

FROM THE LONDON GAZETTE, MAY 18.

ADMIRALTY-OFFICE, MAY 18.

Copy of a letter from Admiral Sir C. Cotton, Bart. to J. W. Croker, dated San Josef, at sea, April 17.

SIR,—Although the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty will be earlier acquainted through the medium of Rear Admiral Bayles, with the gallant action fought on the 13th ult. in the Adriatic by H. M. S. Amphion, Cerberus, Active and Volage, against a squadron of the enemy's frigates, consisting of five in number, one corvette, a brig, two schooners, a xebec, and one gun-boat, which terminated in the capture of two of the enemy's frigates, and the destruction of another, I nevertheless, think it right to transmit the account of this brilliant affair to their Lordships. The event speaking for itself, I shall briefly remark that the success of his Majesty's squadron, has been no other than could be expected from ships in the high order and state of discipline of those in question, and led on by an officer of the reputation of Capt. Hoste—I have sent orders to Capt. Hoste, with the Amphion and Volage (which appear to have suffered a great deal, and been in this country the longest) to take the prizes to Spithead.

I have, &c.

C. COTTON.

His Majesty's Ship Amphion, off the Island of Lissa, March 14, 1811.

SIR—It is with much pleasure I have to acquaint you, that after an action of 6 hours we have completely defeated the combined French and Italian squadrons, consisting of five frigates, one corvette, one brig, two schooners, one gun-boat and one xebec; the force opposed to them was His Majesty's ships Amphion, Cerberus, Active, and Volage. On the morning of the 13th the Active made the signal for a strange fleet to windward, and daylight discovered to us the enemy's Squadron lying to off the north point of the Island of Lissa, the wind at that time N. W. and a fine breeze. The enemy having formed in two divisions, instantly bore down to attack us under all possible sail. The British line led by the Amphion, was formed by signal in the closest order on the starboard tack to receive them. At nine A. M. the action commenced by our firing on the headmost ships as they came within range; the intention of the enemy appeared to be to break our line in two places, the starboard division, led by the French Commodore, bearing upon the Amphion and Active, and the larboard division of the Cerberus and Volage; in this attempt he failed (though almost aboard of us) by the well directed fire and compact order of our line. He then endeavored to round the van ship, to engage to leeward, and thereby place us between two fires; but so warmly received in the attempt, and rendered so totally unmanageable, that in the act of wearing, he went on shore on the rocks of Lissa, in the greatest possible confusion.

The line was then wore to renew the action, the Amphion not half a cables length from the shore: the remainder of the enemy's starboard division passing under our stern and engaging us to leeward, while the larboard division tacked and remained to windward, engaging the Cerberus, Volage and Active. In this situation the action commenced with great fury, his Majesty's ships frequently in positions which unavoidably exposed them to a raking fire of the enemy, who, with his superiority of numbers, had ability to take advantage of it; but nothing Sir, could withstand the brave squadron I had the honor to command. At 20 minutes past eleven A. M. the Flora struck her colours, and at twelve, the Bellona followed her example. The enemy to windward now endeavored to make off; but were followed up as close as the disabled state of his Majesty's ships would admit of; and the Active and Cerberus were enabled at 3 P. M. to compel the sternmost to surrender, when the action ceased, leaving us in possession of the Corona, 44 guns and the Bellona 32 (French Commodore) the Favorite 44, on shore, who shortly blew up with a dreadful explosion; the corvette of the enemy making all possible sail to the northwest, and two frigates crowding sail for the port of Lessina, the brig making off to the southeast, and the small craft flying in every direction; nor was it in my power to prevent them, having no ship in a state to follow.

I must now account for the Flora's getting away after having struck her colours. At the time I was engaged with that ship, the Bellona was raking us; and when she struck I had no boat that could take possession of her. I therefore preferred closing with the Bellona and taking her, to losing time alongside the Flora, which I already considered as belonging to us. I call on the officers of my own squadron, as well as those of the enemy, to witness my assertion. The correspondence I have had on this subject with the French Captain of the Danae (now their Commodore) and which I enclose herewith, is convincing; and even their own officers (prisoners here) acknowledge the fact. Indeed, I might have sunk her, and so might the Active; but as her colours were down, and all firing from her had long ceased, both Capt. Gordon and myself considered her as our own; the delay of getting a boat on board the Bellona, and the anxious pursuit of Captain Gordon after the beaten enemy, enabled him to steal off, till too late for our shattered ships to come up with him, his rigging and sails apparently not much injured; but, by the laws of war, I shall ever maintain she belongs to us. The enemy's squadron, as per enclosed return, was commanded by Mons. Dubourdieu, Captain de Vaisseau, and a member of the Legion of Honor, who is killed. In justice to a brave man, I must say he set a noble example of intrepidity to those under him. They sailed from Ancona the 11th inst. with 500 troops on board, and every thing necessary for fortifying and garrisoning the Island of Lissa. Thanks to Providence, we have this time prevented them.

