

to be primarily the means of freeing himself from the current intimations of his being in the pay of Spain, and of impressing the people of the United States with the belief that he was too loyally patriotic to be allured into any treasonable designs inimicable to their peace and welfare, and secondarily to establish himself so firmly in their confidence and esteem that he would ever thereafter have the fame of being regarded and titled the savior of the union of the states. Whatever other motives may be attributed to him in the composition of the two verbose and bombastic communications, it is certainly true that they contain no nominal intimation by which the most discerning and gifted of inquisitors could derive evidence that Colonel Burr was in any way associated with the designs and enterprises described in them. If he or his immediate followers had been named or covertly titled by General Wilkinson in either of these grandiloquous communications as having connection with the treasonable undertakings of which they were to apprise the president of the United States, there would be indisputably good grounds for denominating General Wilkinson an arrant adept in intentionally giving a false and exaggerated account of purposes and projects which he knew to be more imaginary than real in circumstance, disposition, and accomplishment.

Intending to obtain the sensational importance which he naturally craved, he sent Lieutenant-Colonel Smith on the closely-concealed mission of which he successfully acquitted himself on the twenty-fifth of November, by delivering the dispatches to President Jefferson. The first reads :

“ October 20, 1806.

“ The following information appears to rest on such broad and explicit grounds as to exclude all doubts of its authenticity :

“ A numerous and powerful association, extending from New York through the western states to the territory bordering on the Mississippi, has been formed with a design to levy and rendezvous eight or ten thousand men in New Orleans at a very near period ; and from thence, with the co-operation of a naval armament, to carry an expedition against Vera Cruz.

“ Agents from Mexico, who were in Philadelphia in the beginning of August, are engaged in this enterprise ; these persons have given assurances that the landing of the proposed expedition will be seconded by so general an insurrection as to insure the subversion of the present government, and silence all opposition in three or four weeks. A body of the associates is to descend the Alleghany River, and the first general rendezvous will be held near the Rapids of the Ohio, on or before the 20th of next month, from whence this corps is to proceed in light boats, with the utmost possible velocity, for the city of New Orleans, under the expectation of being joined in their route by auxiliaries from the state of Tennessee and other quarters.