

Battlefield Series N° 4.

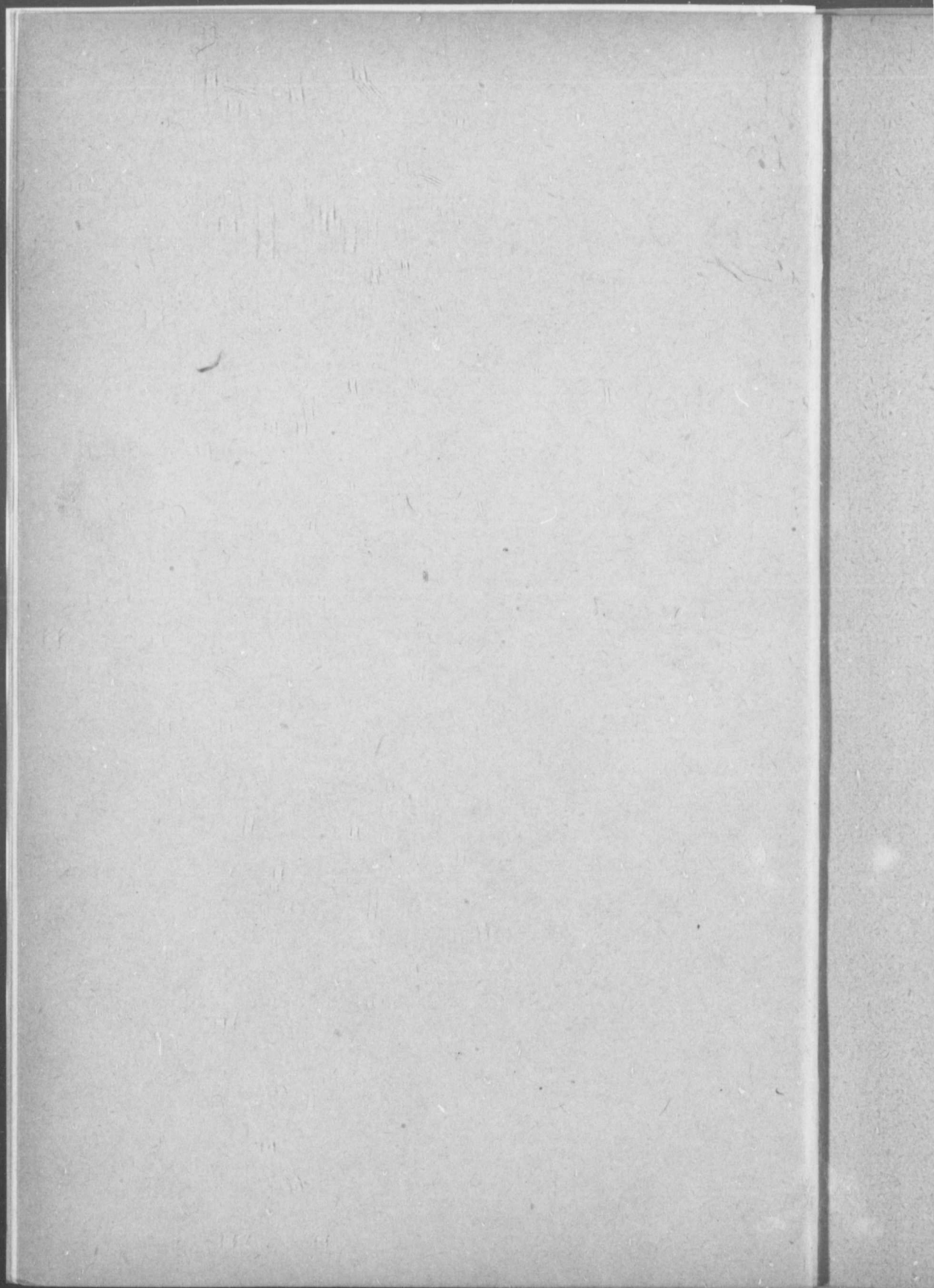
THE
FIRST ENGLISH SERMON
DELIVERED IN QUEBEC
AFTER THE
CAPITULATION OF THE CITY
BY
THE REV. ELI DAWSON
CHAPLAIN OF THE
BRITISH FLEET

