

**Latest European Intelligence.**

FROM THE LONDON GAZETTE EXTRA.

FRIDAY, APRIL 21, 1809.

Admiralty-Office, April 21, 1809.

Sir Harry Neale, Bart. first Captain to Admiral Lord Gambier, Commander in Chief of his Majesty's ships and vessels employed in the Channel, Soundings, &c. arrived here this morning with a dispatch from his Lordship to the Hon. W. W. Pole, of which the following is a copy:

*Caledonia, at Anchor, in Basque Roads, April 14.*

SIR—The Almighty's favor to his Majesty and the nation has been strongly marked in the success he has been pleased to give to the operations of his Majesty's fleet under my command; and I have the satisfaction to acquaint you for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, that the four ships of the enemy named in the margin\* have been destroyed at their anchorage, and several others, from getting on shore, if not rendered altogether unseaworthy, are at least disabled for a considerable time.

The arrangement of the fire-vessels placed under the direction of Capt. the Right Hon. Lord Cochrane was made as fully as the state of the weather would admit, according to his Lordship's plan, on the evening of the 11th instant; and at eight o'clock on the same night they proceeded to the attack under a favorable strong wind from the northward; and flood tide, (preceded by some vessels filled with powder and shells, as proposed by his Lordship, with a view to explosion,) and led on in the most undaunted and determined manner by Captain Woolridge, in the Mediator fire-ship, the others following in succession, but owing to the darkness of the night several mistook their course and failed.

On their approach to the enemy's ships, it was discovered that a boom was placed in front of their line for a defence. This however the weight of the Mediator soon broke, and the usual intrepidity and bravery of British seamen overcame all difficulties. Advancing under a heavy fire from the forts in the Isle of Aix, as well as from the enemy's ships, most of which cut or split their cables, and from the confined anchorage, got on shore and thus avoided taking fire.

At day-light the following morning, Lord Cochrane communicated to me by Telegraph, that seven of the enemy's ships were on shore, and might be destroyed. I immediately made the signal for the fleet to unmoor and weigh, intending to proceed with it to effect their destruction. The wind however being fresh from the northward, and the flood tide running, rendered it too hazardous to run into Aix Roads, (from its shallow water,) I therefore anchored again at the distance of about three miles from the forts on the Island.

As the tide suited, the enemy evinced great activity in endeavoring to warp their ships (which had grounded) into deep water, and succeeding in getting all but five of the line towards the entrance of the Charante before it became practicable to attack them.

I gave orders to Captain Bligh, of the Valiant, to proceed with that ship, the Revenge frigate, bombs, and small vessels, named in the margin,† to anchor near the Boyart shoal, in readiness for the attack. At 20 minutes past two P. M. Lord Cochrane advanced in the Imperieuse with his accustomed gallantry and spirit, and opened a well directed fire upon the Calcutta, which struck her colors to the Imperieuse; the ships and vessels above-mentioned soon after joined in the attack upon the Ville de Varsovie and Aquilon, and obliged them before five o'clock, after sustaining a heavy cannonade to strike their colors, when they were taken possession of by the boats of the advanced squadron. As soon as the prisoners were removed, they were set on fire, as was also the Tonnerre, a short time after by the enemy.

I afterwards detached Rear-Admiral the Hon. Robert Stopford in the Cæsar with the Theseus, three additional fire-ships, (which were hastily prepared in the course of the day,) and all the boats of the fleet, with Mr. Congreve's rockets, to conduct the further operations of the night against any of the ships which lay exposed to an attack. On the morning of the 13th, the Rear-Admiral reported to me, that as the Cæsar and other line of battle ships had grounded and were in a dangerous situation he thought it advisable to order them all out, particularly as the remaining part of the service could be performed by frigates and small vessels only; and I was happy to find that they were extricated from their perilous situation.

Captain Bligh has since informed me, that it was found impracticable to destroy the three-decked ship and the others which were lying near the entrance of the Charante, as the former being the outer one, was protected by three lines of boats placed in advance from her.

