

dishonest, or wholly incompetent to judge between right and wrong. It is singular that his long experience as a politician, and his extensive acquaintance with men, did not more effectually convince him that it was not true that every man who did not accord with him in sentiment was either a knave or a fool.

"Mr. Swartwout was a generous and a brave man, ardent in friendship, and equally heated against those he chose to consider as his enemies."<sup>1</sup>

Colonel W. S. Smith, whose services were at the command of Marshal Swartwout, carried on Monday morning, July 26, the following communication to DeWitt Clinton :

"New York, 25th July, 1802.

"Sir :

"I am informed that you have lately, in a conversation held at Mr. Ezekiel Robins's, taken very unwarrantable liberties with my character, permitting yourself to use expressions relative to me too gross to be repeated. From your character and standing in society, I presume you will not hesitate to recognize or disavow these charges, and, if true, to make me a prompt and suitable reparation.

"I have made my friend Col. Smith acquainted with my feelings and expectations on this subject ; at my particular request he does me the honor to present this. He will receive your answer, and act accordingly.

"I have the honor to be, sir, yours, etc.,

"JOHN SWARTWOUT.

"The Hon. DEWITT CLINTON, Esq."

"On the morning of the 26th," as said by Colonel Smith, "I waited on Mr. Clinton, at New-Town (L. I.), and presented the above letter, who, after perusing it, asked who had given this information. I answered, I had not inquired, neither did I know. He asked what the expressions were that were alluded to. I answered, those of 'liar, scoundrel, and villain,' as applied directly and pointedly to Mr. Swartwout. He said, that the two first he recollected as applied to Mr. Swartwout relative to that system of conduct which he supposed Mr. Swartwout had pursued ; that the third did not rest upon his mind as being used, and explained the grounds upon which they were used and applied.

"I suggested to him the propriety of explaining himself on paper addressed to Mr. Swartwout in answer to the letter I had presented. He retired, wrote, and delivered to me the letter he had addressed to Mr. Swartwout.

<sup>1</sup> "Clinton was a strong-headed and bitter-tongued politician. Swartwout was a frank-hearted, brave man, devoted to Burr with a disinterested enthusiasm that stood all the tests to which friendship can ever be subjected."—The life and times of Aaron Burr. By James Parton, vol. i., p. 224.

The history of political parties in the state of New York. By Jabez D. Hammond, vol. i., pp. 186, 187.