It was at him the people said they were looking, when they were asked the reason of their unusual stir. Several suspected persons had been taken to the garrison; among them was Mr. Moses Henry. Mrs. Henry went, under the pretense of carrying him provisions, and whispered him the news and what she had seen. Mr. Henry conveyed it to the rest of his fellow-prisoners, which gave them much pleasure, particularly Captain Helm, who amused himself very much during the siege, and, I believe, did much damage.

"Ammunition was scarce with us, as the most of our stores had been put on board of the galley. Though her crew was but few, such a re-enforcement to us at this time would have been invaluable in many instances. But, fortunately, at the time of its being reported that the whole of the goods in the town were to be taken for the king's use (for which the owners were to receive bills), Colonel Legras, Major Bosseron, and others had buried the greatest part of their powder and ball. This was immediately produced, and we found ourselves well supplied by those gentlemen.

"The Tobacco's son, being in town with a number of warriors, immediately mustered them, and let us know that he wished to join us, saying that by the morning he would have a hundred men. He received for answer that we thanked him for his friendly disposition; and, as we were sufficiently strong ourselves, we wished him to desist, and that we would counsel on the subject in the morning; and, as we knew that there were a number of Indians in and near the town that were our

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enemies, some confusion might happen if our men should mix in the dark, but hoped that we might be favored with his counsel and company during the night, which was agreeable to him.

"The garrison was soon completely surrounded, and the firing continued without intermission (except about fifteen minutes a little before day) until about nine o'clock the following morning. It was kept up by the whole of the troops, joined by a few of the young men of the town, who got permission, except fifty men kept as a reserve. . . . I had made myself fully acquainted with the situation of the fort and town and the parts relative to each. The cannon of the garrison was on the upper floors of strong blockhouses at each angle of the fort, eleven feet above the surface, and the ports so badly cut that many of our troops lay under the fire of them within twenty or thirty yards of the walls. They did no damage, except to the buildings of the town, some of which they much shattered; and their musketry, in the dark, employed against woodsmen covered by houses, palings, ditches, the banks of the river, etc., was but of little avail, and did no injury to us except wounding a man or two. As we could not afford to lose men, great care was taken to preserve them sufficiently covered, and to keep up a hot fire in order to intimidate the enemy as well as to destroy them. The embrasures of their cannon were frequently shut, for our riflemen, finding the true direction of them, would pour in such volleys when they were opened that the men could not stand to the guns. Seven or eight of them in a short time got cut down. Our troops would frequently abuse the enemy, in order to aggravate them to open their ports and fire their cannon, that they might have the pleasure of cutting them down with their rifles, fifty of which, perhaps, would be levelled the moment the port flew open; and I believe that, if they had stood at their artillery, the greater part of them would have been destroyed in the course of the night, as the greater part of our men lay within thirty yards of the walls, and in a few hours were covered equally to those within the walls, and much more experienced in that mode of fighting. . . . Sometimes an irregular fire, as hot as possible, was kept up from different directions for a few minutes, and then only a continual scattering fire at the ports as usual; and a great noise and laughter immediately commenced in different parts of the town, by the reserved parties, as if they had only fired on the fort a few minutes for amusement, and as if those continually firing at the

fort were only regularly relieved. Conduct similar to this kept the garrison constantly alarmed. They did not know what moment they might be stormed or [blown up?], as they could plainly discover that we had flung up some entrenchments across the streets, and appeared to be frequently very busy under the bank of the river, which was within thirty feet of the walls. The situation of the magazine we knew well. Captain Bowman began some works in order to blow it up, in case our artillery should arrive; but, as we knew that we were daily liable to be overpowered by the numerous bands of Indians on the river, in case they had again joined the enemy (the certainty of which we were unacquainted with), we resolved to lose no time, but to get the fort in our possession as soon as possible. If the vessel did not arrive before the ensuing night, we resolved to undermine the fort, and fixed on the spot and plan of executing this work, which we intended to commence the next day.

