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Memoir on La Salle's Discoveries, 1678-1690

by Henri de Tonti

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INTRODUCTION

ROBERT CAVELIER DE LA SALLE, whose name is indissolubly associated with the valley of the Mississippi, although he was unfortunate in his life and in his death has been fortunate in his biographers both contemporary and recent. About none of the French explorers has so large an amount of documentary material collected. Every detail of his plans and activities after 1678 has been told and retold. His own letters and memorials to the court have been preserved in the French archives, and were in 1879 printed in three volumes by Pierre Margry. In addition to these materials we have the accounts of two of the chaplains of his expedition—the garrulous, lively, popular reminiscences of Father Louis Hennepin, whose work appeared in edition after edition; the accurate, painstaking narrative of Father Zénobe Membré, who accompanied La Salle in his earlier and later attempts at penetrating the Mississippi Valley. For La Salle's last expedition, his tragic death, and the return of the remnant of his people there are numerous sources—the narratives of his brother Jean Cavelier and Henri Joutel being those best known. But among all who acted with La Salle in his ambitious plans for founding an empire in the heart of America, no one is more justly entitled to credence than his faithful lieutenant and friend Henri de Tonty.

Tonty was the son of an Italian banker, Lorenzo Tonti, from whom the tontine system of insurance takes its name. Having been concerned in Masaniello's Neapolitan conspiracy of 1647, Lorenzo fled from his native land to France, where he found service under the Italian premier Cardinal Mazarin. Henri was born probably near Naples and was a babe when

he was carried to the French court. At the age of eighteen or nineteen he entered the French service; he took part in seven campaigns, lost his right hand in battle, and was taken prisoner. After the treaty of Nymwegen in 1678 his regiment was disbanded, and he returned to Versailles, where he was presented to La Salle, then a suppliant for permission to colonize the valley of the Mississippi.

It has been well said that of all that La Salle obtained on his journey to France in 1678—the support of the king, the interest of his ministers, and substantial help for the expenses of his project—none were of more worth than the allegiance of the young Italian lieutenant, whose services he secured upon this occasion. Through all the following years of danger, toil, misfortune, and calumny, Tonty was the one companion who comprehended and seconded all La Salle's far-reaching plans, and was ever his efficient and faithful supporter. Even after his superior's death, Tonty continued his efforts to carry out those plans, to rescue La Salle's memory from obloquy and to secure his fortune and his fame

Left by La Salle, in 1682, in charge of his interests in Illinois, Tonty maintained with great ability the Fort of St. Louis upon "The Rock" on the Illinois River, pacified his Indian colonists, introduced agriculture, prosecuted the fur trade. His journeys took him from the mouth of the Mississippi to the land of the Assiniboin on the Red River of the North; from his seigniory in Arkansas to the French capital on the St. Lawrence. Deprived at last by royal edict of his Fort St. Louis, some time about the close of the seventeenth century he sought the South and joined his fortunes with those of the Canadian founder of Louisiana. There, not far from Mobile, the great lieutenant of La Salle died, September 6, 1704.

Tonty wrote two accounts of his experiences in North America. The first covers the five years, 1678–1683, and

exists in two copies in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. It is published in Pierre Margry, *Découvertes et Établissements des Français dans l'Ouest de l'Amérique Septentrionale,* I. 573–616. The second or longer narrative, covering the years 1678–1691, was sent in 1693 to Count de Pontchartrain, then minister of the colonies. It is published in Pierre Margry, *Relations et Mémoires Inédits* (Paris, 1867), pp. 1–36. It first appeared in an English translation in Thomas Falconer, *On the Discovery of the Mississippi,* etc. (London, 1844). The same translation was used by Benjamin F. French in *Louisiana Historical Collections,* part I. 52–66, and is reprinted in *Illinois Historical Collections,* I. 128–164, from which we reprint with many textual corrections. This second memoir of Tonty formed the basis of a spurious work entitled, *Dernières Découvertes dans l'Amérique Septentrionale de Monsieur de la Salle par Chevalier de Tonti, Gouverneur du Fort St. Louis aux Illinois* (Paris, 1697). This was Englished in 1698, and issued in London. Tonty during his lifetime protested the authorship. This spurious memoir should not be confounded with the genuine memoir addressed to the Count de Pontchartrain, which remained in the French archives until the nineteenth century. This latter has seemed to the editors the best brief connected account, by a participant and survivor, of La Salle's explorations in the Mississippi Valley, his plans for settlement and exploitation, and his premature and tragic death.

MEMOIR ON LA SALLE'S DISCOVERIES, BY TONTY, 1678–1690 [1693]

Memoir Sent in 1693, *on the Discovery of the Mississippi and the Neighboring Nations by M. de la Salle, from the Year* 1678 *to the Time of His Death, and by the Sieur de Tonty to the Year* 1691.

AFTER having been eight years in the French service, by land and by sea, and having had a hand shot off in Sicily by a grenade,[1] I resolved to return to France to solicit employment. At that time the late M. Cavelier de La Salle came to court, a man of great intelligence and merit, who sought to obtain leave from the court to explore the Gulf of Mexico by traversing the countries of North America. Having obtained of the King the permission he desired through the favor of the late M. Colbert and M. de Seignelai, the late Monseigneur the Prince of Conti,[2] who was acquainted with him and who honored me with his favor, sent me to ask him to be allowed to accompany him in his long journeys, to which he very willingly assented.

We sailed from Rochelle on the 14th of July, 1678, and arrived at Quebec on the 15th of September following. We recruited there for some days, and after having taken leave of M. the Count de Frontenac, governor general of the country, ascended the St. Lawrence as far as Fort Frontenac, 120 leagues from Quebec, on the banks of the Lake of Frontenac, which is about 300 leagues around;[3] and after staying there

[1] Tonty had this hand replaced by one of metal which he usually wore covered with a glove. He is said to have used this as a weapon with much effect among enemy Indians, who called him *Bras de Fer* (Iron Arm).

[2] Colbert was the prime minister of Louis XIV., Seignelay Colbert's son; the (second) prince of Conti was a prominent courtier who had married a daughter of the king.

[3] Count de Frontenac built this post in 1673 and two years later granted it as a seigniory to La Salle. The Indian name for the site was Cataraqui, at the modern town of Kingston. La Salle rebuilt the fort in stone, and it was main-

four days, we embarked in a boat of forty tons to cross this lake, and on Christmas day we found ourselves opposite a village called Tsonnontouan,[1] to which M. de La Salle sent some canoes to procure Indian corn for our subsistence. From thence we sailed towards Niagara, intending to look for a suitable place above the Falls where a boat might be built. The winds were so contrary that we could not approach it nearer than nine leagues, which determined us to go by land. We found there some cabins of the Iroquois, who received us well. We slept there, and the next day we went three leagues further up to look for a good place to build a boat.[2] There we encamped.

The boat in which we came was lost on the coast through the obstinacy of the pilot, whom M. de La Salle had ordered to bring it ashore. The crew and the things in it were saved. M. de La Salle determined to return to Fort Frontenac over the ice, and I remained in command at Niagara with a Recollect Father[3] and thirty men. The bark was completed in the spring. M. de La Salle joined us with two other Recollect Fathers and several men, to aid in bringing this bark up, on account of the rapids, which I was not able to ascend on account of the weakness of my crew. He directed me to wait for him at the extremity of Lake Erie, at a place called Detroit, 120 leagues from Niagara, to join there some Frenchmen whom he had sent off the last autumn. I went in advance in a bark canoe, and when we were near Detroit the ship came up.[4]

tained until captured in 1758 by the English. Lake Ontario was frequently called Lake Frontenac.

[1] The village of the Seneca near the Genesee River.

[2] This shipyard has been identified near the mouth of Cayuga Creek at a village now called La Salle.

[3] This Recollect priest was Louis Hennepin, born about 1640 in Belgium. Fond of adventure, he travelled in Europe, officiated as chaplain in the Netherlands during war, and embarked in 1675 for New France, becoming the next year chaplain at Fort Frontenac. Having accompanied La Salle to Illinois, he was sent with an exploring party to the upper Mississippi, captured by the Sioux, and carried past the Falls of St. Anthony, to which he gave the present name. Rescued by Duluth, he returned to Canada and sailed for Europe, where he published several accounts of his journeys, all designed to give prominence to his own achievements. For his rescue by Duluth, see the succeeding document.

[4] This first sailing vessel on the upper lakes was called the *Griffin*, in honor of Frontenac's armorial bearings.

We got into it, and continued our voyage as far as Missilimakinak, where we arrived at the end of August, having crossed two lakes larger than that of Frontenac.

