

# The London Gazette.

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*Admiralty-Office, October 12, 1779.*

**A** LETTER from Captain Pearson, of His Majesty's Ship *Serapis*, to Mr. Stephens, of which the following is a Copy, was Yesterday received at this Office.

*Pallas, French Frigate in Congress Service, Tenth, October 6, 1779.*

**SIR,**  
**Y**OU will be pleased to inform the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, that on the 23d ult. being close in with Scarborough, about Eleven o'Clock, a Boat came on Board with a Letter from the Bailiffs of that Corporation, giving Information of a Flying Squadron of the Enemy's Ships being on the Coast, and of a Part of the said Squadron having been seen from thence the Day before, standing to the Southward. As soon as I received this Intelligence, I made the Signal for the Convoy to bear down under my Lee, and repeated it with two Guns; notwithstanding which, the Van of the Convoy kept their Wind, with all Sail stretching out to the Southward from under Flamborough Head, till between Twelve and One, when the Headmost of them got Sight of the Enemy's Ships, which were then in Chace of them; they then tacked, and made the best of their Way under the Shore for Scarborough, &c. setting fly their Top-gallant Sheets, and firing Guns; upon which I made all the Sail I could to Windward, to get between the Enemy's Ships and the Convoy, which I soon effected. At One o'Clock we got Sight of the Enemy's Ships from the Mast-head, and about Four we made them plain from the Deck to be three large Ships and a Brig; upon which I made the Countess of Scarborough's Signal to join me, she being in Shore with the Convoy, at the same Time I made the Signal for the Convoy to make the best of their Way, and repeated the Signal with two Guns: I then brought-to, to let the Countess of Scarborough come up, and cleared Ship for Action. At half past Five the Countess of Scarborough joined me, the Enemy's Ships then bearing down upon us, with a light Breeze at S. S. W. at Six tacked, and laid our Head in Shore, in order to keep our Ground the better between the Enemy's Ships and the Convoy; soon after which we perceived the Ships bearing down upon us to be a two-decked Ship and two Frigates; but from their keeping End on upon us, on bearing down, we could not discern what Colours they were under: At about twenty Minutes past Seven, the largest Ship of the three brought-to, on our Larboard Bow, within Musquet Shot: I hailed him, and asked what Ship it was; they answered in English, the Princess

Royal; I then asked where they belonged to, they answered evasively; on which I told them, if they did not answer directly, I would fire into them; they then answered with a Shot, which was instantly returned with a Broadside; and after exchanging two or three Broadfides, he backed his Topsails, and dropped upon our Quarter within Pistol Shot, then filled again, put his Helm a-weather, and run us on Board upon our Weather Quarter, and attempted to board us, but being repulsed, he sheered off; upon which I backed our Top sails, in order to get Square with him again, which, as soon as he observed, he then filled, put his Helm a-weather, and laid us athwart hawse; his Mizzen Shrouds took our jib Boom, which hung him for some Time, till it at last gave Way, and we dropt along-side of each other, Head and Stern, when the Fluke of our spare Anchor hooking his Quarter, we became so close Fore and Aft, that the Muzzles of our Guns touched each others Sides. In this Position we engaged from Half past Eight till Half past Ten, during which Time, from the great Quantity and Variety of combustible Matters which they threw in upon our Decks, Chains, and in short into every Part of the Ship, we were on Fire not less than ten or twelve Times in different Parts of the Ship, and it was with the greatest Difficulty and Exertion imaginable at Times that we were able to get it extinguished. At the same Time the largest of the two Frigates kept sailing round us the whole Action, and raking us Fore and Aft, by which Means she killed or wounded almost every Man on the Quarter and Main Decks. About Half past Nine, either from a Hand Grenade being thrown in at one of our Lower Deck Ports, or from some other Accident, a Cartridge of Powder, was set on Fire, the Flames of which running from Cartridge to Cartridge all the Way aft, blew up the whole of the People and Officers that were quartered abaft the Main-mast, from which unfortunate Circumstance all those Guns were rendered useless for the Remainder of the Action; and I fear the greatest Part of the People will lose their Lives. At Ten o'Clock they called for Quarters from the Ship alongside, and said they had struck: Hearing this, I called upon the Captain to know if they had struck, or if he asked for Quarters; but no Answer being made, after repeating my Words two or three Times, I called for the Boarders and ordered them to board, which they did; but the Moment they were on Board her, they discovered a superior Number laying under Cover with Pikes in their Hands ready to receive them, on which our People retreated instantly into our own Ship, and returned to their Guns again till Half past

[ Price Seven-Pence. ]

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