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ADMIRALTY-OFFICE—April 23. 1805.

Copy of a Letter from Vice-Admiral Sir Andrew Mitchell, K. B. Commander in Chief of his Majesty's ships and vessels at Halifax, to William Marsden, Esq. dated Bermuda, 24th March 1805.

SIR—I have the honour to inclose, for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, three letters relative to the capture of his Majesty's ship *Cleopatra*, on the 17th of February last, by the French frigate *La Ville de Milan*, after a very severe action.

Their Lordships will with pleasure observe how fortunate the *Leander* has been in falling in with both ships, taking *La Ville de Milan*, and retaking the *Cleopatra*.

No language of mine can do sufficient justice to the perseverance in the chase, and gallant conduct of Sir Robert Lawrie, Bart. his officers, and young ship's company, in the action with the enemy, which will ever reflect the highest honour on them, when their Lordships consider the superiority of the ships and men.

I cannot omit, at the same time, to give full credit to the zeal shewn by the *Leander's* ship's company, and with what alacrity and anxious wish (Captain Talbot reports to me) they shewed to engage both the frigates, then in the haze, and under French colours, when the *Leander* bore up to the place herself between them to bring them to action. From the high opinion I have of the officers, and the uniform good and steady conduct and discipline of the men, I trust they would have given a good account of them.

The *Cleopatra* sailed for Halifax the 18th instant, under the charge of Captain Sir Robert Lawrie, for the purpose of being valued and refitted as soon as possible.

La Ville de Milan I shall take to Halifax with the squadron. She is a very fine frigate, of the

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largest class, only one year old the day of the action, and completely fit for his Majesty's service in every respect, except the damage she received in her masts, yards, &c. in the action, having also a great quantity of spare stores on board. I therefore trust their Lordships will give the necessary orders for her being purchased into his Majesty's service. I shall take upon me to direct Commissioner Inglesfield to cause the proper officers of his Majesty's dock-yard to value her hull, stores, &c. agreeable to their Lordships' instructions on that head.

I have the honour to be, &c.

A. MITCHELL.

His Majesty's ship *Leander*, off St David's Head, Bermuda, Wednesday 6th March 1805, at ten A. M.

SIR—I have the honour to inform you, that I proceeded to sea, and cruized in his Majesty's ship under my command, according to your orders, dated the 13th of last month.

On Saturday the 23d February, at twelve o'clock at noon, a sail was seen from the mast-head, bearing south of us; the weather at this time was hazy, with squalls of wind and rain from the northward. All sail was immediately made in chase; the weather becoming still more hazy, in a few moments we lost sight of the chase; at half past two o'clock it cleared away a little to the southward, and we again got sight of her. I found we had considerably neared the chase, and that it was a large ship under jury masts, standing to the south-east. At three o'clock we saw another ship a short distance from the chase, steering the same course, also under jury masts, in appearance a much larger vessel. As we closed them very fast, we soon clearly saw they were both frigates; on their making us out to be a man of war, they closed to support each other, fired a gun to leeward, and hoisted

French Ensigns from their main stays; at four o'clock we were within gun-shot of them; they separated; the frigate nearest to us put before the wind, the other steered with it, on her larboard quarter. By half past four o'clock we got within musket-shot of the smallest frigate, gave her one of the main deck guns; when, after a few minutes hesitation, she hauled down her colours, and hove to.

On my hailing this frigate, I am sorry to tell you, Sir, that I was informed by them, she was his Majesty's ship *Cleopatra*, of thirty-two guns, lately commanded by Sir Robert Lawrie, Bart. She was taken on Sunday the 17th of February, after having brought to and sustained a most severe and gallant action for the space of three hours and a quarter, by a French frigate, nearly double her force, in size, complement of men, and weight of metal.

Observing that the part of the crew left on board her belonging to his Majesty's ship *Cleopatra*, had come on deck, and taken possession of her on the ship striking to us, I hailed, ordered them to make sail, and steer after his Majesty's ship *Leander*; again made sail in chase, and in about an hour's time got alongside the French frigate. She hauled down her colours, and struck to us without a gun being fired on either side.

On hailing the French frigate, you, Sir, may easily judge how happy I must have felt, on hearing I was answered by my friend Sir Robert Lawrie, who told me he was well, and that the ship was *La Ville de Milan*, 19 days from the island of Martinique, bound to France.

La Ville de Milan is a remarkably fine and handsome frigate, about one year old, 1200 tons burden, mounting 14 long nine-pounders on her quarter-deck, 6 long nine-pounders on the fore-

