CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE successes of Montgomery, and especially his triumph at Montreal, had given great joy to the whole country. This was heightened by the intelligence of Arnold's arrival before Quebec, with his troops in good spirits. "We receive, with very great satisfaction, your congratulations on the glorious success of the Continental army in Canada," wrote Nathaniel Woodhull on behalf of the New York Provincial Congress, to General Schuyler, "and we can assure you that it is much heightened by the consideration that we recommended the generals who have, with so much activity and success, conducted an expedition which was attended with difficulties, thought to be insuperable by those who were acquainted with them."* And the Continental Congress, in testimony of their appreciation of his services, promoted Montgomery to the rank of major-general on the 9th of December.

The thoughtless many believed the conquest of all Canada to be an easy task after these victories, but there were a wise few, in and out of legislative halls, who shared in the anxieties of the leaders in the northern army, and condemned, without stint, the conduct of the troops, who, at the moment of greatest need, had practically abandoned the cause and returned home. The Continental Congress received its share of blame because of its tardiness in

* Autograph letter, Dec. 9, 1775.

affording needed coöperation. Time after time, both Schuyler and Montgomery had besought them to send reenforcements and supplies, and also an advisory committee like the one dispatched to Cambridge to confer with Washington, but it was not until too late to be of service in the current campaign that such committee were appointed,* and made their way toward Montreal. Montgomery was therefore compelled, by circumstances, to make unauthorized arrangements with the troops to induce them to go forward; and he left Montreal for Quebec without seeing the committee.

"Be so good," he wrote to Schuyler from near Quebec, "as to show Congress the necessity I was under of clothing the troops to induce them to stay and undertake this service at such an inclement season. I think, had the committee been with me, they would have seen the propriety of grasping at every circumstance in my power, to induce them to engage again. I was not without my apprehensions of not only being unable to make my appearance here, but even being obliged to relinquish the ground I had gained. However, I hope the clothing and dollar bounty will not greatly exceed the bounty offered by Congress * * * Upon another occasion I have also ventured to go beyond the letter of the law. Colonel Easton's detachment at the mouth of the Sorel was employed on the important service of stopping the fleet. They were half naked, and the weather was very severe. I was afraid that not only they might grow impatient and relinquish the business in hand, but I also saw the reluctance the troops at Montreal showed to quit it. By way of stimulant, I offered as a reward all public stores taken in the vessels, to the troops who went forward, except ammunition and provisions. Warner's corps refused to march, or at least declined it. Bedel's went on, and came in for a share of the labor and honor. I hope the Congress will not think this money ill laid out."†

Arnold, as we have seen, was baffled in his attempts to cross the St. Lawrence at Quebec, by a tempest of wind and sleet that continued for several days and nights Meanwhile the garrison in the city was strengthened by

* Robert R. Livingston, Robert Treat Paine, and John Langdon.

† Autograph letter, Dec. 5, 1775.

the Highlanders under McLean, that fled from the Sorel. At length the wind ceased, and at nine o'clock in the evening of the 13th of November, Arnold began the embarcation of his troops in birch canoes. Before dawn the next morning over five hundred of them had crossed, unperceived until the last moment by the British vessels lying in the river, and rendezvoused at Wolfe's Cove, where the lamented hero of the old war prepared to scale the heights of Abraham. One hundred and fifty men were yet at Point Levi, but it was too late to return for them; so Arnold, emulating the daring of Wolfe, placed himself at the head of his little band of heroes, and before sunrise on the 14th, scaled the acclivity at the exact point where his predecessor ascended, sixteen years before.

That little band presented a sublime spectacle. There they stood, only five hundred and fifty strong, upon a bleak eminence, in the dim light of a keen, wintry morning, thinly clad, scantily fed, more than half their muskets made useless by the storms of the wilderness, with a dark castle and massive stone walls, that inclosed an alert garrison and five thousand inhabitants, frowning upon them, yet with the expectation of seeing the proud city bow to them as its conquerors!

