

they will most undoubtedly for winter support have recourse to fraud and violence. I can conceive no alternative to it at present, and my anxiety is greatly increased by the very suspicious character of several neighbouring harbours towards the head of the bay, which are thickly inhabited by people of the worst class, and who are now generally in distress. Above us there is only one mercantile establishment remaining, Danson's at Holy Rood, whose concerns there this fall are much narrowed; we lie therefore exposed to the first assaults, and I confess myself uneasy at the prospect. Dry goods alone in the store would not I think attract them, but where provisions are, their attention will be fixed, and stores once forced, no sort of property will be safe; I have therefore under all these circumstances, thought it most expedient and safe not to hold provisions through the winter."

*George Gardiner,  
Esq.*

From another Letter, dated Brigus, 8th February 1817.

"The example of those Carbonear and Harbour Grace rioters, has produced a very mischievous effect through this end of the bay, and the ultimate point gained by them, in securing a provision by public regulation, has caused large bodies of men to confederate, in order to demand provision here also, on pain of plunderage of the stores.

"About a week since, one of our late rejected dealers, of a naturally lawless temper, and accompanied by others of the same cast, came and insisted on getting provisions, which were again refused, on credit; he became extremely riotous, and was forced off the room. A mob presently formed, and some blows passed, when I was apprehensive of mischief ensuing. This attempt at riot was preconcerted, and certainly intended to incite a general disturbance, but fortunately we were enabled to put it down without farther evil at the moment.

"That party however proceeded to organize forces, went up the bay with large assurances of abundance in our stores, inviting all disorderly persons, and forcing others to join a general attack upon this room, and they had actually raised a party sufficient to overwhelm the harbour, if they had then made the attempt. Through the past week we have been constantly kept on the alarm, and I thought it necessary to call a meeting of the principal Brigus planters, to resolve on defending the harbour, and I have every reason to believe it had a salutary effect in checking the rashness of the mob. There were some in this harbour likewise, who only waited the commencement of hostilities to share in the plunder, and I believe I may say, that all who were put out of credit were disposed the same way, part being however impelled solely by the force of want. As far as I could out of our stock of rooms provisions, I determined to assist those rejected planters that were really actuated by distress, sparing a  $\frac{1}{2}$  cwt. of bread flour and pork to some, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cwt. of the same to others of larger families. The interests of the party thereby becoming different, reproaches and jealousies among themselves have effected a dispersion, and an abandonment for the present of any serious attack from that quarter. The priest has just spent a day here, and I think his exhortations to maintain peace and the security of merchants property, have been serviceable.

"With the sealing schooners, the chief strength of the harbour will go from us, and I am most uneasy about what may then turn up, especially as little stocks of potatoes and other supplies will then be exhausted, and the bulk of the population above us will be approaching to a state of starvation; I can scarcely venture to expect, that we shall pass through the winter with an entire escape of the stores.

"There will be much disturbance and difficulty about first supplies of provisions, and it will not be safe to receive more than can be thrown immediately into the hands of our dealers, and that in small quantities too, so that idle people may go elsewhere for credit, before the second quantity should arrive. It is much to be wished for, that the Governor should be prepared to send all the superfluous population from Newfoundland."

From another Letter, dated Brigus, 25th February 1817.

"Since my last respects (by this vessel) dated 8th instant, I am happy to say we have been tolerably tranquil, so far at least as to be free from any violence on the stores, although we are daily besieged by importunate and unprincipled claimants for provisions, who have developed still further the disorderly state of the times, and show the strongest inclinations to plunder and distress the merchants stores.

"All these people are moneyless, and almost all are entirely strangers to the house, yet make their demands in the most authoritative and insolent manner, holding forth, "That while the stores contain a biscuit they will have it." Now we