

A SCHEME FOR THE CONQUEST OF CANADA IN 1746.

BY VICTOR HUGO PALTSITS, OF THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY.

Great Britain's acquisition of the vast domain of Canada, by the treaty of 1763, was the realization of a hope long cherished. The reduction of this "thorn in the side" of the neighboring English colonies had been attempted in 1690, under Sir William Phips, and in 1711 under Sir Hovenden Walker. The attempt of the former ended ingloriously, while that of the latter proved a fiasco.

From the treaty of Utrecht, in 1713, until the open rupture in 1744, a nominal peace reigned. The declaration of war between Great Britain and France in the latter year equally involved their colonial possessions in conflict. On 17th June, 1745, Louisburg, the richest American jewel that had ever adorned the French crown, capitulated to the daring of the New Englanders under General William Pepperrell, aided by a fleet commanded by Commodore Peter Warren. The successful issue of this enterprise gave the English entire command of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and thus enabled them to cut off Quebec from all hope of succor from France. It also facilitated the conquest of Canada itself.¹ The victory was hailed with acclamation throughout the colonies, and a hope was expressed that no peace negotiations should ever be set on foot with France in which the restoration of Cape Breton should as much as be mentioned.²

The Canadians were apprehensive of a British invasion; but made vigorous preparations to repress it. They learned the English plans by means of scouting parties, from the English prints, and more especially from the English colonists captured on the frontiers by their various incursions, and whom they held in confinement at Quebec.³

In the English-American provinces an expedition against Canada was looked upon by some as a chance for "fine plundering;"⁴ while to others it appeared to afford advantages "inconceivably great to the Crown of Britain."⁵ Indeed, the original suggestions of October,

¹ *Memoirs of the Principal Transactions of the Last War*. Third edition. Boston, 1758; p. 33.

² Parker's *New-York Post-Boy*, No. 164, for March 10, 1746. The article itself is dated December 28, 1745.

³ The whole subject of rumors and French anticipatory action can be studied from *N. Y. Col. Docs.*, vol. x; and *Journal of Captain William Pote, Jr.*, *New York*, 1896.

⁴ *Post-Boy*, No. 178, for June 16, 1746.

⁵ *Post-Boy*, No. 173, for May 12, 1746.