

Professor Heeren had opened up new vistas; he must get to Napoleon and strike while the iron was hot. The dazzling De Reizenstein would have married him, settled him down to a secure, graceful, elegant position in a German court. His ambitions were on a grander scale; they *must* be fulfilled.

From Erfurt he continued his breakneck flight to Gotha, as though he feared the siren might follow and he might weaken. There he was royally entertained by Ernst I, Duke of Saxe-Coburg, and met Bernard de Lindenau, Director of the Observatory, famous mathematician and astronomer, as well as Galletti, the historian. And, on January 18th, he was in Frankfort, where he settled down to await word from Paris on his application for a passport. Five days later, he was still waiting, "but there were advices from Paris concerning me extremely unfavorable, and requesting I might be advised by no means to hazard my person within the territories of France."⁵⁹ Nevertheless, he made the hazard, and on the 25th was in Mayence, in the sphere of French influence. No passport was forthcoming, and he was placed under a modified arrest pending disposition of his case from Paris. He found distant cousins here in Mayence, representing a branch of the Burr family which had settled in Holland more than a century before, and they did what they could to ease his condition. And, at the beginning of February, came good news. Paris had decided to grant him his passport, and he was free to proceed.

CHAPTER XXVIII

FAILURE IN FRANCE

1. PROPOSALS TO NAPOLEON

AARON BURR reached Paris on February 16, 1810. He wrote at once for an audience with the Duc de Cadore, the Minister of Foreign Relations, which was granted, and he submitted his plans. Then he retired to his shabby lodgings and waited for a reply. The wait was to be long and tiring. In the interval he renewed his acquaintance with Comte de Volney, scholar and author, and M. Adet, former French Minister to the United States, both of whom he had entertained in the days of affluence at Richmond Hill. There was also a joyful reunion with John Vanderlyn, the painter, to further whose genius Burr had given unstintedly of his time and money. Vanderlyn was famous now, and in a position to turn the tables in the matter of financial help. But Burr was singularly delicate in this respect. He had had no hesitation in borrowing vast sums from usurers and those to whom lending was a business procedure, but he resisted as long as possible borrowing — with little prospect of return — from those who were personal friends. Bentham, Lüning, whose draft he had cashed with the greatest reluctance only when he had not another *sou* in his pocket, and now Vanderlyn.

His first flush of optimism was slowly dying. He heard nothing from Cadore, French officialdom was cool, if not openly hostile, and his scanty funds were steadily growing less. So much so that on February 24th, he was reduced to "rice soup for dinner, 8 sous. Go out at 6. Bought bread and cheese." *But*, the same evening, he records "two rencounters, one good; another, the third, 13 francs! That's economy for you!"¹ Burr knew his own failings, but could not resist them. He had no money for food, but the cries of the flesh were irresistible.

A few days later Cadore informed him that he had appointed Deputy Louis Roux to treat with him concerning the proposals he had submitted to His Majesty, the Emperor. Burr dined with Roux several times, and recorded mournfully, "have no reason to believe that my business advances, or that I shall do anything here."² Officialdom grew more and more rude and overbearing, doors re-

mained closed in spite of repeated attempts to get past guards, food was held at a minimum, and life was kept bearable only by repeated *muse* and the solace derived from a certain yielding Madame Paschaud, whose husband was quite fortunately away in Geneva. Because of her, Burr had no time to make any entries in his Journal from March 12th to March 28th.

What were these projects which he had submitted to Napoleon, and to which the French Ministry opposed a discreet silence? On March 21st, he had written in desperation to the Duc d'Otrante — better known to fame as Fouché, dreaded Chief of Police to Napoleon — “Mr. Burr, from the United States of North America, having some months ago seen published in the *Moniteur* the expression of his majesty's assent to the independence of the Spanish American colonies, came to Paris to offer his services to accomplish that object and others connected therewith. He asked neither men nor money. He asked only the authorization of his majesty.” Failing answers to his previous communications, he now asks an audience from the Duke relating to his schemes.³

Seemingly this letter is plain enough in its language. The independence of Spanish America was the single object of his heart, the only plan to be discussed. Nothing else. Nothing of treasonable designs upon the territory of the United States. Yet, up to a few years ago, there was no period in Burr's long career more shrouded in impenetrable obscurity, more murmurous in the whispering-galleries of history with treason, turncoatism and renegade proposals. The older view was based chiefly on rumors, fugitive letters and inquiries addressed by the State Department to correspondents in France and their replies — or rather, the bruited rumors of their replies. These documents, as they come to light among the Madison papers in various repositories, require close examination.

The first and most important is a lengthy communication, addressed to James Madison from Paris, dated Dec. 11, 1811. Herein is stated positively that “to the Duke [of Otranto], he [Burr] delivered a memorial of 63 folio pages . . . The object of this memorial was: to procure peace between France and England. France was to offer to secure to England, with all her forces, even by the loan of 100,000 men, or more, the conquest of the Northern parts of the United States. With such a secret treaty or an understanding between the two nations, it was proposed that English fleets should carry, from time to time, to Canada and Nova Scotia as many troops, as would be judged necessary, and there wait under some pretence till the moment was favorable for the operation. That time was provisionally stated by B[urr] to be the next election of

P. & V. P. He added: that he strongly relied on his consummate local knowledge of the various dispositions & inclinations of the inhabitants of the Eastern and Southern states, and of the local prejudices which he could, between this and that time, excite by means of his numerous friends, who were dispersed over every part of the Country.” These were to act in “concert with the Chief of an insurrection that was to be raised in New Mexico, the Province of Texas, W. Florida. This chief was to be himself with the appointment from his F. M. [French Majesty] of Generalissimo over the armies in the South, 1,500,000 francs was required for this part of the expedition.”⁴

Proposals that are obviously treasonable, even if somewhat contradictory and fantastic in their total disregard of political, military and nationalistic considerations. Yet they are set forth in this letter with such a wealth of precise detail as almost to compel belief. Who, then, had sent this warning to the Department of State? One who merely signed himself “Citizen of the United States,” who received the information second-hand from another personage equally unknown. Such anonymity must naturally render the warning highly suspicious — Burr had many American enemies in Paris at the time — unless it contains internal evidence of authenticity, or there is external corroboration. But only a crank or a madman could propose seriously that France and England, battling for the supremacy of the world, with antagonisms that were deep-seatedly political, economic and philosophical, could unite on a scatterbrained plot involving remote and unessential issues. Such a memorial, if offered, would have found its way immediately into the nearest fire, and the promulgator himself clapped into a lunatic asylum.

