



The Volunteer Review

AND MILITARY AND NAVAL GAZETTE.

A Journal Devoted to the Interests of the Military and Naval Forces of the Dominion of Canada

VOL. III.

OTTAWA, CANADA, MONDAY, AUGUST 9, 1869.

No. 32.

THE REVOLT

OF THE

British American Colonies,

1764-84.

CHAPTER XII.

The Revolutionary Committee, known as the "Continental Congress," had been sitting throughout the previous autumn and winter, immediately on intelligence of the result of the action at Bunker's Hill they appointed George Washington to the command of the insurgent troops and at the same time organized an invasion of the Province of Canada, which had only portions of the 7th and 26th regiments, numbering in all 717 men for its defence. But it had a soldier General, politician and statesman for its Governor in the presence of Sir Guy Carleton.

It appears in an evil hour for Great Britain that by a *private arrangement* with the ministry this able man relinquished to Howe the command of the troops in America, accepting what was then the obscure position of Governor of Canada, and a fortunate day for the best interests of that great country was that on which he landed at Quebec. With the tact of a statesman and the true appreciation of his duty as representative of his Sovereign he attached himself at once to the Canadian *noblesse* instead of the factious minority of Yankee pedlars and discontented adventurers which represented the English element and which was nearly if not altogether disloyal.

Afraid to provoke the hostility of a people who had so frequently vanquished them in a fair fight the *straight forward Puritans* of Massachusetts and of the Congress had sent secret emissaries amongst the people of Canada with an able address translated into the French language and distributed in manuscript. As it was freely scattered amongst the people it fell of course into the hands of the clergy and seigneurs, who, having seen the address to the people of England by the same body, in which the provisions of the "Quebec Act" were set

forth as intolerable grievances, and the free toleration of the Roman Catholic religion made a subject of as fierce denunciation as the Stamp Act, in which it was characterized as the "discrimination of impurity, persecution and murder over all the world," openly cursed the double-faced Congress and the scoundrels supporting them, at the same time driving from the Province all its known emissaries amongst whom was a Catholic ecclesiastic named Carroll, brother to a member of Congress, and manfully avowing their intention to retain their allegiance to Great Britain in violation, a pledge they gallantly and faithfully fulfilled.

On the day fixed for the Quebec Act to go into force (May 1st, 1775) the King's bust on the parade at Montreal was found to have been blackened during the night and adorned with a rosary of potatoes and a wooden cross to which a label was added with this inscription "*Le Pape du Canada ou le sot Anglois.*" As might have been expected this insult greatly exasperated the people. Fifteen years had barely elapsed since the capitulation of Canada was signed in Montreal, and so thoroughly reconciled had the gallant soldiers who fought under Montcalm and DeLevis become to the rule of the conquerors that Carleton wrote to Gage that a corporal's guard was sufficient for the protection of the Province. Fully aware of the perils thickening around that sapient commander and satisfied that some one must perform the service of extricating him from a position rendered intolerable by his own stupidity, the Governor of Canada meditated a march upon Boston and actually despatched two officers to explore the shortest military route. The plotting of English traitors and the rebel emissaries compelled him to turn attention to his own defence, but it is a pity that a skilful soldier with a clear and extensive judgment, great administrative faculties and large experience should be so far prejudiced by the prevailing pedantry of his profession as to neglect the opportunity of calling the gallant Canadian militia to arms, by which means his troops would be free to act, and Col. Ethan Allen and his "Green Mountain Boys"

would have kept at a respectable distance, while the beleaguering insurgents at Boston would have looked carefully to their scalps.

In a military point of view there were at this period but two lines of advance by which Canada could be reached from the North American Colonies, and although a third along the course of the Kennebec and Chaudiere Rivers was essayed during the year it was only useful as an Indian war trail, that is for purposes of surprise, and could by no means be made a line of advance leading from a base of operations.

The first of those lines was that by the Mohawk River and the Oneida Lake to Oswego,—as the rebels possessed no vessels on Lake Ontario this was useless; while moreover it was flanked throughout its whole length by the Mohawks and Indians of the Six Nations who were to a man hostile to the rebels. The other line, graphically called the "Gate of Canada," led through the valley of Lake Champlain.

In 1758 Amherst had cut a road from Boston to the Hudson above Albany, notwithstanding the affidavits of the "Select Men" that no site for such a road existed. In the event of invasion two courses were open, the first to ascend the Hudson to Fort Edward, thence by land to Fort George (formerly William Henry) at the head of Lake George, thence down that lake to the landing above the Saw Mills, where Abercrombie's army disembarked, by following the road to a point five miles east of Fort Edward, thence to the head of Wood Creek, the southern extremity of Lake Champlain, and along that lake to Ticonderago or Crown Point. Lake Champlain approaches within thirty miles of the Hudson and stretching one hundred and twenty miles in a northerly direction, sends its effluent, the Richelieu River, to join the St. Lawrence sixty miles below Montreal. The posts of Ticonderago and Crown Point commanded the principal passes on the Lake. The Richelieu was defended by the post of St. Johns, about twelve miles from the lake, while about five miles further down stream was Fort Chambly. To garrison these posts