

No. XXXV.

Private Despatch from Sir George Prevost to Earl Bathurst, p. 179.

(Private.)

“ *Montreal, 21st Sept. 1814.*

“ My Lord,

“ IN my despatch from Plattsburg, of the 11th inst. I reported to your Lordship the unfortunate event which induced me to withdraw the troops with which I had advanced into the enemy’s territory. My reasons for that measure I can more fully explain to your Lordship in a private communication than it might be proper to do in a public letter.

“ Your Lordship must have been aware from my previous despatches, that no offensive operations could be carried on, within the enemy’s territory, for the destruction of his Naval Establishments, without naval support. Having ascertained that our flotilla was in every respect equal to the enemy’s, and having received from Captain Downie the assurance, not only of his readiness, but of his ability to co-operate with the army, I did not hesitate in advancing to Plattsburg, and confidently relying upon the successful exertions of the squadron, I made my arrangements for the assault of the enemy’s works the moment it should appear.

“ The disastrous and unlooked for result of the naval contest, by depriving me of the only means by which I could avail myself of any advantage I might gain, rendered a perseverance in the attack of the enemy’s position highly imprudent, as well as hazardous. From the state of the roads, each day’s delay at Plattsburg rendered my retreat more difficult. The enemy’s Militia was raising *en masse* around me, desertion increasing, and our supply of provisions scanty.

“ Excluded from the use of water communication, and that by roads passing through woods and over swamps,