But Burr's letter to the Duke of Otranto, or Fouché, quoted above, not only makes no mention of such phantasms, but speaks specifically and sharply of Spanish-American independence alone, and “asked neither men nor money.” Joel Barlow, ex-Hartford wit and poet, and charged with a commercial mission to France, was asked by Madison to verify these accusations against Burr. He wrote back in cipher that such seemed to be the case, that both France and England did not dislike Burr's project of dividing the United States between them, that the scheme was rather applauded by Napoleon, and that “it is with great inquietude that I contemplate these possibilities.”⁵ But this seeming confirmation was dated Sept. 26, 1812, long after Burr's memorials had retired to gather dust in forgotten archives, and the proponent himself was safely back in the very country he was supposed to have divided.

Furthermore, Barlow, a polemic writer chiefly, and the author of such poems as "The Vision of Columbus," had not reached France until late in 1811, after Burr had left, discomfited. And, though it was Barlow's mission to see Napoleon, he never achieved even that. Obviously his information, such as it was, had come from the whispering-gallery of rumors that represented the American colony, who one and all hated Burr, or even from that "Citizen of the United States" whose anonymous letter he was supposed to investigate.

Thus the situation stood until a few years ago, when research workers, under the direction of Dr. Waldo G. Leland, of the Carnegie Institution, unearthed in the *Archives Nationales* of France certain memoranda and *précis* relating directly to the memorials and proposals of Aaron Burr. Now indeed should the matter of Burr's alleged treasonable designs have been cleared up definitively, once and for all. But, surprisingly, the darkness became worse confounded. Unfortunately, the transcriptions and summaries of these documents have remained hidden in the working notebooks of the researchers, penciled in great haste, and seen only by a very few in the safekeeping of the Carnegie Institution. Perhaps because of the crabbed handwriting, the vagueness of Burr's phrasing — an old failing of his — the notoriously poor French, and certain misinterpretations by an openly puzzled and much harried clerk in the French Ministry, these documents have lent themselves to assertions that Burr, at least in his later years, was openly advocating treason against the United States. One of the commentators even goes so far as to explain the lapse upon the theory that Burr, always mentally somewhat unbalanced, was now definitely insane.⁶

But let the documents speak for themselves. The first is a summary by a French departmental clerk of all the others. The second is a "Note on the United States," submitted by Burr through Deputy Roux. The Americans, he said, are not content with the present form of government, but a great many of them would not consent to a change. Concerning the political parties in the United States, he maintained that, aside from the Republicans, whom he admitted to be in the majority, the Federalists were without zeal and energy, and without a leader. However, "there is a third party quite superior — in talent and energy . . . they wish for something grand and stable, something which, requiring the employment of active spirits, will assure the tranquillity of reasonable men . . . This party has a recognized chief [Burr]; they ask only to follow and obey him." Three-quarters of the Americans, he as-

sured the French, hate England. It is a favorable moment for persuading the United States to make war on that country. Forty thousand sailors, idle because of the embargo, are ready to undertake anything.

To which Note the puzzled clerk added his own admittedly doubtful interpretation. His *addendum* has been the responsible cause of most of the misconceptions concerning Burr's thesis. "This note," he wrote for the information of the Ministry, "is not at all clear: the author seems hardly willing to explain himself openly — it seems that he is the chief of the third party which inclines to monarchy; and that this plan would employ the 40 thousand sailors for the overthrow of the republican government — the declaration of War against the English would follow this change — it ought to be remarked, for the rest, that since the writing of this note, the embargo has been lifted."⁷

Which is indeed an outrageous interpretation of a rather plain document by an underpaid, much harried clerk. To his French mind, obsequiously eager to flatter His Majesty, the Emperor, a grand and stable government could only mean a monarchy; though not a syllable is breathed by Burr relating to such a form of government. Nor, even by a twisting of meanings, can any intention be ascribed to him for the employment of the inactive sailors to overthrow the American forms. Burr, in fact, stated quite plainly that a great many of the people would not consent to any change, though discontented. He had been asked for an analysis of the political situation, and he had given it. That was all. Of course there was a third party, naturally it was superior in talents and energy to the others, and he was its chief — what else could he have told the French if he wished to be considered as a person of weight and influence? But obviously, the whole tenor of the proposal was for a war with England. Three-quarters of the Americans hated England; the forty thousand sailors, idle in American ports because of the embargo induced by England's high-handed Orders in Council and seizures on the seas, would leap at the opportunity to avenge themselves on the country responsible for their ills. The third party — of superior talents — would follow Burr blindly to the attack. The "grand and stable" occupation of "active spirits" would be war — war on England, on Spain as well, with strong governments in the conquered provinces of Canada, Mexico, Cuba, Florida — and the strong ruler would be Burr. Nowhere in this note is there a hint of treason, except in the overheated imagination of a French clerk. Burr had simply enlarged his old scheme against Spain to include a now hated England, chiefly because he

had suffered indignities, and Napoleon's interest could be more readily caught in a plan against his formidable rival. The United States could also be drawn into the grand scheme because of the pending situation. While the big powers squabbled and fought, he would quietly seize those provinces which he had always passionately desired, and thus set up for all time the dynasty of Burr.

The next Note in the series is a Memoir on Louisiana. He described its government, its population, and remarked that in spite of union, the inhabitants did not enjoy the privileges of American citizens. "The government of the United States," he continued, "has become quite odious to the Inhabitants. When I was in the district of Orleans, about three years ago, I saw a memorial already signed by several respectable citizens, addressed to the Emperor. I advised them to suppress this memorial and promised them to come to their assistance in another manner. They are still waiting for me to keep my promise."⁸

It is on this Note that Wandell and Minnigerode base their contention that Burr was plotting the seizure of Louisiana, and its annexation to France. But the Memoir bears no such far-fetched interpretation. Quite the contrary. When the disgruntled inhabitants had wished to address Napoleon, obviously for assistance, Burr had advised them against such a course, and promised to help them "in another manner." This "manner" fits in as well with his old schemes as with his new. They were still the same. He had, as we have seen, promised the Orleaners the conquest of Mexico and the adjoining Spanish provinces of Texas and West Florida. With himself as the ruler of these territories, prosperity must necessarily come to Louisiana and New Orleans by free and untrammelled trade with these dominions; and with prosperity, the population must soon increase to the figures set by Congressional Statute as requisite for full citizenship. Here, however, as has also been noted in the initial conspiracy, lingers the vague doubt whether or not, at some unspecified future time, Burr was not considering the possibility that Orleans would find it advantageous to associate itself with his dream empire of Mexico. In this, and this only, may be found the adumbrations of possible treason, if such it could be considered, when the plan depended on the will of the people involved, and not on forcible seizure.

