

will lie at the door of the villainous aggression. The Spaniards now saw plainly they would have to take the stockade before they could get away, and the officers seemed consulting together.

"Halt!" cried Asa, suddenly. "Messieurs les Americains," said the captain looking up at our loopholes.

"What's your pleasure?" demanded Asa.

Upon this the Captain stuck a dirty pocket handkerchief upon the point of his sword, and laughing with his officers, moved some twenty paces forward, followed by the troops. Thereupon Asa again shouted to him to halt.

"This is not according to the customs of war," said he. "The flag of truce may advance, but if it is accompanied, we fire."

It was evident that the Spaniards never dreamed of our attempting to resist them; for there they stood in line before us, and, if we had fired, every shot must have told. The Acadians, who kept themselves all this time snug behind the cotton trees, called more than once to the captain to withdraw his men into the wood; but he only shook his head contemptuously.

Then, however, he heard Asa threaten to fire, he looked puzzled, and as if he thought it just possible we might do as we said. He ordered his men to halt, and called out to us not to fire till he had explained what they came for.

"Then out it short," cried Asa sternly. "You'd have done better to explain before you burst down our houses, like a pack of Molasses on the war path."

As he spoke, three bullets whistled from the edge of the forest, and struck the stockade within a few inches of the loophole at which he stood. They were fired by the Creoles, who, although they could not possibly distinguish Asa, had probably seen his rifle barrel or one of his buttons glitter through the opening.

As soon as they had fired, they sprang behind their trees again, craning their heads forward to hear if there was a groan or a cry. They'd have done better to have kept quiet; for Righteous and I caught a sight of them, and let fly the same moment. Two of them fell, and rolled from behind the trees, and we saw that they were called Croupier, and another of our horse-baiting friends.

When the Spanish officer heard the shots he ran back to his men, and shouted out "Forward! To the assault!" They came on like a distance of thirty paces, and then, as if they thought we were wild geese to be frightened by their noise, they fired a volley against the blockhouse.

"Now then!" cried Asa, "are you loaded? Nathan and Righteous! I take the captain—your Nathan, the lieutenant—Righteous, the third officer.—James, the sergeant. Mark your men, and waste no powder."

The Spaniards were still some sixty yards off, but we were sure of our mark at a hundred and sixty, and that if they had been squirrels instead of men. We fired: the captain and lieutenant, the third officer, two sergeants, and another man whined for an instant on the grass. The next moment they stretched themselves out—dead.

All was now confusion among the musketeers, who ran in every direction. Most of them took to the wood, but about a dozen remained and lifted up their officers to see if there was any spark of life left in them.

"Load again, quick!" said Asa in a low voice. We did so, and six more Spaniards ran off as if the soles of their shoes had been of red hot iron.

We set to work to pick out our touchhole and clean our rifles, knowing that we might not have time later, and that a single miss fire might cost us all our lives. We then loaded, and began to calculate what the Spaniards would do next. It is true they had lost their officers; but there were five Acadians with them, and those were the men we had most cause to fear. Meantime the vultures and turkey buzzards had already begun to assemble, and presently hundreds of them were circling and hovering round the carcasses, which they were, however, feared to touch.

Just then Righteous, who had the sharpest eye of us all, pointed to the corner of the wood where it joins the brushwood thicket. I made a sign to Asa, and we all looked, and there was something creeping and moving through the underwood. Presently we distinguished two Acadians heading a score of Spaniards, and endeavoring, under cover of the bushes, to steal across the open ground to the east side of the forest.

"The Acadians for you, Nathan and Righteous, the Spaniards for us," said Asa. The next moment two Acadians and four Spaniards were scarce out of the brushwood. But the bullet which Asa had not seen, started up.

"Now's the time," shouted he "before they are loaded again. Follow me! we will have followed by the Spaniards. Although we had shot a score of our enemies, those who remained were even more than ten to one of us, and we were worse off than at first, for then they were altogether, and now we had them on each side of us. But we did not let ourselves be discouraged, although we could not help feeling that the odds against us were fearfully great.

We now had to keep a sharp look out; for if one of us showed himself at a loophole, a dozen bullets rattled about his ears. There were many shot holes through the palisades, which splinters had been torn off by the lead. The musketeers had spread themselves all along the edge of the forest, and had learned by experience to keep close to their cover. We now

five, but it was slow work, and the time seemed very long.

