CHAPTER X.

THE final struggle for the mastery in the New World, between the English and the French, was now at hand. Four years had elapsed since the commencement of the contest, but only during the last campaign had success encouraged the English. Now the future for the colonists appeared bright, and the pride and ambition of England were powerfully excited. Pitt, with wonderful sagacity, surveyed the whole scene of possible conflict, and calculated the chances of future success. He conceived the magnificent scheme of conquering all Canada, and destroying, at one blow, the French dominion in America. That dominion was now confined to the region of the St. Lawrence, for the more distant settlements of the west and south were in the condition of weak colonists cut off from the parent country.

Pitt had the rare fortune to possess the confidence of Parliament and of the colonists, and nothing that he desired was withheld. The former was dazzled by his greatness, the latter were deeply impressed with his justice. He had promptly reimbursed all the expenses incurred by the provincial assemblies during the campaign recently closed, amounting to at least a million of dollars; and they as promptly seconded his scheme of conquest, which had been communicated to them under an oath of secresy. With great unanimity Parliament voted for the year sixty mil-

lions of dollars, and such forces, by land and sea, as had never before been known in England. "This is Pitt's doing," exclaimed Lord Chesterfield, "and it is marvelous in our eyes."

The inefficient Abercrombie, who had wasted the whole autumn at Lake George in criminal supineness, was deprived of his command, and General Jeffrey Amherst, who, with Wolfe, had earned laurels on the eastern shores, was made commander-in-chief of all the British forces in America, and sinecure governor of Virginia. The general operations were to be conducted at separate points. A strong land and naval force, under General Wolfe, was to ascend the St. Lawrence and attack Quebec. Another force, under Amherst, was to drive the French from Lake Champlain, seize Montreal, and join Wolfe at Quebec; while a third expedition, commanded by General Prideaux, was to attempt the capture of Fort Niagara, and then hasten down Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence to Montreal. A considerable fleet, under Admiral Saunders, was deputed to carry Wolfe up the St. Lawrence, and to coöperate with him in the attack on Quebec.

The French in America, who were to oppose these formidable preparations for the conquest of their remaining territory, were comparatively few in number and weak in supplies. Montcalm was the military commander, but in all Canada he could not muster seven thousand men into the service, and only a comparatively few Indians. Scarcity of food prevailed throughout all the French domain in America, for the able-bodied men had been called from their fields to the camp; and on account of arrearages of pay and a profusion of paper money, the French soldiers were becoming very discontented. "Without unexpected good fortune or great fault in the enemy," Montcalm wrote

to the minister, "Canada must be taken this campaign, or certainly the next."

Amherst, on hearing of the disasters at Ticonderoga in the summer of 1758, had hastened to Boston from Louisburg, and then across the country, with four regiments and battalion, to reinforce the defeated general. He arrived at Lake George early in October, too late for further action in the field that season. He returned to New York, and in November received his commission as commander-in-chief. He immediately set about arrangements for the next campaign. When these were completed, he transferred his headquarters to Albany, appointed Colonel Bradstreet quartermaster general of the army under his immediate command, and then collected his forces. They were assembled at the close of May, twelve thousand strong, chiefly provincials, furnished by New York and New England.

The assembly of New York entered into the scheme of conquest with zeal. They voted two thousand six hundred men for the service, and authorized the emission of half a million of dollars in bills of credit. Again, early in July, the assembly, at the request of General Amherst, agreed to loan the crown a large sum, to be reimbursed in the course of the year.

