

waterway the birds sang. For the British moved, not as once upon Lake George, startling the echoes with drums and military bands, but so quietly that at half a mile's distance only the faint murmur of splashing oars and creaking thole-pins reached the ears of the watchers.

The Commandant suddenly lowered his glass and closed it with a snap, giving thanks to God. For at that distance the leading boats began heading in for shore.

"Etienne, he means at least to summon us!"

So it proved. General Amherst was by no means the man to pass and leave a hostile post in his rear. His detractors indeed accused him of spending all his time upon forts, either in reducing or in building them. But he had two very good reasons for pausing before Fort Amitié; he did not know the strength of the garrison, and he wanted pilots to guide his boats down the rapids below.

Therefore he landed and sent an officer forward to summon the garrison.

The officer presented himself at the river-gate, and having politely suffered Sergeant Bédard to blindfold him, was led to the Commandant's quarters. A good hour passed before he reappeared, the Commandant himself conducting him; and meantime the garrison amused itself with wagering on the terms of capitulation.

At the gate the Englishman's bandage was removed. He saluted, and was saluted, with extreme ceremony. The Commandant watched him out of earshot, and then, rubbing his hands, turned with a happy smile.

"To your guns, my children!"

They obeyed him, while they wondered. He seemed to take for granted that they must feel the compliment paid them by a siege in form.

The day was now well advanced, and it seemed at first that the British meant to let it pass without a demonstration. Towards nightfall, however, four gunboats descended the river, anchored and dropped down the current, paying out