

six followed, making a signal for the *Perseverance* to attend to one of the merchant ships who was nearer to her. On coming near the *Resolu*, the French Captain desired to know what the *Phoenix* wanted, and was informed by Sir Richard Strachan that he had orders to examine the two merchant ships, and would send a boat on board to explain the reason. The cutter was then hoisted out, and a Lieutenant sent on board the *Resolu*, who soon after made a signal to the two ships; they immediately made sail, the *Phoenix* also made sail to intercept them, fired to bring them to, and hoisted a boat out; the merchant ships were on her larboard beam, and the *Resolu* on the other quarter, the latter fired two shot to windward with an intention to deter the boats from boarding, the *Phoenix* backing to prevent the merchant ships from escaping to leeward; the *Resolu* again fired at the boats, and Sir Richard wore to keep close to her; shortly after, she fired a broadside into the *Phoenix* and began the action; the *Phoenix* returned her second broadside, and soon silenced the *Resolu*, who made signals that she had struck; the *Phoenix* had six men killed and eleven wounded, and the *Resolu* twenty-five killed and forty wounded. On examining the merchant ships they proved to be bound to Mangalore, but contained no contraband articles. The French Officers refusing to work the ship, saying, she had struck to the *Phoenix*, she was navigated to Tellicherry by English seamen, from whence Commodore Cornwallis ordered her to be conveyed to a French port, and there left. The right of searching neutral vessels, which has always been looked upon as intimately connected with our maritime welfare, was on this occasion exercised with as much conciliation and attention to forms, as it was opposed with violence and rashness, and afterwards acknowledged to be unjustifiable by the French Government. The Commander of the French Squadron, Mons. St. Felix, shortly after arrived, and a correspondence took place between him and the Commodore, which seemed likely to be productive of serious consequences, as he threatened resistance if any vessels under his protection were attempted to be stopped; his letters were answered with temper and firmness, for the Commodore was not a man likely to be deterred from doing his duty by threats. There was, however, no trial made on the part of the French, although the *Cybele* and *Resolu* got under weigh and went to sea, they were attended by the *Phoenix* and *Minerva*, who cruised with them several days, and brought to vessels under French colours without interruption from them, Mons. St. Felix dispatched the *Resolu* on other service, and the *Phoenix* was also then sent away; the remaining French and English frigates cruised together some days longer without any thing of importance occurring.

During his command in India the Commodore is said to have paid great attention to an object of considerable importance, the economy of the public expences in the naval department. This had at some former periods amounted to enormous sums, which were scattered with great profusion. We do not pretend to vouch for the fact, but it is said, that Commodore Cornwallis kept his whole squadron for nearly the same sum which it had formerly cost to maintain a single ship; he has been accused of extreme parsimony in the allowance of stores to the different ships; they probably did not look so gay as a Spithead fleet, and perhaps the economical system might have been carried to excess: however it was an error on the right side, and will enable the Admiralty to judge of what can be done, and be a check on any who might be inclined to renew the former scenes of prodigality.

In November 1791, Commodore Cornwallis shifted his pendant to the *Minerva*, and shortly afterwards returned to Europe; he retained the command of this ship long after her arrival in England, and on the 1st of February, 1793, was promoted to the rank of Rear-Admiral of the White.

In May 1794, Admiral Cornwallis hoisted his flag on board the *Excellent*, and on the promotion in July the same year was advanced to the rank of Vice of the Blue; his flag was shifted to the *Cæsar* in August, and in December it was flying on board the *Royal Sovereign*. There were few Officers to whom the country looked with greater confidence than Admiral Cornwallis, or from whose known gallantry and great experience higher expectations were formed, when occasion should call forth his abilities. Hitherto, although actively employed several years on the Channel station, no event had occurred in the course of his service of importance enough to attract the public attention; fortune at length gave him an opportunity of justifying the opinion the world had formed of him, and adding greatly to the naval glory of his country.

In the month of June 1795, Admiral Cornwallis commanded a detached Squadron; cruising in the Bay of Biscay, on the 7th he fell in with and chased three French line of battle ships and six frigates, the enemy being between the English and the land; the wind unfortunately carried them into Belleisle Road, where several large ships were at anchor, before the Squadron could come up with them, although they were so near that the *Phæton* exchanged some shot with the line of battle ships. The Admiral followed as far as was prudent, and then hauled his wind; in standing off they fell in with a convoy under the protection of three frigates, who pushed round the south end of Belleisle, eight of the convoy were taken, but the frigates saved themselves by running in shore among the shoals; the prizes were part of a convoy from Bourdeaux, laden with wine and naval stores, under the protection of three line of battle ships and eight frigates.

