

maneuvered. As yet Burr was no politician. Nothing was more natural than his support of his old friend, Judge Yates, with whom he was in political accord.

“Governor Clinton was evidently of that opinion, for four months after the election, he offered Burr the attorney-generalship of the state. This was a tribute to the lawyer merely. This office was important and lucrative, but it was not given, at that day, as a matter of course, to a partisan. For some days after the offer was made, Colonel Burr hesitated to accept it, not from any dislike to the office, as he informed the governor, but from other circumstances known to both and therefore not mentioned. On the twenty-fifth of September, he signified his willingness to accept, and, on the twenty-seventh, he was appointed. It is conceded * * * * that during the two years that Colonel Burr held this office its duties were performed by him with punctilious correctness and efficiency. * * * *

“In January, 1791, occurred what is regarded as the greatest mystery of Colonel Burr’s political career. He was elected to represent the state of New York in the senate of the United States. Rufus King and Philip Schuyler were the first United States senators chosen by the state of New York, and, as General Schuyler had drawn the short term, his seat would become vacant on the fourth of March, 1791. He was a candidate for re-election. Besides being in actual possession of the seat, he had the advantage of old renown, influential connections, and the powerful aid of Hamilton, then the confidential man of Washington’s administration and in the full tide of his great financial measures. Above all, the federalists had a majority in the legislature which was to elect the senator, and Schuyler was the most federal of the federalists. Aaron Burr was a young man of thirty-five, not known in national politics, with no claims upon either party, and with few advantages which were not personal. Yet upon nomination, General Schuyler was at once and decisively rejected, and immediately after, when proposed, Aaron Burr was, by the first vote, in both houses, elected. Sixteen senators voted, of whom twelve voted for Burr. In the assembly, Burr’s majority was five. * * * *

“Schuyler felt his defeat acutely and Hamilton was painfully disappointed. It was of the utmost possible importance to the secretary of the treasury to have a reliable majority in congress, and the presence of a devoted father-in-law, in a senate of twenty-eight members, sitting with closed doors, was convenient. From 1791, dates Hamilton’s repugnance to Burr, and soon after his letters begin to teem with passages expressive of that repugnance. The two families were on terms of politeness, then and always. The two men were, to all appearance, cordial friends enough down to the last month of Hamilton’s life. But from this time, in whatever direction Burr sought advancement, or advancement sought him, his secret, inveterate opponent was Alexander Hamil-