

and to lead him step by step, to the different points of enquiry for the purpose of testing his consistency and the truth of his statements. This of itself was the work of days, even to a mind disengaged from every other avocation.

"I commenced the investigation on the ninth of October, the day after Mr. Swartwout presented himself. At that juncture the Spanish force, greatly superior in numbers, was in my front, and I had every reason to believe that we should, in a few days, be brought to action."

Samuel Swartwout, having imparted all the information concerning Colonel Burr's plans and intentions which were known to him, departed from the headquarters of General Wilkinson on the eighteenth of October. Thereupon General Wilkinson sent a message to Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas A. Smith, belonging to the detachment of troops assembled at Natchitoches, to come to him. On presenting himself to General Wilkinson, "a conversation of several minutes ensued, after which, as deposed by Lieutenant-Colonel Smith, "he told me he had something of the highest importance to communicate to me; that I must first pledge my sacred honour not to divulge it. I gave him the pledge required, and he told me he had received by Mr. Swartwout, a letter from Colonel Burr, stating that he was then assembling an armed force on the upper waters of the Mississippi, and would descend, at their head, in a short time. The general stated that their object was unlawful or treasonable, I do not recollect which; and that Burr had offered him, if the army would join in the enterprise, that he might name the rank of his officers. The general observed, that of all traitors, a military one was the greatest, and that there was but one course for him to pursue, which was to oppose him with all his force.

"The general then told me that he was desirous of intrusting to me a communication to the president of the United States; that it must be delivered in a shorter time, if possible, than the same route ever had been travelled. *In order to prevent suspicion, he observed, that I must tender my resignation, which he would accept in orders, but that he would arrange the business with the president so as to continue me on the rolls of the army. The general mentioned to me a number of persons of high rank as being concerned with Burr, and furnished me with a cypher to communicate to him any information I might receive of their movements on my journey.*

"I cannot be certain as to the day [I left Natchitoches], but I think near sundown of the evening of the twenty-second of October, 1806. * * * * The communication to the president of the United States was concealed between the soles of a slipper, which I opened, agreeably to my orders, in the presence of the president."

The disclosures, which General Wilkinson had embodied in the dispatches he was about to send to President Jefferson, were evidently intended by him