Yet all were not enemies within those walls, nor even within that garrison. In fact, Lieutenant-Governor Cramahé, in command there, could not certainly rely upon any one except the Royal Scotch regiment—McLean's Banditti, as Montgomery called them. Most of the Canadians in the city were friendly to the invaders; and many who bore arms, pressed unwillingly into the service, would do but feeble execution against the republicans. Indeed, they would have joined them at the first opportunity. It was upon these friends and their disaffected soldiers that

Arnold relied more for success than upon the arms of the men under his command. He believed that a shout from his troops, under the walls of Quebec, would be the signal for an insurrection in his favor within; and he accordingly drew up his men within eight hundred yards of the gates of St. Louis and St. John, and ordered them to give three cheers. He expected, at least, to see the regulars sally out to attack him, when, he hoped, by the assistance of friends in the city, to be able to rush in through the open gates, and seize the town. But Cramahé and McLean were too wary to open the gates without perceiving a sure prospect of success; and the people within, awed by the presence of troops, were comparatively passive and silent. The parapets of the walls were, however, soon covered with people, and many of them responded to the huzzas of the republican troops. The Americans also discharged several guns at the British soldiery, but without effect, while the shot of a thirty-two pound cannon, brought to bear upon the republicans, proved equally harmless.

The whole affair now began to assume the character of a solemn farce. It was soon rendered completely so by Arnold, who sent to Lieutenant-Governor Cramahé, by a flag, a pompous proclamation and demand for a surrender. After a preface, in which he set forth that he had been sent by General Washington to coöperate with General Schuyler by taking possession of the city of Quebec, he said:

"I do, therefore, in the name of the united Colonies, demand immediate surrender of the town, fortifications, etc., of Quebec to the forces of the united colonies under my command, forbidding you to injure any of the inhabitants of the town in their persons or property, as you will answer the same at your peril. On surrendering the town, the property of every individual shall be secured to him; but if I am obliged to carry the town by storm, you may expect every severity practised on such occasion; and the merchants, who may now save their property, will probably be involved in the general ruin."

The bearer of this summons was fired upon; but on the following day Arnold found means to convey it to Cramahé, with a letter, in which he assured him that he had several British prisoners in his hands, who should receive the same treatment that the lieutenant-governor had given, as he understood, an American prisoner, then in irons within the town.* But the letter and the proclamation were treated with contempt. There were no signs of insurrection in the city, and the invaders were considered harmless.†

Colonel Arnold thought it not prudent to attempt to storm the town with a force so feeble. He accordingly proceeded to invest it, so as to cut off all communication with the country, with the hope of reducing the garrison by starvation, he having been informed that provisions were scarce in the city. He made the large mansion of Major Caldwell, "half a league from the city," his headquarters, and his extensive out-buildings were converted into barracks for the troops. He also took possession of a nunnery for the same purpose, and made provision for the sick and wounded. The detachment left at Point Levi had made its way to the camp meanwhile, and his force numbered a little less than seven hundred men.

But Arnold was soon compelled to raise the siege.

* This was a young Virginian, named George Merchant, who had been suddenly seized by a party of British, while on duty as a sentinel near the walls.

† "This ridiculous affair," wrote an eye-witness, "gave me a contemptible opinion of Arnold. Morgan, Febiger, and other officers did not hesitate to speak of it in that point of view. However, Arnold had a vain desire to gratify. He was well known at Quebec. Because he had traded in horses there he was despised by the principal people. The epithet of *horse-jockey* was freely and universally bestowed upon him by the British. Having now obtained power, he became anxious to display it in the faces of those who had formerly despised and contemned him."—Judge Henry's *Campaign against Quebec.*

Friends from above informed him that Carleton was approaching Quebec in an armed vessel, with two hundred men; and other friends in the city assured him, on the 18th, that McLean would sally out with several field-pieces, the next day, and attack him. He at once perceived the danger of his situation; and on a strict examination of his ammunition, he found that he had not more than five rounds of powder to each man, so much had been spoiled in the march across the wilderness. Under these circumstances he deemed it prudent to withdraw. On the morning of the 19th he broke up his camp, and retired to Point aux Trembles (Aspen-Tree Point), eight leagues above Quebec, and there awaited the orders of Montgomery. On his way he saw the vessel that was conveying Carleton and his friends to Quebec. It had touched at Point aux Trembles, but proceeded immediately on hearing of the approach of the republicans. Soon afterward, Arnold heard the booming of the cannon that welcomed the governor back to the capital.

