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THE WEEKLY MISCELLANY.

For MONDAY, September 24, 1781.

NARRATIVE of the SIEGE of GIBRALTAR, taken from the
JOURNAL of a LADY who was present on the Spot.

ON the 12th of April, 1781, at one o'clock in the morning, an English cutter came in with news of the fleet being within a few leagues of us. Extravagant was our joy, you may be sure; and, while friends and neighbours were congratulating each other on the prospect of eating beef and mutton once more, the Spaniards, about eleven o'clock, began the most furious bombardment ever heard of.—Terror and consternation deprived me for a minute of sense and motion. Our house was one of the nearest to the Spanish lines. I seized my children, and ran with them towards Montague's bastion, which I knew was bomb-proof. An Officer of the 58th regiment met me, saying, "For God's sake, Madam, where are you going? Do not you know that you are going nearer to the enemy's fire? Stoop with your children under this covered way." Six and twenty pounders, without number, went over my head. I presented my little ones towards Heaven, and, in an agony of prayer, besought the Almighty to preserve us. I then had the courage to advance towards Montague's bastion, and, having walked down a few steps, my strength failed me, and I fell down the rest. Fortunately I received no hurt, and ran, or rather flew, into the soldiers barracks. This was no time for the indulgence of pride, distinction, or even delicacy. The soldiers who were off duty, in their blunt, honest way, endeavoured to cheer my spirits, saying, "Never fear, Madam; if the d—d Dons fire to eternity, they will never take the old rock, nor the good souls that are upon it; and, if General Elliott would let us

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fally out at Landport-gate, my life to a farthing we would lay the Spanish camp in ashes." I admired their courage, but could not eat any dinner with them, agreeable to their kind invitation.

We were then firing upon the enemy from almost every battery that bore upon them. My head was almost distracted with the noise of so many cannon being fired from the top of the building where I had taken shelter. I had the happiness, however, of seeing my husband enter the place: luckily for me, he was not on duty that, or the day following; he produced a curtain, and hung it round one of the soldiers beds for me. I laid down in my cloaths, but sleep was out of the question; the bursting of shells, and the terrifying sound of cannon-balls, were sufficient to keep me awake: add to this, the disagreeableness of lying amongst near an hundred private soldiers; yet I was thankful to find admittance even here; for none know what they will submit to, in order to save their lives, 'till they are tried with the near prospect of approaching death.

The next day our servant said he would venture into our house, and endeavour to bring me a few cloaths; he did so, but found it almost in ruins; a shell burst in the kitchen, and a ball entered the roof, and passed through my bed into the parlour, while he was there.

On the third day, Mr. ——— was Lieutenant of the picquet — many buildings were set on fire by the enemy's shells; and it was his duty to see the fires put out, and to protect some of the better sort of the inhabitants, who were endeavouring to remove their effects to the South, and who had applied to the Governor for a guard for that purpose. I could not recollect the dangers he was exposed to, without being almost certain I should never see him again.

While I was torturing myself with these reflections, an order came for all the soldiers in Montague's bastion to remove to the King's. I and my little ones were to march likewise. I was, if possible, more terrified than before; for I had a much longer way to go, and the Spaniards were firing from all their batteries. To the latest period of my life shall I remember with anguish that dreadful walk! Sometimes I stopped, and thought I might as well resign myself to die, and, with my quivering lips, begged Heaven to admit me into its divine abodes! — But when I looked on my children, I started up and dragged them forwards, not knowing what I did. Our servants, and two soldiers who were with me, said all they could to comfort and encourage me.

At length we arrived safe at the King's bastion. Mr. ——— was marching the picquet from thence: he waved his hand; but, being on duty, could not stop to speak to me. The room I was
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put into smelt very disagreeably; I enquired the cause, and was told a man was killed in it, not an hour before, by a ball which entered in at a hole over the door.

