

MARYLAND GAZETTE.

T H U R S D A Y, JULY 16, 1807.

Maryland Gazette.

ANNAPOLIS, Thursday, July 16, 1807.

NORFOLK.

[CIRCULAR.]

THIS day, (July 4,) the following letter was received by Richard E. Lee, Esq. mayor of this borough, from commodore Douglas:

[COPY.]

His majesty's ship Bellona, Hampton Roads, July 3, 1807.

beg leave to represent to you, that having observed in the news-papers a resolution, made by a committee, on the 29th ult. prohibiting any communication between his Britannic majesty's consul at Norfolk, his ships lying at anchor in Lynnhaven bay; and being a measure extremely hostile, not only in giving the British consul from discharging the duties of his office, but at the same time preventing me from obtaining that information so absolutely necessary for his majesty's service, I am therefore determined, if this infringement is not IMMEDIATELY ANNULL'D, to prohibit every vessel bound either in or out of Norfolk, to proceed to their destination, until by the pleasure of my government, or the commander in chief's on this station. You must be perfectly aware that the British flag never has nor never will be insulted with impunity. You must also be aware, that it has been and is still in my power to obstruct the whole trade of the Chesapeake since the circumstances, which I desisted from, trusting to the general unanimity would be restored. Respect to the circumstance of the deserters lately apprehended from the U. S. frigate Chesapeake, in my opinion, must be decided between the two governments ALONE. It therefore rests with the inhabitants of Norfolk, either to engage in a war, or on terms of peace. Agreeable to my intention, I have proceeded to Hampton Roads with the squadron under my command, to await your answer, which I trust you will favour me with without delay. I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

J. E. DOUGLAS.

enclose you two letters to the British consul at Norfolk, which you will be pleas'd to forward him.

J. E. D.

which the mayor returned the following answer: NORFOLK, July 4, 1807.

have received your menacing letter of yesterday moment. The day on which this answer is written is of itself to suffice, to prove to the subjects of our sovereign, that the American people are not intimidated by menace, or induced to adopt any measures, except by a sense of their perfect propriety. Seduced by the false shew of security, they may be sometimes surpris'd, and slaughtered while unprepared with a supposed friend. That delusive security, however, is now pass'd for ever. The late occurrence has taught us to confide our safety no longer to any thing but to our own force. We do not seek hostility, but shall we avoid it. We are prepared for the worst you may attempt, and will do whatever shall be judged proper to repel force whensoever your efforts shall render any act of ours necessary. Thus we are not to be alarmed by the threats of your letter, which can be considered in no other light than as addressed to the superstitious fears of our citizens.

answer to that part of it which is particularly directed to me, as the first judicial officer of this borough, I have but to say, that you must be aware, that the judiciary of no country possesses any other powers, than those conferred upon them by the laws. The same channels through which you have derived intelligence stated by yourself, must also have attended to you that the act of which you complain, is an act of individuals, and not of the government. This act be wrong and illegal, the judiciary of this country, whenever the case is properly brought before it, will take care to do its duty. At present we have no judicial information of any outrage on the laws, and therefore cannot act.

you, Sir, please to consider this act of individuality, a measure "extremely hostile," and shall continue to hold it, without waiting the decision of our governments, (although you yourself acknowledge it properly belongs to them alone to decide) the inhabitants of Norfolk will conform to your example, and will protect themselves against any lawless aggression that may be made upon their persons or property. Therefore leave it with you "either to engage in a war, or to remain on terms of peace," until the pleasure of our respective governments shall be known.

Your letters to the British consul at this place have been forwarded to him.

I have the honour to be, Sir, Your most obedient Servant, RICHARD EVERS LEE, Mayor of the borough of Norfolk.

To com. J. E. Douglas, commanding his Britannic majesty's ship the Bellona, now lying in Hampton Roads.

Norfolk, July 5, 1807.

SIR,

In pursuance of your request, I this day went down to the British Squadron, lying in Hampton Roads, for the purpose of delivering the letter with which I was charged to capt. Douglas; on arriving along-side his ship, the Bellona, I was invited on board, received by capt. Douglas himself at the gangway, and conducted to his cabin, where I found assembled all the captains of the Squadron. I immediately informed him that you had yesterday received a letter from him, the answer to which I had been requested to deliver, and place it in his hands. He read the letter very attentively, and then handed it to capt. Hardy, from whom it passed to the other captains in succession. When they had perused it, capt. Douglas observed to me, "I presume, Sir, you are acquainted with the contents of this letter; I told him I was perfectly so. He then stated that his letter must have been misapprehended, that it contained no expression of menace which he recollected, and that it certainly was not his intention to use language which could be construed to convey such ideas; he referred to capt. Hardy, saying that he had shewn him the letter previously to its being sent, and had requested his opinion, as to its sentiments; capt. Hardy concurred with capt. Douglas in the opinion and objects of the communication. I then remarked to them the particular expressions in the letter, which I considered as the language of threat, and adverted to the circumstance of the words "immediately annulled," being underscored. He said that this underscoring must have been done by his clerk, without his direction, and had escaped his observation; but again assured me, upon his honour, that if any expression in the letter wore the appearance of threat, it was not intended to be so understood.

