

De Levis' hopes of success rested on the presumption that he could attack and reduce the city before the navigation of the Gulf of St. Lawrence was practicable, and as the lower St. Lawrence is generally free from ice for a month before the Gulf is open, the theory was plausible enough, and the attack might have succeeded under a more energetic commander. On the 17th of April he assembled his troops from winter quarters, and on the 20th set out for Montreal, collecting such detachments as had concentrated at different points along the way. The flotilla dropped down from Trois Rivières, having the artillery of which he was very deficient, provisions and siege material on board. On the 25th the whole army had assembled at Pointe aux Trembles, and the vanguard under Bourlamaque, marched next day, with the intention of surprising the British outpost at Cape Rouge. The arrival of the flotilla off St. Augustine naturally awakened the vigilance of the Commandant, who soon ascertained that the French advance was within half a league of his post, of which fact he advised General Murray. De Levis finding it impracticable to cross Cape Rouge river at the mouth, resolved to pass higher up near Lorette, march over the marshes of La Suede and occupy a position on the heights of St. Foye. Accordingly, Bourlamaque restored the bridge over the river, which the British had broken down, and perceiving they had not destroyed a causeway of wood which had been laid (corduroy road) across the marches, De Levis ordered his savages to occupy the head of it. The advanced guard reached that point at night-fall, and the march was continued over the swamp throughout the night. At the lower end it was covered by a wood about a mile in width, behind which the troops were concentrated, and at daylight on the 26th the advance cleared it, and confronted the British, drawn up in position on the other side.

Murray, who had previously cleared the town of its inhabitants, no sooner received the report of the Commandant at Cape Rouge than he marched with nearly his whole available force to extricate his imperilled detachment. The French advance having turned the position at Lorette, it was at once evacuated; that of St. Foye, now formed the left of the line, occupied by the British, while its right rested on the road to La Suede, about 400 yards from the wood, through which the French were desfilng. The heights of St. Foye, on which the British were posted, overlooks the marshes of La Suede. De Levis had therefore brought his troops into a most critical position, as he could not form them either for defence or attack, nor was it possible to execute a flank movement towards the St. Charles—the nature of the ground preventing that manœuvre. His only chance of escape was therefore to attain the St. Foye road by a flank march from the right to the left of the British position by his own right. This difficult, dangerous, and delicate operation was safely performed during the night, which was unusually tempestuous, and when morning dawned the English General found his left flank turned, and no alternative remained but to fall back towards the city, which he leisurely effected, having withdrawn the detachments from Cape Rouge and St. Foye. Acting on the principle which had influenced Montcalm the preceding autumn, that it was better risk a battle than a siege in an untenable fortress, Murray marched out with ten skeleton battalions on the morning of the 28th of April, and took up a position in front of the Buttes-a-Neveuc. His whole force numbered a little over 4,000

