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Admiral *RUSSEL*'s

LETTER

TO THE

Earl of *NOTTINGHAM*:

CONTAINING

An *EXACT & PARTICULAR*

RELATION

Of the Late Happy

Victory and Success

AGAINST

The French Fleet.

Published by Authority.

In the SAVOY:

Printed by *Edward Jones*. MDCXCII.

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Admiral RUSSELL's

LETTER

TO THE

Earl of Nottingham, &c.

Portsmouth, June 2. 1692.

My LORD,

SINCE your Lordship seems to think, that an Account in general of the Fleet's good Success, is not so satisfactory as one setting forth the Particulars, I here send it with as much Brevity as the Matter will admit of. I must confess I was not much inclined to trouble you in this nature, not being ambitious to see my Name in Print on any Occasion; but since 'tis your Lordships Commands, I am the more enclined to give you the best Information I am able of the Action, having seen several Printed Relations not very sincere.

Wednesday in the Evening, being the Eighteenth of *May*, standing over for *Cape de Hague*, I ordered Captain *Gillam* in the *Chester*, and the *Charles Galley*, to lie at such a distance to the Westward of the Fleet, that they might discover any Signals made from me.

Thursday the Nineteenth, standing with a small Gale S. S. W. the Wind at W. and W. and by S. hazey Weather, *Cape Barfleur* bearing then S. W. and by S. from me distant about Seven Leagues, between three and Four in the morning, we heard several Guns to the Westward, and in a short time I saw the two Frigats making the Signal of seeing the Enemy, with their Heads lying to the Northward, which gave me reason to think the Enemy lay with their Heads that way; upon which I ordered the Signal to be made for the Fleet's drawing into a Line of Battel; after which I made the Signal for the Rear of the Fleet to Tack, that if the Enemy stood to the Northward, we might the sooner come to engage; But soon after four a Clock, the Sun had a little cleared the Weather, and I saw the French Fleet standing to the Southward, forming their Line on the same Tack that I was upon; I then ordered that Signal for the Rear to Tack to be taken in, and at the same time bore away with my own Ship so far to Leeward, as I judged each Ship in the Fleet might fetch my Wake or Graine; then brought to again, lying by with my Fore-top-sail to the Mast, to give the Ships in the Fleet the better opportunity of placing themselves, as they had been before directed. By eight a Clock we had formed an indifferent Line, stretching from the S. S. W. to the N. N. E. the Dutch in the Van, the Red in the Center, and the Blue in the Rear. By Nine a Clock the Enemies Van-Guard had stretch'd almost as far to the Southward as ours, their Admiral and Rear-Admiral of the Blue that were in the Rear, closing the Line, and their Vice-Admiral of the same Division stretching to the Rear of our Fleet, but never coming within Gun-shot of them. About ten they bore down upon us, I still lying with my Fore-top-sail to the Mast. I then observed Monsieur *Tourville*, the French Admiral, put out his Signal for Battel; I gave order that mine should not be hoisted till the Fleets began to engage, that he might have the fairer opportunity of coming as near me as he thought convenient, and at the same time, I sent Orders to Admiral *Almonde*, that as soon as any of his Squadron could Weather the Enemies Fleet, they should Tack, and get to the Westward of them; as also to the Blue, to make sail and close the Line, they being at some distance a-stern; but as soon as the Fleet began to engage it fell calm, which prevented their so doing. About half an Hour after eleven, Monsieur *Tourville* in the *Royal Sun* (being within Three Quarters Musquet-shot) brought to, lying by me at that distance about an Hour and a half, plying his Guns very warmly; though I must observe to you, that our Men fired their Guns faster; after which time I did not find his Guns were fired with that vigour as before, and I could see him in great Disorder, his Rigging, Sails, and Top-sail Yards, being shot, and no body endeavouring to make them serviceable, and his Boats towing of him to Windward, gave me reason to think he was much gaul'd. About two the Wind shifted to the N. W. and by W. and some little time after that Five fresh Ships of the Enemies Blue Squadron came and posted themselves, three a-head of Monsieur *Tourville*, and two a-stern of him, and fired with great Fury, which continued till after three. About four in the Evening there came so thick a Fog, that we could not see a Ship of the Enemies, which occasioned our leaving off firing for a little time, and then it cleared up, and we could see Monsieur *Tourville* towing away with his Boats to the Northward from us; upon which I did the same, and ordered all my Division to do the like; and about half an Hour after Five, we had a small breeze of Wind Easterly. I then made the Signal for the Fleet to Chase, sending Notice to all the Ships about me, that the Enemy were running. About this time I heard several Broad-sides to the Westward; and, though I could not see the Ships that fired, I concluded them to be our Blue, that by the shift of Wind had weathered the Enemy; but it proved to be the Rear-Admiral of the Red, who had weathered *Tourville*.

