

I communicated this letter, and my proposed answer to my father, whom I had previously apprised of the intended advertisement by the Officers of the Customs. He at once became very much disturbed and alarmed at the state of things, as they regarded General COFFIN. The evident implication in the General's letter to me, that he had caused the rescue; the consideration, that if this letter were communicated to the Collector, he would be bound to prosecute to extremities; and the appearance of such an advertisement, to be sent to all parts of the world in a public newspaper, seemed to impress his mind so heavily with the serious consequences that might ensue to General COFFIN, that he insisted upon my suppressing General COFFIN's letter to me, and my answer thereto, in a manner, that from my father, I could not resist. But, I strongly remonstrated against the measure, as a dereliction of my duty as a public officer, after so high-handed a violation of the law: for in that light I have ever considered, and still do consider, the Rescue of the schooner Martin. But, upon my father's persevering injunctions, I did consent to withhold these letters, and he thereupon wrote to General COFFIN, what the General now terms "the secret friendly confidential paper," of which the following is a copy:

MY DEAR GENERAL.

Whether you will excuse this or not, I feel compelled from motives of the purest friendship, to say to you, that I think the steps you have taken and are pursuing, are those of a mad-man, if you regard your reputation or your most important interests, if any thing can be important in common with me. It is your business, instantly to assure the Collector that the vessel shall be brought back, and placed in his custody. A prosecution then may be, and I have no doubt will be, conducted in a manner that will be as little prejudicial to you, as can be practicable. If this advice is neglected 'till this day's Paper comes out, the Rubicon will be past. In haste, ever most faithfully yours,
W. C.

Saturday, 19th April, 1817.

[N. B. The words printed in Italics, were underscored in the original, at the time it was sent.]

This letter, by my father's direction, I showed to the Collector, in order to obtain his sanction thereto, without which it might have been altogether ineffectual, before it was sent to General COFFIN; and I then immediately dispatched it to the General, who, in a short time returned the letter with his answer indorsed on it, as follows:

"Lower Cove.

MY DEAR JUDGE.—I am where I can only say, I thank you for your advice, and I will abide by it; and if I can put my hand on her, bring her back to the Collector on the faith of a man, Yours,
J. COFFIN.

Provided no advantage is taken, whatever, of any person.
J. COFFIN.

[The original of the above letter and answer, are now in my father's possession.]

In reply to this answer to the best of my recollection, another short note was written to the General by my father, of which no copy was retained, merely informing the General that he had no authority to make any terms, and that he must see the Collector without delay; which I understood he did. Having communicated General COFFIN's answer to the Collector, I immediately proceeded to the Printing office, to stop the advertisement from being inserted in the Newspaper, and was barely in time for the purpose, it being already in type, and the paper being on the point of being put into the press. I well remember that my father (with his characteristic ardour in every thing in which he is seriously engaged,) remained on horseback upwards of an hour, in the market square, near to which the Custom house was then kept, and until I had reported to him, that the insertion of the advertisement in the newspaper of that day was suppressed.

After this my father had no knowledge or concern whatever, in any of the proceedings relating to the schooner Martin, nor was any further communication respecting them made to him; indeed he shortly after sailed for Boston, on the business of the Boundary Line.

The next period of these transactions in which I had any concern, was on the morning of Monday the 21st of April. I had understood that General COFFIN, in the intermediate time, had set out in pursuit of the vessel, and had been driven back by a head wind. I had also understood, that one of the Tide Waiters who had set out in the schoer Little Belt, in pursuit of the Martin, in expectation of the reward before the advertisements were suppressed, had also been driven back by the same head wind.

On the morning of Monday, the 21st of April, at an early hour before breakfast, I was much surprised at receiving a visit from General COFFIN, who appeared to me to be

