

which I received on the same day, I communicated the contents of that letter to

Mr. Grisler, Hanoverian Consul at Memel.

Mr. Schiller, Swedish and Norwegian Consul at Memel.

Mr. Schröder Sund, Danish Consul at Memel.

Mr. Hoeffmann, for Holland, Consul at Memel, and likewise to a number of merchants on the Exchange of this town, and to several Riga and Libau Merchants who were there.

I likewise informed His Excellency Lord Bloomfield, that I had communicated the subject of your letter to the Consuls of Neutral Powers at Memel.

(Signed) W. J. HERTSLET.

*Captain Cooper Key,
Memel Roadstead.*

(3)

Copy of an official report from Captain Key, R.N., Her Majesty's ship *Amphion*, to Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Napier.

*Amphion, off Windau,
June 14, 1854.*

SIR.

HER Majesty's ship under my orders having detained several vessels belonging to Neutral Nations for attempting to violate the blockade established on this coast, and sent them to England for legal adjudication in accordance with Articles 9 and 10 of the Admiralty instructions on the subject. I have the honour to report, for your information, the circumstances under which the said vessels have been captured, the manner in which the blockade has been carried out, and other points which may be of importance to the Court of Admiralty commissioned to take cognizance of this question.

Three points must be proved to condemn these vessels as lawful prizes:

1st. That an effective blockade has been established.

2nd. That the vessels detained attempted to violate this blockade.

3rd. That they were aware of its existence.

Regarding the first point, I have the honour to inform you that since May 9th, when I was first intrusted with the blockade of this coast (at which time I found Her Majesty's ships *Conflict* and *Cruizer* on the station, which vessels had been blockading since April 20th) two ships have been ordered to cruise off the entrance of the Gulf of Riga, a passage limited by the shoals to a breadth of three miles, this entrance has never been left without one vessel. Two other

ships have been continually passing between Windau and Memel within sight of the coast.

No doubt in a few instances vessels have succeeded in evading the cruizers under cover of the night and the fogs, which have been so prevalent that the number of vessels boarded is of itself a proof that vigilance has been exercised.

The second point is readily ascertained by a reference to the definition which has been sent in each vessel by the Captain of the ships detaining her, in which the locality, the course the vessel was steering, and the direction of the wind are stated.

With respect to the third point, the knowledge of the blockade, great care has been necessary to prevent injury to innocent vessels. The captured vessels come under two heads—those attempting to enter the blockaded ports and those leaving them. As regards the former, the Captains of Her Majesty's ships received orders that if the slightest reasonable doubt existed as to the captain or the owner of the vessel being informed of the blockade, she was to be sent away with a notification to that effect on his papers.

Under these orders 154 vessels have been warned off since April 20th, although nearly all of them passed through the Sound, communicating at Elsinore, which scarcely allows a doubt to exist of their knowledge of the blockade. Nevertheless, I deemed it my duty to show as much leniency to neutrals as was compatible with the interests of the Allied Powers. Four vessels only have been detained for attempting to enter the ports. Two of these contained coal, and were without proper papers; the others were from Copenhagen, and confessed their knowledge of the blockade.

To insure that the residents in the blockaded ports should not plead ignorance of their condition, I wrote the accompanying letter (Enclosure No. 1) to the British Vice-Consul at Memel, the contents of which were published in the Berlin Gazette, and were publicly made known at Riga, Libau, and Windau. Mr. Hertslet's answer (No. 2) I enclose.

Notwithstanding this, several vessels have taken in cargoes, and left Riga; they have therefore been detained, and sent to England for adjudication.

(Signed) A. COOPER KEY,
Captain and Senior Officer on the
Coast of Kourland.

*Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Napier, K.C.B.,
Commander-in-Chief, &c. &c. &c.*

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