

Carlisle Herald and Expositor.

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In Bankruptcy.

NOTICE.

PETITIONS for Discharge and Certificate under the Bankrupt Law, have been filed by:
JOHN McGRIMMON, late Merchant & Co. do. Cumberland co.
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POETRY.

Those who may read the following stanzas, from the pen of one of the old bards of England, will be struck by the ready wit of the poet.

DEATH'S CONQUEST.

BY SIBBIE.

The glories of our birth and state
Are shadows, not substantial things;
There is no armor against fate;
Death lays his icy hand on Kings;
Scepter and crown
Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.
Some men with swords to reap the field,
And plant fresh laurels where they kill;
But their strong nerves at last must yield,
They too must to the dust be still—
Early or late
They stoop to fate,
And must give back their mummured breath,
When they pale captives creep to Death.

NARRATIVE OF LIEUT. MACKENZIE.

U. S. Brig Somers, 21.
New York, December 19, 1842.

Since my arrival at this port I have been diligently engaged in preparing for the Department at Washington, a full and detailed narrative of all the circumstances connected with the mutiny on board the U. S. brig of war Somers on her recent voyage from Africa; but having been frequently interrupted, especially by the solicitude of friends, I have been forced to relinquish my first intention and confine myself entirely to a sketch of the principal occurrences. After leaving the Azores and Madeira, in October, I proceeded, according to orders, to Teneriffe and Porto Praya. Thence I went to Liberia, expecting to find the U. S. ship of war Vandalia. But on arriving there I learned that she had sailed on the 5th of October for the United States, as I understood.

The despatches with which I was entrusted for her being thus rendered of no use were left with the United States agent whose receipt for them is enclosed. On the 11th of November I sailed for the United States, by the way of St. Thomas, where I thought it necessary to take in supply of bread, water and other refreshments. On Saturday, the 25th of November, Lieut. Gansvoort came into the cabin and informed me that he had learned from Mr. Wales that a conspiracy existed on board the ship to capture the vessel, to murder the captain, bring over as many of the crew as possible, murder the rest, and convert the vessel into a pirate; and that Midshipman Spencer was at the head of the conspiracy. This Lieut. G. said, had been told to him by Mr. Wales, whose narrative was as follows:—

On the night of the 23rd of November, between 6 and 8 o'clock in the evening, Wales said he was aroused by Spencer, who asked him to go upon the booms, as he had something to say to him. He got up, and on arriving at the booms, he was asked by Spencer, "do you fear death? do you fear a dead man? do you fear to kill a man?" Wales, with admirable coolness, induced Spencer to go on, took the oath of secrecy, and entered into all his plans. Spencer told him that he had about twenty men in his plot; that they would easily get possession of the ship, murder the commander and officers, and commence piracy. He gave Wales all the details of his plan, which were admirably suited for his purpose, and arranged much better, Mr. Wales said, than he could have done himself. As an inducement to embark in the enterprise, Spencer said that a large box of wine on board contained a large amount of gold and other treasures.

His object was to go to the Isle of Pines, where one of his associates, who had been a pirate before, had a confederate; that he would attack no vessels that he could not capture, and destroy all that he captured; that he would select from them such females as were proper, use them, and then dispose of them; that he had all the details of the plan drawn out on paper, which was in the back of his cravat. He showed money to Mr. Wales, and before separating threatened him with instant death if he revealed what he had told him.

Such, proceeded Captain Mackenzie, was the purport of the information which I received from Lieut. Gansvoort. To me the whole affair seemed so monstrous that I treated it with ridicule, and believed that Spencer had been amusing himself and Wales with some story of piracy he had learned from some novel or tale of murder. Still I could not help feeling that it was sporting with a serious subject, and that my duty required me to be upon my guard, and I resolved closely to watch the movements of Spencer. I directed the first lieutenant to observe him very narrowly. I learned that in the course of the day Spencer had been in the ward-room for some time, and had been himself in examining a chart of the West Indies, and

that he had made some inquiries concerning the Isle of Pines. The lieutenant told him that he believed it was a place much frequented by pirates, and drily asked him if he had any acquaintance there. Spencer passed the day sullenly, and was often observed to be examining a paper, and writing with a pencil, and making rings with his penknife.

