

St. Denys soon managed to recover his liberty, and made his way to France. There, of course, he made an exposure of the treatment he had received at the hands of the emissaries of Le Borgne and Madame D'Aulnay. The Company of New France now (1653), a second time granted him the whole eastern coast of Acadie, from Cape Canso to Cape Rosier, with all the islands of the Bay of St. Lawrence. It was also adjudged that the widow and heirs of D'Aulnay were to indemnify him for the losses he had sustained at their instance. This second commission of St. Denys was confirmed by royal patent, on the 30th of January, 1654.

St. Denys returned in triumph to Acadie and Cape Breton. On reaching St. Peter's he exhibited his new authority to the person whom Le Borgne had there placed in command. The authority was acknowledged, and his fort was peaceably surrendered to him. He was not content with this. In his triumphant, but honest simplicity, he sent one of his subordinates to Port Royal, to exhibit to Le Borgne his new commission and show the extent of his powers. This emissary encountered Le Borgne in the Bay of Fundy, on the way to attack La Tour at St. John. The unscrupulous Le Borgne at once determined upon possessing himself of the commission and all the other papers which St. Denys had sent his special messenger to exhibit to him; and then again to forcibly eject the unsuspecting St. Denys from his possessions, and, with this end in view, he turned about and made sail towards Port Royal. He was soon and forcibly impressed with other matters for consideration. He had no sooner arrived at Port Royal (August, 1654), than he was disagreeably surprised by a visit from Major Robert Sedgewicke, an officer of Cromwell's, just from Boston, with a belligerent force of 500 men. After a short and sharp struggle the place capitulated to Sedgewicke.

St. Denys received no further trouble from Le Borgne. Neither was he disturbed by the English under Sedgewicke and his successors. They took possession of Penta-goet, St. John, Port Royal, Cape Fourchu, Port La Tour and La Have, but left St. Denys' posts unmolested. In 1656 Cromwell granted Nova Scotia to Charles de la Tour, Sir Thomas Temple and William Crowne; but their patent extended no farther east than Merliguesche (Lunenburg). St. Denys was still left undisturbed.

St. Denys now re-entered with vigour into his interrupted pursuits; and his fisheries, and his agricultural operations, and his fur trade, were soon in the full tide of success. Then he fell in with a new source of trouble. This was caused by a man named *La Giraudière*. From all that can be learned of this *La Giraudière*, he was simply a pirate. About this time, and for long after, piracy was very prevalent in the North American waters. On the western side of the Strait of Canso, or Passage de Fronsac, there is a little harbour which is still called "Pirate Cove." This is no whimsically bestowed name. This beautiful little harbour, surrounded by lofty hills, at that time densely wooded, with a narrow entrance, but of easy access, was admirably adapted as a hiding place for that troublesome class of people; and it was, for a long time, a favourite resort of pirates. They were only too abundant around the coast. Even as late as in 1690, Port Royal was sacked and the surrounding settlement burnt by a crew of these freebooters.

This *La Giraudière* had made his headquarters upon the St. Mary's River. About eight miles from the mouth of that river, just at the head of ship navigation, and directly opposite the present pretty village of Sherbrooke, there is a long promontory which juts out between the river and a deep inlet to the westward. Of late years, this has been known as "Sinclair's Point." Upon this point the bold *La Giraudière* had built for himself a fort and made himself lord of all he surveyed. This freebooter—and perhaps fur-trader—could not but know of St. Denys' doings at Chedabucto and St. Peter's, and was envious of his seeming good fortune. *La Giraudière* proceeded to France, and pretended to receive those, from the Company of New France, a grant of the port of Canso, or Cansau. Perhaps he really did receive such a grant, for it seemed to be the habit of that unprincipled Company to give grants to every applicant, in utter disregard of the vested rights of others, even when derived from themselves. Thus, if *La Giraudière* really had such a grant, that Company had given it to him immediately after having made to St. Denys—and for the second time too—a grant covering the same territory.

*La Giraudière* appeared at Canso, where he learned that a vessel belonging to St. Denys, and loaded with supplies, was daily expected. Within a few days this vessel arrived. *La Giraudière* showed a commission to the captain in command, and forbade him delivering to St. Denys any part of the cargo. He also caused the latter to be cited before him, and commanded him to surrender Chedabucto to him, together with all the territory up to Cape Louis (Cape George), as being included within his (*La Giraudière's*) grant. St. Denys, of course, refused to do anything of the sort, and very naturally pointed out the absurdity of the Company's conceding to *La Giraudière* what they had already granted, with all requisite forms, to him. He obviously considered this interloper's commission as spurious.

