

In the meantime, the enemy were continually sustained by the hope of speedy aid. A little event, that happened at this time, ought indeed to have diminished their confidence. Our scouts met in the woods three messengers coming from Fort Lydis; they killed the first, took the second, and the third escaped by his swiftness in running. They seized a letter put into a hollow ball and so well concealed on the body of the dead man that it would have escaped the scrutiny of any other than that of a military man who knows this sort of stratagem of war. The letter was signed by the Commandant of Fort Lydis and addressed to the Commandant of Fort George. It contained in substance the deposition of a Canadian, taken prisoner on the first night of our arrival. According to his declaration our army numbered eleven thousand men, and the Corps of our Savages two thousand; and our artillery was most formidable. There was a mistake in this reckoning. Our forces were in this letter exaggerated far beyond the truth. This error ought not, however, to be attributed to fraud and deceit—which, although useful to the Country, cannot be justified to the conscience of an honest man, even the most zealous and the most patriotic. Before this war, the most numerous armies of Canada had scarcely exceeded eight hundred men; surprise and astonishment would magnify objects to eyes unaccustomed to see large ones. In the course of this campaign, I have been witness of much greater mistakes of this kind. The Commandant of Lydis concluded his letter by telling his colleague that the interests of the King his master not permitting him to dismantle