

2 when too lately convinced of their error sent over a
body of men who repulsed the French from Matejorda &
from its ruin have amused them greatly, in retaking
the fort of Matejorda they only accomplished half their
purpose as the Groves & Fort Lucis which flank the
still remained in the enemies hand; strong reasons
have been made to the Spanish & English General
by skilful officers, to reoccupy their posts immediately,
whatever help they might sustain, but this it is of such
importance ^{the attack} has been delayed upon one pretext or another
till the time (I left Cadiz) & what should never have
been given up, in the first instance (must be recovered
at the expense of 1 or 2,000 lives as the French have
had time to fortify themselves) tho' it might have
been taken ~~without~~ help, at first & for the first week
by sacrificing 3 or 400. It must be allowed however
that these places would eventually be gained by the
enemy, but the time ^{they would have} lost ^{by obstinate} ~~defending~~ ^{the}
& number of lives it must have cost them should
have been sufficient inducement to the Spaniards to
defend them to the utmost, when the French are
firmly in possession of these Forts. Their intention most
probably is to line all the coast with heavy batteries
drive our fleet off, at least keep them at a considerable
distance & then construct gun boats & craft of all
kinds to transport their troops across. That such
is their plan may be inferred from the carpenter
shops in Andalusia being put in requisition & sent
to Puerto Real & other places for the building of boats,
wood will be the chief want, but we know too well the
activity & enterprise of the French to imagine their want
will continue long. The principal gins have lately been
from their Forts but so badly directed on both sides that
the Spaniards have lost only a few wounded & our shells