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Admiralty Office, April 2, 1782.

Copy of a Letter from Captain Pule, of His Majesty's Ship the Success, of 32 Guns and 220 Men, to Mr. Stephens, dated at Spithead the 30th of March, 1782.

S I R,

I HAVE the Honor to desire you will inform My Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, That on the 16th Instant, at Daylight, in Latitude 35:40 North, Cape Spartel bearing E. N. E. Eighteen Leagues, with the Wind at S. W. standing for the Gut, with the Vernon Storeship, we discovered a Sail right ahead, close hauled on the Larboard-Tack: As soon as I could discover her Hull from the Masthead, which the Haze and lofty Poop magnified, I made the Vernon's Signal to haul the Wind on the Starboard Tack, and make all Sail; soon after hauled our Wind, the strange Sail tacked and gave Chace; at Half past Two P. M. finding the Chace gained on the Vernon, I shortened Sail to let her go ahead, and then brought to, in Hopes at least to make him shorten Sail, and divert his Attention from the Ship under my Convoy. We soon after discovered him to be only a large Frigate with a Poop: At a little after Five he hoisted Spanish Ensign, with a broad Pendant, and fired a Gun: At Six, being within Random Shot astern of me, I wore, and stemmed for his Lee Bow, till we had just Distance sufficient to weather him; then hauled close athwart his Forefoot, giving him our whole Fire within Half-Rifol Shot; passed close to Windward engaging, while the Enemy, expecting us to Leeward, were firing their Lee Guns into the Water; the Disorder our first Fire threw them into they did not recover. We then wore, and placed ourselves to great Advantage, which our Superiority of sailing allowed us to do, supporting, without Intermission, a most astonishing close and well-served Fire, at never more than Half Cable Distance, till the Enemy struck, which was about Twenty Minutes past Eight. She proved to be the Santa Catalina, Don Mig. Jacon Commander, of Thirty-four Guns, Twenty-six long Spanish Twelves on the Main deck, and Eight Six-pounders on the Quarter-deck. The Number of Men I have not been able to ascertain. We have on Board 286 Prisoners. The Captain and Officers say they had between 25 and 30 killed, and only 8 wounded. Don Mig. Jacon is a Captain in the Line, hath a distinguishing Pendant as such, and is senior Officer of the Frigates cruising off the Straits; had a very particular Description of the Success sent him, whom he was particularly directed to look out for; had been cruising Three Weeks for us; had seen us Four Times, chased us Twice with a Squadron of Four

and Six Sail, from whom he parted Two Days before: He speaks with much Displeasure of the Behaviour of his Ship's Company. Lieutenant Oakely, whom I had appointed to take Charge of the Prize, was indefatigable in clearing the Wreck; Her Mizzen-mast fell (some Time before she struck; her Main-mast in a short Time after, and her Fore-mast must have shared the same Fate, if the Water had not been remarkably smooth; in short, without assuming much Presumption, I may add, our Guns did as much Execution in little Time as could have been done; her Hull was like a Sieve, the Shot going through both Sides. From this State of the Prize, their Lordships may imagine my Hopes of getting her to Port were not very sanguine: Whilst we were endeavouring to secure the Foremast, and had just repaired our own Damages, which were considerable in our Yards, Masts and Sails, at Day light of the 18th, Six Sail appeared in Sight, Two Frigates from whom had chased and were reconnoitring us; I instantly ordered the Vernon to make all Sail, hoisted all my Boats out, sent on Board for Lieutenant Oakely and the Scamen, with Orders to set Fire to the Santa Catalina before he left her. She blew up in a Quarter of an Hour, the Wind being at S. E. I made all Sail from the Six Sail, and determined on proceeding with the Vernon to Madeira. She being now in Want of Provisions, and Water. We had now 286 Prisoners on Board, whose Intention to attempt rising we had fortunately discovered, encouraged by the Superiority of Numbers, which appeared very striking to them.

The spirited Behaviour of every Officer, and of the Ship's Company, is superior to my Praise; their real Value and Merit upon this Occasion hath shewn itself in much stronger and more expressive Terms than I am Master of; but, it still becomes a Duty incumbent on me, to represent them to their Lordships as deserving their Favor and Protection; I have particular Pleasure in so doing. Lieutenant M. Kinley, (2d) assisted by Mr. James, Master, were very assiduous in getting the Success's Damages repaired as well as they could admit. Lieutenant Pownall, of the Marines, by the greatest Attention and good Example, formed a Party that would do Honor to Veteran Soldiers. Indeed, Sir, the Warrant, Petty, Able, &c. did their Duty in so noble a Manner; that I feel myself happy in rendering them my public Thanks. I shall hope, if their Lordships are pleased to consider the Conduct of the Success on this Occasion as deserving their Notice, that they will permit me to recommend the First Lieutenant to their Favor. From the Reports given me since, it adds to my Satisfaction to know, that, had I not been obliged to set Fire to the Catalina, she could not have swam, a Gale of Wind coming on immediately

[Price Three-pence-Halfpenny.]

