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FROM THE LONDON GAZETTE.

ADMIRALTY-OFFICE—Aug. 11.

The Court of Directors of the East India Company have transmitted to this Office an account of an action which took place in the China Seas, on the 15th of February last, between a division of the Company's ships and a French Squadron, of which the following is a copy:

SIR—For the information of the Hon. Court, I beg leave to acquaint you that the Earl Camden was dispatched from Canton, by the Select Committee, the 31st of January last; and the ships noted in the margin* were put under my orders as senior Commander; also the Rolla Botany Bay ship, and the country ships as per margin †, were put under my charge to convoy as far as our courses lay in the same direction. I was also ordered to take under my protection a Portuguese Europe ship that was lying in Macao Roads, whose supra-cargo had solicited it from the Select Committee. Our passage down the river was tedious, and the fleet much dispersed; the ships being under the direction of their several Chinese pilots, I could not keep them collected as I wished.

The Ganges, a fast-sailing brig, was put under my command by the Select Committee, to employ in any manner that might tend to the safety and convenience of the fleet, till we passed

* Warley, Alfred, Royal George, Coutts, Wexford Ganges, Exeter, Earl of Abergavenny, Henry Addington, Bombay Castle, Cumberland, Hope, Dorsetshire, Warring Hastings, and Ocean.

† Lord Castlereagh, Carron, David Scott, Minerva, Ardasier Charlotte, Friendship, Shaw Kils a Roo, Sahaungeer, Gilwell, and Neptune.

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the Straits of Malacca; I was then to dispatch her to Bengal.

We passed Macao Roads on the night of the 5th of Feb. and I conceive the Rolla had anchored so near Macao as not to see the fleet get under weigh and pass through; although at the time I had no idea that it could be possible, especially as I saw the Ocean, in-shore of us, getting under weigh, burning blue lights and firing a gun. The Portuguese ship, I suppose, must have been in the same situation as the Rolla.

During the night of the 5th of February I carried an easy sail, and on the following day hove to for above two hours, hoping to see those ships, but there was no appearance of them, nor did they ever join the fleet.

On the 14th of February, at day break, we saw Palo Auro bearing W.S. W. and at 8 A.M. the Royal George made the signal for seeing four strange sail in the S. W. I made the signal for the Alfred, Royal George, Bombay Castle, and Hope, to go down and examine, and Lieut. Fowler, of the Royal Navy, late Commander of the Porpoise, and passenger with me, having handsomely offered to go in the Ganges ‡ brig, and inspect them nearly, I afterwards sent her down likewise; and from their signals I perceived it was an enemy's squadron, consisting of a line-of-battle ship, three frigates and a brig.

At one P. M. I recalled the look out ships by signal, and formed the line of battle in close order. As soon as the enemy could fetch in our wake, they put about; we kept on our course under an easy sail; at near sun-set they were close up with our rear, and I was in momentary expectation of an attack there, and prepared to support them; but at the close of day we per-

ceived them haul to windward; I sent Lieut. Fowler, in the Ganges brig, to station the country ships on our lee-bow, by which means we were between them and the enemy; and having done so, he returned with some volunteers from the country ships.

We lay to in line of battle all night, our men at their quarters; at day-break, on the 5th, we saw the enemy about three miles to windward, laying to. We hoisted our colours, offering him battle if he chose to come down. The enemy's four ships hoisted French colours, the line of battle ship carrying a Rear Admiral's flag; the brig was under Batavian colours.

At 9 A. M. finding they would not come down, we formed the order of sailing, and steered our course under an easy sail, the enemy then filled their sails, and edged towards us.

At 1 P. M. finding they proposed to attack and endeavoured to cut off our rear, I made the signal to tack and bear down upon him, and engage in succession; the Royal George being the leading ship, the Ganges next, and then the Earl Camden: this manœuvre was correctly performed, and we stood towards him under a press of sail; the enemy then formed in a very close line, and opened their fire on the headmost ships, which was not returned by us till we approached him nearer. The Royal George bore the brunt of the action, and got as near the enemy as he would permit him; the Ganges and Earl Camden opened their fire as soon as their guns could have effect; but before any other ships could get into action, the enemy hauled their wind, and stood away to the eastward under all the sail they could set. At 2 P. M. I made the signal for a general chase, and we pursued them till

