

His Majesty's Sloop Lyra,
May 15, 1813.

MY LORD,
CONCEIVING that the surrender of Castro should be known in England as soon as possible, and the Alpha schooner being about to proceed to Plymouth, I herewith transmit to you a duplicate of my letter to Captain Sir George Collier, giving an account of that event, and of the operations of the vessels under my orders, in assisting in its defence, and in removing the garrison.

From various reports I have since received, I am informed that the loss of the enemy was so great, that the conquest of Castro, instead of being celebrated as a victory, as was usual on other occasions, of any advantage, created an universal gloom among the French.

I have the honour to be, &c.
(Signed) ROBERT BLOYE, Captain.
Admiral Lord Keith, K. B. &c. &c. &c.

His Majesty's Sloop Lyra, off Bermeo,
SIR, May 13, 1813.

IN my letter of the 4th instant, I informed you of my arrival off Castro, in company with His Majesty's sloops Royalist and Sparrow, and that the enemy having been twice repulsed from before the walls of Castro had again invested it since the 25th of April, with increased forces, and of the measures taken by the squadron to assist in its defence; I have now the honour to communicate to you our subsequent operations.

On the 5th and 6th no material movement took place. The enemy were in such numbers in the surrounding villages, that the garrison did not make another sortie after the 4th. We perceived them making fascines in the woods.

On the 7th we discovered that they were throwing up a battery to the westward of the town. A twenty-four-pounder was landed with great difficulty, from the Sparrow, on a small island within point blank shot of it, and a battery erected, which by great exertion was nearly ready for its reception on the following morning, at which time the enemy commenced their fire from two twelve-pounders against it, which was briskly returned by the castle, and about three in the afternoon by our twenty-four-pounder, and with such effect, that one of their embrasures was rendered perfectly untenable before night. The enemy were discovered also constructing a large battery to the south west of the town, within one hundred yards of the wall, under cover of a large house, and against which the guns of the castle could not be brought to bear. A long brass twelve-pounder was mounted on the castle, by the assistance of our people, but it unfortunately burst after having been fired a few times. The whole of the 9th a heavy fire was kept up on both sides, and every exertion made to strengthen the defences. The most determined spirit of resistance animated the Governor Don P. P. Alvarez, and every officer and soldier under his command, and the enemy had received signal proofs of their perseverance and courage in the two preceding attacks. We could see troops approaching in every direction, and we received intelligence that besides the artillery they had received from

Santonce before our arrival, they had also several guns embarked at Portugalette. I therefore took every precaution to prevent their conveyance by sea, by sending at one time the Sparrow off that port, and at another the Royalist, and keeping a strict guard of boats by night.

On the 10th the enemy commenced throwing shells from a battery they had constructed to the south east of the town with great effect; they were also busily employed in erecting two other batteries, one to the southward of the town, and the other to flank our works on the island. They also sent a strong body of men behind the rocks to annoy our people with musketry; but they were soon dislodged by the fire of a four-pounder on the island, and two companies of Spanish troops. A battery for another twenty-four-pounder was begun by Captain Tayler, on the island, flanking the enemy's principal battery, and the gun mounted and ready for firing at daylight on the 11th. The enemy at the same moment opened a very heavy fire from their south west battery, with such effect, that, notwithstanding the brisk manner in which it was returned from our eighteen-pounder carronade mounted on the castle, the troops on the walls, and our battery on the island, they had made a breach large enough to admit twenty men abreast before noon. The enemy were now advancing towards the town in immense numbers; and as our position on the island was not tenable in the event of their storming, I directed Captain Tayler, of the Sparrow, who had undertaken the management of it, to re-embark the guns and men, and made the necessary arrangements with the Governor to embark the garrison, after having destroyed the guns and blown up the castle.

The enemy having destroyed the walls, turned their guns on the town and castle, throwing shells incessantly at the bridge connecting the castle with the landing place, endeavouring to cut off the retreat of the garrison; about nine P. M. at least three thousand men rushed at once into the town from every quarter, not only by the breaches, but also by scaling. They were most gallantly resisted by the garrison, who disputed the town, house by house, until they were overwhelmed by numbers and obliged to retreat to the castle; the ships' boats and launches were in readiness to receive them, and they were embarked by companies under a tremendous fire of musketry, and distributed to the three brigs and Alpha schooner, except two companies which remained to defend the castle until the guns, &c. were destroyed. The enemy advanced to the castle, but were successfully resisted, until every gun was thrown into the sea; but they unfortunately gained the inner wall before the train for blowing up the castle was set on fire, in consequence of which that part of my wishes was frustrated; I have however the pleasure to say, that every soldier was brought off and many of the inhabitants. The town was set on fire in many places, and must I think have been entirely destroyed. As soon as every thing was embarked, the squadron weighed and proceeded to Bermeo, where the troops were landed yesterday morning.

I have the highest gratification in having to mention the cheerful, yet fatiguing exertions, of every officer and man employed. Captains Bremen