

In answer to that communication, he received the circular letter addressed to collectors of customs :

“ Treasury Department, May 12, 1837.

“ If the bank where you deposite should suspend specie payments, *you will yourself collect and keep safely in your own hands the public money for all duties at your port, until further directions are given you by this department how to deposite, transfer, or pay it.* You must, of course, continue to adhere to the existing laws of congress, and the former instructions of the treasury in respect to the kind of money receivable for customs; and by which *it is understood to be your duty to require payments to be made in specie, or the notes of specie-paying banks that are at par.*

“ LEVI WOODBURY,

“ Secretary of the treasury.”

On the receipt of the circular, Collector Swartwout went at once to Washington, where he had not only an interview with Secretary Woodbury, but one with President Jackson. On his return from the national capital, he disclosed to a number of merchants assembled at the Exchange the particulars of those interviews.

The information given the merchants was variously reported to the public by the city newspapers. Having read these diverse accounts of the collector's statements, the secretary of the treasury wrote the following letter to the misrepresented official :

“ Treasury Department, May 19, 1837.

“ Sir:—This department has, with much surprise, seen several representations in the daily press concerning certain declarations made by you, at a recent public meeting in New York city, as to the course you intended to pursue in future in collecting the public revenue.

“ The importance of the subject, and the nature of these representations, render it my unpleasant duty to call your immediate attention to them.

“ Some of the accounts of what took place represent you as saying, in substance, *that, as the orders of the treasury could not be complied with, you, on your own responsibility, would dispense with them; while others state that you understood a discretion had been left to you by the executive on this subject; and, that, in the exercise of such discretion, you should not conform to the instructions of the department, either by collecting the money yourself, which fell due for duties, or by collecting it in such kind of money as the laws require.* Other representations convey the idea *that if you pursued such a course the government would make no objection to it.*

“ Under a belief that in these reports as to your remarks and determination on this subject some unfortunate errors must have occurred, or that you must