Captain Douglas next adverted to the conclusion of the letter, in which the alternative of peace or war is left to himself—he said upon this subject, he had no orders to commit any act of hostility, and that there was no man from whose intention or wishes such an object was more remote. That he was anxious to preserve the relations of amity, which had existed between the two governments, and that no act of his should tend to interrupt their harmony, unless he was ordered by his superiors to perform such acts, in which case, as an officer, he must do his duty. He repeated, however, that he had at present no such orders, nor did he expect to receive such. He stated that he had it in charge generally to guard his flag, and those under its protection from insult or assault of any kind, and that this in all situations he must unquestionably do. But that any further measure he was not at present authorized, nor was it his intention to take. I here stated to him the many insulting menaces which had been communicated in Norfolk, as coming from him. He positively denied ever having uttered any such—declared if they had been used by any of his officers, that they were unauthorized, and disapproved of by him, remarking at the same time, that he hoped all who knew him, would do him the justice to believe, that he was not in the habit of using the language of threat—he here too again referred to all the officers to say, if they had ever heard him at any time, even while speaking confidentially to them, utter such expressions, and they united in declaring that they had not.

A desultory conversation then took place between captain Douglas, the other captains, and myself, which continued nearly an hour, in the course of which many remarks were made, which had no reference to the subject of your letter, or were in any way connected with it; these, Sir, I have already communicated to yourself, and to all my fellow-citizens, with whom I have conversed upon this subject; but as they are not connected with the subject of your letter, I presume it would be unnecessary again to detail them here. In the course of this conversation, I described to them as well as I was able the sentiments which universally prevailed through the country at this time, the cause from whence it proceeded, and the effects it would produce, provided any effort on their part should be made to oppose the public resolves, as to intercourse or supplies. I explicitly declared that we had as yet received no authority from our government to proceed to acts of aggression, but that we were authorized, and were prepared for defence, and for the protection of ourselves and our property; to prove which I placed in the hands of

capt. Douglas, an extract from the letter of governor Cabell, to brigadier-general Mathews, which I had made for that purpose; I concluded by warning him again not to send any of his officers or people on shore, for that if he did, the arm of the civil authority, I did not believe, would be able to protect them from the vengeance of an enraged people; that this might lead to consequences which might possibly be yet averted, and if he was sincere in the sentiments he had expressed, he would be anxious to prevent such results. Captain Douglas and all the captains declared, that they were aware of the present state of the public feelings, and deplored the circumstance which had excited it; that they did not intend to expose any of their people to the resentment of ours, which they could conceive was highly inflamed; that as to supplies they did not want any at present, but when they did, they should not attempt to procure them in any way which would excite the opposition of the citizens of this country.

Upon the subject of intercourse, he did not expect to hold any with the people of this country, nor was there any occasion for it. He only wished to be permitted freely to communicate with the accredited officers of his government here, who had been formally received and recognized by our executive, and whose functions he presumed none but the government had the right to put down. As to the particular manner in which this communication might be carried on, it was a matter quite indifferent to him.—He had no objection to that being regulated by ourselves, in any way which is judged proper, and that he would certainly pursue the mode which might be suggested as most agreeable to us, provided the channel of communication was kept free and open.—To this I stated, that I had no authority from any person to enter into any engagement with him, but that as an individual I would state that the letters he had forwarded under cover to you had been safely delivered, and that therefore, I presumed any other dispatches of a like kind would be treated in the same way—but upon this subject, I could only refer him to you and your associates for information. He then stated that he would to-day write an answer to your letter, which he should forward as before, and I left the ship, captain Douglas again repeating the substance of what I have already stated.

From the moment I approached the Bellona to that on which I left her, my treatment from captain Douglas and all his officers, was marked by as much attention, politeness and respect, as any gentleman ever received from others.—My particular friend Mr. James Taylor, junr. accompanied me on board the British ship, for reasons that will at once suggest themselves to you, when you remember the delicate and embarrassing situation in which I might be placed. He remained on board the whole time with me, and was a witness to every thing which passed. I have read to him this communication, Sir, in order to ascertain if my recollection was correct, and he accords with me in every statement here made.

I have forwarded a copy of this letter to the governor of Virginia, and to the Federal Executive, believing that at this time it is the duty of every citizen to keep his government well informed of every thing which may be useful.

I am respectfully, Sir, Your most obedient servant, L. W. TAZEWELL.

To Richard E. Lee, Esq. Mayor of the borough of Norfolk.

His majesty's ship Bellona, Hampton Roads, 6th July, 1807.

SIR,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 4th inst. in answer to mine of the preceding day, requesting that the British consul might be restored to his powers.

As every circumstance relative to the above communication was so fully discussed in presence of the gentlemen deputed by the magistracy of Norfolk, as bearers of your dispatch, I have only in addition to remark, that as far as I am individually concerned, every exertion shall be used that can, consistent with the honour and dignity of the British flag, tend to an amicable termination.

I have the honour to be, Sir, Your obedient humble servant, J. E. DOUGLAS.

RICHARD E. LEE, Esq; Mayor of the borough of Norfolk, Virginia.

A letter from a gentleman in Richmond to his friend here, states, that the express which was sent off on Saturday last in consequence of commodore Douglas's first letter, arrived there on Sunday evening, upon which the Richmond cavalry and artillery received orders to march for this place immediately.

From another source we understand that 1000 militia were ordered to repair for this place.