

*Admiralty-Office, December 19, 1809.*

DISPATCHES, of which the following are Copies and Extracts, have been received by John Wilson Croker, Esq; Secretary to the Admiralty, from Rear-Admiral Sir Richard John Strachan, Bart. and K. B.

*His Majesty's Ship Blake, in Flushing Roads, Dec. 13, 1809.*

SIR, I AVAILED myself of Vice-Admiral Campbell's Offer of the Jason to convey me to Flushing; and as soon as it moderated on the 9th, in the Afternoon, I hoisted my Flag on board that Ship, and, accompanied by the Idas Cutter, proceeded to this Anchorage, where I arrived on the Evening of the 10th.

I found Rear-Admiral Otway with the Squadron here; he had embarked the Troops, and put every Thing in a State of Preparation for retiring from Walcheren whenever the Wind became favourable. The Arsenal and Works about the Basin at Flushing having been destroyed on that Day.

The inclosed Letter from the Rear-Admiral will inform you of the Particulars of his Proceedings; his Arrangement for the Retreat appeared to me to be so excellent, that I have given my full Approbation to the whole.

It has blown an exceedingly heavy Gale of Wind from the Westward since my Arrival in these Roads, which has prevented my going as I intended to the Division under Commodore Owen in the Slough Passage; and the same Cause has prevented much Communication here.

I have not received any Reports from the Room-pot, but I send an Extract of a Letter from Commodore Owen, addressed to Rear-Admiral Otway, which will inform you of the Proceedings of that Officer with the Force under his Orders.

I have the Honour to be, &c.

(Signed) R. J. STRACHAN.

*Cesar, Flushing Roads, 11th Dec. 1809.*

SIR,

I HAVE the Honour to communicate to you such Circumstances as have occurred previous to your Arrival, and subsequent to my last official Communication.

The Transports necessary for the Embarkation of the Army having arrived the 25th ult., on the following Day the Measures that I had previously concerted with Lieutenant-General Don for the Destruction of the Basin, Arsenal, and Sea Defences of Flushing, agreeable to Instructions from the Earl of Liverpool, dated the 13th and received on the 17th, were begun.

On this Service Six Hundred Seamen and Artificers from the Fleet were employed, under the Orders of Captain Moore, of His Majesty's Ship Marlborough, assisted by Captains Tomlinson and Henderfon, of the Fire Ship Service. The Navy having completed the Portion of Work allotted to them, and Lieutenant-Colonel Pilkington, commanding the Royal Engineers, having reported to Lieutenant-General Don that his Mines for the Destruction of the Gates and Piers at the Entrance of the Basin were ready, the whole of the Army, with the Exception of the Rear Guards, was embarked on the Afternoon of the 9th Instant.

The Mines were exploded Yesterday at Low Water, and appear to have fully answered their Object: The whole of the East Side of the Basin had been previously completely destroyed, but as the Port of Flushing West of the Basin lies considerably below the High Water Mark, any material Injury of the West Bank would have caused the immediate Inundation of the whole Town; therefore our Work on that Side has been confined to the Demolition of the Careening Wharf and Pits.

It was at first intended to defer the burning of the Storehouse and other Buildings in the Arsenal until our final Departure, but from the Probability, that with a strong East Wind the Flames might communicate to the Town, the whole was set Fire to Yesterday, and is totally destroyed.

Thus Flushing is rendered useless to the Enemy as a Naval Arsenal; and the Basin, which afforded very secure Retreat for several Ships of the Line during the Winter, is for the present effectually destroyed, and can only be restored by great Labour, and at an immense Expence:

I cannot conclude without expressing my great Obligations to Captain Moore, for the able Assistance he has rendered me in the Performance of a very complicated Service; and he speaks in Terms highly satisfactory of the Conduct of Captains Tomlinson and Henderfon, and the other Officers who served under his Orders on Shore.

I have the Honour to be, &c.

W. A. OTWAY, Rear-Admiral.

*Rear-Admiral Sir Richard Strachan, K. B.*

*Commander in Chief, &c. &c. &c.*

SIR, *Clyde, in the Veer Gat, Dec. 8, 1809.*

LAST Night the Enemy worked very hard at the Battery on Woolversdyke, notwithstanding the continued Fire kept on it.

At Daylight this Morning, it was found he had opened Four Embrasures in it. Captain Carteret, therefore, pushed Two Subdivisions of the Gun-boats forward against it, which completely succeeded in demolishing Two of the Embrasures, and in injuring the others very materially.

About Noon, Three Mortars were brought down, and, with a Field-Piece, opened against our Vessels (the Brigs more especially); but, after about an Hour's firing, in which their Shells were thrown with some Precision, but without Effect, they were completely silenced, and all our Vessels kept their Ground.

About this Time the Guard-Boats entered the Cross Channel which unites the Two Passes of Woolversdyke, to endeavour to tow off a Flat-Boat, which was lost last Night from the Pallas's Stern, being swamped and overfet; they got her in Tow, but she was fast aground and could not be moved. The Enemy's Troops were in Number behind the Dyke, and a considerable Fire of Musketry was exchanged with them, I believe without Effect on either Side; some few Shot struck our Boats.

The Enemy's advanced Gun-Boats appeared to lie close together, and I ordered Two of the Clyde's Boats to advance into the Passage and throw some Rockets that way, in order that the Occasion might be taken to reconnoitre them more closely.

I find the Enemy's Batteries are not so far in ad-