

In the meantime the British had been suffering in the West. Fort St. John's, Fort Chambly, and Montreal had surrendered in rapid succession, and it was with difficulty that Guy Carleton escaped from Montreal.

When Montreal fell, Governor Carleton felt that the only hope of saving Canada from the invading forces was to hasten to Quebec at once. Captain Bouchette, a hardy Canadian, undertook to pass him through the American lines. On a pitch dark night in November, the Governor of Canada, accompanied by several trusty officers, began his flight in a skiff propelled by muffled paddles. Not a word was spoken; and the commands were given by signs. Time and again they were almost discovered as they crept down the river past the watch-fires of the enemy. So near did they approach the sentinels at times, that they were compelled to stop paddling altogether, and to allow their skiff to drift as lifeless as a log down the stream. Once when in danger of drifting on the shore, they kept their skiff out in mid-stream by propelling it for nine miles with their hands. They halted at Three Rivers and went to an Inn to rest, and the tired Governor, resting his head on his arms, fell into a much-needed slumber. But he was soon rudely awakened by the loud talking of American soldiers in an adjoining room. He despaired of escaping, but Captain Bouchette with great cleverness succeeded in passing him and his party through their midst, and without loss of time their skiff was once more on its way to Quebec. They soon met and boarded the armed brig "Fell," and before long a favorable breeze had swept them to their goal. There was great rejoicing in the city at their arrival, and the shouting and firing of joy-guns reached Arnold on his retreat to Pointe-aux-Trembles. Without delay Carleton examined the fortifications, and soon had everything in a fit state to stand a protracted siege.

On the first of December General Montgomery reached Arnold's camp, and the men, impatient from their inactivity, met him with exulting shouts. They clamored to be led against Quebec at once. Montgomery acquiesced in their wish, and on the fifth of the month they were marched along the frozen roads to the city. When it was reached the American commander at once sent in a flag of truce, but Carleton would have no communication with rebels, and the siege commenced in earnest.