

duced the conquerors were to unite with Wolfe in a conjoined attack on Quebec.

It was on the 27th of June that Wolfe was prospecting on the western point of Orleans Island. His inspection was cut short by the sudden approach of a terrible storm, which, however, spent its fury without doing material damage to the British ships. The storm had hardly cleared away when, under cover of the night and with the aid of a favorable breeze, Montcalm ordered a number of fire-ships to be cut from their moorings and sent amongst the British vessels. The bursting flames cast a lurid light over the river, the island and the great fleet, whilst the constant discharge of thousands of guns of every description heightened the effect of the terrific scene. But it was "terrible in appearance only." When the discharges became less frequent the English sailors towed the burning craft harmlessly away. After the storm the naval officers decided that the anchorage was unsafe, and they determined to occupy the Basin of Beauport. To soften the movement Montcalm took possession of Point Levi, a position of great importance opposite Quebec, and scarcely two miles from the city. There a battery was planted which menaced the citadel and the wooden houses of the Lower Town. Montcalm had urged upon Vaudreuil the fortification of this point, but his counsels were disregarded. After placing another battery on Orleans Island, Wolfe's next movement was to encamp on the north shore, just below the Montmorenci. His plan was to march up that stream to where it was fordable, cross it and force Montcalm to give him battle. In this vain attempt he lost many men who were cut off by scouting parties of Canadian and Indian sharpshooters concealed in the woods.

The burghers of Quebec, aided by a band of students, and some volunteers from the army, resolved to make an attack on the newly-erected works at Point Levi. They chose the night of July 12th for the sortie. Crossing the river three miles above the town, they landed to march along the south shore. Some confusion took place which resulted in a panic. The disordered crowd fired on each other, fled to their boats and hastily escaped across the river.

The battery at Point Levi and the guns of the fleet now opened a furious fire on Quebec. All day the work of destruction went on, and far into the night the sky was lit by the parabolic glare of fiery missiles carrying death to the cowering citizens and destruction to their homes.

The 18th was signalized by a new movement. Under cover of night and the Levi battery, a gunboat boldly passed up stream without the knowledge of the French sentinels, thereby escaping the fire of the citadel. Other boats followed, whilst troops marched along the shore. The only immediate result of this movement was to lengthen the already dangerously extended line of the British forces. In vain the shore was closely reconnoitred for many miles. No point of attack had been left unguarded by the wary Montcalm.

The restless energy of Wolfe could not bear inaction. He resolved to attack the extreme right of the French line at the junction of the Montmorenci and the St. Lawrence. So on the evening of July the 31st he marched troops from the Montmorenci camp across the shallows in front of the Fall. Other troops were disembarked on the shore from small boats. The Grenadiers of Louisbourg and the Americans were the first to form into line on the beach. Without wait-

ing for the support of Wolfe and the Highlanders, they moved briskly forward and attempted to storm the French defences. The furious fire opened upon them sent them back in confusion. The Indians in the French service sallied down from the heights and scalped many of the wounded. Wolfe covered the retreat of the retiring forces. His plans had been frustrated by rashness, and he was compelled to order his troops to embark, having lost 500 men in killed and wounded, without inflicting much injury on the enemy.

Many vessels crowded with men had passed up the river searching for a landing place. Forty miles above the city Murray effected a landing and occupied a small village, which was feebly defended by wounded soldiers. Letters were seized which brought the cheering news from the West that Niagara, Ticonderoga and Crown Point were in British hands; but the aid which Wolfe expected from Amherst was not forthcoming, and he must struggle on with his insufficient force. The fire of the batteries and of the ships was kept up without intermission and great damage was inflicted on the distressed city. The cathedral in the Upper Town and hundreds of houses in the Lower Town were reduced to ashes. Montcalm was sorely pressed. A false rumor reached him that Amherst was about to move on Montreal, so he had to despatch DeLevis to superintend defensive operations at that place. From that moment Montcalm felt his responsibility doubled, for he had parted with a faithful friend and a good officer. The movements of the British above the town compelled him to send a large force to occupy points where attack was possible. This and the desertion of many Canadians greatly weakened his available strength. Food, too, was becoming scarce, for the last harvest had yielded poorly. Already his troops were on short allowance.

