

lay, that the most cordial Co-operation has always existed between us. On the 13th Instant, I sent out Two Scout Canoes well manned, with Orders to pass the Spanish Fleet in the Night; and, proceeding to the Northward, to board the first small Vessel they could fall in with. On the 16th they captured a small Packet-Boat with Five Hands, when taking out the Prisoners, Letters, &c. and destroying the Boat, they returned hereon the 17th. At Day-Light of that Day the Canoes were entangled with the retreating Spanish Fleet near Savanna-Quay, and escaped with Difficulty.

The Expedition was commanded by Arthur O'Neil, a Field-Marshal in the Armies of Spain, and Captain-General of the Province of Yucatan. The Campeachy Fleet was commanded by Captain Bocco Negra: Two Thousand Soldiers were embarked and distributed in Proportion to the Dimensions of the Vessels, on board of the Fleet, which consisted of,

The Vessels which made the Attack, in Number, - - - - -	9
Reserve of equal Force, - - - - -	5
A very large Sloop of equal Force, and Six Schooners not so large, but armed in the same Manner as those which came down to the Attack, and drawing too much Water remained with the Transports and Victuallers, - - - - -	7
Transports, Victuallers, &c. all carrying Bow and Side Guns of different Calibres, - - - - -	11
Total	32

And navigated by Five Hundred Seamen, principally from the Havanna and Campeachy.

I am, &c. THO. BARROW,
Lieutenant-Colonel-Commandant.

(True Copy) BALCARRAS.

To the Earl of Balcarras.

Admiralty-Office, January 22, 1799.

Extract of a Letter from Vice-Admiral Sir Hyde Parker, Knt. Commander of His Majesty's Ships and Vessels at Jamaica, to Ewan Nepean, Esq; dated on board His Majesty's Ship Abergavenny, in Port-Royal Harbour, the 6th November, 1798.

SIR,

YOU will be pleased to acquaint the Right Honorable the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, that I have received Dispatches from Captain Mofs, of His Majesty's Sloop Merlin, dated Honduras, 27th September; a Copy of which, describing the Defeat of the Spanish Flotilla, is herewith enclosed.

*Merlin, St. George's-Key,
September 27, 1798.*

SIR,

MY Letters by the Swift Schooner, which failed from Honduras express on the 21st of last August, have informed you of the Enemy's Force intended for the Reduction of this Settlement, and their Situation at that Time; since which our Look-out Canoes have watched them so closely, that all their Movements were known to me as they happened. On the 4th of this Month they were visible from our Mast-heads at Belize, and Look-outs reported to me Thirty-one Sail of all Descriptions, but their exact Force by no Means

certain. The next Day Six of their heaviest Vessels attempted to force their Passage over Montego-Key Shoals, by putting their Provisions and Stores into other Vessels; had they effected this, it would have secured them all a Passage to Belize over Shoal-Water, where I could by no Means act. I ordered Three of our Armed Vessels to annoy them in their Endeavours, which succeeded so far as to occasion their Removal at dark, and a small Channel they had marked by driving down Stakes was also taken up by our Canoes. I now clearly saw that their next Effort would be to get Possession of St. George's-Key, from which Place (only Nine Miles from Belize) they might go down through the different Channels leading to it, and continue to harass the Inhabitants and destroy the Town at their Leisure, and drive me from my Anchorage there; this determined me to gain the Key before them, if possible; I therefore left Belize on the Evening of the 5th, and secured this Place, at the Instant Twelve of their heaviest Vessels were attempting the same; they hauled their Wind and returned to Long-Key, on my hauling my Wind towards them. They continued working and anchoring among the Shoals until the 11th, at the Distance of Three or Four Miles; when having made their Arrangements, at One P. M. Nine Sail of Sloops and Schooners, carrying from Twelve to Twenty Guns, including Two Twenty-four and Two Eighteen-Pounders each had in Prow and Stern, with a large Launch a-stern of each full of Men, bore down through the Channel leading to us in a very handsome cool Manner; Five smaller Vessels lay to Windward out of Gun-shot, full of Troops, and the Remainder of their Squadron at Long-Key Spit to wait the Event, each of which carried small Prow-Guns, with Swivels fore and aft. At Half past One P. M. seeing their Intention to board the Two Sloops, and that they meant to come no nearer, but had anchored, I made the Signal to engage, which began and continued near Two Hours; they then cut their Cables and rowed and towed off by Signal in great Confusion over the Shoals. I had placed the Merlin as near the Edge of them as possible, and nothing that I had was equal to follow them unsupported by the Merlin. At dark they regained their other Vessels, and continued in Sight till the 15th at Night, when they moved off with a light Southerly Wind: Some are gone to Bacalar, and some Prisoners taken report others to Campeche. I am happy to add that the Service was performed without a Man killed on our Side. The Enemy I think must have suffered much from the great Number of Men on board, and the precipitate Manner they made their Retreat. This Armament was commanded by General O'Neil, Governor of the Province; Troops and Sailors included, about Two Thousand Five Hundred Men: and so certain were the Spaniards of Success, that the Letters found in a Canoe taken were actually directed to Belize and St. George's-Key.

The Behaviour of the Officers and Crew of His Majesty's Ship gave me great Pleasure, and had we had deep Water to follow them in, I think many of them would have fallen into our Hands. The Spirit of the Negro Slaves that manned our small Crafts was wonderful, and the good Management of the different Commanders, does them great Credit.