

The following Account of the Engagement at Quebec, from a Gentleman to his Friends in the City, is subjoined, as the Writer of the above JOURNAL leaves it rather unfinished.

I intend to send you a journal, containing ever material occurrence during the blockade; [He apologizes for not sending it with the JOURNAL] meantime, shall give you the words of it on the day the rebels attempted to storm us.

December 31, 1775

Wind N. E., snowy and cloudy. Capt. Malcolm Fraser, of the Royal Emigrants, in going his rounds between four and five o'clock this morning, perceived signals made by the enemy; he immediately alarmed the guards, and picquets, who stood to their arms. All our centries [sentries] saw flashes like lightning everywhere round about. Those between St. John's gate and Cape Diamond saw an avenue of lanthorns [lanterns], as if set upon poles, at regular distances; their sky-rockets were seen which was instantaneously followed by a shower of balls, from the rebels, on our people who lined the walls at Cape Diamond. The drums beat to arms; all the bells rang the alarm; and, in less than ten minutes, every person able to bear arms was in motion; even old men, upwards of seventy, were forward in appearing for the defense of the town. A party of the British militia, under Col. Caldwell, was immediately detached by Col. MacLean, to reinforce Cape Diamond, as it was said an attack would be made there: There he posted the party, and returned to the parade. Mr. Montgomery attacked, at the same time, at Pres de Ville (a strong barrier and guard-house, at the southern extremity of the town), with 900 picked men; and Arnold, attacked at Saut au Matelot (the battery at the northern end of the lower town), with 700 chosen fellows. Still the fire was kept up at Cape Diamond; and a strong body (it is said they were Canadians) appeared on St. John's suburbs, and their bomb battery played on us from St. Roc.

The guard at Pres de Ville had perceived flashes for some time; and every man was ready at his point. The gunners, with lighted matches, stood ready to give the rebels a warm reception. Though the night was very dark, with thick snow, yet they were seen approaching. A body of about 150 came within 50 yards of our guns. They made a stand, at a narrow pass, as if in consultation. Captain Barnfair, who commanded the guns, watched time, and fired, the instant they began to move forwards. Shrieks and groans were heard, but nobody was seen. After this cool discharge, he continued his fire for some time. At the other end of the town, the rebels had better success: They forced our guard at Saut au Matelot, penetrated to the end of the street, where our people made a stand behind a carrier. A very hot fire began on both sides; the rebels fired under cover as much as possible. At this time General Carleton saw their error, and improved the opportunity. He sent Captain Laws, with a party, out at Palace-gate, to attack the enemy in rear; and Colonel MacLean sent Captain MacDougal to support him, and take possession of the post which our guard had abandoned. Major Mairne, also of the Royal Emigrants, or Colonel MacLean's regiment, was detached to the lower-town with a strong party; and Colonel Caldwell, with a detachment of the British militia, was sent there also. Major Nairne, and Lieutenant Dembourges, of the same corps, attracted the notice of everybody, and gained much honor by their gallant behavior. They entered a house by the windows where the rebels had lodged themselves, and, with charged bayonets, forced them to desert it, and thus secured a post, which had the enemy kept, must have been attended with the worst consequences for us, as it commanded a principal street, and overlooked the strong battery on Lymburner's wharf.

The General, from his knowledge in military affairs, foresaw that the sorti would be crowned with success. The different corps, confiding in his abilities, marched with alacrity wherever they were led; and advanced, secure of gaining victory.

Colonel MacLean, the second in command, with all the presence of mind which distinguishes the brave soldier, made his dispositions in most excellent order, to counteract the plans of the attackers. In short, his indefatigability, ever since the town was invested, gave us a favorable presage of our success. Colonel Caldwell, by his example, made his corps of militia emulous to appear where danger made their assistance necessary. The rebels, perceiving themselves vigorously attacked in front and rear, called for quarter, which was granted. In this affair, we made the flower of Mr. Montgomery's army prisoners; and we have reason to think that many have been killed, and many wounded. Arnold was carried off at the first onset: He was shot in the leg, while he was passing the picquets behind the Hotel Dieu; from whence an inconceivable fusilade was poured on the rebels as they marched to the Saut au Matelot. The prisoners say, that if Mr. Montgomery's party had attacked at Pres de Ville with equal bravery to that which was shown at Saut au Matelot, they would have carried the Lower-town: But, after the Lower-town is taken, it is commanded by the Upper-town.

The rebels had slips of paper pinned to their caps, with the words "Liberty or Death!" wrote on them. We lost, this morning, Capt. Anderson, formerly lieutenant in the navy, killed; five privates killed; one private wounded. We took two royals, three howitzers, two brass three pounders, with a quantity of small shells. We made prisoners, 1 lieutenant colonel, 2 majors, 8 captains, 15 lieutenants, 1 adjutant, 1 quarter master, 4 volunteers, 350 privates; 44 officers and soldiers wounded 426 taken in all. Our fatigue this winter, has been excessive. Every man able to carry a musket became soldier, and did his duty cheerfully. We lived on salt beef, salt pork, and salt fish. Fresh meat was from 1s. 3d. to 1s. 6d. and every thing in proportion. The newspapers will have informed you of our success on the day the rebels attempted to storm us.

Quebec, May 14th, 1776.

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