

**BOSTON, JUNE 6.
COMMUNICATION.**

Sober Thoughts upon the late rencontre between the President, and the British ship of war Little Belt.

The moment of rumour and alarm is ill suited to reflection, and just decision.—The fears, the hopes of men excite and influence them, and suggests opinions, which in their sober moments they would reject.

In an affair which may, according as it shall be viewed by the nation, whose ship our officer has attacked and "riddled," either be considered as an unfortunate accident, or a purposed insult demanding reparation; at a period too, when the state of irritation produced by our extraordinary laws, and the gross partiality of our cabinet is so general in Great-Britain, it may well become all those sober men, who wish that their country should be just in all its dealings, and that in case of war, she might be able to appeal with confidence, to the God of battles, to inquire thoroughly, anxiously, and impartially into this important case.

We have waited, not as the Chronicle sneering insinuates, to hear from Halifax, (though we do not see, why in this case, as in all others, we should not adopt the fair rule of hearing both sides, unless war is resolved upon,) but we have waited to hear Capt. Rogers' apology, for what at first blush, appeared not only a violation of our neutral duties, but certainly reflected no particular credit on the chivalry of the nation.

We shall presume in this discussion, Capt. Rogers' statement to be perfectly correct.—We know that he is a gallant, and we believe, an honorable officer.—If the nation shall be involved, in consequence of this attack, in a ruinous war, it can be imputed at most only to errors in the judgment of Capt. Rogers, perhaps not even to those, perhaps his orders were of such a nature as obliged him to assume towards a British ship the appearance of an enemy, and thus compel her to treat him as such.

One or two preliminary remarks may be necessary to enable our readers to follow us in our reflections upon this affair.

The National Intelligencer seems to derive some consolation in this case from the spirit which, it supposes, it proves to exist in our officers.

We are afraid this feeling has too general an operation, but we are mortified to find so base a sentiment avowed, as that the attack of a sloop of war by a frigate is a proof of spirit.

Capt. Rogers has *other views* of it—he feared, it is evident by his letter, that this rencontre so unequal, and continued to so dreadful a length, might be deemed a reflection on our gallantry or humanity, and the whole force of his talents has been directed to wipe away what he seems to admit would have been a stain, if he had known his enemy's comparative force.

It will be fortunate for the peace of our country if the naval officers of Great-Britain will be as ready as we are to admit, that a disguised ship of the line like the President, could so long mistake a sloop of war for a frigate, while lying within hailing distance, within the reach of small arms—that at a quarter past 8 o'clock, the length and the height of the enemy's ship could not be ascertained—or if it was dark, that the height of her gun deck could not be perceived by the flash of the guns, or their weight of metal by the report.—In short, it is to be feared that they would ask, whether upon the punctilio of not answering the hailing first, it could be justifiable in a ship of a neutral nation, at peace with all the world, whose officers knew that they had no enemy to encounter, to continue a conflict so long against a ship which might mistake her for a ship of an enemy, without one attempt to undeceive her? Whether an officer ought in such a case, to hazard the sinking such a little ship, as it appears he had some fears of, when he found that she had it not in her power to do him any important damage?

Such questions may be put by the officers of the other nation, and surely we ought not to exasperate them at such a moment, by speaking and boasting of the battle as a proof of national spirit.

It is enough, if we are acquitted of inhumanity, and so Capt. Rogers seemed to think, by his letter—for he appeals to his former character and general feelings with great force, as tending to prove that he could not knowingly have carried on this contest to so great a length against so feeble a foe.

In short we fully acquit him, because we are persuaded that he is a man of gallantry, and true honor, and that he would not have continued this contest if he had not been deceived as to her force.

But there is one point in his conduct, in which we think he acted wrong, against the dictates of prudence, and we believe contrary to the courtesy required by the law of nations.

We do not believe, that a neutral ship of war, or to speak more correctly a national ship belonging to a sovereign at peace with all the world, has any right so to conduct towards a belligerent ship as to lead her to believe her an enemy, to induce her to run away, or to quit her station where her duty called her—nor has she a right to require the name of a ship of war, of a nation at war. She may do it as a courtesy, and she can only require an answer by the same courtesy. On the other hand, it is the right of a ship of a nation at war to hail the neutral ship of war, and she is entitled to an answer—if she makes none, she gives the belligerent a right to presume that she is an enemy.—Now to the facts in this case.

The ship Little Belt was, as she lawfully might, cruising on the high seas for her enemy, and especially for a certain privateer, which we had permitted to enter and refit in our ports, and which was designed to cruise against the American and British commerce.

