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Admiralty-Office, January 12, 1784.

EXTRACT of a Duplicate of a Letter from Vice-Admiral Sir Edward Hughes, Knight of the Bath, and Commander in Chief of His Majesty's Ships and Vessels in the East Indies, to Mr. Stephens, received on Friday last by Captain Erasmus Gower, of Majesty's Ship Medea; the Original of which is on board the Pondicherry Armed Transport, not yet arrived.

*Superb, in Madras Road,
July 25, 1783.*

MY last Address to you, for their Lordships Information, was dated the 19th of March, of this Year, from Bombay. By it I signified my Intention to proceed to Sea with the Ships of His Majesty's Squadron under my Command, and I sailed accordingly on the Day following.

On the 8th of April, off the Bassas, I was joined by Captain Troubridge, in His Majesty's Ship Active, who had been cruising for a Month off the Friar's Hood by my Orders, and had seen nothing of the Enemy's Squadron during that Time.

In the Night of the 10th, a Grab Ship of the Enemy's, that had been taken from the English, fell into the Squadron and was captured. By the Officers, Prisoners, taken in this Ship, I learned the Whole of the Enemy's Squadron, under the Command of Mons. Suffrein, was in Trincomalé Harbour, except Two of their best sailing Line of Battle Ships, and Two Frigates, which were cruising off Madras to block up that Port, and intercept all Supplies bound to it: I therefore immediately steered with the Squadron for that Place, and anchored in the Road on the 13th of April, but saw nothing of the French Cruizers; however, as they had been in Sight of the Place only the Day before, I directed the Ships named in the Margin,* under the Orders of Captain Mitchell, of the Sultan, to proceed to Sea, and use all possible Diligence to intercept them; and, on the Day following, Captain Graves, of His Majesty's Ship Sceptre, whose Signal had been made to chase a strange Sail on the 11th, joined me with the Naiade, a French Frigate of 30 Guns, and 160 Men, which he had come up with in the Night and captured.

On the 16th of April, Captain Burney, of His Majesty's Ship Bristol, with his Convoy from England, arrived in this Road, escorted by the Ships under the Orders of Captain Mitchell, of the Sultan, who had seen nothing of the Enemy's Cruizers, but fell in with the Bristol and her Convoy at Sea.

On the 19th of April, the Company's Ship Duke of Athol made the Signal of Distress, and the Boats of the Squadron being ordered by Signal to her Assistance, she unfortunately blew up, by which

* Sultan, Burford, Africa, Eagle, and Active.

unhappy Accident the Squadron lost †Six Commissioned and Four Warrant Officers, and 127 of our best Seamen.

From the Day of the Squadron's Arrival in this Road, all possible Diligence have been used to compleat the Ships Water, in doing which great Delays and frequent Disappointments arose from the Want of a sufficient Number of Shore Boats, and the high Surf on the Beach. However I put to Sea on the 2d of May with His Majesty's Ships to seek the Enemy's Squadron, and, if possible, intercept their expected Reinforcements, although the Water of many of the Ships was by no Means compleat, having left in the Road His Majesty's Three Store-ships Pondicherry, Harriott, and Minerva, to lade Military Stores and Provisions for the Service of the Army then about to march for the Attack of Cuddalore, where the Marquis de Bussy, with the greater Part of the French Land Forces, was posted; and to cover and protect these Storeships, as well as some other Ships and Vessels employed for the same Purpose, from the Enemy's Cruizers, I left in the Road, at the Request of the Select Committee of this Presidency, His Majesty's Ships and Vessels as per Margin, † under the Command of Captain Haliday, of His Majesty's Ship Isis.

On the 15th of May, when off Cuddalore, I spoke Two Portuguese Ships from Trincomalé, who informed me Mons. Suffrein with his whole Force was there, sitting for Sea with all possible Expedition, to come to the Relief of Cuddalore: From that Time I continued working to Windward with the Squadron along Shore, lest the Enemy's Squadron should pass in Shore of me, and fall on the Storeships and their covering Party, then at Anchor near to Cuddalore.

On the 25th of May I came off Trincomalé, and reconnoitred the Position of the Enemy's Squadron, which I did not think by any Means eligible to attack at Anchor, under Cover of their Gun and Mortar Batteries, and therefore stood to the Southward to intercept any Reinforcement or Supplies that might be coming to them, at the same Time watching their Motions by the Frigates of the Squadron, and keeping within a proper Distance of the Place, lest they should put to Sea in the Night, and fall down on the covering Ships and Storeships off Cuddalore.

† The Names of the Commissioned Officers are as follows those of the Warrant Officers are not yet known, viz.

- Lieutenant Charles Egan, of the Superb,
- Neal Morrison, of the Eagle.
- Thomas Wilson, of the Sceptre.
- James Thompson of the Juno.
- Pringle, of the Active.
- Alexander Allen, of the Seahorse.

† Isis, Active, San Carlos, Naiade, Chaser, Pondicherry, Minerva, and Harriott.

[Price Seven-Pence.]