

## THE FOILING OF THE FRENCH

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present his most respectful compliments, and to say on his behalf that he invites you to surrender the fort without further fighting, and in event of your doing so, assuring you of his protection; but if you refuse, he will without delay make a general assault, and when the fort is taken, put the whole garrison to death or deliver them to the Indians to be tortured."

Having thus spoken with impressive emphasis, Le Mercier swept the group of officers with a penetrating glance from his dark eyes, and then assumed an attitude of respectful attention as he awaited the English commander's reply.

Major Eyre hesitated only long enough to look into the faces of his subordinates for an instant, and, being satisfied with what he read there, proceeded with his response.

"Convey to your commander my compliments and inform him how deeply I appreciate his kind consideration in thus giving me the opportunity of surrendering without the loss of my garrison; but at the same time assure him of my regret that I cannot accede to his proposition, as I and these with me are fully determined to defend the fort to the very last."

There was no mistaking the decision with which he spoke, and Le Mercier, suppressing a pitying smile at the folly of the English in imagining they could withstand so superior a force as he represented, bowed gracefully and with-