Lieut. Gansvoort soon after made some excuse for following him to the foretop, when he found him engaged in working some love devices upon his arm. He expressed a desire to learn the rate of the chronometer, and was referred to the master of marines. He was frequently seen engaged in holding secret conferences with boatswain Cromwell and Small, and was known to have given money to different persons of the crew. He had also incited the steward to steal brandy, which he had given to the crew, and with which he had once or twice got drunk himself.

Spencer had the faculty of throwing his lower jaw out of joint, and of thus playing with a variety of musical airs, and he was found frequently thus amusing the crew. In his intercourse with me he was servile to the last degree; but among the crew I learned that he was loudly and blasphemously vituperative against me, and that he had often abused me in the most outrageous and violent terms, and declared that it would give him real pleasure to roll me overboard from the roundtop. I found that he had drawn a representation of a black flag, and asked members of the crew what they thought of it; that he had often said that the vessel could be easily taken; that he had not long before examined the palms of the hands of one of the midshipmen, to tell his fortune, and had predicted for him a speedy and violent death.

These things induced me to look back over all I had heard or observed of Spencer. When young Spencer first reported himself to me for duty on board my vessel, I gave him my hand and welcomed him on board. I heard, not long after, that he had been involved in difficulty when on the Brazil station, and that he had been dismissed for drunkenness. Upon hearing this, I earnestly desired his removal from my vessel—principally on account of the young men I had with me; two of whom were connected with me by blood, two by alliance, and four were entrusted to my especial care. The circumstance of his connection with a high and distinguished officer of the Government, by enhancing, if possible, his baseness, increased my desire to get rid of him.

On this point I beg that I may not be misunderstood. I revere authority, and in this republican country I regard its exercise as an evidence of genius, intelligence and virtue. But I have no respect for the base son of an honored father. On the contrary, the conduct of that man who sullies by his crimes the pure fame and the high honor of his parent, seems to me to be far more base than the one who quails from an humble station. But I equally grieve to do with baseness in any shape, least of all on board a vessel belonging to the United States. On this account I wished to get rid of Spencer. Two others soon after joined the vessel, and thus seven were obliged to occupy the space fitted only for five. I had heard that Spencer had expressed a willingness to be transferred, and hoped that he would now consent.

I desired Lieut. Gansvoort to state to Mr. Spencer that if he would apply to Commodore Perry to detach him from the Somers I would second his application.—The application was accordingly made and I seconded it, earnestly urging that it might be granted in order to secure the comfort of the young officers. Commodore Perry, however, declined to detach Midshipman Spencer, but said he would consent to detach Midshipman Rodgers. I could not, however, consent to part with Mr. Rogers, whom I had long known to be an accomplished seaman, a gentleman and an officer of the highest attainments, both in and beyond his profession. The Somers accordingly sailed with seven in the steerage; they could not all sit down together at the table; two of them had no lockers but slept upon the steerage deck, and subjected themselves to considerable inconvenience, to all which, however, they readily submitted without the slightest murmur or complaint, and performed every duty which fell to them to the perfect satisfaction of all the officers.

All these things I called to recollection, and endeavored carefully to review the whole conduct of Spencer. I had treated him precisely as I treated other Midshipmen; though I had perhaps reproved him somewhat less than the others for slight deviations from the strict line of his duty. This arose from my conviction that there could be but little hope of essentially serving one who had proved to be so decidedly his own enemy. I learned that he was in the habit of associating but little with the other officers, but that he was constantly intimate with the crew. He was often in the habit of joking with them and smiling whenever he met them, with a smile never known but upon such occasions; and I

had frequently observed in him a strange flashing of the eye.