On the 16th, in the morning, standing in with the land, near the Penmarks, the *Phæton* was sent ahead to look out, the Admiral standing after her with the rest of the Squadron. At ten a signal was made by the advanced frigate for a fleet ahead, and afterwards that they were of superior force, upon which the signal was made to haul the wind on the starboard tack; at this period the hulls of the strange sails were not visible, they were to leeward on a wind, and thirty were counted from the *Royal Sovereign*; the Admiral continued to stand on the starboard tack, keeping the Squadron collected. On ascertaining the enemy's force, by signal from Captain Stopford, it was found to be as follows:—

Thirteen sail of the line, Fourteen frigates, Two brigs,

and a cutter. To oppose which, the British Squadron consisted of the

Royal Sovereign,	100	Admiral Cornwallis,
Triumph,	74	Captain Whitby,
Mars,	74	Sir Erasmus Gower,
Brunswick,	74	Sir Charles Cotton,
Bellerophon,	74	Lord C. Fitzgerald,
Pallas and Phæton frigates,		Lord Cranston,
		Curzon and Stopford.

In all Six ships to cope with Thirty. They might say with our immortal Bard,

“God’s arm strike with us! ’tis a fearful odds.”

In the afternoon near one-half the enemy’s force tacked and stood in shore; the wind fell very much, and coming round to the northward, brought these ships to windward of our force, the other ships at the same time laying up for them. They were discovered in the morning before daylight on both quarters of the English Squadron.

About nine in the morning the enemy’s frigates, one excepted, were all ranged abreast of, and to windward of the Squadron, the attack was about this time begun by one of the front line of battle ships on the *Mars*. The dispositions of the British force appear to have been thus: The *Brunswick* and *Bellerophon*, who were heavy sailing ships, and obliged to carry all their canvas, ahead of the Admiral, the *Mars* and *Triumph* being the rear ships,

Slowly they mov’d, and wedged in firm array,
The close compacted Squadron won their way.

One of the enemy’s frigates ranged up on the *Mars’* larboard quarter, then yawed and fired her broadside, which she frequently repeated; this was the only ship of that class which came down or attempted any thing during the day.

The line of battle ships came up in succession, and a teasing fire was kept up by them, with intervals, during the whole day, which the English ships returned from their stern chases; the Admiral proportioning his sail to the slowest of the Squadron, and edging away to support them when it was requisite.

Towards the evening they appeared to have an intention of making a more serious attempt upon the *Mars*, which ship had fallen a little to leeward. The Admiral did not suffer her, however, to sustain the attack unaided, but immediately bore up to her assistance, on which the enemy drew back.

On Ajax thus a weight of Trojans hung,
The strokes redoubled on his buckler rung,
Confiding now in bulky strength he stands,
Now turns, and backwards bears their yielding bands;
Now stiff recedes and hardly seems to fly,
And threats his followers with retorted eye.

Pope’s Iliad.

This was their last effort, if, as Admiral Cornwallis observes, any thing they had done deserved that appellation; they appeared to be drawing off, and before sunset the enemy’s fleet had tacked and were standing from the British. No words can do more justice to the conduct of the fleet in general, than those of the Commander in his public letter. Admiral Cornwallis observes, that

“The *Mars* and *Triumph* being the sternmost ships, were of course more exposed to the enemy’s fire, and I cannot too much commend the spirited conduct of Sir Charles Cotton, and Sir Erasmus Gower, the Captains of those ships. Lord Charles Fitzgerald also in the *Brunswick* kept up a very good fire from the after guns, but that ship was the whole time obliged to carry every sail. The *Bellerophon* being nearly under the same circumstances, I was glad to keep in some measure as a reserve, having reason at first to suppose there would be full occasion for the utmost exertion of us all, and being rather ahead of me was not able to fire much. I considered that ship as a treasure in store, having heard of her former achievements, and observing the spirit manifested by all on board when she past me, joined to the activity and zeal showed by Lord Cranston during the whole cruise. I am also much indebted to Captain Whitby for his activity and unremitting diligence on board the *Royal Sovereign*.—The frigates showed the greatest attention and alertness; I kept the *Pallas* near me to repeat signals, which Captain Curzon performed much to my satisfaction. Indeed I shall ever feel the impression which the good conduct of the Captains, Officers, seamen, marines, and soldiers in the Squadron has made on my mind; and it was the greatest pleasure I ever received to see the spirit manifested in the men, who, instead of being cast down at seeing thirty sail of the enemy’s ships attacking our little Squadron, were in the highest spirits imaginable.

“I do not mean the *Royal Sovereign* alone, the same spirit was shewn in all the ships as they came near me; and although (circumstanced as we were) we had no great reason to complain of the conduct of the enemy, yet our men could not help repeatedly expressing their contempt of them.—Could common prudence have allowed me to let loose their valour. I hardly know what might not have been accomplished by such men.

“Little damage was sustained by the Squadron in general. The *Mars* had twelve wounded, none killed, her masts and sails much cut; the *Triumph* shifted some of her sails, but the damage she received is so trifling, at least in her Captain’s eye, that Sir Erasmus Gower has not thought it worth reporting; indeed the cool and firm conduct of that ship was such, that it appeared to me the enemy’s ships dared not to come near her.”

We have no hesitation in pronouncing (and think our opinion will be seconded by those who are best able to appreciate naval merit), that such a retreat as the one we have just described, reflects as much honour on the abilities of the man who conducted it, as would the achievement of the most splendid victory. The retreat of the *Ten Thousand* has been more admired by judges of military merit than all the victories of Alexander.

