

in. By evening I had twelve long boats, fitted as fire ships, ready to attempt burning them, under cover of the Saphire and Coventry; but the weather being bad, and the wind contrary, obliged me to defer it, till at least the latter should be favourable; if they can by any means be destroyed, it shall be done.

In attacking a flying enemy, it was impossible in the space of a short winter's day, that all our ships should be able to get into action, or all those of the enemy brought to it. The commanders and companies of such as did come up with the rear of the French on the 20th, behaved with the greatest intrepidity, and gave the strongest proofs of a true British spirit. In the same manner, I am satisfied, would those have acquitted themselves, whose bad going ships, or the distance they were at in the morning, prevented from getting up. Our loss by the enemy is not considerable; for in the ships which are now with me, I find only one lieutenant, and 39 seamen and mariners killed, and about 202 wounded. When I consider the season of the year, the hard gales on the day of action, a flying enemy, the shortness of the day, and the coast we are on, I can boldly affirm, that all that could possibly be done, has been done. As to the loss we have sustained, let it be placed to the account of the necessity I was under of running all risks to break this strong force of the enemy: Had we had but two hours more day-light, the whole had been totally destroyed, or taken, for we were almost up with their van when night overtook us.

Yesterday came in here the Pallas, Fortune sloop, and the Proserpine fireship. On the 16th I had dispatched the Fortune to Quiberon, with directions to captain Duff, to keep strictly on his guard. In her way thither she fell in with the Hébé, a French frigate of 40 guns, under Jury masts, and fought her several hours. During the engagement lieutenant Stuart 2d. of the Ramillies, whom I had appointed to command