

town in the state in which I should have expected any open marks of hospitality and respect."

Meanwhile, "the duel having been fought in New Jersey, certain federalists of that state" had succeeded "in getting Doctor Mason, one of the clergymen who had attended General Hamilton, to give testimony on which to found an indictment. Burr was indicted accordingly. In New York, the evidence had been given by Bishop Moore, who administered the communion to the dying man. But for those two clergymen's second-hand testimony, there would never have existed a word of legal evidence that the duel had been fought."

Although indicted, he was not prosecuted. On his return to Washington, it is said he was received by the officials and in society, "with at least as much consideration" as he had been before the duel. On the second of March, 1805, the vice-president took leave of the senate. "This was done at a time when the doors were closed; the senate being engaged in executive business, and, of course, there were no spectators." His brief address was reported as having been "the most dignified, sublime, and impressive that ever was uttered."

When he had withdrawn from the senate chamber, the members

"Resolved, unanimously, That the thanks of the senate be presented to Aaron Burr, in testimony of the impartiality, dignity and ability, with which he has presided over their deliberations; and of their entire approbation of his conduct, in the discharge of the arduous and important duties, assigned him as president of the senate."

The intentions of the eminent statesman then began to be a subject of public interest. Every lover of gossip in the United States, or, in other words, "every sane inhabitant of the United States," as remarked by one of his biographers "was asking these questions in the spring of 1805: What will Burr do now? Where will he go? For ten years past, he filled a large place in the public view, and recent events had fixed all eyes upon him. In every part of the country, he had strong personal friends; men, who had supported and worked hard for him in hotly-contested campaigns; women, who had loved his black eyes, and thought him a knight without fear and without reproach. His portrait hung upon walls, his bust stood upon mantles. Always a man of whom anecdotes were told, he was now the subject of a thousand preposterous rumors and the hero of a thousand groundless or exaggerated tales. He was regarded as a *mysterious* being, a man of unfathomable purposes, and able to bend all things and persons to his will. The public mind was prepared to believe anything of Burr, provided only that it was sufficiently incredible."<sup>1</sup>

The character of Aaron Burr as a soldier of the war of the Revolution, as a

<sup>1</sup> The life and times of Aaron Burr. By James Parton, vol. i., pp. 335, 340, 341, 342, 344, 348, 349, 352, 355; vol. ii., pp. 14, 15, 16, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 28, 29.