Notwithstanding Amherst used the greatest exertions to enter the field early, it was July before his army moved northward, and it was not until the 22d of that month that it appeared at Ticonderoga. Meanwhile the object of the expedition against Niagara, under Prideaux, had been almost accomplished. Prideaux was accompanied by Sir William Johnson and a few Mohawk Indians. His forces, who were chiefly provincials, were collected at Oswego. From that point he sailed for Niagara, and landed a short distance from the fort, without opposition, on the

17th. Prideaux immediately commenced the siege, and was killed on the same day by the bursting of one of his own guns. The command then devolved upon General Johnson, and he sent a flag demanding the surrender of the fort. The garrison, in hourly expectation of reinforcements, refused, and held out bravely for several days. On the 24th, about fifteen hundred French regulars, and as many Creek and Cherokee Indians, appeared, and were greeted by the garrison with a shout of welcome. Their joy lasted but for a moment. Johnson's troops and the French reinforcement had a severe engagement. The latter were effectually routed, and on the following day, the 25th of July, Fort Niagara and its dependencies, and the garrison of seven hundred men, were surrendered to Johnson. A fortnight afterward Lieutenant Governor De Lancey wrote to the Lords of Trade, saying, "His Majesty is now in possession of the most important pass in all the Indian countries." It was even so. Fort Niagara was the connecting link of French military posts between Canada and Louisiana. It was effectually broken, never to be reunited.

Johnson garrisoned Fort Niagara and returned to Albany, for his prisoners encumbered him, and he could not procure sufficient vessels to carry himself and troops to Montreal to coöperate with Wolfe and Amherst, according to the plan of the campaign.

Amherst took the route by Lake George, over which Abercrombie passed the year before. He was accompanied by Colonel Bradstreet, Colonel Schuyler, of New Jersey, who had been exchanged, and Brigadier General Gage. Among other officers were some who became distinguished as the friends or foes of freedom in the war for American independence in after years. Of these, the most noted were

Balfour, who commanded British troops at Charleston; Loring, father of the British commissioner of prisoners in New York and Philadelphia; Moncrieffe, who was a major in the royal army; Prescott, the petty tyrant, who held Ethan Allen a prisoner in 1775, and ruled with a rod of iron while commanding in Rhode Island two years later; Putnam, a major general in the Continental army; Skene, who was made a prisoner with Burgoyne; Stark, the hero of Bennington; Waterbury, who performed brave exploits on Lake Champlain, and Wooster, the patriot-martyr, who was killed near Danbury.

Major Schuyler remained at Albany, actively engaged in the duties of forwarding supplies for the army. So great was his ability in carrying on his plans, public and private, that he was now invested with the functions of commissary general. He was still an easy, good-natured young man, and no one would have suspected that under that exterior lay qualities hitherto unsuspected, even by himself, that were to exalt him to the position of one of the most honored patriots of the world. They existed, nevertheless, and when occasion called for their exercise they promptly appeared. In business he was always firm and discreet. No one ever saw him hurried, embarrassed, or agitated; and he conducted the affairs of his department at this time with the greatest prudence, judgment, and dispatch.

General Amherst appeared before Ticonderoga on the 22d of July. The French, unable to cope with their enemies, had resolved to confine their operations to the service of delaying the invading armies. In consequence of the withdrawal of troops to assist in the defense of menaced Quebec, the garrison at Ticonderoga at this time was very feeble.

On the morning of the 23d, the French army, under

Bourlamarque, withdrew from their lines into the fort, and three days afterward abandoned and partially demolished it, and fled to Crown Point. General Amherst immediately took possession of Fort Carillon, ordered the works to be repaired, and placed a strong garrison there. While engaged in these repairs, he received information that the French had also, in dismay, abandoned Crown Point, and fled down the lake in their boats. This evacuation occurred on the first of August. Amherst immediately detached a body of troops to occupy the abandoned post, and on the 4th proceeded to its occupation with his whole army.

The French fled to Isle aux Noix, at the foot of the lake. Amherst was about to follow with a detachment of his army, when he was informed that the French were over three thousand strong, and that the lake was guarded by four vessels, mounted with cannon and manned by numerous pickets, under the command of M. le Bras, a skilful officer of the French navy. Amherst immediately gave orders for the construction of several vessels of war, which he placed in charge of Captain Loring. When these were equipped, he embarked with his whole army, chiefly in batteaux, near the middle of October, resolved to drive the enemy beyond the St. Lawrence. Heavy tempests arose upon the lake, and he was compelled to turn back. He abandoned the enterprise, landed at Crown Point, put his army into winter quarters there, and proceeded to erect that strong and costly fort whose picturesque ruins may yet be seen by voyagers upon Lake Champlain. Captain Loring, however, braved the storm with his little fleet, went down the lake, destroyed the French flotilla, and thus gained the complete command of Champlain.