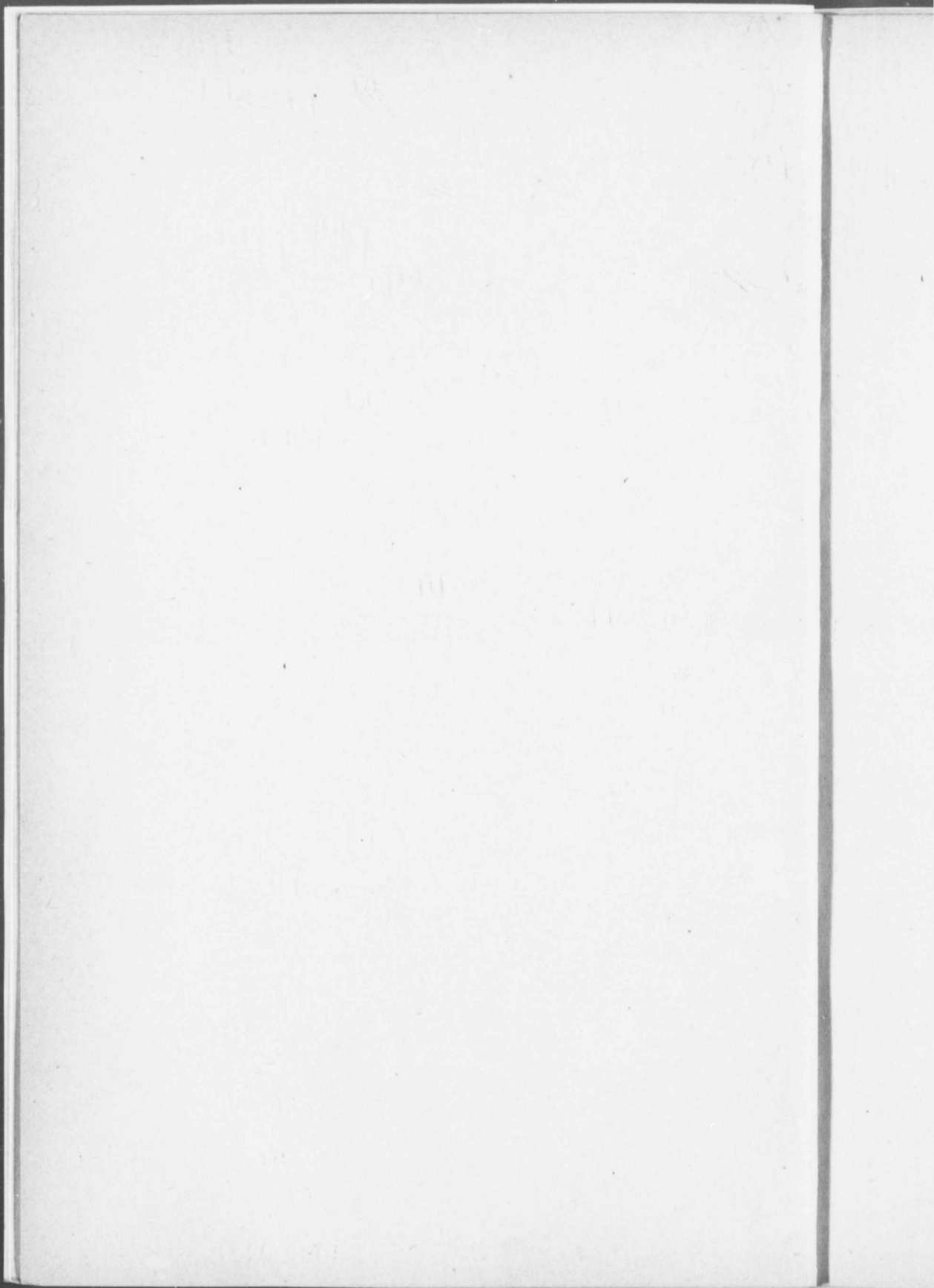
Sept 27th 1759

QUEBEC

PRINTED BY THE NUNS OF THE FRANCISCAN CONVENT
AT THEIR PRESS ON THE PLAINS OF ABRAHAM

1901





A
DISCOURSE,
DELIVERED AT
QUEBEC,

IN THE
Chappel belonging to the Convent of the Ursulines,
September 27th, 1759 ;

OCCASIONED BY
The Success of our Arms in the Reduction of that Capital :
at the request of
Brigadier GENERAL MONCKTON, and by Order of Vice-Admiral
Saunders, Commander in Chief.

BY THE REVEREND ELI DAWSON,

Chaplain of His Majesty's Sterling-Castle, on Board of which Ship
the Vice-Admiral's hoisted his Flag, during the Siege.

LONDON :

Printed for R. Griffiths, opposite Somerset-House in the Strand.

MDCCLX

NOTE.

THIS is probably the first English Sermon delivered in the City of Quebec ; certainly the first after the capitulation, which occurred on the 18th of September 1759.

The text is from a transcript of a printed copy in the British Museum. London.

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TO
Mrs. Wolf.

Madam !

I do myself the Honour of prefixing your Name to the following short Discourse.

If I have taken too great a Freedom in doing this without the previous Ceremony of applying for Leave ; this must be my Apology, which is really the Truth . Dedications being very common, with respect to such occasional Discourses, I could not omit the present Opportunity of giving Expression to that high Veneration and Esteem, which every Englishman must feel for the late General, and for the Honour and Service He hath done his Country !

This, Madam, hath cost you in particular, very dear: But you have every Consolation to support you, in so tender and affecting a Circumstance; insomuch, that I really look upon you as the Object of Envy to all British Matrons! For it is not to be conceived, that the fondest Wishes of the most indulgent Parent can rise higher, than that her Son may live and die like M^r Wolf!

I am,

Madam

With great Respect,

Your most Obedient Servant,

