

# The Royal Gazette

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### ASSIZE OF BREAD, PUBLISHED MAY 2, 1811.

THE Sixpenny Wheaten Loaf to weigh 1 lb. 7 oz.  
Ditto Rye ..... 1 lb. 15 oz.  
And other Loaves in proportion.

WILLIAM CAMPBELL, Mayor.

BOSTON, MAY 27.

#### THE FRIGATE PRESIDENT.

The late prevailing rumours, respecting an engagement between this frigate and an English vessel of war, are now put to rest by the publication of the following circumstances, which, it is probable, are, in the main points, correct. On the subject of the Orders, which Commodore Rogers may have received from the Executive, there is such a discordance of opinion, as to leave the mind unsatisfied of the real truth. The Baltimore Federal Republican, asserts, that orders had positively been issued by Mr. Madison, for demanding, and taking by force, if necessary, any American seamen impressed by the British. On the other side, a letter is said to have been received at Philadelphia from the Secretary of the Navy, stating, that Commodore Rogers had been despatched in search of the Seaman taken by La Guerrier from the sloop Spitfire; but not to use force in obtaining him. Will the Intelligence give some explanation of this matter, as the public are much interested in the principle which Mr. Madison is now assuming, respecting impressments.

#### UNPLEASANT CONFLICT.

The New-York Gazette of Friday last, furnishes the following particulars of the naval affair off Cape Henry, which for the last two or three days, has excited so much the public attention:—

NEW-YORK, MAY 24.

Yesterday about 12 o'clock, the U. S. frigate President, Commodore Rogers, arrived off Sandy Hook from the Chesapeake. In the afternoon, two officers came up from her on board the pilot boat Thorn, from whom we have the particulars of the firing off Cape Henry, which has, for the last two days, given rise to so many reports and conjectures. The facts, as stated below, will, we have no doubt, prove substantially correct. The mistake will be regretted by every one.

There is no truth in the reports of the President having been sent out in pursuit of the frigate, that impressed a man from the brig Spitfire—and the unfortunate affair now before us has no connexion with any particular orders to Commodore Rogers. These being facts, no additional circumstance has now occurred to widen the breach between the two governments, under whose flags these vessels sail. The "mistakes of a night," ought not, cannot produce a war.—N. Y. Gaz.

Particulars of the engagement between the United States frigate President, Commodore Rogers, and the British sloop of war Little Belt, Capt. Bingham.

On the night of the 16th instant, about 9 o'clock, the frigate fell in with the sloop of war, about 20 miles N. E. of Cape Henry; and when within pistol shot of her, Commodore Rogers hailed her—no answer was given—Commodore Rogers hailed her a second time, and in the act of hailing, a shot was fired from the sloop of war into the frigate, which struck her mainmast.—The frigate immediately fired a shot into the sloop of war—she then poured a broadside into the frigate. Here the action commenced, and continued about 15 minutes, when the sloop of war ceased firing. The frigate remained near her all night. The next morning Commodore Rogers sent an officer on board, to offer any assistance they might require; and to express his regret at the circumstance that had occurred the preceding evening. The sloop of war proved to be the Little Belt, Capt. Bingham, who apologized; and gave as a reason for firing into the frigate, that he supposed her to be a Frenchman; and politely declined any assistance, as he believed he would be able to reach a port of safety.

The Little Belt lost and wounded 30 men, was very much injured, having had nearly all her masts and spars shot away, besides several shots in her hull. This sloop of war is a Danish built vessel, and was taken at Copenhagen. In Steel's List she is rated a 20 gun sloop; but carries 24 thirty-two pound carronades.

The President received some trifling damage in her rigging, and had one boy slightly wounded in the arm.

We have seen several accounts of the above action, both printed and written; but they differ in no essential circumstance, except the following. In the Evening Post account, which the editor says was furnished by the Capt. of the President, and one other officer of the ship, it is stated, "That when Commodore Rogers hailed the sloop of war, to know who she was, and where from; the commander of the sloop answered, 'by asking who and what the frigate was.' Commo-

dore Rogers conceiving himself entitled to the first answer, hailed a second time, and instantly after received a shot which struck his mainmast.