It is said here by some persons belligerents have no right to be hovering on our coasts, and it is asked by

others if our ships of war have not a right to chase and hail (as if we were belligerent) on our own shores?

When will the absurdity and inconsistency of men end? We who have been contending against the British assumption of the sovereignty of the seas which they never assumed, now claim a right of jurisdiction over the whole Atlantic. This chase commenced 45 miles from Cape Henry—in the broad Atlantic Ocean. Did our territorial rights extend thither? The most zealous sticklers for neutral or territorial sovereignty never pretend to extend it beyond a marine league—some say a cannon shot, and others as far as you can see—no one will pretend that 45 miles is within our territorial limits. Even the British claim to certain privileges in the narrow sea which we have denied to her, never extended so far as this.

Again, if by our laws, we admit the ships of war of one nation, and exclude those of its enemy, has not the other a right to hang upon our coasts, and way lay their enemies in their entrance and exit? Common justice would admit this.

The Little Belt being thus lawfully cruising on the high seas, the President about noon perceived her.—The British ship made signals—by these, Capt. Rogers must have known, and he says, did know, if not her nation, at least that she was a ship of war, and not an American ship of war. As Capt. Rogers did not answer the ship of war's signals, she must have concluded either that the President was an American frigate or an enemy. But when Capt. Rogers commenced a chase, and continued it for six or seven hours, it was conclusive evidence to the British officer that the President was a French ship.

Because if an American frigate, why should she chase? Why chase so long? Why tack and manoeuvre to come up with her when it was apparent that the British ship wished to avoid it? It is true the President had American colours flying, but this is so ordinary a ruse de guerre, a stratagem, that it is not in the least regarded. A British officer could not presume that an American frigate would run 15 or 20 miles out of her way after him merely for the idle purpose of knowing the name of his ship. And we ask in the name of common sense why did Capt. Rogers chase that ship? Why demand her name? Why demand a thing which might be refused, and which by the laws of nations he had no right to enforce compliance with? We repeat it, that the question was an idle one, as Capt. Rogers had no right to board a ship of war of any nation.

It is said by some, why are our ships sent out if not to chase and speak ships? by others, perhaps the British ship might have been a pirate. Extreme cases do not confer general rights, or settle principles—principles result from ordinary and usual occurrences.

I have no right to stop any man in the street and demand his name, because I had a watch taken from me at the theatre and it is possible he may be the pick-pocket.

The following case has also been stated, and appears to me extremely opposite. A centinel is at his post in a fortress—An armed private citizen passes by.—The private man hails the centinel, the centinel does not answer.—The centinel hails the private man, who thinking it a piece of etiquette, for the centinel to answer first, refuses to answer.—The centinel fires—Has the private man a right to return the shot? We conceive not. Precisely like a private man is a neutral ship of war—she is obliged to answer the hail of the belligerent, but the belligerent is not obliged to answer hers. Capt. Rogers had no right by the law of nations to refuse to answer, and therefore of course he had no right to return the fire until he had answered. If he had said to the British officer that she was an American frigate, the British Captain would after that have acted at his peril. We hope this affair will terminate peaceably, as it is said to have commenced in accident. But terminate as it may, we shall always think, that such a long chase by a ship which had no legitimate object in chasing at all, the driving one belligerent off his lawful cruising ground where he was cruising for his enemy, the repeated exertions to come up with a belligerent who studiously tried to avoid it, and the refusal to tell the name of our ship under pretence of etiquette, were wrong acts, and tended to deceive the British officer, and bring on a quarrel.

CAUTION.

THIS is to Caution all manner of persons whatever, from trespassing on the *Four Lots* belonging to the Subscriber, situated in the Township of Sheffield, adjoining the Lands of *Bradford Gilbert, Esqr.* and *James Tilley*; from cutting, destroying or carrying off any Timber from the said *Four Lots*, or in any manner whatever trespassing upon them.—He calls upon his neighbors of Sheffield, whose integrity, from a long experience, he has the greatest confidence in, to expose any person or persons committing depredations thereon; which information will be gratefully acknowledged and rewarded, as he is determined to fence and improve his Lands agreeable to Law.—And if any person should molest the Tenants on said Lots, by throwing down the fence, or otherwise trespassing, they may depend on suffering the penalty of all damages.
8th Feb. 1811. HUMPHREY GILBERT.

To be Let, Leased or Sold,

THE WATER LOT, adjoining the one occupied at present by *Timothy Parker*, in Prince William-Street, 52 feet front and rear by about 200 (Grant being to low Water mark)—Terms moderate—Apply to **WILLIAM DONALD**. 24th September, 1810.

CASH or BOOKS given for clean **LINEN** and **COTTON RAGS** at this Office.

