

The troops of the General occupied at the time nearly every important place in Canada. It was deemed expedient to take possession of the Province, in order to establish a barrier against the hostilities of the Indians, and to display to the world the strength of the insurgent forces. General Montgomery, then second in command to Major General Schuyler, who soon retired from the scene of action, moved in September, 1775, from Ticonderoga upon St. Johns, which surrendered after a siege of fifty days, and thence on Montreal, which he occupied with his troops, as well as Sorel, and subsequently Three Rivers. He pressed forward to join Colonel Arnold at Quebec, in order to precipitate an attack on the fortress with their combined forces before the severity of the season should render all prospect of success hopeless.

Winter had, however, fairly set in when Montgomery appeared before Quebec. He had no battering train, consequently he was not prepared for a regular siege, but he believed in a fair chance of success by assault. It is the repulse of the assault that we now commemorate. Upon the issue of the conflict hung the cause of the King in Canada, and the fate of the Colony as a dependency of the British Crown. A more daring attack than that of Montgomery upon Quebec is, perhaps, not on record in the page of History. An attack made at the break of day, in the dead of winter, and in the teeth of a driving snow storm. All that a daring man could do was done; but formidable defenders were within the walls—men resolved to be buried in the ruins rather than surrender.

Living as we do on the very scene of the action, it seems most meet that members of the Literary and Historical Society—an association formed fifty years ago for the prosecution of researches into the early History of Canada—should meet together with their friends to commemorate the centennial of the event.