We remained there some days to rest ourselves, and as M. de La Salle intended to go to the Illinois, he sent me to the Sault Sainte-Marie, where Lake Superior discharges itself into Lake Huron, to look for some of his men who had deserted, and himself set sail on the Lake of the Islinois. Having arrived at Poutouatamis, an Islinois village,[1] the calumet was sung, a ceremony of theirs during which large presents are given and received, and in which a post is placed in the midst of the assembly, where those who wish to make known their great deeds in war, striking the post, declaim on the deeds they have done. This ceremony regularly takes place in the presence of those with whom they wish to make alliance, and the calumet is among the savages the symbol of peace. M. de La Salle sent his ship back to Niagara to fetch the things he wanted, and, embarking in a canoe, continued his voyage to the Miamis River. There he commenced building a house.[2]

In the meantime I came up with the deserters,[3] and kept on my way to within thirty leagues of the Miamis River, where I was obliged to leave my men, in order to hunt, our provisions failing us. I then went on to join M. de La Salle. When I arrived he told me he wished that all the men had come with me in order to proceed to the Islinois. I retraced my way to find them. But the wind increasing, we were forced to land, and the violence of the waves was such that our canoe was upset. We were, however, saved, but everything that was in the canoe was lost, and for want of provisions we lived for three days on acorns. I sent word of what had happened to M. de La Salle. He directed me to join him. I went in my little canoe. As soon as I arrived we ascended twenty-

[1] There seems to be some hiatus here. La Salle set sail from Michilimackinac for Green Bay, on which there was a Potawatomi (not an Illinois) village.

[2] The present St. Joseph River, emptying into Lake Michigan at its southeastern extremity. La Salle's fort at the mouth of the stream was named for the Miami Indians, who had recently removed thither from Wisconsin.

[3] Tonty, having apprehended the deserters, came down the eastern shore of the lake, while La Salle and the main body of the expedition proceeded in canoes along the western and southern shores to St. Joseph River.

five leagues, as far as the portage,[1] where the men whom I had left behind joined us. We made the portage, which is about two leagues in length, and came to the source of the Islinois River. We embarked there and descended the river for 100 leagues. When we arrived at the village of the savages, they were absent hunting and as we had no provisions we opened some caches[2] of Indian corn.

During this journey some of our Frenchmen, fatigued, determined to leave us, but that night was so cold that their plan was broken up. We continued our route, in order to join the savages, and found them thirty leagues below the village. When they saw us they thought we were Iroquois, and therefore put themselves on the defensive and made their women run into the woods; but when they recognized us, the women with their children were called back and the calumet was danced to M. de La Salle and me, in order to mark their desire to live in peace with us. We gave them some merchandise for the corn which we had taken in their village.

This was on the 3d of January, 1679.[3] It was necessary to fortify ourselves for the winter. Applying ourselves to it, we made a fort which was called Crèvecœur.[4] Part of our people deserted and they even put poison into our kettle. M. de La Salle was poisoned, but he was saved by some antidote a friend had given to him in France. The desertion of these men gave us less annoyance than the effect which it had on the minds of the savages, for the enemies of M. de La Salle had spread a report among the Islinois that we were friends of the Iroquois, who are their greatest enemies. The effect this produced will be seen hereafter.

M. de La Salle commenced building a boat to descend the

[1] The location of the portage from the St. Joseph to the Kankakee—the southern branch of the Illinois—has been found by recent investigations of local historians to be above the city of South Bend, in St. Joseph County, Indiana.

[2] A cache was a kind of underground storehouse used by Indians and woodsmen to conceal provisions and goods.

[3] This date should be January 3, 1680; probably it is given according to an earlier method, that made the year begin March 1 instead of January 1.

[4] Early commentators supposed that the fort received its name, Crèvecœur (*heartbreak*), from the distressing circumstances of the leader of the expedition. It is now thought to have been named for a fortress in the Netherlands captured by Turenne, in July, 1672.

river. He sent a Recollect Father with the Sieur Acau[1] to explore the nation of the Sioux,[2] 400 leagues from the Islinois, toward the north, on the Mississipy River, a river that runs not less than 800 leagues to the sea without rapids, and having determined to go himself by land to Fort Frontenac, because he had heard nothing of the bark which he had sent to Niagara, he gave me the command of this place and left us on the 22d of March with five men. On his road he met with two men, whom he had sent in the autumn to Missilimakinak to obtain news of his bark. They assured him that it had not come down, and he therefore determined to continue his journey.[3] These two men were sent to me with orders to go to the old village to visit a rock and to build a strong fort upon it.[4]

Whilst I was absent all my men deserted. They took away everything that was finest and most valuable, and left me with two Recollects and three Frenchmen, newly arrived from France, stripped of everything and at the mercy of the savages.[5] All that I could do was to draw up an authentic account of the affair and send it to M. de La Salle. He lay in wait for them on Lake Frontenac, took some of them and killed the others. After this he returned towards the Islinois. As for his bark, it has never been heard of.[6]

[1] Michel Accault, the leader of the expedition of three to the Sioux country, was a native of Poitiers. He was captured by the Sioux, rescued by Duluth, and settled permanently in Illinois, where he married a woman of the Illinois tribe. The Recollect was Louis Hennepin, for whom see p. 287, note 3, *ante*.

[2] The country of the Sioux was about the headwaters of the Mississippi and westward. For its discovery and exploration, see the succeeding narrative of Duluth.

[3] This winter journey of La Salle, overland through northern Illinois, Indiana, southern Michigan, southern Ontario to the fort at Niagara is proof of the tremendous determination and physical endurance of the explorer.

[4] This rock, known throughout the French régime as "Le Rocher," is situated on the southern bank of the Illinois, not far from the village of Utica. It is locally known as "Starved Rock."

[5] While Tonty had gone to survey the site for the new fort, his men destroyed Fort Crèvecœur, stole the ammunition and goods, and left in writing the statement, "We are all savages." The two friars with Tonty were Gabriel de La Ribourde and Zénobe Membré.

[6] The fate of the *Griffin* has never been known. Probably it foundered in one of the autumn gales.

In the meanwhile, the Islinois were greatly alarmed at seeing a party of 600 Iroquois. It was then near the month of September. The desertion of our men and the journey of M. de La Salle to Fort Frontenac made the savages suspect that we were betraying them. They severely reproached me respecting the arrival of their enemies. As I was recently come from France and was not then acquainted with their manners, this embarrassed me and determined me to go to the enemy with necklaces[1] to tell them that I was surprised they had come to make war upon a nation dependent on the Governor of New France, and that M. de La Salle, whom he esteemed, governed these peoples. An Islinois accompanied me, and we separated ourselves from the body of the Islinois, who were 400 in number, and were already fighting with the enemy. When I was within gun-shot the Iroquois fired a great volley at us, which compelled me to tell the Islinois to retire. He did so. When I had come up to them, these wretches seized me, took the necklace from my hand, and one of them, reaching through the crowd, plunged a knife into my breast, wounding a rib near the heart. However, having recognized me, they carried me into the midst of their camp and asked me what I came for. I gave them to understand that the Islinois were under the protection of the King of France and of the Governor of the country, and that I was surprised that they wished to break with the French, and to postpone peace.

All this time skirmishing was going on on both sides, and a warrior came to give notice to the chief that their left wing was giving way, and that they had recognized some Frenchmen among the Islinois, who were shooting at them. On this they were greatly irritated against me and held a council concerning what they should do with me. There was a man behind me with a knife in his hand, who every now and then lifted up my hair. They were divided in opinion. Tegancouti, chief of the Tsonnontouan, wished positively to have me burnt. Agonstot, chief of the Onontagués,[2] as a friend of M. de La Salle, wished to have me set at liberty. He carried his point. They agreed that, in order the better to deceive the

[1] Strings of wampum, which were used by the Indians in peace negotiations.
[2] The Onondaga tribe of the Iroquois confederacy.

Islinois, they should give me a necklace of porcelain beads to show to them that they also were children of the Governor, and that they all ought to unite and make a good peace.

They sent me to deliver their message to the Islinois. I had much difficulty in reaching them on account of the great quantity of blood I had lost, both from my wound and from my mouth. On my way I met the Fathers Gabriel de la Ribourde and Zénoble Membré, who were coming to look after me. They expressed their joy that these barbarians had not put me to death. We went together to the Islinois, to whom I reported the sentiments of the Iroquois, adding, however, that they must not altogether trust them. They retired within their village, but seeing the Iroquois present themselves always in battle array they felt obliged to rejoin their wives and children, three leagues off. They left us there: namely, the two Recollect Fathers, the three Frenchmen, and myself.

The Iroquois made a fort in the village and left us in a cabin at some distance from their fort. Two days later, the Islinois appearing on the hills near the Iroquois, the Iroquois thought that we had had some conference together, which led them to bring us inside their fort. They pressed me to go and find the Islinois and induce them to come and make a treaty of peace. They gave me one of their own nation as a hostage. I went with Father Zénobe.[1] The Iroquois remained with the Islinois, and one of the latter came with me. When we got to the fort, instead of mending matters, he spoilt them entirely by saying to the enemy that they had in all only 400 men and that the rest of their young men were gone to war, and that if the Iroquois really wished to make peace with them they were ready to give them a quantity of beaver skins and some slaves which they had. The Iroquois called me to them and loaded me with reproaches; they told me that I was a liar to have said that the Islinois had 1,200 warriors, and several tribes of allies who had given them as-

[1] The name is variously spelled Zénobe, Zénoble, Zénobie. It is the French form of the Latin Zenobius; the first spelling is the usual one. Father Zénobe Membré accompanied La Salle on his three principal expeditions, was left in the dwelling on the coast of Texas (1686), and perished with the remnant of La Salle's colony.

sistance. Where were the sixty Frenchmen who, I had told them, were at the village? I had much difficulty in getting out of the scrape.

