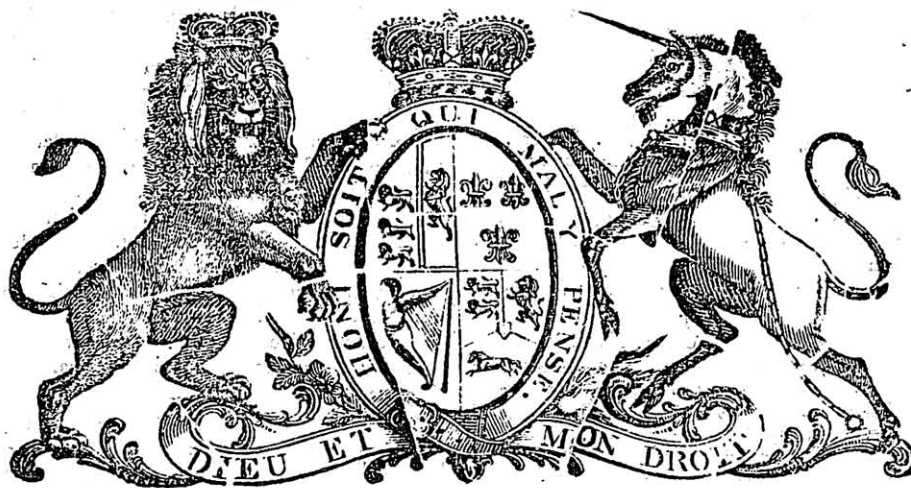




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FROM FRIDAY, JANUARY 24. TO TUESDAY, JANUARY 28. 1800.

ADMIRALTY-OFFICE—Jan. 21. 1800.

Copy of a letter from Admiral Sir Hyde Parker, Knt. Commander in Chief of his Majesty's ships and vessels at Jamaica, to Evan Nepean, Esq. dated in Port-Royal harbour, the 4th November 1799.

SIR,

I HAVE a peculiar satisfaction in communicating to you, for the information of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, that his Majesty's late ship *Hermione* is again restored to his navy, by as daring and gallant an enterprize as is to be found in our naval annals, under the command of Captain Hamilton himself, with the boats of the *Surprise* only.

Captain Hamilton's own letter, with the reports accompanying it (copies of which are inclosed) will sufficiently explain to their Lordships the detail of this service, and the bravery with which the attack was supported, and leaves me only one observation to make on the very gallant action which adds infinite honour to Captain Hamilton as an officer, for his conception of the service he was about to undertake. This was, Sir, his disposition for the attack, which was, that a number of chosen men, to the amount of 50, with himself, should board, and the remainder in the boats to cut the cables and take the ship in tow. From this manœuvre he had formed the idea, that while he was disputing for the possession of the ship, she was approaching the *Surprise*, who was laying close into the harbour, and, in case of being beat out of the *Hermione*, he would have an opportunity of taking up the contest upon more favourable terms.

To the steady execution of these orders was owing the success of this bold and daring undertaking, which must ever have rank among the foremost of the many gallant actions executed by our navy this war.

I find the *Hermione* has had a thorough repair, and is in complete order; I have therefore ordered her to be surveyed and valued, and shall commission her as soon as the reports are made to me from the officers of the yard, by the name of the *Retaliation*. I have the honour to be, &c.

H. PARKER.

*Surprise, Port Royal Harbour,
Jamaica, Nov. 1. 1799.*

SIR,

THE honour of my country and the glory of the British navy, were strong inducements for me to make an attempt to cut out, by the boats of his Majesty's ship under my command,

[Price Sixpence.]

his Majesty's late ship *Hermione*, from the harbour of Porto Cavallo, where there are about 200 pieces of cannon mounted on the batteries.

Having well observed her situation on the 22d and 23d ult and the evening of the 24th being favourable, I turned the hands up to acquaint the officers and ships company of my intentions to lead them to the attack, which was handsomely returned with three cheers, and that they would all follow to a man; this increased my hopes, and I had little doubt of succeeding: the boats, containing one Hundred men, including officers, at half-past twelve on the morning of the 25th, (after having beat the launch of the ship, which carried a twenty-four-pounder, and 20 men, and receiving several guns and small arms from the frigate,) boarded; the fore-castle was taken possession of without much resistance; the quarter-deck disputed the point a quarter of an hour, where a dreadful carnage took place; the main-deck held out much longer, and with equal slaughter; nor was it before both cables were cut, sail made on the ship, and boats, a-head to tow, that the main-deck could be called ours; they last of all retreated to the 'tween decks, and continued firing till their ammunition was expended; then, and not until then, did they cry for quarter.

At two o'clock the *Hermione* was completely ours, being out of gun-shot from the fort, which had for sometime kept up a tolerable good fire. From the Captain Don Romond de Chalas I am informed she was nearly ready for sea, mounting 44 guns, with a ship's company of 321 officers and sailors, 56 soldiers, and 15 artillery men on board.

Every officer and man on this expedition behaved with an uncommon degree of valour and exertion; but I consider it particularly my duty to mention the very gallant conduct, as well as the aid and assistance at a particular crisis I received from Mr John M'Mullen, surgeon and volunteer, and Mr Maxwell, gunner; even after the latter was dangerously wounded.

As the frigate was the particular object of your order of the 17th September, I have thought proper to return into port with her. Inclosed I transmit you a list of captures during the cruise, also two lists of killed and wounded.

I have the honour to be, &c.

Sir Hyde Parker, Kt. &c. Jamaica.

E. HAMILTON.

(A.)

