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Admiralty-Office, July 20, 1802.

*Copy of a Letter from Captain Sir Home Popham, to Sir Evan Nepean, Bart. dated at Calcutta, the 18th of November 1801.*

SIR,

I HAVE much Pleasure in transmitting you a Copy of Captain Collier's Letter of the 10th September, for the Information of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, giving a very detailed Account of his sinking the French National Ship La Fleche of Twenty-two Guns, and One Hundred and Seventy Men.

The Result of Captain Collier's unremitting Perseverance under every trying Circumstance, and his determined Conduct in warping the Victor into Mahé Harbour, is likely to be of very material Service to the Commerce of India, as La Fleche was unquestionably intended to cruise in the Bay of Bengal.

I have the Honor to be, &c. &c. &c.  
HOME POPHAM.

*His Majesty's Sloop Victor, Mahé Roads, September 19, 1801.*

SIR,  
THE State of the Crew of His Majesty's Sloop under my Command, after leaving the Red Sea, induced me to put into the Island Diego Garcia; after procuring a large Supply of Turtle and good Water, I left that Harbour on the 27th of August, and proceeded on the Execution of the particular Service pointed out in your Orders of the 22d July; and on the 2d Instant, in Sight of these Islands, His Majesty's Sloop fell in with a French National Corvette, and after a few ineffectual Manœuvres on her Part, from the superior sailing of the Victor, when going large, I had the Pleasure of bringing her to a close Action at Three Quarters past Five P. M.; the disguised State of the Victor did not long deceive the Enemy, the Second Broadside proved sufficient, the Corvette hauling her Wind and endeavouring to escape, which, in about Twenty Minutes, I was sorry to observe, by having almost solely directed her Fire at our Masts and Sails she had a fair Prospect of effecting, for, on her tacking under our Lee, I endeavoured to wear, with the Hope of boarding on her Bow, when I had the Mortification to find both Lower and Topfai

Braces shot away on the Starboard Side, as well as Preventer ones and Bow Lines, and before others could be rove the Corvette was Half a Mile to Windward; Night fast approaching added to the Chagrin I felt on observing the Corvette sail better than the Victor on a Wind; the Chace continued all Night, frequently within Gun-Shot, and at Sunset the following Day, from the Wind having favoured the Enemy, she was Four or Five Miles to Windward; in the Night of the 4th lost Sight of the Chace, when, probably by tacking, she escaped.

In this Affair I had one Man wounded with Two Musket Balls, and Mr. Middleton, Master's-Mate, slightly; the Damage sustained in the Hull trifling, the Foremast shot through, and I have to regret our Sails and Rigging much cut.

Judging from the Course the Corvette was steering, when first seen, she must be bound to these Islands, I pushed for them, and towards Sunset of the 5th, she was again seen running in for this Anchorage; I kept under easy Sail till dark, when the Victor was anchored; at Daylight I had the Satisfaction of seeing the Corvette moored with Springs in the Bafon or Inner Harbour with a Red Flag at the Fore (which, as I since learn, was in Defiance); being unacquainted with the Channel, and having no Pilot, Mr. Crawford, the Master, (though ill of a Fever,) and Mr. Middleton being Volunteers, were sent to sound, which Service they completely performed; nor did the latter Gentleman desist, till repeatedly fired at by a Boat from the Corvette.

The extreme Narrowness of the Channel, added to the Wind not being very favourable, compelled me to use Warps and the Stay-fails only, which exposed the Ship to a raking Fire for some Minutes, till, shoaling our Water, I was obliged to bring up. Having Two Springs on the Cable our Broadside was soon brought to bear; and at Three Quarters past Eleven A. M. a well directed Fire was opened, which was kept up incessantly from both Vessels till Twenty Minutes past Two, when I plainly perceived the Enemy was going down; in a few Minutes her Cable was cut, she cast round, and her Bow grounded on a Coral Reef.

Mr. M'Lean, the First Lieutenant, with a Party of Officers and Men, were sent to board: though scarce had they put off, ere we discovered the Enemy to be on Fire; Lieutenant Smith and other

