

PREFACE.

The present volume continues the correspondence of Governor Sharpe during the years 1757-1761.

The English government, in their choice of Lord Loudoun to replace the rash and over-confident Braddock, seem to have erred in precisely the opposite direction, the new commander being vacillating, slow, and cautious to timidity.

The strongholds of the French at this time were Louisbourg (Cape Breton), Montreal and Quebec, Crown Point at the southern end of Lake Champlain, Ticonderoga at the northern end of Lake George, Frontenac on the north side of Lake Ontario above the Thousand Islands, and Fort Niagara at the angle formed by that lake with the Niagara river. Fort Du Quesne was held by only a small garrison.

The English posts were at Oswego and Fort Ontario on the southern shore of that lake, Fort Frederick at Albany, Fort William Henry at the southern end of Lake George, and Fort Edward on the Hudson near that lake.

Loudoun fixed his headquarters at Albany, and slowly proceeded to organize his command. Generals Abercromby and Webb had preceded him with a large force of regulars, and Loudoun disgusted the Provincial troops and Assemblies by making a major of the regular forces outrank a Provincial major-general.

War had been formally declared between England and France in 1756, and the chief command given to the Marquis de Montcalm, a commander as prompt as Loudoun was dilatory. While the latter was wasting time at Albany, Montcalm suddenly appeared before Oswego, and that place with Fort Ontario fell after a brief resistance, the French retiring after destroying the fortifications. For the rest of the year Loudoun seemed paralyzed.

By the following spring the English commander had matured his plans for an attack upon Louisbourg, and gathered a strong force at Halifax for that purpose, but the plan proved abortive, and he returned discomfited to Albany. Montcalm, however, had seized the opportunity, and descending Lake George with a force of French and Indians, appeared before Fort William Henry, which capitulated, General Webb, who was in command at Fort Edward, giving no assistance beyond the advice to make the best terms they could. The fort was then destroyed by the French.

Secretary Pitt now took matters in hand. He recalled Loudoun, and