

THE
INVASION of CANADA in 1775

LETTER ATTRIBUTED TO

MAJOR HENRY CALDWELL.

Published under the Auspices of the

Literary and Historical Society of Quebec

[REPRINTED.]

QUEBEC:

PRINTED AT THE "MORNING CHRONICLE" OFFICE.

1887.

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The EDITH *and* LORNE PIERCE
COLLECTION *of* CANADIANA



Queen's University at Kingston

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This manuscript consists of a letter said to have been written in 1776, by Colonel Henry Caldwell, father of Sir John Caldwell. Although the latter part of the manuscript, containing the signature, is wanting, it is traced beyond doubt, to Col. Caldwell, then proprietor of the *Sans Bruit* farm on the St. Foy road formerly owned by General James Murray. This old document is valuable chiefly from its being the production of an eye-witness, whose statements though strongly tinged with animosity towards French Canadians, are nevertheless entitled to respect. The minute description of the *locale* on the St. Foy and St. Louis roads, and the thrilling narrative of the hand-to-hand fight of Arnold and his men, at the east end of Sault-au-Matelot street, will be found interesting and instructive.

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Society of Quebec.]

THE INVASION OF CANADA IN 1775.

ON BOARD THE HUNTER, SLOOP-OF-WAR,
JUNE 15, 1776.

MY DEAR GENERAL (supposed to be General James Murray),

In my last letter I gave you a full account of the state of our Province at that time. I am not now certain whether Arnold had arrived when my letter went away ; he, however, with the greatest difficulty, got, with about 800 men, to Sertigan, in the beginning of November. The people, from hunger and fatigue, were in a very weak condition, so much so that fifty men properly posted, might have made the whole party prisoners ; nor, indeed, could they have got forward, had not the Canadians sent bullocks and other provisions to meet them. The 8th, they got to Pointe Levy, where they took post, as also at my mill. The fellow whom I had employed to put the mill in order, and who was to have had a share in the profits of it, turned out a great scoundrel, put me to great expense, and has proved to be in the rebel interest. He contrived to detain some of my flour, and two hundred bushels of my wheat, which was at the mill, for the rebels' use ; he afterwards was appointed their commissary of provisions, and acted in that position till the siege or blockade—whichever you please to term it—was raised, which happened on the 6th May, on the arrival of the *Isis*, man-of-war, and two frigates with some transports, and the 29th Regiment ; a frigate also arrived a few days after, with the transports of the 47th

1776

Regiment from Halifax. I think, in my last letter, I mentioned to you the surrender of St. John's ; a few days after Generals Carleton and Prescott evacuated Montreal, with about one hundred and fifty men, the remains of the 7th and 26th Regiments, with the staff, who embarked in the *Gaspé*, sloop-of-war, and some armed vessels that lay there ; they fell down the river till they got within a few leagues of Sorel, where the enemy, by that time, had taken post, and erected batteries of 2, 3, 6, 9, and 12-pounders each. The wind not serving, the ships stopped there about the 16th of November, when Gen. Carleton quitted the *Gaspé* in the night, escaped in a birch canoe, and arrived at Quebec about the 20th. Two days after, as we were told, the pilots on board the vessels mutinied, and refused to conduct them past the batteries ; and Prescott, with his people, surrendered, with, I suppose about 100 seamen, chiefly Canadians that were on board the different vessels—I must confess, to my very great surprise. Nor have I been able to account for it, since there must have been some circumstances with which we were unacquainted ; for the pilots might have been obliged to do their duty, and, waiting for a leading gale of wind, the ships might have passed the narrows with little loss, in spite of the batteries on shore, or a floating battery, which, by means of a heavy gun, might have been kept at a distance, and annoyed them a little. Be it as it may, our garrison at Quebec suffered considerably in the loss of the men and officers that were taken. In the mean time, Arnold, as I before told you, had taken post at Pointe Levy, with about 800 men ; not a soldier at Quebec but Col. McLean, who just arrived about that time from Sorel, from whence he had been obliged to decamp, with about 100 of his new corps of emigrants ; about 60 of the Fusileers, composed chiefly of their recruits, and about 100 recruits of McLean's corps, which Malcolm Fraser and Captain Campbell had raised in Newfoundland,