Suddenly the Spaniards set up a loud shout. At first we could not make out what was the matter, but presently we heard a hissing and crackling on the roof of the blockhouse. They had wrapped tow round their cartridges, and one of the shots had set light to the fir boards. Just as we found it out, they gave three more hurrahs, and we saw the dry planks beginning to flame, and the fire to spread.

"We must put that out and at once," said Asa, "if we don't wish to be roasted alive. Some one must get up the chimney with a bucket of water. I'll go myself."

"Let me go, Asa," said Righteous. "You stop here. It don't matter who goes. The thing will be done in a minute."

He put a chair on a table and got upon it, and then seizing a bar which was fixed across the chimney to hang hams upon, he drew himself up by his arms, and Rachel handed him a pail of water. All this time the flame was burning brighter, and the Spaniards getting louder in their rejoicings and hurrahs. Asa stood upon the bar, and raising the pail above his head, poured the water out of the chimney upon the roof.

"More to the left, Asa," said Righteous; "the fire is strongest more to the left."

"Tarnation seize it!" cried Asa, "I can't see. Hand me up another pailful."

We did so; and when he had got it, he put his head out at the top of the chimney to see where the fire was and threw the water over the exact spot. But at the very moment that he did so the report of a dozen muskets was heard.

"Ha!" cried Asa in an altered voice, "I have it. And the hams and bucket came tumbling down the chimney, and Asa after them all covered with blood."

"In God's name, man, are you hurt?" cried Rachel.

"Hush! wife," replied Asa; "keep quiet. I have enough for the rest of my life, which will not be long; but never mind, lads; defend yourselves well, and don't fire two at the same man. Save your lead, for you will want it all. Promise me that."

"Asa!" my beloved Asa!" shrieked Rachel; "if you die, I shall die too."

"Silence! foolish woman: and our child, and the one yet unborn! Hark! I hear the Spaniards! Defend yourselves, and, Nathan, be a father to my children."

I had barely time to press his hand and make him the promise he wished. The Spaniards who had doubtless guessed our loss, rushed like mad wolves up to the mound, twenty on one side, and upwards of thirty on the other.

"Steady!" cried I. "Righteous, here with me; and you Rachel, show yourself worthy to be Hiram Strong's daughter, and Asa's wife; load this rifle for me while I fire my own."

"O God! O God!" cried Rachel, "the hell hounds have murdered my Asa!"

She clasped her husband's body in her arms, and there was no getting her away. I felt enough myself, but there was scanty time for grieving; for a party of Spaniards, headed by one of the Acadians, was close up to the mound on the side which I was defending. I shot the Acadian; but another, the sixth, and last but one, took his place. "Rachel!" cried I, "the rifle, for God's sake, the rifle! a single bullet may save all our lives."

But no Rachel came, and the Acadian and Spaniards, who from the cessation of our fire, guessed that we were either unloaded, or had expended our ammunition, now sprang forward, and by climbing, and scrambling, and getting on one another's shoulders, managed to scale the side of the mound, almost perpendicular as you see it. And in a minute the Acadian and half a dozen Spaniards, with axes, were chopping away at the palisades, and severing the wattles which bound them together. To give the devil his due, if there had been only three like that Acadian, it would have been all up with us. He handled his axe like a real backwoodsman; but the Spaniards wanted either the skill or the strength of arm, and they made little impression. There were only Righteous and myself to oppose them; for on the other side, a dozen more shoulders, with the seventh of those cursed Acadians, were attacking the stockade.

Righteous shot down one of the Spaniards; but just as he had done so the Acadian tore up a palisade by the roots, (how he did it I know not to this hour, there must have been a stump remaining on it,) held it with the wattles and branches hanging round it like a shield before him, guarding off a blow I aimed at him, then hurled it against me with such force that I staggered backwards, and he sprang past me. I thought it was all over with us. It is true that Righteous, with the butt of his rifle, split the skull of the first Spaniard who entered, and drove his hunting knife into the next; but the Acadian alone was man enough to give us abundant occupation, now he had got in our rear. Just then there was a crack of a rifle, the Acadian gave a leap into the air and fell dead, and at the same moment my son Godsend, a boy of ten years old, sprang forward, Asa's rifle in his hand still smooching from muzzle and touchhole. The glorious boy had loaded the piece when he saw that Rachel did not do it, and in the very nick of time had shot the Acadian through the heart. This brought me to myself again, and with axe in one hand and knife in the other, I rushed in among the Spaniards, hacking and hewing right and left. It was a real butchery which lasted a good quarter of an hour; but then the Spaniards got sick of it, and would have done so sooner had they known that their leader was shot. At last they jumped off the mound and ran away, such of them as could.