men, with 25 pieces of artillery, having left only the necessary guards in the city. His order of battle appears to have been well considered; his right rested on the hill of St. Genovive and the St. Foye road, his left touched the cliff on the St. Lawrence, thus completely overlooking the French position, on the lower ground, and in advance of the village of St. Foye. Early in the morning the French had secured a wind-mill on the St. Foye road, about midway between the village and city, which enabled them to debouch on the Plains of Abraham, to extend their lines to L'Anse du Foulon (Wolfe's Cove) where their flotilla had arrived, and occupy the redoubt above it, which the British had erected the previous year. Both armies were drawn up in three Brigades. The French right rested on the redoubt, their left on Dumont's Mill, the whole force was drawn up in two lines with a third in reserve. The British were also formed in two lines, but had no reserve. The key of the French position was the mill, that once taken their defeat was certain. General Murray's original position under the guns of the fortress, was unassailable, especially as the French had no artillery, and had only moved into position to cover the landing of whatever guns had been collected from the relics of their magazines and forts, which were then on board the flotilla. As soon as his troops had occupied their position he rode forward to reconnoitre, and then discovered what he should have known before, that the French were debouching on the plains from St. Foye, under cover of Dumont's Mill; that they had marched throughout the night, that their arms were unseizable, owing to its tempestuous character, and that a fair opportunity presented itself for capturing the mill, driving the French left and centre into the swamps, and the right into the St. Lawrence; in fact an onward movement simultaneously effected of the whole line would secure an easy victory. Accordingly, to the astonishment of his opponent, he ordered his whole line to advance, and at the first onset carried the mill, the defenders of which fell back fighting to the wood at the entrance of the swamp. The English light troops who led this attack, carried away by the ardour of pursuit, followed up the retiring French, drove them through the wood, but were checked by the advance of their left, which had time to form, and hurled back on the main body with fearful slaughter. Their advance and retreat silenced the artillery of the right wing of the British troops, and in the confusion which ensued it was turned, and the mill retaken. De Levis pushed a column along the edge of the escapement of the St. Charles into the suburb of St. Rochs, but the 35th Regt., which had been placed in reserve during the attack on the mill, by a vigorous charge repelled the movement. Meantime the action on the British left had been hotly maintained. Colonel Fraser, who commanded there, had driven the French right from their position. Murray does not appear to have brought his centre into action at all, he had weakened it and the left to support the right, while De Levis was concentrating fresh troops on the centre, and seeing the weakness of the British left, ordered the Royal Roussillon regiment to charge it at once, which was effected, and it was thrown back on the centre by sheer force fighting bravely against superior numbers. A simultaneous charge on the right wing was equally successful; the whole of the artillery was captured, and the line gave way in the utmost confusion. Nothing could have hindered the beaten army from being driven into the

St. Charles but the cool intrepidity and splendid manœuvring of the 15th and 58th Regiments, who by repeated charges secured the retreat of the fugitives, who left three hundred dead upon the field, and seven hundred wounded, only twenty-eight of whom were sent to the hospitals. It is said the French officers of the regular service sullied their victory by unusual cruelty. Four British officers, prisoners, were conducted to the officers of the Regiment of La Sarre, who received them with a wave of the hand and *Allez vous en*, which speedily decided their fate. So great was the confusion within the city that the gates remained open for two hours, the sentinels deserted their posts, and it was a considerable time before the ramparts were re-manned. The French force amounted to over 7,000 men, their loss was greater than the British, as they had no artillery. Immediately after the action they marched to the Buttes-a-Neveuc, and formally invested the city.

Such were the results of the second battle of Abraham, and an examination of the manœuvres which preceded it, as well as the tactics adopted during the action, will convey no exalted idea of the scientific knowledge displayed by either General. De Levis' march through the swamps, and the flank movement at St. Foye, though successfully executed, were dangerous in the extreme, and could only have succeeded with an apathetic and unenterprising officer as Murray proved himself to be. In fact, De Levis' separation from his flotilla at Cape Rouge could not be defended on any grounds beyond those of extreme ignorance, as to the force of his opponent at that post, and the certainty that his march would be concealed by the peasantry. Also, during the action, he ordered his whole line to fall back, and if Murray had supported the onset of his light troops De Levis' defeat was certain, and a defeat in such a position was simple destruction, but the fault of many English officers of that period was that they did not know how to improve an opportunity, and hardly ever supported the onset of their light troops or skirmishers. Gage's ignorance of this principle lost the battle of Monongahela, and insured the defeat of Braddock's expedition. Murray's neglect lost the battle of Quebec. During the action Murray committed the grave error of neglecting to force the French centre; he allowed both extremities of his line to be attacked; the French to debouch by their left to reinforce their right, and all the fresh troops to be concentrated at the centre for a decisive charge without attempting to prevent it, but kept the troops which should have been hurled against it idly parading from the right to the left. It is true they did good service by covering the retreat, but it was owing to the skill of the commanding officers of the two battalions and the steadiness of the men. It was owing to his want of skill and energy that De Levis made the most dangerous march on record, and completed a flank movement within four hundred yards of his position, on the night of the 27th, and finally it was owing to his ignorance that the French force ever escaped from the marshes. He should have strengthened his outpost at Cape Rouge when he found De Levis afraid to attack it; guarded the outlets from the marshes of La Suede, and the French army would have been obliged to disband for want of provisions. No possible approach was open but through Lorette and the left bank of the St. Charles to Montcalm's old lines, which were everywhere under the guns of the city. In fact, during the three days operation a dozen chances of totally