

to me evident that had he fallen in with a British frigate, or any ship of war equal in power to his own, he would certainly have brought her to action. And what further confirms me in that opinion is, that his guns were not only loaded with round and grape shot, but with every scrap of iron that could be possibly collected. I have to lament the loss of 32 men killed and wounded, among whom is the master. His Majesty's ship is much damaged in her masts, sails rigging and hull, and as there are many shots through between wind and water, and many shots still remaining inside, and upper works all shot away, starboard pump also, I have judged it proper to proceed to Halifax, &c.

There could be no excuse for the hostile action of Commodore Rodgers. No demand was made for any Americans impressed by the British, no complaint was urged; the frigate commenced hostilities at once, as if the American Government had resolved to cut short all intermission and negotiate only at the cannon's mouth. The "Little Belt" was brought into Halifax harbour on the 26th May in a sinking state—almost shot to pieces. When the news of the attack reached England it created intense excitement, and an opinion generally prevailed that unless reparations were immediately made, or a satisfactory explanation given by the Government of the United States—war would be the consequence; and as a preparatory step for whatever might result, a squadron of four sail of the line, one frigate and a sloop of war, under Sir Joseph York, sailed from Portsmouth for the American coast. Conflicting statements respecting the attack were made on both sides. Commodore Rodgers stated positively that he hailed twice, and his words were repeated by the stranger; that she fired one shot which struck the vessel, then three shots, and immediately afterward the remainder of her broadside, before he opened his guns upon her, except the single shot, which one of the deserters declared was