The same evening they sent back the Islinois to tell his nation to come the next day to within half a league of the fort and that they would there conclude the peace, which in fact was done, at noon. The Islinois having come to the meeting-place, the Iroquois gave them presents of necklaces and merchandise. The first necklace signified that the Governor of New France was not angry at their having come to molest their brothers; the second was addressed to M. de La Salle with the same meaning, and by the third, accompanied with merchandise, they bound themselves by oath to a strict alliance, that hereafter they should live as brothers. They then separated and the Islinois believed, after these presents, in the sincerity of the peace, which induced them to come several times into the fort of the enemies, where, some Islinois chiefs having asked me what I thought, I told them they had everything to fear, that there was among these barbarians no good faith, and that I knew that they were making canoes of elm bark and that consequently they were intending to pursue them, and that they should take advantage of the time and retire to some distant nation, for they were most assuredly betrayed.

The eighth day after their arrival, on the 10th of September, they called me and Father Zénoble to council, and having made us sit down, they placed six packets of beaver skins before us and addressing me they said that the two first packets were to inform M. de Frontenac that they would not eat his children and that he should not be angry at what they had done; the third was to serve as a plaster for my wound; the fourth was oil to rub on my own and the Recollect father's limbs, on account of the journeys we had taken; the fifth, that the sun was bright; the sixth, that we should depart the next day for the French settlements. I asked them when they would go away themselves. Murmurs arose among them. Some of them answered me that they would eat some of the Islinois before they went away; upon which I kicked away their presents, saying that there was no use in making presents to me, I would have none of them, since they

designed to eat the children of the governor. An Abenakis[1] who was with them, and who spoke French, told me that the men were irritated, and the chiefs rising drove me from the council.

We went to our cabin, where we passed the night on our guard, resolved to kill some of them before they should kill us, for we thought that we should not live out the night. However, at daybreak they directed us to depart, which we did. After making five leagues in the canoe, we landed to dry some peltries, which were wet. While we were repairing our canoe, Father Gabriel told me he was going aside to pray. I advised him not to go away, because we were surrounded by enemies. He went about 1,000 paces off and was taken by forty savages, of the nation called Kikapous, who carried him away and broke his head. Finding that he did not return, I went to look for him with one of my men. Having discovered his trail, I found it cut by several others, which joined and ended at last in one.

I brought back this sad news to the Father Zénoble, who was greatly grieved at it. Towards evening we made a great fire, hoping that perhaps he might return; and we went over to the other side of the river, where we kept a good lookout. Towards midnight we saw a man appear, and then many others.

The next day we recrossed the river to look for our equipment, and after waiting till noon we embarked and reached the Lake of the Islinois by short journeys, always hoping to meet with the good Father. After having sailed on this lake till All Saints' Day we were wrecked, twenty leagues from the village of Poutouatamis.[2] Our provisions failing us, I left a man to take care of our things and went off by land, but, as I had a fever constantly on me, and my legs were swollen, we did not arrive at the village of Poutouatamis till St. Martin's Day.[3] During this time we lived on nothing but wild garlic, which we were obliged to grub up from under the snow. When we arrived we found no savages; they had gone to

[1] The Abenaki Indians were from Maine and the eastern provinces of Canada.

[2] November 1, 1680. The location of this Potawatomi village is not certainly known; it appears to have been the one on the lake shore mentioned in 1698 by St. Cosme as being on the eve of abandonment. See p. 344, note 4, *post*.

[3] November 14.

their winter quarters. So we were obliged to go into their wilds, where we obtained hardly as much as two handfuls of Indian corn a day and some frozen gourds, which we piled up in a cabin at the water's side.

Whilst we were gleaning in the wilds, a Frenchman[1] whom we had left at the cache came to the cabin where we had left our little store of provisions. He thought we had put them there for him, and therefore did not spare them. We were very much surprised, as we were starting off for Missilimakinak, to find him in the cabin. He had arrived three days before. We had much pleasure in seeing him, and much regret to see our provisions partly consumed. We did not delay to embark, and after two leagues' sail, the wind having arisen offshore, I came to land. We saw a fresh trail and I directed that it should be followed. It was that of the Poutouatamis village, who had made a portage to the Bay of the Puans. The next day, weak as we were, we carried our little canoe and all our things into this bay, to which there is a league of portage.[2] We embarked in a creek called Sturgeon Creek, and turned to the right at hazard, not knowing where to go. After sailing for a league we found the same number of cabins, which led us to expect soon to find the savages.

Five leagues from this place we were stopped by the wind for a week, which compelled us to consume the few provisions we had collected together, and we were without anything. At last we held a council to see what we should do, and despairing of being able to come up with the savages, every one asked to return to the village, since there was wood there, so that we might die warm. The wind lulling, we embarked and set off. On entering Sturgeon's Creek we saw a fire and went to it. It was made by savages, who had just gone away. We thought they were gone to their village and determined to go there, but the creek having frozen in the night, we could not proceed in our canoe. We made shoes of

[1] Sieur de Boisrondet, one of Tonty's party who had been lost for several days.

[2] The Sturgeon Bay portage, across Door County peninsula, Wisconsin. It is now cut by a canal. See Marquette's journey across this portage, p. 263, *ante*.

the late Father Gabriel's cloak, having no leather. We were to have started in the morning. One of my men being very ill from having eaten some pare-flesche,[1] in the evening, as I was urging our starting two Outawas savages came up, who led us to where the Poutouatamis were. We found some Frenchmen there, who received us kindly. I spent the winter with them, and Father Zénoble left us to pass the winter with the Jesuit fathers at the end of the bay.[2]

When I left this place in the spring for Missilimakinak we had hardly recovered from the miseries which we had suffered from hunger and cold during thirty-four days. We reached Missilimakinak about Corpus Christi in 1680.[3] M. de La Salle arrived some time afterwards, on his way to seek us at the Illinois, with M. de La Forest.[4] He was very glad to see us again, and notwithstanding all reverses, we made new preparations to continue the exploration which he had undertaken. I therefore embarked with him for Fort Frontenac, to bring things that we should need for the expedition. Father Zénoble accompanied us thither. When we came to Lake Frontenac, M. de La Salle went forward, and I waited for his boat at the village of Teyagon.[5] When it arrived there I embarked for the Islinois. When we came to the Miamis River I assembled some Frenchmen and savages for the exploration, and M. de La Salle joined us in December.

We went in canoes to the River Chicaou, where there is a portage which joins that of the Islinois. The rivers being frozen we made sledges and dragged our baggage to a point thirty leagues below the village of Islinois, and there, finding the navigation open, we arrived at the end of January at the River

[1] Dried meat or leather.

[2] At the mission of St. François Xavier, at the site of De Pere, Wisconsin. This mission was established by Father Claude Allouez. See pp. 142–146, *ante*.

[3] 1681. In that year Corpus Christi fell on June 5.

[4] La Salle had just come from the Illinois, where he had been to seek Tonty and his men, and found only the ruins of the fort, and the destruction caused by the Iroquois. In great desolation he retraced his way to Mackinac, there to be cheered by finding Tonty and a few of his men safe and well.

Guillaume de La Forest had commanded for La Salle at Fort Frontenac. He later became Tonty's partner at Fort St. Louis in Illinois. In 1710 he was commandant at Detroit, where he died four years later.

[5] La Salle on this journey took the Toronto portage. The village where he left Tonty was probably on an island in Lake Simcoe.

Mississipy.[1] The distance from Chicaou is estimated at 140 leagues. We descended this river and found, six leagues below, on the right, a great river, which comes from the west. There are numerous nations above. We slept at its mouth. The next day we went on to the village of the Tamaroas, six leagues off on the left.[2] There was no one there, all the people being at their winter quarters in the woods. We made our marks to inform the savages that we had passed, and continued our route as far as the River Ouabache, which is eighty leagues from that of the Islinois. It comes from the east and is more than 500 leagues in length. It is by this river that the Iroquois advance to make war against the nations of the south. Continuing our voyage, we came to a place, about sixty leagues from there, which was named Fort Prudhomme, because one of our men, of that name, lost himself there when out hunting and was nine days in the woods without food.[3] As they were looking for him they fell in with two Chicachas savages, whose village was three days' journey from there, in the lands along the Mississipy. They have 2,000 warriors, the greatest number of whom have flat heads, which is considered a beauty among them, the women taking pains to flatten the heads of their children, by means of a cushion which they put on their foreheads and bind with a band to the cradle, and thus make their heads take this form, and when they are fat their faces are as big as a large soup-plate. All the nations on the seacoast have the same custom.[4]

M. de La Salle sent back one of them with presents to his village, so that, if they had taken Prudhomme, they might

[1] The boat carrying the exploring party entered the Mississippi from the Illinois, February 6, 1682.

[2] The great river coming from the west was the Missouri. Somewhere below it on the Illinois side was the village of the Tamarois, a division of the Illinois tribe. The Tamarois afterward removed to the neighborhood of Cahokia and coalesced with the Cahokia branch of the Illinois Indians.

