

*an affirmative opinion, but I learned yesterday that his accounts as collector were in a bad condition, and that there was a balance due the United States of over one million two hundred thousand dollars. He is abroad, as you know, making an effort [to] raise money on his Cumberland property, and, in a recent letter, as I understand, from him to a Mr. Howell, his partner in interest, gives a reason to expect that he will succeed in raising a very large sum, and IN WHICH EVENT, IT IS SAID BY MR. OGDEN, THE CASHIER OF THE CUSTOM-HOUSE, HE WILL BE ENABLED TO PAY MOST OF THE BALANCE, AND AMPLY SECURE THE REMAINDER. Of this I have no knowledge other than that derived from a conversation with Mr. Ogden to-day.*

*“Mr. Swartwout is expected out in the first steam-packet from England, which may be daily expected; or if he does not come, letters will be received that will state the prospect he has of success. I am of opinion that, if his negotiations fail abroad, he has not sufficient property to meet the claims of the United States.*

“Respectfully,

“HON. LEVI WOODBURY.

“J. HOYT.”

As a medium for the circulation of aspersive and detractory statements respecting Samuel Swartwout, Collector Hoyt was particularly fitted. He had an artful gift for exaggeration that would quickly obtain the admiration of the ex-collector's political enemies and of all easily prejudiced people. His selfish instincts were in no way inimical to his utterance of the most sweeping of accusatory and denunciatory declarations inasmuch as he foresaw the consequent downfall of the ex-collector and his own individual elevation in the esteem and good-will of the public. Why should he not therefore take the leadership of the misrepresenters, calumniators, and maligners of Samuel Swartwout, absent and ignorant of the scandalous reports which would undoubtedly have wide currency concerning his dishonesty and insolvency?

The secretary of the treasury returned the following answer to the deeply interested collector :

“Washington, November 2, 1838.

“Dear Sir :—I thank you for the information communicated in yours of the 31st ultimo, as to Mr. Swartwout. *There is some mystery in this subject. His current account, rendered to me and the treasurer, admits a balance in his hands of only about \$200,000; and that, as you were formerly apprized, he professed to retain in order to meet payments on duties which had been made to him under protest, and such as had been sued for to recover them back. SOME OF THOSE I UNDERSTOOD FROM YOU, HE HAD SINCE PAID, WHEN RECOVERIES WERE HAD.*

“THE BALANCE NOW WOULD THUS BE BELOW \$200,000. *It cannot exceed*