

Mole to keep up the communication with the army on that side, and the Merope to the eastward, for the same purpose, whilst the Blake was to occupy the attention of the enemy opposite the Melagro. We had scarcely reached the town, and opened our fire, when the wind increased to a gale at N. W., and prevented all communication by boats with the shore. We persevered, however, under a press of sail, standing off and on, so as to keep up the bombardment until daylight; but the assault was not made, nor could we see any of the Spanish troops in the neighbourhood in the morning. Anxious to afford every encouragement in an enterprize which, besides being of material service to the general cause, would, if successful, have produced me, individually, such particular satisfaction, we continued to work up under as much sail as we could carry the next day, in order to communicate, if possible, with the army, until at length, by the mainsail blowing entirely out of the bolt-rope, other sails splitting, and the barge sinking before we could get the caronade and ammunition out of her, I was driven to the necessity of anchoring for shelter just without range of shot to the eastward of the town. I am still uninformed of the particular cause which prevented the attack being made, either on the 19th or the following night, having had no direct communication with any of the chiefs, but by short requests for assistance, circuitously conveyed, in consequence of the arrival of various divisions of the enemy in those parts, amounting to seven thousand men.

A few lines from General Lacy, which I received on the 23d, induced me to push for Mataro, which I had nearly reached on the 24th, when a very severe gale from the N. E. necessarily reduced me to storm staysails; and whilst persevering off Barcelona, in an endeavour to hold our own, by keeping the ship's head to the eastward, she was struck by a sea, which has started all the timbers and rail of the head, ledges and earlings, bent the iron rail close into the bowsprit, drew the chock in the stern which receives the bolt for the bumpkin shroud, carried away the round-house and head door, and filled the main deck with water, so that the officers were up to their knees in the ward room, although both our spars and ropes stood this severe trial without injury. I bore up for shelter at Villa Nueva, where we were about to anchor at four P. M. on the 25th, in company with the Sparrowhawk and Merope, which I had left to assist the Baron d'Éroles, when the latter, which had just weighed, made the signal for the enemy upon the road to the westward, and shortly afterwards opened her fire on them. The gale being over, and the wind light, we made all sail, and soon commenced firing also. We observed three waggons disabled and abandoned, and considerable discomfiture amongst the troops, notwithstanding the difficulty we were under from a heavy swell setting directly on shore. Arriving opposite Yeardrell we perceived another party coming from the westward, with cavalry, artillery, &c. amounting to some thousand men, which directed their course in land upon our approach. We were however enabled, by giving the guns the greatest elevation, to discharge two or three broadsides before dark, which, I trust, did them material damage. Since this they have never appeared upon any part

of that coast; and I know nothing more of the movements of either army than from the reports of desperate battles having taken place, the result of which is so variously stated, that it is impossible to venture an opinion without more authentic intelligence.

I have the honour to be, &c.

(Signed) E. CODRINGTON.

Sir Edward Pellew, Bart. Vice-Admiral  
of the Red, &c. &c. &c.

SIR, *Blake, off Mataro, Feb. 2, 1812.*

PASSING Barcelona on the night of the 26th, Captain Guion brought me communications from Captain Tower, respecting the services of the Curaçoa, Rainbow, and Papillon, in harassing a division of the enemy which was marching along the coast from the eastward, and in finally obliging them to retire, and proceed towards Barcelona by a more circuitous route. And I beg to assure you, that their unremitting exertions on all occasions, in aiding our ally on the one part, and checking the progress of the enemy on the other, fully entitle them to your approbation.

On the 29th, whilst watering at Arens, I received information that the whole French force, which had lately traversed this principality, amounting to seven thousand men, (four thousand of which were collected from the Ampurdam, and the other three thousand from the garrison of Barcelona,) were about to make a movement along the coast, I therefore directed Captain Tower, instead of returning immediately to the Medas, which he had lately supplied with provisions and water, and which could not well be in any other danger whilst the whole of the army was in this quarter, to proceed with the Merope to Mataro, and concert with the governor, Colonel O'Ryan, the most adviseable means for its defence. On the morning of the 30th, the Curaçoa making the signal that the enemy were advancing, the Rainbow opened her fire upon them near Vilasar, as did the Curaçoa and Merope upon their approach to Mataro. I weighed immediately, and worked up to that place, accompanied by the Papillon, which just then joined me, having been driven, in company with the Triton transport, off the coast in the late gale.

The French appearing determined to occupy the town, and the inhabitants having had notice of their approach on the preceding evening, and consequently sufficient time to remove their most valuable effects, I felt myself called upon to comply with the desire of the Captain-General, repeated by Colonel O'Ryan, and opened the fire of the squadron upon such parts of the town as appeared to be most occupied by the enemy, and which was suffering by indiscriminate plunder. The tops of the mountains were covered as usual by the irregular Spanish forces acting in Guerilla; and I was in hopes that our united efforts had inclined the enemy to quit the place. They returned, however, at night, and have continued to occupy the town partially ever since, as I judge by their movements, giving each part of the army an opportunity to plunder in its turn. It being impossible to continue the great expence of ammunition, by persevering according to the tenor of Colonel O'Ryan's letter, our fire has only been