Eli Dawson.

Psalms XVIII. 49. Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O Lord! among the Heathen; and sing Praises unto Thy Name.

These Words of the Royal Psalmist are Part of an Ode, or Song, which breathes a Spirit of Triumph; and was evidently wrote upon the Occasion of some remarkable Victory over his Enemies: The Glory of which is piously ascribed to Almighty God, by the divine Penman.

For after having given us (in the first Part of this Psalm) a most elevated and sublime Description of the Majesty of God; whom he represents, in all the Boldness of poetic Fiction, as visibly present in the providential Assistance

afforded him, "That he bowed the Heavens and came down ! — That the Earth shook and trembled at his Presence ! — That a Smoke went out of his Nostrils, and a Fire out of his Mouth ! — That he thundered in the Heavens. " He then proceeds to inform us ; — " That the Lord sent out his Arrows, and scattered his Enemies ! That he shot out his Lightenings, and discomfited them ! — That he taught his Hands to war ; so that a Bow of Steel was broken by his Arm ! — That he pursued his Enemies and overtook them ! — That God had avenged him ; and subdued the People under him ! — Therefore (saith he) I will give thanks unto thee O Lord, among the Heathen ; and sing Praises unto thy Name.

Reason will most assuredly approve this conduct, upon every similar Occasion : and therefore, though the Jews and Israelites were much better instructed in the Principles of true religion, and entertained more just and honourable Conceptions of God, and a Providence superintending human Affairs, and directing all Events than other Nations, before the coming of Christ to enlighten and instruct the World ; — yet were they far from being a People particular in their Sentiments ; or singular in the Practice of acknowledging the Power and Influence of Providence in Events that were successful : Or in paying publick Honours

and Worship for public Blessings and Advantages.