No withstanding the vigilance of the Officers, and non-commissioned Officers, many of the men were shamefully intoxicated. The Town-Major, and a party of soldiers, were busily employed in staving all the casks of liquor they could find in the town. And here I cannot help reflecting on many of the wine and liquor merchants, who hoarded up their stocks to enhance their value, till at last they were drank by any person, or staved by order of the Governor, and suffered to run into the sea! But cunning often over-reaches itself.

This place was so crowded with soldiers, that it was impossible to procure either a bed or platform: my servant put me a mattrass into a kind of arch, or hole, by the door, and in here I and my children crept. I was ill for want of sleep, yet could not compose myself to rest. Though neither shot nor shell could pierce the roof, yet the enemy kept on so furious a cannonading, that I thought we must lose numbers of our men. It was computed that the Spaniards fired, upon an average, at the rate of two hundred shot and shells an hour.

The Spanish church, and many other buildings, were at this time in flames. The first object I beheld in the morning, was a man lying dead by the door. He died, I was told, from intoxication.

Some hours after this, I saw Dr. C——m and Lieutenant S——h fall; they were wounded by the splinters of a shell: the former had his foot shot off, the latter had a dangerous contusion on his head. He was the son of my old friend: a better heart never inhabited a human breast. They brought his sword to me, and, as he was carrying to the hospital, our servant, with his usual bluntness, came and told me I might take a last view of him, for it was supposed he could not survive the dressing of his wound. In this, however, he was happily mistaken.

Mr. —— was on guard the next day, and, as soon as he came off, he informed me an order was given out for all ranks of women to remove to the South. I was again in terrors, but was obliged to obey. My husband carried my little Charlotte, while my son Jack ran by my side. We got safe to the navy hospital; but, when there, found it so crowded with wounded soldiers, that we could not procure a place to lie down in, except an open gallery. I wept in silence! Mr. —— at last recollected a lady of our regiment, who had been here some time before the siege, on account of her health. She readily admitted me, and gave me a dish of tea, which was a great refreshment. I laid a mat on the

floor, and that night slept three hours, which seemed to put new life into me.

April 19. The Commanding Officer of our regiment was so kind as to send a marquee for us. Captain ——, who was always a generous friend to my little family, desired me to have it fixed in his garden.

My husband was that night on guard, and I had no company but my children. Never shall I forget the shocking scene daylight presented to me. The Spanish gun-boats were firing upon us with all the rage of well-directed artillery.—Gun-boats, methinks you say! What are those?—I will tell you. They are boats constructed on purpose for carrying mortars and cannon, from which they throw thirteen-inch shells, and twenty-six pounders. From these dreadful visitors no human foresight can find a shelter: it is all chance, and they are such small objects, and so uncertain to hit, that it is only a waste of ammunition in our batteries to attempt to bear upon them.

A woman, whose tent was a little below mine, was cut in two as she was drawing on her stockings! Our servant ran in, and endeavoured to encourage me: he made me a kind of breast-work of beds, trunks, mattrasses, bolsters, and whatever else he could find, and set me behind them. I clasped my darlings, and prayed most fervently, that the ball that should pierce their tender bosoms, might transfix my own too! But how needless was this prayer—I circled them in my arms, and must have perished with them, had chance or fate (call it which you will) directed a shot or shell to the place where I sat. The balls fell round me on every side!

When these formidable visitants had expended their ammunition, they retired. I resolved to sleep no more in that place; yet, where to find one that was safer, I knew not; for these infernal spitfires can attack any quarter of the garrison they please.

The town was now become little more than a heap of ruins. The provisions which we had in the garrison before the arrival of the fleet, were burned: but the army did not esteem this a misfortune; we rather rejoiced at it, for some of them were so bad, that there was no bearing to be within the smell of them.

April 23. I begged Mr. —— to let me take the servant's tent towards Europa; I fancied I could lean against the rocks there, and find shelter from the shot from the enemy. He said, there might be a chance of securing myself against a ball; but assured me, one place was no more secure than another against their shells.

I was prevailed on to stay a few nights more in this place, as I had here the pleasure of Mrs. D——t's company, who was at
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all times a kind neighbour, and sympathizing friend. We were, in some respects, in similar circumstances; she suckled a darling child as well as myself.

