God was fighting. If it were really necessary to New France that the English should be delayed—and he would take the Commandant's word for it—why then delayed they would be. This he felt able to promise. "And I in my heart of hearts am sure of it," said the Commandant. "But in war one has to take account of every chance, and this may pass sometimes for want of faith."

So, like an honest gentleman, he took his absolution, and afterwards went to Mass and spent half an hour with his mind withdrawn from all worldly care, greatly to his soul's refreshment. But with the ringing of the sanctus bell a drum began to beat—as it seemed, on the very ridge of the chapel roof, but really from the leads of the flagstaff tower high above it. Father Launoy paused in the celebration, but was ordered by a quiet gesture to proceed. Even at the close the garrison stood and waited respectfully for their Commandant to walk out, and followed in decent order to the porch. Then they broke into a run pell-mell for the walls.

But an hour passed before the first whaleboat with its load of red uniforms pushed its way into sight through the forest screen. Then began a spectacle—slow, silent, by little and little overwhelming. It takes a trained imagination to realise great numbers, and the men of Fort Amitié were soon stupefied and ceased even to talk. It seemed to them that the forest would never cease disgorging boats.

"A brave host, my children—but we will teach them that they handle a wasps' nest!"

His men eyed the Commandant in doubt; they could scarcely believe that he intended to resist, now that the enemy's strength was apparent. To their minds war meant winning or losing, capturing or being captured; to fight an impossible battle, for the mere sake of gaining time for troops they had never seen, did not enter into their calculations.

So they eyed him, while still the flotilla increased against the far background and came on—whaleboats, gunboats, batteaux, canoes; and still in the lessening interval along the