We find proper Acknowledgments of some superior, cœlestial Power and Influence upon like Occasions in other Nations ; indeed in all Nations : In all those more especially, where Arts and Sciences have flourished so much, that their Policy and Religion became worthy of Notice, and have been transmitted down to distant Ages and Countries. — Their Temples were crowded ; — their Altars smoked with grateful Offerings of different Kinds : — They invoked the Assistance of their Deities upon entering into a war ; paid their Devotions also at the Conclusion of it : — And upon every signal Victory and Success, celebrated them in Songs of Triumph, as the primary Causes and Authors of Success and public Blessings ; and their Heroes were justly mentioned with Honour in the second Place only, as Instruments conducted by a divine Agency and Direction.

The mode or Form perhaps might be objected to : This, indeed, was oftentimes ridiculous and superstitions enough ; but the Sentiment was the same. One common Principle which hath its Foundation in nature, and the common Reason of Mankind, lies at the Bottom of a Practice, which has so universally gained ground, in all Places, in all Ages of the World : The only

Difference is in the Manner of Expression. A Providence was evidently acknowledged in both Cases; and the Confession of a superior divine Agency, and Influence in such Events, were made as full and plain by the superstitious Heathen, as the more enlightened Jew or Christian.

And how should it be otherwise? Where is the Wonder to find this universal Agreement amongst Mankind, in this Sentiment and Practice? Or can there be any Difficulty in accounting for it? Surely the Ideas of a God and Providence, creating and governing the World, if not innate, are at least so far natural, that they cannot possibly avoid presenting themselves to the Mind of Man, on numberless Occasions; or fail of being immediately received for certain Truths, as soon as presented to it.

Every Man sees and feels his own Dependence; and that too of every other Being about him. He is made sensible by constant Experience, that whilst, according to the established Course of Things, there is Room left for the Exertion of all the Powers and Faculties of the human Mind; yet, that every Design, every Enterprize, every Action and Event of Life, depends upon Contingencies, which he can neither possibly foresee, regulate, or direct. And what he experiences as to himself he may observe (if he pays any Attention) in all

public Affairs. All national Councils and Measures ; all political Designs, planned with the greatest Wisdom, and carried into Execution with a power every way equal, if not superior, to the Effect intended ; depend alike upon Probabilities, and are subject to the same Contingencies. The publick Feeling, therefore, in this Case, must be the same as that of every Individual.

And if the Ideas of a creating Deity and superintending Providence are so natural, that they must be presented, received, and submitted to by the human Mind ; the Ideas also of religious Homage and Worship, in the different Branches of it, must necessarily arise along with them. The one is seen and felt at the very same time with the other. In this Case, there is no Occasion for intricate Deductions. The simpler Operations of the human Mind are much quicker than the slower Process of learned Argumentation. The Mind sees, and concludes in a moment. These great Principles of Religion are as much intuitive, as any human Knowledge, or any first Principles whatsoever can be supposed to be.

We see therefore, that the religious Duties of Adoration, Praise and Thanksgiving, to a superintending Providence, on such Occasions as the present, are not only authorized by the universal Consent of Mankind, but accounted for from the

Plainness and Obviousness of our Obligations to them. For the plainer the Reasons for any Duty are, they are so much the stronger ; and we must suppose they will have a greater Effect upon all Minds properly touched with a Sense of Ingenuity and Honour.

You will easily perceive, without my mentioning it, what this Observation leads to : It leads us to imitate the devout Psalmist ; and teacheth us how proper and pertinent the like Conduct is, in like Circumstances. Such are your Circumstances at present ! — I am, therefore, (after congratulating you upon Victory) to direct your Attention to the supreme Disposer of all Events, for the agreeable and important Success which has crowned his Majesty's Arms in this Part of the World ! Success ! which hath clipped the Wings of a Power and Ambition that soars so high, and meditates, without ceasing, our Destruction, both at home and abroad.