and had just landed. The *Lizard*, frigate, arrived also about the same time, with £20,000 cash ; though that gave us some spirits, yet the town was in great danger of being given up, through the cabals of the disaffected, whom Cramahé permitted to remain in town, notwithstanding the repeated representations made to him to order them away. Indeed, to tell the truth, I believe he was thoroughly frightened. However, a kind of council of war was summoned, at which the Captains of the *Lizard* and *Hunter*, sloops, Colonels McLean and I, with some others, assisted. It was there determined that the town should be defended to the last, and that it was for the king's service that the *Lizard* and *Hunter* should winter at Quebec, and their crews assist in the defence of the place. That an embargo should be laid on the ships in the harbour, and that their masters and crews should also assist. The money was got on shore, and the militia assembled. The Canadians at first were very lake-warm, and said if the English inhabitants would defend the town, they would ; and the British subjects, to their eternal honour, not only set an example on that, but on every other occasion during the siege. We were about 330, officers included ; every body did duty, either as officers or privates, and I can assure you, duty was never done with more punctuality or earnestness. Inhabitants worth £3,000 or £4,000, standing sentry in their turn, during our severe winter nights, with the greatest alacrity ; and what is still more to their honour (as it was found necessary to mix the guards, British and Canadians), they submitted with the greatest cheerfulness to the command of the Canadian officers, whom they held cheap, and who were in reality their inferiors, both as to education and fortune. Indeed, in general, I had the greatest reason to be satisfied with my corps (for Cramahé gave up his share of the command of it, never making his appearance out of doors the whole winter.) Indeed, the better kind of people,

by keeping up a spirit of emulation amongst them, hardly ever put it in my power to reprimand them ; those of a lower class were kept in very good order, by fining them of their pay, and by the black-hole on bread and water, a punishment they were much afraid of ; and though at first I didn't attempt it, yet in a little time, I brought them to it without murmuring. Arnold crossed the river about the 14th of November, landed at Wolfe's Cove and Sillery, and marched directly to *Sans Bruit*, where he surprised some of my servants, who were busy loading some of my carts and waggons for town. They got there before day, seized on all my working bullocks, about 20, and 4 or 5 fat ones, with all my horses ; and there they lived away on my beef and potatoes about a week, when they retreated to Pointeau-Tremble on a rumour of our intentions to attack them from the town, for their ammunition had been spoiled carrying through the woods, so that they had not more than 4 rounds a man ; and their shoes and clothes were all in pieces, and the men themselves but ill recovered from their fatigues ; we had indeed talked of attacking them the morning they passed the river, and I wished for it much from the idea I had formed of their situation, but our field pieces were not in readiness, and that plan was laid aside ; the day Arnold retreated, General Carleton arrived. I saw as affairs were situated, that the public service might suffer, by my being on bad terms with him, and resolving that every thing should give way to that, I went to see him, which I had not done for six months before ; and we have been on good terms ever since. On the General's arrival, he ordered all the people that were disaffected and those that did not choose to take up arms, out of town, on pain of being taken up and treated as spies. That order strengthened the garrison considerably. We could guard against open and avowed enemies, but not against those lurking about town ; cabals then ceased, and every body

seemed zealous for the public service ; the Bonfields left the town on that occasion, Wells, Zachary McCauley, Murdock Stewart, John McCord, and several others, amongst whom were four or five of the militia officers appointed by Cramahé. It is not doubted whether your friend, Mr. Allsop, would have been of the number, had it not been for the employments he held. He continued, however, to be almost the only man in the garrison that did not do duty, pleading his business as commissary, to which employment Mr. Carleton named him. When Arnold retreated, I got in a little of my hay, some oats, wheat, &c., but they again returned whilst I had about 15,000 bundles of hay out ; and a day or two before their return, as I suppose, some Canadians wanting to pilfer something at *Sans Bruit*, where I had only an old man to take care of the house, the fire from his pipe, I imagine, fell in some hay (of which there was a quantity in each room to serve as beds to the Yankees) set it on fire, and before morning, the house was burned to the ground. The out-house, however, still remained, and La Gorgendière's house was then in pretty good repair ; but when the siege was raised, it was pitiful to behold the desolation and waste that reigned about all my farms ; the barns and stables torn to pieces and burned ; the fences torn all to pieces, and though the house at La Gorgendière's was not burned, yet it was torn to pieces. In the inside, the floors torn up and useless, the windows all broken, and the offices entirely destroyed ; that, however, must be my future residence,* and I have given orders to have it repaired. That I have suffered in my fences and farms, &c., &c., including hay, carts, and ploughs, and at my mill in wheat and flour stolen, independent of the destruction of my houses and offices, which you can form an idea of, (and which must have

