

had been advanced within two hundred yards of the walls, elevated one of his pieces and lobbed a bomb clean over the summit of the flagstaff tower.

It was a fancy shot, fired—as the army learnt afterwards—for a wager; but its effect staggered all who watched it. The fuse was quick, and the bomb, mounting on its high curve, exploded in a direct line between the battery and the flagstaff. One or two men from the neighbouring guns shouted bravos. The sergeant slapped his thigh and was turning for congratulations, but suddenly paused stock-still and staring upward.

The flagstaff stood, apparently untouched. But what had become of the flag?

A moment before it had been floating proudly enough, shaking its folds loose to the light breezes. Now it was gone. Had the explosion blown it to atoms? Not a shred of it floated away on the wind.

A man on the sergeant's right called out positively that a couple of seconds after the explosion, and while the smoke was clearing, he had caught a glimpse of something white—something which looked like a flag—close by the foot of the staff; and that an arm had reached up and drawn it down hurriedly. He would swear to the arm; he had seen it distinctly above the edge of the battlements. In his opinion the fort was surrendering, and some one aloft there had been pulling down the flag as the bomb burst.

The General, occupied for the moment in giving Captain Muspratt his instructions, had not witnessed the shot. But he turned at the shout which followed, caught sight of the bare flagstaff, and ordering his bugler to sound the "Cease firing," sent forward the captain at once to parley.

With Muspratt went a sergeant of the Forty-sixth and a bugler. The sergeant carried a white flag. Ascending the slope briskly, they were met at the gate by M. Etienne.

The sudden disappearance of the flag above the tower had mystified the garrison no less thoroughly than the British. They knew the Commandant to be aloft there with Sergeant