

The Canadian winter had set in, and although Montgomery was not prepared for a lengthy siege, he placed several guns on the far side of the St. Charles, four on Point Levis, and a strong battery of six pieces before St. John's Gate, and began to bombard the city. In the meantime his men took possession of the country round about, and soon from every important point could be seen the crimson, or red and black flag of the "Continental" army.

The inhabitants, particularly the French, began to think that Carleton would yet have to surrender, and not a few living outside of the city walls became sympathisers with the rebels. The suburb of St. Roch was particularly disloyal; every house sheltered one or more of the enemy, who kept up a constant series of petty attacks on the city. The famous palace erected by the Intendant Bigot in this suburb offered an excellent opportunity to the foe, and they crowded its cupola with riflemen, who succeeded in picking off several of the British sentries; but Carleton turned a nine pounder on this position, and soon the lordly palace, so famous in the history of New France, was laid in ruins.

All through the month of December the siege lasted with but little injury being done to either side. The Americans were becoming disheartened, and many believed that their long and trying march had been all in vain. Their only hope lay in attempting to take the city by assault, and their general decided on adopting this course. Towards the end of the month the order was given for every man to hold himself in readiness for a night attack. A gathering storm was to be the signal for assembling, and eagerly the officers and men watched the heavens for the propitious sign. Several times they were called out, but the moon swept from behind the clouds just as the advance was about to be sounded, and all were sent to their quarters.

At last, on the night of December the thirtieth, leaden clouds swept down from the north, and all felt that the decisive time had arrived. The skies grew darker and darker, and at two o'clock on the following morning Montgomery called out his men, and gave the officers their orders.

Colonel Livingstone, in command of a regiment of mercenary Canadians, and Major Brown, with a part of a Boston regiment, were detailed to make a false attack on St. John's Gate, and if