

Expedition to Ireland, which she captured the 12th Instant, about Thirty Leagues to the Westward of Ushant, the Spitfire having been driven to that Situation by strong Gales of Northerly Wind.

Admiralty-Office, January 21, 1797.

*Copy of a Letter from Sir Edward Pellew, Bart. Captain of His Majesty's Frigate Indefatigable, to Evan Nepean, Esq; dated January 17, 1797.*

I Have the Honor to make known to you, for the Information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, that on Friday last the 13th Instant, at Half past Noon, in Latitude 47 deg. 30 min. N. Ushant bearing N. E. 50 Leagues, we discovered a large Ship in the N. W. Quarter, steering under easy Sail for France; the Wind was then at West, blowing hard, with thick, hazy Weather. I instantly made the Signal to the Amazon for a general Chace, and followed it by the Signal that the Chace was an Enemy. At Four P. M. the Indefatigable had gained sufficiently upon the Chace for me to distinguish very clearly that she had Two Tier of Guns, with her Lower Deck Ports shut, and that she had no Poop.

At Fifteen Minutes before Six we brought the Enemy to close Action, which continued to be well supported on both Sides near an Hour, when we unavoidably shot a-head; at this Moment the Amazon appeared a-tern, and gallantly supplied our Place; but the Eagerness of Captain Reynolds to second his Friend, had brought him up under a Press of Sail, and, after a well-supported and close Fire for a little Time, he also unavoidably shot a-head. The Enemy, who had nearly effected running me on Board, appeared to be much larger than the Indefatigable, and, from her very heavy Fire of Musquetry, I believe was full of Men; this Fire was continued until the End of the Action with great Vivacity, although she frequently defended both Sides of the Ship at the same Time.

As soon as we had replaced some necessary Rigging, and the Amazon had reduced her Sail, we commenced a second Attack, placing ourselves, after some raking Broadfides, upon each Quarter; and this Attack, often within Pistol Shot, was by both Ships unremitting for above Five Hours: We then sheered off to secure our Masts. It would be needless to relate to their Lordships every Effort that we made in an Attack, which commenced at a Quarter before Six P. M. and did not cease, excepting at Intervals, until Half past Four A. M. I believe Ten Hours of more severe Fatigue was scarcely ever experienced; the Sea was high, the People on the Main Deck up to their Middles in Water, some Guns broke their Breechings Four Times over, some drew the Ring-Bolts from the Sides, and many of them were repeatedly drawn immediately after loading; all our Masts were much wounded, the Main Top-mast completely unrigged, and saved only by uncommon Alacrity.

At about Twenty Minutes past Four, the Moon opening rather brighter than before, shewed to Lieutenant George Bell, who was watchfully looking out on the Forecastle, a Glimpse of the Land; he had scarcely reached me to report it, when we saw the Breakers. We were then close under the Enemy's Starboard Bow, and the Amazon as near her on the Larboard; not an Instant could be lost, and every Life depended upon the prompt Execution of my Orders; and here it is with heartfelt Pleasure I acknowledge the full Value of my Officers and Ship's Company, who, with incredible Alacrity, hauled the Tacks on Board, and made Sail to the Southward. The Land could not be ascertained, but we took it to be Ushant, and in the Bay of Brest, cappled as

we were, I had no particular Fears, but before Day we again saw Breakers upon the Lee Bow; the Ship was instantly wore to the Northward, and being then satisfied that the Land we had before seen was not Ushant, the lingering Approach of Day-Light was most anxiously looked for by all, and soon after it opened, seeing the Land very close a-head, we again wore to the Southward, in Twenty Fathoms Water, and a few Minutes after discovered the Enemy, who had so bravely defended herself, laying on her Broad-side, and a tremendous Surf beating over her. The miserable Fate of her brave but unhappy Crew was perhaps the more sincerely lamented by us, from the Apprehension of suffering a similar Misfortune. We passed her within a Mile, in a very bad Condition, having at that Time Four Feet Water in our Hold, a great Sea, and the Wind dead on the Shore; but we had ascertained, beyond a Doubt, our Situation to be that of Hodiern Bay, and that our Fate depended upon the possible Chance of weathering the Penmark Rocks. Exhausted as were with Fatigue, every Exertion was made, and every Inch of Canvas set, that could be carried, and at Eleven A. M. we made the Breakers, and, by the Blessing of God, weathered the Penmark Rocks about Half a Mile.

The Amazon had hauled her Wind to the Northward, when we stood to the Southward; her Condition I think was better than our's, and I knew that her Activity and Exertions were fully equal to any Thing that could be effected under similar Circumstances; the Judgment with which she was managed during so long an Action, and the Gallantry of her Attacks, could not but merit the highest Commendation, and to the Heart of a Friend it was peculiarly gratifying. I have full as much Reason to speak highly of my own Officers and Men, to whom I owe infinite Obligations. The Lieutenants Thomson, Norway and Bell, Lieutenants O'Connor and Wilson of the Marines, and Mr. Thomson the Master, have abundant Claims upon my Gratitude, as well as every inferior Officer in the Ship. The Sufferings of the Amazon are unknown to me; and I am singularly happy to say that my own are inconsiderable. The First Lieutenant, Mr. Thomson, a brave and worthy Officer, is the only one of that Description wounded, with Eighteen Men; Twelve of which Number have Wounds of no serious Consequence, consisting chiefly of violent Contusions from Splinters.

I am, &c. &c. &c.

(Signed)

ED. PELLEW.

Admiralty-Office, January 21, 1797.

*Extract of a Letter from Admiral Lord Bridport to Mr. Nepean, dated at Sea, the 16th of January, 1797.*

Captain Countess, of the Dædalus, informs me, that on the 8th Instant, off Ushant, in Company with the Majestic and Incendiary, he captured Le Suffrein, a French Transport, which had been taken by the Jason, and recaptured by Le Tortu Frigate, and was going to Brest. She had Two Mortars, a Quantity of Small Arms, Powder, Shells, and some Intrenching Tools on Board, which he sunk to prevent her falling into the Hands of the Enemy.

*Extract of a Letter from Captain Sir Thomas Williams, of His Majesty's Ship Unicorn, to Mr. Nepean, dated Carusand Bay, January 18, 1797.*

IN the Evening of the 10th Instant the Wind changed to the N. W. when I shaped a Course which I calculated would fall in with Lord Bridport; the following Afternoon I took a Private Ship of War, L'Eclair, of Eighteen Guns and One Hundred and Twenty Men, and the same Evening joined the British Fleet.