

exhausted, I was under the Necessity to proceed with the Squadron to this Road, where our Stores and Provisions are deposited; and having sailed from my then Station off Negapatnam on the 18th, arrived here the 20th of last Month, where I have been incessantly labouring to put the Ships in a Condition for Service.

When I left the Windward Station off Negapatnam, the French Squadron was at an Anchor off Cuddalore, repairing their Damages.

On my Arrival in this Road, I learned that His Majesty's Ship Sceptre, Captain Samuel Graves, one of Sir Richard Bickerton's Squadron, had arrived here on the 13th of last Month, and had again sailed with His Majesty's Armed Transport San Carlos on the 17th, with Intent to join me to the Southward; and on the 28th of the Month they both joined me in this Road: Captain Graves's Squadron Company with Sir Richard Bickerton's Squadron soon after it left the Channel, had been at Rio Janeiro, where he met the Medea Frigate, and, in the Course of their Passage to India, they captured a large French Ship laden with Naval Stores, in Charge of which Capt. Graves left the Medea, and proceeded on in the Sceptre to join me.

On the 31st I dispatched His Majesty's Ships Monmouth and Sceptre to Trincomalee with a Reinforcement of Troops, and a Supply of Provisions and Stores, under the Command of Captain Aims; and I have the Satisfaction to inform their Lordships, that Service has been very completely performed, and the two Ships rejoined me here on the 10th of this Month.

As the Ships of the Squadron are now nearly fitted, I hope to be able to proceed to Sea in a few Days to cover the Arrival of the expected Reinforcements under Sir Richard Bickerton, and oppose the Enemy's Squadron.

Superb, in Madras Road, August 16, 1782.

I Beg you will be pleased to inform their Lordships, that, since closing my last Letter to you, dated the 12th of this Month, His Majesty's Frigate the Medea, Captain Gower, arrived and joined me here the 13th, and His Majesty's Frigate the Coventry this Day from Bombay, where she has been completely repaired.

The Medea brought in with her a French Ship about 450 Tons Burthen, laden with Provisions and Stores, bound to the Mauritius, but captured by the Sceptre and Medea off the Cape of Good Hope.

Captain Mitchell of the Coventry informs me, that on the 12th of this Month, off Friars Hood on the Island of Ceylon, he fell in with and attacked the Bellona, a French Frigate of 40 Guns, and, after a severe Engagement of two Hours and a half, the Bellona sheered off from the Coventry, and made Sail to join the French Fleet; and the Coventry had suffered so much in her Masts and Rigging, as not to be able to come up with her before she joined the French Fleet, consisting of 23 Sail, which Captain Mitchell saw at Anchor in the Battacalo Road, and was chased by two of their Line of Battle Ships: In the Engagement the Coventry had 15 Men killed, and 29 wounded; and I hope to be able so far to repair her Damages, as to carry her to Sea with me in two or three Days. Captain Mitchell speaks highly of the Courage and good Conduct of the Coventry's Officers and Men; and I trust their Lordships will give him his full Share of Merit, for having so gallantly attacked and beaten an Enemy's Ship so superior in Force to his own.

Superb, in Madras Road, Sept. 30, 1782.

IN my Letter of the 12th of last Month, I mentioned my Intention to proceed to Sea when the Squadron was refitted, for the Purpose of covering the Arrival of the expected Reinforcements under the Command of Sir Richard Bickerton, and to oppose the Enemy's Squadron; and accordingly, on the 20th, the Squadron having completed its Provisions, and being in a tolerable Condition for Service, I left the Road with the Squadron under my Command, and used all Diligence possible to get to the Southward to Trincomalee, being apprehensive the Enemy would endeavour to make themselves Masters of that Harbour in the Absence of the Squadron; but the Wind blowing strong from the South-

ward, I did not arrive with the Squadron off Trincomalee till the Night of the 20th of this Month; and in the Morning following I discovered French Colours on the Forts, and their Squadron reinforced by the illustre, of 74 Guns, the St. Michael, of 64, and the Elizabeth, formerly a Company's Ship, of 50 Guns, with several Transports, in all 30 Sail, at Anchor in the several Bays there.