* La Gorgendière's house stood close to where the residence at Belmont has since been built.

cost † you about £2,000) is not less than £100 sterling, for I had just got every thing in order, and was beginning to put myself snug and comfortable, when those plunderers came to disturb me. However, they have not gained much by their expedition, and I flatter myself Government will take compassion on a poor ruined farmer, who has not been inactive in their service. The burning of my house led me into this digression. The day after this happened, my clerk, (Joshua Wolf) trying to save some more work, was taken prisoner by some of the enemy's flying parties, and a few days after, General Montgomery (brother to him, you might remember, at Quebec) and lately a Captain in the 17th Regiment, and your old acquaintance and friend Colonel Donald Campbell, quarter master-general, arrived at Holland's house (now the rebel head-quarters.) We were not idle, in the mean time, in town ; we got the merlons and embrasures repaired ; platforms laid, guns mounted, the picketing at Cape Diamond and behind the Hotel Dieu repaired ; barriers were made between the upper and lower town, and at the extremities of the lower town, at Sault-au-Matelot, and at the other side, at Près-de-Ville, which, you may remember, is on the further side of the King's wharf, past the old King's forges ; these posts were strengthened with cannon. In that situation, we were in the month of December ; about the 14th, Mr. Montgomery got a battery formed of gabions, filled with snow, and rammed close, with water thrown on it, which made it freeze, which, intermixed with fascines and snow, did not answer well ; but, as well as could be expected. On this battery, he mounted five guns, 12 and 9-pounders, and then sent a flag of truce, which the General would not receive, except on condition that they came to implore the King's mercy, which, indeed, was the

† This sentence can leave no doubt that this letter was addressed to Genl. James Murray, as it is well known Murray had once owned, and had sold, the estates in this neighborhood to Col. Caldwell.

way he treated several flags of truce that the enemy wanted to send in. Mr. Montgomery then contrived to have several letters thrown into the town on arrows, directed to the—and inhabitants of the town, full of threats and scurrility. He then opened his battery, which was erected on a rising ground, in a line with the tanners, who lived on the road to *Sans Bruit*, but without any effect; and Arnold's corps, which took post in St. Roch, under our walls, were continually firing at our sentries—the three Rifle companies in particular—these sometimes wounding a sentry. They also got seven Royals behind Grant's house,* and threw a number of shells into town, also to no effect; and their battery was soon silenced, and some of their guns dismounted by the superior fire from the town. About the 23rd, at night, my clerk made his escape, and brought with him one of their people. He effected it by getting a bottle of rum, and making the sentry over him drunk. He brought us the first certain accounts of their intention to storm the town; of their having ladders prepared, and of the different attacks that they were to make, as talked of amongst their troops; that Mr. Montgomery had declared his intention of dining in Quebec on Christmas day; and in public orders he promised the plunder of the town to his soldiers, which we afterwards found was true. We had before kept a good look out, but this put us more on our guard. The few regular troops, such as they were, were, off guard, ordered to be accoutered, with their fire-arms beside them; the sailors, formed into a corps, under the command of Capt. Hamilton, of the *Lizard*, lay in their barracks in the same manner; and the two corps of militia, assembled at different points to take their rest, in the same manner also. They remained quiet until the 31st of December; about five o'clock in the morning we were alarmed at our picket by Capt. Fraser, who was captain of

* Grant's house stood about the centre of St. Roch.