I have to lament the loss of so many valuable officers and men; but, in a contest of this kind, it was to be expected. It is now my duty to endeavor to do justice to the brave officers and men I had the honor to command. I feel myself unequal to the task; nothing from my pen can add to their merit. From your own knowledge of Captains Gordon, Whitby and Hornby, and the discipline of their ships, every thing, you know Sir, might be expected; and, if an officer so near in the same rank as themselves, may be permitted to give an opinion, I should say, they exceeded my most sanguine expectation; and it is a duty I owe to all, to express in the most public manner my grateful sense of the brave and gallant conduct of every captain, officer, seaman and royal marine employed on this occasion. From my first Lieutenant Sir D. Dunn, I received every assistance that might be expected from a zealous, brave and intelligent officer; and his exertions (though wounded) in repairing our damage, are as praise worthy as his conduct in the action; particularly, as I have been unable to assist him, from a wound in my right arm and several severe contusions.

Capt. Moore, royal marines, of this ship received a wound, but returned to his quarters immediately after it was dressed. The Captains of the squadron speak in the warmest terms of their officers and men, particularly their first Lieutenants, Dickenson, Henderson and Wolridge; and the behaviour of my own officers and ships company, who have been with me so long, was every thing I expected from their tried worth; but I must not particularise, where all were equally meritorious. I am now on my way to Lissa, with the squadron and prizes. The damage the ships have sustained is very considerable, and I fear will render us totally incapable of keeping the sea. I enclose a statement of the enemy's force, together with a return of killed and wounded in the squadron, and deeply lament they are so great. I have the honor to be, &c.

WILLIAM HOSTE.

ENGLISH SQUADRON.

Amphion 32 guns, 254 men—Active 32 guns, 300 men—Volage 22 guns, 175 men—Cerberus 32 guns, 254 men.—Deduct ships short compliment of men 101—Total 124 guns—879 men.

FRENCH SQUADRON.

La Favorite, 44 guns, 350 men, burnt;
Flora, 44 guns, 350 men, struck, but escaped;
Danae, 44 guns, 350 men, escaped;
Corona, 44 24-pounders, 350 men, taken;
Bellona, 32 guns, 224 men, taken;
Caroline, 28 guns, 224 men, escaped;
Schr. 10 guns, 60 men; Schr. 2 guns 37 men;
Xebec, 6 guns, 70 men; Gunboat, 2 guns, 35 men—
Escaped. Troops embarked 500—Total 272 guns 2655 men.

W. HOSTE.

KILLED AND WOUNDED.

Amphion 15 killed 47 wounded; Cerberus 13 killed 44 wounded; Active 9 killed 26 wounded; Volage 13 killed 33 wounded—Total 50 killed 150 wounded.

His Britannic Majesty's ship Amphion, at the Island of Lissa, March 15.

SIR,—The frigate you commanded in the late action with the British squadron, struck her colours to his Britannic Majesty's ship Amphion, under my command; I was not able to take possession of you at that moment, being engaged with the Bellona frigate; but I considered you as my own, and as a man of honor, you must have thought so yourself. I call on the officers of your own squadron, as well as those I have the honor to command, to witness my assertion. You know, Sir, I might have sunk you, had I not considered you as having surrendered, and so might two of my squadron also. By the laws of war the Flora belongs to me, and the purport of the present truce is to demand her restitution in the same state as when she struck. I have the honor to be, &c.

(Signed) WILLIAM HOSTE.

To Monsieur Peridier, Captain, commanding the frigate Flora, off Lessina.

[TRANSLATION.]

On board his Imperial and Royal Majesty's frigate the Danae, in the Roads of Lessina.

SIR,—In consequence of the wounds received by Monsieur Peridier, Commandant of his Imperial and Royal Majesty's frigate La Flora, I have had the honor to take upon me the command of his Imperial and Royal Majesty's ships; and I cannot surrender to you his Majesty's frigate under the laws to which you refer, because she did not strike her colours as you are pleased to state. His Majesty's frigate had her flag cut by shot. Her state not allowing her to continue any longer the engagement, her Captain thought proper to withdraw from it. If you should not consider my answer satisfactory, I request you will address yourself to my Government. I have the honor to be, &c.

To Monsieur the Commandant of the Amphion frigate, at Lissa.

His Britannic Majesty's Ship Amphion, Island of Lissa, March 19, 1811.

SIR,—The letter I had the honor of receiving today was neither signed nor dated, (I presume through mistake); I return it for its signature.

As Captain of the Danae, you will not admit that the Flora struck her colours in the late action, nor did I call on you to do so. No, Sir, I call on Mons. Peridier, the Commander of that ship, as a man of honor, to declare whether she struck her colours or not; and if Monsieur Peridier was so severely wounded as not to have charge of the ship at that time, I look to his next in command for an answer to my letter of the 15th; but I again assert, and ever shall maintain, that by the laws of war, his frigate belongs to my sovereign,

and his sword to me; the world will judge between us. I have the honor to be, &c.

