

A few ecclesiastics, in black cassocks, dignitaries of the Church, mingled cheerfully in the conversation of the officers. They had accompanied the Governor, both to show their respect, and to encourage, by their presence and exhortations, the zeal of the colonists in the work of fortifying the capital.

War was then raging between old England and old France, and between New England and New France. The vast region of North America, stretching far into the interior and southwest from Canada to Louisiana, had for three years past been the scene of fierce hostilities between the rival nations, while the savage Indian tribes, ranged on the one side and on the other, steeped their moccasins in the blood of French and English colonists, who, in their turn, became as fierce, and carried on the war as relentlessly, as the savages themselves.

Louisbourg, the bulwark of New France, projecting its mailed arm boldly into the Atlantic, had been cut off by the English, who now overran Acadia, and began to threaten Quebec with invasion by sea and land. Busy rumors of approaching danger were rife in the colony, and the gallant Governor issued orders, which were enthusiastically obeyed, for the people to proceed to the walls and place the city in a state of defence, to bid defiance to the enemy.

Rolland Michel Barrin, Count de la Galissonnière, was remarkable no less for his philosophical attainments, that ranked him high among the savans of the French Academy, than for his political abilities and foresight as a statesman. He felt strongly the vital interests involved in the present war, and saw clearly what was the sole policy necessary for France to adopt in order to preserve her magnificent dominion in North America. His counsels were neither liked nor followed by the Court of Versailles, then sinking fast into the slough of corruption that marked the closing years of the reign of Louis XV.

Among the people who admired deeds more than words the Count was honored as a brave and skilful admiral, who had borne the flag of France triumphantly over the seas, and in the face of her most powerful enemies—the English and Dutch. His memorable repulse of Admiral Byng, eight years after the events here recorded,—which led to the