The ship and all the others, except four of the line and a frigate have now moved up the river Charante. If any further attempt to destroy them is practicable, I shall not fail to use every means in my power to accomplish it.

I have great satisfaction in stating to their Lordships how much I feel obliged to the zealous co-operation of Rear-Admiral Stopford, under whose arrangement the boats of the fleet were placed; and I must also express to their Lordships the high sense I have of the assistance I received from the abilities and unremitting attention of Sir Harry Neale, Bart. the Captain of the fleet, as well as of the animated exertions of the Captains, Officers, seamen and marines under my command, and their forwardness to volunteer upon any service that might be allotted to them; particularly the zeal and activity shown by the Captains of the line of battle ships in preparing the fire-vessels.

I cannot speak in sufficient terms of admiration and applause, of the vigorous and gallant attack made by Lord Cochrane upon the French line of battle ships which were

on shore, as well as of his judicious manner of approaching them, and placing his ship in the position most advantageous to annoy the enemy, and preserve his own ship; which could not be exceeded by any feat of valor hitherto achieved by the British navy.

It is due to Rear-Admiral Stopford, and Sir Harry Neale, that I should here take the opportunity of acquainting their Lordships of the handsome and earnest manner in which both these meritorious officers had volunteered their services before the arrival of Lord Cochrane to undertake an attack upon the enemy with fire-ships; and that, had not their Lordships fixed upon him to conduct the enterprise, I have full confidence that the result of their efforts would have been highly creditable to them.

I should feel that I did not do justice to the services of Captain Godfred of the *Etna*, in bombarding the enemy's ships on the 12th, and nearly all the day of the 13th, if I did not recommend him to their Lordships' notice; and I cannot omit bearing due testimony to the anxious desire expressed by Mr. Congreve to be employed wherever I might conceive his services in the management of his rockets would be useful; some of them were placed in the fire-ships with effect, and I have every reason to be satisfied with the Artillerymen and others who had the management of them, under Mr. Congreve's direction.

I send herewith a return of the killed, wounded and missing of the fleet, which, I am happy to observe, is comparatively small. I have not yet received the return of the number of prisoners taken, but I conceive they amount to between 4 and 500.

I have charged Sir Harry Neale with this dispatch [by the Imperieuse] and I beg leave to refer their Lordships to him, as also to Lord Cochrane, for any further particulars of which they may wish to be informed.

I have the honor to be, &c.

(Signed) GAMBIER.

15th April.

P. S. This morning three of the enemy's line of battle ships are observed to be still on shore under Fouras, and one of them is in a dangerous situation. One of their frigates (*L'Indienne*), also on shore, has fallen over, and they are now dismantling her. As the tides will take off in a day or two, there is every probability that she will be destroyed.

Since writing the foregoing, I have learnt that the Hon. Lieut. Col. Cochrane (Lord Cochrane's brother) and Lieutenant Bisset of the navy, were volunteers in the Imperieuse, and rendered themselves extremely useful, the former by commanding some of her guns on the main-deck, and the latter by conducting one of the explosion vessels.

*Names of the ships in Aix Roads, previous to the attack on the 11th April, 1809.*

*L'Océan*, 120 guns, Vice-Admiral Allemande, Capt. Roland.—Repaired in 1806; on shore under Fouras.

*Foudroyant*, 80 guns, Rear-Admiral Gourden, Captain Henri.—Five years old; on shore under Fouras.

*Cassard*, 74 guns, Capt. Faure, Comodoro.—Three years old; on shore under Fouras.

*Tourville*, 74 guns, Captain La Caille.—Old; on shore in the river.

*Regulus*, 74 guns, Captain Lucas.—Five years old; on shore under Madame.

*Patriote*, 74 guns, Capt. Mahee.—Repaired in 1803.

*Jemappe*, 74 guns, Captain Fauvau.—On shore under Madame.

*Tonnerre*, 74 guns, Capt. Clement de la Ronciere.—Nine months old, never at sea.

