



The London Gazette.

Published by Authority.

From Saturday March 19, to Tuesday March 22, 1796.

Admiralty-Office, March 22.

A DISPATCH, of which the following is a Copy, has been received at this Office from Sir William Sidney Smith.

Diamond, off Cape Frebel, March 18, 1796.

SIR,

HAVING received Information that the Armed Vessels detached by the Prince of Bouillon had chased a Convoy, consisting of a Corvette, Two Luggers, Four Brigs, and Two Sloops, into Herqui, I proceeded off that Port, to reconnoitre their Position and found the Channel, which I found very narrow and intricate. I succeeded, however, in gaining a Knowledge of these Points sufficient to determine me to attack them, in the Diamond, without Loss of Time, and without waiting for the Junction of any Part of the Squadron, lest the Enemy should fortify themselves still further on our Appearance.

Lieutenant M'Kinley, of the Liberty Brig, and Lieutenant Goffet, of the Aristocrat Lugger, joined me off the Cape, and, though not under my Orders, very handsomely offered their Services, which I accepted, as small Vessels were essentially necessary in such an Operation. The permanent Fortification for the Defence of the Bay are Two Batteries on a high rocky Promontory: We observed the Enemy to be very busily employed in mounting a detached Gun on a very commanding Point of the Entrance. At One o'Clock Yesterday Afternoon this Gun opened upon us as we passed: The Diamond's Fire however silenced it in Eleven Minutes. The others opened on us as we came round the Point, and their commanding Situation giving them a decided Advantage over a Ship in our Position, I judged it necessary to adopt another Mode of Attack, and accordingly detached the Marines and Boarders to land behind the Point, and take the Batteries in the Rear. As the Boats approached the Beach they met with a

warm Reception, and a temporary Check, from a Body of Troops drawn up to oppose their Landing: The Situation was critical, the Ship being exposed to a most galling Fire, and in intricate Pilotage, with a considerable Portion of her Men thus detached. I pointed out to Lieutenant Pine the apparent Practicability of climbing the Precipice in Front of the Batteries, which he readily perceived, and, with an Alacrity and Bravery of which I have had many Proofs in the Course of our Service together, he undertook and executed this hazardous Service, landing immediately under the Guns, and rendering himself Master of them before the Column of Troops could regain the Heights. The Fire from the Ship was directed to cover our Men in this Operation; it checked the Enemy in their Advancement, and the Re-embarkation was effected, as soon as the Guns were spiked, without the Loss of a Man, though we have to regret Lieutenant Carter of the Marines being dangerously wounded on this Occasion.

The Enemy's Guns, Three Twenty-four Pounders, being silenced and rendered useless for the Time, we proceeded to attack the Corvette and the other Armed Vessels, which had by this Time opened their Fire on us, to cover the Operation of hauling themselves on Shore. The Diamond was anchored as close to the Corvette as her Draft of Water would allow. The Liberty Brig was able to approach near, and on this Occasion I cannot omit to mention the very gallant and judicious Manner in which Lieutenant M'Kinley, her Commander, brought this Vessel into Action, profiting by her light Draft of Water to follow the Corvette close. The Enemy's Fire soon slackened, and the Crew being observed to be making for the Shore on the English Colours being hoisted on the Hill, I made the Signal for the Boats, manned and armed, to board, directing Lieutenant Goffet, in the Lugger, to cover them. This Service was executed by the Party from the Shore, under