"The Indians of different tribes that were inimical had left the town and neighborhood. Captain Lamotte continued to hover about it, in order, if possible, to make his way good into the fort. Parties attempted in vain to surprise him. A few of his party were taken, one of which was Maisonville, a famous Indian partisan. Two lads that captured him tied him to a post in the street, and fought from behind him as a breastwork, supposing that the enemy would not fire at them for fear of killing him, as he would alarm them by his voice. The lads were ordered, by an officer who discovered them at their amusement, to untie their prisoner, and take him off to the guard, which they did, but were so inhuman as to take part of his scalp on the way. There happened to him no other damage. As almost the whole of the persons who were most active in the department of Detroit were either in the fort or with Captain Lamotte, I got extremely uneasy for fear that he would not fall into our power, knowing that he would go off, if he could not get into the fort in the course of the night. Finding that, without some unforeseen accident, the fort must inevitably be ours, and that a re-enforcement of twenty men, although considerable to them, would not be of great moment to us in the present situation of affairs, and knowing that we had weakened them by killing or wounding many of their gunners, after some deliberation, we concluded to risk the re-enforcement in preference of his going again among the Indians. The garrison had at least a month's provisions; and, if they could hold out, in the course of that time he might do us

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much damage. A little before day the troops were withdrawn from their positions about the fort, except a few parties of observation, and the firing totally ceased. Orders were given, in case of Lamotte's approach, not to alarm or fire on him without a certainty of killing or taking the whole. In less than a quarter of an hour, he passed within ten feet of an officer and a party that lay concealed. Ladders were flung over to them; and, as they mounted them, our party shouted. Many of them fell from the top of the walls,—some within, and others back; but, as they were not fired on, they all got over, much to the joy of their friends. But, on considering the matter, they must have been convinced that it was a scheme of ours to let them in, and that we were so strong as to care but little about them or the manner of their getting into the garrison. . . . The firing immediately commenced on both sides with double vigor; and I believe that more noise could not have been made by the same number of men. Their shouts could not be heard for the firearms; but a continual blaze was kept around the garrison, without much being done, until about daybreak, when our troops were drawn off to posts prepared for them, about sixty or seventy yards from the fort. A loophole then could scarcely be darkened but a rifle-ball would pass through it. To have stood to their cannon would have destroyed their men, without a probability of doing much service. Our situation was nearly similar. It would have been imprudent in either party to have wasted their men, without some decisive stroke required it.

“Thus the attack continued until about nine o'clock on the morning of the 24th. Learning that the two prisoners they had brought in the day before had a considerable number of letters with them, I supposed it an express that we expected about this time, which I knew to be of the greatest moment to us, as we had not received one since our arrival in the country; and, not being fully acquainted with the character of our enemy, we were doubtful that those papers might be destroyed, to prevent which I sent a flag [with a letter] demanding the garrison.”

The following is a copy of the letter which was addressed by Colonel Clark to Lieutenant-governor Hamilton on this occasion:—

“*Sir*,—In order to save yourself from the impending storm that now threatens you, I order you immediately to surrender

yourself, with all your garrison, stores, etc. For, if I am obliged to storm, you may depend on such treatment as is justly due to a murderer. Beware of destroying stores of any kind or any papers or letters that are in your possession, or hurting one house in town; for, by heavens! if you do, there shall be no mercy shown you.

“(Signed)

G. R. CLARK.”

The British commandant immediately returned the following answer:—

“Lieutenant-governor Hamilton begs leave to acquaint Colonel Clark that he and his garrison are not disposed to be awed into any action unworthy British subjects.”

“The firing then,” says Clark, “commenced warmly for a considerable time; and we were obliged to be careful in preventing our men from exposing themselves too much, as they were now much animated, having been refreshed during the flag. They frequently mentioned their wishes to storm the place, and put an end to the business at once. . . . The firing was heavy through every crack that could be discovered in any part of the fort. Several of the garrison got wounded, and no possibility of standing near the embrasures. Toward the evening a flag appeared with the following proposals:—

“Lieutenant-governor Hamilton proposes to Colonel Clark a truce for three days, during which time he promises there shall be no defensive works carried on in the garrison, on condition that Colonel Clark shall observe, on his part, a like cessation of any defensive work,—that is, he wishes to confer with Colonel Clark as soon as can be, and promises that whatever may pass between them two and another person mutually agreed upon to be present shall remain secret till matters be finished, as he wishes that, whatever the result of the conference may be, it may tend to the honor and credit of each party. If Colonel Clark makes a difficulty of coming into the fort, Lieutenant-governor Hamilton will speak to him by the gate.

“(Signed)

HENRY HAMILTON.

“24TH FEBRUARY, 1779.”

