

to Captain Downie, who had been recently appointed to command the* vessels on Lake Champlain, consisting of a ship, a brig, two sloops, and twelve gun-boats, and requested his co-operation, and in the meantime batteries were constructed for the guns brought from the rear.

On the morning of the 11th, our flotilla was seen over the isthmus which joins Cumberland-Head with the main land, steering for Plattsburg-Bay. I immediately ordered that part of the brigade, under Major-General Robinson, which had been brought forward, consisting of four light infantry companies, 3d battalion 27th and 76th regiments, and Major-General Powers's brigade, consisting of the 3d, 5th, 1st battalion 27th and 58th regiments, to force the ford of the Saranac, and advance, provided with scaling ladders, to escalate the enemy's works upon the heights; this force was placed under the command of Major-General Robinson. The batteries opened their fire the instant the ships engaged.

It is now with deep concern I inform your Lordship, that, notwithstanding the intrepid valour with which Captain Downie led his flotilla into action, my most sanguine hopes of complete success were not long afterwards blasted, by a combination, as it appeared to us, of unfortunate events, to which naval warfare is peculiarly exposed. Scarcely had His Majesty's troops forced a passage across the Saranac, and ascended the height on which stand the enemy's works, when I had the extreme mortification to hear the shout of victory from the enemy's works, in consequence of the British flag being lowered on board the Confidence and Linnet; and to see our gun-boats seeking their safety in flight. This unlooked-for event depriving me of the co-operation of the fleet, without which the further prosecution of the service was become impracticable, I did not hesitate to arrest the course of the troops advancing to the attack, because the most complete success would have been unavailing, and the possession of the enemy's works offered no advantage to compensate for the loss we must have sustained in acquiring possession of them.

I have ordered the batteries to be dismantled, the guns withdrawn, and the baggage, with the wounded men who can be removed, to be sent to the rear, in order that the troops may return to Chazy to-morrow, and on the following day to Champlain, where I propose to halt until I have ascertained the use the enemy propose making of the naval ascendancy they have acquired on Lake Champlain.

I have the honour to transmit herewith† returns of the loss sustained by the left division of this army in its advance to Plattsburg, and in forcing a passage across the River Saranac.

I have the honour to be, &c.

(Signed) GEORGE PREVOST.

Right Honourable Earl Bathurst,
&c. &c. &c.

* The Confidence, 36 guns; Linnet, 18 guns; Broke, 10 guns; Shannon, 10 guns; 12 gun-boats, 16 guns.

† This Return was published in the Gazette of the 19th instant.

Admiralty-Office, November 26, 1814.

Copy of a Letter from Commodore Sir James Lucas Yeo, Commander in Chief of His Majesty's Ships and Vessels on the Lakes of Canada, to John Wilson Croker, Esq. dated on board His Majesty's Ship Saint Lawrence, at Kingston, 24th September 1814.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to transmit, for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, a copy of a letter from Captain Pring, late Commander of His Majesty's brig Linnet.

It appears to me, and I have good reason to believe, that Captain Downie was urged, and his ship hurried into action before she was in a fit state to meet the enemy.

I am also of opinion that there was not the least necessity for our squadron giving the enemy such decided advantages, by going into their bay to engage them; even had they been successful, it would not in the least have assisted the troops in storming the batteries; whereas had our troops taken their batteries first, it would have obliged the enemy's squadron to quit the bay and given ours a fair chance.

I have the honour to be, &c.

(Signed) JAMES LUCAS YEO, Commodore and Commander in Chief.

United States Ship Saratoga, Plattsburg-Bay, Lake Champlain, September 12,

SIR, 1814.

THE painful task of making you acquainted with the circumstances attending the capture of His Majesty's squadron, yesterday, by that of the Americans, under Commodore M'Donough, grieves me to state, becomes my duty to perform, from the ever-to-be-lamented loss of that worthy and gallant officer Captain Downie, who unfortunately fell early in the action.

In consequence of the earnest solicitation of His Excellency Sir George Prevost for the co-operation of the naval force on this Lake to attack that of the enemy, who were placed for the support of their works at Plattsburg, which it was proposed should be stormed by the troops, at the same moment the naval action should commence in the bay; every possible exertion was used to accelerate the armament of the new ship, that the military movements might not be postponed at such an advanced season of the year, longer than was absolutely necessary.

On the 3d instant, I was directed to proceed in command of the flotilla of gun-boats to protect the left flank of our army advancing towards Plattsburg, and on the following day, after taking possession and paroling the militia of Isle la Motte, I caused a battery of three long eighteen-pounder guns to be constructed for the support of our position abreast of Little Chazy, where the supplies for the army were ordered to be landed.

The fleet came up on the 8th instant, but for want of stores for the equipment of the guns, could not move forward until the 11th; at daylight we weighed, and at seven were in full view