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Southern Colonies, as they are Masters of Ontario Lake
by means of their strong & well garrisoned Fort thereon
named Cataracui, the nature of the adjacent Country
renders a Road to Niagara by Land impracticable
they have not hitherto given themselves much trouble
to render that Place more defensible than Nature has
made it imagining for the two Reasons just mentioned
that the English wd never attempt its Conquest however
strongly its vast Importance might invite them thereto.
At present we have only a Trading-House distin-
guished sometimes by the Appellation of Oswego. Fort on
Ontario Lake where perhaps 50 or 60 Men from y^e
N York Independant Companies may now be posted, but by
wt I can find the French may make themselves Masters
thereof at a very small Expence & without much difficulty
just when they please, unless some of the Indians should
insist on its being a place of Neutrality as they did
during the last War between the two Crowns, should the
Indians appear less desirous of reserving the Place to y^e
English at present & which indeed I am somewhat suspicious
will be the Case) I apprehend the French will immediately
dispossess us thereof as soon as they hear of your Arrival
& that they have something to fear on Acc^t of their late
acquired Possessions on the Ohio. This as it seemed
to me a matter of Importance I was unwilling to
delay communicating till I shall have the pleasure
of waiting on you w^{ch} as I am impatient of doing I hope
I shall be able to accomplish soon after this shall have reach^d
y^r hand in the mean time I beg leave to spare you Sir
that I am