Squadron, and got between them and their Admiral of the Blue, where they lay firing some time, and then *Tourville* anchored with some Ships of his own Division, as also the Rear-Admiral of the Red with some of his. This was the time that Captain *Hoffings* in the *Sandwich* was killed, he driving through those Ships, by reason of his Anchors not being clear. I could not see this part, because of the great Smoak and Fog, but have received this Information from Sir *Cloudesly Shovel* since. I sent to all the Ships that I could think were near me, to Chase to the Westward all night; telling them, I designed to follow the Enemy to *Brest*; and sometimes we could see a French Ship, two, or three, standing away with all the Sail they could make to the Westward. About Eight I heard firing to the Westward, which lasted about half an hour, it being some of our Blue fallen in with some of the Ships of the Enemies in the Fog. 'Twas Foggy, and very little Wind all night.

Friday the 20th, 'twas so thick in the morning, that I could see none of the Enemies Ships, and but very few of our own. About Eight it began to clear up; the Dutch, who were to the Southward of me, made the Signal of seeing the Enemy; and, as it cleared, I saw about 32 or 34 Sail, distant from us between two and three Leagues, the Wind at E. N. E. and they bearing from us W. S. W. our Fleet Chasing with all the Sail they could make, having taken in the Signal for the Line of Battle, that each Ship might make the best of her way after the Enemy. Between Eleven and Twelve, the Wind came to the S. W. The French ply'd to the Westward with all the Sail they could, and we after them. About Four the Tide of Ebb being done, the French anchor'd, as also we in 43 Fathom Water, *Cape Barfleur* bearing S. and by W. About Ten in the Evening we weigh'd with the Tide of Ebb, the Wind at S. W. and ply'd to the Westward. About Twelve my Fore-Topmast came by the Board, having received several Shot.

Saturday the 21st, we continued still plying after the Enemy, till Four in the morning. The Tide of Ebb being done, I anchored in 46 Fathom Water, *Cape de Hague* bearing S. and by W. and the *Island of Alderney* S. S. W. By my Topmast's going away, the Dutch Squadron, and the Admiral of the Blue, with several of his Squadron, had got a great way to Windward of me. About Seven in the morning several of the Enemies Ships, being far advanced towards the *Race*, I perceived driving to the Eastward with the Tide of Flood. Between Eight and Nine, when they were driven so far to the Eastward that I could fetch them, I made the Signal for the Fleet to cut and follow the Enemy; which they all did, except the aforementioned Weathermost Ships, which did fast, to observe the motion of the rest of the Enemies Ships that continued in the *Race of Alderney*. About Eleven, I saw three great Ships fair under the Shoar Tack and stand to the Westward: but after making two or three short Boards, the biggest of them run ashore, who presently cut his Masts away; the other two being to Leeward of him, ply'd up to him: The reason, as I judge, of their doing this was, that they could not weather our sternmost Ships to the Westward, nor get out a-head of Us to the Eastward. I observing that many of our Ships hovered about those, I sent to Sir *Ralph Delaval*, Vice-Admiral of the Red, who was in the Rear of our Fleet, to keep such a number of Ships and Fireships with him, as might be sufficient to destroy those of the Enemies; and to order the others to follow me, I being then in pursuit of the rest of the Enemy: An Account of the performing that Service I don't trouble your Lordship with, He having given it you already. About Four in the afternoon 18 Sail of the Enemies Ships got to the Eastward of *Cape Barfleur*; after which, I observed they hawled in for *le Hogue*: The Rear-Admiral of the Red, Vice-Admiral of the Blue, and some other Ships, were ahead

a-head of me. About Ten at night, I anchored in the Bay of *le Hogue*, and lay till Four the next morning, being

