

AN
AUTHENTIC ACCOUNT
OF THE
IMPORTANT BATTLE OF THE NILE,
Fought on the 1st and 2d of August, 1798.
BETWEEN THE
BRITISH FLEET,
COMMANDED BY
Rear Admiral Sir HORATIO NELSON, K. B.
AND
The French Fleet, Commanded by
VICE-ADMIRAL BRUEYS,
In Bequires Bay, on the Coast of EGYPT.

This account was sent by a young Man who was on board the *Majestic* of 74 Guns, to his Mother in Whitehaven. with the Particulars of the Cruize, previous to their falling in with the Enemy.



AUTHENTIC ACCOUNT, &c.

ON the 24th of May our orders came on board (we were then lying in Cadiz bay) to sail in company with nine ships of the Line, to join Admiral Nelson in the Mediterranean sea, in about three weeks time we fell in with Admiral Nelson, blue at the Mizzen, in the Vanguard, near Toulon, having with him the Orion, Alexander, the Leander, and the Mutine Brig of war; our fleet then consisted of thirteen Sail of the Line, one fifty gun ship, and a brig of sixteen guns; the following is a list of the ships: the Vanguard, seventy four guns, Admiral Nelson, Orion, ditto, Alexander, Audacious, Tellerophon, Culloden, Defence, Goliath, Swiftsure, Majestic, Theseus, Minotaur, Zealous, Leander, fifty, and the Mutine Brig of sixteen guns. From Toulon we sailed to the Isles of Corsica, in quest of the enemy, but not hearing of them there we continued our course upwards, as we well knew the French had sailed from Toulon, we then went through a very narrow passage, one ship only could go through at the time, with a pilot on

board, the name of the place is Faro Mesfina: A vast concourse of people came along-side of our ships in boats, and expressed great surprize at seeing such a fleet of large ships; for it was never known in the memory of any person living at this time, for a fleet of men of war to be seen there;—they were overjoyed when they understood we were in search of the French fleet, and informed us, that they were seen off, a few days before we arrived, and had gone to Malta;—we fell in with a brig, and she gave us intelligence that the French fleet had sailed for Egypt. Our Admiral being determined to find them, if possible, steered his course for Alexandria, in Egypt; but to his great surprize and mortification the French fleet had not been there at all: we then steered our course down again, and coasted round the Island of Candia, and then put in to the Island of Syracuse in Sicily, where we wooded and watered, being much in want of the same, also we took a good stock of Fresh Beef to sea with us;—and during the time we were laying there we gained fresh intelligence that the French fleet, after having captured Malta, and garrisoned the Island with French troops, had sailed for Alex-

andria, and arrived there four days after we left it. We then sailed from Syracuse on the 24th of July, and on our passage, the Culloden captured a brig laden with wine,—she was a transport belonging to and on her passage to the French fleet,—she confirmed the intelligence that we received in Syracuse. On the 1st of August, at 4 o'clock, P. M. the Zealous being the look out ship for that day, made the signal for an enemy's fleet lying at an anchor, off the mouth of the river Nile, above Alexandria, the enemy's fleet consisted of 1 three decker of one hundred and thirty guns, called the L'Orient: 5 Eighty-fours: 7 Seventy-fours: 4 Frigates: 1 Brig-cutter: and several Gun Boats: our Admiral made the signal to clear the ships for action, we hauled our wind about 5 o'clock, in order to get well to the windward of the enemy's fleet, we then bore down upon them at six o'clock: our Admiral hoisted the Bloody Flag at his maintopgallant-mast head, and made a signal for the ships to form a line in the best manner they could, and engage the enemy as they came up: the head-mast ship was the Goliath, which began to engage the enemy, at half an hour after 6 in the evening, and our ship began to engage

near 7 o'clock; during the time we were bringing the ship to an anchor with springs on our cables; we had several men killed and wounded, for we began to engage in five fathom water, within pistol shot of each other: I cannot relate every particular that happened in the action, as I had to attend my duty. Early in the action, one of the French Eighty-fours came from her moorings, intending to bring along side of us, broad-side too but thank God they were frustrated in their scheme, for they brought up stem on our star-board quarter, with her jib-boom before our Mizzen Rigging, they were not able to bring a gun to bear on us but small arms, (by these however we had several men killed) she likewise made several attempts to board us, but they were repulsed with great loss on their side, our great guns did her incredible mischief, as every shot near racked her fore and aft; she remained in that situation near an hour: she was so terribly shattered, that we could see through their bows very plain, she either cut or slipped her cables, and drifted away from us, and run aground: another two decker, an Eighty-four, made an attempt to board us on our bow, for her taffrail was right under our

Bowsprit, but they were soon repulsed by our Marines and boarders.

The L'Orient, of one hundred and thirty guns, engaged us on our Larboard bow: about 10 o'clock, as near as I can learn, she took fire in her main chains, and continued burning with great fury till 11 o'clock, when she blew up close to us, the explosion was terrible: then we had an Eighty-four engaging us on our Larboard side, but we soon totally dismasted her; and then two more French ships came to her assistance, they were all three blazing on us at once: we should have have a narrow escape from a watry tomb, had not the Alexander come to our Assistance: the Alexander had been one of the look out ships that day, and had got so far to sea ward, that she could not come into the engagement till late in the evening she was coming into the fleet from sea, but seeing our ship hotly engaged with three others of superior force, she came down to our assistance and lay on our larboard quarter, and engaged the enemy with great gallantry; about half past two o'clock our main and mizzen was shot away, near 3 o'clock we ceased firing on both sides: the action was again renewed between 4 & 5 o'clock in the morning, and con-

tinued near an hour, when it concluded. We took nine sail of the line, one three-decker blew up during the action, one Frigate on shore sunk and blew up another, which was set on fire by the enemy, after striking to us, a cutter brig likewise blew up, and several gun boats were destroyed belonging to the enemy during the action: two sail of the line and two Frigates, were all that escaped out of their whole fleet, and they much disabled: it was currently reported, but I cannot vouch for the truth of it, that there was a deal of valuable property in the three-decker that blew up, being the plunder that the French brought from Malta; our ship suffered very much in the action, besides the loss of her main and mizzen mast, she had her fore-mast and bowsprit shattered in several places, her fore-topmast rendered totally unserviceable, her fore-yard was shot away, and she received a great many shots in her Hull, but thank God, she has a good bottom: we had fifty men killed, one hundred and forty-three wounded, and twenty-one have died since of their wounds: and there are many more at this time that are dangerously ill, our Captain fell in the early part of the action, likewise our Boat-

swain, and a midshipman were killed. I have likewise to acquaint you, that the Culloden, unfortunately run aground, and was thereby prevented from coming into the action: the Alexander, Bellerophon, and Majestic were the greatest sufferers. To give you an accurate list of the killed and wounded on board of each ship, it is not in my power. The 2d of August, we were employed in clearing the wreck, and then we proceeded to get up Jury-masts, and rigging the ships for sea: seven of the prizes were dismasted: and on the 15th of August, having six of the prizes refitted, we proceeded to sea, being in all thirteen sail of the Line, (seven English and six French) we left Admiral Nelson with six of our ships and three prizes, lying at an anchor, off the mouth of the River Nile, with an intent to intercept any thing that came down the Nile, as it belongs to the French. We are now bound to old England once more;—but owing to the ships being in such a shattered condition, it will be a long time before we reach England, unless we meet with a very favourable wind. We had on board this action, 568 people.