

A BIT OF FORGOTTEN HISTORY.

I wonder how many of the young people of Michigan—how many, indeed, of the older people?—know that these two peninsulas came very near being organized into two states, instead of one? And that, instead of being called Michigan, this lower "beautiful peninsula"—as our coat of arms puts it—was to have borne the clumsy, classical cognomen, "Chersonesus," while the upper peninsula was to have received the pretty name "Sylvania?" There is a curious bit of history about the matter, but it has been so long buried up in the official records, that probably not one in a hundred thousand of the people now living within our borders ever heard the story. To rehearse it may not be uninteresting.

We will pass by the earliest history, the explorations of the Jesuit missionaries, Nicolet, Joliet and Marquette, and of the adventurers, La Salle and Cadillac, and the French claim to all these regions, which was wiped out when Great Britain drove France from North America in 1763—all this is familiar; and take up the story at the close of the war of the American revolution when all this vast "hinterland" lying between the Great Lakes, the Ohio and the Mississippi rivers, passed under the control of the newly-formed United States of America. What should be done with this grand and magnificent region—as large a territory as the original thirteen states, still almost an unbroken wilderness, but full of wonderful possibilities? How should it be governed? Congress wrestled with the question some years before reaching a final decision. Various plans were proposed. One was to divide the "Northwest territory," as it was called, into seventeen states. Think of the burdens that plan would have added to American school boys and girls—twelve states more to "bound" and describe than now! Thomas Jefferson took the leading part in the planning and discussions. He, assisted by two other congressmen as a committee, brought in a proposition for dividing the northwest territory into ten states.

This ten-state scheme of Jefferson's is the bit of forgotten history we set out to relate. It was elaborately worked out. The divisions were carefully marked. The names selected for the ten states show a curious combination of classic learning and pretty sounds. Some were borrowed from the Latin, some from the Greek, while others were Latinized forms of Indian names. The states were to be, as far as possible, two degrees of latitude in width, and arranged in three tiers. Let us give their general limitations:

1. All that vast extent of land north of the forty-fifth parallel of latitude, to the British line, and stretching from the upper end of Lake Huron and the rapids of Sault Ste. Marie westward to the

upper waters of the Mississippi, was to form the northernmost state. It included the upper peninsula of Michigan, northern Wisconsin and northeastern Minnesota. Being covered with dense forests, it was appropriately named "Sylvania."

2. The region lying between Lakes Huron and Erie on the east, and Lake Michigan on the west—the lower peninsula of the present state of Michigan—was the next state. It was named "Chersonesus," probably from a fancied resemblance to the classic peninsula of that name extending southward from Thrace alongside the Hellespont. Had Mr. Jefferson's first scheme prevailed, instead of singing "Michigan, my Michigan," we Wolverines of the lower peninsula would be obliged to say—we couldn't sing it—"Chersonesus, My Chersonesus!" What a mouthful!

3. The next state was west of Lake Michigan, extending to the Mississippi, and from Sylvania on the north to two degrees southward, taking in the bulk of the present state of Wisconsin. It was named "Michigania," after the lake on its eastern boundary.

4. South of Michigania, two degrees farther, stretched the next state, taking in the southern part of the present state of Wisconsin, and the northern third of Illinois, including the great western metropolis, Chicago. This was called "Assenisipia," after the Indian name for the Rock river, Assenisipi, which ran across the state.

5. Next southward, for two degrees, taking in the very heart of the present state of Illinois, and a part of Indiana, came "Illinoia," named after the Illinois river, its principal stream. The eastern boundary of Assenisipia and Illinoia, it should be noted, was a meridian drawn northward from the Falls of the Ohio, opposite Louisville, Ky.

6. East of Assenisipia and south of Chersonesus, occupying what is now northeastern Indiana and northwestern Ohio, was carved out the next state. Within its boundaries were the sources of numerous rivers—the Illinois, Wabash, Muskingum, Maumee, Miami and Sandusky. Hence our state-builders thought that "Metropotamia" (Mother of Rivers) would be an appropriate name, and so it was christened.

7. Next south and lying east of Illinoia, comprising what is now central Indiana and western Ohio, came the state of Saratoga.

8. Under Illinoia and Saratoga and stretching along the Ohio river, was the eighth state. Within its confines the waters of the Illinois, Wabash, Kaskaskia, Ohio and other rivers mingled with the "Father of Waters." So the committee judged that "Polypotamia" (Land of Many Rivers) would be a fitting name, and thus it was called.

9. East of Polypotamia, and also stretching along the Ohio eastward to a

line opposite the mouth of the Great Kanawha river was "Pelisipia," so called from the Cherokee name for the Ohio, Pelisipia.

10. The tenth state occupied all that was left—the broad tract extending from Lake Erie to the Ohio river, and eastward to the border of Pennsylvania. This choice region was named after the "Father of His Country," Washington.

The report of Jefferson's committee provided a code of laws for each of the ten states, which should serve for its government till it had 20,000 free inhabitants who might then make their own laws. Another clause provided for the abolition of slavery after the year 1800. This was the first attempt at a national condemnation of slavery. It was, however, stricken out by the house, and after being amended by omitting the portion giving names to the states, the report was adopted and became a law, and remained so from 1784 to 1787, when the whole plan was repealed, and the famous "Ordinance of 1787" was substituted for it.

This ordinance has been ranked with the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States as "the three title-deeds of American constitutional liberty." The ordinance was the handiwork of Thomas Jefferson, the immortal author of the Declaration of Independence. Its three chief corner stones were (1) complete religious liberty (2) the liberal support of public schools and (3) the prohibition forever of slavery. Thus, as Senator Hoar neatly says, "When older states or nations, where the chains of human bonds have been broken, shall utter the proud boast, 'With a great sum obtained I this freedom,' each sister of this imperial group—Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin—may lift her queenly head with the yet prouder answer, "'But I was free-born.'"

The Ordinance of 1787 radically changed the plan of division, providing for "not less than three nor more than five states" out of the northwest territory. Thus we have this group of five great commonwealths, whose population now is nearly five times as large as the entire thirteen colonies a hundred years ago, and is one-fifth of the entire population of the United States today.—Merle Howe, sr., in Michigan Christian Advocate.

ABNORMAL POLITICS.

Colonel Bryan's reliance for a nomination is upon the solid South. His only hope of an election is in the certainty of the southern electoral vote and the expectation to join New York thereto, by the help of Tammany.

Now the remarkable feature in this situation is that neither Tammany nor the South believes in anything that Colonel Bryan advocates. Those who have investigated the subject in the last