

a change of wind threatened to jeopardize the scheme and rob it of success. On the other hand, better conditions had not occurred since the preparations were completed, nor did they recur within the period in which the operations were practicable.¹

The project was both desperate and unique. 'Attacks on territory by the fleet alone,' declares a high naval authority,² 'except by way of set bombardments for merely punitive or destructive purposes, are not now, any more than they were two hundred years ago, the proper objects for a navy alone to carry out.' 'Whatever place in the pages of history may eventually be accorded to the naval raids on Zeebrugge and Ostend,' writes Staff-Paymaster Cyril Cox, R.N.V.R.,³ 'it is certain that no adequate parallel to them can be found in the records of our own or any other Navy.' Various incidents have been recalled, but they accentuate characteristics that make the Raid of St. George's Day unique rather than furnish precedents for its ingenuity and daring.

In 1794 a combined expedition under Vice-Admiral Sir John Jervis and General Sir Charles Grey attacked Martinique, whose possession of the best harbour in the eastern Caribbean Sea made its acquisition desirable. As in the raid on Zeebrugge, the harbour was protected by a sheltering sea-wall. Otherwise, apart from the dare-devil courage which marked both operations, there is little in common between them. H.M.S. *Asia* failed to breach the sea-wall inside the harbour and open a way to a party of bluejackets waiting outside in the bay to

¹ Sir Roger Keyes's Dispatch of May 9, General Summary, para. 16, 18.

² Admiral P. H. Colomb, quoted in *Fortnightly Review*, June 1918, p. 882.

³ *Nineteenth Century and After*, June 1918, p. 1198.