

ANNEX 19

WILLIAM HENRY FLAYHART III

No. 354

CAPTAIN GRAHAM MOORE TO CORNWALLIS

Indefatigable,¹ at Sea, 6th October, 1804.

Sir,—I have the honour to acquaint you that I have executed the service you did me the honour to charge me with.

On the morning of the 29th of September, the *Indefatigable* got off Cadiz; on the 30th we fell in with the *Medusa*. Captain Gore having informed me the *Amphion* was in the Strait's mouth, and that the *Triumph* was off Gibraltar, and that Sir Robert Barlow meant to go into Cadiz for the trade there, on his way to England, I thought fit to send the *Medusa* to apprise Sir Robert Barlow of the nature of my order, that he might then judge whether or not he should go into Cadiz, and I directed Captain Gore to rejoin me with the *Amphion* as soon as possible off Cape St. Mary. On the 2nd inst. I was joined by the *Lively*, and on the third by the *Medusa* and *Amphion*; the latter having communicated what I thought necessary to Sir Robert Barlow.

Yesterday morning, Cape St. Mary bearing N.E. nine leagues, the *Medusa* made the signal for four sail W. by S.; I made the signal for a general chase; at eight A.M. discovered them to be four large Spanish frigates, which formed the line of battle ahead on our approach, and continued to steer in for Cadiz, the van ship carrying a broad pennant, and the ship next to her a rear-admiral's flag. Captain Gore's being the headmost ship, placed the *Medusa* on the weather-beam of the commodore;

¹ The *Indefatigable* had struck upon a rock on 15th September in standing out from Brest, having chased a presumed store-ship but apparently without serious damage.

the Indefatigable took a similar position alongside of the rear-admiral ; the Amphion and Lively each taking an opponent in the same manner, as they came up. After hailing to make them shorten sail without effect, I fired a shot across the rear-admiral's fore-foot, on which he shortened sail, and I sent Lieutenant Ascott, of the Indefatigable, to inform him that my orders were to detain his squadron ; that it was my earnest wish to execute them without bloodshed, but that his determination must be made instantly. After waiting some time, I made the signal for the boat, and fired a shot ahead of the admiral. As soon as the officer returned, with an unsatisfactory answer, I fired another shot ahead of the admiral, and bore down close on his weather bow. At this moment the admiral's second astern fired into the Amphion ; the admiral fired into the Indefatigable ; and I made the signal for close battle, which was instantly commenced with all the alacrity and vigour of English sailors. In less than ten minutes, la Mercedes, the admiral's second astern, blew up alongside the Amphion, with a tremendous explosion. Captain Sutton having, with great judgment, and much to my satisfaction, placed himself to leeward of that ship, the escape of the Spanish admiral's ship was rendered impossible. In less than half an hour she struck, as did the opponent of the Lively. Perceiving at this moment the Spanish commodore was making off and seeming to have the heels of the Medusa, I made the signal for the Lively to join in the chase, having before noticed the superior sailing of that ship. Captain Hamond did not lose an instant, and we had the satisfaction, long before sunset, to see from our mast-head that the only remaining ship had surrendered to the Medusa and Lively.

As soon as our boats had taken possession of

the rear-admiral, we made sail for the floating fragments of the unfortunate Spanish frigate which blew up; but, except forty taken up by the Amphion's boats, all on board perished. This squadron was commanded by Don José Bustamente, Knight of the Order of St. James, and a rear-admiral. They are from Monte Video, Rio de la Plata, and, from the information of the captain of the flag-ship, contained about four millions of dollars, eight hundred thousand of which were on board the Mercedes, which blew up. Other accounts state the quantity of specie to be much greater, public and private, and there is besides much valuable merchandise on board the captured ships. Our loss has been very trifling. I have not yet had the returns from the other ships, but the Indefatigable did not lose a man. The Spaniards suffered chiefly in their rigging, which was our object. The captains of the different ships conducted themselves so ably, that no honour could accrue to me but the fortunate accident of being senior officer.

The zeal, activity, and spirit of the officers, seamen, and marines of the squadron is best evinced by the complete manner in which they performed their work. Lieutenants Gore, Parker, and Ascott, of the Indefatigable, and Lieutenants Havilland and Hole of the Marines, gave me that support which their uniform good conduct formerly taught me to rely on. Mr. Griffith the master's conduct has my perfect approbation. I presume to recommend in the strongest manner, Lieutenant Gore, of the Indefatigable, to your favour and protection.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

GRAHAM MOORE.¹

¹ It would appear that intelligence of the seizure of the treasure ships had not been received in Madrid on November 8th, when Mr. Frere, on his own demand, received his letters of