

soner ; upon this, Col. Steuart opened the door, took his lordship by the arm, and bid him " get out." He was then conveyed to a carriage, which stood by the road side, in which he was carried to the mount, and delivered into the custody of Major Horne, the commanding officer on duty there, with a declaration, that if a rescue was attempted his lordship's life should answer it. Col. Steuart rode back to the fort that evening, and proclaimed Mr. Stratton, governor. The next day the new government sent to Messrs. Russell, Dalrymple, and Stone, declaring, that as they were too much attached to Lord Pigot to be trusted, they were suspended, and a few days after, they sent a similar message to Mr. Latham, who had only been present at one council. Col. Edington was shortly after sent, at midnight, to remove Lord Pigot further up the country, but whither, it was kept a profound secret ; on his being introduced, his lordship declared he would not be removed alive, except to his fort, or on board one of his majesty's ships. — A report was circulated, and supported by affidavit, of an attempt of the Nabob's second son to procure Lord Pigot's assassination ; and from the character of the Nabob's son, and the declaration made at the time of his lordship's commitment, this report gains universal credit.

It appears, however, upon the whole, that his lordship's conduct has not been altogether unexceptionable. In a letter from Gen. Clavering, at Calcutta, to Col. Stuart, at Madras, the general expresses his joy at the colonel's success in placing the majority of the

council in the government ; considers the consequences of Lord Pigot's *usurpation of the government*, as leading inevitably to a war in the Carnatic ; and ascribes the advantages arising to the company from the preservation of so faithful an ally as the Nabob of Arcot, chiefly to the colonel's spirit and magnanimity. The general at the same time assures the council of Madras of the firm support of the board at Bengal.

To the same effect, likewise, Mr. Hastings writes to Mr. Stratton, from Fort St. George. He approves and applauds the measure of wresting from the hands of Lord Pigot the powers of government ; assures him, that the recovery of the constitution from an *usurpation* so confirmed, and from a spirit so determined as his lordship's, must be ratified at home ; and professes, that his opinion is formed upon the most solid and impartial grounds : he likewise, in the warmest manner, expresses his feelings on the determination of a contest of so delicate a nature, so much to the credit and advantage of his friends, without bloodshed ; and concludes with owning that he shall be easier in his mind when he hears that their late president is returned to England, as his presence must be productive of some distress, and check the operations of government.

Mr. Blair's Letter, relating to the Capture of the Morning Star.

THE capture of the Morning Star, belonging to Dr. Irving and myself, and my application for redress having been greatly

ly misrepresented, both in and out of parliament, I submit the following state of facts to the public, who may then judge for themselves, how far any of their servants have been culpable; and whether, in my appeal to parliament, I have been guilty of that indecent hurry of which I am accused.

Lord Halifax, when secretary of state, in a letter to the Governor of Jamaica, dated Decemb. 9, 1763, says, "The Musquito Shore is a British settlement, and as such is to be maintained and encouraged."

Lord Dartmouth sent instructions to the Governor of Jamaica, in August 1775, for establishing a legislative council on the Musquito Shore, to be chosen by the inhabitants.

Dr. Irving and myself, induced by the above arrangement, sailed from Gravesend on the 13th of Nov. 1775, with a design of settling on the Musquito Shore, not entertaining the most distant suspicion, that our property would not be equally protected there as in any other part of the British dominions.

On the 30th of April last, the Morning Star was lying at anchor, under British colours, in the road of Black-river, the principal settlement on the Musquito Shore, and in sight of the king's house, and was there forcibly seized by two armed sloops under Dutch colours; at the same time one of their boats chased the Nancy, a small sloop belonging to Black-river: John Coffin, master of the Nancy, and Richard Burrel, who was a passenger in her, both deposed, that the boat was at one time so

near as to hook the Nancy's quarter-rail, and that the crew were Spaniards; every man who has ever seen a Spaniard, must know that they could not be mistaken.

The inhabitants of Black-river, conscious that the Morning Star had never been employed in any illicit trade, were greatly alarmed; they considered the capture as a direct attack on the colony, and applied to the Superintendant to assemble the legislative council; that council which (I am told) Lord ——— assured the House of Commons never existed, met, advised the superintendant to send an express to Jamaica, with an account of this daring and unprecedented outrage, and laid a tax on the colony for defraying the expence.

The depositions of John Coffin, Rich. Burrel, and some other persons, who saw the transaction, were sent to the Governor of Jamaica (the colony being at present an appendage to that government); but both the governor and admiral, for reasons best known to themselves, were of opinion, that the Morning Star was taken by North-American privateers; and no step was taken to reclaim the vessel and seamen, until Dr. Irving arrived in Jamaica on the 19th of September, and fortunately met with Frederic Sund, one of the seamen taken in the Morning Star, and who had escaped from Carthage. This man made oath to all the particulars of the capture before Thomas Fench, custos and chief judge of the court of common-pleas of Kingston in Jamaica.

