

# The London Gazette.

published by Authority.

From Tuesday June 22, to Saturday June 26, 1756.

Admiralty Office, June 26.

*EXTRACT of a Letter from Admiral Byng to Mr. Cleveland, Secretary of the Admiralty. Dated on board the Ramillies off Minorca, May 25, 1756.*

**I** Have the Pleasure to desire that you will acquaint their Lordships, that having sailed from Gibraltar the 8th, I got off Minorca the 15th, having been joined by His Majesty's Ship Phoenix off Majorca two Days before, when the Enemy's Fleet appeared to the S. E. Falling little Wind, it was Five before I could form my Line, and distinguish any of the Enemy's Motions, and not at all judge of their Force more than by their Numbers, which were seventeen, and thirteen of those appeared large. They at first stood towards us in a regular Line, and tacked about Seven, which I judged was to endeavour to gain the Wind of us in the Night, so that, being late, I tacked, in order to keep the Weather Gage of them, as well as to make sure of the Land Wind: In the Morning, being very hazy, and not above five Leagues off Cape Mola, we tacked off towards the Enemy at Eleven, and at Day-Light had no Sight of them; but two Tartans, with the French private Signal, being close in with the Rear of our Fleet, I sent the Princess Louisa to chase one, and made the Signal for the Rear Admiral, who was nearest the other, to send Ships to chase her. The Princess Louisa, Defiance, and Captain, became at a great Distance, but the Defiance took her's, which had two Captains, two Lieutenants, and One hundred and two private Soldiers, who were sent out the Day before with Six hundred Men, on board Tartans, to reinforce the French Fleet, on our then appearing off the Place. The Phoenix (on Capt. Hervey's offer) prepared to serve as a Fire Ship, but without damaging her as a Frigate till the Signal was made to prime, when she was then to scuttle her Deck, every Thing else being prepared at the Time and Place allowed of. The Enemy now began to appear from the Mast head: I called in the Cruizes, and when they had joined me,

I tacked towards the Enemy, and form'd the Line a-head; I found the French were preparing theirs to Leeward, having unsuccessfully endeavoured to weather me: They were twelve large Ships of the Line and five Frigates. As soon as I judged the Rear of ours was the Length of their Van, we tacked alltogether, and I immediately made the Signal for the Ships that led to lead large, and for the Deptford to quit the Line, that ours might become equal in Number with theirs. At Two I made the signal to engage, as I found it was the surest Method of ordering every Ship to close down on the one that fell to their Lot. And here I must express my great Satisfaction at the very gallant Manner in which the Rear Admiral set the Van the Example, by instantly bearing down on the Ships he was to engage, with his Second, and who occasioned one of the French ships to begin the Engagement, which they did by raking ours as they went down: I bore right down on the Ship that lay opposite to me, and began to engage him, after having received their Fire for some Time on going down. The Intrepid, in the very Beginning, had his Foretop-mast shot away, and as that hung on his Fore-sail and backed it, he had no Command of his Ship, his Foretack, and all his Braces being cut at the same Time, so that he drove on the next Ship to him, and obliged that, and the Ships a-head of me, to throw all a-back: This obliged me to do so also for some Minutes, to avoid their falling all on board me, though not before we had drove our Adversary out of the Line, who put before the Wind, and had several Shot fired at him from his own Admiral. This not only caused the Enemy's Center to be unattacked, but left the Rear Admiral's Division rather uncover'd for some very little Time. I sent and called to the Ships a-head of me, to make sail on and go down on the Enemy, and ordered the Chesterfield to lay by the Intrepid, and the Deptford to supply the Intrepid's Place. I found the Enemy edged away constantly; and as they went three Feet to our one, they would never permit our closing with them, but take the Advantage of destroying our Rigging; for tho' I closed the Rear Admiral fast,

yet