



THE
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FROM TUESDAY, APRIL 3. TO FRIDAY, APRIL 6. 1798.

ADMIRALTY-OFFICE, MARCH 31.

Copy of a Letter from Admiral the Earl of St Vincent, Commander in Chief of his Majesty's ships and vessels on the coast of Portugal, to Evan Nepean, Esq. dated on board the Ville de Paris, at sea, the 21st of February 1798.

SIR,

You will herewith receive letters from Captain Lord Henry Powlett of his Majesty's ship the Thalia, and Capt. Downman of the Speedy sloop, the first giving an account of the capture of a French privateer, and the latter detailing an action between the Speedy and another of the enemy's privateers, which does great honour to her captain, officers, and company.

I am, SIR, &c. ST VINCENT.

SIR,

Thalia, at sea, Feb. 6. 1798.

On the 5th inst. at four A. M. Cape Finisterre being S. W. 70 leagues, I came up with and captured the Antoine French privateer brig, mounting 16 guns, and having 70 men: She was returning from a cruize to Rochelle, having captured five neutral vessels.

I remain, SIR, &c. H. POWLETT.

Geo. Hope, Esq. his Majesty's ship Alcmena.

MY LORD, Speedy, Tagus, February 16. 1798.

I have the honour to acquaint you, that on the 3d inst. at day-light, being seventeen leagues west of Vigo, we discovered a brig bearing down on us with all sail set. At three P. M. being within half a mile of us, she hauled her wind, and opened her fire; on which we made all sail to close, engaging her until half past five, when she tacked, and made sail from us. I immediately tacked, continuing to engage till half past seven, when, from her advantage of sailing and little wind, she got out of gun-shot,—Owing to the great swell, we received little damage, having only our fore topmast shot through, with some of the running rigging cut. It falling calm, and the vessels separating against all our efforts with the sweeps, I had the mortification, about twelve o'clock, to see her fire several guns at our prize that we had taken the day before.

Owing to the good conduct of the Master, who, with twelve men, were on board the prize, battened down 26 Spaniards,

[Price Sixpence.

and made their escape in a small boat. At day-light, a breeze of wind sprung up, which enabled us to fetch her. At eight o'clock, she being within gun-shot, tacked, and made all sail from us, rowing with her sweeps at the same time. We chased her until noon, when they finding she had the heels of us, shortened sail, wore, and stood towards us, with a red flag flying at the main top-gallant-mast head. At half past 12, being within pistol-shot, we began to engage her, with the wind upon the larboard quarter. At two, observing her fire to slacken, I thought it a good opportunity to lay her on board; but at that instant she wore, and came to the wind on the starboard tack; but finding us close upon her starboard quarter, and from our braces and bow-lines being shot away, our yard coming square, she took the opportunity to put before the wind, and made all sail from us. We immediately wore after her, firing musquetry at each other for 20 minutes; and so soon as the lower mast was secured, set our studding-sails, and continued the chase until seven P. M. when we lost sight of her from her superior sailing. I then hauled our wind, and made short tacks all night to fall in with our prize; at day-light saw her to windward; at ten P. M. retook her, with ten Frenchmen on board. I learn from the prize-master, the brig is called the Papillon, 360 tons burthen, pierced for 18 guns, mounting 14, four twelve and ten nine pounders, manned with 160 men. We had five men killed, and four badly wounded. I have to regret the loss of Lieutenant Dutton and Mr Johnston, boatwain, amongst the killed. I beg leave to recommend to your Lordship's notice Mr Marshall, Master, for his good conduct during the action. Every praise is due to the ship's company for their good behaviour. As all our lower masts, bowsprit, main boom, both top-masts, and most of the yards are shot through, with all the standing and running-rigging cut, I thought proper to put into Lisbon to repair our damage.

I have the honour to be, &c. HUGH DOWNMAN.

Earl St Vincent, &c.

Copy of another Letter, dated in the Tagus, March 3. 1798.

SIR,

I inclose a letter from Captain Waller, of his Majesty's ship the Emerald, acquainting me of his having captured Le Chafour barque privateer, of 16 guns, on the 12th ult.

I am, Sir, &c.

ST VINCENT.

(B.)