

ADMIRALTY-OFFICE, September, 24, 1803.
*Copy of a letter from Capt. Owen, of His Majesty's ship
Immortalite, to Rear-Admiral Montagu, in the Downs,
dated St. Vallery en Caux, 14th September, 1803.*

My Lord,

In obedience to the order of Rear-Admiral Montagu, I, at 8 o'clock this morning, in company with the *Perseus* and *Explosion* bombs, commenced an attack on the batteries which protect the town of Dieppe, and vessels building there (in number 17.)

The firing was continued on both sides till past 11, when the *Lee Tide* making, strong, and the town having taken fire badly in one place, and slightly in two others, I caused the bombs to weigh, and proceeded with them off St. Vallery en Caux, where they are constructing six vessels, and at three in the afternoon opened our fire at that place for an hour. The enemy was for the most part driven from their batteries, the inhabitants flying to the country, and judging from the direction in which many of the Shells burst, they must have suffered much.

On a service of this nature we cannot expect to escape unhurt. I have, however, pleasure in reporting to your Lordship that although the enemy's fire, especially from Dieppe (which is very strong in batteries) was heavy and well directed, and that many of their shot took effect, our loss has been but small; the *Perseus* has one man missing, and the serjeant of artillery is slightly wounded.—The boatswain of this ship and three seamen were bruised by splinters, but did not leave their quarters; the other damage (but that not material) is confined chiefly to the rigging.

The manner of executing my Instructions, and the Judgment shewn in the placing and managing the Bomb Vessels, entitle Captain Methuist and Captain Paul, to my best, and warmest thanks; their conduct has been every thing I wish, and they speak highly of the Officers and detachments of the Royal Artillery embarked with them, as well as the Officers and Men of their respective crews. My opinion of the First Lieutenant of this ship, Charles F. Payne, is already known to your Lordship, and his conduct this day as well as that of the other Lieutenants, Officers, and men, without exception, has fully justified the Reports I have made your Lordship concerning them on former occasions, who have the Honour to be, &c. E. W. C. R. OWEN.
Right Honorable Lord Keith, K. B. &c. &c.

GREENOCK, SEPTEMBER 20.

On a review of the actual situation of affairs, we feel less disposed than formerly to reckon upon a visit from the enemy, so much to be wished for, as the means of for ever allaying that habitual boating by which he at little expence occasions to us so much. Accounts from the Netherlands intimate, that large quantities of fascines are directed to be collected near Ostend—and a great deal of timber is ordered to be felled and transported to Boulogne, &c. for the purpose of ship-building. The latter is a real measure applicable to a use which may be termed remote. The former, we are inclined to consider as a pure *Ruse de Guerre*; & it is of a kind that in war is very common, viz. to make a demonstration on a point where no attack is intended. It seems clear, that a million of fascines would load a pretty large flotilla; and that as the materials are to be found in England the enemy would not bring them over, especially as they are generally used only in sieges, or in constructing redoubts, where the nature of the soil renders them necessary; or finally, in passing morasses. It may therefore, be fairly inferred that the order for fascines, if real, is intended with other measures, to keep up the belief of an intention to invade, whilst invasion, at least from that quarter is not intended.

The last Lisbon mail brought reports of an insurrection at Madrid, which is variously stated; one mentioning that the King, and another that the Prince of Peace, or both, are confined. If there is any thing in these reports, they must have reached Lisbon by express, as it was not post day when they were circulated at Lisbon. Our private accounts from Madrid, mention, that the French Ambassador, Bourdonville, had received a courier on the 4th ult. and called immediately on the Prince of Peace, though at 10 at night. Nothing of the subject had transpired on the 5th. Upon the subject of the Spanish neutrality, it appears to be expected that it may be maintained during the current year. This affair on our part is very mysterious.

HISTORICAL ANECDOTES OF FRENCH PERFDY.

The war which was declared in 1762, between their Britannic and Catholic Majesties induced a consequence which able politicians had foretold. Though the bulk of either nation seemed little to suspect it, this was no other than a rupture between Spain and Portugal. The ancient claims which the former had upon the latter, the jealous eye with which the Spaniards had ever regarded the connexions of the Portuguese with the subjects of Great-Britain, and the opportunity of invading Portugal, which was inclosed on every side except towards the sea, by her formidable neighbour, seemed to threaten no less at such a critical juncture.

Notwithstanding all the public professions of Princes of their own and people's good faith, opportunities of this kind are seldom slighted, especially when the least specious excuse can be found for making use of them; and Spain now resolved to avail herself of them, though she should be hard put to it to reconcile her conduct to the rules of honor & justice.

She knew that Portugal had long languished under a sort of a political decline, her riches and vigour continually wasting away. That kingdom, so late as 1756, had suffered a great and almost a fatal blow from the earth-quake which had nearly levelled her capital with the ground, burying above 30,000 of the inhabitants of that city beneath its own ruins, and involving both the court and whole nation, one way or other, in the distress and confusion which it had occasioned. Besides all this, dreadful distempers had broke out in the state; an attempt was made upon the life of His Portuguese Majesty, in which one of the most noble families of the kingdom being concerned, was cut off by the hands of the common executioner. Many others suffered death or imprisonment, and constrained or voluntary exile; some of

the most considerable of orders among the religious were censured and suppressed; whilst all those who had been attached by ties either of blood or interest might naturally be supposed to remain in such a state that the crown could but little rely on them.

