

I have sent Orders to Captain Hofte with the Amphion and Volage, (which appear to have suffered a great deal and been in this Country the longest,) to take the Prizes to Spithead.

I have the Honour to be, &c.

(Signed) C. COTTON.

*Magnificent, off Liffa,
March 24, 1811.*

SIR,

IT is with the greatest Satisfaction I herewith transmit a Letter I have received from Captain Hofte, giving an Account of a most gallant Action, which has been fought in the Adriatic between a Detachment of Frigates named in the Margin*, under his Command, and the Enemy's Squadron from Ancona, the Result of which is that Two of the Enemy's Frigates have been captured, and one destroyed; the Remainder owing their Escape to the crippled State of the Masts and Rigging of His Majesty's Ships.

When the great Disparity of Force in this Action is considered, the Smoothness of the Water, which enabled the Enemy's small Craft to take a Part, and, from his being to Windward, enabled to choose his own Plan of Attack, I think, Sir, the Superiority in Bravery, Discipline, and professional Knowledge exhibited by the British Officers and Seamen never was more conspicuous.

I received by a Neutral Vessel, when off Corfu, a few Lines from Captain Hofte, written immediately after the Action, which mentioned that the Ships which had escaped had taken Refuge in the Island of Liffina, in a very disabled State, and where he thought they may be destroyed, I therefore immediately proceeded hither in the Magnificent, but found on my Arrival that they had sailed and gone to Ragusa.

I have the Honour to be, &c.

(Signed) GEO. EYRE.

* Amphion, Cerberus, Active, Volage.

*His Majesty's Ship Amphion, off the
Island of Liffa, March 14, 1811.*

SIR,

IT is with much Pleasure I have to acquaint you that after an Action of Six Hours we have completely defeated the combined French and Italian Squadrons, consisting of Five Frigates, One Corvette, One Brig, Two Schooners, One Gun Boat, and One Xebec; the Force opposed to them was His Majesty's Ship Amphion, Cerberus, Active, and Volage. On the Morning of the 13th, the Active made the Signal for a strange Fleet to Windward, and Daylight discovered to us the Enemy's Squadron lying to, off the North Point of the Island of Liffa; the Wind at that Time was from the North West, a fine Breeze. The Enemy having formed in Two Divisions, instantly bore down to attack us under all possible Sail. The British Line, led by the Amphion, was formed by Signal in the closest Order on the Starboard Tack to receive them. At Nine A.M. the Action commenced by our firing on the headmost Ships as they came within Range; the Intention of the Enemy appeared to be to break our Line in two Places, the Starboard Division, led by the French Commodore, bearing upon the Amphion and Active, and the Larboard Division on the Cerberus and Volage; in this Attempt he failed (though almost aboard of us), by the well directed

Fire and compact Order of our Line. He then endeavoured to round the Van Ship, to engage to Leeward, and thereby place us between two Fires, but was so warmly received in the Attempt, and rendered so totally unmanageable, that in the Act of wearing he went on Shore on the Rocks of Lyffa in the greatest possible Confusion.

The Line was then wore to renew the Action, the Amphion not half a Cable-length from the Shore; the Remainder of the Enemy's Starboard Division passing under our Stern and engaging us at Leeward, whilst the Larboard Division tacked and remained to Windward, engaging the Cerberus, Volage, and Active. In this Situation the Action commenced with great Fury, His Majesty's Ships frequently in Positions which unavoidably exposed them to a raking Fire of the Enemy, who with his Superiority of Numbers, had Ability to take advantage of it; but nothing, Sir, could withstand the brave Squadron I had the Honour to command. At Twenty Minutes past Eleven A. M. the Flora struck her Colours, and at Twelve the Bellona followed her Example. The Enemy to Windward now endeavoured to make off, but were followed up as close as the disabled State of His Majesty's Ships would admit of, and the Active and Cerberus were enabled at Three P. M. to compel the Sternmost of them to surrender, when the Action ceased, leaving us in Possession of the Corona of Forty-four Guns, and the Bellona of Thirty-two Guns (the French Commodore), the Favorite of Forty-four Guns on Shore, who shortly after blew up with a dreadful Explosion, the Corvette of the Enemy making all possible Sail to the North West, and Two Frigates crowding Sail for the Port of Liffina, the Brig making off to the South East, and the small Craft flying in every Direction; nor was it in my Power to prevent them, having no Ship in a State to follow them.

I must now account for the Flora's getting away after having struck her Colours. At the Time I was engaged with that Ship, the Bellona was raking us; and when she struck, I had no Boat that could possibly take possession of her. I therefore preferred closing with the Bellona and taking her, to losing Time alongside the Flora, which I already considered belonging to us. I call on the Officers of my own Squadron as well as those of the Enemy to witness my Assertion. The Correspondence I have had on this Subject with the French Captain of the Danae (now their Commodore,) and which I enclose herewith, is convincing, and even their own Officers (Prisoners here) acknowledge the Fact. Indeed I might have sunk her, and so might the Active; but as the Colours were down, and all Firing from her had long ceased, both Captain Gordon and myself considered her as our own: the Delay of getting a Boat on board the Bellona, and the anxious Pursuit of Captain Gordon after the beaten Enemy enabled him to steal off, till too late for our shattered Ships to come up with him, his Rigging and Sails apparently not much injured; but by the Laws of War I shall ever maintain he belongs to us. The Enemy's Squadron, as per inclosed Return, was commanded by Monsieur Dubourdieu, a Captain de Vaiffeau, and a Member of the Legion of Honor, who is killed. In Justice to a brave Man I must say, he set a noble Example of Intrepidity to those under him. They