

FROM THE LONDON GAZETTE.

ADMIRALTY-OFFICE, MAY 30, 1812.

Copy of a letter from Capt. Hotham, of His Majesty's Ship Northumberland, to Rear Admiral H. Neale, dated off the Penmark, May 24, 1812.

SIR—I have the honor to inform you the object of the orders I have received from you on the 19th inst. to proceed off L'Orient for the purpose of intercepting two French frigates and a brig lately seen at sea, has been accomplished by their total destruction, at the entrance of that port, by His Majesty's ship under my command (the Growler gun brig being in company,) under the circumstances I beg leave to relate to you.

On Friday the 22d inst. at a quarter after ten A. M. the N. W. point of the Isle Groa, bearing from the Northumberland N. by compass, ten miles distant, and the wind very light from W. by N. they were discovered in the N. W. crowding all possible sail before it for L'Orient. My first endeavor was to cut them off to windward of the Island, and a signal was made to the Growler (seven miles off in the N. W.) to chase, but finding I could not effect it, the Northumberland was pushed by every exertion round the S. E. end of Groa, and by hauling to the wind as close as I could to leeward of it, I had the satisfaction of fetching to windward of the harbour's mouth, before the enemy's ships reached it. Their commander seeing himself thus cut off, made a signal to his consorts and hauled to the wind on the larboard tack to windward of Point Taleet, and they appeared to speak each other. I continued beating to windward between Groa and the Continent to close with them, exposed to the batteries on both sides, when I stood within their reach, which was unavoidable. The wind had by this time freshened considerably, and was about W. N. W.; at 45 minutes after 2 P. M. the enemy (in force as above described) bore up in close line a-head, and under every sail that could be set, favoured by the fresh wind, made a bold and determined attempt to run between me and the shore, under cover of the numerous batteries with which it is lined in that part. I placed the Northumberland to meet them as close as I could to the Point de Pierre Laye, with her head to the shore, and the main-top-sail shivering, and made dispositions for laying one of them alongside; but they hauled so very close round the point, following the direction of the coast to the eastward of it, that, in my ignorance of the depth of water so near the shore, I did not think it practicable, consistent with the safety of His Majesty's ship, (drawing near 25 feet) to prosecute that plan. I therefore bore up and steered parallel to them at the distance of about two cables length, and opened the broadside on them, which was returned by a very animated and well directed fire of round, grape, and other description of shot, supported by three batteries, for the space of 21 minutes, and was very destructive to our sails and rigging. My object during that time was to prevent their hauling outside the dry rock named Le Graul, but in steering sufficiently close to it to leave them no room to pass between me and it, and at the same time to avoid running on it myself, the utmost difficulty and anxiety was produced by a cloud of smoke which drifted ahead of the ship and totally obscured it. However, by the care and attention of Mr. Hugh Stewart, the Master, the ship was carried within the distance of her own length on the south west side, in quarter less seven fathoms, and the enemy were in consequence obliged, as their only alternative, to attempt passing within it, where there was not water enough, and they all grounded, under every sail, on the rocks between it and the shore.

The sails and rigging of the Northumberland were so much damaged, that I was obliged to leave the enemy to the effect of the falling tide, it being only one quarter ebb, while I repaired the rigging and shifted the fore-top-sail, which was rendered entirely useless; working to windward during that time under what sail I could set, to prevent falling to leeward; in which interval at five o'clock, the Growler joined, and fired on the enemy occasionally. At 28 minutes after five, I anchored the Northumberland in six and a half fathoms water, Point de Pierre Laye bearing N. W. half N. the Citadel of Port Louis E. three quarters N. and the rock named Le Graul N. half E. two cables length distance, with her broadside bearing on the enemy's two frigates and brig, at point blank range, all of them having fallen over on their sides next the shore as the tide left them, and exposed their copper to us, and the main masts of one frigate and the brig were gone; and from 34 minutes after five till 49 minutes past six (which was near the time of low water,) a deliberate and careful fire was kept up on them, at which time, believing I had fully effected the object of my endeavors, the crews having quitted their vessels, all their bottoms being pierced by very many of our shot, as low down as to ensure their filling on the rising tide, and the leading frigate being completely in flames, communicated to the hull from a fire which broke out in her fore-top, I got under sail. Three batteries fired on the ship during the whole time she was at anchor, and although the position was so far well chosen that she was out of the range of two of them, the other (to which the enemy's vessels were nearest) reached her and did as much execution in the hull as all the fire she had been exposed to before.

I directed the commander of the Growler to stand in and fire, to prevent the enemy from returning to their vessels after I had ceased.