labouring under great alarm and dejection. The object of his visit, he stated to be, to induce me to go down to the Collector, to get him to stop the sailing of the Little Belt, which was then getting under weigh to off again, in search of the Martin. To the best of my recollection, General COFFIN that time made a proposition to me, to the effect, that he would give a Bond to pay the Collector, the sum of £150. or such other sum as she might be appraised at, and to deliver the Martin to himself when he should recover the possession of her—that in the meantime a prosecution could be regularly carried on in the Court against her, and he would pay such sum on her being condemned. But I well remember that my opinion at that time was as it still is, that under the circumstances of this case, any such proposition would have been highly objectionable. I conceived a flagrant violation of the law to have been committed. The schooner Martin, no matter what the cause of seizure was, had been forcibly rescued from the custody of the Law; and I did then think as I still do think, that I could not have been justified in recommending, nor the Collector in acceding to any proposition that had not for its basis, the replacing of the vessel in the same custody from whence she was taken. To this effect I advised the Collector, whom I went immediately to see according to General COFFIN's request. General COFFIN accompanying me apart of the way; and I well recollect that I arrived at the Collector's justin time for him to stop the Little Belt as she was passing his house, which he did. The proposition which I was then authorised by the Collector to make to General COFFIN, was to the effect, namely: to give a Bond, binding himself in the Penalty of £300 to bring the vessel back to the custody of the Custom House; to deliver up the offending articles that had caused the seizure, and to pay the expenses incurred, namely—a satisfaction to the owner and crew of the schooner Little Belt, and the persons going in her; and this I understood from the Collector, was in substance the understanding between General COFFIN and himself on the preceding Saturday, upon which all further publication of the advertisements had been suppressed.

I returned to General COFFIN with this proposition; to the best of my recollection, he objected to the amount of the penalty, as being far beyond the value of the vessel; I think he did consent that it should be as high as £200, but I will not undertake to say that the amount of the penalty of the Bond was distinctly agreed upon, between General COFFIN and myself: indeed, as the foundation of the agreement was to bring back the vessel, and upon this being done, the Bond would be void, I did not think the amount of the penalty a matter of much importance, and to the best of my recollection I so stated it to General COFFIN. But it was most certainly agreed upon by General COFFIN and myself at the time, that a Bond should be given by him to bring back the schooner Martin; that he should deliver up the articles in question, and pay the above expenses. Accordingly the Collector sent for the persons that were going down in the Little Belt, in order to adjust the amount of these expenses, and General COFFIN and myself proceeded to my office in order to execute the Bond. On our way thither, he stated that he was so much hurried, as the vessel in which he meant to sail was about getting under weigh, that he could not wait for the Bonds being regularly drawn out, but that he would put his hand and seal at the bottom of the paper, and I might fill it up afterwards. I accordingly wrote at the top of the first page of a sheet of paper, the names of the parties alone, and he put his hand and seal at the bottom of the second page, and immediately hurried away for fear of losing his passage. I went to the Collector again and informed him that the Bond was duly executed, which, whatever might be the legal doubt of the validity of such an instrument, I conceived under the circumstances of the case, I was justified in doing.

The expenses were at that time adjusted with the parties concerned. I wrote a note to General COFFIN then embarked, stating their amount, and sent the same to him—whether he received it or not, I do not know. The vessel in which he was, which I understood had been delayed until this arrangement on shore should be completed, was then permitted to proceed, and the Little Belt was stopped from proceeding in pursuit of the Martin.

With regard to the contraband articles, it was a part of the agreement that they should be given up, as I have before stated; and the impression on my mind at this day is, that in the conference with General COFFIN, I stated that they ought to be sent to the Custom House before he sailed; to which he replied, that such was the hurry it was impossible to do it then, but that Mrs. Coffin, on being applied to, would deliver them up. Mrs. Coffin was applied to after the General sailed, and refused to deliver them up; upon

this being made known to me from the Collector. I have no doubt that I wrote a note to Mrs. Coffin, to the effect stated by General COFFIN in his 'appeal,' which there can be as little doubt my agreement with the General fully authorised me to do; but of such note I have no copy. The transactions of this morning of the 21st of April, were, as it will be perceived, from this detail of them, very hurried and irregular; Gen. COFFIN, was apparently in a state of extreme anxiety and depression of mind, and I can with perfect truth and sincerity declare, that my great object on this occasion, as in all the proceedings relating to the schoer Martin, in which I was engaged, was to perform what my duty required of me, while I was in the same time actuated by a friendly disposition towards General COFFIN. I did not, I confess, that, (so far as I was concerned,) no man, let his rank and influence be what they might, should trample upon the laws with impunity, but, where an offence had been essentially atoned, I was ready to advise against, and to forbear any vindictive proceedings.

The Bond was never filled up by me, as I daily expected the return of the Martin. The Martin was brought back by General COFFIN, on or about the 28th of April, and replaced in the custody of the officers of the Customs. The Bond, or rather the paper intended for a Bond, being no longer of use or validity, was afterwards destroyed by me.

