

1705.

The severest part of the march was caused by not less than four rivers not yet entirely frozen over, that had to be waded through the floating ice, which the current hurried down with great violence. Besides this, there was such a heavy fall of snow on the night of the 22nd, that the army was forced to halt for two days, during which a violent and bitter cold wind caused great suffering. On the 26th they resumed their march, turned towards Rebou,¹ and at noon arrived in the midst of the English houses, where all the people fell on their knees, begging for quarter.

Here the army found considerable provisions, and after resting there forty-eight hours, proceeded to encamp three leagues from Petty Harbor, another English post only three leagues from St. John. They entered it the next day, and leaving forty men to guard the prisoners taken at Rebou, marched forward, on the 31st. The English at St. John were ignorant of the proximity of the French, and perhaps of their departure from Placentia, but the want of order observed in leaving Petty Harbor and the neglect to reconnoitre St. John well, deprived the army of all the advantage of surprising it.²

There were then at St. John two forts, one much larger than the other. They began by the former, which was well defended, the English keeping upon the besiegers a constant fire of bombs and cannon-balls, which the French stood with all possible intrepidity. Nevertheless we had only fifteen men killed or wounded; the Chevalier de Lo, ensign, was among those killed.³ Want of ammunition at last forced our men to raise the siege, a part of the powder brought from Placentia having been wet in crossing the rivers: but they did not draw off till they had laid in ashes every house around the harbor.⁴

¹ Evidently a misprint for Bébou. The document in Canada Doc., II. xi., p. 291, has Bébouille, showing it is another French attempt at Bay of Bulls. See III. iv., p. 542.

² The town of St. John's was taken and the French occupied the houses. Canada Doc., III. iv., p. 544. Pedley, History of Newfoundland, p. 43.

³ A nephew of de Subercase. Ib. II. xi., p. 30f.

⁴ Canada Doc., II. xi., pp. 297-302. III. iv., p. 528.