*La Giraudière* insisted upon the validity of his patent, and threatened compulsory measures. St. Denys had, at Chedabucto, 120 men in his employ; and they, alarmed at the prospect of their provisions being stopped through the seizure and detention of St. Denys' vessel and cargo, urged him to discharge them. He blandly conceded that their

demand was just and reasonable. At the same time he temporized with them whilst, all the while, keeping them at work. The work in hand was the completion, or thorough repairing, of his fort. When that was in an efficiently defensive condition, he sent all of his men off to St. Peter's, except twelve who faithfully preferred to abide with him. Hearing of this movement, *La Giraudière*, who was at no great distance, appeared before the fort, and saw that he had been outwitted for the time. He again demanded the immediate surrender of the place, uttering heavy threats of the consequences of any attempt to retain it. St. Denys boldly set him at defiance. *La Giraudière* was now joined by a brother named De Bay. They spent three days in closely reconnoitering the fort; but found it so substantial a work and so well armed, that they feared to commit themselves to an attack upon it. They therefore took their departure.

A few days afterwards De Bay returned alone to fort Chedabucto, where he informed St. Denys that *La Giraudière* had seized, and now held, the fort at St. Peter's. St. Denys had been outwitted in his turn. De Bay proposed an accommodation which St. Denys found himself constrained to accept. It was eventually agreed that *La Giraudière* should give up St. Peter's while St. Denys should surrender Chedabucto; and that they should both proceed to France to have their rival claims referred to the decision of the Company of New France. When the matter was so referred, this villainous Company, after having themselves caused all this trouble and disorder, and loss, calmly declared that they had been imposed upon by *La Giraudière*; and they consequently revoked his grant and reinstated St. Denys in the possession of his rights. But neither the Company of New France, nor *La Giraudière*, nor any body else, ever reimbursed St. Denys for the 15,000 crowns which he had lost through these rascally transactions.

St. Denys returned once more to his posts at Chedabucto and St. Peter's, and to his honest, industrial and mercantile pursuits. In 1663, the more mischievous than useful Company of New France surrendered all their rights and property in North America to the King; and that monarch, on the 21st of March of that year, revoked all grants made by that Company of lands which were not yet cleared, or which should remain uncleared for six months after the date of the edict. This revocation, it would seem, did not materially affect the interests of St. Denys. The old Company of New France was revived under a new name. It was now called "The West India Company" (*La Compagnie des Indes Occidentales*). Upon St. Denys' request, this Company, in 1667, re-granted to him all the territories which he had previously held, in full property and seigneurie, upon the sole condition of his sending thither fifty emigrants annually for ten years.

Still St. Denys was fated to be the sport of Fortune. When at length his prospects seemed to be at the fairest; when his various settlements, and especially his most important post of St. Peter's, were in a highly flourishing condition; when he had a prospect of an unusually rich harvest from his annual fur-trade, a great number of well-laden Indians having already arrived in his neighbourhood; he met with a disaster which could not have been foreseen. Through some cause, which he was never able to ascertain, his fort and buildings at St. Peter's took fire and were totally consumed, together with all his personal effects, his year's agricultural crop, all his supply of provisions for himself and his colony, and a large stock of mercantile goods. The fruits of years of toil and anxiety were lost in a night; and St. Denys felt that he was all but a ruined man.

From this time forth St. Denys seemed to "take a scunner" at St. Peter's, as the scene of his several great misfortunes. Here had he been robbed and imprisoned by Le Borgne; swindled and robbed by *La Giraudière*; and here was he now burned out, with all his personal property—and perhaps the fire was kindled by incendiary hands.

He had no heart to undertake the reconstruction of his establishment at St. Peter's. He consequently moved to what he called his "plantation at Nepigiguit." He often applies the name of *Miramichi* to all the country thereabout. This "plantation" was upon the shore of Nepisiguit—now *Bathurst*—Basin. He describes it as: "At the distance of one league from and at the right of the entrance; at low tide a canoe cannot approach it." He goes on to say: "I had to retire thither after the burning of my fort of St. Pierre, in the island of Cape Breton. My house is flanked by four small bastions, with a palisade, the pickets of which are eighteen feet high, with six pieces of ordnance in battery. The land is none of the best, as there are rocks in some places. I have a large garden," etc.

Denys has not given us the date of the catastrophe which drove him from St. Peter's; and we have no means of knowing how long he afterwards remained at Nepisiguit. We have every reason to believe that he had returned to France previous to 1672; for in that year he published, in Paris, his book entitled a "Geographical and Historical Description of the Coasts of North America." It is not certain that he ever afterwards returned to America.