In the mean time those very European powers which had formerly engaged to keep the balance of the scale against France, were now actually in alliance with her. Spain having acceded to this alliance, and more peculiarly connected herself with that branch of the House of Bourbon by the family compact, threatened destruction to her neighbour, if she refused to co-operate with her against Great-Britain, demanding a categorical answer in four days, whether Portugal would join the confederacy or not? which was represented as being highly for the advantage of that kingdom.

Nor did the Spanish Ministers fail to complain of the insult, which they said had been offered to the Crown of Portugal, and to the law of nations, by Admiral Boscawen's attacking M. de la Clue's Squadron in a Portuguese harbor. While to support all his remonstrances, the Catholic King had caused a Spanish army to spread itself over the frontiers of Portugal, the commerce of corn between the two nations was prohibited, and every thing prepared for an invasion; while the memorial, which the Spanish Ministers delivered, set forth, that if His faithful Majesty would but declare against Great-Britain, their troops were ready to garrison the principal places in his country, in order to defend them from any insults that might be offered from the enemy.

In this emergency the firmness of the King of Portugal was eminent, and such as must deliver his name to posterity to the most distinguished advantage. He resolved steadily to adhere to his ancient and natural alliance, and to brave all dangers and difficulties, that he might preserve his fidelity.

To this insulting proposition of Spain, his answer was humble and moderate, but firm; he observed, that the ties which equally united him to Great-Britain, and the two Crowns, rendered him as proper a mediator to them all, as they made it improper for him to declare himself an enemy to any of them; that his alliance with England was ancient, and therefore could give no offence at this conjuncture; that it was purely defensive, and therefore innocent in all its circumstances; that the late sufferings of Portugal disabled her (in case she was willing) from taking part in an offensive war, into the calamities of which, neither the love His faithful Majesty bore to his subjects as a father, nor the duty by which he was bound to them as a King, could suffer him to plunge them. Finally, he reminded the Catholic King of his pacific dispositions, by which on former occasions he had yielded so much to preserve peace between the two kingdoms.

This reasonable and moderate answer drew on replies, which more and more disclosed the true character and spirit of the Bourbon confederacy. They denied that the alliance with England was purely defensive, or entirely innocent, and for this unheard of reason, that the defensive alliance was converted into an offensive one; from the situation of the Portuguese dominions and from the nature of the English power. "The English Squadron, said they, cannot keep the sea in all seasons, nor cruise on the principal coasts for cutting off the French and Spanish navigation, without the ports and assistance of Portugal; these Islanders could not insult all maritime Europe if all the riches of Portugal did not pass into their hands; that therefore Portugal furnishes them with the means to make war; and their alliance with the Court of Great-Britain is offensive; and they farther informed the King of Portugal, that he might be glad of the necessity they laid him under to resent injuries that had been offered him, and which he had not as yet perceived, and to take the road of his own glory, and join the common interest."

But this treatment neither intimidated the King, nor shook the firmness of his resolution, nor provoked him to change from the moderation of his language. He maintained, that the treatise of league and commerce, which subsisted between Portugal and Great-Britain, were such as the law of God, of nature, and of nations have always deemed innocent. He entreated their most Christian and Catholic Majesties to open their eyes to the crying injustice of pursuing against Portugal, the war kindled against Great-Britain; and withal declared, that should their troops enter his dominions, he would, in defence of his neutrality, endeavour to repulse them with his forces, concluding, "that he would, however affected by the catastrophe, see the last tile of his palace fall, and his subjects shed the last drop of their blood, than thus at once to sacrifice the honor of Portugal, and to render her an example to all pacific powers which would no longer be able to enjoy the benefits of neutrality, whenever a war should be kindled between other powers with which the former might be connected by defensive treaties."

This resolution being declared, passports were demanded for the Ambassadors of the two crowns, who departed, and within a little time after, war was declared against Portugal by France and Spain; and was the first-fruit of the Bourbon alliance.

PROTECTION OF THE COAST.

Lord Hobart has transmitted the following Plan, by Letters Circular, to the Lords Lieutenant of the Maritime Counties.

Plan of a Voluntary Naval Armament for the Protection of the Coast.