Recalling these things in addition to what had been revealed, I resolved to make myself sure of his person, though I thought I would first let Mr. Wales have another interview with him, and obtain further knowledge of his mutinous plans. If he was really in earnest, however, enough was known already.

In the evening I gave orders to Mr. Perry, my clerk, to have all the officers come aft upon the quarter deck. When they were brought up, I approached Spencer and addressed him thus: "I understand, sir, that you aspire to the command of the Somers." With a deferential air he replied, "Oh, no, sir." "Did you not," said I, "tell Mr. Wales that you had a mutinous project on foot—that you intended to kill the Commander and officers of the Somers, and such of the crew as you could not seduce to your plans, and to enter upon a course of piracy?" "I may have told him something like it," he replied, "but it was only in joke." "You admit, then, that you told him of such a plan?" "Yes, sir." "This, sir," I continued, "you must know is joking upon a forbidden subject. This joke, sir, may cost you your life. Be pleased, sir, to remove your neckerchief."

He did so. I took it and opened it; but there was nothing in it. I asked him what he had done with the paper that was in it. "The paper," he said, which had been in it, contained my day's work and I destroyed it." "It is a strange place, sir," said I, "to keep your accounts." He acquiesced with an air of the greatest deference and blandness. "Your design to make yourself commander of this vessel. You must have been aware that you could compass it only by passing over my dead body and the dead bodies of all the officers of the Somers. You had laid out for yourself, sir, a great deal to do. It is my duty to confine you." Turning to Lieut. Gansvoort I said, "Arrest Mr. Spencer, and place him in double irons." Lieut. Gansvoort stepped forward and received from Mr. Spencer his sword. Mr. Spencer was then ordered to sit down; he did so. Double irons were then put upon him, as were also handcuffs, for the sake of greater security. I directed Lieut. Gansvoort to place a watch over Mr. Spencer, and to give orders to put him to instant death if he was detected in speaking or holding communication with any of the crew.

The nature of these orders was told to Mr. Spencer. At the same time, I directed him to allow him every possible indulgence consistent with his safe keeping.—The task was executed by Lieut. Gansvoort, with the greatest kindness and humanity. While he watched with an eagle eye over all his movements, and was ready at a moment's warning to take his life upon a violation of those conditions on which his safety depended, he attended to all his wants, covered him with his own garment from the squalls of rain by which we were visited, and ministered in every way to his comfort with all the tenderness and assiduity of a woman.

The officers were then remanded to quarters; the crew and batteries were inspected; the orders were repeated, and the retreat was beaten. The officers of the watch were all directed to be fully armed with cutlasses and pislles, with rounds of ammunition, and every thing was put in order for the night.

On searching the locker of Spencer, a razor case was found in it, which he had recently drawn from the purser. On opening it, there was no razor within, but in its stead a piece of paper in which was written a string of characters, afterward found to be Greek letters, with which Spencer was known to be familiar. It fortunately happened that there was on board another individual who was well acquainted with the Greek—One whose knowledge of this, as of every thing else, was devoted wholly to the service of his country.—The Greek characters on being converted into our own language by Mr. Henry Rogers, proved to contain the plan for the proposed mutiny. There was a list of the different members of the crew, some of whom were marked certain and others doubtful; some were marked to be kept at all events, and others to be destroyed.—Those were designated who were to do the work of murder in the various apartments; others were to open the arm-chest, and the stations of all were assigned.

This following day was Sunday, and all were to be inspected at 10 o'clock. I took my station aft for the purpose of observing Cromwell and Small as they should come along on the quarter deck. The persons of both were faultlessly clean and neat—they being determined that their appearance should provoke no reproach on account of a fault in this particular. Cromwell stood up to his full stature, carrying his battle axe firmly and steadily; his cheeks pale, but his eye fixed to starboard. He wore a determined and dangerous air. Small presented a very different figure—his appearance was ghastly; his manner

uneasy;—he shifted his weight from side to side, and his battle axe from hand to hand.

