

ship it was? He again repeated my words, and fired a broadside, which I instantly returned. The action then became general, and continued so for three-quarters of an hour, when he ceased firing, and appeared to be on fire about the main hatchway. He then filled. I was obliged to desist from firing, as, the ship falling off, no gun would bear, and had no after to keep her to. All the rigging and sails cut to pieces, and not a brace nor a bowline left. He hailed and asked what ship this was? I told him. He then asked me if I had struck my colors? My answer was No, and asked what ship it was? As plainly as I could understand (he having shot some distance at this time) he answered the United States frigate. He fired no more guns, but stood from us, giving no reason for his most extraordinary conduct.

At daylight in the morning, saw a ship to windward, when having made out well what we were, bore up and passed within hail fully prepared for action. About 8 o'clock he hailed and said if I pleased, he would send a boat on board; I replied in the affirmative, and a boat accordingly came with an officer, and a message from Commodore Rodgers, of the U. S. frigate "President," to say that he lamented much the unfortunate affair (as he termed it) that had happened, and that had he known our force was so inferior he should not have fired at me. I asked his motive for having fired at all? His reply was that "we fired the first gun at him;" which was positively not the case. I cautioned both the officers and men to be particularly careful, and not suffer any more than one man to be at the gun. Nor is it probable that a sloop-of-war, within pistol shot of a large 44 gun frigate, should commence hostilities. He offered me every assistance I stood in need of, and submitted to me that I had better put into one of the ports of the United States; which I immediately declined. By the manner in which he apologized it appeared