At five minutes before eight, the frigate on fire blew up with an awful explosion, leaving no remains of her visible. At the close of day I anchored for the night, out of the reach of the batteries on both sides, Point Taleet bearing N. N. W. half W.—S. E. point of Groa S. S. W. half W. the enemy's vessels N. by E. At ten the other frigate appeared to be on fire also,

(some smoke having been seen on board her from the time the firing ceased,) and at half past eleven the flames burst forth from her ports and every part with unextinguishable fury, which unlooked-for event leaving me nothing more to attempt in the morning, the brig being quite on her beam ends, and very much damaged by our shot in every part of her bottom, even very near her keel. I weighed anchor at midnight with a very light air from the northward, with the Growler in company, profiting by the brightness of the moon to get to sea, but it was so near calm that I made very little progress, and therefore saw the frigate burning from head to stern all night, and explode at thirty-five minutes after two, in the morning of yesterday, leaving a portion of her after part still burning till it was entirely consumed; and in the course of the day, I had the satisfaction to see, from the N. W. point of Groa, a third fire and explosion in the same spot, which could have been no other than the brig.

During the time of firing on the enemy's vessels, a seaman, who states himself to be a native of Portugal, captured in the ship Harmony, of Lisbon, by the frigates, on the 22d February, swam from one of them to the Northumberland, by whom I am informed their names were L'Ariane and L'Andromache of 44 guns, and 450 men each; and the Mameluke brig, of 18 guns, and 150 men, that they sailed from the Loire in the month of January, and had been cruising in various parts of the Atlantic, and had destroyed 36 vessels of different nations; (American, Spaniards, Portuguese and English,) taking the most valuable parts of their cargoes on board the frigates, (and they appeared very deep for ships so long at sea,) and one vessel they sent as a cartel to England with about 200 prisoners.

I am happy to have now the gratifying duty to discharge of bearing testimony to the creditable conduct of every officer and man I had the honor to command on the occasion above related, whose zealous exertions in supporting the honor of his Majesty's naval power, and in humbling that of the enemy were conspicuously displayed, without regard to the peculiar intricacy of the situation, or the risks and difficulties which appeared to interpose; and I hope the circumstances of his station may permit me to make particular report of the services of the Senior Lieut. John Banks, without prejudice to, or neglect of, the other meritorious and deserving officers, who were all equally inspired with intrepidity, and possessed with confidence and coolness which rendered that qualification the more valuable. But as the safety of His Majesty's ship, and the success of the operations which resulted in a navigation so narrow and difficult, with almost every description of danger to avoid, is attributable, next to Providence, to the ability with which she was steered and conducted under the direction of Mr. Stewart, (the master,) and the master Pilot, I should be wanting in my duty if I were to omit to represent to you that nothing could exceed the firmness, good judgment, and skill of those officers, whose experience on the coast was extremely beneficial to the service, and Mr. Stewart's councils were of the greatest assistance to me.

Lieut. J. Weells, commanding the Growler gun-brig, made every effort that vessel was capable of to render assistance, and shewed a perfect readiness to execute the few directions I had occasion to give him.

I should rejoice, Sir, if I were able to close this narrative without adding a report of loss and injury sustained; but neither you, nor any other authority to whom you may communicate it, will expect that a ship should have been so long at different periods under the fire of the enemy's various batteries and vessels, without some loss; and I am thankful it is not greater than is expressed in the report I have the honor to enclose, with a statement of the damages the ship has sustained, which is little in the hull, but more in the masts, yards, and rigging; and I am glad to say, the officer wounded (namely, Lieutenant William Fletcher) will soon be restored.

A line of battle ship, with sails bent and top-gallant yards across, lay in the harbour of L'Orient, spectator of the operations of the day at the entrance of it; but the wind did not serve till night for her coming to the support of her friends: every assistance, however, was afforded them of boats, men, &c. from the port, directed, as I apprehended by the Admiral in person.

I have the honor to be, &c.

(Signed) H. HOTHAM, Captain.

Rear Admiral Sir Harry Neal, Bart, &c. &c. &c.  
A list of Killed and Wounded on board His Majesty's ship Northumberland on the 22d day of May, 1812.

Killed—4 seamen and 1 private marine.

Wounded—1 officer, 3 petty officers, 19 seamen, and 5 private marines; of whom 4 are dangerously, 10 severely, and 14 slightly.

Names of Men killed.

John Howe, able seaman; William Syms, ditto; Thomas Hudson, ordinary seaman; Patrick Fliin, landman; Andrew Anseven, royal marine.

(Signed) H. HOTHAM.

WAR-OFFICE, MAY 26, 1812.

23d Regt. of Foot—First Lieutenant H. S. Blanckley to be Captain of a Company, by purchase, vice Edgar, who retires.

FALMOUTH, MAY 18.