“I was at a great loss to conceive what reason Lieutenant-governor Hamilton could have for wishing a truce of three days on such terms as he proposed. Numbers said it was a

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scheme to get me into their possession. I had a different opinion and no idea of his possessing such sentiments, as an act of that kind would infallibly ruin him. Although we had the greatest reason to expect a re-enforcement in less than three days, that would at once put an end to the siege, I yet did not think it prudent to agree to the proposals, and sent the following answer:—

“Colonel Clark’s compliments to Lieutenant-governor Hamilton, and begs leave to inform him that he will not agree to any terms other than Mr. Hamilton’s surrendering himself and garrison prisoners at discretion. If Mr. Hamilton is desirous of a conference with Colonel Clark, he will meet him at the church with Captain Helm.

“(Signed)

G. R. C.

“FEBRUARY 24TH, 1779.’

“We met at the church, about eighty yards from the fort. Lieutenant-governor Hamilton, Major Hay, superintendent of Indian affairs, Captain Helm, their prisoner, Major Bowman, and myself. The conference began. Hamilton produced terms of capitulation, signed, that contained various articles, one of which was that the garrison should be surrendered on their being permitted to go to Pensacola on parole. After deliberating on every article, I rejected the whole. He then wished that I would make some proposition. I told him that I had no other to make than what I had already made,—that of his surrendering as prisoners at discretion. I said that his troops had behaved with spirit; that they could not suppose that they would be worse treated in consequence of it; that, if he chose to comply with the demand, though hard, perhaps the sooner the better; that it was in vain to make any proposition to me: that he, by this time, must be sensible that the garrison would fall; that both of us must [view?] all blood spilt for the future by the garrison as murder; that my troops were already impatient, and called aloud for permission to tear down and storm the fort. If such a step was taken, many, of course, would be cut down; and the result of an enraged body of woodsmen breaking in must be obvious to him. It would be out of the power of an American officer to save a single man. Various altercation took place for a considerable time. Captain Helm attempted to moderate our fixed determination. I told him he was a British prisoner; and it was doubtful

whether or not he could, with propriety, speak on the subject. Hamilton then said that Captain Helm was from that moment liberated, and might use his pleasure. I informed the Captain that I would not receive him on such terms; that he must return to the garrison, and await his fate. I then told Lieutenant-governor Hamilton that hostilities should not commence until five minutes after the drums gave the alarm. We took our leave, and parted but a few steps, when Hamilton stopped, and politely asked me if I would be so kind as to give him my reasons for refusing the garrison any other terms than those I had offered. I told him I had no objections in giving him my real reasons, which were simply these: that I knew the greater part of the principal Indian partisans of Detroit were with him; that I wanted an excuse to put them to death or otherwise treat them as I thought proper; that the cries of the widows and the fatherless on the frontiers, which they had occasioned, now required their blood from my hand; and that I did not choose to be so timorous as to disobey the absolute commands of their authority, which I looked upon to be next to divine; that I would rather lose fifty men than not to empower myself to execute this piece of business with propriety; that, if he chose to risk the massacre of his garrison for their sakes, it was his own pleasure; and that I might, perhaps, take it into my head to send for some of those widows to see it executed. Major Hay paying great attention, I had observed a kind of distrust in his countenance, which in a great measure influenced my conversation during this time. On my concluding, 'Pray, sir,' said he, 'who is it that you call Indian partisans?' 'Sir,' I replied, 'I take Major Hay to be one of the principal.' I never saw a man in the moment of execution so struck as he appeared to be,—pale and trembling, scarcely able to stand. Hamilton blushed, and, I observed, was much affected at his behavior. Major Bowman's countenance sufficiently explained his disdain for the one and his sorrow for the other. . . . Some moments elapsed without a word passing on either side. From that moment my resolutions changed respecting Hamilton's situation. I told him that we would return to our respective posts; that I would reconsider the matter, and let him know the result. No offensive measures should be taken in the meantime. Agreed to; and we parted. What had passed being made known to our officers, it was agreed that we should moderate our resolutions."

In the course of the afternoon of the 24th the following articles were signed, and the garrison capitulated:—

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"I. Lieutenant-governor Hamilton engages to deliver up to Colonel Clark Fort Sackville, as it is at present, with all the stores, etc.

"II. The garrison are to deliver themselves as prisoners of war, and march out with their arms and accouterments, etc.

"III. The garrison to be delivered up at ten o'clock to-morrow.

"IV. Three days time to be allowed the garrison to settle their accounts with the inhabitants and traders of this place.

"V. The officers of the garrison to be allowed their necessary baggage, etc.