It would be needless (was it my Province) to enlarge upon the Importance of the Acquisition, which, through the Favour of Providence, we have so lately made. Every one may judge of this, by the particular Attention, which at all Times our Enemies have paid to the strong Hold we are now so happily possessed of, as the Capital of an immense Province, swelled to an ominous Bulk ;

and which, for some considerable Time past, has looked with a threatening Aspect upon all our North American Possessions, the richest Jewels that adorn the British Crown:

It was necessary, however, just to touch upon its Importance, for this plain Reason ; — because the more interesting any publick Success or Acquisition may be, the greater must be the joy and Pleasure which results from it ; and of Consequence, our Gratitude will rise the highertowards the primary Cause and Author ; — the Foundation of every publick and private Blessing ; the Sovereign Disposer of all Events. For certainly our Satisfaction in the happy Event, and Gratitude to the Giver of all Success, will keep Pace with each other ; and must be reciprocal and proportionable, if we are rightly disposed. And there is no Doubt but we should be thus disposed, thus affected with religious Gratitude, if we considered Things as we ought to do : But through a culpable Inattention, we are apt to take a very superficial View of Things, and content ourselves with the first Appearances, without searching any farther : For which Reason we are struck with the immediate Instruments of Success, while the great Spring and Original of every prosperous Event escapes our Notice.

It pleases Almighty God to act by the Inter-

vention of Second Causes ; and in this Manner to convey to us the Various Bounties of his providential Government : And therefore it generally happens, that the Battle is to the strong, and the Pace to the Swift. But then we should observe with the Wise Man that it is not always so, and the same Experience might likewise convince us, that the united Force both of Wisdom and Strength have failed of Success : — That Undertakings full of the most promising Expectations, have miscarried : — And plans of Operation, the best designed and concerted, have disappointed the most sanguine Hopes, when carried into Execution, by such a Conjecture of Accidents (improperly so called) as no human Wisdom or Power can foresee or prevent.

Let us therefore mark the Steps of Providence, through the whole of this successful Expedition. A summary View will be sufficient : And I know nothing that can be more proper to answer the Purport of the present Solemnity, which is to inspire us with Sentiments of Gratitude to Almighty God for his Goodness ; and to fix these pious impressions upon our Minds : Because by this Means we shall more distinctly see, how Providence has so operated with your Endeavours, to bring about this successful Event.

It certainly is a peculiar Happiness, and a Hap-

piness for which we are indebted to the good Providence of God; when the principal Commands in the several Departments devolve upon Persons of Wisdom and Ability; whose Souls are animated with a Sense of Honour and Virtue, and cemented into a firm Friendship by an ardent Zeal for the publick Service: For this Union produces the happiest Effect, and gives the surest Omens of success. Painful Experience will best speak the Advantages of this; if we will only reflect how much the Want of Concord and Harmony in former Times hath hurt the publick Service; and ruined our Hopes from the strongest Armaments in such Expeditions as the present.

Whose Commands did the Winds and the Waves obey, but those of their Almighty Ruler, which conveyed so large a Fleet pursuing different Tracks on the vast Ocean, and conducted them from distant Parts of the Globe, in due Time, to the Place of general Rendez-vous? — And who afterwards sent those propitious Gales, which wafted us along a new and very critical Navigation, to this Place of Destination, without suffering the least Damage? — A Circumstance which appears marvellous in our Eyes; as it exceeded our most sanguine Expectations, and gave great Astonishment to our Enemies! These Indulgencies

of Heaven will appear to merit our warmest Acknowledgments, if we consider, that in all the Variety of human Affairs and Actions, none are more visibly subject to so many Contingencies and Vicissitudes as Military Operations ; — let me particularly add, military Operations of a mixed Nature, by Sea and Land. — Storms of Wind ! Unseasonable Rains ! Sickness and pestilential disorders ! The Infertility of the Seasons, which create a Famine in those Countries from whence the necessary Supplies are expected ! Not to enter into a Detail of a thousand other Circumstances ; all which are above the Power of Man to regulate, and command at his Pleasure ; are under the sole Direction of Providence, who can issue out his mighty Orders to act in Alliance with the weaker Force for its Preservation, or even its Triumph.