Sunday the 22d; and then I weighed, and stood in near the Land of *le Hogue*: but when we found the Flood came, we anchored in good Sandy Ground. At Two in the afternoon we weighed again, and ply'd close in with *le Hogue*, where we saw 13 Sail of the Enemies Men of War hawled close in with the Shoar: The Reer-Admiral of the Red tells me, That the night before he saw the other five, which made up the 18 I first chased, stand to the Eastward.

Monday the 23d, I sent in Vice-Admiral *Rooke*, with several Men of War and Firehips, as also the Boats of the Fleet, to destroy those Ships: but the Enemy had gotten them so near the Shoar, that not any of our Men of War, except the small Frigats, could do any Service; but that night Vice-Admiral *Rooke* with the Boats burnt six of them.

		Guns.
Soleil Royal	Count de <i>Tourville</i>	104
L' Ambitieux,	Chevalier de <i>la Vilette</i> ,	104
	Vice-Admiral of the White.	
L' Admirable,	Monsieur <i>Beaujeu</i> ,	90
La Magnifique,	Monf. <i>Cortoligor</i> , Rere-	76
	Admiral of the Blue.	
Le St. Philipp,	Monsieur <i>Inficville</i> ,	76
Le Corquerant,	Du <i>Magnon</i> ,	76
Le Fryumphant,	Monsieur <i>Bellemont</i> ,	74
L' Etonant,	Monsieur de <i>Septime</i> ,	80
Le Terrible,	Monsieur <i>Seprvika</i> ,	80
L' Amiable,	Monsieur de <i>Raal</i> ,	68
Le Fier,	Monsieur <i>Larjetboir</i> ,	68
Le Glorieux,	Le Ch. de <i>Chateaumoorant</i> ,	60
Le Serieux,	Monsieur <i>Bernier</i> ,	60
Le Trident,	Monsieur <i>Monteaud</i> ,	56

As the Prisoners report, a Three Deck Ship burnt by accident, and the two following sunk; how true I don't know.

Le Prince,	Monsieur <i>Bagnez</i> ,	60
Le St. Paril,	Monsieur <i>Ferrie</i> .	60

Tho' these be all the Names that I have been able to learn, yet I am sure there are sixteen Ships of consequence Burnt.

be confessed that our number was superiour to theirs (which probably at first might frightle them) yet by their coming down with that Resolution, I cannot think it had any great effect upon them; And this I may affirm for a Truth, not with any intention to value our own Action, or to lessen the Bravery of the Enemy, That they were beaten by a Number considerably less than theirs; the Calmness and Thickness of the Weather giving very few of the Dutch or Blue the Opportunity of Engaging, which I am sure they look upon as a great Misfortune; and, had the Weather proved otherwise, I do not see how it was possible for any of them to have escaped us.

Tuesday, the 24th, About eight in the morning he went in again with the Boats, and Burnt the other seven, together with several Transport Ships, and some Vessels with Ammunition, the Names of which Ships I am not yet able to give your Lordship any other Account of than what I formerly sent you, which are in the Margin.

Wednesday the 25th, I Sailed from *le Hogue*, ordering the Admiral of the Blue, with a Squadron of English and Dutch Ships under his Command, to run along the Enemies Coast as far as *Havre de Grace*, in hopes that some of the beforementioned five Ships that stood to the Eastward, might have been got thither; but he informs me, that upon his appearing before that place, he could perceive but one or two small Vessels. The Number of the Enemies Ships did not exceed fifty Men of War, by the best information, from Fifty six to One hundred and four Guns; and tho' it must

(7)

This is the Exactest Account that I am able to give You, which I hope will prove to Your Lordship's Satisfaction. Vice-Admiral *Rooke* has given me a very good Character of several Men employed in the Boats, and I have ordered him to give me a List of the Names of such persons whose Behaviour was remarkable, in order to their Reward. I am,

My LORD,

Your Lordship's most Faithful

Humble Servant,

E. Russell,