Righteous and I put the palisade in its place again, securing it as well as we could, and then telling my boy to keep watch, ran over to the other side, where a desperate fight was going on.

Three of our party, assisted by the women, were defending the stockade against a score of Spaniards, who kept poking their bayonets between the palisades, till all our people were wounded and bleeding. But Rachel had now recovered from her first grief at her husband's death, or rather it had turned to a feeling of revenge, and there she was, like a raging tigress seizing the bayonets as they were thrust through the stockade, and wrenching them off the muskets, and sometimes pulling the muskets themselves out of the soldiers' hands. But all this struggling had loosened the palisades, and there were one or two openings in them through which the thin bodied Spaniards, pushed on by their comrades, were able to pass. Just as we came up, two of these coppered coloured Dons had squeezed themselves through, without their muskets, but with their short sabres in their hands. They are active and dangerous fellows those Spaniards in a hand-to-hand tussle. One of them sprang at me, and if it had not been for my hunting-knife, I was done for, for I had no room to swing my axe; but as he came on I hit him a blow with my fist, which knocked him down, and then ran my knife into him, and jumping over his body snatched a musket out of Rachel's hand, and began laying about him with the butt end of it. I was sorry not to have my rifle, which was handier than those heavy Spanish muskets. The women were now in the way—we hadn't room for so many—so I called out to them to get into the blockhouse and load the rifles. There was still another Acadian alive, and I knew that the fight wouldn't end till he was done for. But while we were fighting, Godsend and the women loaded the rifles, and brought them out, and firing through the stockade, killed three or four, and as luck would have it, the Acadian was amongst them. So when the Spaniards, who are just like hounds, and only come on if led and encouraged, saw that their leader had fallen they sprang off the mound, with a "Carajo! Malditos!" and ran away as if a shell had burst amongst them.

The old squatter paused and drew a deep breath. He had forgotten his usual drawl and deliberation, and had become animated and eager while describing the stirring incidents in which he had borne so active a part. When he had taken breath, he continued,

"I could not say how long the fight lasted; it seemed short, we were so busy, and yet long, deadly long. It is no joke to have to defend one's life, and the lives of those one loves best, against four-score blood-thirsty Spaniards, and that with only half a dozen rifles for arms, and a few palisades for shelter. When it was over we were so dog-tired that we fell down where we were, like over-driven oxen, and without minding the blood which lay like water on the ground. Seven Spaniards and two Acadians were lying within the stockade. We ourselves were all wounded and hacked about, some with knife stabs and sabre cuts, others with musket shots; ugly wounds enough, some of them, but none of them mortal. If the Spaniards had returned to the attack they would have made short work of us; for as soon as we left off fighting and our blood cooled, we became stiff and helpless. But now came the women with rags and bandages, and washed our wounds and bound them up, and we dragged ourselves into the blockhouse, and lay down upon our mattresses of dry leaves. And Godsend loaded the rifles and a dozen Spanish muskets that were lying about to be in readiness for another attack, and the women kept watch while we slept. But the Spaniards had had enough, and we saw no more of them. Only the next morning, when Jonas went down the ladder to reconnoitre, he found thirty dead and several others dying, who begged hard for a drink of water, for that their comrades had deserted them. We got them up into the blockhouse, and had their wounds dressed, and after a time they were cured and left us."

"And were you never after attacked again?" said I. "I greatly wonder at your courage in remaining here after becoming aware of the dangers you were exposed to."

"We reckoned we had more right than ever to the land after all the blood it had cost us, and then the news of the fight had got carried into the settlements, and up as far as Salt River; and some of our friends and kinsfolk came down to join us, and were soon enough of us not to care for twice as many Spaniards as we had beaten off before."

While he was speaking the old squatter descended the ladder, and led us out of the forest and over the ridge of a low hill, on the side of which stood a dozen loghouses, which cast their black shadows on the moonlit slope. We found a rough but kind welcome—few words, but plenty of good cheer—and we made acquaintance with the heroes and heroines of the blockhouse siege, and with their sons and their daughters, buxom strapping damsels and fine manly lads. I have often enjoyed a softer bed, but never a sounder sleep than I had that night.

