

fested signs of disaffection to his Government. The Aide-de-Camp, it appeared, was detained.

While this negotiation was attempting, the Hebrus arrived with the charge of a small expedition, with arms and supplies for the Royalists, and when it became evident, that no good could arise out of any attempt to conciliate General Clausel, Captain Palmer made me a very strong representation upon the necessity which he conceived there was for his attempting to enter the Gironde and open a direct communication with the Royalist party. After weighing the circumstances, I thought it my duty to accede to the proposal, and I united the ships for the prosecution of the service.

The General Donnadiou being anxious to pursue his mission on the coast, I dispatched the Larne with him to Passages.

On the 11th the squadron weighed from an outer anchorage we had taken, and formed for the purpose of entering the river; but, as we stood in, the enemy's corvette was perceived to weigh and manoeuvre in the north entrance, while five sail pushed out through the southern passage to sea. Under these circumstances it became necessary for the intercepting those vessels that the squadron should separate for the time; and in consequence the forcing the river was obliged to be given up for that day; during the night the squadron united again, after having examined the vessels which it appeared had sailed in so suspicious a manner, which circumstance was developed by the embargo having been that morning discontinued in the river.

Yesterday, the wind being favourable, the squadron again weighed; and formed in a close line for entering the Gironde: the Pactolus led, the Hebrus followed, and the Falmouth brought up the rear; the two former had transports in tow; as we proceeded, a person came off with a message from the people of the town of Royan, saying that they would not fire at us, provided we did not assail them. We passed on with the royal colours of France at the mast-head; the tri-coloured flag flew along the batteries, which were all in preparation, but no act of hostility occurred until we reached the heavy battery at Verdun, which opened its fire upon us, and continued it until the ships reached the anchorage. No injury, however, was sustained, and the squadron did not return a gun, for I was unwilling to disturb the feeling which appeared so generally and so happily to prevail. Directly the ships were secured, a communication was sent up with a flag of truce to General Clausel by the Comte de Lasteur, deputed by M. La Duchesse D'Angouleme, and we are in expectation of his answer. In the meantime nothing can wear a more favourable aspect than the face of things in this river.

I beg to assure you, that every measure shall be adopted, in conjunction with the Baron Montalembert, to arm and organise the royal party, and establish the power of predominance of His Majesty the King of France, in the vicinity of wherever our means can operate.

I lose no time in dispatching the Falmouth to your Lordship, and Captain Knight will explain our situation, as well as that we are taking every precaution in respect to the defence of that river, in the event of General Clausel sending down any

strong force to stifle the spirit of the people. I shall also write to Rear-Admiral Sir Henry Hotham, and perhaps the Rear-Admiral may strengthen our means here, so that we may fully avail ourselves of such opportunity of pushing the royal cause with vigour and celerity, and of cherishing the excellent disposition with which all here seem inspired. I have just learnt that the enemy evacuated the fort of Verdun last night, and retired with his garrison. We have sent a force on shore to dismantle and destroy the guns, &c. This is the fort which disputed our entrance, and it is a very strong work.

I have also the pleasure to add, that the propositions of the Baron Montalembert, and his mission, have hitherto been every where attended with success. The forts and the positions are gradually pulling down their tri-coloured flags, and hoisting that of their legitimate Sovereign; and several of them have saluted the squadron upon their hoisting the white flag. While writing this letter, another battery has hoisted the white flag, and there now remains only the fort at Méche with the tri-coloured flag.

Captain Palmer, who was entrusted with the service, has throughout directed it, and the accident alone of my being the senior Officer, induces me to give the account to your Lordship.

I have the honour to be, &c.

(Signed) F. W. AYLMER, Captain,
To Admiral Lord Viscount Keith,
&c. &c. &c.

*His Majesty's Ship Hebrus, in the
Gironde, July 14, 1815.*

MY LORD,

I HAVE the honour to state to you, that I arrived off this port on the 6th, where I found His Majesty's ship Pactolus, and I learnt from Captain Aylmer that General Donnadiou (the French officer he had on board) was endeavouring to open a communication with the Commandant at Bourdeaux, General Clausel, and that an Aid-de-Camp had been dispatched in for that purpose. But as General Clausel thought proper to detain the messenger, and also to adopt the most decided measures to prevent any kind of intercourse, there appeared no prospect of any accommodation from any further attempts to conciliate him.

From the nature of this coast, and the complete military possession which the enemy had of it, it seemed impossible that any free communication could be opened with the Royalists, unless I could effect an entrance into the river; and as the Baron de Montalembert expressed the greatest anxiety upon the subject, and I possessed a discretionary power of passing into the Gironde, should I be of opinion that circumstances justified me in doing so, I decided, after the best consideration I could give the matter, that it was the most proper course I could pursue for the good of the cause I was employed on.

As I felt, that the committing the transports and their lading in the river, at a time it was in full possession of the enemy, was a strong measure, and as there were serious obstacles to overcome, in a well defended entrance and a hazardous navigation, I considered it my duty to render our means