The next Note is a straightforward proposal concerning the "Spanish Colonies." Cuba, Florida and Mexico, he declared, desire independence but have no means of achieving it. England's attitude was now one of hostility to such attempts, because Spain

was her ally. The moment, therefore, has come for the Emperor to be the means of liberating the colonies. Such a course would naturally involve the United States in a war with England, and would necessarily bring about the loss of the English colonies to the United States.⁹

The next document is a "Memorial on the means of wresting the Spanish Colonies from the Influence of England." Burr proposed to make the Spanish colonies independent, and array them under his control against England. He would begin with Mexico and New Granada. With 1200 men he could take Pensacola. St. Augustine, Mobile and Baton Rouge would fall without any resistance. In West Florida alone he could enroll under his standard a corps of 4000 men in six weeks; and as many in New Orleans and along the left bank of the Mississippi. With this force he could overthrow the Spanish power east of the Rio del Norte in short order. There would be plenty of volunteers for this enterprise from the Mississippi boatmen and the Western States, whose inhabitants, he said, believed in him.¹⁰

On March 13, 1810, an employee of the Ministry of Foreign Relations was assigned to confer with Burr. This was the Deputy Roux, who wrote out an account of a conversation, in which, according to him, Burr discussed his plans for expeditions against the Lucca Islands, Florida, Louisiana, New Mexico, Jamaica, Canada, and Nova Scotia, or any of them.¹¹ Aside from the vast reaches of territory involved in these grandiose schemes, the chief interest lies in the mention of Louisiana. The other colonies were either English or Spanish. But already the *written* proposals of Burr had been misinterpreted completely; how much more chance for Roux to become wholly befogged in the mist of Burr's cryptic talk. Senator Plumer had long before remarked that Burr's speech was all things to all men, and that it required careful after-analysis to discover that he had not actually said the things his auditors thought he had.

This clerical memorandum was submitted by the Duc de Cadore to the Emperor on March 14th with a notation that Burr could not initiate anything except in Florida and Louisiana, "and he could not be employed without giving grave offense to the United States."¹²

On March 19th, Roux conferred again with Burr, this time to receive a detailed plan for an expedition against Canada, which was duly reported to the Ministry.¹³ Almost four months later, on July 27th, Roux submitted a final report in which he referred to his previous notes, and gave an account of a new interview with

Burr on July 14th, in which Burr had urged that the attention of the Emperor be called to the plans he had presented for his consideration. These were, Roux now stated distinctly, for the independence of Florida and Mexico.¹⁴

The Minister of Foreign Relations, the Duc de Cadore, sent these *précis* along to Napoleon on July 29th, with the illuminating comment that "he [Burr] spoke only of the Floridas and of Canada. It would seem then that he proposed to hush the rumor which had redounded from the reports directed against his own country (*qui s'était répondu des communications dirigées contre son propre pays*) and which he was accused of having made to the Duc d'Otrante [Fouché]." ¹⁵

This communication of Cadore is most important for a final view of what Burr's somewhat involved, and always grandiose, schemes actually portended. Had they been, in truth, treasonable to the United States, and so known to the French to whom they were submitted, certainly he could not now be protesting to them that they entailed no such purpose, that the rumor prevalent in Paris concerning his conversations with Fouché, *not with Roux or Cadore*, was false.

It was *that* rumor to which Joel Barlow referred, and which the anonymous "Citizen" had obligingly sent along to Madison. A careful examination of the actual notes, memoirs and reports, as elicited from the French Archives, discloses at once the absurdity of those rumors. Instead of a proposition by Burr for an amicable agreement between England and France at the expense of the United States, all energies were to be directed to a war by France and the United States, in association, against England and Spain. The charge of treason on the last, and what has appeared hitherto to be the most damning count against Burr, seems to have very little substantiation in the facts.

Burr's appeals to Napoleon for aid failed, not because his proposals were impracticable, when limited in extent of operations, but because, as the Ministerial clerk had justly noted, Madison had lifted the Jeffersonian embargo, and relations between the United States and England had eased for the moment. Napoleon was also engaged, about this period, in diplomatic negotiations with England over Holland, and did not wish to endanger these by an open advocacy of Burr. Then, too, Napoleon must have recognized in the slight figure of Aaron Burr something of his own boundless ambition and thirst for power, and had no intention of aiding such a dangerously able and talented man to set himself up as the ruler of a huge and glamorous territory in the Americas. He

had no assurance, that, once in power, Burr would crook the pregnant knee to him and follow French leadership in vassal obedience.

2. DESPERATE STRAITS

On July 27, 1810, the very day that Roux submitted his final report to his superior, Burr confided to his Journal that, "despairing of any success in my project, a few days ago asked passport to go to the United States, which was refused. . . . Was told that I could not have a passport to go out of the empire. *Me voila prisonier d'etat et presque sans sous.*" (Here I am a prisoner of state and almost without a cent.) ¹⁶

Burr had given up all hope of French participation, and wished to return to the United States, there to take his chances with a vindictive Government and creditors alike. His friends had meanwhile been active in his behalf, and Theo had exerted herself to the utmost — so far, without success, though Burr did not know of it at the time.

She had made a desperate appeal to Dolly Madison, wife of the President of the United States. "Why . . . is my Father banished from a country for which he has encountered wounds & dangers & fatigue for years?" she demanded passionately. "Why is he driven from his friends, from an only child, to pass an unlimited time in exile, and that too at an age when others are reaping the harvest of past toils?" Then, as if ashamed of her outburst, she concluded with dignified words, "To whatever fate Mr. Madison may doom this application, I trust it will be treated with delicacy; of this I am more desirous as Mr. Alston is ignorant of the step I have taken in writing to you." Dolly Madison must indeed attribute it to the zeal of a daughter for a "Father almost adored." ¹⁷

Aaron Burr had peculiar claims on Dolly Madison. As Dolly P. Todd, left a widow with an infant son, she had helped her mother run an exclusive boarding-house in Philadelphia. Burr had been of the greatest assistance to both. He had advised the mother on points of law — without a fee; and he had been responsible for the introduction of Madison and Dolly to each other, and their consequent marriage. So close had been their friendship that the young widow, in a will dated May 13, 1794, had appointed Burr as the sole guardian of her son.¹⁸ Madison, too, had much to remember gratefully of the friendship of Aaron Burr, but these things are soon forgotten in the heat of politics and the exigencies of personal ambition. The record is barren of any reply to Theo's impassioned plea, and evidently the application was discreetly forgotten.

Napoleon's course in refusing either to approve of Burr's designs or to permit him out of his realm is puzzling from the point of view of any other explanation than the one offered. If Burr would be dangerous as the conqueror of Mexico, he was also sufficiently dangerous out of the Emperor's grasp. Desperate, ambitious, talented, he might evolve some other scheme in that fertile brain of his which would disturb the delicate balances set up by Napoleon, and impede, if not bring to grief, some of his own grandiose plans. It would be better to keep him in France, under the eye of his secret police — and harmless. And there was also the American Embassy, of which more will be said later.