#### FACTS.

Admiral Sawyer, has given positive orders to every British Officer on this station, not to impress an American. If any naval officers deviate, it is on his own responsibility that he will violate the commands of his superior. The American government having been informed of the very unjustifiable impressment or impressments off New-York, has, under date of Saturday, 18th May, demanded the restoration by a despatch from the secretary of the state to the British charge des affaires, Mr. Morier. These facts we know to be as stated. Balt. pap.

Orders of Government.—We find the following in the Baltimore Federal Republican of Monday:

"We are correctly informed that a letter is in town from one of the members of the Executive, stating that Rogers has positive orders to search for a British frigate, demand the impressed men she has on board, and if refused, to take them by force. The above may be relied upon." Balt. Fed. Repub.

The following is an extract of a letter from a very respectable gentleman, in Philadelphia, to his Correspondent here, dated on the 22d inst.

NEW-YORK GAZETTE.

"There was a great noise here yesterday occasioned by the assertion in the Baltimore Federal Republican, respecting the frigate President—but we now know, by a letter from the Secretary of the Navy, that Commodore Rogers, of the President, has orders only to go in search of the British frigate, and demand the man impressed, but not to use force."

MAY 30.

#### New Executive Principles.

There appears to be no doubt at present, that the orders, which have been given to the commanders of our frigates, amount to this, "that in any case of meeting with a British ship of war, they are to submit to no questions, which shall wear the semblance of a threat, in manner or word." It is moreover stated, in Mr. Madison's official paper, "that the President put to sea from Annapolis, under such circumstances, as to justify the impression, that the object of her sailing was to obtain the release of impressed seamen." Admitting these things to be true; the result is plain and obvious, that the peace of the United States is placed in the hands of our naval commanders; who cannot, or will not, from a spirit of pride and gallantry, resist the temptations, which these undefined orders hold out to them, although they may be aware that in adopting them the Executive has set up a principle which the British themselves have disavowed.

On this subject we have noticed many judicious and well written Remarks in the Balt. Fed. Republican. The following, selected from this paper, may point an eye to the motives which have governed Mr. Madison on this occasion:—

#### The Sea Fight.

It has been very generally asked what can be Mr. Madison's motive, or what he can promise himself, by retaliating the "murderous attack" upon the Chesapeake after a lapse of four years. Many discredit the information that Commodore Rogers was instructed to use force if the impressed seamen were not given up. They cannot persuade themselves that a man of Mr. Madison's character for indecision and pusillanimity, would authorise an act so pregnant with mischief, and fearful in its immediate consequences.

It should be remembered fear is always rash, and when operated upon by secret and irresponsible cunning, may be driven to the most desperate enterprises.—Jefferson was never wanting in political courage, and now that he is freed from the accountability of office, he will stop at nothing which he can urge poor Madison to undertake, and his tool will not venture to oppose his wishes. He is sensible that he owes his elevation to the philosopher's influence, and conscious that he is the mere breath of his nostrils, he dare not refuse obedience to his orders.

But what does Mr. Madison promise himself by this signal act of outrage, out-rivalling the affair of the Chesapeake, denounced by himself as dishonorable, perfidious, murderous, and in open violation of the law of nations? It is in this he hopes to find his reward: by appealing to the prejudices of the more violent and desperate men of his party, by exciting fresh irritation against England, and raising an artificial political storm, he expects to recover his lost popularity, to reinstate himself in the confidence of those democrats whom the hypocrisy of Armstrong, the boldness of De Witt Clinton, and the grovelling cunning of Robert Smith, have detached from the executive corps. This object must be accomplished preparatory to the great

struggle in October, 1812. Unless the discontented, divided and scattering troops can be united and brought back to proper subordination, Mr. Madison full well knows he will fall far behind in the presidential race. Of what rashness and violence will he not be guilty, what unjustifiable and desperate act will he not commit, to retrieve his character with the French party? It is not long since a violent French print, which has unmercifully lashed the president, declared he would recover his popularity if he were to retaliate the unauthorised and disavowed outrage upon the Chesapeake. Could such a temptation be resisted by a man, who has given such repeated proofs of a total indifference to national honor, prosperity and safety, where they came in collision with private interest and personal aggrandizement?