A more successful expedition was in progress in the meantime. As soon as the ice of the St. Lawrence came

floating into the Gulf in the spring of 1759, Admiral Saunders prepared to sail from Louisburg to Quebec with the British army under Wolfe. The entire armament consisted of eight thousand men in transports, under a convoy of twenty line-of-battle ships, and as many frigates and smaller armed vessels. Admiral Holmes was Saunders' lieutenant; and in the army and navy engaged in this expedition were several officers who were conspicuous in the war for American independence, in the royal service.

The whole force was under the command of Wolfe. It arrived off the Isle of Orleans, just below Quebec, on the 26th of June, and on the following day landed there. Quebec then, as now, consisted of an upper and lower town, the former within fortified walls on the top and declivities of a high rocky promontory; the latter lay upon a narrow beach at the water's edge, and was slowly creeping up the St. Charles river. Upon the heights of the promontory, three hundred feet above the water, was a level plateau called the Plains of Abraham. The town was strongly garrisoned, and at the mouth of the St. Charles, where it enters the St. Lawrence, at the base of the promontory, the French had moored several armed vessels and floating batteries. Along the north bank of the St. Lawrence, from the St. Charles to the Montmorenci river, a distance of seven miles, lay the French army under Montcalm, in a fortified camp. This army was composed chiefly of French Canadians and Indians. The former had been pressed into the service, and all agricultural operations devolved upon old men, women, and children. Montcalm trusted more to the natural strength of the position in which his camp and the city lay, than in his troops for the successful defense of the province.

Wolfe, with amazing skill and vigor, prepared for a

siege. On his left lay his fleet at anchor, and over the beautiful island stretched the tents of his army. All went on quietly until the following night, which was dark and tempestuous, when a fleet of fire-ships, hurried forward by a furious storm of wind and the ebbing tide, came blazing in wrath upon the English ships. The sailors of the fleet, with great adroitness, grappled each incendiary vessel as it came, and towed it free from the shipping. No harm was done by the fire.

On the 30th the English, after some skirmishing, took possession of Point Levi, opposite Quebec, and proceeded to plant batteries there. These were within a mile of the city. From them red hot shot and blazing bombshells were sent upon the lower town. These set on fire full fifty houses in one night, and almost destroyed that part of the city. The citadel, higher up and strong, was beyond the injurious effects of this severe cannonade and bombardment.

Wolfe was eager to gain the prize he so much coveted, and he resolved to attack Montcalm in his fortified camp. On the 10th of July he had landed a large force, under Generals Townshend and Murray, below the Montmorenci, and formed a camp there. On the last day of the month, General Monckton, with grenadiers and other troops, crossed from Point Levi, and landed upon the beach above Montmorenci, at the foot of the great cataract, where the water, after passing for a mile over a rocky bed in a series of roaring rapids, leaps into a dark chasm two hundred feet below.

Murray and Townshend were ordered to force a passage across the Montmorenci above the falls, and coöperate with Monckton. The latter was too eager for attack to await their coming. He rushed up the steep bank, but was soon

repulsed, and was compelled to take shelter behind a block-house on the beach just as a heavy thunder storm, which had been gathering for several hours, burst upon the combatants. Darkness fell before the storm ceased, when its voices were rivalled by the roar of the rising tide, which warned Monckton and his men to take to their boats. More than four hundred of the English had perished before this hasty embarkation. In general orders the next day, Wolfe, while he uttered severe censure for rashness, praised Monckton's regiment as one able to cope with the whole Canadian army.