This was flattering enough to any vanity Burr might have possessed, but decidedly disagreeable otherwise. He had no more money, Theo was trying hard in the United States to collect funds for him, and not succeeding; winter was approaching, and the prospect of Paris in a penniless state was frightening. He wrote a note to a friend, Edward Griswold, requesting the loan of 150 guineas, and told him that he attributed the refusal of a passport to "the machinations of our worthy minister, General Armstrong, who has been, and still is, indefatigable in his exertions to my prejudice."¹⁹ Armstrong was related to the Livingston clan, and had been a party to the shuffling of Senatorial seats with De Witt Clinton.

But Griswold was no longer a friend, and refused the loan. Burr records mournfully, "winter approaches, no prospect of leave to quit the empire, and still less of any means of living in it. So must economize most rigidly my few remaining louis." To add to his troubles, Madame Paschaud, his mistress, had left for Geneva to join her husband, and "truly, her absence makes me sad."²⁰

There were tragic days ahead. Life became a constant effort to keep from starving and freezing, and a weary routine of repeated applications for the coveted passport. Item after item in the Journal discloses a most painstaking economy in food and coal; meals of bread and cheese and potatoes, and sometimes just potatoes. Burr cut himself off from the luxuries of tea and coffee, and shivered in his cold, bare little attic room without a warming fire in the grate. But, in the midst of heroic privations, suddenly an entry appears, in startling contrast. He had given a girl 6 francs for *music*, and, the same day, another, "pretty, good, voluptuous, stayed with her two hours; 7 francs." Hustling then to bed, penitent, apprehensive of physical consequences, and — walking twenty miles the next day to save coach fare.²¹

The story goes on and on — of dire poverty interspersed with

reckless extravagances in the things of the flesh; and of presents for Theo and *Gampillo*, the grandson. Though it had become "so cold I should be glad of a fire," he bought books to send to Theo, and medals, ancient coins and toys to thrill *Gampillo*. "I never spend a livre that I do not calculate what pretty thing it might have bought for you and *Gampillo*; hence my economy," he wrote pathetically.²² In fact, so determined was he on this, that on September 11th may be seen this proud entry: "Not a cent for *music* since last Saturday week," but, alas, the sentence was thereafter crossed out, as if he had remembered.²³

Meanwhile, he was cooling his heels almost daily at the forbidding door of the Duc de Rovigo, the new Minister of Police, seeking a passport to get out of this most inhospitable country and return to one more inhospitable, perhaps. After days of weary waiting, and wrenching agony of heart, September 13th brought most joyful news. The Duc de Rovigo notified him that his passport had been granted; and Griswold, repenting of his former churlishness, came through with a loan of 2000 francs, sufficient to pay his passage to the United States.

The silver pieces glittered in welcome profusion, but the equally glittering words of the Minister of Police were a cruel mockery. Day by day, the assurances were repeated, with no passport forthcoming; until, on September 25th, Burr was stunned to hear that the Emperor had in fact neither granted the passport nor returned any answer to his repeated demands.

Black despair enveloped him; he was doomed to a lingering starvation — yet, "alas! on my way a pair of demoiselles, and so 8 francs." He knew his weaknesses, fought against them, but they were too strong for will, for self-respect, for self-preservation even. "How many curses have I heaped on poor Gam.," he upbraided himself, "and yet he is rather to be pitied; only see how for the last fifteen days he has been so good and considering his habits, and considering, etc., etc."²⁴

Yet, in the midst of darkness, his keen mind remained undimmed; his intellectual curiosity was as alert as ever. Every new discovery, every new inventive process, of which he heard, attracted his instant attention — from the practical as well as the purely scientific point of view. "A very important discovery has been made here, viz., to make vinegar, of excellent quality, from the sap of any trees," he wrote. "The process gives you all the moisture in vinegar, and all the wood in carbon. I shall get the details if I can find money to pay for it." And, also, he went "to see Mons. Cagniard, and his new invention of raising water and

performing any mechanical operation. His apparatus is a screw of Archimedes turned the reverse, air, water, and quicksilver . . . If the thing performs what is said, I will apply it to give water to Charleston." ²⁵ He was quick to see the financial possibilities in all things. He lived before his time; had he been born a century later, he might possibly have become a formidable captain of industry — or, and this is equally likely, a glorified Colonel Sellers, flitting from scheme to scheme with the agility, and the futility, of a butterfly sportive in the sun.

Back he went to the weary, interminable task of renewed petitions for leave to quit French shores, studying Spanish withal, just in case . . . and spending Griswold's money on food, shelter, prostitutes and presents — that money which should have transported him to his native land. And now a new speculation dawned on his vision, dazzling him with its possibilities of millions. The old Holland Land Company venture, on its native heath, *redivivus*. By 1810, the Holland Company shares had fallen to their lowest ebb — war, the collapse of land values, Dutch fear of reprisals by the United States for the Napoleonic seizures of American property — all contributed to the result. But canny speculators in Paris commenced buying up these depreciated shares which were glutting the market, expecting an upswing, and consequent enormous profits. Burr, more than most, was well acquainted with the actual value of the Company's holdings in Western lands, and saw his opportunity in the existing slump. He had no money himself, but he tried to interest others in the speculation. Among them were Griswold, Valkenaer, Nicholas Hubbard, and Theophile Cazenove — that same gentleman who had been his associate in New York, and who was now in Paris. Griswold was interested — so much so that Burr recorded that a liberal proposition had been made to him, "so very liberal that if I had now a passport to go to Amsterdam, I would clear for myself 10,000 dollars in a fortnight." ²⁶

Once more he haunted the anteroom of the Minister of Police, only to be informed that he must first apply to the American consul in Paris. This consul turned out to be a gentleman named Alexander McRae, one of the government attorneys in the Richmond trial. "What a prospect!" Burr noted bitterly in his Journal. ²⁷

Nevertheless, undaunted, he tried his luck. McRae turned him down with malicious satisfaction. He turned then to Jonathan Russell, American *chargé d'affaires*, with a demand for a certificate of citizenship. Russell replied that was the consul's duty, not his. Reluctantly, Burr was forced back to McRae, noting grimly, "if the latter answers insolently, the only revenge I will take, for re-

venge, you know, is not in my nature, will be to publish his letter." ²⁸ The answer was prompt and insolent enough. Said McRae, on October 29, 1810, "that his knowledge of the circumstances under which Mr. Burr left the United States renders it his duty to decline giving Mr. Burr either a passport or a *permis de séjour*." And, if Burr felt aggrieved, there was always Russell. ²⁹