[3] For the use of the name "Ouabache" for the Ohio River, see p. 250, note 1, *ante*. Pierre Prud'homme was the armorer of La Salle's expedition. The fort called by his name was located on the Third Chickasaw Bluff, near the present city of Memphis.

[4] The custom of intentional deformation of the heads of children was found among a few Indian tribes: the Natchez and neighboring tribes near the Gulf of Mexico, and a few tribes in the Pacific Northwest. The French called the Chickasaw *Têtes Plats*.

send him back, but we found him on the tenth day, and as the Chicachas did not return, we continued our route as far as the village of Capa, fifty leagues off. We arrived there in foggy weather, and as we heard the beating of the drum we crossed over to the other side of the river, where in less than half an hour we made a fort. These savages, having been informed that we were coming down the river, came in their canoes to look for us. We made them land, and sent two Frenchmen as hostages to their village. The chief visited us with the calumet, and we went to visit them. They regaled us for five days with the best they had, and after having danced the calumet to M. de La Salle, they conducted us to the village of Tongengan, of their nation, eight leagues from Capa. These received us in the same manner, and from thence they went with us to Toriman, two leagues further on, where we met with the same reception.[1]

It should be remarked that these villages, with another called Osotouy, which is six leagues to the right descending the river, are commonly called Arkansas. The first three villages are situated on the Great River. M. de La Salle erected the arms of the king there. They have cabins made with the bark of cedar; they have no worship, adoring all sorts of animals. Their country is very beautiful, having abundance of peach, plum, and apple trees. Vines flourish there. Buffaloes, deer, stags, bears, turkeys, are very numerous. They even have domestic fowls. They have very little snow during the winter, and the ice is not thicker than an *écu*.[2] They gave us guides to conduct us to their allies, the Taensas, sixty leagues distant.[3]

The first day we began to see and to kill alligators, which

[1] "Cappa" was the village visited by Marquette and Jolliet in 1673, that formed the extent of their voyage. See p. 254, note 1, *ante*. The other two villages were neighboring residences of the Quapaw tribe.

[2] The coin he had in mind was most likely the three-livre piece, nearly as large as an American silver dollar.

[3] The Taensa was a small tribe closely allied in language and customs to the Natchez. La Salle was the first of the French explorers to visit their village. See account of the mission established for this tribe in Introduction to St. Cosme's *Narrative*, p. 339, *post*. The French commandants of Louisiana had various dealings with this tribe, and in 1764 the Taensa removed to Red River rather than become subject to the English. About the close of the eighteenth century they merged with other tribes.

are numerous, and from fifteen to twenty feet long. When we had arrived opposite to the village of the Taenças, M. de La Salle ordered me to go to it and inform the chief of his arrival. I went with our guides. We had to carry a bark canoe for ten arpents, and to launch it on a small lake[1] on which their village was placed. I was surprised to find their cabins made of mud and covered with cane mats. The cabin of the chief was forty feet square, the wall about ten feet high and a foot thick, and the roof, which was of a dome shape, about fifteen feet high. I was not less surprised when, on entering, I saw the chief seated on a camp bed, with three of his wives at his side, surrounded by more than sixty old men, clothed in large white cloaks, which are made by the women out of the bark of the mulberry tree, and are tolerably well worked. The women were clothed in the same manner, and every time the chief spoke to them, before answering him, they howled and cried out several times—"Oh! Oh! Oh!"—to show their respect for him, for their chiefs are held in as much consideration as our kings. No one drinks out of the chief's cup, nor eats out of his dishes; no one passes before him; when he walks they clean the path before him. When he dies they sacrifice his principal wife, his principal house-steward, and a hundred men of the nation, to accompany him into the other world.

They have a form of worship, and adore the sun. They have a temple opposite the house of the chief, and similar to it, except that three eagles are placed on this temple who look towards the rising sun. The temple is surrounded with strong mud walls, in which are fixed spikes on which they place the heads of their enemies whom they sacrifice to the sun. At the door of the temple is a block of wood, on which is a great shell plaited round with the hair of their enemies in a plait as thick as an arm and about twenty fathoms long. The inside of the temple is bare; there is an altar in the middle, and at the foot of the altar three logs of wood are placed end to end, and a fire is kept up day and night by two old medicine-men, who are the directors of their worship. These old men showed me a small cabinet in the middle of the wall, made of mats of cane. When I wished to see what was inside, the

[1] Lake St. Joseph, in Tensas Parish, Louisiana.

old men prevented me, giving me to understand that their God was there; but I have since learnt that it is the place where they keep all their treasure, such as fine pearls which they fish up in the neighborhood, and European merchandise.

At the last quarter of each moon all the cabins make an offering of a dish of the best food they have, which is placed at the door of the temple. The old men take care to carry it away and to make a good feast of it with their families. Every spring they make a clearing, which they name "the field of the spirit," where all the men work to the sound of the drum. In the autumn the Indian corn of this field is harvested with ceremony and stored in magazines until the moon of June in the following year, when all the village assemble, and invite their neighbors to the feast to eat it. They do not leave the ground until they have eaten it all, making great rejoicings the whole time. This is all I learnt of this nation. The three villages below have the same customs.

Let us return to the chief. When I was in his cabin he told me with a smiling countenance the pleasure he felt at the arrival of the French. I saw that one of his wives wore a pearl necklace. I presented her with ten yards of blue glass beads in exchange for it. She made some difficulty, but the chief having told her to let me have it, she did so. I carried it to M. de La Salle, giving him an account of all that I had seen and told him that the chief intended to visit him the next day—which he did. He would not have done this for savages, but the hope of obtaining some merchandise induced him to act thus. He came the next day to our cabins, to the sound of the drum and the music of the women, who had embarked in wooden canoes. The savages of the river use no other boats than these. M. de La Salle received him with much politeness, and gave him some presents; they gave us, in return, plenty of provisions and some of their robes. The chief returned well satisfied. We stayed during the day, which was the 21st of March. We took an observation and found ourselves at 31 degrees of latitude.[1]

We left on the 22nd, and slept on an island ten leagues from there. The next day we saw a canoe. M. de La Salle

[1] This observation was more than a degree out of the way, the true latitude being somewhat more than 32°.

ordered me to chase it, which I did, and when I was just on the point of taking it, more than 100 men appeared on the banks of the river, with bows bent, to defend their people. M. de La Salle shouted to me to come back, which I did. We went on and encamped opposite them. Afterwards, M. de La Salle expressing to me a wish to meet them peacefully, I offered to carry to them the calumet. I embarked, and crossed to the other side. At first they joined their hands, as a sign that they wished to be friends; I, who had but one hand, told our men to do the same thing.

I made the chief men among them cross over to M. de La Salle, who accompanied them to their village, three leagues inland, and passed the night there with some of his men. The next day he returned with the chief of the village where he had slept, who was a brother of the great chief of the Naché; he conducted us to his brother's village, situated on a hill-side near the river, at six leagues distance.[1] We were very well received there. This nation counts more than 3,000 warriors. These men cultivate the ground as well as hunt, and they fish as well as the Taensa, and their customs are the same. We departed thence on Good Friday, and after a voyage of twenty leagues, encamped at the mouth of a large river, which comes in from the west.[2] We continued our journey, and crossed a great canal, which went towards the sea on the right.

Thirty leagues further on we saw some fishermen on the bank of the river, and sent to reconnoitre them. It was the village of the Quinipissa, who let fly arrows upon our scouts, who retired in consequence, as ordered.[3] As M. de La Salle did not wish to fight against any nation, he made us embark. Twelve leagues from this village, on the left, we found that of the Tangibao.[4] Not a week before, this vil-

[1] The village of the Natchez Indians at the time of La Salle's voyage is thought to have been about three miles from the present city of that name upon St. Catherine's Creek.

[2] Red River. Good Friday in 1682 fell on March 27.

[3] The Quinipissa were a tribe of Choctaw, found in St. Charles Parish not far above New Orleans. They are identical with the Acolapissa, among whom Iberville found a letter that Tonty on his second voyage had left for La Salle.

[4] The Tangipahoa were a tribe (now extinct) related to the Creek Indians. Their name is perpetuated in a river and parish north of Lake Pontchartrain.

lage had been totally destroyed. Dead bodies were lying one on another and the cabins were burnt. We proceeded on our course, and after going forty leagues, arrived at the sea on the 7th of April.

M. de La Salle sent canoes to inspect the channels. Some went to the channel on the right hand, some to the left, and M. de La Salle chose that in the centre. In the evening each made his report, that is to say, that the channels were very fine, wide, and deep. We encamped on the right bank, erected the arms of the King, and returned several times to inspect the channels. The same report was made.

This river is 800 leagues long, without rapids, to wit, 400 from the country of the Sioux, and 400 from the mouth of the Islinois River to the sea. The banks are almost uninhabitable, on account of the spring floods. The woods are chiefly poplar, the country one of canes and briars and of trees torn up by the roots; but a league or two from the river, is the most beautiful country in the world, prairies, open woods of mulberry trees, vines, and fruits that we are not acquainted with. The savages gather the Indian corn twice in the year. In the lower course of the river, the part which might be settled, is where the river makes a course north and south, for there, in many places, every now and then it has bluffs on the right and left.