the main guard, and returning from his rounds, told us that there was a brisk firing kept up at Cape Diamond. The morning was dark, and at that time a drizzling kind of snow falling. McLean (who was second in command in the garrison, and who really, to do him justice, was indefatigable in the pains he took) begged that I would take part of my corps to Cape Diamond, and if I found it a false attack (as we both supposed it to be), after leaving the necessary reinforcements there, I might return with the rest. I accordingly went there, found the enemy firing at a distance,—saw there was nothing serious intended, and after ordering a proper disposition to be made, proceeded to *Port Louis*. There I met Captain Laws, an officer to whom the General had given the command of an extra picket, composed of the best men of the detachment of the 7th and McLean's corps there; him I ordered back again to wait the General's orders, and proceed to St. John's Gate, where I first learned that the enemy had surprised the post at Sault-au-Matelot, and had got into the Lower Town. I still had part of the B. Militia with me, and took upon me also to send some whom I found unnecessary on the ramparts, to the party to wait for orders; and took an officer with a small party of the Fusileers with me, by Palace Gate, just at the time when the officer I had mentioned to you, with about 70 men, was ordered to make a sortie and attack the enemy at the Sault-au-Matelot in the rear. I hastened, with what expedition I could, by the back of the Hotel Dieu, in the Lower Town, and on my way passed by the picket drawn up under the field officer of the day, who was Major Cox, formerly of the 47th, and now Lieut.-Governor of Gaspé. I got him to allow me to take your friend Nairne, with a subaltern and thirty men, and then proceeded to the Lower Town, where I found things, though not in a good way, yet not desperate. The enemy had got in at the Sault-au-Matelot, but, neglecting to push

on, as they should have done, were stopped at the second barrier which our people got shut just as I arrived. It was so placed as to shut up the street of the Sault-au-Matelot from any communication with the rest of the Lower Town. As I was coming up, I found our people, the Canadians especially, shy of advancing towards the barrier, and was obliged to exert myself a good deal. To do old Voyer, their Colonel, justice, though he is no great officer, yet he did not show any want of spirit. However, my coming up with Nairne and a Lieutenant, with fifty seamen, gave our people new spirits. I posted people in the different houses that commanded the street of Sault-au-Matelot; some in the house where Levy, the Jew, formerly lived, others at Lymeburner's; the officers of the Fusileers I posted in the street with fixed bayonets, ready to receive the enemy in case they got on our side of the barrier; they had on their side of it, fixed some ladders, and then another to our side as it were to come down by, that was useful to us. I ordered it to be pulled away and fixed it to the window in the gable end of a house towards us; the front of which commanded the street of the Sault-au-Matelot, and their side of the barrier. Then I sent Captain Nairne, and Dambourges, an officer also of McLean's corps,* with a party of their people; Nairne and Dambourges entered the window with a great deal of spirit, and got into the house on that side, just as the enemy was entering it by the front door. But Nairne soon dislodged them with his bayonets, driving them into the street; nor did they approach the barrier afterwards. They however kept up a brisk fire from back windows of the houses they had occupied in Sault-au-Matelot street on our people in Lymeburner's house, on his wharf, and the street adjacent, from one of their houses. I had a narrow escape, for going at day-break to reconnoitre

* It was there that an athletic Canadian, named Charlant, distinguished himself, together with Cpts. Dumas and Dambourges.

on the wharf under them, just as they took post there, they asked, "who is there"? At first I thought they might have been some of Nairne's people, who I knew were next door to them, and answered "a friend"—Who are you? they answered "Captain Morgan's company." I told them to have good heart for they would soon be in the town, and immediately got behind a pile of boards beside me, not above ten or twelve yards from them, and escaped. Their fire, however, a good deal slackened towards nine o'clock, especially after I brought a 9-pounder on Lymeburner's wharf to bear upon them; the first shot of which killed one of their men and wounded another. I then called out to Nairne in their hearing, so that he should let me know when he heard firing on the other side; our General had sent 500 men to hem the enemy in on that side; they soon after began to give themselves up and surrender to Nairne, who sent them through the window to us. They then began to crowd in in such numbers, that we opened the barrier, and they all gave themselves up on that side, while the party that made the sortie were busy in the same manner on the other side of the post, and which had delayed so long from coming up, in taking and sending in by Palace Gate some straggling prisoners; but they had not a shot fired at them, and just arrived on that end of the post, the enemy surprised at the time the officer I sent to take possession of our old post, arrived with a small party, supported by Nairne with 100 men; thus ended our attack on that side, in which the enemy had about 20 men killed, upwards of 40 men wounded, and about 400 made prisoners. Had they acted with more spirit, they might have pushed in at first and possessed themselves of the whole of Lower Town, and let their friends in at the other side, before our people had time to have recovered from a certain degree of panic, which seized them on the first news of the post being surprised. In the mean time, Mr.