His eye was never for a moment fixed, but always turned from me. I attributed his conduct to fear; though now I believe the business upon which he had entered was repugnant to his nature, but that his love for money and rum was too strong for his fidelity. Five bells or 10 o'clock was the time for Divine service. The First Lieutenant asked if he should call the roll. I told him it would be best to wait till the time was up. Five bells struck and all were called to muster. The crew were all present, were unusually attentive, and their responses were more than ordinarily full and audible. In the examination, their countenances exhibited nothing to excite distrust.

In the afternoon the sky-sails and standing-sails were set. Gaily, one of the best apprentices, was sent aloft on the royal yard to make some alteration in the rigging. At once a sudden jerk was given to the brace by Small and another, who has not been discovered, and the fore-topmast, with the topsail, top-gallant-staysail and head gaff-top-sail, at once came down. Gansvoort was on the royal yard. I scarcely dared to look to see the spot where the boy should fall. The next moment his shadow appeared at the mast head, and I presently discovered him examining, with admirable coolness, what was to be done.

I did not dare to believe this carrying away of the topmast the work of treachery; but I knew that an occasion of this sort, such as the loss of the boy, which should create confusion and interrupt the duty of the officers, would be sought by them; if they were bent on the prosecution of the enterprise. All possible measures were taken to prevent confusion. The rigging was immediately restored and the sails bent afresh. Every member of the crew was employed, and all things were made to go on with regularity. To my astonishment, upon the occurrence of this disaster all the conspirators who were named in the programme of Spencer, no matter in what part of the vessel they were engaged at the time, immediately mustered at the main-mast—whether animated by some adventurous zeal to serve their country, or intending to carry out their designs, I cannot say. This circumstance at once confirmed my belief in the continued existence of the danger. The eyes of Spencer travelled continually to the mast-head, and he cast quick and stealthy glances about, as he had not done before. The wreck was soon cleared away, and supper piped.

After supper the same persons mustered at the mast head, and the sails were set.—After quarters they dispersed. Still I did not think it safe to leave Cromwell at liberty during the night, which was emphatically the season of danger. After consulting with Lieut. Gansvoort, I determined to arrest Cromwell. An officer was sent to guard the rigging. I met Cromwell at the foot of the Jacob's ladder, going aft, and stopped him. I asked him about the conversation he had with Spencer. He denied that it was he, and said, "It was not me, sir; it was Small." (Cromwell was the tallest man on board the vessel, and Small the shortest.) Cromwell was immediately put in irons. Small being thus accused by an associate, was also ironed. The utmost vigilance was enjoined upon the officers. All were armed, and either myself or the first Lieutenant was constantly on deck.

The next morning, which was Monday, the 26th of November, two crimes of considerable magnitude came to light. One of the men had been detected in stealing from a boat, and the steward had stolen money and given some of it to Spencer.—This was no time to relax the discipline of the ship, and both the men were punished to the extent of the law. When they appeared, they all had some lame excuse. They probably had agreed to meet at the time, and to commence some act of violence. Gansvoort said he could not get aft. I sent him forward, and ordered him to take the forward look-out for four hours. I directed a close watch to be kept upon him, and distributed the others in a similar manner.

