



The London Gazette

EXTRAORDINARY.

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Downing-Street, December 23, 1798.

CAPTAIN GIFFORD, First Aide-de-Camp to General the Honorable Charles Stuart, arrived this Afternoon at the Office of the Right Honorable Henry Dundas, One of His Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State, with a Dispatch from the General, of which the following is a Copy.

SIR, *Ciudadella, Nov. 18, 1798.*

I Have the Honor to acquaint you, that His Majesty's Forces are in Possession of the Island of Minorca, without having sustained the Loss of a single Man.

As neither Commodore Duckworth or myself could procure any useful Information relative to the Object of the Expedition at Gibraltar, it was judged adviseable to dispatch the Peterell Sloop of War to cruize off the Harbour of Mahon for Intelligence; where, after remaining a few Days, she joined the Fleet near the Colombrites, without having made any essential Discovery. So circumstanced, it was agreed to attempt a Descent in the Bay of Addaya, and the Wind proving favorable on the 7th Instant, a Feint was made by the Line of Battle Ships at Fornelles, and Boats were assembled for that Purpose under the Direction of Captain Bowen, Captain Polden, and Captain Pressland. Previous to the Landing of the Troops, a small Battery at the Entrance of the Bay was evacuated, the Magazine blown up, the Guns spiked, and shortly after the First Division, consisting of Eight Hundred Men, was on Shore. A

considerable Explosion to the Westward indicated that the Spaniards had also abandoned the Works at Fornelles. Nearly at the same Moment Two Thousand of the Enemy's Troops approached in several different Directions, and threatened to surround this inconsiderable Force, but were repulsed with some Loss on the Left, while the Guns of the Argo checked a similar Attempt on the Right Flank, and the Post was maintained until the Debarkation of the different Divisions afforded the Means of establishing a Position, from whence the Enemy's Troops would have been attacked with considerable Advantage, had they not retired in the Beginning of the Night.

The Strength of the Ground, the Passes, and the Badness of the Roads in Minorca, are scarcely to be equalled in the most mountainous Parts of Europe; and what increased the Difficulty of advancing upon this Occasion was the Dearth of Intelligence; for although near One Hundred Deserters had come in from the Swiss Regiments, and affirmed that the remaining Force upon the Island exceeded Four Thousand Men, no particular Account of the Enemy's Movements was obtained. Under this Uncertainty it was for a few Minutes doubtful what Measure to pursue, but as quickly determined to proceed by a forced March to Mercadal, and thereby separate the Enemy's Force by possessing that essential Pass, in the first Instance, and from thence advancing upon his principal Communications to either Extremity of the Island, justly depending upon