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ADMIRALTY OFFICE, JULY 29.

Copy of a Letter transmitted by Lord Keith.

His Majesty's Ship *Blanche*, Yarmouth Roads, July 26, 1856.

MY LORD—I have the honour to acquaint you of my return to Yarmouth Roads, having in company *La Guerriere* French frigate, commanded by Monsieur Hubert (of the Legion of Honour), whom I captured on the 19th inst. in lat. 62 deg. N. off the Ferroe islands, after a sharp contest of 45 minutes.

La Guerriere is of the largest class of frigates, mounting 50 guns, with a complement of 317 men, but these were soon sadly reduced by our destructive fire, and the ship has also suffered very severely, while the damages of the *Blanche* are confined to the top-masts, rigging, and sails.

It now becomes a pleasing duty to beg you to recommend Lieut. Henry Thomas Davies to their Lordships' notice, and to speak in terms of respect of his general good conduct, as also of Lieuts. Bafin and Allan; of Mr Robertson, the Master; and Lieut. John Campbell of the marines.

The Warrant Officers, Midshipmen, and Ship's Company, are likewise entitled to my warmest praise. Underneath you will observe the list of killed and wounded.

I have, &c. THOMAS LAVIE.

Blanche—None killed.—Wounded, Lieut. Bafin, not dangerously; Thomas Wilkinon, James Wilkins, marines, not dangerously; Geo. Morley, marine, dangerously.

La Guerriere—Twenty killed—Thirty wounded, ten dangerously.

T. LAVIE.

The Rt. Hon. Admiral Lord Keith, &c.

ADMIRALTY OFFICE, JULY 29.

The following letter from Rear-Admiral Sir William Sidney Smith, addressed to Vice-Admiral Lord Collingwood, has been forwarded to the Admiralty in his Lordship's letter of 2d inst.

Pompee, at anchor, off Scälia, May 24.

MY LORD—I arrived at Palermo in the *Pompee* on the 21st of last month, and took on me the command of the Squadron your Lordship has done me honour to place under my orders. I found things in the state that may be well imagined on the Government being displaced from its capital, with the loss of one of the two kingdoms, and the dispersion of the army assembled in Calabria. The judicious arrangement made by Captain Sotherton of the ships under his orders, and the position of the British army under Sir John Stuart at Messina, had however prevented further mischief.

I had the satisfaction of learning that Gaeta still held out, although as yet without success, from a mistaken idea, much too prevalent, that the progress of the French armies is irresistible. It was my first care to see that the necessary supplies should be safely conveyed to the Governor. I had the inexpressible satisfaction of conveying the most essential articles to Gaeta, and of communicating to his Serene Highness the Governor (on the breach battery, which he never quits) the assurance of further support to any extent within my power, for the maintenance of that important fortress hitherto so long preserved by his intrepidity and example. Things wore a new aspect immediately on the arrival of the ammunition, the redoubled fire of the enemy with red-hot shot into the Mole (being answered with redoubled vigour) did not prevent the landing of every thing we had brought, together with four of the Excellent's lower deck guns, to answer this galling fire, which bore directly on the landing place.

A second convoy, with the Intrepid, placed the garrison beyond the immediate want of any thing essential, and the enemy from advancing his nearest approaches within 250 yards, was reduced to the defensive in a degree, dreading one of those forties which the Prince of Hesse had already shewn him his garrison was equal to, and which was become a much safer operation, now that the flanking fire of eight Neapolitan gun boats, I had brought with me, in

addition to four his Highness had already used so successfully, would cover it, even to the rear of the enemy's trenches. Arrangements were put in train for this purpose, and according to a wise suggestion of his Serene Highness, measures were taken for the embarkation of a small party from the garrison to land in the rear of the enemy's batteries to the northward.

I confided the execution of the naval part of this arrangement to Captain Richardson, of his Majesty's ship *Juno*, putting the Neapolitan frigate and gun-boats under his orders. His Serene Highness possessing the experience of European warfare, and a most firm mind, having no occasion for further aid on the spot, I felt I could quit the garrison without apprehension for its safety in such hands, with the present means of defence, and that I could best co-operate with him by drawing some of the attacking force off for the defence of Naples. I accordingly proceeded thither with the line of battle ships named in the margin*. The enemy's apprehension of attack occasioned them to convey some of the battering train from the trenches before Gaeta to Naples. The city was illuminated on account of Joseph Bonaparte proclaiming himself King of the Two Sicilies! The junction of the *Eagle* made us five fail of the line, and it would have been easy for their fire to have interrupted this ceremony and shewn of festivity, but I considered that the unfortunate inhabitants had evil enough on them; that the restoration of the capital to the lawful sovereign and its fugitive inhabitants would be no gratification if it should be found a heap of ruins, ashes, and bones, and that as I had no force to land and to keep order, in case of the French army retiring to the fortresses, I should leave an opulent city a prey to the licentious part of the community, who would not fail to profit by the confusion the flames would occasion; not a gun was fired; but no such consideration operated on my mind, to prevent me dislodging the French garrison from the Island of Capri, which, from its situation,

* *Pompee*, *Excellent*, *Athenien*, *Intrepid*.

