

The Alacrity of the Officers, Seamen, and Marines of His Majesty's Ship under my Command during the Chace, and their Steadiness on going down to attack the two Frigates, who had closed, in Appearance with a Determination to make a formidable Resistance, convinced me, Sir, that had they waited to make the Resistance they seemed disposed to do, the Leander would not have *justified* her good Name.

I have the Honor to be, &c  
JOHN TALBOT, Post Captain.  
To Vice-Admiral Sir Andrew Mitchell, K. B.  
&c. &c. &c.

*His Majesty's Ship Leander, Murray's Anchorage, Bermuda, March 7, 1805.*  
SIR, I HAVE the Honor to send you inclosed a Letter I this Day received from Sir Robert Laivrie, Bart. From the Statement made therein, you will find, Sir, that the Credit of the British Flag has seldom been more honorably and gallantly supported than on the present Occasion; and the French Officers, whom I have Prisoners on board this Ship, cannot themselves avoid to acknowledge, that had not the Cleopatra unfortunately forged a-head of La Ville de Milan the latter Part of the Action, La Ville de Milan must have surrendered to the Cleopatra. I have the Honor to be, &c.

(Signed) J. TALBOT.  
Vice-Admiral Sir Andrew Mitchell, K. B.  
&c. &c. &c.

*His Majesty's Ship Cleopatra, at Sea, February 25, 1805.*  
SIR, I HAVE to request that you will be pleased to acquaint the Commander in Chief, that on Saturday the 16th Instant, in Lat. 28 Deg. N., Long. 67 Deg. W., at Ten A. M., saw a Ship in the S. E. standing to the E. N. E., the Wind at N. W.; made Sail towards her; at Eleven perceived the Chace to be a large Frigate, with Fifteen Ports of a Side on the Main Deck; cleared Ship for Action, and hoisted American Colours to induce him to bring to for us; but, instead of which, he made more Sail; the Weather squally; made and shortened Sail occasionally; carried away several Studding Sail-Yards, and the Foretop-Mast Studding Sail Boom, shifted over the Starboard one, and set the reefed Lower Studding-Sail; a good deal of Swell; the Chace apparently steering so as to keep the Studding-Sails drawing full; and that at Daylight on the 17th, was about Four Miles a-head; fresh Breezes and Swell as before. At half-past Ten he took in his Studding Sails, and hauled more up; when we got within about Three Quarters of a Mile took in ours also. At half-past Eleven he hauled his Mainsail up, and kept more to the Wind; upon our steering so close with him upon his Quarter he again set it and Stayails, trying to gain the Wind of us (upon which Point of Sailing he had the Advantage); we made all Sail, the Chace having some Time before hoisted French Colours, and we ours.

On his seeming to draw a-head from us, at the Distance of about half Gun-shot, fired our Bow Chasers, which he returned occasionally from his Stern.

His Guns appearing so well directed, and of heavy Metal, and to prevent being raked by them,

NO. 15799.

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I was obliged to steer so as to keep on his Quarter, though prolonging the Chace. Latitude, at Noon, 29 Deg. 24 Min. N., Long 64 Deg. 20 Min. W. At half-past Two P. M. having got within about a Cable's Length from the Enemy, he luffed close to the Wind, and gave us Two Broadfides, which, when at less than a half Cable's Distance, we returned, and a warm Action commenced, both Ships trimming Sails, steering sometimes close to the Wind, and at others about Three Points free, during which we had considerably the Advantage. About Five, having shot away his Main-topfail-Yard, we forged a-head, although the Mizzen-topfail was squared, and both Jib, Stay, and Haulyards gone, finding neither Fore nor Main Clue-Garnets left to haul the Courses up, our Running Rigging cut to Pieces, so as to render it impossible to either shorten or back a Sail, and both Main and Spring Stays were shot away, the Mainmast only supported by the Storm Stayfail-Stay, I was induced to cross his Bow, and, by hauling up, to have raked him, in Preference to exposing our Stern to the Fire of Twenty-five Pieces of Cannon from his Broadside; but in the Act of which an unfortunate Shot struck the Wheel, the broken Spokes were jammed against the Deck, so as to render it immoveable, as well as the Rudder, which, at the same Time, was choaked in the End by Splinters, Pistols, &c. placed near it. Our Opponent, availing himself of our ungovernable Situation, with the Wind upon his Quarter, gave us the Stern, running his Head and Bow-sprit over our Quarter-Deck, just abaft the Main Rigging, and, under the Cover of a very heavy Fire from Muskets and Musketoons, attempted to board us, but was drove back; we exchanged a few Musketry with them; but their great Advantage in Height and Superiority of Numbers, as well as by their Musketoons from their Tops, cleared our Decks, and in at our Ports. The only Two Guns we could bring to bear, being fired from within board, did them little Injury, the Shot passing through their Lower Deck. Most of our Sails laying a-shiver, or partly a-back, and bore down by so heavy a Ship, (having been intended for a Seventy-four,) going almost before the Wind, and much Sea running, appearing to cut us asunder at every send, I saw no Prospects of saving this Ship, or the Lives of the numerous Wounded that then were below, on the Suggestion of the First Lieutenant we attempted to hoist the Fore-topmast Stayfail; and I directed the Spritsail Topfail to be set also; but, in the Execution of which Orders, every Man was knocked down by their Musketry and other small Shot as they made their Appearance. At a Quarter past Five they succeeded in boarding, and I was compelled to surrender to the French Frigate La Ville de Milan, of Forty-six Guns, French Eighteen-Pounders, on the Main-Deck, and Eights on the Quarter-Deck and Forecastle; Three Hundred and Fifty Men, besides several Officers and Passengers: commanded by Monsieur Reynaud, Capitain de Vaisseaux, and Monsieur Gillet, Capitaine de Frigate; the former was killed, and the latter badly wounded in the Action, and immediately afterwards the Cleopatra became a perfect Wreck, not a Spar standing but the Mizzenmast, the Bow-sprit and other Masts gone by the board, and I fully expected she would have foundered before both Ships could get clear of each other.