

Admiralty-Office, September 10, 1811.

*Copy of a Letter from Captain Ferris, of His Majesty's Ship Diana, addressed to Rear-Admiral Sir Thomas Williams, and transmitted by Admiral Sir Charles Cotton to John Wilson Croker Esq.*

SIR,

I HAVE the Honour to inform you, that while standing towards the Cordovan Light-House, in Company with His Majesty's Ship Semiramis, in the Afternoon of the 24th Instant, I discerned Four Sail inside of the Shoals at the Mouth of the River Gironde, under Escort of a National Brig of War. I meditated either their Capture or Destruction, which could only be accomplished by Artifice and Promptitude, without the Sacrifice of many Lives. Stratagem was used, which had the desired Effect, as they sent a Vessel with Pilots to our Assistance, and I anchored after Dark the Two Ships midway between the Cordovan and Royan, under whose Guns the Brig had taken Refuge, and close to the Brig stationed for the Protection of the several Convoys passing either way. I dispatched Three Boats under the Orders of Lieutenant Sparrow (Second), Lieutenant Roper (Third), and Mr. Holmes Master's Mate, from this Ship, seconded by Four Boats under the Orders of Lieutenants Gardner, Grace, and Nicholson, and Mr. Reneau Master's Mate, from the Semiramis, to capture or destroy the Convoy then anchored up the River, about Four Miles distant, but the Tide prevented their accomplishing it until late in the Night, and at Day-light, finding the captured Vessels with the Boats far up the River beyond the Two Brigs, I determined to attack them with the Ship, but not without using the same Artifice as the preceding Night to prevent Suspicion; and so convinced were they of our being Friends that the Captain of the Port, Monsieur Michel Auguste Dubourg, Capitaine de Frégate, and commanding the in-shore Brig, came on board to offer his Services, and was not undeceived until he had ascended the Quarter-Deck. The Diana laid the outer Brig on board, and Lieutenant Robert W. Parsons (First Lieutenant), Lieutenant Madden, First of the Royal Marines, and Mr. Mark G. Noble Boatswain, headed about Thirty Seamen and Marines (as many as could be spared by the Absence of the Boats), and succeeded in gaining Possession of His Majesty's late Gun-Brig Teazer, mounting Twelve Eighteen-Pound Carronades, and Two Long Eighteen-Pounder Guns, commanded by Monsieur Alex. Papineau, Lieutenant de Vaisseau, with a Complement of Eighty-five Men, and without Loss on either Side. It adds to the Lustre these Officers and Men achieved, the Humanity they displayed to the overpowered Captives in putting them below without the Force of Arms and an unnecessary Effusion of Blood. It was at this Time that Alarm was given and the Batteries opened their Fire upon the Ships, when Captain Richardson in the Semiramis, in a Manner which characterises the Officer and Seaman, pursued, drove on shore, and burnt, under the Guns of the Batteries, the French National Brig Le Pluvier, mounting Sixteen Guns and One Hundred and Thirty-six Men, whose Captain, I have before spoken of, was decoyed on board.

Having obtained to the utmost the Object in View, I anchored in the Gironde, out of Gun-Shot, to repair the Damages sustained by the different

Vessels, when I was rejoined by the Boats and the captured Convoy, a List of which I have the Honour to enclose. The Services I received from Captain Richardson, the Officers and Ship's Company of the Semiramis, merit my warmest Acknowledgements, and I should be committing a great Injustice to the Officers and Ship's Company I command, were I not to speak in Terms of the highest Admiration for their Steadiness and Zeal throughout the whole Affair. And could I add stronger Encomiums to one than another, it would be from the great Assistance I received from Lieutenant R. W. Parsons and Mr. David Bevans the Master, whose unremitting Attention in piloting the Ship in the most intricate Navigation greatly tended to insure the Object of Pursuit. I also enclose you a Letter I received from Captain Charles Richardson, narrating his Attack upon the Brig, and enclosing a List of wounded in the Affray; and I regret to add that I lost One Man overboard, after the Brig was in our full Possession.

I have the Honour to be, &c.

(Signed) W. FERRIS, Captain.

To Rear-Admiral Sir Thomas Williams.

*His Majesty's Ship Semiramis, Royan Roads, August 25, 1811.*

SIR,

I HAVE the Honour to report to you, that as soon as the Diana ran on board the Enemy's outside Brig, her Comfort, at anchor in-shore of her, immediately cut her Cable and made sail for the Beach near the Battery of Royan, where she grounded. I followed in to Five Fathoms, anchoring with a Spring; the Broadside was brought to bear on the Enemy's Brig, and Bow Guns on the Battery, within Grape-Shot of both.

After engaging some Time, I found the Guns of the Enemy's Vessel almost silenced, and perceived the Boats haul up to quit her.

At this Time the Barge, Pinnace, and Cutter rejoined me: I ordered Lieutenant Gardner with these Boats immediately to board the Enemy, which was gallantly effected after receiving his Broadside. She proved to be the French National Brig Pluvier, of Sixteen Guns and One Hundred and Thirty-six Men, commanded, pro tempore, by Lieutenant Page de St. Waast.

The Prize being fast on shore, the Ebb Tide running most rapidly, and my own Ship in only Twenty Feet Water, I found it necessary to take the Remainder of her People out and burn her, which, when completely effected, I made all sail to join you.

I have but to add in this little Affair, my Officers and Ship's Company behaved entirely to my Satisfaction; and I feel much indebted to my First Lieutenant Gardner, Second Lieutenant Grace, and Mr. Reneau Master's Mate, commanding the Boats, for the handsome Manner in which they ran alongside the Enemy.

Lieutenant Taylor of the Marines, and Mr. Brickwood Purser, being the only Officers on board, were of the greatest Use, the former commanding the Main-Deck, the latter the Quarter-Deck Guns.

I have the Honour to be, &c.

(Signed) C. RICHARDSON, Captain.

To Captain William Ferris, of His Majesty's Ship Diana.

P. S. Inclosed is the Surgeon's List of the Wounded.