In full view of the difficulties before him, Montgomery left Montreal for Quebec, on the 26th of November, thoroughly imbued with the spirit of a soldier and a lawgiver commissioned to redeem and remodel a state. He confidently expected success in his military enterprise; and he wrote to Schuyler: "I shall lose no time in calling a convention when my intended expedition is finished." He proceeded in three armed schooners, with artillery and provisions, and only three hundred troops. On the 1st of December he arrived at Point aux Trembles, and on the 3d made a formal junction between his own and Arnold's troops, and took the chief command.

The fearful rigors of a Canadian winter were at hand, and yet, feeble as were his preparations for the perilous

service before him, the valiant Montgomery was hopeful. "I need not tell you," he wrote to his father-in-law, "that until Quebec is taken, Canada is unconquered; and that, to accomplish this, we must resort to siege, investment, or storm." The first was out of the question, because he had no battering train; and from the impossibility of making trenches in a rocky soil and in winter, the second could not be successfully accomplished without ample reënforcements, for the city had provisions for eight months; but the third he thought feasible.

"To the storming plan," he said, "there are fewer objections; and to this we must come at last. If my force be small, Carleton's is not great. The extensiveness of his works, which, in case of investment, would favor him, will, in the other case, favor us. Masters of our secret, we may select a particular time and place for attack, and to repel this the garrison must be prepared at all times and places; a circumstance which will impose upon it incessant watching and labor, by day and by night, which, in its undisciplined state, must breed discontents that may compel Carleton to capitulate, or perhaps to make an attempt to drive us off. In this last idea there is a glimmering of hope. Wolfe's success was a lucky hit, or rather a series of such hits; all sober and scientific calculation was against him, until Montcalm, permitting his courage to get the better of discretion, gave up the advantage of his fortress, and came out to try his strength on the plain. Carleton, who was Wolfe's quarter-master-general, understands this well, and, it is to be feared, will not follow the Frenchman's example."*

With these views Montgomery prepared to march upon Quebec. He was much pleased with Arnold's troops, and spoke of them in high terms in a letter to Schuyler:

"I find Colonel Arnold's corps," he said, "an exceedingly fine one. Inured to fatigue, and well accustomed to cannon shot (at Cambridge), there is a style of discipline among them much superior to what I have been used to see this campaign. He, himself, is active, intelligent, and enterprising. Fortune often baffles the sanguine expectations of poor

* American Archives, Fourth Series, iii., 1638.

mortals. I am not intoxicated with the favors I have received at her hands, but I do think there is a fair prospect of success. The governor has been so kind as to send out of town many of our friends, who refused to do military duty;* among them several very intelligent men, capable of doing me considerable service—one of them, a Mr. Antill, I have appointed chief engineer."†

Montgomery clothed Arnold's corps with thick suits from the public stores; and while they were paraded in front of the parish church at Point aux Trembles, he addressed them in words of just praise and patriotic exhortation. "A few huzzas," says Henry, "from our freezing bodies were returned to this address of the gallant hero. New life was infused into the whole corps;" and the little army of republicans, less than a thousand strong, with two hundred Canadians under Colonel James Livingston, pressed on toward the capital in the face of a severe snow-storm.

Montgomery arrived before Quebec on the 5th of December, made his head-quarters at Holland House, in the parish of St. Foi, between two and three miles from the town, and from there, on the same day, wrote a long and interesting letter to Schuyler.