The river is only navigable for ships as far as the village of Nadesche, for above that place the river winds too much; but this would not prevent one's setting out from the country above with pirogues and flatboats, to proceed from the Ouabache to the sea. There are but few beavers, but to make amends, there is a large number of buffaloes or bears, large wolves, stags, *sibolas*,[1] hinds, and roe deer in abundance; and some lead mines, with less than one-third refuse. As these savages are stationary, and have some habits of subordination, they might be obliged to make silk in order to procure necessaries for themselves, if the eggs of silkworms were brought to them from France, for the forests are full of mulberry trees. This would be a valuable trade.

As for the country of the Islinois, the river runs 100 leagues from Fort St. Louis, to where it falls into the Mississipy.

[1] Cibola (*sibola*) was the Spanish term for the buffalo.

It may be said to contain the finest lands ever seen. The climate is the same as that of Paris, though in the 40th degree of latitude. The savages there are quick, agile, and brave, but extremely lazy, except in war, when they think nothing of seeking their enemies at a distance of 500 or 600 leagues from their own country. This they constantly show in the country of the Iroquois, whom, at my instigation, they continually harass. Not a year passes in which they do not take a number of prisoners and scalps.

A few pieces of pure copper, whose origin we have not yet sought, are found in the river of the Islinois. Polygamy prevails in this nation, and is one of the great hindrances to the introduction of Christianity, with the fact of their having no form of worship of their own. The nations lower down would be more easily converted, because they adore the sun, which is their sole divinity. This is all that I am able to relate of those parts.

Let us return to the sea coast, where, provisions failing, we were obliged to leave sooner than we wished, in order to seek provisions in the neighboring villages. We did not know how to get anything from the village of the Quinipissa, who had received us badly as we went down the river. We lived on potatoes until six leagues from their village, when we saw smoke. M. de La Salle went to reconnoitre at night. Our people reported that they had seen some women. We went there at daybreak and taking four of the women, encamped on the other bank, opposite their village. One of the women was sent with merchandise, to show this tribe that we had no evil design against them and wished for their alliance and for provisions. She made her report. One of them came immediately and invited us to encamp on the other bank, which we did. We sent back the three other women, keeping, however, constant guard. They brought us some provisions in the evening, and the next morning, at daybreak, the scoundrels attacked us.

We vigorously repulsed them, and by ten o'clock had smashed their canoes, and, but for the fear of using up our ammunition for the future, we should have attacked their village. We left in the evening in order to reach the village of the Nachés where we had left a quantity of grain as we

passed down. When we arrived there the chief came out to meet us. M. de La Salle made them a present of the scalps we had taken from the Quinipissa. They had already heard the news, for they had resolved to betray and kill us. We went up to their village armed, and, as we saw no women there, we had no doubt of their having some evil design. In a moment we were surrounded by more than 1,500 men. They brought us something to eat, and we ate with our guns in our hands. As they are afraid of firearms, they did not dare to attack us. The chief of the nation begged M. de La Salle to go away, as his young men had not much sense, which we very willingly did—the game not being equal, we having only fifty men, French and savages. We then went on to the Taença, and then to the Akansas, where we were very well received.

From thence we came to Fort Prudhomme, where M. de La Salle fell dangerously ill, which obliged him to send me forward, with five others, to arrange his affairs at Missilimakinak. In passing toward the Ouabache, I found four Iroquois, who told us that there were 100 men of their nation coming on after them. This gave us some alarm, for there is no pleasure in meeting warriors on one's road, especially when they have been unsuccessful. I left them and at about twenty leagues from the Tamaroas, we saw smoke. I ordered our people to prepare their arms, and we resolved to advance, expecting to meet the Iroquois. When we were near the smoke, we saw some canoes, which made us think that they could only be Islinois or Tamaroas. They were in fact the latter. As soon as they saw us, they came out of the wood in great numbers to attack us, taking us for Iroquois.

I presented the calumet to them. They laid down their arms and conducted us to their village without doing us any harm. The chiefs held a council, and, taking us for Iroquois, had already resolved to burn us; and, but for some Islinois who were among them, we should have fared ill. They let us proceed. We arrived about the end of June,[1] at the River Chicacou, and, by the middle of July, at Missilimakinak. M. de La Salle, having recovered, joined us in September. Resolving to go to France, he ordered me to go and collect

[1] 1682.

together the French who were on the River Miamis to construct the Fort of St. Louis in the Islinois. I left with this design, and when I arrived at the place, M. de La Salle, having changed his mind, joined me. They set to work at the fort, and it was finished in March, 1683.

During the winter I gave all the nations notice of what we had done to defend them from the Iroquois, at whose hands they had lost 700 people in the preceding years. They approved of our good intentions, and established themselves, to the number of 300 lodges, at the Fort—Islinois and Miamis and Chaouanons.[1]

M. de La Salle departed for France in the month of September, leaving me to command the fort. He met on his way the Chevalier de Bogis, whom M. de La Barre[2] had sent with letters ordering M. de La Salle to Quebec. He had no trouble in getting him to make the journey, as he found him on the road. M. de La Salle wrote to me to receive M. de Bogis well, which I did.

The winter passed, and on the 20th of March, 1684, being informed that the Iroquois were about to attack us, we prepared to receive them well, and dispatched a canoe to M. de La Durantaye, governor of Missilimakinak,[3] to ask him for assistance, in case the enemy should hold out against us a long time. The savages appeared on the 21st. We repulsed them with loss. After six days' siege they retired with some slaves which they had made in the neighborhood, who afterwards escaped and came back to the fort.

M. de La Durantaye, with Father Daloy,[4] a Jesuit, arrived at the fort with about sixty Frenchmen, whom they were bringing to our assistance, and, more particularly, to inform

[1] This concentration of Indian tribes had an important influence on aboriginal geography and economy. The various villages clustered around Fort St. Louis are located on Franquelin's "Map of Louisiana" of 1684.

[2] Antoine Le Febvre de La Barre superseded Count Frontenac in 1682 as governor-general of New France. He reversed as far as possible all the plans of the latter, and replaced La Salle's men with his own officers, one of whom was Chevalier de Baugis (Bogis). The latter was recalled after a year in Illinois.

[3] Olivier Morel, Sieur de La Durantaye, came to Canada as officer in the Carignan regiment in 1665. He commanded in the Northwest 1683–1690; he died in 1717.

[4] Father Claude Allouez, for whom see *ante*.

me of the orders of M. de La Barre, to leave the place, and that M. de Bogis was in possession of a place belonging to M. de La Salle. I obeyed orders, and went to Montreal, and thence to Quebec, where M. de La Forest, who had accompanied M. de La Salle to France, returned by order of M. de La Salle with a lettre de cachet, by which M. de La Barre was directed to deliver up to M. de La Forest the lands belonging to the Sieur de La Salle, and which were occupied by others to his prejudice.

As he brought me news that M. de La Salle was sailing by way of the islands to find the mouth of the Mississipy, and had at court obtained a company[1] for me, and sent me orders to go and command at Fort St. Louis, as captain of foot, and governor, we took our measures together, and formed a company of 20,000 livres to maintain the fort.

M. de La Forest went away in the autumn, for Fort Frontenac, and I began my journey to the Islinois. Being stopped by the ice, however, I was obliged to halt at Montreal, where I passed the winter. M. de La Forest arrived there in the spring. We took new measures. He embarked for Fort Frontenac, and I for the Islinois, where I arrived in June.[2] M. le Chevalier de Bogis retired, according to the orders that I brought him from M. de La Barre.

The Miamis having seriously defeated the Islinois, it cost us 1,000 dollars in presents to reconcile these two nations, which I did not accomplish without great trouble. In the autumn I embarked for Missilimakinak, in order to obtain news of M. de La Salle. I heard there that M. le Marquis de Denonville[3] had succeeded M. de La Barre; and by a letter which he did me the honor to write to me, he expressed his wish to see me, that we might take measures for the war against the Iroquois, and informed me that M. de La Salle was engaged in seeking the mouth of the Mississipy in the

[1] La Salle secured a commission for Tonty as captain of a company in the colonial troops.

[2] 1685.

[3] Jacques René de Brisay, Marquis Denonville, was governor of Canada from 1685 to 1689. His well-known expedition of 1687 against the Iroquois was only a partial success, and led to fresh hostilities in 1689, which forced Denonville's retirement, and the return of Frontenac.

Gulf of Mexico. This made me resolve to go in search of him and aid him, with a number of Canadians that I should take to him, and as soon as I should have found him, to return to execute the orders of M. de Denonville.

