

himself, and would see if they were as brave as they professed to be.

Quickly the little band was put in battle array. Guns were shouldered, and all the available snow-shoes were tied on. At the head of his troop of thirty men, Maisonneuve crossed the clearing, and entered the forest beyond, where for some time they saw no sign of human presence. But after wading for a good way through the deep snow, they were suddenly saluted with a shower of arrows and bullets from some eighty Iroquois springing from their ambush.

Maisonneuve ordered his men to take shelter behind the trees and fire at the enemy. For a time, they stood their ground, though three of their men were killed and several wounded. But their ammunition began to fail, while the Iroquois still pressed them close with a galling fire which broke the steadiness of the men and made them begin a retreat. They covered their retreat by turning frequently to fire, but when they reached the beaten track leading to the fort, they made such a wild rush that they were mistaken for enemies by their friends, and, but for an accident, they would have received a fatal fire.

Maisonneuve gallantly stood his ground to the last, retreating backward with a pistol in each hand, with which he kept back his pursuers. The Indians were anxious to take him alive, and therefore would not shoot him. The chief wished himself to have the honor of capturing the French commander, and was in the act of seizing him, when Maisonneuve shot him dead. This caused such a confusion among the Iroquois, who rushed to secure the dead body of their chief, that Maisonneuve escaped during the excitement and was soon safe in the fort. Thenceforward his men recognized him as a hero, and the wisdom of his generalship was unquestioned. For some time after this Ville Marie enjoyed comparative peace. The scene of this brilliant action of Maisonneuve is believed to have been what is now the Place d'Armes, close to the great church of Notre Dame.

But there were still many dark days and bloody struggles in store for the little settlement. Rumors of raids being planned continually reached the ears of the settlers, and the outlook for Montreal as for the whole colony, was just at the darkest point