Sailed the Mary packet, for Barbadoes and Jamaica; Alpha Schponer for New-York.

LISBON, MAY 17.

Not a word of news.—The army has begun to move south. No accounts have yet been received from General Hill.

LONDON, MAY 23.

The following Decree was presented a few days since, by the American Legation, to the Secretary of State;

FRENCH DECREE.

"PALACE OF ST. CLOUD, APRIL 23, 1811.

"Napoleon, Emperor of the French, King of Italy, Protector of the Confederation of the Rhine, Mediator of the Swiss Confederation.

"On the Report of our Minister for Foreign Affairs.

"In consequence of the Act of the 2d of March, 1811, by which the Congress of the United States have enacted, exemptions from the provisions of the Non-Intercourse Act, which prohibit the entrance into the American ports to the ships and goods of Great-Britain, of its colonies, and dependencies;

"Considering that the said law is an act of resistance to the arbitrary pretensions consecrated by the British Orders in Council, and a formal refusal to adhere to a system derogatory to the independence of neutral Powers, and of their flag:

"We have decreed, and decree as follows:—  
"The Decrees of Berlin and Milan are definitely; and from the date of the 1st of November last, considered as never having taken place (*non avenues*) with regard to American vessels.

(Signed) "NAPOLEON.

"By order of the Emperor,

"The Minister and Secretary for Foreign Affairs, (True Copy)

(Signed) "The Count DARU."

"The Minister for foreign Affairs, (Signed) "The Duke De BASSARO."

Yesterday, in the House of Commons some debate took place upon the subject of the above Decree—Lord Castlereagh observed, that "The American Government had not been able, to the latest period, to procure from the French Government any official revocation of the decrees in question, but now for sinister purposes, the French Government has thought proper to produce a decree dated in April, 1811. Certainly this was an extraordinary step in the diplomacy of France and was disgraceful to the Government of any civilized nation. By this decree, however the Berlin and Milan Decrees are not generally and unconditionally repealed, as is required in His Majesty's Declaration, but they are only repealed as far as relates to America."

MAY 26.

A Morning Paper says—"Some discoveries have recently been made, which have rendered the departure of Lucien Bonaparte from this country a measure of indispensable necessity."

MAY 27.

Marmont was at the date of the latest accounts from Spain, employed in fortifying Salamanca.

Within these few days Messrs. Schaw and Ross have been sent to Mr. Foster, with despatches from the Secretary of State's office.

In the course of last week two Messengers were sent off with important despatches to the North.

The Warspite left Sir Edward Pellew off Toulon, on the 16th ult. The French have 18 sail of the line ready for sea in that harbour.

The Prince Regent of Portugal has conferred the honor of the Sword and the Tower on Marshal Beresford.

MAY 29.

The Guerillas have lately made a most valuable capture of Joseph Bonaparte's wine, plate, and a great chest of money. The wines they have sent as a present by a deputation to Lord Wellington.

It is said that the Cortes have allowed Spaniards to enlist into the British regiments under Lord Wellington.

But of all the particulars mentioned in these letters, the following is perhaps, the most singular:

"On the 11th four French trumpeters came in as deserters from Marmont's head quarters: they mentioned that their Officers were much dispirited by accounts which had reached them of a bloody action on the frontiers of Poland, where the French had been dreadfully cut up. These fellows were dressed in most gaudy uniforms, and beat hollow the most showy dresses of the bands of our Guards or Militiamen."

STAR OFFICE, 2 O'CLOCK.

After this Paper was at press, we were informed that one point is now understood, and that with the full consent and approbation of the leading men of all parties, that Earl Moira shall be First Lord of the Treasury, that is to say, Prime Minister. So far, we believe, (though till every thing is concluded nothing can be affirmed with absolute certainty) a foundation is laid for an efficient Administration; for it may be concluded that his Lordship will take for his coadjutors, some of the men most distinguished for talents belonging to all parties—but concessions on some leading points must be made by all our Statesmen, to insure a vigorous and popular Administration.

The Dublin Correspondent of the 25th says, "The Duke of Richmond is busily employed in preparing to leave this country."

This morning an Anholt Mail arrived, by which we have received advices from Gottenburgh to the 19th inst. That nothing may be wanting to complete the humiliation of the unfortunate King of Prussia, His Majesty has been obliged to appoint a French General Governor of Berlin. The whole administration of the Prussian capital is vested in his hands, so that if Frederick William appears there, it can only be in the character of a private individual. It is probable that he will not be suffered long to enjoy even a nominal Sovereignty.

Jamaica Spirits and Turk's Island Salt,  
LANDING from on board the Brig CATHARINE,  
Captain Tew, and for Sale by  
WILLIAM PAGAN, & Co,  
St. JOHN, 4th July, 1812.