A regular establishment for the enrolment of Seafaring persons under the denomination of Sea Fencibles, having been formed by the Board of Admiralty, upon the line of coast more immediately opposite to the enemy, it is thought advisable that measures should be taken for a further extension of that system, and for rendering the services of that description of Volunteers available, as well for the Naval Defence of the Country, as for the purpose of manning the Batteries upon the coast. With this view, it is proposed first, that it be recommended to the Lords Lieutenant of the Maritime Counties, to co-operate with the Board of Admiralty in obtaining the enrolment of all Seafaring men, not applicable to the service of the Navy, upon their respective coasts, under the general denomination of Sea Fencibles. Secondly, That it be recommended to the

principal Sea Port Towns to equip, at their own expence, a certain number of armed vessels and hulks, to be stationed for the better security and protection of such Ports, and to be appropriated to, and manned by Sea Fencibles, who shall take charge of them, and to be exercised on board at the guns as often as may be required. Thirdly, That where the proportion of Sea Fencibles, which any place can furnish, is greater than such place can find shipping to employ; and likewise where any place is capable of providing men, but unable to procure vessels; in both these cases vessels shall be furnished by Government. Fourthly, That as colliers and coaling vessels are well adapted to be armed as gun-boats, it be recommended to the principal Merchants and Owners in every Port in this kingdom to fit their vessels of that description with slides between decks and loop-holes in the combings of their hatchways, for close quarters; these vessels to carry two guns forward, and two aft, to fight on either side, as well as fore and aft. Fifthly, That when the vessels are reported ready, guns and ammunition shall be put on board by Government, free of expence to the Owners; the masters giving a receipt and voucher to return them when demanded, and to keep a regular account of the expenditure of the stores. Sixthly, That these vessels be fitted with ring and eye bolts for guns, and that small vessels be prepared to receive large oars, that they may be able to act in a calm, if necessary. Seventhly, That the said vessels be under orders to attend to, and obey, the signals, and directions that may be made to them by the Commanders of his Majesty's ships, or from the Signal stations on the shore, and when detained, that they be entitled to demurrage according to their regular tonnage, at the same rate as common transports; the time of detention to be certified by the Officer who may order it. Eighthly, That the said vessels on arriving at and sailing from port, be subject to be visited by the commanding Officer of the Sea Fencibles of the district.

* The expence of such fitting has been calculated under 54l.

GENERAL COURT MARTIAL.

The following is the charge exhibited against Lieutenant and Adjutant Alexander Grant Carmichael, of the 25th Regiment of Foot, at a General Court Martial held at Gibraltar, on the 20th of April, 1803, together with the opinion and sentence of the Court-Martial:

Behaving in a scandalous and infamous manner, unbecoming the character of an Officer and a Gentleman, on the night of the 15th of April, 1803, in the garrison of Gibraltar, by outrageously disturbing a private company, where he was present as a guest, by using obscene language to Quarter-Master Charles West of the same Regiment, and striking him in the face as he sat at supper, and by afterwards way-laying and attacking the said Quarter-Master Charles West, as he was returning home, about the hour of eleven o'clock at night, unarmed, and with his wife leaning on his arm, and his two daughters walking by his side, and beating him violently with a stick, in the presence, and to the great terror and alarm, of his wife and daughters.

The Court having weighed the evidence given in support of the charge against the prisoner, together with that produced in his defence, are of opinion, that although the fact of way-laying the prosecutor is not proved, neither that the prosecutor was unarmed (as he appears to have had his sword on), yet that the remaining facts specified in the charge are proved, and are sufficient to support the same; the Court does therefore find the prisoner Guilty of the charge against him, in breach of the Articles of War; and does therefore sentence him, the said Alexander Grant Carmichael, Lieutenant and Adjutant of the 25th Regiment of Foot, to be dismissed from his Majesty's service.

In the debate in the House of Commons on Wednesday, August 10, Mr. ARCHDALE was followed by Mr. FRANCIS, who delivered his opinion exactly in the following words:

"Mr. Speaker, the Honorable Gentleman who has just sat down, concluded his speech with a comparison which does not seem to me to resemble the case: He says that if the owner of a house and the father of a family were to inform his children that the house was on fire and in great danger of being consumed, it would be absurd and unnatural for them in return to say that they must take four and twenty hours to consider whether or no they should help to extinguish the fire. Now, Sir, if it were evident that an Address to the Throne was very like a water engine, and if an Act of Parliament were equivalent to a great supply of water, I should agree with him in thinking that any part of the family who refused to work the engine, or to provide the water, would not only be very undutiful, but very great fools into the bargain. Until that proposition is made out, the Honorable Gentleman's allusion will not go far in support of his argument. On the present occasion I can assure my Honorable Friend near me (Mr. Sheridan) that I have no thought of abusing the right and privilege which belong to me as a Member of Parliament, to enter, if I think fit, into the discussion of any subject that comes regularly and properly under my consideration in that character; but much less am I disposed to surrender such a right and privilege to the admonition we have received from him to refrain from arguments and debates on military subjects. In a parliamentary sense, right and duty are relative ideas. The duty gives the right, and the right indicates the duty. According to the occasion I shall at all times exercise my right to the best of my judgment, even on military questions coming in a parliamentary way before me. And I am perfectly sure my Honorable Friend will act in the same manner when the case requires it, notwithstanding his present exhortation to the contrary. I do not mean to oppose the motion, though I think it liable to many considerations which ought to have been previously weighed. The motion being once made, they come too late. The purpose for which I have risen is to express to my Honorable Friend the very great pleasure with which I heard conclusion of his speech, not for the value, the wisdom, the necessity of the advice it contained, though I