

1754

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HISTORY of the WAR.

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his great superiority, obliged col. Washington to surrender; but the colonel obtained honourable conditions for himself and the troops. The British lost about 40 men; the loss of the French was never known. It was observed that they were assisted by a considerable number of Indians, who had long been in the British alliance. This action had a very bad effect upon the British interest in America. Tho' the French commander had engaged by the capitulation to do all he could to prevent the British from being insulted by the savages, yet the latter plundered the baggage and attacked the British in their retreat, killing some and scalping others.

Thus the French remained victors; the Indians were confirmed in their defection, and the frontiers exposed thro' the ill-timed parsimony of the provinces. The enemy on the other hand, wisely improved the present advantage, and erected forts to secure to themselves the quiet possession of that fertile country. Thus the noblest opportunity was lost of keeping our Indians steady, and for building a fort at a small expence, in a pass so commodiously situated between the mountains, that it would have effectually covered and defended two of our frontier counties, from the inroads of the French and their Indians. When the true state of the affair came to be known at London, his majesty instructed the earl of Albemarle to represent it at the court of France as a formal breach of the peace; but no satisfactory answer was obtained. The English ministry however were averse to war; and notwithstanding the French encroachments and hostilities, they hoped to settle all disputes by negotiation; yet the people saw, from the nature of the French encroachments and hostilities in America, that war was unavoidable.

While the congress, formerly mentioned, was held at Albany, governor Shirley proceeded with 1000 men to the eastern parts of the province, and with the consent of the Indians, built fort Western and fort Halifax upon the river Kenebeck, the former about 37 miles from the mouth of it, and the other about 54. These were erected to stop the progress of the French on that quarter, which was in great danger from those at Quebec and Crown Point; and to effect a solid friendship

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