

Her Majesty's ship Vesuvius, Sea of Azof,
No. 35. September 26, 1855.
Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report that, in pursuance of arrangements made with Captain Hall, Her Majesty's ship *Miranda*, I proceeded, on the 23rd September, with the vessels named in the margin*, to harass and keep in check the enemy's troops at Temriouk, whilst the allied squadron at Kertch attacked Fanagoria and Taman.

On the 24th September, at daybreak, we arrived off Temriouk Lake, and were there joined by the French steamers *Milan*, *Caton*, and *Fulton*.

We failed in reaching the town with our boats, the lake proving too shoal for even those of the lightest description; up to noon however we kept a large body of horse, foot and artillery in the town, the latter opening a sharp but harmless fire at us to prevent the destruction of a fine brig which was secreted just inside the lake's entrance. Weighing from thence, the squadron, accompanied by that of our gallant Allies, under Capitaine de Frégate De Cintré, proceeded to cut off the communication between Temriouk and Taman by the narrow belt of land lying north of the lakes. In this we perfectly succeeded; for at 1 P.M. a heavy column of troops, with nine field-guns, were discovered on the march, proceeding towards Taman. Opening fire on them at 2,500 yards, we stopped their march; and after suffering severely, as it appeared to us, they retreated upon Temriouk, the *Wrangler* with her Lancaster guns keeping up an effective fire upon them to an extraordinary distance. Some of the enemy's riflemen, who with much gallantry fruitlessly endeavoured to keep the beach, and save a quantity of forage, must have lost a number of men by the admirable shell practice of the French squadron. Whilst this was doing, I detached the *Ardent*, *Beagle*, and *Cracker*, to watch another favourable part of the neck of land. Lieutenant Campion was fortunate enough to discover that the road lay over a fine wooden bridge, which spanned a channel connecting the Sea of Azof with Lower Temriouk Lake.

The bridge was 180 feet long and 30 feet wide, composed of strong wooden piles, and sleepers at each end, and four pontoons in the centre, the whole well planked over and apparently much used. It was evidently the route of communication between Temriouk and Taman, except by

* *Vesuvius*, *Curlew*, *Ardent*, *Wrangler*, *Beagle*, *Fancy*, *Grinder*, *Cracker*.

the very circuitous round of the extensive lakes. The burning of this bridge effectually stopped the garrison of Temriouk, who could not be under 2,000 men and some 10 or 12 guns, arriving in time to resist the landing at Taman.

I therefore weighed, as the weather was threatening, and have since driven in and destroyed the Cossack posts which had been established in this neighbourhood, and to watch our garrison at Enikale.

Two French flags (tricolors) were found by Lieutenant Strode at one of these posts, the Russians having left them, as well as some of their arms, in making a hasty retreat. I am unable to say under what circumstances they could have got into the enemy's possession.

Throughout these operations I have received the greatest assistance from Commander Rowley Lambert, of Her Majesty's ship *Curlew*, and the zealous exertions of the officers and men in the squadron generally.

The *Recruit* has been left to watch the Straits of Ghenitch, and Lieutenant Day, her commander, alone, on the nights of the 18th and 21st September, passed the enemy's picquets there, and waded up to their gun-vessels and guards in the channel. His reconnaissance confirms my opinion of their perfect readiness to resist an attack in that direction. I am sorry to say the exposure and excessive labour has caused Lieutenant Day to be laid up with a severe attack of illness.

The two Russian fishermen taken at the mouth of the Don, having quite recovered from the effects of their wounds, I caused Commander Rowley Lambert to proceed with them on the 23rd instant to Arabat Fort, under a flag of truce, for the purpose of offering to land them there if General Wrangel wished. The offer was accepted and the prisoners landed.

The squadron is now proceeding to Ghenitch to complete ammunition from the *Durham*, and I am in hopes that fine weather, which may be shortly expected by general account, will enable us to do more service in the coming month than that of the present one.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) SHERARD OSBORN.

Captain and Senior Officer.

Rear-Admiral Sir Edward
Lyons, Bart., &c., &c., &c.
G.C.B.