On the Appearance of His Majesty's Squadron on the Morning of the 30, the French Squadron, consisting of 14 Line of Battle Ships, the Elizabeth, Three Frigates, and a Fire-ship, got under Sail, and, about Six A. M. stood out of Back Bay to the S. Eastward, the Wind blowing strong at S. W. off the Shore, which placed them to Windward of His Majesty's Squadron. At Ten Minutes past Six A. M. I made the Signal for the Line of Battle a-head at Two Cables Length Distance, shortened Sail, and edged away from the Wind, that the Ships to form the Van of our Line might the more speedily get into their Stations. At 20 Minutes past Eight, the Enemy's Squadron began to edge down on our Line, then formed in good Order. From that Time till Half past Eleven A. M. I steered under Top-sails in the Line E. S. E. with the Wind blowing strong at S. W. in order to draw the Enemy's Squadron as far as possible from the Port of Trincomalee; they sometimes edging down, sometimes bringing-to, and in no regular Order, as if undetermined what to do.

At Noon the Enemy's Squadron appeared to have an Intention to engage. At Half past Two P. M. the French Line began to fire on ours, and I made the Signal for Battle: At Five Minutes after, the Engagement was general from our Van to our Rear, the two Headmost Ships of the Enemy's Line sailing for the Rearmost Ship the Worcester, we being supported by that Ship and the Monmouth, who fired all her Sails to the Van of the Enemy's Line, so that the Worcester had crowded, bore down on the Rearmost Ship, the Two Headmost Ships of our Line, and by repeated Fire on them, forced the Worcester much crowded, out of the Line; then tacked, keeping the Wind, and firing on the Iffe, and other Ships of our Van, as they passed. In the mean time the Centers of the Two Lines were warmly engaged, Ship to Ship. At Twenty-eight Minutes past Three, the Mizzen-mast of the French Admiral's Second a-Item was shot or cut away, and, at the same Time, his Second a-head lost her Fore and Mizzen Top masts.

At Thirty-five Minutes past Five the Wind shifting suddenly from S. W. to E. S. E. I made the Signal for the Squadron to wear, which was instantly obeyed in good Order, the Ships of the Enemy's Squadron either wearing or staying at the same Time; and the Engagement was renewed on the other Tack close and vigorously on our Part. At Twenty Minutes past Six, the French Admiral's Main-mast was shot away by the Board, and, soon after, his Mizzen-mast; and about the same Time the Worcester, one of our Line of Battle Ships, lost her Main top-mast. At about Seven P. M. the Body of the French Squadron hauled their Wind to the Southward, the Ships in our Rear continuing a severe Fire on them 'til Twenty Minutes past Seven, when the Engagement ceased; and the Ships of our Squadron had apparently suffered so much, as to be in no Condition to pursue them. At about Eight P. M. made the Night Signal for the Line of Battle a-head on the Larboard Tack; but the Night being dark, and several of the Ships not to be seen, at Twelve P. M. I made the Signal for the Squadron to bring-to and lye by on the Larboard Tack. At Day-light no Part of the Enemy's Squadron was in Sight: And the Eagle, Monmouth, Burford, Superb, and several other Ships making much Water from Shot-holes, so very low down in the Bottom as not to be come at, to be effectually stopped; and the Whole having suffered severely in their Masts and Rigging; under these Circumstances, and Trincomalee being in the Enemy's Possession, and the other Parts of the West Coast of Ceylon unsafe to anchor on, at this late Season of the Year, when the N. E. Winds often blow strong there, I was under the Necessity of steering with the Squadron for this Coast, to get anchoring Ground, in order to stop the Shot holes un-