The next day our horses were brought round from the swamp, and we took our departure; but as hardships, however painful to endure, are pleasant to look back upon, so have I often thought with pleasure of our adventures in the prairies, and recurred with the strongest interest to old Nathan's thrilling narrative of the Bloody Blockhouse.

#### THE BLESSED RAIN.

Waters, gentle Waters,  
Ye are beautiful in Rain,  
Coming oft and pattering soft  
On hedgerow, hill and plain.

Wandering from afar  
In a cloud swung car;  
Ye dim the blaze of noon,  
Shut out the midnight moon,  
And veil the evening star.

The seed is in the earth  
Of promised bread;  
But ye must aid its sacred birth,  
Or nations, pressed by starving death,  
Will groan unfed.

Man may plant the root  
In some fair spot,  
But where where will be the spring time  
shoot,  
And who shall pluck the autumn fruit  
If ye come not!

How the red grapes flush,  
Till the rich streams burst!  
But your crystal gush  
Must have trickled first.

The ancient forest lord  
Had ne'er look proudly up,  
Had ye not glittered on the sword  
That held the acorn cup.

#### New Works.

##### The Empire of the Czar.

THE RUSSIAN AND ENGLISH CHARACTER. Under all this fictitious elegance, the character of the people betrays itself; a passion for display is the ruling passion of the Russians; thus, in their drawing rooms, the flowers are not placed in such a manner as may render the interior of the apartment more agreeable, but so as to attract admiration from without; precisely the contrary of what we see in England, where, above all things, people shrink from hanging out a sign in the streets. The English are, of all people on the earth, those who have best known how to substitute taste for style; their public buildings are chefs d'œuvre of the ridiculous; their private houses are models of elegance and good sense.

##### From Henry's Events of a Military Life.

##### TRICKS OF WAR.

Our men soon reached the summit, scattering the enemy, and taking some hundreds prisoners. Fifty or sixty unfortunate wretches concealed themselves in a house at the top until the affair was over, and our men had piled their arms, and were kindling their night fires, when they sallied out in a body, and attempted to escape down the hill. At the first rush our men seized their arms, which were loaded, pursued them with a loud cheer, and shot or knocked down almost every man. They were stripped soon after, for this process takes place wonderfully early, and by no visible agency; and I well recollect when the moon rose, seeing their plump white corpses scattered over the field. In the morning we were shocked to see their bodies mutilated of their fair proportions, and all the fleshy and protuberant parts cut clean off down to the bone. How this happened none could say; although a report was current at the time, that a certain ingenious regiment in Byng's brigade, authorized to recruit inside of Temple Bar, and pick up all the low talent of London, had metamorphosed the poor "defuncts" hams into pork, and exchanged this with the Portuguese soldiers for rum. One of the 66th officers averred that he had overheard two of the culprits chuckling at the trick.

##### A DRUNKEN DRAGOON ENCUMBERED WITH THE SPOILS OF VICTORIA.

We passed Vittoria a mile on our left, where the plunder of King Joseph's treasure and baggage was going on, and our hussars were getting drunk with his tokay. We might have picked up something valuable in the melee had we turned aside; indeed, a friend of mine who did, met a drunken dragoon with a bottle of wine at his month, and a bag of money under each arm. When his daughter was finished he attempted to mount his horse; but, heavily laden and top heavy as he was, this was no easy operation; for when he tried to deposit a bag on the pommel of his saddle and get up, still clutching the other, the former was sure to fall off. After several fruitless attempts, seeing my friend watching the operation, he flung him the refractory bag, hiccoughing "Here, d—n your eyes, you look like an honest fellow, here's a bag of money for you!" The receiver hastened to ascertain the value of his prize, hoping it was a bag of doubloons; but was mortified to find the contents were only a thousand French crowns.

##### From the Empire of the Czar.

##### PRUSSIAN PREDILECTION FOR MUSIC.

Every schoolmaster in Prussia is a village Hullah. These rural concerts preserve a taste for music, form a counter attraction to that of the tavern, and prepare the minds of the people for religious instruction. This latter has degenerated among the protestants into the course of practical morals; but the time is not far distant when religion will resume her rights; the being endowed with immortality will not always rest content with a terrestrial empire, and the people the most ready to appreciate the pleasures of art will also be the first to comprehend the new evidences of the divine revelation. It is, then, only just to admit that the Prussian government is worthily preparing its people to perform a part in that renovation of religion, whose approach is already announced to the world by signs that cannot, and will not be mistaken.