*Aquilon*, 74 guns, Capt. Maingon.—Old;

*Ville de Varsovie*, 80 guns, Capt. Cuvillier.—New, never at sea.

*Calcutta*, 56, Captain La Tonie.—Loaded with flour and military stores.

**FRIGATES.**—*Indienne*, Captain Proteau.—On shore near Isle d'Enet, on her beam ends; *Elbe*, Capt. Pereugier; *Pallas*, Capt. Le Bigot; *Hortense*, Capt. Allgand.

**N. B.** One of the three last frigates on shore under Isle Madame.

Total of killed and wounded—2 officers, 8 men, killed; 9 officers, 28 men, wounded; 1 man missing.—Total 48.

EXTRACT OF A PRIVATE LETTER.

On board the —, off Rochefort, April 14.

"The convoy of fire-vessels, and the transports that contained the rockets, joined us on Monday the 10th, after a very tedious passage.

"About eight o'clock on the following night (Tuesday), two explosion vessels and twenty fire-ships, armed each with fifty rockets, were sent in to commence the attack on the enemy. An explosion-vessel having run on shore, under the batteries of the Isle d'Aix, was blown up. This was a signal for lighting the fire-ships, and in a few minutes we beheld a general blaze, which exposed the enemy's ships distinctly to our view. It was evident that our fire-ships were pursuing the right direction against the foe. Now the rockets began to fly about; some of them grazing along the surface of the ocean; others ranging through the air; and from the spreading and increasing of the light, there was good reason to hope that some of the French ships had been set fire to. This, however, was not exactly the case at that period; but the result was equal in glory, and much more corresponding with the feelings of Britons, than the conflagration of the ships with their crews on board.

"On Wednesday morning, we found that the French fleet had effected its escape from immediate destruction, by cutting their cables and going ashore; some lying down on one side, and some on another. As, however, the tide was rising, and as the springs were coming on, no time was to be lost in the completion of the business, thus far so suspiciously began.

"Our ships were prepared for action, and signal made for going down to engage; but in the mean time, the tide had floated all the enemy's ships except six, which they had endeavored to lighten as much as they possibly could. The former got up the river Charante; but the four outermost of the latter were soon laid alongside by the *Revenge*, the *Indefatigable*, and the *Valiant*, of 74 guns each, Lord Cochrane having led in with the Imperieuse in the most gallant style. A heavy cannonade was maintained for about

two hours, our ships being under the fire of the batteries of the Isle d'Aix. Four of the French men of war, viz. *La Ville de Varsovie*, *L'Aquilon*, *La Tonnerre*, and the *Calcutta*, struck; the other two got still further up the Charante. In the course of the evening, two of the French ships having been set on fire, blew up with a most tremendous explosion; the other two were fired in the course of the night, after we had taken out the crews in our boats. There was some hope of getting off one of these ships, but it was found that her back was broken, as we hope is the case with the most of those that went on shore. At all events they must have been so much damaged, that they must all be docked. They are dismantled, having thrown over their guns, their shot, and all their heavy stores.

"Thus, with a loss scarcely exceeding 30 men killed and wounded on our part, we have destroyed five sail of the line, including that which first got on shore, and three frigates at Sables d'Olonne, besides the incalculable mischief which the others have sustained. This exploit has been performed under the batteries of the enemy, and in sight of a large army collected on the Isle d'Aix. Thus the 11th of April acquires a double claim to the gratitude of Englishmen, from the recollection of the splendid achievement of the immortal Rodney, in the West-Indies, and of the important advantages now gained by the destruction of the chief fleet that remained in the hands of the enemy.

"Yesterday the *Etna* bomb, and the rocket boats, kept up a constant fire the whole morning on the enemy's ships, which had got up the river Charante; but they were not able to approach near enough to do any execution. The mortification of the French must, however, have been complete, to find themselves thus insulted by the British, even within the batteries of the Isle d'Aix.

LONDON, APRIL 27.

The *Theseus*, of 74 guns, is arrived at Plymouth, with 400 French prisoners taken in Basque Roads, and part of the force employed in the late attack upon the French squadron at that place.