The governor, unable to resist
such

such positive proof, applied to Admiral Gayton, who, after a delay of another month, sent a frigate to Carthagena, but positively refused to permit Dr. Irving to go in the frigate to assist the Captain in his application for redress.

The Spanish governor, contrary, in all probability, to the wishes of Sir Basil Keith and Admiral Gayton, acknowledged the capture, but said he had no power or authority to order restitution.

Having taken the earliest opportunity of returning to England, I got to London September 24, and next day presented a memorial to Lord George Germaine, with an attested estimate of the actual loss immediately sustained, amounting to 2659l. 12s. 10d. sterl. besides the total ruin of our project; his lordship acquainted me with the opinion of Sir Basil Keith, that the Morning Star was taken by North American privateers. I shewed him the affidavits of John Coffil, and Richard Burrel; but his lordship chose to give more credit to the vague suspicion of the Governor of Jamaica, than to my positive assurances, as a spectator of the transaction, supported by the clearest evidence the nature of the case would admit; or which there was at that time any probability of ever obtaining. His lordship seemed extremely desirous of not making any immediate application to the court of Spain, and in deference to the critical situation of this country at that time (for the accounts of our successes in America were not then arrived) I did not then press the matter farther.

I received Frederick Sund's affi-

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davit on the 17th of Dec. and wrote immediately to Lord George Germaine, inclosing a copy of it. I saw his lordship on the 19th, when he seemed still desirous of making further delays; but being pressed by me for redress, referred me to Lord Weymouth, to whose department he told me it belonged to make application to the court of Spain.

I saw Lord Weymouth by appointment soon after; who told me that the first knowledge he had of the affair was by a copy of Dr. Irving's petition to the Governor of Jamaica, and of Frederick Sund's affidavit, transmitted to him from the admiralty; that he had immediately sent them to Lord Grantham; that the papers which I had put into his hands should be sent that evening; and that as soon as any answer arrived from the court of Spain, it should be communicated to me: this last part of his lordship's promise has never been performed; but I willingly impute the neglect to hurry of business.

The propriety of Lord Weymouth's conduct in the affair of Falkland's-illand makes it reasonable to suppose, that if the representations to the court of Spain, on the present occasion, have not been made with becoming spirit, it is not his lordship's fault.

I am assured that Lord — told the House of Commons, that the Spanish minister denied any knowledge of the affair in the month of January. The Morning Star was taken on the 30th of April, and carried directly to Porto-Bello and Carthagena. Can any man believe that a Spanish governor da-

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red so long neglect informing his court of the capture of a British vessel in so unprecedented a manner?

Great pains have been taken to represent the whole affair as a complaint of a private injury, in order that administration might shelter themselves under the shallow pretence, that I did not continue to harra's them, with daily applications for redress, from the 25th of Sept. to the 17th of Dec. but this is by no means the case; the British flag has been insulted; British seamen have been made captives in the most barbarous and disgraceful manner; and the very existence of a colony, capable of being made equal to any in the West Indies, is at stake.

I conceive that I have discharged my duty to the public, by communicating to his majesty's ministers, as early as possible, all I knew of the matter; if the negotiation has languished in their hands, it is to be hoped the day will arrive, when they shall be made answerable for it.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

ALEX. BLAIR.

Coxsack-street, March 4.

THE petition which was offered to the house of commons, and which is alluded to in the above letter, stated, "That the petitioners, Capt. Blair, and Dr. Irving, an eminent man in his profession, and a celebrated chymist, had, by an encouragement from government, established a manufactory for expressing oil out of vegetable substances, with which the Musquito

country was known to abound; that the undertaking was accompanied with great success; that the purposes to which the oil, thus expressed, was used in this country, was chiefly for oiling wool for the wool-combers. That the petitioners had incurred a very great expence in establishing this manufacture; that some time in the month of April last, two Spanish Guarda Costas entered the harbour, or road, opposite the oil works, one of 14 guns, commanded by Don Juan Castello, and the other of eight guns, commanded by Don Antonio Euppi, under Dutch colours; that they bore down on the *Morning Star*, a vessel belonging to the said partnership, and having approached very near, hoisted Spanish colours, and sent several armed men on board, making prize of the *Morning Star*, taking the British sailors prisoners on board their own ships, where they ironed them, and carried them into Porto-Bello, and at length removed them to Carthagena, whence this informant made his escape to Jamaica, where, before the chief justice of the common pleas for said island, he swore to the facts therein set forth."—The petition then stated the different applications which had been made, as recited in the above letter, and finally prayed, "that the House would be pleased to take the premises into consideration, and do therein as they shall think fit. The motion for bringing up the above petition produced a most important and animated debate; but the question being put, it was rejected without a division."