On the 29th of April, the Martin, and the articles in question, were libelled by me in the Court of Vice Admiralty, together with divers other seizures that had been made about that time, as is the practice in such cases. Proceedings were regularly had to condemnation; and after this I had no concern, nor was I in any manner advised with, relative to any subsequent proceedings. The course, which I thought the only proper one under the circumstances of this case, had been pursued, namely, regular proceedings were had to condemnation in the Court of Vice Admiralty; there my official duties ceased, and there my interference ceased also. No prosecution or proceedings were had or contemplated against General COFFIN for the rescue, of the schooner, nor, (to make use of his own terms,) was "any advantage whatever taken of any person" on his account; nor would the transaction ever have been made a subject of discussion, had it not been for General COFFIN's complaint to the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury upon his arrival in England, against the Collector of the Customs, with regard to the prosecution of this schooner.—I must not omit here, to relate one or two circumstances that occurred about that time: in the first place, I signified to General COFFIN soon after the Martin was brought back, that it would never answer for the persons who actually run away with her, to return to this Province, as public policy would require in such case, that they should be taken notice of, and he intimated that they would not return. Another little anecdote is too characteristic to be omitted: very soon after the vessel was brought back, General COFFIN professing that he now desired nothing but peace, told me that he had a few brace of ducks, which he had killed on the voyage, and asked me whether he had not better send one or two pair as a peace offering to the Collector. I advised him by no means to offer at such a time, would be equally unworthy, in him to make and in the Collector to accept. This circumstance is well remembered by some of my friends, as having been mentioned by me to them when it happened, and is of importance only to shew that, at that time the prevailing feeling in General COFFIN's mind, was not that of a deep sense of injury. The usual daily civilities continued to pass between us, until he embarked for England a few days before which, we had a friendly conversation in the market place.

In the month of June 1817, Gen. COFFIN thought proper, to insert in the public newspapers here, some intemperate paragraphs against the Collector. The Collector, justly incensed at such proceedings, which he conceived forfeited all claim that General COFFIN might otherwise have had to further forbearance, thereupon prepared a statement of the circumstances attending the rescue of the schooner, to be submitted to the Commissioners of the Customs, for their direction whether a prosecution should be commenced against General COFFIN for this offence; the case of the Martin, having in the official returns, been stated merely as an ordinary seizure. This representation the Collector was induced to withhold at that time, in compliance with the earnest solicitations of the Comptroller and myself, made under an apprehension of the very injurious consequences that would probably ensue therefrom to the General; and under a hope that the General's rashness and imprudence in this affair, would not be permanent, and certainly never dreaming that he could venture, after his own conduct with regard to the

Martin, to make any official complaints against the Collector respecting this seizure; otherwise a sense of justice towards the Collector, would never have permitted us to make this interference. This statement of the Collector would for ever have lain dormant, had it not become necessary, many months afterwards, to transmit in defence against General COFFIN's representations to the Lords of the Treasury. Thus every thing respecting the seizure of the schooner Martin, so far as respected my father and myself, remained until the last winter. By the December mail from England, which was received here in the month of February, numerous and voluminous letters were said to have been received from General COFFIN, then in England, respecting the concerns of the Province, by several persons with many of whom it was said he had never corresponded before. It was soon rumoured and came to my father's ears, that it appeared among other things by these letters, that General COFFIN, in addition to the very serious charges he had exhibited against the Collector and Comptroller of the Customs, had been making representations to His Majesty's Ministers strongly impeaching the propriety and rectitude of his conduct, as His Majesty's Agent, under the 4th and 5th Articles of the treaty of Ghent. My father at first ridiculed the idea of any conduct so base and ungrateful towards him on the part of General COFFIN, and for some time gave no credit to the report. He however, immediately set on foot an inquiry, and very soon ascertained to his utter astonishment, that the information he had received was but too well founded. From some of the gentlemen he obtained copies of each one of General COFFIN's letters as respected him and the business of the Agency; and from other persons ascertained that the General among other things, boasted of his free access to all the Public offices, and of his having (to use his own coarse and vulgar, but strongly significant expression,) "blown up Old CHIPMAN," and set the matter of the Boundary under his management in its true light before His Majesty's Ministers. It was reported that, to some of his correspondents, he had transmitted a copy of a letter, said to be written by the Under Secretary of State, intimating Earl BATHURST's thanks for the representations, and an assurance that they should be attended to. About this time, also, my father received a letter from the Collector and Comptroller of the Customs, requiring of him, as a matter of importance to them, if not to public justice, to furnish them with copies of his letter to General COFFIN, and of General COFFIN's answer respecting the schooner Martin; together with such other particulars within his recollection, as led to his interference on that occasion.

