

have twenty or thirty francs in the corner of my haversack, I die you will send them to my mother.

The word 'forward' sounded and thrilled through the heart of every warrior as though it had been unexpected.

As they advanced the intersection of the woods in the centre of the forest appeared to be lighted up; on approaching the described flaming torches, the objects before them soon became more distinct and a spectacle of which none then had formed an idea rose in sight.

On an altar rudely represented by a heap of stones the priest of Saint Marie de Rhé was celebrating mass, and all around aged men, women and children knelt in prayer. Between the republicans and this group was placed a wall of armed men who in a narrower point presented the same plan of battle for the defence as for the attack; it would have been evident that the republicans had been expected even had they not recognized in the first rank, the guide who had escaped; he was now a Vendean soldier in complete costume, bearing on his left breast the red heart which was the rallying mark and on his hat the white kerchief worn in lieu of the cockade.

The Vendean awaited not the attack, having scattered rifle men in the woods the fire began; the republicans advanced, their guns on their shoulders, without answering the reiterated fire of the enemy, without uttering aught after each discharge, except the words: close up the ranks, close up the ranks.

The priest had not ended mass but still continued; his auditory seemed unconscious of what passed around, and remained kneeling. The republican soldiers still advanced. When arrived at the distance of thirty feet from the enemy, the first rank knelt, three lines of rifles were lowered like ears of grain that the wind bendeth; their fire burst forth;—the ranks of the Vendean were thinned and balls went flying through and killed women and children at the foot of the altar. There was in that crowd a moment of screams and tumult. The priest raised