

covered by a fair open wood of walnut timber unencumbered with brush. Above this rises another acclivity gradually attaining a height of fifty feet above the first resting its further edge upon the bold rocky face of the mountain. The soil was heavy clay, densely timbered, and encumbered with dense brush. The line of advance ran diagonally across these slopes which were bounded on the right and left by deep ravines commencing on the lower bottom and running out at the top of the upper slope. The field where the action was fought formed a parallelogram about 300 yards wide next the river gradually narrowing towards the top where it was 50 or 60 yards wide. The ravines were shallow at the upper end and had lateral ramifications coming close up to the line of march, the whole heavily timbered, and covered with underbrush and grape vines so as to be perfectly invisible till the very edge was approached; the sides steep and favorable for concealing a large force. After the lapse of a century, with the disappearance of the forest and all the agricultural improvements in this region, the peculiar features of the field are still prominent and the ravines imperceptible to casual observation and not to be seen till their very brink is reached; the distance from the ford to the head of the ravine was a little over 1000 yards.

Meanwhile at Fort du Quesne Monsieur Contrecoeur prepared to capitulate to a force superior in every respect to that which he commanded; he had about 400 soldiers in the Fort, of whom 250 were regular troops, and on the day before the action he was reinforced by 100 Delaware Indians, 60 Wyandots, 40 Onondagos, 40 Puwawes, and 30 Pawawes; making in all about 1300 men, or nearly equal to Braddock's force. On the 7th July it was known at Du Quesne that the English troops were at the head waters of Turtle Creek; on the 8th, a Monsieur de Beaujeu, Captain in the regular troops, proposed to the Commandant that he might be permitted to prepare an ambuscade on the route which the British troops must now take. A reluctant consent was given to enlist volunteers in the enterprise and it was answered by the whole force. The ground described was carefully reconnoitred and proper dispositions made for placing the ambuscade in position. Subordinate to Beaujeu were Monsieurs Dumas and De Ligneris, both Captains in the regular army, four Lieutenants, six Ensigns and twenty Cadets. Though the numbers were nearly equal it is not likely Beaujeu anticipated more than giving the English a severe check and probably delaying their advance as his intention was to contest the passage of the second ford, and then to fall back on the ravines. It is impossible he could have contemplated the complete victory that was before him. After passing the river Braddock's troops marched forward to pass around the head of the ravines to avoid the morass formed by the small runlets of water

from them; his route lay parallel to the most dangerous defile, but it also passed its head at an angle of 45 degrees, thus exposing his front and flanks at points varying from 100 to 30 yards when he would turn it, and offering a line 200 yards long to the enemies fire at an average distance of 60 yards; had he possessed the least knowledge of those ravines he would undoubtedly have occupied them, as his whole conduct hitherto and at the moment of the action was marked by consummate skill, caution, and generalship.

The order of march from the river was as follows:—"The pioneer guides and six light horsemen formed the advanced party, then the supports under Colonel Gage followed by the working parties with two brass six pounders on either flank; parties to the number of eight were thrown out to guard against surprise, at some distance marched the line preceded by the light horse our squads of whom also acted as extreme flankers at either end of the column. Next came the seamen followed by a subaltern with 20 grenadiers, a twelve pounder and a company of grenadiers. Then the rear guard, the waggon and artillery train, which began and ended with a twelve pounder, covered by a detachment with a squad of light horse closed the whole, numerous flanking parties covered each side, and six subalterns each with 29 grenadiers, and ten sergeants each with 10 men, were detached for that purpose. The greater part of the advanced guard were advanced beyond the spot where the main battle was fought, and were just surmounting the second ascent from the river at the point where the concealed ravines approached each other when the Engineers in front perceived the enemy advancing at the run. Foremost of all came Beaujeu attired as an Indian Chief with a silver gorget on his breast, the moment he caught sight of the British he suddenly halted and waved his hat above his head; at this preconcerted signal the whole force dispersed to the right and left throwing themselves flat upon the ground, taking cover behind rocks and trees or in the ravines, the French holding the centre of the semi-circular position assumed, and the whole opened at once a tremendous fire, accompanied with furious yells. For a moment the English advance paused aghast at the strangeness of the onset, but their commanding officer Gage rallied them immediately and returning their fire—he halted a moment till the working party under St. Clair came up and then advanced at once upon the centre of the concentric line. As he closed with it he was again greeted with a fearful discharge which shook his formation, but in return he opened a fire of grape and musketry so tremendous as to sweep down every unsheltered foe. Beaujeu and a dozen more fell dead on the spot, and the Indians, unused to so heavy a fusillade, began to fly, but reanimated by the unflinching bravery of the French and the ex-

ample and exhortation of Dumas and de Ligneris they returned once more to the front. For a time the issue seemed doubtful the loud cries of Vive le Roi were answered by the charging cheers of the British; precision of aim and the immunity from danger enjoyed by those under cover began to prevail over mere discipline. In vain the 44th continued their fire, in vain their officers led them to the charge hidden beneath trees concealed below the level of the plain with the muzzles of their rifles resting on the brink of the ravines and shooting steadily and securely with naught to disturb their aim, the majority of the enemy were secure and invisible dealing death among the exposed ranks of the English.

Braddock whose extreme rear had not yet left the river bank ordered Lieut. Colonel Burton to reinforce the troops already engaged with part of the 48th; leaving Halket with 400 men to protect the baggage and the rest of the line to halt, as he imagined the advanced parties were evenly engaged.

According to this disposition 800 men were detached from the line free from all impediments; in the meantime an aide-de camp was sent forward to bring an account of the nature of the attack, but as he did not return and the fire getting heavier the General moved forward himself to find the advance and supports in inextricable confusion; while Burton was forming his men to face a rising ground on his right the advanced detachment under Gage, unable any longer to withstand the fire, broke and fell back upon his line completely confusing it and hopelessly confounding all attempts at reformation. The colors were advanced in different directions to separate the men if possible but without effect, Braddock ordered the officers to endeavor to form the men and tell them off in small divisions to no purpose; as fast as the officers appeared they were shot down, being all mounted as was the fashion of the day, and distinguished by their uniforms they offered an easy mark to the deadly rifles of unseen foes; and it became as impossible to find men to give orders as to have them obeyed. Huddled together in a narrow road twelve feet wide shut up by the primeval forest the panic stricken soldiers hastily loading and blindly discharging their muskets in the air, were shot down by platoons from the fire of foes whom they could not see but whose whoops added horror to the unearthly scene. The French and Indians had extended their lines in the ravines to the right and left and finally attacked the baggage guard, the flanking parties to which terrified by the combat in front ran in on the first fire, ten pieces of Artillery flanked the baggage and for some time kept the enemy at bay but gradually their fire slackened as their ammunition became exhausted and the whole line from front to rear was surrounded and enveloped in a circle of deadly fire. Every thing that a good General and brave man could do was