"Signed at Post St. Vincent [Vincennes] 24th of February, 1779.

"Agreed for the following reasons: the remoteness from succor; the state and quantity of provisions, etc.; unanimity of officers and men in its expediency; the honorable terms allowed; and, lastly, the confidence in a generous enemy.

"(Signed)

HENRY HAMILTON,

"Lieut.-gov. and Superintendent."

"The business being now nearly at an end, troops were posted in several strong houses around the garrison and patrolled during the night to prevent any deception that might be attempted. The remainder on duty lay on their arms, and for the first time for many days past got some rest. . . . During the siege, I got only one man wounded. Not being able to lose many, I made them secure themselves well. Seven were badly wounded in the fort through ports. . . . Almost every man had conceived a favorable opinion of Lieutenant-governor Hamilton,—I believe what affected myself made some impression on the whole; and I was happy to find that he never deviated, while he stayed with us, from that dignity of conduct that became an officer in his situation. The morning of the 25th approaching, arrangements were made for receiving the garrison [which consisted of seventy-nine men], and about ten o'clock it was delivered in form: and everything was immediately arranged to the best advantage."

The conquest of the country north of the Ohio River by George Rogers Clark in 1778-9 was one of the most heroic episodes of the period of the Revolution, and one of the most important in its consequences. It was because, owing to this conquest, the country between the Ohio and the

Mississippi was actually held by us, under military and civil rule, at the close of the war, that it was possible for us to secure, in the Treaty of Paris, the concession of the Mississippi instead of the Ohio as our western boundary. It has been properly said that, "with respect to the magnitude of its design, the valor and perseverance with which it was carried out, and the momentous results which were produced by it, Clark's expedition stands without a parallel in the early annals of the valley of the Mississippi."

Clark was a young Virginian who had settled in Kentucky in 1775, had secured the organization of Kentucky as a county of Virginia, and been the leader in the defence of the frontier. The Kentucky and Illinois country suffered greatly during the early years of the war from Indian depredations. Clark saw clearly that the sources of these depredations were the British posts of Detroit, Vincennes on the Wabash, and Kaskaskia on the Mississippi; and he went to Virginia and laid before Patrick Henry, then Governor of Virginia, a scheme for the conquest of the North-west, the boldness of which at once enlisted the interest and co-operation of Henry, Jefferson, and other influential men. With his little army of one hundred and fifty men, he surprised and captured Kaskaskia on the night of July 4, 1778, did much by wise diplomacy to attach the French and Indians to the American cause, and in February, 1779, marched upon Vincennes. The hardships of that march of one hundred and sixty-six miles were almost incredible. In that great era of brave deeds there was no braver deed than this. A portion of Clark's own account of the march and the capture of Vincennes, taken from his Memoirs, composed at the special request of Jefferson and Madison, is given in the present leaflet. The weakness of his force alone prevented Clark from moving on Detroit. The county of Illinois was established by the General Assembly of Virginia, covering all the territory; and this remained under the actual control of Virginia at the close of the war and when the Treaty of Paris was under consideration. "The arms of Clark had settled the question of possession and civil as well as military rule of this great territory, which now holds so many millions of people. These prominent facts were before the British minister and before the world. He could not say that this part of the land was in the power of England any more than Virginia herself was after the battle of Yorktown, and he was too accurate a jurist to yield to any claim of Spain or to hear the objections of France."

The last years of this great man's life were spent in solitude and poverty near Louisville. He felt keenly the ingratitude of the republic; and, when late in his life the State of Virginia sent him a sword, he exclaimed to the committee: "When Virginia needed a sword, I gave her one. She sends me now a toy. I want bread!"—thrust the sword into the ground, and broke it with his crutch.

John Reynolds called George Rogers Clark "the Washington of the West," and John Randolph styled him "the Hannibal of the West." See chapter entitled "The Hannibal of the West," in Dunn's *Indiana*, in the "American Commonwealths" series, for the best brief account of Clark's exploits. W. F. Poole's chapter on "The West," in the sixth volume of the *Narrative and Critical History of America*, contains an invaluable mass of material concerning Clark and his work. A good biography of Clark is a desideratum. The memoirs, from which the present leaflet is taken, are printed in Dillon's *History of Indiana*. A letter from Clark to George Mason, covering his Vincennes campaign, has been published under the title of *Clark's Campaign in the Illinois* (Cincinnati, 1869).

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