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LONDON GAZETTE EXTRAORDINARY.

DOWNING-STREET, DEC. 25. 1798.

Captain Gifford, first Aide-de-Camp to General the Hon. Charles Stuart, arrived this afternoon at the Office of the Right Hon. 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 honour 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 advisable to dispatch the Petterel sloop of war to cruise off the harbour of Mahon for intelligence, where, after remaining a few days, she rejoined the fleet near the Colombites, without having made any essential discovery. So circumstanced, it was agreed to attempt a descent in the Bay of Addaya, and the wind proving favourable on the 7th inst. a feint was made by the line of battle ships at Fornelles, and boats were assembled for that purpose under the direction of Capt. Bowen, Capt. Polden, and Capt. Prefsland. 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 800 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 2000 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

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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 100 deserters had come in from the Swiss regiments, and affirmed that the remaining force upon the island exceeded 4000 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 Commodore Duckworth's zeal and exertions to forward from Addaya and Fornelles such supplies of provisions and ordnance stores as might favour subsequent operations.

To effect this object, Colonel Graham was sent with 600 men, and, by great exertion, arrived at Mercadal a very few hours after the main force of the enemy had marched towards Ciudadella, making several officers and soldiers prisoners, seizing various small magazines, and establishing his corps in front of the village.

The persevering labour of 250 seamen, under the direction of Lieutenant Buchanan, during the night, having greatly assisted the artillery in forwarding the battalion guns, the army arrived at Mercadal on the 9th, where, learning that Mahon was nearly evacuated, a disposition was instantly made to operate with the whole force in that direction, and Colonel Paget detached under this movement with 300 men to take possession of the town: upon his arrival, he summoned Fort Charles to surrender, and made the Lieutenant-Governor of the island, a colonel of artillery, and 160 men, prisoners of

(B.)