Feeling rather like a shuttlecock, Burr applied again to Russell, this time with firm language. He was ignorant, he wrote, "of any statute or instruction which authorizes a foreign minister or agent to inquire into any circumstances other than those which tend to establish the fact of citizen or not." ³⁰ This gave Russell, who once had been glad enough to fawn on Burr, the chance to extract a miserable triumph from the reversal of their fortunes. He replied on November 4th, that "the man who evades the offended laws of his country, abandons, for the time, the right to their protection. This fugitive from justice, during his voluntary exile, has a claim to no other passport than one which shall enable him to surrender himself for trial for the offences with which he stands charged. Such a passport Mr. Russell will furnish to Mr. Burr, but no other." ³¹

The malice of the Virginians was pursuing him with vengeful relentlessness to the farthest shores. It affected even the American sojourners in Paris. For, reported Burr, "the Americans here have entered into a combination against A. B.; that every man who speaks to him shall be shunned as unworthy of society; that no master of vessel, or any other person, shall take any letter or parcel for him, and other like benevolent things; all of which amused me." ³² Amusing, yes, but with a bitter tinge to it. No matter how armored with pride, with stoic philosophy, Burr must have felt the keen sting. Scorned, hated, shunned, proscribed, a pariah in a foreign land, forbidden to leave, almost forbidden to remain, the last few dollars of a loan dribbling through his hands, the future black, the present insupportable, the past but vain regrets, one wonders that in truth, as has been claimed, the doors of sanity did not swing slightly ajar.

Griswold was still willing to back him in the Holland Company venture, if he could only get to Holland to buy and sell the necessary shares. But Americans and French alike blocked the way to seeming fortune. In desperation, he composed a long memorial to Napoleon, in which he recited his grievances, the lack of response to his proposals, the refusal to grant him his passport, the blank walls he encountered on every side. He is hurt and surprised, he told the Emperor; he merited better at French hands; his home

had always been open to distinguished French visitors, and, he pointed out, "at a period when the administration of the government of the United States was hostile to France and Frenchmen, they received from me efficient protection."³⁸ Which was true enough; but past benefits, if remembered, are but added causes for present resentment. Napoleon never took the trouble to answer Burr's lengthy effort.

Yet, on November 1st, he was buying a watch for Theo, only to pawn it the following day, together with his ring, for \$200; which sum, together with the \$300 left from Griswold's loan, was deposited with Valkenaer to cover his share in the Holland Company speculation. This left him with but \$21 in his pocket. By November 8th, his funds were so low that he was compelled to sell some of the curious coins he had intended for his grandson's collection; his boots, left at the shoemaker's for resoling, could not be redeemed; and, on November 17th, he had changed his last two guineas into francs. There were 52 of the latter at the existing rate of exchange. "Then began to calculate how I should dispose of so much money," he wrote. "Having on Monday evening engaged with two dancing girls of good demeanor to take coffee with them this evening, thought I would devote a crown to that. Took in my pocket 7 francs 10 sous, lest the devil might induce me to spend more. It all went, and ran into debt 6 francs more, having been deb'd by one — that one which liked least. Got home very penitent and humble."³⁴ Only to repeat such sorry incidents, however, again and again.

Two days later, in fact, he borrowed 50 francs from the complaisant Griswold, paid off some small debts, and "with the most deliberate malice and forethought, have resolved to dine with Fleury to-morrow or next day, which will be an affair of 6 or 8 francs."³⁵ As a result of this adventure, he lived for three days on 10 sous — a pittance one gives a beggar — yet rode home in a fiacre, borrowing from his housekeeper and the family in whose shabby quarters he resided the three francs necessary to pay off the indignant cabman. Recording, the very same day, "Nothing from Amsterdam, and verily I shall starve."³⁶

In the midst of all this a kind friend furnished him with the recently arrived American newspapers, "from which I learn that I have a pension of 2,000 sterling from his Majesty the Emperor. An extract from an English paper, also, that I am on a project for dismembering the United States."³⁷ Cause for loud and bitter laughter, sometimes not far from tears.

He was living now on soup and potatoes, or bread and cheese, or

bread, baked pears and milk, trying hard not to show his famishment when he was infrequently invited out to dine; playing whist without a sou in his pocket, and fortunately winning 60 before he arose from the table; resorting to all sorts of shabby expedients to keep body and soul together — yet discovering in himself an ineradicable need for women. He described his own condition with unsparing pen. "For some days past, and more particularly to-day, I have been in a state of irritability very unusual. Answer brusque and rapid. Say things almost rude; even to the good Valkenaer I was unkind. . . . Can you imagine from what this arises? The want of *musé*." For ten days the lack of a sou had deprived him of such consolations, and "really I suffer and am scarcely fit for society."³⁸

By December 10th, he could stand his parlous state no more. Again there was but one way, to rob "poor little Gampy" of his cherished coins, which were duly sold, and the proceeds invested in sugar, coffee, tea, "segars." The balance was intended for the payment of his debt to his washerwoman, but, meeting a girl of the streets instead, the washerwoman, all unknowing, was perforce compelled to wait.³⁹

These were the darkest days of his life. Then, on December 23rd, came a faint ray of sunshine. "I am about to undertake the translation from English to French of two octavo volumes for 100 louis. It will take me three months hard work. Better than to starve. But the most curious part of the story is that the book in question contains a quantity of abuse and libels on A. B."⁴⁰

The Holland speculation seemed in dire straits. Griswold decided to withdraw, and warned him against Valkenaer, with whom all of Burr's scanty speculative capital had been placed. But Burr, in order to display his complete trust in his partner, made the grand gesture of returning to him the receipt evidencing the deposit. With Griswold out, it was necessary to find another backer. Crede, a friend, agreed to advance the necessary moneys for equal participation in the profits, and, in the meantime, took 10 shares for future delivery from Burr at a price which, at the existing market, gave Burr a supposed profit of some \$300. In high spirits now, the eternally optimistic Burr noted for Theo's later edification, "Now, if I can get a passport to Bremen and Amsterdam, I will send you a million of francs within six months; but one-half of it must be laid out in pretty things. Oh, what beautiful things I will send you. Gampillus, too, shall have a beautiful little watch, and at least fifty trumpets of different sorts and sizes. Home at 10, and have been casting up my millions and spending it. Lord, how

many people I have made happy!"⁴¹ Colonel Sellers was rapidly coming to the fore!

