

for one of those unaccountable incidents, which no human prudence can foresee: A gunner, attempting to step out of his boat, had fallen into the water. He caught hold of a flake of ice, climbed up upon it, and was carried down the stream. As he passed by Quebec, close to the shore, he was seen by a centinel, who, observing a man in distress, called out for help. The English flew to his assistance, and found him motionless. They knew him by his uniform to be a French soldier, and carried him to the governor's house, where, by the help of spirituous liquors, they recalled him to life for a moment. He just recovered his speech enough to tell them that an army of ten thousand French was at the gates, and expired. The governor immediately dispatched orders to the advanced guard to retire within the walls with all expedition. Notwithstanding their precipitate retreat, the French had time to attack their rear. A few moments later, they would have been defeated, and the city retaken.

When General Murray perceived the approach of the enemy, he found himself reduced to the unavoidable alternative of making choice of one of two parts,—either to keep within the town, and confiding in his troops, which though weak as an army, were strong as a garrison, to sustain the siege to the utmost extremity; or to march out, and by trying the fortune of the field, to avoid the tedious hardships of a siege, in a place which seemed to him scarcely tenable. He resolved on the latter part. But when he came to review his ability for this undertaking, he could possibly draw into the field no more than three thousand men. However, he was not frightened by the enemy's great superiority. He determined to engage, depending on fortune, on the tried goodness of his troops, and his own courage to animate them. But he was mistaken in all his calculations. When he came to engage the French he found them too strong for him. The English, after narrowly escaping the calamity and disgrace of being surrounded, were driven back within their walls, leaving upwards of a thousand of their bravest men dead upon the spot. They gained Quebec, however, with very little further loss in the pursuit, except their cannon, which they could not bring off on account of the wreaths of snow which, even in this advanced season, still lay upon the ground. The French lost, at least, two thousand men in action; but as their whole hope of success depended on perfecting their work before a British squadron could arrive, they lost not a moment's time to improve their victory. They opened trenches before the town the very night of the battle. But it was the 11th of May before they could bring two batteries to play upon the fortifications. On the 9th of that month, to the great joy of the garrison, an English frigate anchored in the bason, and brought them an account that the British squadron, commanded by Lord Colville, was then in the river. On the 15th, a ship of the line and a frigate arrived; the next morning the two frigates were sent to attack the French squadron above the town. They executed their commission so well, that in a moment all the French vessels, of whatever kind, were dispersed, and the greatest part destroyed or taken. Mr. Levi, who had the mortification to behold, from the eminences, this action, which at one stroke put an end to all the hopes he had conceived from his late victory, was persuaded that these frigates, by the boldness of their manner, must have been the van-guard of a considerable reinforcement;