WILLIAM HOSTE.

To the Captain commanding the frigate Danae.

His Majesty's ship Amphion, Island of Lissa, Adriatic, March 15.

SIR,—On my arrival here this morning, I found the remainder of the French commodore's crew and troops two hundred in number, had retired to Lissa; they were summoned to surrender by Messrs. Lew and Kingston, two midshipmen of the the Active, (who had been left in charge of prizes) and several men belonging to privateers. The summons was acceded to; they laid down their arms and were made prisoners of war. The spirited conduct of those young men deserve every praise; nor can I forbear mentioning the dastardly behaviour of a Sicilian privateer brig of fourteen guns, named the Vincitore, and commanded by Capt. Clemento Fama, who was lying in this port, and previous to the commencement of the action hauled down his colours to a small 1 gun Venetian Schooner; this was witnessed by every man in the squadron, and I believe there was but one opinion on the subject. Messrs. Kingston and Lew afterwards went on board, took charge of the brig, beat off the schooner, and prevented her from destroying the vessels in the bay. I have omitted a circumstance in my former letter respecting the Corona which, from the meritorious conduct of the officers and men employed, deserves to be mentioned. The Corona caught fire in the main top shortly after her capture, and the whole of her mainmast and rigging was instantly in flames. Lieutenants Dickenson, of the Cerberus, and Hay of the Active, with a party of men, were on board her at the time. The ship now presented a most awful spectacle, and I had quite given her up as lost. No possible assistance could be afforded from the squadron, and she had to trust alone to her own exertions; these, however, were not wanting, and by the extraordinary perseverance and coolness of the officers and men employed, the fire was at last extinguished, with the loss of the main-mast, and the ship of course saved to the service. I have to express my warmest thanks to Lieutenants Dickenson and Hay, and the officers and men employed, and beg leave to recommend them to the Commander in Chief.

I have the honor to be, &c.

(Signed) W. HOSTE.

Capt. G. Eyre, or Senior Officer.

Extract of another Letter from Admiral Sir Charles Cotton, Bart. to John Wilson Croker, Esq. dated on board the San Josef, off Toulon, the 24th of April.

I have the satisfaction to transmit the enclosed copy of a letter from Capt. Bullen, of the Cambrian, dated the 16th inst. then Senior officer on the coast of Catalonia, giving an account of the surrender of Figueras to the Spaniards on the 10th of the month, and the other successes therein mentioned. Their Lordships will perceive that I have in consequence of this favorable turn of affairs, increased the force on the coast of Catalonia, in order to afford a more effectual co-operation to the Marquis of Campoverde, (from whom, and as well from Major-General Doyle, I have also heard of the fall of Figueras,) in his intended operations to drive the French from Rosas, and the other ports on the coast, and ensure supplies for the Spaniards reaching Figueras, and the other places in possession of our ally.

I should mention to their Lordships, that the ammunition with which the store-ship lately captured by the Ajax and Unite was laden, will enable me to afford succour to the Spaniards in that respect, in compliance with their repeated applications.

Cambrian, off Rosas, April 16, 1811.

SIR,—I have great pleasure in sending to you, by the Blossom, the important intelligence of the surrender of Figueras to the Spaniards, on the 10th inst. and that St. Philion and Palamos were taken possession of by the Cambrian and Volantaire on the 12th and 14th, the guns all embarked, and the batteries destroyed.—I am now on my way to Rosas and Cadequiz and I have reason to hope the latter place, with Silva, will also shortly be ours.

The fall of Figueras has roused the Spaniards, who are arming in all directions; and Hostalrich and Gerona are at this moment garrisoned by Spanish troops. The only correct account I can learn is, that 400 Italians, with 200 French troops, were left to protect Figueras; and that the former, disgusted with the treatment they daily receive from the French, and being also half starved, opened the gates of the fortress to a body of Spanish troops (apprized of their intention,) who rushed into the castle, and put every Frenchman to the sword.

At this moment about two thousand effective Spanish troops are in full possession of this important place; and General Sarsfield is on his way with more, as well as supplies of every kind.

The French General D'Hillers, who has the command in Catalonia, on hearing of the fall of Figueras, has abandoned all his holds in Spain, except Barcelona, and is collecting the whole of his force to attack it, as well as to prevent supplies from getting in; but I am told a quantity of provisions was concealed in the town, unknown to the French, which have been given up to the Spanish troops in the castle, who are in the highest spirits possible.

The Termagant continues to watch Barcelona, and I purpose remaining off here with the Volantaire, ready for any thing which may offer; as under all the existing circumstances, I think it likely Rosas may give up.

I also beg to inform you, that a large Settee, deeply laden with grain for Barcelona from Port Vendee, was the night before last most handsomely cut out from under the Medes Islands and batteries by the boats of