Several weeks had now passed since the English landed upon the Isle of Orleans, and yet nothing of importance had been accomplished. Wolfe was becoming very impatient. Day after day he expected Amherst with reinforcements. They came not. He could not even hear from Amherst. He was informed of the fall of Niagara, the flight of the French from Ticonderoga and Crown Point, but still no aid came for him. Every hour difficulties more and more appalling were gathering around Wolfe. At length, early in September, exposure, fatigue, and anxiety had wasted his strength and produced a violent fever. Prostrate in his tent he called a council of war, and while his brow and hand were hot with disease, he laid before his officers three desperate plans of attack upon the vigilant enemy. They dissented from all, and at the suggestion of Townshend it was resolved to scale the heights of Abraham and draw the French out into open battle. Wolfe acquiesced, though with faint hopes of success. A plan was speedily matured, and, feeble as he was, the commander-in-chief resolved to lead the assault in person. He considered the enterprise a most hazardous one, and he wrote to Pitt, saying, "In this situation there is such a choice of

difficulties that I am at a loss myself how to determine. The affairs of Great Britain require most vigorous measures, but then the courage of a handful of brave men should be exerted only where there is some hope." These words gave England unpleasant emotions.

On the 8th of September the camp at the Montmorenci was broken up, and the attention of Montcalm was diverted from the real designs of the English by seeming preparations to attack his lines. Already, having secured the posts on Orleans, Wolfe had marched the portion of the army at Point Levi, up the river, and embarked them on transports which had passed the town in the night for that purpose. Bougainville, who had been sent by Montcalm to watch the movements of the English and prevent a landing, was completely deceived; and when, in several vessels of the fleet, the whole army appeared to be retreating up the river, there was great joy in Quebec and in the French camp. De Levi was sent with three thousand men to defend Montreal, and the Canadians felt confident that the lateness of the season would compel the British fleet to leave the river soon.

It was the pleasant evening of the 12th of September when the whole army destined for the assault moved several miles up the river, above the intended landing place. Leaving their ships at midnight, they embarked in flat-boats, and with muffled but unused oars, moved silently down at the speed of the current, followed by the ships soon afterward. Black clouds were then gathering in the sky, and before the flotilla reached its destination the night was intensely dark.

Wolfe was in good spirits, and yet there was evidently in his mind a presentiment of his speedy death. At his evening mess, before leaving the vessel, he composed and

sang impromptu that little campaigning song, which has been chanted in many a British tent since, commencing—

"Why, soldiers, why
Should we be melancholy, boys?
Why, soldiers, why,
Whose business 't is to die!"

And as he sat among his officers, and floated softly down the river in the gloom, a shadow seemed to rest upon his heart, and he repeated in low, musing tones, that touching stanza of Gray's Elegy in a Country Churchyard—

"The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike the inevitable hour—
The path of glory leads but to the grave."

At the close he whispered "Now, gentlemen, I would prefer being the author of that poem to the glory of beating the French to-morrow."

At dawn, on the 13th of September, almost five thousand British troops were drawn up in battle array on the Plains of Abraham, three hundred feet above the St. Lawrence. They had landed cautiously in a cove, which still bears the name of Wolfe, and were led up a ravine and steep acclivity by the commander-in-chief, who was at the head of the main division, followed by Colonel Howe with light infantry and a corps of gallant Highlanders. This was a strange apparition to the French. The sergeant's guard at the brow of the acclivity were instantly dispersed, and in hot haste communicated the startling intelligence, first to the garrison in Quebec, and then to Montcalm, at Beauport. That commander was incredulous. "It can be but a small party come to burn a few houses and return," he said; yet, ever vigilant, he did not wait for confirmation. He was speedily undeceived. He soon saw the

imminent danger to which the town and garrison were exposed, and he immediately abandoned his intrenchments and led the greater part of his army across the St. Charles to confront the invaders. Messengers were dispatched to to call back De Bougainville and De Levi, and at ten o'clock Montcalm had his army in battle order on the higher part of the plains of Abraham, near the town.