"Mr. Carleton," he said, "who is, I suppose, ashamed to show his face in England, is now in town, and puts on the show of defense. The works of Quebec are extremely extensive, and very incapable of being defended. His garrison consists of McLane's banditti, the sailors from the frigates and other vessels laid up, together with the citizens obliged

* Carleton was unpopular with the great mass of the people, toward which he had shown much reserve, confining his intimacy to the military and the Canadian gentry. He was well aware of his unpopularity, and looked with distrust on all around him. Perceiving many malcontents in Quebec, he issued a proclamation on the 22d of November, ordering all persons who should refuse to take up arms for the king, to leave the town within four days from the date of the proclamation, and, with their wives and children, to leave the district of Quebec before the first day of December, under the penalty of being treated as rebels or spies.

† Autograph Letter, December 5, 1775.

to take up arms, most of whom are impatient of the fatigues of a siege, and wish to see matters accommodated amicably. I propose amusing Mr. Carleton with a formal attack, erecting batteries, etc.; but mean to assault the works of the Lower Town, which is the weakest part. I have this day written to Mr. Carleton, and also to the inhabitants, which, I hope, will have some effect. I shall be very sorry to be reduced to this mode of attack, because I know the melancholy consequences, but the approaching severe season, and the weakness of the garrison, together with the nature of the works, point it out too strongly to be passed by."*

Montgomery's letter to Carleton, above-mentioned, was a demand for the instant surrender of the city. This was his first act after disposing his troops before Quebec. In violation of the rules of honorable warfare, the governor ordered McLean to fire upon the flag, and not allow it to approach the walls. Montgomery was made very indignant by this treatment, and on the following morning he addressed a very menacing letter to Carleton, in which he exaggerated the strength and appointments of his army, and made a demand for an instant surrender. This letter, and one of like tenor to the inhabitants, were carried into the town by a woman from the country, and a copy of the letter was afterward shot over the walls upon an arrow. But Carleton, innately brave, and relying upon his known resources, refused to hold any communication with the "rebel general," nor would he permit the least intercourse between the citizens and the people outside the walls. He was well informed of the real strength of Montgomery's forces, felt confident that the garrison would keep the disloyal citizens quiet, and expected to see the rigors of the winter soon drive the besiegers away.

Montgomery now prepared for an assault. His quarters, as we have observed, were at Holland House. Those of Arnold were near Scott's Bridge on the St. Charles River,

* Autograph Letter, Dec. 5, 1775.

and the greater portion of the republican troops were encamped near the Intendant's Palace in the suburb St. Roque, of the Lower Town, not far from Palace Gate. His prospects were certainly very unpromising. With a feeble, ill-clad, ill-fed army, exposed to the most severe frosts and storms in the open fields; with no other ordnance than a field-train of artillery and a few mortars; with few intrenching tools, and the ground frozen to a great depth and covered with snow-drifts, how could the republican commander hope for success? Yet his brave heart and generous spirit would not yield to these formidable obstacles, and he resolved to force the garrison and people to surrender by a series of annoyances, hinted at in his letter just quoted. He accordingly planted four or five mortars in the suburb St. Roque, of the Lower Town, and from these cast about two hundred shells into the city, in the course of thirty hours, but without other serious effect than setting a few buildings on fire. He had already commenced the construction of a six-gun battery and other works under the direction of Captain Antill, on the plains of Abraham, about seven hundred yards from the walls. It was a difficult task, for the ground was deeply frozen, and the snow lay in immense drifts. Indeed, the earth could not be penetrated, and gabions and fascines were set up and filled with snow, upon which water was poured, and instantly congealed. Thus, an ice mound was soon formed, and upon this glittering embankment Captain Lamb placed six twelve-pound cannon and two howitzers, in battery.

