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*Admiralty-Office, June 24, 1778.*

**T**HE Three Letters from the Honourable Admiral Keppel to Mr. Stephens, of which the following are Copies and Extract, were received this Afternoon at this Office.

( C O P Y . )

*Victory, at Sea, June 13, 1778.*

S I R,

A Little before Twelve o'Clock Yesterday, the Fleet being in a Line of Battle, steering S. S. W. the Wind at West, and the Lizard bearing N. 44. 00 W. distant 23 Miles, we observed two Ships seemingly reconnoitring the Fleet, with two Tenders accompanying them; I immediately directed the whole Fleet to chace, and between Five and Six in the Evening the Milford had got close along-side the leewardmost Ship, a large French Frigate; I made the Signal for the Ships chasing to bring down their Chace to me; which Sir William Burnaby could not, by civil Words, get the French Officer to allow him to do; but upon the Hector's drawing near upon her, and firing a Gun shotted, she stood to her, and the Hector then made Sail with her towards the Fleet. The other French Ship was closely pursued by the Arethusa, and Alert Cutter, and, at some Distance a stern of them, the Valiant and Monarch.

I am not able to inform their Lordships in this Letter, relative to that Chace, more than that an Officer got to me this Morning, from the Valiant, who had been in the Boat the whole Night; his Captain directed him to inform me, that he should have returned agreeable to the Signal to leave off Chace, but that he had observed the French Frigate had given Battle to the Arethusa.

At Nine o'Clock last Night I sent Sir Charles Douglas to Leeward to the Hector and America, to let their Captains know, it was my Orders they brought the French Frigate under the Victory's Stern; and Sir Charles Douglas was charged from me, to express every Civility to the French Captain, and to inform him that I should see him when the Ships and Frigate got up to the Fleet in the Morning; in the mean Time he was also to attend the Frigate, unmolested, up to me; but, to my Astonishment, this Morning about Nine o'Clock, I observed the French Ship seemingly going upon the other Tack; one of the Ships that was attending her fired a Shot across her, which was immediately followed by the French Frigate's discharging her whole Broadside and Musquetry into the America, at the very Moment Lord Longford was upon the Gunwale talking to the French Captain in the most civil Strain; several of the Shot struck the America, and wounded four of her People; The French Captain then struck his Colours; his Behaviour merited the Fire of the America, but Lord Longford's Hu-

manity and Prudence prevailed, much to his Credit, over his Repentment.

I hope I have not done improperly in sending the Frigate into Plymouth: The Circumstance of her Behaviour, and the other French Frigate giving Battle to the Arethusa, has been a Justification to myself for seizing her and sending her into Port.

I am, SIR,

Your most obedient and very humble Servant,  
A. KEPPEL.

P. S. The French Frigate is called the Licorne, of 32 Guns and 230 Men.

*Philip Stephens, Esq; Secretary to the Admiralty.*

( E X T R A C T . )

*Victory, at Sea, June 20, 1778, at Noon, the Lizard, N. 37: 00. E. 19 Leagues.*

S I R,

**B**EFORE Noon of Yesterday we saw the Valiant and Monarch, who had chased from the Fleet on the 17th, coming down; the Valiant with a crippled Ship in Tow, which we soon perceived was the Arethusa, with her Main-mast gone, and much shattered in other Respects.

The Arethusa had come up with her Chace on the Evening of the 17th; she proved a large French Frigate with heavy Metal (the Belle Poule;) Captain Marshall requested of the French Captain to bring to, and informed him, he had Orders to conduct him to his Admiral, who wished to speak to him; both which Requests the French Officer peremptorily refused to comply with; Captain Marshall then fired a Shot across the Frigate, upon which the French Captain instantaneously fired his whole Broadside into the Arethusa, who was at that Time very close along-side, which brought on an Action on both Sides, which continued for upwards of two Hours; the Arethusa being much shattered in her Masts, Sails and Rigging, and there being very little Wind to govern her, she was thrown in such a Situation, as not to be able to get her Head towards the French Ship, notwithstanding Captain Marshall's utmost Endeavours so to do: The French Ship's Head being in with the Land, and getting her Foresail set, she stood into a small Bay, where Boats at Day-light came out, and towed her into Safety.

Captain Marshall appears to have conducted himself in the whole of this Matter with the greatest Spirit and Gallantry, and speaks with great Satisfaction of the Behaviour of his Officers and Ship's Company. The Arethusa had eight Men killed, and thirty-six wounded; the Loss of the French must be considerable.

I must not omit in this Relation to acquaint their Lordships, that Capt. Fairfax, in the Alert Cutter, has had his Share in the Business; he got along-side of a Schooner of 10 Carriage Guns and 10 Swivels that attended