The Indulgence of Providence therefore, without Doubt, is to be gratefully acknowledged for every Success and Advantage ; even though the Superiority has never been so great on the Side of the triumphant Party. — For it is not in Mortals to command success : The Aid of Providence can alone secure the Battle to the strong, and Victory to the brave. We may observe, however, that as it gives a higher Relish of joy, so it must be a higher Incentive to Gratitude, when the Par-

ty that is inferior becomes victorious. This was evidently our Case! which makes the Favour of Providence still greater. For so small was the Number of our Land Forces! Such the Superiority of the Enemy, with all the Advantages of Situation, that they thought themselves secure; while the highest that our Hopes could aspire to, was to be serviceable to our Country by making a Diversion in this Part of the Continent to favour our military Operations in another.

Surely! no one can entertain so strange a Supposition (though indeed we live in an Age of strange Thinking) that an Acknowledgement and Gratitude to Almighty God for Success and Victory, should in the least detract from that Respect, which I have already observed is due, in the second Place, to Persons of great Merit and Genius; who have been the distinguished and glorious Instruments of Success in the Hands of Providence. For as the Love of God always implies in it the Love of Man, so where there is Gratitude to God, it will necessarily be accompanied with a sensible Resentment to inferior Benefactors. There is indeed less Danger of a Defeat in the latter Case. But what I plead for is agreeable to our Saviour's Maxim, that this ought to be done, and the other not to be left undone. And indeed, this is so far from precluding that Respect and Gratitude

which is due to heroic Merit ; that even the great Ancients, and one of their greatest Philosophers, as well as Poets always chose to grace his victorious Heroes with the immediate Presence and Assistance of some Deity : This he considered as graceful and ornamental to them ; and a real Heightening to their Characters : And surely we must acknowledge the Sentiment to be not less just than religious. Good God ! Should our Morals be worse ? should our Sentiments of Providence be less worthy and reverential than theirs ? Or doth not our holy Religion give us so far more exalted and perfect Sentiments of a Providence, as must naturally engage our Attention the more strongly to it, in every Occurrence of Life, both public and private ? But to put the Matter out of all Doubt, and to show our Obligations to the Supreme Being, for his Favour and Blessing, in a clear and strong Light ; — let us ask ourselves these few Questions ; — Who is it that inspires the Heroe with Courage ? — and the Commander with Wisdom and Ability ? — Whence cometh the original Genius for War, as observable in this as in all other Acts and Sciences ? — From whence does it receive its Cultivation ? — And by what Train or Series of Providences, does it expand itself unto all that Variety and Compass of Knowledge, requisite for high

and arduous Exploits? — Who is it also that brings it to Light, and exhibits it on the Theatre of public Life and Action? — “It is God that teacheth their Hands to War, and the Spirit of the Almighty, that giveth them Understanding.”

Our particular Thanks are farther due to Almighty God that the Conquest we have made (all things considered) has cost us no dearer; — Peace be to those gallant Souls who fell a generous Sacrifice to the Honour and Service of their Country! — The Loss indeed of a great and able General, whose Memory we revere, and will be ever dear and precious to Great Britain, must considerably abate our Transports of Joy; as it deprives us of those fair Hopes which we might justly have entertained of his future great Utility and Service to his Country. But though it may cool our Transports of Joy, it ought not to abate the Warmth of our Gratitude to the Supreme Being, for his Favour and Assistance,

Providence is pleased oftentimes, for the wisest Purposes, to mix some Alloy with the Blessings he vouchsafeth to bestow, to correct that Levity and Vanity which the Height of Success too commonly inspires. The Cypress and the Laurel generally grow together, and flourish in the same Soil. But whence these Tears in the Day of Triumph! — Pardon me — I blame them not. —

The venerable Image of your deceased General rises to your Imagination! — They gush spontaneous from an honest Fountain! — They are the Tears of Piety and Gratitude; — the natural Tribute due to his illustrious Merit!