In fact, his own enthusiasm was infecting his friends. The canny Griswold caught the contagion again, and also took ten of Burr's mythical shares, giving Burr an additional profit of \$400. The following day, the fever waxing, he raised his purchases to fifteen shares, thereby increasing Burr's capital to \$1000. All these were paper transactions, however, contingent on his getting to Amsterdam to take up the shares for which he had contracted. The market value had increased in the interim, but evidently the regulations forbade the export of the certificates. On January 21, 1811, his application for a passport to Amsterdam was definitely turned down, and all was gloom again. "Thus end all my fine projects," he wrote mournfully, "and hopes, and with them the fortune, and it is quite doubtful whether I get a penny of the 800 dollars which I thought I had made."⁴² The bubble had burst.

Once more he was reduced to petty borrowings; Valkenaer, now that the mythical fortunes had vanished, turned cool, and Crede, the friend, had worked secretly behind Burr's back to reap the profits of the speculation which Burr had disclosed to him in strict confidence. An unusual cry of anguish welled from Burr's heart at the collapse of fortune, friendship, everything. "My dear T[heo], I am sick at heart, having made the most afflicting of all discoveries, the perfidy of a friend."⁴³ All was lost.

From February 18th to May 14th, 1811, there is a significant gap in the Journal, as if misfortune had so completely overwhelmed him that he had no heart to put pen to paper. During this period, too, came bitter news from Theo. All their friends, she wrote, had deserted them. John P. Van Ness "is like the rest of the world. When I was in New-York, W. P. [William P. Van Ness] was doubtful whether it would be quite safe to visit me. John Swartwout is true, invariably and nobly conspicuous as the sun. He retrieves the character of man."⁴⁴ Poor Theo, she was aging rapidly in experience!

Yet her indomitable will carried her on. She had not heard from Dolly Madison, nor from her husband, the President of the United States. Now she tried Albert Gallatin, another old friend of her father.⁴⁵ But this inquiry also was destined to remain unanswered. Whereupon she marshaled a certain desperate courage, and wrote to Burr, "I say *come*; . . . Go to New-York. Make your stand there. If you are attacked, you will be in the midst of the tenth legion." She was forgetting how the "tenth legion," with the shining exception of John Swartwout, had deserted them. "Civil debts

may be procrastinated, for a time, by confinement to the limits. There you can take breath; openly see your friends; make your arrangements; and soon, I think, you will be able to throw off those momentary shackles, and resume your station."⁴⁶ Yet over a year was to pass before the advice could be followed.

3. ENGLAND AGAIN

When the Journal resumes, on May 14, 1811, Burr is discovered in Arras, headed for the French border. He had received his passport, that precious document which had been dangled before him so tantalizingly for long, weary months. Powerful French friends had been working quietly and secretly to this end. Among these were M. Denon, Director of Fine Arts, who had been captivated by Burr's knowledge and appreciation of art, and the Duc de Bassano, who advanced him sufficient money to pay entangling debts and leave the country. The vindictive Russell, even, under pressure from Bassano, yielded to the extent of furnishing him with the coveted certificate of citizenship.⁴⁷

Burr hastened by diligence to Amsterdam, seeking information on the affairs of the Holland Company. But the directors were noticeably cool to their stockholder, and refused to open their books or issue any statements. Nevertheless, Burr subscribed to more of the Company's stock, to the value of 7000 francs — so positive was he of its eventual enhancement. From Amsterdam he went to Bremen, where he took ill with his usual stomach complaint, and was forced to come back to Amsterdam for adequate treatment. There had also been a hitch in the matter of the elusive passport; the final application and attached papers had been lost in one of the many French bureaus, and red tape must spin interminable coils, while Burr perforce possessed his soul in patience.

On June 14th, he fell in with an American captain of a 400-ton ship, who was most "anxious to serve me. Sais [*sic*] he has often kept awake whole nights about me, though he had never seen me. Will fit up a cabin to my own caprice, and appears to think he can never do enough."⁴⁸ Passage to the United States seemed at last in sight. The captain was so amiable, so eager to please! How should Burr know he was a smooth, cozening rascal, who was to cause him more trouble and sickening exasperation than any one in all the rest of his exile? This was but another example of Burr's total inability to penetrate the superficial surfaces of men to the mainsprings of their characters.

Burr, ill, suffering from headaches and piles, went on to Paris

for better treatment, and arrived there on June 22nd. But in his Journal one comes across the gay nonsense that he had gone for "a thousand nothings, of which, probably, the most important are to buy Gampy some beautiful marbles, and you some silk stockings, and father a pail to water his horses on the road. A pail that you may put in your pocket." 49

But the passport continued elusive. Again he took up the weary round of calls, to meet with the usual shrugs and futile promises. Russell had repented of his former pliability, and now that all papers were lost, refused point-blank to issue another certificate. On July 17th a letter arrived from Captain Combes that he was sailing on July 23rd. Six days, barely time to make Amsterdam by hard riding, and the precious passport was still not in sight. Combes' ship, it seemed, was the only one sailing under a flag of truce, and therefore immune from capture. Practically every other American vessel that stuck its nose out of port was promptly seized by the patrolling warships of the warring powers. Denon heard of Burr's plight, and took it up with Bassano. The Duke intimated it would be wiser to have Russell, the American *chargé d'affaires*, issue the passport. Burr shook his head despondingly. That meant his last hope was gone. But Bassano only smiled with Gallic subtlety, and, on July 18th, the next day, lo and behold! the courtly Frenchman had received the necessary assurances that the price-less document was on its way.

The method employed by Bassano to achieve the seemingly impossible reflects the utmost discredit on the moralistic Jonathan Russell, so touchy about his country's honor, so ethically virtuous in his judgments on Burr. Bassano explained it all in a letter to Denon, "The person through whom I could have communicated to Mr. Russell that he should not have refused a new passport to Mr. Burr," he said discreetly, "was in the country. I wrote to *her* [italics mine] yesterday to return. She arrived at the moment that your note was received. I shall have the passport in the course of the day, and shall forward it immediately to the Duke [Rovigo], and I am convinced that you will receive it to-morrow, to transmit to Mr. Burr." 50 The result was to justify his calm omniscience. He *knew* that strait-laced Puritan, Mr. Jonathan Russell.

Posthaste, Burr raced for Amsterdam to catch the poised Captain Combes. But news evidently reached him *en route* of delay, for he remained unaccountably at Anvers from July 22nd to August 3rd, while Combes' ship was detained at Trexel, an island in the North Sea. Something had gone wrong. So wrong, that on August 15th, Combes was begging Burr to use *his* influence to get him

a passport to go to the United States with Burr. The explanation of this topsy-turvy business proved to be that the honest Captain had run heavily into debt, in reliance on the forthcoming passage money of some fifty passengers, only a few of whom had paid anything on account — and even these were suing him for the return of their money.