When these works were completed, Montgomery sent Colonel Arnold, and Captain Macpherson (his favorite aid-de-camp), with a flag of truce, to bear letters to the governor. They reached the walls without molestation, when they

were ordered off immediately. To their question, whether the governor would receive any letters from them, they were answered with an emphatic No, and ordered to leave. Carleton utterly refused to hold any kind of parley with the besiegers. Montgomery was exceedingly indignant, and on the following morning he contrived to send in to Carleton a letter, in which, after charging him with personal ill-treatment, and cruelty to American prisoners, and informing him that he well knew the governor's situation, and that only motives of humanity caused him to make another overture for a surrender, he said:

"I am at the head of troops accustomed to success, confident of the righteousness of the cause they are engaged in, inured to danger and fatigue, and so highly incensed at your inhumanity, illiberal abuse, and the ungenerous means employed to prejudice them in the minds of the Canadians, that it is with difficulty I restrain them till my batteries are ready, from assaulting your works, which would afford them a fair opportunity of ample vengeance and just retaliation. Firing upon a flag of truce, hitherto unprecedented, even among savages, prevents my following the ordinary mode of conveying my sentiments; however, I will, at any rate, acquit my conscience. Should you persist in an unwarrantable defense, the consequence be upon your own head. Beware of destroying stores of any sort, as you did at Montreal or in the river. If you do, by Heaven, there will be no mercy shown."*

Carleton paid no attention to this letter; and Montgomery ordered Lamb to open his battery upon the enemy's works. Bombs were sent from the Lower Town at the same time, and did some damage, but the cannon made no serious impression upon the walls. At length heavy balls, hurled from the citadel, shivered Lamb's ice-battery and the brittle breast-work near, and very soon silenced his cannon, and compelled him to withdraw.

It was toward the close of the day, when this destructive gun was brought to bear upon the ice battery. Mont-

* American Archives, Fourth Series, iii., 289.

gomery, accompanied by his youthful aid-de-camp, Aaron Burr, paid a visit to the trenches, and at the moment when he approached the spot where Lamb was plying his guns, a shot from the enemy dismounted one of them and wounded several of the men. A second, and almost equally destructive shot, immediately followed. "This is warm work, sir," said Montgomery, addressing Captain Lamb. "It is, indeed," replied the gallant soldier, "and certainly no place for you, sir." "Why so, captain?" asked Montgomery. "Because," he answered, "there are enough of us here to be killed, without the loss of you, which would be irreparable." The general quickly perceived the insufficiency of the batteries, and, on retiring, gave Captain Lamb permission to withdraw his men whenever he might think proper; immediately if he chose to do it. But Lamb decided to remain until dark, when, securing all the guns, he abandoned the ruined redoubt. Lamb, who had never seen Burr before, wondered that the general should encumber his military family with a boy. But on observing his perfect coolness in the midst of the greatest danger, and the fire in his keen, black eye, and perceiving no trace of the disturbances of fear in his singularly striking countenance, he was convinced that the young volunteer was no ordinary youth, and not out of place by the side of the brave Montgomery.*

The commander had not expected much breaching service from his cannon. They were intended more to lull the enemy into security at other points than as means of much destructive execution. He had other and more effective plans in view; and on the evening of his first cannonade, he wrote to General Wooster, saying:

* Leake's *Life of Lamb*, p. 125.

"The enemy have very heavy metal, and I think will dismount our guns very shortly; some they have already rendered almost useless. This gives very little uneasiness; I never expected any other advantage from our artillery than to amuse the enemy and blind them as to my real intention. I propose the first strong northwester, to make two attacks by night: one with about a third of the troops, on the Lower Town, having first set fire to some houses, which will, in all probability, communicate their flames to the stockade lately erected on the rock near St. Roque; the other upon Cape Diamond Bastion, by escalade. I have not time to point out my reasons for this particular attack; let it suffice that it is founded on the nature of the grounds, works, and the best intelligence I have been able to procure. However, I am not sure whether the troops relish this mode of proceeding."*

That evening (16th of December) Montgomery called a council of all the commissioned officers of Arnold's detachment, to determine upon future proceedings. A large majority voted for making an assault as soon as reënforcements should arrive, and the men should be furnished with bayonets, hatchets, and hand-grenades. But in these contingencies lay all the difficulty.

