

Admiralty-Office, September 10, 1799.

A Letter from Captain Sir Sidney Smith, of His Majesty's Ship *Tigre*, to Evan Nepean, Esq; Secretary to the Admiralty, with its Inclosures, of which the following are Copies, were Yesterday received at this Office:

Copy of a Letter from Captain Sir William Sidney Smith, of His Majesty's Ship Tigre, to Evan Nepean, Esq; dated off Mount Lebanon, June 16, 1799.

SIR MORTON EDEN has forwarded a Duplicate of your Letter of the 4th May, informing me of the sailing of the French Fleet from Brest. I take for granted this Fleet is bound for these Seas to support Buonaparte's Operations, not knowing that his Expedition to Syria has completely failed, as the inclosed Duplicates will inform their Lordships.

MY LORD, *Tigre, Acre, May 9, 1799.*

I Had the Honor to inform your Lordship by my Letter of the 2d Instant, that we were busily employed completing Two Ravelins for the Reception of Cannon to flank the Enemy's nearest Approaches, distant only Ten Yards from them. They were attacked that very Night, and almost every Night since, but the Enemy have each Time been repulsed with very considerable Loss:—the Enemy continued to batter in Breach with progressive Success, and have Nine several Times attempted to storm, but have as often been beaten back with immense Slaughter. Our best Mode of Defence has been frequent Sorties to keep them on the defensive, and impede the Progress of their Covering Works. We have thus been in one continued Battle ever since the Beginning of the Siege, interrupted only at short Intervals by the excessive Fatigue of every Individual on both Sides. We have been long anxiously looking for a Reinforcement, without which we could not expect to be able to keep the Place so long as we have. The Delay in its Arrival being occasioned by Hassan Bey's having originally received Orders to join me in Egypt, I was obliged to be very peremptory in the Repetition of my Orders for him to join me here; it was not however till the Evening of the Day before Yesterday, the Fifty-first Day of the Siege, that his Fleet of Corvettes and Transports made its Appearance. The Approach of this additional Strength was the Signal to Buonaparte for a most vigorous and persevering Assault, in Hopes to get Possession of the Town before the Reinforcement to the Garrison could disembark.

The constant Fire of the Besiegers was suddenly increased tenfold, our flanking Fire from a Float was, as usual, plied to the utmost; but with less Effect than heretofore, as the Enemy had thrown up Epaulments and Traverses of sufficient Thickness to protect him from it. The Guns that could be worked to the greatest Advantage were a French Brass Eighteen-Pounder in the Light-House Castle, manned from the Theseus, under the Direction of Mr. Scroder, Master's Mate, and the last mounted Twenty-four Pounder in the North Ravelin, manned from the *Tigre*, under the Direction of Mr. Jones, Midshipman. These Guns being within Grape Distance of the Head of the attacking Column, added

to the Turkish Musquetry, did great Execution; and I take this Opportunity of recommending these Two Petty Officers, whose indefatigable Vigilance and Zeal merit my warmest Praise. The *Tigre's* Two Sixty-eight Pound Carronades, mounted in Two Germes lying in the Mole, and worked under the Direction of Mr. Bray, Carpenter of the *Tigre*; (one of the bravest and most intelligent Men I ever served with,) threw Shells into the Centre of this Column with evident Effect, and checked it considerably. Still, however, the Enemy gained Ground, and made a Lodgment in the Second Story of the North-East Tower; the upper Part being entirely battered down, and the Ruins in the Ditch forming the Ascent by which they mounted. Daylight shewed us the French Standard on the outer Angle of the Tower. The Fire of the Besieged was much slackened in comparison to that of the Besiegers, and our flanking Fire was become of less Effect, the Enemy having covered themselves in this Lodgment and the Approach to it by Two Traverses across the Ditch, which they had constructed under the Fire that had been opposed to them during the Whole of the Night, and which were now seen composed of Sand Bags and the Bodies of their Dead built in with them, their Bayonets only being visible above them. Hassan Bey's Troops were in the Boats, though as yet but Half-way on Shore. This was a most critical Point of the Contest; and an Effort was necessary to preserve the Place for a short Time till their Arrival.

I accordingly landed the Boats at the Mole, and took the Crews up to the Breach armed with Pikes. The enthusiastic Gratitude of the Turks, Men, Women, and Children, at Sight of such a Reinforcement, at such a Time, is not to be described.

Many Fugitives returned with us to the Breach, which we found defended by a few brave Turks, whose most destructive missile Weapons were heavy Stones, which, striking the Assaultants on the Head, overthrew the Foremost down the Slope, and impeded the Progress of the Rest. A Succession, however, ascended to the Assault, the Heap of Ruins between the Two Parties serving as a Breast-work for both, the Muzzles of their Musquets touching, and the Spear-Heads of the Standards locked. Gezza Pacha hearing the English were on the Breach quitted his Station, where, according to the ancient Turkish Custom, he was sitting to reward such as should bring him the Heads of the Enemy, and distributing Musquet Cartridges with his own Hands. The energetic old Man coming behind us, pulled us down with Violence, saying, if any Harm happened to his English Friends all was lost. This amicable Contest as to who should defend the Breach, occasioned a Rush of Turks to the Spot, and thus Time was gained for the Arrival of the first Body of Hassan Bey's Troops. I had now to combat the Pasha's Repugnance to admitting any Troops but his Albanians into the Garden of his Seraglio, become a very important Post as occupying the Terre-plein of the Rampart. There was not above Two Hundred of the original Thousand Albanians left alive. This was no Time for Debate, and I overruled his Objections by introducing the *Chifflick* Regiment of One Thousand Men armed with Bayonets, disciplined after the European Method under Sultan Selim's own Eye, and placed by his