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CHAPTER XIII.

As soon as possible after the capture of St. John's detachments of the rebel army were pushed down the Richelieu to Sorel, on the St. Lawrence, and up stream above Montreal. The remains of the British flotilla were in a critical position as they were driven from their anchorage above by the rebel cruisers, while their retreat to Quebec was cut off by their occupation of Sorel and the Berthier narrows.

After Allen's attempt on Montreal Gen. Carleton despatched an order to Colonel MacLean at Quebec to procure as many recruits as possible and repair to Sorel. A force of 379 Canadians was accordingly raised and marched to Sorel. Here the emissaries of the disaffected parishes found means to cause many of them to desert, and MacLean, unable to hear anything of the Governor, and in danger of being cut off by the rebels, retreated—that movement being hastened by a letter transmitted to him that Arnold had unexpectedly arrived at Point Levi opposite Quebec. MacLean descended the river with his command, landed at Cape Rouge and entered the city on the 7th.

Carleton's position at Montréal had become imminently perilous. There seemed to be no chance of escape. But at length a bold and experienced officer, Capt. Bouchette, then in command of an armed vessel at Montreal carried him safely through the rebel forces, who held all the posts from Montreal to Trois Rivieres, and he entered Quebec on 13th November.

About the end of August, Arnold, who had received a colonel's commission from the rebel congress, laid a plan before Washington, then recently appointed Commander-in-Chief of the rebel forces, the object of which was to prevent any aggressive movement on the part of Sir Guy Carleton. The project was to ascend the Kennebec, a river

about 130 miles east of Boston (ten miles east of Portland in the State of Maine) to its source in Lake St. Pierre, cross the height of land separating the watershed of the St. Lawrence from that of the Atlantic, a distance of 40 miles, and striking the head waters of the Chaudiere, a march of 45 miles further on would bring them opposite Quebec at a time best fitted for surprise, when the vessels of war had left the river and the ice had not closed it. It was correctly predicted that a movement by this line would be thought impracticable by the British General or his officers, and it was probable that correct information of the state of defences and the garrison had been received from some of the English traitors then in the town. Whatever may have influenced the design it was the conception of a true soldier, forming in this instance a marked contrast to the want of energy, enterprises and professional skill displayed on every occasion by the British officers. As the expedition must of necessity carry its own supplies as there were no depots or base of operations to fall back upon the undertaking was of a most hazardous nature, but the indomitable will of Arnold eventually triumphed over all difficulties.

Leaving Cambridge, the rebel headquarters, with 1,500 men he ascended the Kennebec in canoes to Lake St. Pierre, and thence attempted to force a passage through the spurs of the Laurentian mountains, but so difficult, dangerous and apparently impracticable an operation did this prove that one third of the detachment with a colonel at its head deliberately marched back. Arnold would not relinquish the design, and finally appeared at Point Levi on the 5th November, as stated, to the consternation of the garrison which was then incapable of resisting an assault. It consisted of one captain and two subalterns and 50 men of the 7th Regiment, lately arrived from Montreal, one Lieut.-Colonel, six captains, twelve subalterns and 350 men of Colonel MacLean's corps, then raising five companies of British militia, about 200 men, six companies of Canadian militia, about 300 men, a battalion of seamen under Captain Hamil-

ton of the Lizard frigate, about 250, and a few artillery men—total, 1,150 men, to man works requiring a garrison of 8,000 men at least, and without one officer of experience among them. If Arnold could have crossed the river at once there can be no doubt the city would have fallen but the Canadians voluntarily removed all boats to the north side on his appearance, and his half-starved troops required food and rest before attempting any enterprise. This delay saved the city and Colony, and during a dark night on the 13th November Arnold found means to cross on rafts, and on the morning of the 14th assaulted the St. John's gate but was repulsed with great slaughter. Colonel MacLean, who having arrived as above stated, having ample time to reorganize the garrison. Being informed that a sortie in force was contemplated Arnold retreated to Point aux Trembles, 20 miles below Quebec, for the purpose of effecting a junction with Montgomery, who, having captured the British flotilla at La Valatrie, leisurely descended the river, the inhabitants submitting through necessity. Amongst other captures on board the flotilla was that of Gen. Prescott. As he was only ornamental to the British his captors had no great bargain, but eventually he was exchanged for a rebel general in whose command he was not fit to be a corporal.

Since the peace of Paris (1763) the works at Quebec had been neglected. The *enceinte* consisted of a wall without either ditch, glacis or covered way, the parapet was broken down, but 150 pieces of cannon were mounted on the ramparts; on the landward side a palisade covered the foot of the wall. The river side was defended by batteries on the various wharves; the Sault-au-Matelot and St. Peter's streets were barricaded, the wharf being mounted with heavy ordnance, another barricade was raised two hundred yards further on in old Sault-au-Matelot street on the communication between the Cape and River St. Charles. Between the foot of Cape Diamond and the water edge at the end of Champlain street two batteries were raised, supporting each other, which completely commanded the