

of the fifes and drums, and the ruse of the burning buildings, had the desired effect, and the people of the village became wildly demoralized. The women and children, and some of the faint-hearted among the men, hastily snatched up what household goods came first to hand and rushed pell-mell for the belt of woods back of the village, the ladies of the manor-house alone remaining in their home, but prepared to retreat to the cellar in the event of the conflict coming near them. Intense excitement was apparent on the faces of the men who were hurrying off in the direction in which "*les soldats*" were coming—excitement not lessened on learning of the disappearance of some of their leaders who had got them into difficulty, and basely left them to their fate.

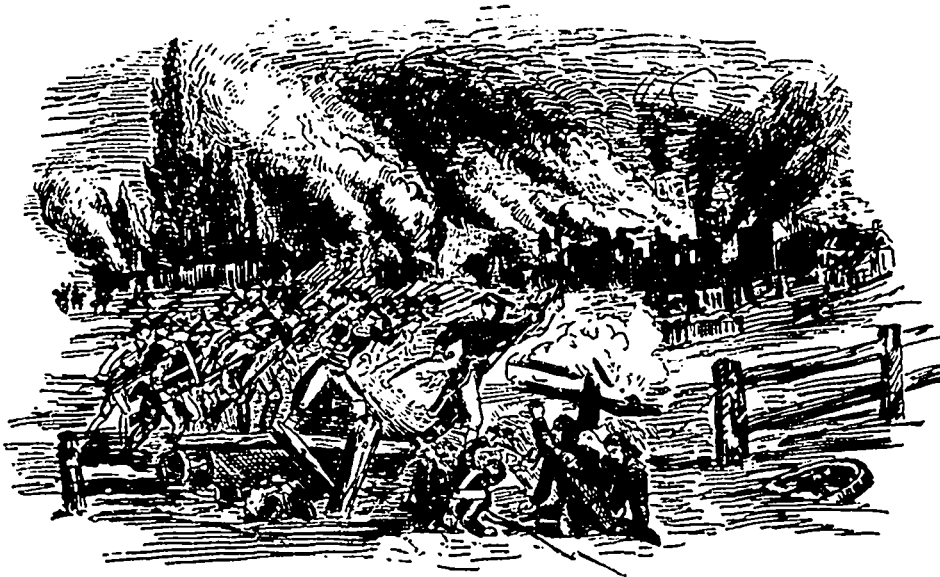
De Bienville had assumed command and was rushing here and there inspiring, persuading, threatening.

"Follow me!" he cried, "be not afraid, our cause is just and must prevail! Remember we fight for home and country! Down with the tyrants! To the barricade!"

His high courage and fearless bearing put new heart into his band of undisciplined enthusiasts, who now ill-equipped as they were—joined in a wild, straggling rush

tion of the small force being reserved to support it, and the remainder detailed for a flank movement through the fields, both detachments to advance on the charge simultaneously and carry the position with a rush. The colonel naturally thought of his own men first: how many of them might probably never cross that short bit of road and meadow? But his heart ached more for the poor wretches caught in the trap of their own setting. Those of them who escaped the bullets of the soldiers' first volley would only save themselves from the crueler death by the bayonets' thrust by instant and unconditional surrender as prisoners of war, trusting for the future to the summary and scant justice of the impending court martial.

The gunners were ordered to fire, and a solid round shot crashed through the flimsy defences, hurling the splintered timbers among the defenders, and badly wounding many. Others followed in quick succession, replied to by discharges from the muskets of the besieged fired through the openings between the logs. The charge was sounded, and, with that wild exultant cheer that has inspired the gallant wearers of England's uniform in many an historic fight on land and sea, the



"THE TROOPS! THEY ARE COMING, AND BURNING THE BARN!"

to where a rough defense of logs, trees, and fence rails had been thrown across the road, at a little distance from the village, in the vain hope of checking the advance of the veteran troops.

In obedience to de Bienville's orders the defenders remained quiet behind the barrier and made no opening.

"Reserve your fire," he commanded, "till the enemy begins his attack; give our foes no excuse to say we precipitated a conflict; when he does come, take aim and shoot true!"

Meanwhile the colonel had halted his force under cover, and in a matter-of-fact way was examining the position through his glass. His practised eye quickly took in the situation, and the mode of attack was easily settled. The barrier stretched across the road to the river on one side, but on the other ended at a short distance in the meadow beyond the road. A field piece was trained to bear directly on it at short range; a por-

soldiers swarmed over and around the barrier. The contest—if such it might be called with the odds all on one side—was short, sharp, and decisive; bayonet and clubbed musket were plied with powerful stroke, and all who did not instantly yield felt their deadly force. Caught as they were in a pocket formed by the angle of the barrier and the river, retreat was almost hopeless. Many did attempt it, however, some escaping, others being shot down as they ran.

Raoul, brave to the last, refused to surrender, but stood his ground defying the soldiers to take him, and calling on them to shoot if they would. One man levelled his piece to take him at his word; another prepared to thrust him with his bayonet; but a burly sergeant of grenadiers, taking in at a glance the dauntless bearing of the youth as he stood with bared head, his face and hands and once dapper dress begrimed with powder-smoke and dirt, swinging his clubbed musket and shouting defiance to the whole