

were close engaged for Thirty-five Minutes, and the Unicorn's Masts, Sails and Rigging are much cut and damaged, not a Man on Board was hurt, while the Enemy had Thirty-seven killed and Fifteen wounded.

Intrepidity and judicious Management were never more strongly manifested than in this Instance, which reflects the highest Honor on Captains Williams and Martin, and on every Individual under their Command, and they all have my humble but warmest Approbation and Thanks.

*Copy of a Letter from Captain Williams, of His Majesty's Ship Unicorn, to Vice-Admiral Kingmill, dated Unicorn, at Sea, June 10, 1796.*

S I R, *Holy Head E. S. E. dist. 8 Leagues.*

I HAVE the Honor to lay before you a Narrative of the Proceedings of the Squadron under my Command since my Departure from Cork on the 19th Ult. On the following Day, in consequence of my having received Intelligence of the Enemy's Privateers being on the Coast, to the Northward of Cape Clear, I dispatched His Majesty's Sloop Hazard, with Orders to Lieutenant Parker her Commander to cruise between the Cape and the Mouth of the Shannon, while I, for the more effectual Protection of our Trade, cruized with the Santa Margaritta in the Vicinity of Cape Clear. I had the Satisfaction a few Days afterwards to learn that the Hazard had retaken Two Prizes, and had chased the Privateer off the Coast that captured them, after a narrow Escape from being taken. On the 5th Instant, having met with other Ships of the Irish Station, I concluded upon making a Circuit on the outer Limits of my Station, accompanied by the Santa Margaritta, and at Dawn of Day on the 8th Instant, Scilly bearing E. Half S. 17 Leagues, we discovered Three Ships of War on our Lee Beam, distant Two or Three Miles, to which we immediately gave Chace, and soon afterwards perceived them to edge away, and that they were Enemy's Ships, Two Frigates and a large Ship Corvette. At Nine A. M. they formed themselves in a close Bow and Quarter Line, and continued to run from us in that Position, the largest Ship under easy Sail, for the Support of his Squadron. In this Situation we approached them very fast, and must have speedily brought them to Action. I therefore made the Signal to form for Battle, the Margaritta being at this Time a-head of the Unicorn, and at the same Time directed her by Signal to come within Hail, to learn from Captain Martin his Opinion of the Enemy's Force, who informed me, that the largest Ship was a 38 Gun Frigate, the Thames, and a Corvette. I ordered Captain Martin to attack the Thames, acquainting him with my Intention to fight the largest Ship with the Unicorn. On our nearer Approach, the Corvette, which detained the other Ships, gradually hauled out to Windward, and passed our Weather Beam in long Gun-Shot, steering afterwards the same Course as the other Ships, and with the Intention, I then imagined, to be in Readiness to give Support to either of her Friends eventually most needing it.

At One, P. M. the Two Frigates hoisted French Colours, the largest Ship a Commodore's Pendant, and at the same Moment commenced a quick and

well-directed Fire on us with their stern Chaces; the Corvette at this Time hauled more up, and, to my great Astonishment, brought to, to board a Sloop passing us on the contrary Tack. As the Commodore continued to wait for the Thames we thereby approached them both, but were considerably retarded by the Effects of their Shot. At Four, P. M. the Thames being the sternmost Ship, bore round up, to avoid the Fire from the Unicorn, and to pour a Broadside into the Margaritta's Bow, when I had the Pleasure to see Captain Martin manœuvre his Ship with the greatest Judgment, and with the utmost Gallantry he laid himself close alongside his Opponent. The superior and well-directed Fire from the Santa Margaritta marked the Discipline of his Ship, and soon put the Thames into his Possession. The Commodore, on seeing his Companion fall, made all Sail, and by a sudden and judicious though unsuccessful Manœuvre, endeavoured to gain the Wind of the Unicorn. We were at this Time chasing him toward the Entrance of the Irish Channel, and soon after passed close to the Tusker Rock. The Parity of Sailing in the Two Ships, aided by the Judgment of the Enemy's Commander, kept us at running Fight for Ten Hours; during which Period we were much annoyed in our Sails and Rigging, and were for some Time unluckily deprived of the Use of our Main-Top-sail; but on it's falling less Wind after Dark we were enabled to use our supernumerary Flying Sails, Royal Steering Sails, &c. which, by slow Degrees, brought us so near his Weather Quarter as to take the Wind from his Sails; when, at Half past Ten at Night, after having pursued Two Hundred and Ten Miles, we shot up alongside of our Antagonist, gave him Three Cheers, and commenced close Action, which had continued in that Position with great Impetuosity on both Sides for Thirty-five Minutes; when, on clearing up of the Smoke, I observed that the Enemy had dropt on our Quarter, was close hauled, attempting, by a masterly Manœuvre, to cross our Stern, and gain the Wind. This was happily prevented by our instantly throwing all aback, and giving the Ship strong Stern-way, by which we passed his Bow, regained our Situation, and renewed the Attack. The Effects of our Fire soon put an End to all Manœuvre, for the Enemy's Ship was compleatly dismantled, her Fire ceased, and all further Resistance appeared to be ineffectual; they called to us they had surrendered. The Ship proves to be La Tribune, commanded by Commodore John Moulton, mounting 44 Guns, though pierced for 48; on the Main Deck 26 Twelves, on the Quarter-Deck and Forecastle 16 long Sixes, and 42 lb. Carronades; had on Board at the Commencement of the Action 337 Men, 37 of whom are killed, 13 badly and 2 slightly wounded. The Ship is quite new, launched since the Commencement of the War, sails extremely fast, is of large Dimensions, being on the Gun Deck Two Feet broader and Thirteen Feet longer than the Unicorn. Commodore Moulton, who I am sorry to add is among the Wounded, is by Birth an American, but has served Sixteen Years in the French Navy, and during the present War has always had the Command of a Division. The Squadron late under his Orders, consisting of La Tribune, La Proserpine, La Thames, and La Legère, of 20 Nine Pounders, had left Breft Two Days only, had taken nothing; La Proserpine