Montgomery made his attack at Près-de-Ville; rockets were thrown up as a signal to Arnold that both attacks might be made at the same time. He got past some pickets, where we at first established our advance post; the guard was alarmed in time and prepared for his reception, but the post was much stronger than, I believe, he imagined, and defended by four cannons there and a 4-pounder; they were served by some seamen under the orders of the master of the transport; his name was Barnsfare. The guard was under the command of a* Canadian officer of Militia; the men, Canadians and British, mixed. Barnsfare declared he would not fire till he was sure of doing execution, and with the utmost coolness, waited till the enemy came within his view, at about 30 yards distance, where they received a general discharge from the cannon and musketry. Nothing but groans were heard, and the rebels immediately retired; their General, his Secretary, two or three other officers, and about five privates being killed on the spot; their wounded got off. We had a block house on Cape Diamond, over Drummond's wharf, where the enemy formed. Had the officer of the Canadian Militia, who commanded there, done his duty, great havoc might have been made among the enemy, who was quite exposed directly under them, and not a shot fired at them. Soon after the enemy was repulsed at that side, some old women brought an account that the rebels had surprised the post at Sault-au-Matelot, and had got into the Lower Town; part of the garrison that had lately behaved so well, were struck with a panic and began, some to hide their arms, some to throw them into the river; the—— officer began to feel a little frightened, when a Mr. Coffin, a British gentleman, who, with his wife and twelve children

* Error: two Canadian Militia officers were in command of this post: "alors le sieur Chabot et le sieur Alexandre Picard, qui commandaient ce jour là la garde, donnèrent ordre de mettre le feu aux canons chargés à mitraille." —*Sanguinet's Journal*.

had taken refuge there, expecting to find there peace and quietness, and who had served previously in our militia, drew his bayonet, and declared he would put the first man to death who laid down his arms or attempted to abandon his post, by which means he re-established order, and with the assistance of Captain Bransfare, who commanded the seamen, got two of the guns pointed on the opposite sides, in case Arnold's people having got into the Lower Town should attempt to force the post on that side ; they, however, at that time were surrendering themselves prisoners, and immediately having secured the post that had been surprised, I ordered all the rest of the men to the parade, to wait the General's orders, in hope that we should have marched out directly and completed our victory. But all that was done was going out as far as Mr. Grant's, in St. Roch, and bringing in 7 Royals, that were placed behind his house ; one small brass field piece was also taken, and a few of the houses in which the enemy had before posted themselves, and from whence they had much annoyed us, were burned. The General did not choose to risk anything further, his ideas seemed entirely to centre in the preservation of the town, certain of succours arriving in the spring ; nor did he seem to carry his views towards the operations of the summer campaign, which might have been much forwarded by the entire route of the enemy, as in that case, St. John's might have been recovered, some of their craft, and the entrance into Lake Chambly secured. Indeed, by the intelligence we received afterwards, their little army was thrown by our success into the greatest confusion. Above three or four hundred remained in a body together, and parties from them were continually on the march after large parties that were deserting with the intention of going homewards. We were, however, kept blocked up in the town, received little or no intelligence of what the enemy were about, except now and then by a deserter ; indeed, such was the extent they were obliged to guard, that, had I

been in their situation, the expectation of having my quarters beat up would have prevented me from sleeping very sound. From the 31st, things wore another face in town; the Yankees were no longer held in a respectable light; our success at least was equal to a reinforcement of 500 men; the garrison was in high spirits and wished for nothing more than a second attack. Never were people more alive or watchful; for my part I never thought the enemy could be brought to a second attack, though, for example sake, I hardly ever lay at my own house at night; on duty for a great part of the winter every second day, never less than the third day, and nobody in the garrison ever took off his clothes, and the men of the militia who were not for guard the next day, always assembled at pickets in the evening, in order to turn out, if necessary, at a moment's warning. Thus we remained the remainder of the winter, always on the *qui vive*. The army of the rebels retreating, for as they all had engaged only to certain periods, so when their time was up, many insisted on going home, and those were replaced by others; nor do I think that troops of that kind can be ever formidable, for as they only engage for a year or a year and-a-half, as soon as they know anything, they are discharged, and as their officers are very little their superiors in point of birth, they cannot enforce the respect which is necessary to keep up proper discipline; and, indeed, I believe also that the Quebec expedition will make them heartily sick of engaging in war out of their Provinces, as I do not think, by all accounts, they could have lost by sickness less than 500 men in the course of the winter; the small-pox also raged violently amongst them, and of those we had taken prisoners, not less than 200 were cured of that disorder. A great part of their army was also composed of Europeans; on these they had the greatest reliance, and with some reason, the same spirit that caused them then to emigrate would naturally operate in every other circumstance of life. Of the prisoners