We have received Hamburg Papers to the 20th, and a set of Dutch Papers to the 24th, the date of those from which we yesterday gave some extracts. They contain no news of importance.—It appears that the Austrian Declaration of War was made on the 9th, and that Russia has also issued a Declaration, in which she echoes the boast lately made by France of the subservience of ALEXANDER to the policy of BONAPARTE, and declares that they are inseparably united, as well for peace as for war.

LORD COCHRANE.

PARTICULARS OF THE LATE SUCCESSFUL ATTACK UPON THE FRENCH SQUADRON, IN BASQUE ROADS.

Although Captain Woolridge led on the Mediator fire-ship, yet it is equally true that Lord Cochrane personally conducted the explosion-ship, which had been charged by himself in a manner than which nothing was ever more dreadful. His Lordship caused about 1500 barrels of gunpowder to be started into puncheons, which were placed end-upwards; upon the tops of these were placed between 3 and 400 shells, charged with fuses, and again, among and upon these were between 2 and 3000 hand grenades. The puncheons were fastened to each other by cables wound round them, and jammed together with wedges; and molten sand was rammed down between these casks, so as to render the whole, from stem to stern, as solid as possible, that the resistance might render the explosion the more violent. In this immense instrument of destruction, Lord Cochrane committed himself with only one Lieutenant and four seaman; and after the boom was broken, his Lordship proceeded with this explosion-ship towards the enemy's line. Let it be recollected, that at this moment the batteries on shore were provided with furnaces to fire red hot shot, and then his Lordship's danger in this enterprise may be properly conceived. The wind blew a gale, and the tide ran three knots an hour. When the blue lights of the fire-ships were discovered, one of the enemy's signal ships made the signal for fire-ships; which being also a blue light, the enemy fell into great confusion, firing upon her with very injurious effect, and directly cut their cables. When Lord Cochrane had conducted his explosion-ship as near as was possible, the enemy having taken the alarm, he ordered his brave little crew into the boat, and followed them, after putting fire to the fuse, which was calculated to give them 15 minutes to get out of the reach of the explosion. However, in consequence of the wind getting very high, the fuse burnt too quickly; so that, with the most violent exertion against wind and tide; this intrepid little party was six minutes nearer than they calculated to be, at the time when the most tremendous explosion that human art ever contrived took place, followed by the bursting at once in the air, of near 400 shells, and 3000 hand-grenades, pouring down a shower of cast-metal in every direction! But, fortunately, the boat reached, by unparelled exertion, just beyond the extent of destruction. Unhappily this effort to escape cost the life of the brave Lieutenant, whom this noble Captain saw die in the boat, partly under fatigue, and partly drowned with waves that continually broke over them. Two of the four sailors were also so nearly exhausted, that their recovery has been deferred of. When they reached their ship the Imperieuse, it is known that Lord Cochrane was the first to go down to the attack, and was far more than an hour the only English man of war in the harbour. His attack and capture of the Calcutta, which had one-third more guns than the Imperieuse, have been properly spoken of.

The repetition of his explosions was so dreaded by the enemy, that they apprehended an equal explosion in every fire-ship; and immediately crowded all sail, ran before the wind and tide so fast, that the fire-ships, though at first very near, could not overtake them before they were high and dry on shore, except three 74's, besides the Calcutta, which were afterwards engaged, taken and burnt. Seven went ashore, of which two 3-deckers afterwards got off, before our ships of the line got in, and they went up the river.—Two of the remaining five were on their beam ends before Lord Cochrane came away, and it was his Lordship's opinion, that with proper exertion they might be completely destroyed.

\* *Ville de Varsovie*, of 80 guns; *Tonnerre*, of 74 guns; *Aquilon*, of 74 guns; and *Calcutta*, of 56 guns.

† *Indefatigable*, *Aigle*, *Emerald*, *Pallas*, *Beagle*, *Etna* bomb, *Insolent gun-brig*, *Conflit*, *Encounter*, *Fervent* and *Crowler*.