I embarked, therefore, for the Islinois, on St. Andrew's Day,[1] but, being stopped by the ice, I was obliged to leave my canoe and to proceed by land. After going 120 leagues I arrived at the Fort of Chicacou, where M. de La Durantaye commanded; and from thence I came to Fort St. Louis, where I arrived in the middle of January, 1685.[2] I departed thence on the 16th of February, with thirty Frenchmen and five Islinois and Chaouanons for the sea, which I reached in Holy Week,[3] after having passed the tribes described above, by whom I was very well received. I sent out one canoe towards the coast of Mexico, and another towards Carolina, to see if they could discover anything. They each sailed about thirty leagues, in either direction, but were obliged to stop for want of fresh water. They reported to me that where they had been the land began to rise. They brought me a porpoise and some oysters. As it would take us five months to reach the French settlements, I proposed to my men, that if they would trust me, we should follow the coast as far as Menade, and that by this means we should arrive shortly at Montreal, declaring that we should not lose our time, because we might discover some fine country and might even take some prize on our way.[4] Part of my men were willing to adopt my plan, but the rest were opposed to it, so I decided to return the way I came.

The tide does not rise more than two feet perpendicularly on the sea coast; the land is very low at the entrance of the river. We encamped in the place where M. de La Salle had erected the arms of the King. As they had been thrown down by the floods, I took them five leagues farther up, and placed them in a higher situation. I put a silver écu[5] in the hollow of a tree to serve as a mark of time and place. We left this

[1] November 30, 1685. [2] Meaning 1686. [3] April 7–14.

[4] It was a daring plan conceived by Tonty to skirt the coast all the way to New York (Menade or Manhattan Island) in the small canoes used for river and lake transportation.

[5] See p. 298, note 2, *ante*.

place on Easter Monday. When we came opposite the Quinipissa Village, the chiefs brought me the calumet and declared the sorrow they felt at the treachery they had perpetrated against us on our first voyage. I made an alliance with them.

Forty leagues higher up, on the right, we discovered an inland village, with whom we also made an alliance. These are the Ouma,[1] the bravest savages of the river. When we were at Akansas, ten of the Frenchmen who accompanied me asked for settlements on the River Akansas, on a seigniory that M. de La Salle had given me on our first voyage. I granted the request to some of them. They remained there and built a house surrounded with stakes.[2] The rest accompanied me to the Islinois, in order to get what they wanted. I arrived there on St. John's Day.[3] I made two chiefs of the Islinois embark with me in my canoe, to go and receive the orders of M. de Denonville, and we arrived at Montreal by the end of July.

I left that place at the beginning of September to return to the Islinois. I came there in December, and I directly sent some Frenchmen to our savage allies to declare war against the Iroquois, inviting them to assemble in good season at the fort. They did so in the month of April, 1686.[4] The Sieur de La Forest was already gone in a canoe with thirty Frenchmen, and he was to wait for me at Detroit till the end of May. I gave our savages a dog feast, and after having declared to them the will of the King and of the Governor of New France, I set out on April 17 with sixteen Frenchmen and a guide of the Miami nation.

We encamped half a league from the fort, to wait for the savages who might wish to follow us. I left twenty Frenchmen at the fort and the Sieur de Bellefontaine to command there during my absence. Fifty Chaouanons, four Loups, and

[1] This is a tribe of the Choctaw nation, usually known as the Huma. Apparently La Salle, in 1682, had passed their village without seeing it.

[2] Thus was founded the oldest existing French settlement in the Mississippi Valley. It was later known as Aux Arcs, although technically named the fort and mission of St. Étienne. The Americans called it Arkansas Post. It is on the Arkansas River in the present Arkansas County.

[3] June 24, 1686.

[4] This should be 1687.

seven Miamis came to join me at night; and the next day more than 300 Islinois came, but they went back again, with the exception of 149. This did not prevent me from continuing my route; and after 200 leagues of journey by land, we came, on the 19th of May, to Fort Detroit. We there made some canoes of elm wood. I sent one of them to Fort St. Joseph, which was at the harbor of Detroit, thirty leagues from where we were, to give Sieur Dulud, the commander of this fort, information of my arrival.[1] The Sieur de Beauvais de Tilly, his lieutenant, joined me, and afterwards the Sieur de La Forest, then the Sieurs de La Durantaye and Dulud. I made the French and the savages line up along the road, and, after the Sieur de La Durantaye had saluted us, we returned the salute. They had with them 300 English, whom they had taken on Lake Huron, who had come there to trade.[2] It was the Sieur de La Durantaye who commanded the party that captured them. We made more canoes, and coasted along Lake Erie to Niagara, where we made a fort below the portage to wait there for news. On our way we took thirty more Englishmen, who were going to Missilimakinak, commanded by Major Grégoire,[3] who was bringing back some Huron and Outawas slaves taken by the Iroquois. Had it not been for these two strokes of good luck our affairs would have turned out badly, as we were at war with the Iroquois, and the English, from the great quantity of brandy and merchandise which they had with them, would have gained over our allies, and thus we should have had all the savages and the English upon us at once.

I sent the Sieur de La Forest to inform M. the Marquis

[1] Fort St. Joseph, located about where Fort Gratiot now stands, was built by Daniel Greysolon, Sieur Duluth, in 1686. During the winter of 1687–1688 it was commanded by Baron Lahontan, who destroyed it in August, 1688. For Duluth, see the following narrative.

[2] A company of English and Dutch traders from Albany had been assured by the Iroquois that the tribesmen at Mackinac were ready to secede from the French alliance. The capture of their caravan was of immense importance to the trade of Canada.

[3] Major Patrick Macgregory, a Scottish immigrant to Maryland (1684), who entered the fur-trade at Albany. After release from captivity (1688) he was killed in Leisler's revolt (1691). See Charles M. Andrews, *Narratives of the Insurrections* (Original Narratives Series), p. 248.

de Denonville of everything. He was at Fort Frontenac, and he joined us at Fort des Sables.[1] The large boat coming, and bringing us provisions, the Marquis sent us word by it that he expected to arrive by the 10th of July at the Marsh, which is seven leagues from the Sonnontouans.

The Poutouatamis, Hurons, and Outawas joined us there, and built some canoes. There was an Iroquois slave among the Hurons. Because of some foolish words he spoke of the French I proposed to have him put to death. They paid no attention to my proposal, and, twelve leagues on our march, he ran away and gave our enemies information of our approach, and of the marks which our savages bore, which did us great harm in the ambuscade, as will be seen.

On the 10th we arrived at the marsh of Fort des Sables, and the army from below arrived at the same time. I received orders to take possession of a certain position, which I did with my company and savages. We then set about building a fort. On the 11th I went with fifty men to reconnoitre the road, three leagues from camp. On the 12th the fort was finished, and we set off for the village. On the 13th, half a league from the clearing, we found an ambuscade. My company, who were the advance guard, forced it. We lost there seven men, of whom my lieutenant was one, and two of my people.[2] We were occupied for seven days in cutting down the corn of four villages. We returned to Fort des Sables, then embarked, and went to build a fort at Niagara.[3]

From thence I was going back to Fort St. Louis with my cousin, the Sieur Dulud, who was returning to his post with eighteen soldiers and some savages. Having made half the portage, which is two leagues in length, as we were about to make the rest, some Hurons who were at the rear, perceived some Iroquois. They came and gave us warning. There were only forty of us, and we thought the enemy strong. We agreed to fall back with our ammunition towards the fort and

[1] A temporary post at the mouth of Irondequoit River, New York.

[2] This Seneca ambuscade occurred west and north of the present site of Victor, New York. The French loss was much greater than Tonty mentions; he enumerates only the losses in his own division.

[3] This fort was a temporary structure at the mouth of Niagara River.

get an escort. We marched all night, and as the Sieur Dulud could not leave his detachment, he begged me to go to the Marquis, while he placed himself in ambush in a very good position. I embarked, and when I came to the fort, the Marquis was reluctant to give me any men, inasmuch as the militia had gone away and he had only some infantry remaining to escort him; however, he sent a captain named Clément de Valrenne and fifty men to support us. He stayed at the portage whilst we crossed it. We embarked, and when clear of the land we perceived the Iroquois on the banks of the lake. We crossed Lake Erie, and I left the Sieur Dulud at his post at Detroit, and went on from there in company with the Reverend Father Gravier[1] as far as Missilimakinak, and thence on to Fort St. Louis.

There I found M. Cavelier, a priest, his nephew, and the Reverend Father Anastatius, a Recollect, and two men. They concealed from me the assassination of M. de La Salle; and upon their assuring me that he had remained at the Gulf of Mexico in good health, I received them as if they had been M. de La Salle himself, and lent them more than 700 francs. M. Cavelier, brother of M. de La Salle, departed in the spring, 1687, to give an account of his voyage at court.[2] M. de La Forest came here in the autumn, and went away in the following spring.

On the 7th of September, one named Couture[3] brought to me two Akansas, who danced the calumet to me, and informed me of the death of M. de La Salle, with all the circumstances which they had heard from the lips of M. Cavelier, who had fortunately discovered a house I had built at the Akansas, where the said Couture had stayed with three Frenchmen. The former told me that the fear of not obtaining from me

[1] Jacques Gravier, a Jesuit recently arrived in New France. In 1688 he succeeded Allouez in the Illinois mission, where he served many years.

[2] Jean Cavelier, a Sulpitian priest, accompanied his brother, La Salle, on his last fateful expedition to the mouth of the Mississippi. After the latter's assassination in March, 1687, Cavelier with his young nephew, Father Anastase Douay, Henri Joutel, and Tessier, the pilot, made his way to Fort St. Louis, and ultimately to France. Cavelier and his company passed the winter of 1687–1688 at Fort St. Louis, and left in the spring of 1688.

