

of the King's fleet, to the Marquis de Castries, Minister and Secretary of State for the Marine department.

*On Board the Sceptre, in Hudson's Strait, September 6th, 1782.*

YOU have been informed of my departure from Cape Francois the 31st of May, with the Sceptre of 74 guns, and the Astree and Engageante of 36 guns each, commanded by the Chevalier de Langley, and the Sieur de la Jaille, Lieutenans de Vaisseau, for the expedition in Hudson's Bay. I had embarked at St. Domingo 250 men of Armagnac and Auxerrois, and 40 artillery men, 2 eight-inch mortars, 300 bombs, and 4 cannon. This detachment was under the command of the Sieur de Rostaing, Major of the regiment of Armagnac. The Sieur, le Certain, Captain of Artillery in the service of the Colonies was charged with whatever related to that department. The Sieur de Monneron, Captain in the royal corps of Engineers was to direct the operation of the sieges; and the Sieur de Mansuy, Captain-engineer of the Colonies was to take plans of the coasts and bays which we were going to survey.

Nothing remarkable happened in my navigation until the 17th of July, when at midnight I made the island of Resolution. I had scarcely proceeded 20 leagues up Hudson's Strait, when obstacles of every kind multiplied; my vessels remained several days fast in the ice; the seamen went on foot from one ship to another; the Astree and Engageante suffered infinitely, and were so much damaged in their bows as to alarm me greatly. The Sceptre also was very nearly losing her rudder. Every thing was new to us in this navigation, which had made me neglect taking on board ice anchors, which would have been of the greatest service to me. At last on the 30th of July, I had sight of Cape Walsingham, which is the most westerly part of the Straits. Till then I had no other guide, than some points astronomically determined, inserted in the Practical Navigator, and by means of which the Sieur de Mansuy and myself have sketched out a chart, which we corrected in proportion as the fog permitted us to descry some risings of the land, I now flattered myself the greatest of my difficulties were conquered, and I burned with impatience to arrive speedily at Fort Prince Wales. This was the first place which I proposed to attack; I had not an instant to lose, the rigour of the season obliging all ships to abandon this sea in the first days of September; but my impatience was put to a new proof. On the 3d of August, sailing with security enough in the Bay of Hudson, I was enveloped in a fog, and immediately surrounded with large islands of ice, which forced me to make a signal for my division to bring to. The fog dissipating two hours after, I saw the three ships wedged in the ice, which extended beyond our view. I had then a well-

grounded apprehension of losing the season for operation, and I was almost determined to send back my ship and a frigate to the windward islands, and to winter in the bay myself with the other frigate, and a small number of troops under the Sieur de Rostaing. I should have attacked and destroyed the English settlements the next season, but on the 5th of August the bank of ice, in which I was engaged, opened a little, and I determined to force through it by a piece of sail, whatever risque my ship might run. I was happy enough to accomplish it; and on the 8th of August in the evening, I saw the colours of Fort Prince Wales. I approached within a league and a half of it, sounding all the way, and I anchored my division in eighteen fathom water, muddy bottom. In the mean time I sent an officer to sound; he reported that it was safe for our ships to approach very near the Fort; and I was assured, that if the enemy should meditate any resistance, the Sceptre could easily reduce them; all my preparations were instantly made for the descent, but the night was become very dark, and the tide contrary. It was two in the morning before the boats began to move. The descent was made, without opposition, three quarters of a league from the Fort, which was built with free-stone, and appeared in a condition to make a vigorous defence. The Sieur de Rostaing advanced with his detachment within cannon shot, there halted, and not seeing on the part of the enemy any disposition for defence, he sent to summon the fort to surrender. They made no hesitation; the gates were opened; and the governor and garrison\* surrendered at discretion.

There was in this fort a very great quantity of merchandise of every kind; the artillery was in the best condition possible; all the magazines were covered with lead.

Not having an instant to lose in finishing my operations in the Bay of Hudson, I determined to burn every thing, excepting some beaver skins and other furs, which have been shipped on board the Astree. I have given to the Savages whatever they thought proper to carry away, particularly powder and shot, these people living only by hunting.

On the 11th I set sail for Fort York, the chief settlement of the English in this Bay; but I underwent here much greater difficulties than those which I had to overcome since my entrance into these seas. I knew that the coast was full of rocky shoals; I had no chart; our prisoners obstinately refused to give me the least information: at last after

\* If Monsieur de la Perouse had favoured us with the numbers of the garrison, it would have been a curious detail.—The Storekeepers and Servants of the Hudson's Bay Company, in the six different Factories in that Bay, are in all from 100 to 120 men. See Magazine 1782. page 292.