On September 8th, they were still in port, and new trouble in sight. Combes, writes Burr, "demands of me 450 guilders immediately, or that he should break up the voyage and sell the ship; by which I understand that, if I do not pay the 450, he will go off without me . . . I have not 1/3 of the sum he demands, nor have I any hope of getting it." 51 The Captain was coming forth in his true colors — the amount demanded was far in excess of the original contract price. But Burr could not help himself. Four days later he had raised 480 guilders, by the sale of most of his personal effects — only to find that the rascally Captain had summarily raised the price to 500. Accordingly, Theo's watch followed the rest. His baggage was on board the *Vigilant*, Combes' ship, on September 14th. All worries were over. "I feel as if I were already on the way to you," he told Theo *via* the Journal, "and my heart beats with joy. Yet alas! that country which I am so anxious to revisit will perhaps reject me with horror . . . My windows look over the ocean; that ocean which separates me from all that is dear. With what pleasure I did greet it after three year's absence . . . There seems to be no obstacle between us, and I almost fancy I see you and Gampy, with the sheep about the door, and he 'driving the great ram with a little stick.'" 52

Alas, Burr was still far away from native land and dear ones. More delays, more gougings by the Captain, and dilatory negotiations with the authorities to permit passengers of Dutch extraction — and most of them were in that category — to sail. Finally, in the latter part of September — the Journal entry of October 9th is an obvious error — to Burr's inexpressible joy, the *Vigilant* actually sailed. Two ducats represented Burr's entire fortune. Combes had bled him clean. But all was forgotten now as the homecoming exile sniffed the salt sea air, saw the sails belly in the favoring wind, and strained his eyes westward toward the distant shore his fancy almost persuaded him that he could see. What did it matter that he was "on board a small ship, very badly accommodated, fifty-four passengers, of whom a majority women and children; thirty-one sailors, thirty-three hogs, and about one hundred other quadrupeds and bipeds." And pockets bare. 53 He was going home!

But the sportive gods were not through with their victim. On

September 29th, the British frigate, *Le Desirée*, lying off Holland waters, seized the *Vigilant*, in spite of flag of truce, and sent it on to Yarmouth roads as a prize. There they huddled in discomfort, human passengers and porcine, waiting the august decision of the Admiralty Court as to their ultimate fate. Combes, seeing his profits slip out of his hands, brutally refused to feed his passengers, and Burr was forced ashore, if he would not starve. Once more he was on inhospitable English soil, that soil from which he had been deported three years before.

October 16th found him in London with exactly two shillings in his pocket. The *Vigilant* was being detained for trial, but there was another vessel due to sail shortly for Charleston. "But how," Burr asked in despair, "to pay and how to get my baggage in time are grave questions."⁵⁴

Once more he met Jeremy Bentham, but withheld from him all knowledge of his desperate financial plight. He was reduced to selling his cambrics, rare bits that he had carefully hoarded, the last of the things he had thought to bring Theo. On October 30th, he encountered Combes and demanded the return of his passage money. Combes laughed in his face. His troubles multiplied. His French passport, secured after so much incredible hardship, was no longer of any value. He required an English document now to leave the country.

Again he was starving — a condition that had become monotonously, and tragically, usual. Bit by bit the last of his precious little gifts for Theo and little Aaron Burr Alston found their way into strange hands, while the paltry pence into which they had been converted went for the barest necessities of life. And, on December 14th, he counted his money and found exactly 18 sous on hand. The *Vigilant's* case was again postponed for a month; there seemed no chance ever to realize on his passage money in that vessel. In despair he made his way somehow back to Yarmouth to remove his baggage, and try for another boat. But principally, he wished to get his French pamphlet on the new method of making vinegar. Brunel, the distinguished engineer, to whom he had explained the process, had thought it of great value. But the pamphlet had been lost or stolen from his effects. His brain teemed with a thousand inventive and ingenious projects for making money — perhaps the sparse diet was responsible for the brilliant schemes. There was the matter of making vinegar, which, unfortunately, required cash for acid and barrels; he was keenly interested in steam engines, and visited all the factories, attentive, questioning, alert; a shoe-making machine caught his fancy; he

became enamored of a wholly new idea in steamboats — and, finally, there was a new kind of false teeth, made by Fonzi for himself, so excellent that he wished to promote their manufacture on a large scale for all of suffering humanity. Visions, schemes, processes, inventions — which in another day and age, backed by his restless energy, might actually have brought him the millions that forever tossed about in his fancy.

But, with millions in the clouds, on solid earth "held a consultation with myself about dining. Instead of having bread for the day, had not a mouthful, and was sick for want of Tobacco. To dine and drink a pint of ale would just ruin me. So sent my little maid for 4 pence worth of bread and an ounce of tobacco, 3 pence half penny; for which had to borrow a penny and a half of her; and having only coffee for the morning, and very scant."⁵⁵

On January 4, 1812, good news came. The *Vigilant* had been acquitted, and was ready to sail. But Combes was not through — he had an infinite talent for causing Burr trouble. He had chartered his boat for a voyage to New Orleans without consulting his passengers. New Orleans was the last place to which Burr wished to go. There he would be directly within the jurisdiction of the Federal Government, and of all his old enemies — Wilkinson, Claiborne, *et al.* But Combes told him he could take it or leave it. Finally Burr decided to go — it was the only way he could save his passage money — when more blows fell on his devoted head. The American Government had intervened in the persons of the consuls at Yarmouth and London. Both warned Combes that if he transported Burr to the United States he personally must abide the consequences. Jonathan Russell had tracked Burr like an avenging Fury, and was now *chargé d'affaires* in London. His fine Italian hand was detectable in these proceedings. Burr tried other American boats, and actually engaged passage on two occasions, only to have the captains come to him with troubled countenances and break the contract. The only way to get out of England now was by British packet.⁵⁶

The month of March found Burr still in London — almost six months of weary sojourning. Finally there was a rift in the clouds. He heard of a ship clearing for Boston, commanded by a Captain Potter. The bluff sea-dog asked no questions, though he looked queerly enough at *Monsieur Arnot*, Burr's latest *alias*. The price for passage on the *Aurora*, he said, was 30 guineas, and she sailed on the 25th.

At last he could get away — if he could raise the necessary funds. Again he sold some of that lovely cambric — one begins to won-

der what magic store of gifts he had on hand — and received ten pounds. Within a few days this sum had dwindled to six pounds. He tried to sell his precious volumes of *Bayle*, which he had carted with him all over Europe, to Reeve, his good friend in the Alien Office. But he received a loan of ten pounds from him instead. Reeve had been of infinite assistance. It was he who issued a passport to *M. Arnot*, and, he told him obligingly, “if you are tired of the name Arnot, and wish any other, you may have it.”

On March 21st, through the good offices of Robert Morris, then in London, Burr realized another ten pounds from the sale of the balance of his cambric, ribands, medals and handkerchiefs — the magic store was at length thoroughly exhausted. Five pounds more came from seltzer water he had somehow accumulated.

