

W. M. Lupton *July 10th 1789* *to the* *Secretary*

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EXTRACTS RELATIVE TO THE HISTORY OF BRITISH AMERICA.

ACCOUNT OF CANADA.

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THIS decay of the fur-trade was not then so remarkable as it has been since, when the promotion of the Duke of Anjou to the throne of Charles V. spread an alarm over all Europe, and plunged it once more into the horrors of a general war. The conflagration extended beyond the seas, and would have advanced even to Canada, had not the Iroquois put a stop to it. The English and French had long vied with each other in courting the alliance of that nation: These demonstrations of esteem or fear, had so elevated their natural pride, that they thought themselves the umpires of the two rival nations, and pretended that their interests were to regulate the conduct of both. As they were inclined to peace at that time, they haughtily declared that they would take up arms against either of the two which should commence hostilities against each other. This resolution suited the situation of the French colony, which was ill provided for a war, and expected no assistance from the mother-country. New-York, on the contrary, whose forces, already considerable, were daily increasing, wished to prevail upon the Iroquois to join with them. Their insinuations, presents, and negotiations were ineffectual till 1709, when they succeeded in seducing the five nations; and their troops, which till then had remained inactive, marched out, supported by a vast number of Indian warriors.

The army was haughtily advancing towards the center of Canada, with the greatest confidence of success, when one of the chiefs of the Iroquois, who had never approved of their proceedings, simply

said to his people, What will become of us, if we should succeed in driving away the French? These few words, uttered with a mysterious and anxious look, immediately recalled to the minds of all the people their former system, which was to keep the balance even between the two foreign nations, in order to secure their own independence. They instantly resolved to forsake a plan they had too precipitately engaged in, contrary to the public interest; but as they thought it would be shameful openly to quit their associates, they imagined that secret treachery might be substituted in place of open defection. The lawless savages, the virtuous Spartans, the religious Hebrews, the sagacious and warlike Greeks and Romans; all people, whether civilized or not, have uniformly made what is called the right of nations consist either in craft or violence.

The army had halted on the banks of a little river, to wait for the artillery and ammunition. The Iroquois, who spent their leisure hours in hunting, contrived to strip all the beasts they caught, and throw their skins into the river, a little above the camp. The waters were soon infected. The English, who suspected no such perfidy, continued drinking of the poisoned stream. Such numbers immediately died, that they were forced to desert.

A still more imminent danger threatened the French colony. A numerous fleet, destined against Quebec, and which had five or six thousand men on board, for the purpose of making a descent, entered the river St. Lawrence the following year, with the greatest probability of success, if it could