

On the 1st of June Two English Seamen in a Boat escaped from the French Squadron, and brought certain Intelligence, that the Fendant, of 74 Guns, with Two Frigates and Two Storeships, had slipped out of Trincomalé Bay; the Storeships I concluded carried Stores for the French Garrison of Cuddalore, and the Fendant and Two Frigates destined to cover and protect them; and being apprehensive they might attack our covering Ships and Storeships off Cuddalore, I bore away on the 2d of June for the Coast, and on the 3d had Sight of the Fendant and Two Frigates, whom I chased till Night, when I lost Sight of them.

I continued cruising with the Squadron to the Southward of Cuddalore till the 9th of June, when I anchored in Porto Novo Road, about Seven Leagues to the Southward of that Place, partly to cover our own Ships in Cuddalore Road, and engage the Enemy's Squadron before they could anchor there, and partly to endeavour to get a Supply of Water, of which many Ships began to be in Want; but, after exerting ourselves to the utmost, no Water could be obtained either at Porto Novo or Tranquebar; at the first Place the Enemy's Troops were in Possession of both Banks of the River, at the other the Wells were dried up.

On the 13th of June the Enemy's Squadron, under the Command of Mons. Suffrein, came in Sight to the Southward, consisting of Fifteen Ships of the Line, Three Frigates and a Fireship; and the same Day I weighed with His Majesty's Squadron, and dropped down to about Five Miles Distance off Cuddalore, and there anchored: The French Squadron anchored off the Coleroon River, about Seven or Eight Leagues to the Southward of ours.

On the 17th the French Squadron being under Sail and bearing down; I made the Signal, and weighed with His Majesty's Squadron, and formed the Line of Battle a-head to receive the Enemy: In the Evening they hauled the Wind, and stood to the Southward; and I followed them with His Majesty's Squadron: From this Time to the 20th I was continually employed in endeavouring to get the Wind of the Enemy, which, however, I was never able to effect, from the extraordinary Variableness of the Winds; that often brought Part of the two Squadrons within a random Shot of each other. On the 20th, the Enemy still having the Wind, shewed a Disposition to engage, when I immediately formed the Line of Battle a-head, and brought to to receive them: At Four Minutes past Four, P. M. the Van Ship of the Enemy, having first tried her Distance by a single Shot, when scarce within Point-blank Shot Distance, the Enemy's Squadron began their Fire on His Majesty's, which, at Twenty Minutes after was returned, and a heavy Cannonade ensued on both Sides, the Enemy still keeping up their first Distance; the Cannonade continued till Seven, P. M. when the Enemy hauled off: At Day-light I made the Signal and wore with the Squadron, and brought to to repair the Damages, with the Ships Heads towards the Land; several of the Ships much disabled in their Hulls, Masts and Rigging, the Gibraltar and Isis in particular; the Enemy's Squadron not in Sight.

In the Morning of the 22d I saw the French Squadron at Anchor in Pondicherry Road, bearing S. S. W. directly to Windward of His Majesty's Squadron, and some of them getting under Weigh; and I made what Sail I could towards them, and anchored the same Night off the Ruins of Alem-

parvo, the more effectually to stop Shot Holes, and repair the Damages sustained.

I beg you will be pleased to inform their Lordships, that so early as the 8th of June, the Scurvy began to make a rapid Progress among the Crews of all the Ships of the Squadron, but particularly on board the Ships last arrived from England, under the Orders of Commodore Sir Richard Bickerton, Bart.

The Number of Sick on board the Line of Battle Ships amounted on that Day to 1121 Men, 605 of whom being in the last Stage of the Scurvy, I was under the Necessity of sending on the Day following to the Naval Hospital at this Place, in His Majesty's Ships Bristol and San Carlos.

From that Time to the 22d, the Disease increased the Numbers of the Sick daily, so as most of the Ships of the Line had from 70 to 90 Men, and the Ships last from England double that Number, very many in the last Stage of the Disease, and unable to come to Quarters, dying daily. Under these Circumstances, and the Water of most of the Ships being expended, except a few Casks in their Ground Tiers, and none to be obtained to the Southward, I determined to return to this Road, there to land the Sick and Wounded, and compleat the Water of the Squadron for further Service; and on the 23d of June I weighed with the Squadron, and arrived in this Road of the Afternoon of the 25th.

On my Arrival there, I received authentic (although not official) Intelligence, that the Preliminary Articles of Peace between Great Britain, France, Spain, and America, had been signed and ratified, as well as a Cessation from Hostilities agreed on between Great Britain and the States General of the United Provinces, of which Information the Select Committee of this Presidency were also in Possession; and being summoned the same Day to a Consultation with the Select Committee, to take into Consideration these Circumstances, I concurred with the other Members of the Committee, that it would be proper and was necessary to communicate to the Commanders in Chief of the Sea and Land Forces of the French King at Cuddalore, the Information we had received, together with the Grounds on which we believed it to be true and authentic; and on the 27th of June I dispatched His Majesty's Ship Medea, as a Flag of Truce, with Letters to Mons. Suffrein and the Marquis de Bussy.

On the 4th of July the Medea returned to this Road, with Answers from Mons. Suffrein and the Marquis De Bussy to my Letters of the 27th of June, by which they concurred in a Cessation of Hostilities by Sea and Land, as well as an immediate Release and Return of Prisoners on both Sides: In Consequence, I have received all the Prisoners belonging to the Squadron in Mons. Suffrein's Power, amounting to about 200, and have returned all those made Prisoners in French Ships, amounting to about 350. Mons. Suffrein informs me by Letter, he has also sent to the Mauritius for such English Prisoners as have been sent thither, and will return them.

I have judged it necessary to send, for their Lordship's Information, the Line of Battle of His Majesty's Squadron under my Command, on the 20th of last Month, and a List of the French Ships opposed to me under the Command of Mons. Suffrein.