

cable, had got under Weigh on the Morning of that Day with their whole Fleet, seemingly with a View of forcing a Passage through the Windward, a Sand-bore Passage, to the Eastward of Long-Key; but on seeing the Merlin beating into the Harbour of St. George's-Key, and that our Fleet was reinforced by the Armed Vessels No. 2 and 3, and a large Gun-Boat, they returned to their former Anchorage between Long-Key and Key-Chappel.

I was now of Opinion that the Enemy would alter his Mode of Attack, and endeavour to make a Landing on the Main Land to the Northward of our Posts at the Haul-over. Under this Idea, I began to prepare small Vessels and Gun-Boats, in which I meant to embark with 200 Men, including Detachments of His Majesty's 63d and 6th West India Regiments, and of the Royal Artillery, with One Howitzer and Two Field Pieces, Six-Pounders: with this Force it was my Intention to block up the Channel between the Main and the Western Point of Hicks's Keys, and to obstruct as much as possible a Landing in that Quarter; or, if foiled in both of these Objects, to throw the whole Strength into the Works at the Haul-over, and to defend that Post to the last Extremity; while a Body of experienced Bush-Men, all good Shots, and under Orders for that Purpose, should hang on the Flanks and Rear of the Enemy.

On the Morning of Monday the 10th of September, Fourteen of the largest Vessels of the Spanish Fleet weighed Anchor, and at Nine o'Clock brought to about a Mile and a Half distant from our Fleet. Captain Mofs was then of Opinion that they meant to delay their Attack till the following Day; but Nine of them got under Weigh about Noon: these carried each Two Twenty-four Pounders in the Bow, and Two Eighteen Pounders in the Stern; One Schooner carried Twenty-two, and all the Rest from Eight to Fourteen Guns in their Wasse; and every one of them, besides being crowded with Men, towed a large Launch full of Soldiers. The other Five Vessels, with several large Launches all full of Men, remained at this last Anchorage at the Distance of a Mile and a Half.

Our Fleet was drawn up with His Majesty's Ship Merlin in the Centre, and directly abreast of the Channel: the Sloops with heavy Guns, and the Gun-Boats in some Advance to the Northward, were on her Eastern and Western Flanks.

The Enemy came down in a very handsome Manner, and with a good Countenance, in a Line abreast, using both Sails and Oars. About Half after Two o'Clock Captain Mofs made the Signal to engage, which was obeyed with a cool and determined Firmness, that, to use his own Expression to me on the Occasion, would have done Credit to Veterans. The Action lasted about Two Hours and a Half, when the Spaniards began to fall into Confusion, and soon afterwards cut their Cables, and failed and rowed off, assisted by a great Number of Launches, which took them in Tow.

Captain Mofs, on seeing them retreat, made the Signal for our Vessels to chace; but Night coming on, and rendering a Pursuit too dangerous in a narrow Channel and difficult Navigation, they were soon after recalled.

At Half after Three in the Afternoon, I received a Letter from Captain Mofs, stating that the

Enemy was preparing to attack him, and requiring all the Assistance which I could give. I immediately ordered as many Men to embark and proceed to his Assistance, as small Craft to carry them could be procured. The Alacrity shewn on this Occasion was great indeed; but as a Requisition of this Nature was by no Means expected, the necessary Arrangements had not been made for so speedily embarking the Troops, and of Consequence some Irregularity ensued; for the Cannonade being distinctly heard, and a Certainty of an Engagement having taken Place, it became impossible to restrain the Eagerness of the Colonial Troops, who, possessing Canoes, Dories, and Pit-pans, without Thought or Retrospect to those left behind, hastened with Impetuosity to join their Companions, and share their Danger: hence arose Difficulty and Disappointment to the regular Troops, who being under Arms, and anxious to proceed with all Expedition, suffered Delay from Want of the necessary Boats and Craft to embark in.

As soon as I saw Seventeen Craft of different Descriptions, having on board Two Hundred Men, set off with Orders to rally round the Merlin, I immediately joined them in Hopes of assisting Captain Mofs and harassing the Enemy; but although we were only Two Hours in getting on board the Merlin, a Distance of Three Leagues and a Half, in the Wind's-Eye, we were too late to have any Share in the Action. But I am of Opinion, that the Sight of so many Craft full of Men coming up with Velocity, hastened the Return of the Enemy, and that their Appearance on the following Day, as well as the Junction of Two Armed Ships, the Juba and Columbia, which I had ordered round to St. George's-Key on the 9th, induced the Fleet to prepare for returning to their respective Posts. The Spaniards remained under Key-Chappel until the 15th; on the Morning of which they made various Movements, and in the Course of the Day some of them anchored under Key-Caulker. On the Morning of the 16th, it was discovered that they had stolen off; Eight of their largest Vessels got out to Sea, and stood to the Northward; the Remainder, being Twenty-three in Number, shaped their Course for Baccalar.

We have every Reason to believe that the Enemy suffered much in the Action of the 10th, as well in Killed and Wounded as in the Hulls and Rigging of the Vessels engaged; and I am happy to inform your Lordship that we had not a single Man hurt, and that no Injury was done to any of our Vessels deserving of Notice.

It would be unjust, my Lord, to mention the Names of any Officers, either of the Military or Militia, on Account of any particular Service performed by them; for the Conduct of all being such as to merit my best Thanks, no particular Distinction can be made.

It is also unnecessary for me to say any Thing respecting Captain Mofs: his Penetration in discovering, and Activity in defeating, the Views of the Enemy; his Coolness and steady Conduct in Action, point him out as an Officer of very great Merit. He first suggested to me the very great Use which might be made of Gun-Boats against the Enemy, and gave me much Assistance by the Artificers belonging to his Ship in fitting them out. I am happy to