

1691.

Action of
La Prairie
de la
Magde-
leine.

This fort was thirty paces from the river, on an abrupt elevation between two prairies, one of which, facing a place call La Fourche, is intersected by a little river within cannon-shot of the fort, and a little nearer by a ravine. Between the two is a current on which a mill had been built; on this side to the left of the fort the militia were encamped, and had been joined by some Ottawas who happened to be at Montreal when the alarm was given. The regular troops were encamped on the right, and the officers had pitched their tents opposite on an eminence.¹

An hour before daybreak, the sentinel posted at the mill perceived men creeping along the height where the fort stood. He immediately fired his piece, called, "To Arms!" and sprang into the mill.² They were enemies, who, creeping along between the little river La Fourche and the ravine, gained the bank of the river and took up a position there; then, finding the militia quarters unmanned, drove out the few who remained, and held their ground. Some provincials and six Ottawas were killed in this surprise.³

At the sentinel's call, Mr. de St. Cyrque, an old captain, commanding in the absence of Mr. de Callières, marched at the head of the troops, a part of whom followed the river edge, and a part crossed the prairie, passing around the fort. The battalion commanded by Saint Cyrque in person first came in sight of the militia quarters; although that officer was not yet aware that the enemy were in possession, still having some suspicion he halted to get infor-

¹ Relation, 1691-2. N. Y. Col. Doc., ix., p. 521. De la Potherie, Histoire de l'Amérique Sept., iii., p. 139.

² Ib. Belmont, Histoire du Canada, p. 33. This was Aug. 1, O. S., 11, N. S. Schuyler says the sentinel or miller killed one of his Indians, and was firing again from the window when they shot him. Major Peter Schuyler's Journal of his expedition. N. Y. Col. Doc., iii., p. 803.

³ Relation, &c., 1691-2, N. Y. Col. Doc., ix., p. 521. De la Potherie Histoire de l'Amérique Sept., iii., p. 139-40. Both Belmont, Histoire du Canada p. 33, and the Histoire de l'Eau de Vie en Canada, p. 18, ascribe the surprise to a night spent in debauchery. Schuyler, Journal. N. Y. Col. Doc., iii., p. 804, says the Ottawas were under canoes. He claims to have destroyed most of them.