

There was, indeed, a motley gathering of Indians near the fort, representing a score of tribes, from the Hurons of Lorette and the Abenakis of St. Francis, on the lower St. Lawrence, to the Ottawas of Lake Superior. But to place any reliance on their co-operation in such an emergency seemed impossible. Yet De Beaujeu could not bring himself to wait tamely there to be crushed, or retreat in inglorious haste. He would not give up Fort Duquesne without striking a blow. Canadian officers of that city had great contempt for the slow movements of the English. Buoyed up by this, De Beaujeu resolved to advance on the enemy and form an ambuscade where the road they had taken crossed the Monongahela. Indian scouting parties had kept up regular reports of the advance of Braddock, and knew the topography of the country. The Chevalier de la Perade, soon to fall beside his commander, had sallied out on the 6th of July, and returned the next day to announce the proximity and strength of the enemy. De Beaujeu resolved to march forth with all the troops that could be spared; not a dissenting voice seems to have been raised, and the 8th of July was spent in preparing to take the field. But, when De Beaujeu visited the Indian camp and announced to the chiefs the decision of the French officers, there was no response. To his earnest appeal they at last cried: "What, Father, do you wish to die and sacrifice us? The English are more than 4000 men, and we only 800, and you wish to go and attack them! You see at once that you have no sense! We must have until tomorrow to decide".

There was no alternative. Precious as the moments were, De Beaujeu was compelled to defer his march till morning. At day break, on the 9th of July, the French officers and soldiers, gathered in the little "chapel of the Assomption of the Blessed Virgin at the Beautiful River," as that in the fort was styled. The commandant knelt in the confessional