Both parties were deficient in heavy guns. The French had three field pieces, the English only one, and that was a light six-pounder which some sailors had dragged up the ravine. The two commanders, in the order of battle, faced each other. Wolfe was on the right, at the head of the grenadiers who were repulsed at the Montmorenci. They burned with a desire to wipe out the stain of that event. Montcalm was on the left, at the head of three of his best regiments. Wolfe ordered his men to put two bullets into each of their muskets, and reserve their fire until the enemy should be within forty yards of them. They obeyed. Their double-shotted guns did terrible execution. The French were thrown into utter confusion, and were then attacked by the terrible English bayonet.

Wolfe was urging on his battalions in this bayonet charge when he was slightly wounded. He staunched the blood with a handkerchief, and whilst cheering on his men received a more severe bullet wound in the groin. A few minutes afterward a third bullet struck him in the breast, and he fell mortally wounded. It was at this moment that victory for the English was secured by the confused rout of the French. As Wolfe was being carried to the rear, an officer on whose shoulder he was leaning exclaimed, "They run! they run!" The dim eyes of the expiring hero lighted up, and he asked "Who runs?" "The enemy, sir; they give way everywhere," said the officer. Wolfe

gave an important command for a movement to cut off the fugitives, and then feebly exclaimed, "Now, God be praised, I die happy!" These were his last words. He soon afterward expired.

Montcalm was also mortally wounded. "Death is certain," said his surgeon. "I am glad of it," replied Montcalm. "How long have I to live?" he inquired. "Ten or twelve hours—perhaps less," was the reply. "So much the better; I shall not live to see the surrender of Quebec!" the dying general said. That night he "spent with God," and expired in the morning. His remains were buried in the grounds of the Ursuline convent at Quebec. Wolfe's were conveyed to England and laid in his family vault, and his government erected a monument to his memory in Westminster Abbey. Massachusetts, grateful for his services, decreed a marble statue of him. Almost seventy years afterward, an English governor of Canada caused a noble obelisk of granite to be erected in the city of Quebec "TO THE MEMORY OF WOLFE AND MONTCALM."

General Townshend succeeded Wolfe in the command of the army. The French had left five hundred of their comrades dead on the field when they fled. Townshend took possession of their position, and commenced the erection of batteries to storm the city. Some of the French officers desired to renew the conflict and hold out to the last; but the inhabitants within the walls would not submit to such total destruction of life and property as would result from a siege. A capitulation was agreed upon, and five days afterward the city of Quebec was surrendered to the English, and the remains of Montcalm's army, under De Levi, fled to Montreal. General Murray was left to defend the half demolished city, and the British fleet, fear-

ing frost and ice, left the St. Lawrence, carrying away about a thousand prisoners.

Thus brilliantly, for the English, ended the campaign of 1759. Intelligence of the repulse of the grenadiers at the Montmorenci reached England on the 16th of October, and added to the gloom occasioned by Wolfe's desponding letter to Pitt. On the evening of the same day a vessel arrived with news of the victory on the Plains of Abraham, and the King set apart a day for public thanksgiving. "The incidents of dramatic fiction could not be conducted with more address," wrote Horace Walpole, "to lead an audience from despondency to sudden exultation, than accident prepared to excite the passions of a whole people. They despaired, they triumphed, and they wept, for Wolfe had fallen in the hour of victory." But the conquest of Canada was not yet completed.

When the ice left the St. Lawrence in the spring of 1760, De Levi, at the command of Vaudreuil, the governor general of Canada, proceeded with ten thousand men, composed of French regulars, Canadians, and Indians, to attempt the recovery of Quebec. Admiral Saunders had left abundant provisions and much heavy artillery there, and Murray, when the fleet departed, had seven thousand men under his command for the defense of the city. These were reduced one half by disease during the winter. De Levi approached on the 27th of April, and on the 28th the brave but weak Murray went out with his whole force, less than three thousand, to attack him. The English were defeated, lost all their artillery, and came near being cut off in their retreat to the town. In this engagement they lost a thousand men.