The resources of the colony were at a low ebb. An infamous combination of officials headed by Bigot the Intendant, had, with the Governor's connivance, robbed the colony till its supplies were exhausted. Montcalm and his lieutenants alone were blameless amid this "crookedness and perversity."

Nor were prospects bright in the English camp. On the 20th of August sickness confined Wolfe to his bed at Montmorenci, where he lay dangerously ill for ten days. Gloom pervaded the fleet and camp. The season was far advanced, and the naval officers were longing for the open sea. Saunders was pacing the quarter-deck with quick uneasy steps, whilst the sailors were every day becoming more profrane at the thought of being icebound in the river.

When somewhat recovered, Wolfe planned out three schemes for the consideration of his brigadiers. The first was to cross the Montmorenci high up the stream and attack Beauport in the rear while the fleet thundered in front. The second to repeat the experiment of July the 31st at Montmorenci. The third, to make a general attack from the boats at the Beauport Flats. These plans were so desperate that the brigadiers could not approve of them but favored an attack on any vulnerable point above the town.

At this juncture an adviser came. Major Stobo, who was sent to Quebec after the capture of Fort Necessity, had escaped in the spring of 1759 and made his way to Halifax. On the first day of September he came up the river, had a secret consultation with the British officers, and disclosed to them the existence of a path which led up to the

Plains of Abraham. Wolfe verified his account with a field-glass. Preparations were made for a night surprise of Quebec.

The greatest difficulty was to deceive the French. The camp at Montmorenci was broken up, and the fleet was manœuvred as if to sail for home. The men required in the new enterprise were marched by night up the southern bank. By the evening of September the 12th all was in readiness. To distract the enemy, Saunders began a furious bombardment in the Beauport Basin, whilst Navigator Cook busied himself in planting buoys and otherwise deceiving them. The success of the British plan was by no means assured. A fleet of French provision boats had been ordered down the St. Lawrence to Quebec. It was to keep to the north shore for safety. This order was countermanded. The British were aware of both order and countermand, the French sentinels of the order only. Could the watches on the heights be so imposed upon as not to observe that the boats below were filled with British not French troops. On this uncertain chance Wolfe's success depended.

To the General's orders of September the 12th this note was appended—"That the officers and men will remember what their country expects of them." Towards midnight 1,600 soldiers from the fleet crowded into the small boats and floated down with the tide. The silence of the night was little broken by the quiet movements of the men. Wolfe's mind was pensive. Poetical musings for a time displaced all other thoughts. He softly recited a stanza of "Gray's Elegy" to young Jervis. But action was at hand. A sentinel from the heights challenged the boats. Captain McDonald who spoke French fluently, bade him be quiet lest the English on the river should hear the noise. Reassured, the man walked on. Soon the foremost boats reached a little cove, the Aube Du Foulon (now Wolfe's Cove), at the foot of a path leading up the rugged heights. Twenty-four chosen men led the way up the difficult path. Stunted trees and low shrubbery grew along its sides. These aided the men in their ascent. Spruce and ash trees and even the white-tuniced birches were allies of England. When the men gained the height they made a rush to capture the guard-tent. The cowardly DeVergor (twice betrayer of France), who was captain of the guard, fled in dismay followed by his men, two of whom were shot. A joyful cry from the heights told Wolfe, who was in suspense at the cove, that all was well. So the men in hundreds pressed up the narrow path, Wolfe among the first, and formed in order of battle on the plains above.

The breaking dawn disclosed to straggling Canadians 5,000 armed troops on the Plains of Abraham prepared for the work of death. Wolfe was confident—even exultant. And yet his position was a critical one. Montcalm could face him with a superior force, aided by the guns of Quebec. Bougainville could attack him in the rear. In case of defeat escape was impossible. His troops could not descend the path by which they had reached the Plains. He might well have burned his boats. His men were formed in a long line with their right resting on the height above the cove, their left well towards the River St. Charles. The regiments, in order of formation from left to right were the 35th Grenadiers of Louisbourg, 28th, 43rd, 58th, 78th and 47th. Wolfe commanded the right, Moncton the centre, Murray the left. The 15th and