

him, on the afternoon of the seventeenth of June, requesting his presence at Richmond Hill, on the following morning. He called upon the vice-president, who delegated him to convey to General Hamilton the newspaper, with the most offensive passage marked, and a note from Colonel Burr, which concluded with the following words: "You must perceive, sir, the necessity of a prompt and unqualified acknowledgment or denial of the use of any expressions which would warrant the assertions of Mr. Cooper."

"Hamilton was taken by surprise." He had not seen Doctor Cooper's letter. "Having read it, and the note of Colonel Burr," he informed Mr. Van Ness that he would send him an answer "in the course of the day." Late that evening, he called at Mr. Van Ness's residence, and told him that a press of business had prevented his preparing a reply, and would prevent him for two days to come; but on the twentieth he would give him a communication for Colonel Burr.

"In that communication, which was very long, General Hamilton declined making the acknowledgment or denial that Colonel Burr had demanded. Between gentlemen, he said, *despicable* and *more despicable* were not worth the pains of distinction. He could not consent to be interrogated as to the justice of the *inferences* which others might have drawn from what he had said of an opponent during fifteen years' competition. But he stood ready to avow or disavow explicitly any *definite* opinion which he might be charged with having expressed respecting any gentleman. He trusted that Colonel Burr, upon further reflection, would see the matter in the same light. If not, he could only regret the fact, and abide the consequences.

"The letter was oil upon the flames of Burr's indignation. His reply was prompt and decided. \* \* \* \*

"Your letter of the twentieth instant has been this day received. Having considered it attentively, I regret to find in it nothing of that sincerity and delicacy which you profess to value. Political opposition can never absolve gentlemen from the necessity of a rigid adherence to the laws of honor and the rules of decorum. I neither claim such privilege nor indulge it in others. The common sense of mankind affixes to the epithet adopted by Doctor Cooper the idea of dishonor. It has been publicly applied to me under the sanction of your name. The question is not, whether he has understood the meaning of the word, or has used it according to syntax, and with grammatical accuracy; but, whether you have authorized this application, either directly or by uttering expressions or opinions derogatory to my honor. The time "when" is in your knowledge, but no way material to me, as the calumny has now first been disclosed, so as to become the subject of my notice, and as the effect is present and palpable, your letter has furnished me with new reasons for requiring a definite reply.'