April 30. I had enough of sleeping, or rather endeavouring to sleep in this spot. The gun-boats paid us another visit, and killed several people. I suffered greatly last night from another cause. About eleven o'clock it began to thunder and lighten exceedingly; the flashes seemed to last several minutes, and the thunder was so uncommonly loud, that the like had never been heard since the great storm which happened thirty years ago. The rain deluged through our tent, but I did not mind being wet. The glare of the lightning was so great, that my eyes were sensibly affected; and though accustomed to the thunder rattling amongst the rocks at Gibraltar, yet this by far exceeded all I ever heard. Mr. U—— asked if I should think myself safer in Captain D——t's summer-house? He went first to see if it was open; but between the flashes it was so dark, that he could not keep the road: at last he got there, and found our servant, whom he sent to carry the children. I went to the door of the tent, but the whole hemisphere seemed on fire; and, as if we did not suffer enough from the Spaniards, Heaven's artillery seemed in array against us! They were firing all the time; but we could scarcely hear their cannon, the thunder was so loud.—Towards morning the storm abated.

May 8. Affairs remained in much the same situation. Our enemies must have expended an immense sum in ammunition; for I am told by persons of veracity and experience, that every shell they throw costs them three guineas; yet they continued to annoy us as much as ever. I cannot ascertain the exact number of men we have lost, perhaps none know for a truth but the Governor.

May 13. A small tent, that would just hold a bed, was carried towards Europa for me; yet I cannot say I found myself safer there. Every time the gun-boats came, I dragged my poor children out of bed, and stood leaning with them against a rock. The third night I was here, a ball struck the rock against which I leaned, and covered us with dirt and stones. In a few minutes after, a shell burst so near us, that I had scarcely time to run out of the way.

It would have melted the hardest heart to see the women and children run from the camp, without a rag to cover them, whenever the gun-boats approached. I was so harrassed for want of rest, that I thought fatigue would kill me, if the Spaniards did not.

May 20. I will now endeavour to describe that dreadful night, which made me determine to leave Gibraltar; but language will convey

convey but a faint idea of the horrid scene!—About one o'clock in the morning, our old disturbers, the gun-boats, began to fire upon us. I wrapped a blanket about myself and children, and ran to the side of a rock; but they directed their fire in a different manner from what they had done before. They had the temerity to advance so near, that the people in our ships could hear them say, *Guarda Ingleses*, which is, “Take care, English!”

Mrs. Tourale, a handsome and agreeable lady, was blown almost to atoms! Nothing was found of her but one arm. Her brother, who sat by her, and his clerk, both shared the same fate. The daughter of that unfortunate woman, whom I mentioned before, was killed that night; a shell crushed the house, and buried the unfortunate girl in the ruins.

Many other people were sent to their eternal homes, but I do not know their names.

After what I had seen and suffered, I was of opinion it was not courage, but madness to stay. As a parent, I considered I had no right to expose the lives of my children; and conjugal affection gave place to maternal tenderness: accordingly I applied for, and obtained leave to embark in one of the first ships bound for England.

Affairs remained in the same situation to the hour of my embarkation, which was on the 27th of May last.—I cannot close this account, without informing you my husband presented a plan of operations to General Elliott for the destruction of the enemy's gun-boats, which was approved of, and is, I suppose, before this time, put in execution.

Curious Account of the Number of Romish Priests now in England, and of the Schools abroad for the Education of English Catholics. By an English Catholic.

BY an arrangement which took place in the reign of James II. England was divided into four districts, and a Bishop was appointed to preside over each. They had then 1000*l.* per annum settled on each of them out of the Exchequer; but this only continued 'till the Revolution, when they were reduced to the necessity of supporting themselves by the best means in their power. Since that time, the same regulation with regard to numbers has continued; and as they have no particular place of residence allotted, each Bishop generally chuses to live in the most central and convenient situation. Their office is to attend the small concerns of their respective districts; to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation,