

did not receive them until I had actually taken my Departure from that Court, still, upon a careful Consideration of the Tenor of your Instructions, I thought that it would be right to act as if that Case had not occurred. I resolved, therefore, to proceed forthwith to ascertain the Effect produced by the Blockade of Lisbon, and to propose to the Portuguese Government, as the only Condition upon which that Blockade could cease, the Alternative (stated by you) either of surrendering the Fleet to His Majesty, or of immediately employing it to remove the Prince Regent and his Family to the Brazils. I took upon myself this Responsibility in renewing Negotiations after my public Functions had actually ceased, convinced that, although it was the fixed Determination of His Majesty not to suffer the Fleet of Portugal to fall into the Possession of His Enemies, still His Majesty's first Object continued to be the Application of that Fleet to the original Purpose, of saving the Royal Family of Braganza from the Tyranny of France.

I accordingly requested an Audience of the Prince Regent, together with due Assurances of Protection and Security; and upon receiving His Royal Highness's Answer, I proceeded to Lisbon on the 27th, in His Majesty's Ship *Confiance*, bearing a Flag of Truce. I had immediately most interesting Communications with the Court of Lisbon, the Particulars of which shall be fully detailed in a future Dispatch. It suffices to mention in this Place, that the Prince Regent wisely directed all His Apprehensions to a French Army, and all His Hopes to an English Fleet: that He received the most explicit Assurances from me that His Majesty would generously overlook those Acts of unwilling and momentary Hostility to which His Royal Highness's Consent had been extorted; and that I promised to His Royal Highness, on the Faith of my Sovereign, that the British Squadron before the Tagus should be employed to protect His Retreat from Lisbon, and His Voyage to the Brazils.

A Decree was published Yesterday, in which the Prince Regent announced his Intention of retiring to the City of Rio de Janeiro until the Conclusion of a general Peace, and of appointing a Regency to transact the Administration of Government at Lisbon during His Royal Highness's Absence from Europe.

This Morning the Portuguese Fleet left the Tagus. I had the Honour to accompany the Prince in His Passage over the Bar. The Fleet consisted of Eight Sail of the Line, Four large Frigates, several Armed Brigs, Sloops, and Corvettes, and a Number of Brazil Ships, amounting, I believe, to about Thirty six Sail in all. They passed through the British Squadron, and His Majesty's Ships fired a Salute of Twenty-one Guns, which was returned with an equal Number. A more interesting Spectacle than that afforded by the Junction of the Two Fleets has been rarely beheld.

On quitting the Prince Regent's Ship, I repaired on board of the *Hibernia*, but returned immediately, accompanied by Sir Sidney Smith, whom I presented to the Prince, and who was received by His Royal Highness with the most marked and gracious Condescension.

I have the Honour to inclose Lists * of the Ships

* See Rear-Admiral Sir Sidney Smith's Dispatches.

of War which were known to have left Lisbon this Morning, and which were in Sight a few Hours ago. There remain at Lisbon Four Ships of the Line, and the same Number of Frigates, but only one of each Sort is serviceable.

I have thought it expedient to lose no Time in communicating to His Majesty's Government the important Intelligence contained in this Dispatch. I have therefore to apologise for the hasty and imperfect Manner in which it is written.

I have the Honour to be, &c.

STRANGFORD.

Admiralty-Office, December 21, 1807.

DISPATCHES, of which the following are Extracts and Copies, were received at this Office on Saturday last, by Captain Yeo, of His Majesty's Sloop the *Confiance*, from Rear-Admiral Sir William Sidney Smith, addressed to the Honourable William Wellesley Pole.

His Majesty's Ship Hibernia, 22 Leagues

SIR, *West of the Tagus, Dec. 1, 1807.*

I in a former Dispatch, dated the 22d November, with a Postscript of the 26th, I conveyed to you, for the Information of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, the Proofs contained in various Documents of the Portuguese Government being so much influenced by Terror of the French Arms, as to have acquiesced to certain Demands of France operating against Great Britain. The Distribution of the Portuguese Force was made wholly on the Coast, while the Land Side was left totally unguarded. British Subjects of all Descriptions were detained; and it therefore became necessary to inform the Portuguese Government, that the Case had arisen which required, in obedience to my Instructions, that I should declare the Tagus in a State of Blockade; and Lord Strangford agreeing with me that Hostility should be met by Hostility, the Blockade was instituted, and the Instructions we had received were acted upon to their full Extent; still, however, bearing in Recollection the first Object adopted by His Majesty's Government of opening a Refuge for the Head of the Portuguese Government, menaced as it was by the powerful Arm, and baneful Influence of the Enemy, I thought it my Duty to adopt the Means open to us, of endeavouring to induce the Prince Regent of Portugal to reconsider his Decision "to unite Himself with the Continent of Europe," and to recollect that He had Possessions on that of America, affording an ample Balance for any Sacrifice He might make here, and from which He would be cut off by the Nature of Maritime Warfare, the Termination of which could not be dictated by the Combination of the Continental Powers of Europe.

In this View, Lord Strangford having received an Acquiescence to the Proposition which had been made by us, for his Lordship to land and confer with the Prince Regent under the Guarantee of a Flag of Truce, I furnished his Lordship with that Conveyance and Security, in order that he might give to the Prince that Confidence which his Word of Honour as the King's Minister Plenipotentiary, united with that of a British Admiral, could not fail to inspire towards inducing His Royal Highness to throw Himself and His Fleet into the Arms