[3] Couture was from Rouen, a carpenter by trade. He came to Illinois in 1683 with Baugis, and formed the Arkansas settlement in 1686.

what he desired had made him conceal the death of his brother, of which he had told them.

M. Cavelier had told me that the Cadadoquis had one day proposed to accompany him if he would go and fight against the Spaniards.[1] He had objected that there were only fourteen Frenchmen. They replied that their nation was numerous, that they only wanted a few musqueteers, that the Spaniards had much money, of which they would be the masters; that, as for themselves, they only wished to keep the women and children as slaves. Then Couture told me that a young man whom M. Cavelier had left at the Akansas had assured him that this was true. Not wishing to undertake anything without the consent of the Governor of Canada, I sent the said Couture to the French remaining at Nicondiché,[2] to get all the information he could. He set off, and at 100 leagues from the fort was wrecked and, having lost everything, returned.

In the interval M. de Denonville directed me to let the savages do as they liked, and to do nothing against the Iroquois, and informed me that war was declared against Spain. This caused me to resolve to go to the Naodiches, to execute what M. Cavelier had not ventured to undertake, and to bring back M. de La Salle's men, who had remained on the sea coast not knowing of the misfortune that had befallen him. I set off on the 3d of December, and joined my cousin, who was gone on before, and who was to accompany me, as he expected that M. de La Forest would come and take the command in my absence; but as he did not come I sent my cousin back to command the fort.

I bought a boat larger than my own. We embarked five Frenchmen, one Chaouanon, and two slaves. We arrived on the 17th at a village of the Islinois at the mouth of their

[1] The Kadohadacho (Cadadoquis) were the principal tribe of the Caddo, who were the northern confederacy of the southern division of the Caddoan stock. Their village was located on Red River, not far from the present Texarkana. For the Spaniards in this region during La Salle's time see *Texas Historical Quarterly*, V. 171–205.

[2] Nicondiché (Naodiches, Naouadiche) was Notedache, a village of the Cenis tribe, known to ethnologists as the Hasinai. Thither the remains of La Salle's party had repaired after his murder. It was located on San Pedro Creek, a western branch of the Neches River, in the northeastern part of Houston County, Texas.

river. They had just come from fighting the Osages,[1] where they had lost thirteen men, but brought back 130 prisoners. We reached the village of the Kapa on the 16th of January, where we were received with much joy, and for four days there was nothing but dancing, feasting, and masquerading after their manner. They danced the final calumet for me, which confirmed the last alliance.

On the 20th I came to the Tongenga. They wished to entertain us as the Kapa had done; but being in haste I put them off until another time. I did the same with the Torimans, where I arrived on the 22d. Leaving my crew I set off the next day for Ossotoué, where my commercial house is. These savages had not yet seen me, as they lived on a branch of the river coming from the west. They did their best, giving me two women of the Cadadoquis nation, to which I was going. I returned to Torimans on the 26th, and bought there two pirogues. We went away on the 27th. On the 29th, finding one of our men asleep when on duty as sentinel, I reprimanded him, and he left me. I sent two of my people to the Coroa,[2] to seek some Frenchmen and appoint them a rendezvous at the lower part of their river, in order to spare myself the fatigue of dragging our goods six leagues inland. The Frenchman with whom I had quarrelled made with them a third.

We camped opposite the rivers. Some Taença coming from the Akansas found us there. On the 2nd,[3] having reached the place of meeting, my Chaouanon went out hunting on the other side of the river, where he was attacked by three Chachouma.[4] He killed one of them, and was slightly wounded by an arrow on the left breast. On the 4th, the rest of the party having arrived, we set out down stream. On the 5th, being opposite the Taença, the men whom I had sent to the

[1] The Osage were a large and important tribe whose habitat was on the Big and Little Osage rivers, in the present states of Missouri and Arkansas.

[2] The Koroa were a small tribe located on the Mississippi below the Natchez, with whom La Salle in 1682 made alliance. Later they merged with the Yazoo and ultimately with the Choctaw. In customs they resembled the Natchez and Taensa, near whom they dwelt, although their language was reported to be different.

[3] Of February, 1690.

[4] The Chakchiuma Indians dwelt on the Yazoo, and were allied to the Chickasaw, with whom they later merged.

Coroa not having brought any news of the two Frenchmen whom I was anxious about, I sent them to the Naché. They found that this nation had killed our two men. They retired as well as they could, making the savages believe that we were numerous.

They arrived on the 8th of February. We set off on the 12th with thirty Taença, and after a voyage of twelve leagues to the northwest[1] we left our pirogue, made twenty leagues' portage, and on the 17th of February, 1690, came to the village of the Nachicoche. They made us stay at the place which is in the midst of the three villages called Nachicoche, Ouasita, and Capiche.[2] All the chiefs of the three nations assembled, and before they began to speak, the thirty Taença who were with me got up, and leaving their arms went to the temple, to show the nations how sincerely they wished to make a firm peace. After having taken their God to witness they asked for their friendship. I made them some presents in the name of the Taença. Peace having been concluded, they remained some days in the village to traffic for salt, which these nations got from a salt lake in the neighborhood.

After the departure of the Taença the villages where I was gave me guides to the Yataché; and after ascending the river, always towards the northwest, about thirty leagues, we found fifteen cabins of Naché, who received us pretty well. We arrived on the 16th of March at the Yataché, about forty leagues from thence. The three villages of Yataché, Nadao, and Choye are together.[3] When they knew of our arrival they came three leagues to meet us with refreshments. On their joining us, we went together to their villages. The chief made many feasts for us. I gave presents to them, and asked for guides to the Cadodaquis.

They were very unwilling to give us any, as they had murdered three ambassadors only four days before, who went

[1] On the Red River.

[2] Three tribes of Caddoan stock located near the site of the present town of Natchitoches, Louisiana.

[3] The Yataché were the tribe usually known as Yatasi. They were of Caddoan stock and lived near the present site of Shreveport, Louisiana. The Nadao may have been the Nadaco (Anadarko), a related tribe who later dwelt west of the Yatasi between the Sabine and the Neches. The Choye are not identified.

to them to make peace. However, by dint of entreaties, and assuring them that no harm should happen to their people, they granted me five men, and we got to the Cadodaquis on the 28th. At the place where we were encamped we discovered the trail of men and horses. The next day some horsemen came to reconnoitre us, and after speaking to the wife of the chief of their nation, whom I was bringing back with me, carried back the news to their nation. The next day a woman, who governed this nation, came to visit me with the principal persons of the village. She wept over me, demanding revenge for the death of her husband, and of the husband of the woman whom I was bringing back, both of whom had been killed by the Osages. As one takes advantage of everything, I promised that their death should be avenged. We went together to their temple. After the priests had invoked their God for a quarter of an hour they conducted me to the cabin of their chief. Before entering they washed my face with water, which is a ceremony among them.

During the time I was there I learnt from them that eighty leagues off there were the seven Frenchmen whom M. Cavelier had left. I hoped to accomplish my purpose by rejoining them, but the Frenchmen who had accompanied me, tired of the voyage, being unwilling to go further, told me so. As they were unmanageable persons over whom I could exercise no authority in this distant country I was obliged to give way, and all that I could do was to engage one of them, with a savage, to accompany me to the village of the Naouadiche, where I hoped to find the Frenchmen. I told those who abandoned me, that to prevent the savages knowing this, they must say that I had sent them to carry back the news of my arrival, so that the savages should not suspect our disunion.

The Cadodaquis are united with two other villages called Natchitoches and Nasoui. They are situated on the Red River. All the nations of this river speak the same language. Their cabins are covered with straw, and they are not assembled in villages, but their huts are distant one from the other. Their fields are beautiful. They have fish and game in abundance, but few cattle. They wage cruel war, hence their villages are but thinly populated. I never found that they did any work except to make very fine bows, in which they trade

with distant nations. The Cadodaquis possess about thirty horses, which they call *cavalis*.[1] The men and women are tattooed in the face, and all over the body. They call this river the Red River, because in fact it deposits a sand which makes the water as red as blood. I am not acquainted with their manners, having only seen them in passing.

I left this place on the 6th of April, directing our route southwards, with a Frenchman, a Chaouanon, a little slave of mine, and five of their savages, whom they gave me as guides to the Naouadiche. When I went away, I left in the hands of the wife of the chief a small box, in which I had put some ammunition. On our road we found some Naouadiché savages hunting, who assured me that they had left the Frenchmen at their habitations. This gave me great pleasure, hoping to succeed in my whole object by finding them. On the 19th the Frenchman with me was lost. I sent the savages who were with me to look for him. He came back on the 21st, and told me that, having lost our trail, he was near drowning in crossing a little river on a log. His bag having slipped off, all our powder was lost, which very much annoyed us as we were reduced to sixty rounds of ammunition.