we took, about 100 of them were Europeans, chiefly from Ireland; the greatest part of them engaged voluntarily in Col. McLean's corps, but about a dozen of them deserting in the course of a month, the rest were again confined, and not released till the arrival of the *Isis*, when they were again taken into the corps. You can have no conception what kind of men composed their officers. Of those we took, one Major was a blacksmith, another a hatter; of their captains, there was a butcher, a——, a tanner, a shoemaker, a tavernkeeper, &c., &c. Yet they all pretended to be gentlemen. They, as well as their privates, were treated well, had full allowance of provisions, and allowed as much liberty as the nature of our situation would admit; some of them abused that liberty and suffered for it. Some officers, tampering with the sentries, were discovered and put in irons; and their privates had actually laid a plot, named their officers, and proposed seizing one of the gates, and endeavour to open it for their friends, who they found means of informing of the design, by one of them making his escape. The plot was discovered, and the delinquents put in irons; they were, however, all released on the arrival of the *Isis*. Nothing very violent was attempted after the 31st. Their numbers for two months after that period did not, by all accounts, exceed 1400 men. Finding, however, that we attempted nothing against them, they were enabled effectually to block up the town, so as to prevent any fresh provisions coming into it, and but little intelligence of what was passing. Of the former we were not very much in want of, the hospital was sufficiently provided. Most families had taken care to provide themselves; those that did not, could buy from the butchers at 1s. per lb. The militia that would receive pay had 1s. per day, and provisions for themselves and family; they lived by that means at least as well as they had ever done before. It is true they were dear troops, but the situation of affairs made that necessary. The rebels, as I mentioned before, continued

to hem us in on every side. They raised a battery of four guns at Pointe Levy ; another of three guns near the ferry on the River St. Charles, and they were busy erecting another of six guns on the heights of the town between Port* Louis and St. Jean, which was to have opened on 8th May. From the two former they cannonaded the town as briskly as they could (with red hot shot), considering the fire that opposed them ; and sometimes from Pointe Levy they fired at our shipping in the Cul-de-Sac, but to very little purpose. The women and children were at first a little afraid, but in a short time walked about the town as usual. By their whole fire we lost but one man and one child killed, and three men and one child wounded. In the mean time we had strengthened ourselves in the Lower Town, which was most accessible. We made ourselves very strong from Levy the Jew's house to Lymburner's wharf, as well as in every other accessible place. We kept the ditches clear of snow, every man, without distinction, taking a shovel on that occasion ; we got at length about 140 pieces of cannon mounted in different parts about the town ; we had not originally above 30 carriages made from the King's ships, and the carriages made during the winter, the rest were completed. Things were at this situation on the 1st of May, plenty of provisions in the garrison, and every body in good spirits, expecting soon to be relieved, when on the 2nd, in the evening about 9 o'clock, a vessel† was seen coming round Pointe Levy ; every body was in high spirits, expecting it to be the forerunner of the fleet. She came up to the great joy of every one in town within hail of our battery, when not answering, she was fired upon, and then soon proved what

* An old word from the latin *portare*, from the circumstance that when Romulus caused a plough furrow to be drawn to shew the position of the walls of future Rome, the plough was carried over the places meant for gates.

† The *Gaspé*, which belonged to Simon Fraser, had wintered at the Island of Orleans and been taken possession of by the Yankees.