NOTICES.

ALL persons having demands against the Estate of **WILLIAM ROBERTSON, Esqr.** late Assistant Deputy Commissary General in this Province, deceased, are requested to render in the same duly attested; and those indebted to said Estate, are desired to make immediate payment to **WILLIAM BLACK, Administrator.**
St. John, New-Brunswick, 6th June, 1811.

ALL Persons having any just demands against the Estate of **JOHN TOTTEN, late of Penfield, County of Charlotte; deceased,** are requested to present them duly attested within *Eighteen Months* from the date hereof; and all Persons indebted to said Estate, are desired to make immediate payment to **SAMUEL HAND, Administrator.**
Penfield, 29th May, 1811. 31

ALL Persons having any just demands against the Estate of **DONALD M'DONALD, late of the Parish of Sussex, in the County of King's, deceased,** are requested to present the same duly attested within *twelve months* from the date hereof; and all persons indebted to the said Estate, are desired to make immediate payment to **GEO. LEONARD, Jun.** Administrators.
JOHN M'DONALD, Administrators.
St. JOHN, MAY 20, 1811. 36

ALL Persons having any just demands against the Estate of **ELIAS SNYDER, deceased,** are requested to present the same within *Nine Months* from the date hereof; And all those indebted to said Estate, are desired to make immediate payment to **PETER SNYDER, jun.** Administrators.
ELIAS SNYDER, Administrators.
Sussex-Vale, 11th May, 1811. 37

ALL persons having demands on the Estate of **WILLIAM MILBY, late of Shelburne, deceased,** are requested to render them to the Subscriber, duly attested, within *eighteen months* from this date; and all persons indebted to said Estate, are desired to make immediate payment to **SARAH MILBY, Administratrix.**
Shelburne, January 5, 1811.

ALL Persons having any just demands against the Estate of the late **ANDREW IVORY of Miramichi, deceased,** are requested to present them duly attested, within *Eighteen Calendar Months* from the date hereof; and all persons indebted to said Estate, are required to make immediate payment to **MURDOCH M'KENZIE,** Administrators.
GEORGE LAURIE, Administrators.
Miramichi, 2d August, 1810.

ALL Persons having any just demands against the Estate of Captain **JONATHAN LEAVITT, late of Carleton, deceased,** are requested to present the same, duly attested, within *Twelve Months* from the date hereof; and all persons indebted to the said Estate, are required to make immediate payment to the Subscribers. **JAMES WHITE, Junr.** Executors.
DANIEL LEAVITT, Executors.
FRANCIS LEAVITT, Executors.
Saint John, 18th February, 1811.

ALL Persons having any legal demands against the Estate of **GEORGE PRICE, late of the Parish of St. Martin's, deceased,** are requested to present them duly attested, to the Subscribers, within *Twelve Months* from the date hereof; and all those indebted to said Estate, are desired to make immediate payment to **JOHN HOWARD Esq. or** Administrators.
Mr. PHILIP MOSHER, on said Estate.
St. Martin's, 6th February, 1811.

ALL Persons having any just demands against the Estate of **JAMES EAGLES, late of the Parish of Portland, deceased,** are requested to present the same duly attested, within *Twelve Months* from the date hereof; and all persons indebted to the said Estate, are desired to make immediate payment to **WILLIAM EAGLES,** Administrators.
GEO. LEONARD, junr. Administrators.
Saint John, 26th November, 1810.

ALL Persons having any legal demands against the Estate of the late **EBENEZER WHITNEY, Sent. of Miramichi, in the County of Northumberland, deceased,** are hereby required to render their accounts duly attested within *Twelve Months* from the date hereof; and those indebted thereto, are requested to make immediate payment to **RICHARD SIMONDS,** Administrators.
ANTHONY ROGERS, Administrators.
MIRAMICHI, 27th August, 1810.

ALL Persons having any Demands on the Estate of **SAMUEL HART, Esqr. late of Halifax, deceased,** are requested to present them duly attested to the Subscriber, within *Eighteen Calendar Months* from this date, for adjustment; and all persons indebted to said Estate, are desired to make immediate payment to **REBECCA HART, Sole Executrix.**
Halifax, October 15, 1810.

ALL Persons having any legal Demands against the Estate of the late **JONATHAN MOREHOUSE, Merchant of this Town, deceased,** are requested to send in their accounts duly attested to the Subscribers, within *Eighteen Calendar Months* from the date hereof; and all persons indebted to said Estate, are desired to make immediate payment to **WILLIAM MOREHOUSE,** Executors.
ICHABOD CORBITT, Executors.
Annapolis, 7th May, 1810.