After a moments reflection, there was no room to hesitate with regard to the course now to be pursued. As my father had in the manner before mentioned kept back from the officers of the Customs, all knowledge of General COFFIN's official letter to me of the 19th of April; and which until this time had never been seen by any person but my father and myself, and had instead thereof, made the communications to them which had influenced their conduct with regard to the General and the schooner Martin; as the Collector might with great propriety, when they were originally shewn to him, have taken copies of my father's note to General COFFIN, and of the answer indorsed thereon, for the justification of his own conduct, if he had anticipated its ever being called in question, as it now was by General COFFIN. As there was therefore, nothing 'secret or confidential' in the transaction, to justify the withholding of these copies from the officers of the customs, but on the contrary, under the then existing circumstances, they had a right, in their defence against the memorial presented by General COFFIN, to the Lords of the Treasury, to demand and receive copies of all the papers which had been shewn to them, in order to influence their proceedings with regard to the schooner Martin; as I felt it my indispensable duty on this occasion, to furnish them with a copy of General COFFIN's letter to me of the 19th April, which had been thus withheld from their knowledge, and which is any thing but a confidential one; as in addition to all these indispensable considerations of justice to the officers of the Customs, it was incumbent upon my father as a measure of self defence to furnish all the means in his power of giving information to His Majesty's Government, respecting the conduct of a man representing himself to be so much in their confidence, for although he had no reason to fear any suggestions that could consistently with truth, be made with regard to his conduct; yet, as it was impossible to conjecture, after the discovery now made of General COFFIN's temper and disposition, towards him, what other shafts of the same malignity might in the dark have been pointed against him; under all these considerations my father justly feeling that General COFFIN's conduct did not entitle him to any further

efforts on his part, to serve him from the consequences of his malignity, with my concurrent advice furnished to the officers of the Customs of all the letters above recited ment.

The last link in the chain of is afforded by General COFFIN since his return to this place in the month of May last; when he attempts to justify himself to the circumstances of which is a faithful history. How far it is made out, let any man of intelligence decide! Not having, while in England, set on foot that the ingenuity suggest, to destroy the character and fortunes of those, whom, and delusion, he had conjured wandering fancy as engaged against him; since his return slanders the most foul and vindictive, have marked every progress.—Even the sacred recent females, have not escaped; but, because they were by the most tender ties with his vengeance, infamous Han turb their peace and blast brought ready in print from be put into the hands of the man, and be by him hawked about. Is this "the character," is it of Honor" of "a Soldier" in general prides himself in his "the real Soldier determine!

The more recent occurrence Gen. COFFIN and myself, who roused the public attention in a course of judicial would be highly improper and me to make any statement present occasion. In due time the public eye.

I come now to General statement of the transaction schooner Martin, in his "Public," the softened and which, affords an amusing other productions. He commensurate by asserting in bold terms, that his letter to me deliver up the offending article "the day after the schooner seized" and "that the rescue the following evening;" at calls in question my conduct "upon this candid display of given my opinion to the the case, that the vessel made liable under the "before me: first, not "cles on board at the time "the articles themselves no "to pursue the vessel, and "intention of fraud what subsequent statement in the turday last, in which the "as truth is announced to "the day," to "recover "something that may carry "of truth;" he repeats that the letter was written "the seizure. Now I admit, that if such a letter, in suling as it was, had been time stated by General C time before the rescue, standing the offensive term couched, have been inclined a relinquishment of the set not upon the ground of articles on board at the because, if it could be evidence that the articles had in the schooner, this would sufficient to work a copy out the articles having been on board:—not upon the having been no intention the circumstance given in Custom House, that the a in the night, was of itself rily explained, a sufficient intention; but such recollection have been founded on that the articles themselves sufficient consequence or expedient to prosecute the fact is, as it appears on itself, which is the first foregoing statement, and it is, so far as my conduct this letter was not written. This violent out insurmountable barrier in commodation, with regard of the vessel on the allege. The only object with all to avoid the necessity of the outrage itself, against it. And let it be here all, that it is to this cowardly rescue alone, that to attribute all his di General COFFIN's state was written to me the true? The letter itself f