The day before sailing time found his baggage on board the *Aurora*, but the passenger himself was still twenty pounds shy of the passage money. The morning of the 25th dawned cold and clear, and the balance seemed as far away of attainment as the moon. At the turn of the tide, Captain Potter intended to weigh anchor, Burr or no Burr. In desperation, not knowing where else to turn, Burr went once more to Reeve. That official listened to him in silence, and, without a word, “drew a check on his banker for 20 pounds; and how I did gallop across the park,” confided *M. Arnot* to his Journal that night, “to get my 20 pounds.”⁵⁷ Luckily, there was a delay in sailing, and he had time to bid his friends good-bye, especially Bentham and the Godwins, before galloping once more to the ship.

The next day, March 26, 1812, the *Aurora* weighed anchor, spread its wings, and westward ho, for America! Only Captain Potter knew the true identity of *A. Arnot*, the modest, retiring, gray-templed passenger with eyes of undimmed brilliance. He was cargo more dangerous than stored gunpowder. Potter feared impending war between England and the United States, but not Burr. For the first time in his travels, he dared commit political thoughts to his Journal. “If the British should hang or roast every American they can catch, and seize all their property,” he wrote acidly, “no war would be declared by the United States under present rulers . . . Now at some future day we will read this over, and see whether I know those folks. I did not dare write such things while on shore, for I never felt perfectly secure against another seizure.”⁵⁸ Burr was a true prophet, even though war was actually to be declared within the year. He had rightly gaged Madison’s temper, and the temper of the Virginia Dynasty. In fact, the war was forced upon Madison by the expansionists who

stemmed from Burr himself, and who, wittingly or unwittingly, were but following in the paths he had indicated. It was the hunger of the Western and Southern frontiersmen for Canada and Florida, *not* the outrages on American shipping, that pushed the new Administration into the War of 1812.

4. EXILE'S RETURN

On May 5, 1812, *M. Adolphus Arnot*, “a grave, silent, strange sort of animal,” who had let his whiskers grow to disguise him, landed in Boston port. The exile had returned to his native land, after four years of wandering which read like some fantastic adventure out of the Arabian Nights — a tale of unbelievable hardships and impossible splendors; one day hobnobbing with kings and princes and ladies fair, and the intellectual giants of the earth — the next lying hidden in a filthy garret, gnawing dry bread, and making assignations with servants and prostitutes of the gutter; feted and honored — and pursued with hate and misunderstanding; exalted to the skies — and ground by a malignant destiny into the mud; a tale of indomitable courage, gallantry and defiance — and saturated with the lowest physical instincts of man. A tapestry of rich and varied threads, a story which has quite no counterpart in the history of man, and told, day by day, in unvarnished, matter-of-fact style, always with humor, always without complaints or bitterness or vain regrets. Here, if anywhere, may the curious reader discover the man, Aaron Burr.

Aaron Burr was back, but not a soul was there to greet him, not a person knew of his homecoming. For he had sent no word ahead; he dared not. What welcome could possibly await the returned traitor, the man whom all the nation cursed? Jail awaited him possibly; jail, or worse. He must feel his way, remain unknown, unseen, until he could be sure of his course.

He took obscure lodgings in a boarding-house in Cornhill Square, and wrote at once to Samuel Swartwout in New York, and to Theo, notifying them of his arrival. In every corner, at every crossing, he expected some one to start, peer in his face, and exclaim, “But you are Colonel Burr!” No one did; his whiskers and wig kept his secret. But his baggage was in the Customs, and the Collector was the son of General Dearborn, knew him well, and was “extremely vindictive.” The gauntlet was run, however, without the busy Collector realizing that the whiskers and wig of the unassuming *M. Arnot* hid the presence of the family enemy; and the baggage was freed.

The next thing to do was to get in touch with friends in Boston whom he could trust. He hunted in the directory for familiar names. There he found a Benjamin Fessenden, who had served under him as ensign in the Westchester campaign. Fessenden seemed not delighted to see his old commander, but this was evidently due to the touchiness of Burr himself; for later the Journal notes that he became most obliging, and helped Burr in sundry ways. He found as well another name — that of Jonathan Mason, a friend of college days. He sent him a letter, "I pray you not to conjecture *aloud* who may be the writer of this note; he wishes to remain *incog.* a few days . . . If you will take the trouble of calling at Mrs. Goodrich's, Cornhill Square . . . you will find an old acquaintance who wishes half an hour's conversation with you."⁵⁹

But Mason had grown cautious with the years. He wrote back apologetically that he dared not come, and "that the motive to it is a respect to the prejudices of others." Neither would he buy the books which Burr offered in order to get cash, nor advance his old friend a loan in any amount.

Better and more heartening, however, was the enthusiastic response of Samuel Swartwout. A letter came on May 19th, "with assurance that I have very many and warm friends and no enemies. The letter," Burr noted dryly, "is stamped with that enthusiasm which marks his character. As regards business, however, things are not propitious. The two creditors who have judgments against me are inexorable. Nothing will satisfy them but money or approved security, neither of which are in my power. The alternative is to be taken on execution and go the [jail] limits."⁶⁰

There were serious objections in Burr's mind to the latter course. There was the blow to Theo's pride; it would interfere with the prospect of marriage to an old and wealthy woman (as a means of extrication from his financial difficulties), and it would confine him to the tedious practice of law within New York City and prevent those larger speculations outside by which his fortune might be speedily recouped. He was already an aging man, and impatient. But Theo's letter of a year before, which, through unaccountable vicissitudes, had just caught up with him, was strong in urging that very method — she would feel no blow to her pride if her father were confined to the jail limits. Her heartening tone encouraged and decided him to follow her advice. But, alas, another degrading circumstance intervened. His luggage was being held in the boarding-house as security for the unpaid room rent. Fessenden came to his rescue by introducing him to Presi-

dent Kirkland of Harvard, who purchased his stock of books and thereby released him from durance vile.

Still in disguise, still hiding from prying eyes, Mr. De Gamelli — his latest *alias* — sailed on May 30th out of Boston harbor in the sloop *Rose*, bound for New York. The captain of the boat and his wife, strangely enough, were Burr's distant cousins, and Mrs. Hall, a passenger, had known him well in those fabulous days at Fairfield, but they did not recognize him. On June 7th, he set foot after years in the streets of New York, so familiar, yet so haunted with the pathos of distance.

The Swartwouts, Samuel and Robert, took their old leader into their house, and kept him there *incognito* while the future was charted and the horizon anxiously scanned. Here the Journal, having fulfilled its purpose, comes abruptly to an end. Aaron Burr had come home!