

Fort were anxious to march out, and, if possible, surprize the Enemy at their Post, by which Means we might have cut off their Communication with any disaffected People in the Colony, and probably have forced them back again to their Ships.

I was persuaded such an Attempt might be of Service, if effected with Resolution, and, at the repeated Solicitations of the Royalists, I permitted them to assemble One Hundred and Eighty Volunteers, and put them under the Command of Captain M^cDowall, of the 43d Regiment, who offered to direct their Operations. The Party marched from the Fort about Eight o'Clock in the Evening; but, I am sorry to say, my Hopes of the Benefit we might have derived from the Success of this Attempt were entirely defeated, by their Want of Steadiness and Discipline.

In marching along the Road leading to Gozier, a few Shot were fired, probably by a Picquet of the Enemy's, from the Bushes at the Side of the Road: The most shameful Panick instantly prevailed throughout the whole Party: A general Discharge of Musquetry commenced; many of them threw away their Arms and deserted to the Town; some few returned to Fleur d'Epée, and it was with the greatest Difficulty Captain M^cDowall could collect about Thirty of them together, whom he marched some Minutes after into the Fort. I am sorry to add, that the next Morning were found Three of the Royalists dead, and Four wounded.

On the Morning of Thursday the 5th Instant the Enemy landed Thirteen Boats crowded with Sailors, and, from the Information of a Prisoner brought into the Fort, I learnt it was their Intention to attack us that Night, and that their Numbers amounted to from Twelve to Fifteen Hundred Men. As I saw, from the Conduct of the Royalists on the preceding Night, that I had very little to hope from their Steadiness and Resolution, I took the Precaution to defend the Gate, and line the weakest Part of the Work, with the Soldiers of the 43d Regiment, keeping a small Body as a Corps de Reserve, to act on the Approach of the Enemy.

At Eleven o'Clock a Party of Horse, that had been sent out to reconnoitre, returned, and informed me the Enemy were on their March, and in Possession of the Village of Gozier. At One o'Clock on Friday Morning the advanced Picquet came into the Fort, and we then distinctly heard the Approach of the Enemy along the Road leading from the Village. We instantly commenced a Fire of Grape Shot from One Twenty-four Pounder and Two Field Pieces, which threw them into great Confusion, and must have been attended with considerable Effect. The Enemy halted for Two or Three Minutes, and then, at the Persuasion of their Officers, marched on to the Foot of the Hill, and began to storm the Work.

We kept up a very heavy Fire of Musquetry for about Fifteen Minutes: The Enemy were evidently repulsed, and I am persuaded, that had the Royalists acted with Resolution at that Moment, we might have maintained our Ground; but, on the Firing ceasing, Numbers of them concluded the Place lost, and, abandoning their Posts, ran in Crowds towards the Gate. It was in vain for the Soldiers of the 43d Regiment to oppose their Progress; the Gates were laid open, and nearly One Half of the whole Body deserted to the Town.

The Gates were again closed as soon as possible, and, the small Body of the 43d Regiment, which I had kept in Reserve, moved on to the Attack. They opposed the Entrance of the Enemy for some Time, but one Side of the Work having been abandoned and left entirely defenceless, we found ourselves nearly

surrounded, and I then ordered the Soldiers I had with me to charge their Bayonets, and retire a few Paces to a Spot where we might be better able to defend ourselves. Here we halted, and received a Volley of Musquetry from a Number of the Enemy that had formed themselves in a Body in our Front.

The Crowd of People that now came rushing from every Quarter towards the Gate rendered every Effort of the Soldiers ineffectual: Overpowered as they were, they found themselves dispersed, and obliged to retire. I consulted with Two or Three Officers, that continued at my Side, upon the Possibility of rallying once more, and still defending the Place; but it was their general Opinion that the Fort was no longer tenable, and that we ought to retire; I therefore permitted the Gate to be opened, and ordered a Retreat to Fort Louis.

On my Arrival at Fort Louis I assembled the Soldiers, with a Resolution to defend the Post; but finding that I had not quite Forty Men, and that it would be impossible to hold out against the Enemy, I thought it more prudent to retire, and save the Remains of the Regiment, than to surrender them Prisoners of War.

I, in consequence, ordered the Men to march; and, collecting the Detachment at Fort Government, with the Soldiers that had escaped singly from Fleur d'Epée, I proceeded to Petit Canal; and, having embarked in Two Boats, set Sail from Basse Terre, where we arrived at Eleven o'Clock Yesterday Morning.

Inclosed I have the Honour to transmit to your Excellency a Return of the present State of the 43d Regiment, but it is not in my Power to determine the Number of our Killed and Wounded; neither can I form any Opinion of the Loss sustained by the Royalists at Fleur d'Epée; but I am apprehensive it must have been very considerable. I am sorry to add, that Captain Suckling, of the British Artillery, was wounded with a Bayonet in the Breast, and left at Point à Pitre.

I cannot conclude this Letter without expressing my Approbation of the Conduct of the Officers and Soldiers under my Command: Their Intrepidity in meeting any Danger, and their Exertions in rallying our Force, were conspicuous in the Extreme, and such as will ever claim my warmest Acknowledgements.

I have the Honor to be,

S I R,

Your Excellency's most obedient
very humble Servant,

(Signed)

James Drummond,
Lieut. Col. 43d Reg.

C O P Y.

S I R,

Basse Terre, June 14, 1794.

I Have had the Honour of receiving your Two Expresses, and have forwarded them to his Excellency Sir Charles Grey, in Hopes they may find him at Antigua or St. Kitt's.

I am sorry to inform you we buried Major-General Dundas this Morning.

I have the Honor to be

Your very obedient humble Servant,

(Signed)

Bryan Blandell,
Lieut. Col. Com.

Lieutenant-Colonel Drummond.

C O P Y.

S I R,

St. Marie, June 5, One o'Clock.

IN consequence of your Letter to Captain Buchanan, which Colonel Blundell has just seen, the Colonel has ordered about Eighty Men of the 39th Regiment,