

proved a heavy loss to the enemy; who were at that time in great want both of provisions and materials for their shipping. This capture took place on the eighth of January, eighty.

On the sixteenth, a Spanish squadron of eleven sail of the line, was discovered off the Cape of St. Vincent. As the day was far advanced, in order to reach them the sooner, the British Admiral made the signal for a general chase, to engage as the ships came up, by rotation, and to take the lee gage, in order to prevent the enemy from retreating into their own ports.

The action began at four in the afternoon; the headmost ships in the British Squadron closing in with the nearest of the enemy. In about half an hour one of their ships, mounting seventy guns, and carrying six hundred men, blew up, and they all perished. After two hours fight, another Spanish ship of the line was taken. The action continued with great vigour on both sides, till two o'clock in the morning; when the headmost ship of the enemy struck to the Sandwich: after which they ceased firing.

The weather was so tempestuous during the night, that it was with extreme difficulty possession could be taken of those ships that had surrendered. They were six in number; of which two went on shore and were lost, and the other four were brought safe into Gibraltar. They consisted of the Spanish Admiral's own ship of eighty guns, and seven hundred men, and three of seventy guns, and six hundred men.

This engagement happened so near the shore, and the British ships were so eager in securing the lee gage, to prevent the enemy's escape, that Admiral Rodney's ship, and some of the largest in the fleet, were in great danger of running on the shoals off the coast of St. Lucar. Nor did they return into deep