It is asked if we are of opinion that Mr. Madison and his out-door party wish a war with England? Discontented foreigners, exiles and fugitives from Ireland, French emissaries, and the more desperate democrats, doubtless pant for an opportunity to vent their brimful pent-up wrath against England, but Mr. Madison is too much accustomed to trace effects from causes to desire actual hostilities. He will deal profusely in provocatives, push to the next last point the forbearance of England, raise a Tammany war-whoop and set the nation in a flame—but war he wants not, he knows the popularity of no administration would survive its commencement at one election. But how is it to be avoided in the event of a successful encounter with a British frigate? By denying or renouncing the instructions to Rogers, disavowing the act, resorting to negotiation, and afterwards perhaps promoting the Officer.—But will they go further, and make provisions for the families of the English sailors killed in the fight, and otherwise imitate the conduct of the British Ministry in the case of the Chesapeake? Let the treasury and the general tenor of their conduct answer.

Should the President be so fortunate as to capture the Guerrier, and the affair be immediately disavowed, or placed upon the footing of that of the Chesapeake, and adjusted by negotiation, Mr. Madison will have gained every point. There will be no bounds to the rejoicings. Huzza! Huzza! "we have beaten an English frigate, we have flogged the damned English," will resound through the country; the nation's pride will be up; the people's passions roused, their feelings elevated to intoxication, and for a time, perhaps long enough to ensure the "narrowless" chief's election, the general interest and safety will be lost sight of, amidst the din of warlike talk and "boasted battle." Even good men may yield to clamor, fancy it a flattering and goodly circumstance, that the "murderous attack" upon the Chesapeake has been clearly eclipsed by executive contrivance.

#### GALLANT ACTION.

QUEBEC, MAY 9.—Capt. Hodgson, of the brig Fortune, who arrived here yesterday from London was, attacked on the 13th of April, in about 53 deg. N. lat. and 20 deg. W. lon. by a French privateer of 16 guns, and about 120 men, which he most gallantly contended with for an hour and twenty minutes, and finally beat off. During this time his Colours were twice shot away, and then nailed to the mast. The enemy made three attempts to board, and were each time repulsed; the boarders being killed in the Chains or Shrouds, or precipitated into the Sea, where they were drowned.—The Fortune having sustained considerable damage in her rigging and spars, and as her crew were decreasing fast, would probably have been captured, had she not fortunately shot away the enemy's fore-topmast at which time the Fortune's crew gave three cheers, and the Privateer sheered off. Capt. H. gave her a parting broadside, which was not returned, and then lay by, and began to repair the damage, and to clear the ship for a renewal of the action, in case the enemy should think proper to renew it. But in two hours afterwards the Privateer disappeared to the leeward, and Capt. H. proceeded on his voyage. Capt. H. speaks in the highest terms of the bravery of his crew, and of the great assistance he received from his passengers during the action. The loss unfortunately sustained by the Fortune in this action is as follows: John Wilson, John Dickson, English seamen, killed. Mr. Alexander Greig, of this city, a passenger, wounded in the knee; Mr. Saunderson, also a passenger, wounded in the arm, and three men slightly wounded.

The Fortune mounts 8 guns and 2 swivels; and the number of persons on board, including her officers, 3 passengers and 3 boys, amounted to 19.

The Privateer lost in killed and drowned, between 20 and 30 in boarding, but the number killed on board of her by shot from the Fortune, could not be ascertained.