At 4 o'clock others missed their muster. I heard of this with the greatest uneasiness. Where, I asked, was this to end? If the men upon a bright night like this seem mutinous and disposed to undertake the rescue of those confined, on a bad night, in a storm, in the midst of utter darkness, how much greater will be the probability of a rescue? If all suspected agency and evidently been at work since the departure of the Somers from New York; and this was now disclosed. I explained to the crew the general nature of Spencer's plot and the atrocious character of his designs he had formed. I took especial care not to betray a suspicion that I thought any one of them was deeply implicated, but exhorted all of them to repent of their intentions and attend faithfully to their duty. I took good care to assure them that the majority of the crew must at all events share the fate of the officers. I strove to divert their minds from the picture of successful mischief which Spencer had presented to them. I brought up

before them images of friends at home; I endeavored to impress upon their minds the endearing nature of those ties of kindred from which Spencer had sought to sever them forever, and expressed the hope that within three weeks we should all be again among our friends. I thanked God that he had provided them all with dear friends who were deeply interested in their welfare, and that they had the prospect of so soon being once more among them.

The effect of my address on them was various. Many of them seemed delighted at their narrow delivery, and others seemed struck with horror at the thought of the terrible danger they had escaped. Some seemed overwhelmed with terror at the anticipation of punishment that awaited them. Others were overcome by thoughts of returning home, and wept profusely at the mention of the friends they hoped so soon to see. I could not help believing that all the crew were now tranquil, and that the vessel was again safe. Having observed that Spencer was endeavoring to hold intelligence with some of them, I directed the faces of all the prisoners to be turned aft, and that no tobacco should be allowed them when the supply they had upon their persons should be exhausted. I told them that I would see that they had every thing necessary for their comfort; that each should have his ration; that they should be abundantly supplied with every necessary for their health and convenience.—But I told them that tobacco was only a stimulant, and that, as I wished their minds to become as quiet and tranquil as possible, I could not allow them to use it.

The day after Mr. Spencer's tobacco was stopped, his spirits gave way. He would sit for a long time with his face buried in his cloak, and when he raised his head his face was bathed in tears. He was touched by the kind attention of Mr. Gansvoort. He told him that he was not then in a state to speak of any thing but that he would the next day tell him all—would answer any question that might be put to him.

On Tuesday, after quarters, all hands were again called to witness punishment, and Waltham was punished to the extent of the law for offering three bottles of wine to McKinley. I then spoke to the crew of the necessity of conforming in all particulars to the orders of the vessel, which were known. I told them that every punishment inflicted on board must be known to the Secretary of the Navy, and that the less they were in amount, the greater would be the credit that would attach to the commander and the crew.

But the whole crew I soon found were far from tranquil. They collected in knots upon the deck—seditious words were heard among them—and they assumed an insolent and menacing tone. Some of the petty officers were examined, and found to be true to the colors, but it was the general impression that the vessel was far from being safe. There was reason to fear that that very night a rescue would be attempted. I obtained a variety of intelligence concerning conferences among the disaffected. Individuals whom I had not supposed to be implicated were found closely associated with several who were known to be among the disaffected, and several times were symptoms that they were about to strike the blow. Mr. Wales once detected C. A. Wilson in drawing out a hand-spike from its place; and on presenting his cocked pistol at him, he only offered some lame excuse. I became exceedingly anxious, and remained constantly on deck.

At 12 o'clock the watch was called.—McKinley, Green, and one or two others missed their muster; they could not be asleep, and why they should be absent just at that time, when they never had been before, was not easy to be seen.—When they appeared, they all had some lame excuse. They probably had agreed to meet at the time, and to commence some act of violence. Green said he could not get aft. I sent him forward, and ordered him to take the forward look-out for four hours. I directed a close watch to be kept upon him, and distributed the others in a similar manner.

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security for the vessel which had been given to my charge.