Perhaps there never was a comparison more flattering to the naval prowess of our countrymen than the conduct exhibited by the different Squadrons of the two nations from the 7th of June to the 17th; on the former day, Admiral Cornwallis fell in with three sail of the enemy’s line and six frigates, they immediately fled in confusion to the cover of their batteries. On the latter day, when the English

had to contend with more than treble their force, their retreat was so well conducted, and their Squadron presented so imposing an aspect, that the enemy kept baying at a distance without daring to bring them to close action, although evidently in their power; sometimes they ventured to approach, but finding (if we dare take a liberty with Milton), How quick they turn’d; and retiring, behind them shot Sharp fleet of iron shower; speedily bore up, and at length withdrew ingloriously, yielding the palm to a force so greatly inferior.

Nor should the gallantry of our noble tars pass without a comment; inspired with confidence by the steady conduct of their Officers, they repeatedly encouraged each other during the whole of the day by animating cheers, which, we doubt not, had its due effect on the enemy.

We have heard it asserted, that at one period of this glorious day the *Phæton*, being at a distance from the fleet, let fly her top-gallant-flags (the signal for discovering a fleet), which is said to have given, if possible, additional spirits to the seamen. Allowing this to have been a pre-concerted manœuvre, it reflects great credit on the head that planned it; no conjunctural circumstances, however, can add lustre to the same Admiral Cornwallis acquired by this unparalleled achievement.

A promotion taking place in this month, the subject of our Memoir became Vice-Admiral of the Blue, and in the year 1796, was appointed to command on the West-India station; in this year he was also appointed by his Majesty to the rank of Rear-Admiral of Great-Britain.

During the *Royal Sovereign’s* passage to the West-Indies a gale of wind so disabled her, that the Admiral thought it necessary to return to England; the Lords of the Admiralty, doubting of the propriety of this measure, made it the subject of a Court Martial. Admiral Cornwallis was honourably acquitted, and shortly after, at his own request, struck his flag. This misunderstanding is the more to be regretted, as it deprived the country of the service of so valuable an Officer when much wanted. On the 14th of February 1799, he was promoted to the rank of Admiral of the Blue; and when the distinguished Nobleman, who now presides at the Admiralty, was appointed to that important station, Admiral Cornwallis succeeded him in the command of the Channel Fleet, and hoisted his flag on board the *Ville de Paris*, in February 1801.

The enemy kept so close in Brest harbour during the latter part of the war, that a Commander destined to watch their motions could only exert his vigilance; however, should any future occasion demand his services, high as the reputation of the British flag has been raised of late years, it will not have its lustre diminished while led by a Cornwallis.

From the BOTANY-BAY GAZETTE.

BON MOT.—An Edition of *Bailey’s Dictionary* having been some time since put up at an Auction, the Vendue Master observed, that it was a *New Bailey*.—“I’m glad of that with all my heart, (replied a bidder,) for most of us have had enough of the *Old One*.”

Extraordinary Interposition of Providence.

On Saturday night last, as several Carts were stopping to bait near the First Pond, on the Hawkesbury road, a tree of prodigious size and immense height, that had been loosened by successive tempests, fell among the travellers, and broke the carts to pieces, without injury either to the drivers or horses. A child was in one of the vehicles, upon which a forked branch happened to strike; by the violence of the concussion, the infant was thrown to the distance of more than twenty yards, but also miraculously escaped unhurt!

Among the numerous petty causes that came before the Civil Court during the last sitting, the following diverting one made its appearance, and was decided on very little to the entertainment of the Plaintiff; He had summoned a poor woman, whose residence was upwards of 40 miles from Sydney, for a debt of 12s. payment whereof had been tendered him in Wheat, but which he had thought proper to reject. A sample was produced in Court, the tender considered legal, and the Plaintiff ordered to pay the Defendant thirty shillings for travelling expences.

The following is a remarkable instance of deviation from instinct: A stalling, in the possession of Mr. Baker, of Notgate-street, Chester, England, has been bred up in perfect intimacy with a cat; and such is the mutual friendliness of these animals, that one platter serves both, and the back of the puss is frequently the perch of his feathered companion.

Curious return of a Quaker under the Defence Act.—“He was led as a Lamb to the slaughter, and as a Sheep before his shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.” I in a Christian, and profess to believe in the Gospel of Christ; the precepts, nature, and spirit of which Gospel led me to be persuaded, that, like my master Jesus, the Prince of Peace, I ought to suffer all things, to love all men, and to kill none; therefore no martial service is to be expected from
JOHN SMITH,
Trebach-Street, Liverpool, 14th of the 8th Month, 1803.

The French are performing a Comedy at Paris, called *the Invasion*. If they attempt to bring the same piece out here, it will, in all probability, lose all its *vis comica* by translation.

The fascinating Parisian full dress for Ladies is “an ninth crape *fellished*,” &c.

—If weak women go astray,
The stars are more in fault than they.

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