she was, for she sheered into the Cul-de-Sac, (where all our shipping were laid, a 28-gun frigate, a King's sloop, and 30 merchant men and transports) and was immediately set on fire. Had she got one hundred yards further, she would have effected her purpose, but the people were frightened and quitted her too soon. When the sails took fire, which they did immediately, she lost way; an eddy tide took hold of her, and she dropped down clear of the shipping, which had they taken fire must have communicated to the Lower Town, and in the confusion consequent thereon, it is imagined the enemy intended to attack us. They knew, at this time, of the *Isis* being in the river; and being now near 3,000 strong, they attempted this as their last effort: we were, however, prepared to receive them well everywhere, every man retiring to his alarm post. On the 6th of May, early in the morning, a frigate hove in sight, and in about an hour alter, the *Isis* and a sloop-of-war appeared to the great joy of the whole garrison. Lord Petersham with the grenadiers, and a small party of the 29th were on board the *Isis*. They, with the marines, were immediately landed, to the amount of about 200 men. A sortie was immediately ordered, not with the intention of attacking, but merely to see what the enemy was about. Our sortie consisted of from 1,000 to 1,200 men. When we got on the heights, a few straggling shots were fired at us from a great distance, by part of their rear-guard, left, I suppose, to cover their retreat and prevent our getting intelligence of their motions. We also saw some small parties filing off by Holland's house, and some people at Mabane's house,* which they had made an hospital of; and I had got the wood near the back gate of *Sans Bruit* reconnoitred, and intended getting near the ruins of the house, in order to try and some of those people and get a nearer view of the enemy,

* Judge Mabane had purchased this property from the reverend gentlemen of the Seminary, shortly after the conquest. It had previously belonged to Bishop Dosquet, and changed its name of "Samos" to that of "Woodfield."

but did not succeed. My scheme would have been to have pushed the rebels off the heights as far as Cape Rouge, at least, as far as *La Suède*, which, if you remember, is the cross road which leads from old Lorette to St. Foy. By taking post there, we must have cut off all the out-parties that had been on the lower road of the General Hospital and Beauport, which they had no time to call in, and which must have past that way. I mentioned it to Major Carleton, who arrived in the *Isis*; he spoke of it to his brother, the General, but he still (perhaps with propriety) adhered steadily to his resolution of running no risk as to the safety of the place. No body was more ready than he was at all times to expose his person, his timidity was only shewn in respect to others, and the safety of the town. Other people in his situation perhaps might have extended their views to the recovery of the country, and to the operations of the summer campaign. I confess those ideas struck me in the course of the winter. Nobody knows better than you do how far the minds of mankind are depressed on receiving a check, and that in all military operations there are particular circumstances which authorize a commander to undertake, with propriety, what with reason may be deemed rashness at another time; that there are particular moments which, if lost, may never be regained, when it is of the greatest consequence to see with quietness and judgment, and execute with rapidity. By all accounts which we afterwards received, had we followed up our blow of the 31st December, the enemy might have been driven out of the Province. Not more than 400 of them kept together, and they were obliged to send large parties every two or three days afterwards to bring back their fugitives; and, indeed, during a great part of the winter we were blocked up by the rebels, not superior to us either in numbers or the goodness of their troops, and they were of necessity obliged to post themselves round us in such a straggling manner, to cut off our communication with the

country (which they absolutely effected), that had we taken advantage of it, their headquarters might have been beaten up, and they punished for their temerity. Had they been the best troops in the world, and the best officered, we could not have treated them with greater respect. However, a great many circumstances combined to do as we have done, and which were more, I believe, than was expected from us. Nor is it possible to conceive that people unused to arms could do more than our Militia, the British in particular. I forgot to mention a circumstance in favour of the Canadians (I would willingly say as much in their favour, consistent with truth, as I could). A *habitant* (peasant) from Beaumont (the only one that crossed to town during the winter from that side) came to Quebec in a canoe with some fresh provisions, and mentioned that many of the inhabitants of the South side were inclined to serve the government, if they knew how. The General by this man wrote to Mons. de Beaujeu, who lived in obscurity on the *Isle aux Grues*, to try and endeavour to assemble the Canadians, and cut off the guard they then had at Pointe Levy. He engaged about 150 Canadians in that design; but they were betrayed by others of the disaffected Canadians. Some of them assembled in a house together, were surrounded, and about thirty taken prisoners. Messire Bailly, a priest, was shot through the body, and also taken; he, however, has since been released, and recovered of his wounds. The priests in general behaved well, and refused to confess the Canadians in the rebel interest, for which they suffered persecution. Messire de Lotbinière, alone excepted, he they proposed to make Bishop. Mons. De — was almost the only person of the *noblesse* that did not do everything he could for the public service. I mentioned to you before of having refused the command of the Militia without the rank of Colonel in the King's service.

[*The remaining portion of the manuscript is missing.*]