I took counsel with the first lieutenant, and was fortified in my purposes by finding his opinion identical with my own.—In so grave a case, involving so many interests and such high responsibilities, I felt desirous of having the opinion of all my officers upon the matter, though not a shadow of doubt remained in my mind of the guilt of the prisoners, should their execution be deemed necessary. I did not forget that the officers were still boys, and that all the responsibility of the proceeding must rest upon the older and higher officers. Still I felt desirous to have their opinion, and accordingly addressed them the following letter:—

U. S. Brig Somers, Nov. 30, 1842.
I am desirous of availing myself of your counsel in the very responsible situation in which I find myself placed. You are aware of the circumstances which have resulted in the confinement of Midshipman Spencer, of Bostonian's mate Cromwell, and of seaman Small; and I purposely abstain from entering into details concerning them. Necessarily ignorant, as I am, of the extent of the affection among the crew who have so long been tampered with, and knowing the suspicion which attaches to some of the crew who are at large, I address you and ask your united counsel as to the best course now to be pursued; and I call upon you to take into deliberate and dispassionate consideration, the conduct which will be necessary for a safe continuance of our course, and to enlighten me with your opinion as to the proper method to be pursued.

I am your obedient servant,
ALEX. SIDLEY MACKENZIE, Commander.
To Lieut. Gansvoort, and others.
After I had written this letter, but before I had sent it, at about 9 o'clock, Wilson being foiled in his attempt to get up an outbreak at night, and feeling that he was narrowly watched and was no longer left at liberty, came forward and made some lame and worthless confessions, and requested that he might not be put in irons. I told him that if he had made any real confession, in sincerity and truth, he should not be molested; but that it was an insult to his officer to offer him so lame a story as that he had told. Nothing more could be got out of him, and he was immediately put in irons.

While on the African coast I knew that he had procured an extraordinary knife, broad in the middle, and running to a point. He made it very sharp on both sides. It was a singular weapon, of no use except to kill. He had been seen also the day before sharpening his battle axe with a file, and had brought one part to an edge. This was a thing never allowed or known before on board. McKinley was now arrested. He was evidently the individual in every way the most formidable of all concerned. McKee was also put in irons. They were made to sit down; and when the irons were put on I walked around the batteries, followed by Lieut. Gansvoort, and made a careful inspection.

On the receipt of my letter the officers immediately assembled and entered upon the examination of witnesses, who were sworn and their testimony written down. In addition to this each witness signed the evidence he gave. In this employment the officers passed the whole day without interruption, and without taking the least food. I remained, myself, in charge of the deck. The officers were excused from watch duty, and the watches were so arranged that two in succession fell to me. On the 1st December the First Lieutenant presented me with the following letter:—

U. S. Brig Somers, December 1, 1842.
Sir:—In answer to your letter requiring our counsel as to the best course to be pursued with regard to the prisoners, Spencer, Cromwell and Small, we have the honor to state, that the evidence which has come to our knowledge after the most careful, deliberate and dispassionate consideration which the exigency would allow, is of such a nature as to call for the most decided action. We are convinced that in the existing state of things it will be impossible to carry the prisoners to the United States. We think that safety of our lives, and honor to the flag entrusted to our charge, require that the prisoners be put to death, as the course best calculated to make a salutary impression upon the rest of the crew. In this decision we trust we have been guided by our duty to our God, to our country and to the army.
Respectfully, your obedient servants,
Lieut. Gansvoort, and others.
Com. Mackenzie.

On account concurred in the justice of this opinion, and made preparations to carry the recommendation into effect. Two other conspirators were almost as guilty as the three singled out for execution; they could be kept confined without extreme danger to the ultimate safety of the vessel. The three chief mutineers were the only ones capable of navigating and sailing the vessel. By their removal, all motive to capture the vessel and carry out their original design would at once be taken away. Their lives were justly forfeited, and the interests of the country, the safety of the sea and the honor of the flag required the sacrifice.

In the necessity of my position I found my law; and in that necessity I trust for justification. I thought it best to arm the petty officers; on this point only the first lieutenant differed from me; and I found that he was of the same opinion with some of the petty officers themselves—they said that since I could not tell whom to trust, it would be best to trust no one. I made up my own mind, and judged of the characters whom I could trust, and determined to arm them. I ordered to be issued a certain number of cutlasses, pislles and cartridges. I ordered preparation also to be made for execution of the three. All hands were called