

grance and the nightingale the air with song. These settlements were scattered thinly along this long coast by the banks of the rivers—a mere skein of population.

The boundless continent behind held the implacable Indian, who had been driven slowly back by the combined power of colonist and British. The Spaniard and French had foothold on the Gulf and on the Pacific, holding the mouth of the Mississippi, and a ready ally to the Indian. So that the narrow strip between the Appalachian range and the sea was all that would, in fact, constitute the United States of America when success made them free. Impoverished by such a war as would follow; with no accumulated wealth; with so sparse a population; with the British in Canada, the Indian behind them, the Spaniard and French holding Florida, the Gulf, and the Mississippi, national existence, much less national expansion, seemed indeed almost hopeless; and the political difficulties added to the dark forecastings. It was not one Colony, homogeneous and unique. The political factors were thirteen, with different charters, with diverse traditions, with diverse interests, and every possible jealousy that can be generated in human breasts; and all history told how fierce and cruel and unreasoning these jealousies could be. Grecian Leagues, Italian Confederacies, German Federations, had been constant causes of fraternal strife and savage massacre. Why should not Virginia hate as Sparta hated, or Massachusetts make terms with a foreign foe against her sisters, as heroic but misguided patriots had often done? Some of the wisest saw another cloud, then no larger than a man's hand, on the horizon—the cloud of African slavery—and foretold the storm which would thence fall.

It was clear to our far-sighted sires that in the end success required the conquest of the continent; that the subtle force which would give us life would not be confined within these narrow limits. Nay! that our existence would depend on that expansion. War with Great Britain meant far more