

D'ANVILLE'S EXPEDITION.

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Early in 1745, Governor Shirley of Massachusetts formed a bold plan to capture Louisbourg, and so strike a telling blow at French rule in America. Four thousand New England troops, raw, but full of courage and enthusiasm, were sent on this mission under command of an untried militia colonel named Pepperell. Commodore Warren was ordered to support the provincials with the small squadron under his command.

To one experienced in warfare, this hastily raised expedition would seem doomed to certain failure. Good fortune, however, followed the New Englanders; and the French commandant, Du Chambon, after standing a siege of seven weeks, raised the white flag and asked for terms.

The news of the fall of the Dunkirk of America threw France into the utmost dismay, and she also felt keen mortification at having thus surrendered to a poorly equipped force of undisciplined colonists. Consternation and chagrin, however, soon gave way to desire for revenge, and plans for retaliation were quickly formed. The fortress must be immediately recaptured, and Annapolis and Boston demolished. It should be England's turn to feel the stings of humiliation.

To guard against the least possibility of failure, most elaborate preparations were made. An immense fleet was mobilized at Brest, and, although its destination was kept secret, the British colonies in America easily surmised that it was to be directed against them, and consequently they were filled with deep apprehension.

This fleet consisted of eleven ships of the line, mounting from fifty to sixty guns each, twenty frigates, and about thirty-four transports, fire-ships, etc.,—some sixty-five vessels in all. Over three thousand troops were on board, with large stores of arms and ammunition. Such an armament had never before sailed for America; well might the colonies tremble before so large a force.

The commander was M. de la Rochefoucauld, duc d'Anville, an experienced naval officer, who had spent the greater part of his life in the service of his king. Throughout the hardships of a naval life he had retained the elegance of manner and artistic temperament of