His son, Richard St. Denys de Fronsac, was in Nepisiguit in 1685 as his father's representative. We learn that, on the 13th of August of that year, this Richard, "as lieutenant for his father, Nicholas St. Denys, Governor, etc.," granted to the Episcopal Seminary of Foreign Missions, at Quebec, three leagues of land in front at

Restigouche, three leagues on the river St. Croix, and three other leagues on the island of Cape Breton, each to be also three leagues in depth—reserving within each tract the right of building a store-house and trading with the savages. The Seminary is bound to have a mission, a church or chapel, and a resident priest, at each place, maintained at their expense. The exact locations are to be determined within ten years, and are to suit the convenience of the savages (Indians).

We know, further, that, in 1707, two grandsons of Nicholas St. Denys—presumably sons of Richard—called *La Ronde Denys*, or *St. Denys de la Ronde*, and *St. Denys de la Bonaventure*, were at, and took a very prominent part in, the defence of Port Royal, when it was unsuccessfully attacked—first, in June of that year, by Colonel March; and afterwards, in August, by Colonel Wainright.

When, in 1713, the French, having become finally dispossessed of Acadie, had determined upon building up a permanent stronghold in the island of Cape Breton, we find the same *La Ronde de St. Denys* stoutly advocating *St. Anne's*, or *Port Dauphin*, as the site of the projected fortress. In the course of his remarks to the French Minister he says: "My deceased grandfather St. Denys had a fort there, the vestiges of which are yet to be seen, and the Indians tell us that he raised the finest grain in the world there, and we have likewise seen the fields which he used to till; and there are to be seen there very fine apple trees"—planted, of course, by his grandfather—"from which we have eaten very good fruit."

Nicholas St. Denys was a man who deserves to be better known than he is. He was true to the country, both of his birth and of his adoption. He was far-seeing, boldly enterprising and pre-eminently energetic and persistent in his undertakings; straight-forward and honourable in his transactions; and candid and charitable in his dealings with and estimates of his contemporaries. In many respects he bore a striking resemblance to Champlain, who, about the same time, filled so prominent a position in a neighbouring sphere. They two were, in all the capacities which they assumed, far above all the other French explorers and colonizers of their period. St. Denys' book, the title of which is given above, is an unpretentious, but a painstaking and reliable work, so far as it goes; although it is—almost necessarily, for that time—imperfect as a complete description of the regions of which it treats. Its descriptions of the aborigines of the country, their habits and their handiwork, are almost elaborate, and scarcely leave anything unsaid in that direction. So his elaborate descriptions of all that relates to the catching and curing of fish, upon these now Canadian shores, show that but little, if any, material change has taken place in the mode of conducting these fisheries from that which was pursued over two hundred years since. Everything considered, this "geographical and historical" work of St. Denys is really the best account of Acadie and the islands of the St. Lawrence which was published during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The name of Nicholas St. Denys is inseparably associated with that of the island of Cape Breton. He was unquestionably the first man who ever cleared and cultivated land upon that island; and this he did, at St. Peter's, certainly as early as 1636. I am firmly of the opinion that, although sometimes almost extinguished, some settlement has been continuously kept up at St. Peter's (*St. Pierre*—afterwards *Port Thoulouse*) ever since.

PIERCE STEVENS HAMILTON.

#### A NEW ELECTRIC RAILWAY.

THE *Munich Allgemeine Zeitung* has, in a recent issue, published an article entitled "Die Eisenbahn der Zukunft." The article deals, in a general way, with a system of operating railways by means of electricity, and bears particularly upon a project submitted by an Austrian firm of contractors for an electric railroad to connect the cities of Vienna and Buda-Pesth. The account given may be rendered, in a condensed form, as follows:—

It is clear, in the first place, that a rate of speed touching one hundred and fifty miles an hour will necessitate the employment of signals widely differing from those now in use. In order to receive a reliable impression of an object, the eye must dwell on it for about the tenth part of a second, and as the seventieth part of a second would, in this case, only be allowed, an arrangement for signalling with very long bands of colour and light has been suggested. Should a signal nevertheless escape the notice of the conductor, it will still be possible to stop the train through external agency. The motive power is derived from an electric wire running along the rails, and the current may be interrupted from any signalling station (by its occupant), so as to affect only a certain section of the track, without interfering with any part of the railway before or behind that section. As each train absorbs the current pertaining to the section through which it is moving, it is evident that a train encroaching on the zone of another will at once find its speed diminishing through an insufficient supply of electricity from the tributary wire. A double track will entirely obviate the danger of collision, because all trains running in the same direction will be confined to the same line. The distance between the two lines will measure thirty feet, owing to the tremendous atmospheric pressure which would be caused by the meeting of two trains. This will, of course, greatly