"I have been near a fortnight before Quebec, at the head of upward of eight hundred troops," Montgomery wrote to Schuyler, "a force, you'll say, not very adequate to the business in hand. But we must make the best of it. It is all I could get. I have been so used to struggle with difficulties, that I expect them of course." He anxiously desired the reënforcements, that he might act promptly and efficiently. "I hope the troops will be sent down," he said, "as soon as possible, for should we fail in our first attempt, a second or a third may do the business before relief can arrive to the garrison. Possession of the town, and that speedily, I hold of the highest consequence. The enemy are expending their ammunition most liberally, and I fear the Canadians will not relish a union with the colonies till they see the whole country in our hands, and defended by such a force as may relieve them from the apprehensions of again falling under the ministerial lash. Were it not for these reasons, I should have been inclined to a blockade till toward the 1st of April, by which time the garrison would probably be much distressed for provisions and wood."*

* American Archives, Fourth Series, iii., 289.

† Autograph letter, Dec. 18, 1775.

Schuyler was utterly powerless. He had tried recruiting, but failed in the attempt. He had already written to Montgomery—"I am much afraid that we shall not have a man left at either Fort George or Ticonderoga by the first day of January. The recruiting parties that have been sent out meet with little or no success."* He had earnestly importuned the Congress for reënforcements, and in a special manner for hard money, for the soldiers were averse to receiving the Continental bills, and but few of the Canadians would touch them. "I am amazed no money is yet arrived," Montgomery wrote to Schuyler. "The troops are uneasy, and I shall by and by be at my wits' end to furnish the army with provisions. I have almost exhausted Price, having had upward of £5000, York, from him."†

In the lack of hard money may be found the secret of many of the discontents in the army, and the failure in the recruiting service. The Congress was even dilatory in replying to Schuyler's letters; and now, when Montgomery was appealing to him for more troops and supplies, he again wrote an urgent, at the same time a quietly sarcastic letter, to the president of the supreme legislature, saying:

* MS. Letter Book, Dec. 17, 1775.

† Autograph letter, December 26, 1775. Mr. James Price was a wealthy merchant of Montreal, and from the beginning had been an active friend of the republicans. "I must take this opportunity," wrote Montgomery to Schuyler, "of acknowledging Price's services. He has been a faithful friend to the cause indeed! His advice and assistance upon every occasion I have been much benefited by; and when I consider that he has been the first mover of those measures which have been attended with so many and great advantages to the united colonies, I can't help wishing the Congress to give him an ample testimony of their sense of his generous and spirited exertions in the cause of freedom." In a letter to Schuyler, from Montreal, on the 5th of January, 1775, Mr. Price wrote: "I fear the army here will be in great want of cash. Our house has advanced them, since their arrival here, £20,000. We are now almost out of that article; and I am sorry to say I don't find any of the merchants here willing to lend."

"I cannot procure any gold or silver here to send to Canada. I am afraid it is not to be had at Philadelphia, as a considerable time has already elapsed since Congress gave me reason to hope that a supply would be sent. I can not help, sir, repeating my wish, that a considerable force should be immediately sent into Canada. The necessity appears to me indispensable, for I do most sincerely believe that unless such a measure be adopted we shall severely repent of it, perhaps when too late to afford a remedy. I beg a thousand pardons of Congress for my importunity on this occasion, and I hope they will have charity enough to impute it to my zeal for the American cause. From what I can learn, the troops that are at Ticonderoga will leave it to-morrow, and I have none to send there. The few that are here [Albany] refuse to remain until Tuesday, to escort the prisoners, before which I can not move them for want of carriages. I have been so very long without hearing from Congress, that I am exceedingly anxious to have the honor of a line from you."*

* MS. Letter Books, Dec. 31, 1775.