

he hurried toward the city, followed by the soldiers. They entered by the Palace Gate, "and pressed in head-long march through the narrow streets; troops of Indians in scalp-lock and war-paint, a savage glitter in their eye; bands of Canadians, whose all was at stake—faith, country, home; the battalions of Old France, a torrent of white uniforms and gleaming bayonets—La Sarre, Longuedoc, Rousillon, Béarn, the victors of William Henry Oswego, Ticonderoga. So they passed out upon the plain, some by the Gate of St. Louis, some by that of St. John; and hurried breathless to where the banner of Guienne fluttered on the ridge." Montcalm had thought to find only a detachment on the plains. What was his amazement when he saw an army drawn up before him! A council was held, and it was decided that, after waiting a little for the Governor and his troops, the French should open the battle. In the light of what we now know, Montcalm's decision was unwise, for Vaudreuil did not come up. But Montcalm believed that Wolfe was throwing up entrenchments and that he would receive reinforcements. Moreover, Montcalm's men were eager to engage, and he well knew the value of enthusiasm. He rode up and down, therefore, encouraging them in his frank, earnest way—the men answering with their old cry of "Vive le Roi!" "Vive notre Général!"—and then gave the order to attack. For some time it was a skirmish, the French sharpshooters firing from behind knolls and adjacent houses. Dashes were made by the British to dislodge the sharpshooters; but, in general, Wolfe's soldiers lay down to avoid the bullets. At about ten o'clock Montcalm formed his line of battle; the regulars in the centre, the regulars and the Canadians on the flanks. The command was given to advance; and the French came on with a great shout, firing as they came. The British also advanced a few paces, and then halted. When the French were within 40 yards, Wolfe gave the order to fire, and a hail of bullets struck the on-coming lines. Another volley followed, and then a spattering fire. The rising smoke revealed an awful sight. The field was strewn with the dead and dying French, their white uniforms crimsoned with their blood; and Montcalm's army, but a moment before advancing in proud exultation, was now a broken mob. Against this dashed the British with a mighty cheer, the Highland slogan sounding over all. On the right Wolfe led the charge at the head of the Louisbourg grenadiers. A shot struck him in the wrist; then another, and another, the last in the breast; and, as the faintness of death came on he had time but to ask the issue of the battle, to turn upon his side, and to thank God for the victory. The beaten army pressed in confusion toward the city; and, as Montcalm was carried with it, a shot pierced his body. Thus, dying, he was led through the gate. There was for a time desultory fighting on the flanks, the Canadians, at the Côte Ste. Geneviève, doing much to atone for their unsteadiness in the battle proper. But in that little quarter of an hour was decided the fate of Canada.