

to the fleet, I away back home. And after dinner, by water to Whitehall and there waited, till the Council rose, in the boarden gallery. By and by the Council rises, and Sir W. Coventry comes out and he and I went aside and discoursed of much business of the Navy; and afterwards took his coach and to Hide parke, he and I alone. There we had much talk. First, he started a discourse of a talk he hears about the town, which, says he, is a very bad one, and fit to be suppressed if we knew how: which is the comparing of the success of the last year with that of this, saying that that was good and that bad. Then to discourse of himself, saying that he heard that he was under the lash of people's discourse about the Princes not having notice of the Dutch being out and for him to come back again, nor the Duke of Albemarle notice that the Prince was sent for back again. To which, he told me very perticularly how careful he was, the very same night that it was to resolve to send for the Prince back, to cause orders to be writ; and waked the Duke,¹ who was then in bed, to sign them; and that they went by express that very night, being the Wednesdy night before the Fight, which begun on the Friday; and that, for sending them by the post express and not by gentlemen on purpose, he made a sport of it, and said, "I knew none to send it with but would at least have lost more time in fitting themselves out then any diligence of theirs beyond that that the ordinary post would have recovered." I told him that this was not so much the towne talk as the reason of dividing the Fleete. To this, he told me he ought not to say much; but did assure me in general, that the proposition did first come from the Fleete; and the resolution not being prosecuted with orders so soon as the Generall² thought fit, the Generall did send Sir Edwd. Spragge up on purpose for them; and that there was nothing in the whole business which was not done with the full consent and advice of the Duke of Albemarle. He tells me, as to the business of Intelligence, the want whereof the world did complain much of, that for that it was not his business, and as he was therefore to have no share in the blame, so he would not meddle to lay it anywhere else. He doth not disowne but that the dividing of the fleet, upon the presumptions that was then had (which I suppose was the French fleet being come this way), was a good resolution.

1. The Duke of York.
2. Albemarle.