

if not it stands fixed : be you careful not to drop it to any, for fear of desertion, and it would not be amiss for Carleton to pass his troops [from Orleans] in the beginning of Wednesday night. Crofton can file along the shore to his right, and meet you at the post you take; let the men have their blankets and let the tents be struck, bundled up and ready to bring over. If we succeed in the first business, it may produce an action, which may produce the total conquest of Canada; in all cases it is our duty to try the most likely way, whatever may be the event." (1)

This letter seems to have been overlooked in the discussion of the question of Wolfe's independent action. Why should Wolfe have told Burton what he refused to tell Monckton and Murray? That he should withhold information from Townshend was not altogether inexplicable, and perhaps in Townshend we have the key to the mystery.

Fore-
bodings.

What "harbinger preceding still the fates," what "precursor of fierce events," on this 12th night of September was it that affected both Wolfe and Montcalm? What made the one feel he would not survive that night's enterprise, the other that irretrievable disaster was impending? Among Montcalm's great anxieties was the problem of provisions: Quebec and his army, before the English secured so complete a command of the river, had been fed by both the land route and the water route. Latterly supplies had come by water as far as St. Augustine, thirteen miles from Quebec,² whence they had been taken overland. Now the recent bad weather had made the roads almost impassable, and there was nothing for it but to risk sending down boats in the dead of night in the hope that they might, by hugging the northern shore, get safely past the vessels lying

(1) Wright, p. 569.

² Kingsford, vol. iv, p. 260.