De Levi followed up his success vigorously. He commenced a siege, encamped a large force on the heights of

Point Levi, and brought six French frigates up to assist in beleaguring the city by land and water. Meanwhile Pitt had sent a fleet, under Lord Colville, to coöperate in defense of the city. Colville approached with two ships of the line, destroyed the French vessels in the presence of De Levi, and spread great alarm in the French army. Believing these vessels to be only the van of a large squadron, he raised the siege at the middle of May and retreated precipitately to Montreal, leaving behind him most of his artillery and stores. Murray started in pursuit of the fugitives, but their flight was so rapid that he could not overtake them.

Montreal was the last remaining stronghold of the French, and Amherst might easily have had possession of all Canada before De Levi besieged Quebec. But he preferred to follow the systematic and tardy plan which he had formed for the reduction of the province, to a quick and energetic expedition. So he spent the whole summer in making great preparations for the invasion. Vaudreuil, meanwhile, gathered all the moral and material power, at his command at Montreal, for the final struggle.

Amherst's movements, though slow, were effectual. At the head of almost ten thousand men, and a thousand Indian warriors, under Sir William Johnson, he proceeded to Oswego, thence over Lake Ontario and down the St. Lawrence. At the mouth of the Oswegatchie river (now Ogdensburgh) he took possession of a French fort with a feeble garrison, and moving on, appeared before Montreal on the sixth of September. On the same day Murray arrived from Quebec with four thousand troops ; and on the next Colonel Haviland, who had marched from Crown Point, appeared with three thousand more. Haviland had taken possession of Isle aux Noix on the way. Vaudreuil

perceived the folly of attempting resistance against such a crushing force, and on the 8th he signed a capitulation surrendering into the hands of the English, Montreal and all Canada, which was then defined as a region covering not only the present provinces of that name, but part of the country south and west of the more westerly of the great lakes. General Gage was appointed governor of Montreal, and General Murray went down the St. Lawrence with four or five thousand men to garrison Quebec.

The French still held the post of Detroit, on the connecting waters between Lakes Erie and St. Clair; and Amherst, feeling that the conquest of Canada was not absolutely complete while the lilies of France waved over any garrison in the province, however insignificant, sent Major Rogers, five days after the capitulation, with two hundred of his rangers, to plant the English flag in the far interior. At ruined Frontenac the party were well treated by the Indians. Creeping along the north shore of Lake Ontario, they made their way slowly to Niagara, and there furnished themselves with proper costume for the wilderness. In the chilly month of October they went over Lake Erie in open boats to its southern shore, and with cattle furnished by Colonel Boquet, proceeded by land to Detroit in the midst of savage tribes. At the mouth of a river, according to Rogers' journal, whose locality can not now well be defined, they were met by a deputation of Indian chiefs residing upon the great peninsula of Michigan. They informed Rogers that he was within the domain of Pontiac, the famous Ottawa emperor, and advised him to wait for his coming. That haughty prince, when he came, demanded to know how he dared to enter his country without his leave. Rogers explained that he

came not as the enemy of the Indians, but to remove the French; and after some hesitation the Partisan and his rangers were suffered to pass on to take possession of Detroit. This was accomplished at the close of November, 1760.*

* "I landed half a mile from the fort," says Rogers in his journal "and drew up my party in front of it in a field of grass. Here Captain Campbell joined us with a French officer bearing Captain Beleter's compliments, and informing me that the garrison was at my command. Lieutenants McCormick and Leslie, with thirty-six Royal Americans, immediately took possession of the fort. The troops of the garrison piled their arms, the French colors were taken down, and the English flag hoisted in their place. Upon this, about seven hundred Indians, who were looking on at a distance, gave a shout, exulting in their prediction being verified, that the crow represented the English instead of the French."