But, remember he is greatly fallen! Tell how he fell, ye proud Towers! — Ye Ramparts! — were ye not Witnesses? — Speak with what a Blaze of Glory you saw the Heroe surrounded! — Tell how ye shook to your Foundations at the presence of the Conqueror! Tell how you saw your numerous Hosts, like the Dust, scattered over the Plain! — Tell how vainly they sought Shelter amidst these ghastly Ruins! — Ye Mountains of Abraham, decorated with his Trophies, tell how vainly ye opposed him, when he mounted your lofty Heights with the Strength and Swift-ness of an Eagle! — Stand fixed forever upon your rocky Base, and speak his Name and Glory to all future Generations! Ye Streams of Lawrence! and propitious Gales! speed the glad Tidings to his beloved Country! and let Britannia soon receive the last, the richest Pledge of her Heroe's filial Duty and Affection! Ye Heralds of Fame (1), already upon the Wing, stretch

(1) Alluding to the Expresses sent with the News of the Surrender of Quebec and the Continent of America.

your Flight, and swell your Trumpets with the Glory of a military Exploit through distant Worlds ! An Exploit ! which, for the Fineness of Address in Stratagem ! the Daringness of the Attempt ! and the Spirit of its Execution ! shall take Rank with the choicest Pieces of ancient or modern Story in the Temple of Fame, where it remains immortal — Whilst, we trust in God, He is gone to take Possession of that more substantial Immortality ; into which all Patriots ; all Lovers of Virtue and Mankind, who hold their Lives in ready Resignation to the Call of God and their Country, will most assuredly enter. And for our farther Consolation, as Well-wishers to our Country, let us remember, that the God of Battles, who teacheth our Hands to War, can, whenever he pleaseth, raise up other Instruments for the Protection and Prosperity of our Nation ; if we are but so prudent, as to make a better Use of the present, than we have of former Blessings ; — if we offer up unto him the Fruit of our Lips, giving Praise unto his Name ; and the Obedience of our Lives, as the Token of our Gratitude. Since Gratitude for Favours received gives the surest Grounds of farther Hope, and Confidence in God, for Prosperity and Success. And to conclude — Circumstances which contribute to Victory, or are the Occasions of Defeat, are generally called

the Fortune of War. Strange Impropriety of Language! Would they not be much better styl'd the Providence of War? unless we can suppose all those Events on which the Fates of Armies, and consequently of Kingdoms, depend, have no Direction at all. And if we do not observe and acknowledge a Providence in the greater, how shall we do it in the lesser Affairs and Concerns of human Life? For if a Sparrow falleth not to the Ground, without the Notice of our Heavenly Father; if the very Hairs of our Head are all numbered; if the minutest Creature, or the least Particle of Matter, passeth not unnoticed, but receives all the Variety of its Modifications from the Direction of his unerring Wisdom: Is it not much more expected, that those greater Objects and Events, in which the Fate of Nations is concerned, and which have such a wide and extensive Influence in the World-should strike our Attention, and inspire us with the most august and venerable Ideas of that unerring Wisdom, which guides and directs them in the best Manner, to the Good and Benefit of the universal system?

We cannot leave Providence out of the Question in these Cases, without the grossest Infidelity; or withhold our religious Acknowledgments, without great Profaneness, and such an Insensi-

bility and Deadness to all the Principles and Spirit of Religion, as would be a Shame to the Reason of Man, as well as a Reproach to our Religion as Christians.

Let us, therefore, offer unto God the Fruit of our Lips, giving Praise unto his Name! gratefully acknowledge him as the Author of all Good, both public and private; — humbly implore his future Blessing and Protection upon our Country; and that such Success may crown the Measures of Defence, which the Perfidy and Ambition of our Enemies oblige us to have Recourse to, as may be effectual to procure a safe, honourable, and lasting Peace.

That Peace may be within our Walls, and Prosperity in our Palaces, — may God, the Parent of all Mercies, Grant!

FINIS