On the 23d we slept half a league from the village, and the chiefs came to visit us at night. I asked them about the Frenchmen. They told me at first that they were at their village. Arriving there the next day and seeing no one, when they desired to give me the calumet I refused, until I should see the Frenchmen. Seeing that I was determined, they told me that the Frenchmen had accompanied their chief to fight the Spaniards seven days' journey away from their village; that the Spaniards, having espied them, had surrounded them with their cavalry, and that their chief having spoken in their favor the Spaniards had given them horses and arms. Others told me that the Quanouatino had killed three of them, and that the four others were gone in search of iron arrow-heads. I no longer doubted that they had murdered them. So I told them that they had killed the Frenchmen. Directly all the women began to cry, and thus I saw that what I had said to them was true. I would not, therefore, accept the calumet. I told the chief I wanted four horses for my return, and having

[1] *Cf.* Spanish *caballo*.

given him seven hatchets and a string of large glass beads, they gave me the next day four Spanish horses, two of which were marked on the haunch with an R and a crown above it, and another with an N. Horses are very common among them. There is not a cabin which has not four or five. As this nation is sometimes at peace and sometimes at war with the neighboring Spaniards, they take advantage of a war to carry off their horses.

We harnessed ours as well as we could, and departed on the 29th, greatly vexed that we could not continue our route as far as M. de La Salle's camp, not having been able to obtain guides from this nation to take us there, though not more than eighty leagues away, and also being without ammunition, owing to the accident which I have related.

It was at the distance of three days' journey from hence that M. de La Salle was murdered. I will say a word, in passing, of what I have heard of his misfortune.

M. de La Salle having landed beyond the Mississipy, on the side toward Mexico, about eighty leagues from the mouth of the river,[1] and having lost his vessels on the coast, saved a part of the cargo, and began to march along the seashore, in search of the Mississipy. Meeting with many obstacles to his plans on account of the bad roads, he resolved to go to the Islinois by land. So he loaded several horses to carry what was necessary. The Recollect Father Anastatius,[2] M. Cavelier, the priest, his brother; M. Cavelier, his nephew; M. de Morangé, his relative;[3] MM. du Haut and Lanquetot,[4] and several Frenchmen accompanied him, with a Chaouanon savage.

[1] The site of La Salle's lost colony on the coast of Texas has recently been discovered by Professor Herbert E. Bolton. It was located on Garcitas River in Victoria County, Texas. See his article in the *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, II. 166–182.

[2] Anastase Douay, a Recollect friar, accompanied La Salle as one of the chaplains of his final expedition. After his return to France with La Salle's brother, he wrote an account of the expedition which was published in Chrestien Le Clercq, *Premier Établissement de la Foy dans la Nouvelle France* (Paris, 1691). Father Anastase afterward returned to Louisiana as chaplain for Iberville.

[3] Crevel de Moranget was a nephew of La Salle.

[4] The name is spelled Liotot, Lanctot, and as printed here. He was the surgeon of La Salle's expedition, who was embarked at La Rochelle, having given no previous account of his history.

When three days' journey from the Naouadiche, finding himself short of provisions, he sent M. de Morangé, his servant, and the Chaouanon, to hunt in a small wood with orders to return in the evening. When they had killed some buffaloes, they stopped to dry the meat. M. de La Salle was uneasy, so he asked the Frenchmen who among them would go and look for them. Du Haut and Lanquetot had for a long time determined to kill M. de La Salle, because, during the journey he had made along the seacoast, he had compelled the brother of Lanquetot, who was unable to keep up, to return to camp, and as he was returning alone he was massacred by the savages. This caused Lanquetot to swear that he would never forgive his brother's death. And as in long journeys there are always many discontented persons in a company, he easily found partisans. He offered, therefore, with them, to search for M. de Morangé, in order to have an opportunity to execute their design.

Having found the men, he told them that M. de La Salle was uneasy about them; but, they declaring that they could not set off till the next day, it was agreed to sleep there. After supper they arranged the order of the watch, that it should begin with M. de Moranget; after him was to follow the servant of M. de La Salle, and then the Chaouanon. After they had kept their watch and were asleep, the others massacred them, as persons attached to M. de La Salle. Toward daybreak they heard the reports of pistols, which were fired as signals by M. de La Salle, who was coming with the Recollect Father in search of them. The wretches, suspecting that it was he, lay in wait for him, placing M. du Haut's servant in front. When M. de La Salle came near, he asked where M. de Morangé was. The servant, keeping on his hat, answered that he was behind. As M. de La Salle advanced to remind him of his duty, he received three balls in his head, and fell down dead (March 19, 1687). I do not know whether the Recollect Father could do anything, but it is agreed that he was frightened, and, thinking that he also was to be killed, threw himself on his knees before the murderers, and begged for a quarter of an hour to prepare his soul. They replied that they were willing to spare his life.

They went on together to where M. Cavelier was, and, as

they advanced, shouted, "Down with your arms." M. Cavelier, on hearing the noise, came forward, and, when told of the death of his brother, threw himself on his knees before the murderers, making the same request that had been made by the Recollect Father. They granted him his life. He asked to go and bury the body of his brother, but they refused.[1]

Such was the end of one of the greatest men of this age, a man of an admirable spirit, and capable of undertaking all sorts of explorations. This murder much grieved the three Naoudiche whom M. de La Salle had found hunting, and who had accompanied him to the village. After the murderers had committed this crime, they seized all the baggage of the deceased, and the rest of the Frenchmen continued their journey to the village of the Naouadiche, where they found two Frenchmen domesticated among the savages, who had deserted in M. de La Salle's time.[2]

After staying some days in this village, the savages proposed to them to go to war against the Quanouatino, to which the Frenchmen agreed, lest the savages should ill-treat them. As they were ready to set off for war, an English buccaneer,[3] whom M. de La Salle had always liked, begged of the murderers that, as the savages were soon going to war, they would give him and his comrades some shirts. They flatly refused, which offended the Englishman, and he could not help expressing this to his comrades. They agreed together to make a second demand, and if refused, to revenge the death of M. de La Salle.

This they did some days afterwards. The Englishman, taking two pistols in his belt, accompanied by a Frenchman with a gun, went deliberately to the cabin of the murderers, whom they found outside shooting with bows and arrows.

Lanquetot bade them good day, and asked how they were. They answered that they were pretty well, that as for his

[1] Professor Bolton concludes in the article noted above, p. 317, note 1, that La Salle's death occurred on Brazos River just above the mouth of the Navasota.

[2] These Frenchmen were Ruter, a Breton seaman, and Grollet, from La Rochelle.

[3] This man, whose name was Hiens, is called by some authorities a German. La Salle took him into his party in the West Indies.

party it was not necessary to ask how they did, as they were always eating turkeys and good venison. Then the Englishman asked if they would not give some ammunition and shirts, as they had taken possession of everything. They replied that M. de La Salle was their debtor, and that what they had taken was theirs. "You will not, then?" said the Englishman. "No," replied they. On which the Englishman said to one of them, "You are a wretch; you murdered my master," and firing his pistol killed him on the spot. Du Hault tried to get into his cabin, but the other Frenchman shot him also with a pistol, in the loins, which threw him on the ground. M. Cavelier and Father Anastase ran to his assistance. Du Haut had hardly time to confess himself, for the father had but just given him absolution when he was finished by another pistol-shot at the request of the savages, who could not endure that he should live after having killed their chief. The Englishman took possession of everything. He gave a share to M. Cavelier, who, having found my abode at the Akansas, went from thence to the Islinois. The Englishman, with five companions, remained at the Naouadiche.

We reached the Cadodaquis on the 10th of May. We stayed there to rest our horses, and went away on the 17th, with a guide who was to take us to the village of the Coroas. After four days' journey he left us, in consequence of an accident which happened to us in crossing a marsh. As we were leading our horses by the bridle, he fancied he was pursued by an alligator, and this led him to try to climb a tree in the midst of this little marsh. In doing this, he entangled the halter of my horse, which was drowned. This induced him to leave us without saying anything, lest we should punish him for the loss of the horse. This left us in great difficulty respecting the road which we were to take.

I forgot to say that the savages who have horses use them both for war and for hunting. They make pointed saddles, wooden stirrups, and body-coverings of several skins, one over the other, as a protection from arrows. They arm the breasts of their horses with the same material, a proof that they are not very far from the Spaniards.

When our guide was gone I told our Chaouanon to take the lead; he said in answer that since he was accompanying

me that was my affair; and as I was unable to change his purpose I was obliged to act as guide. I directed our course to the southeast, and after about forty leagues' march, crossing seven rivers, we found the river of the Coroas. We made a raft to explore the other side of the river, but, finding there no dry land, we were compelled to resolve to abandon our horses, as it was impossible to take them on, upon account of the great inundation.

In the evening, as we were preparing to depart, we saw some savages. We called to them in vain—they ran away, and we were unable to come up with them. Two of their dogs came to us, which with our two, we embarked the next day on our rafts, and left our horses. We crossed fifty leagues of flooded country. The water, where it was least deep, reached half-way up the leg; and in all this tract we found only one little island of dry land, where we killed a bear and dried its flesh. It would be difficult to give an idea of the trouble we had to get out of this miserable country, where it rained night and day. We were obliged to sleep on the trunks of two great trees, placed together, to make our fires on the trees, [to make] rafts on entering every new field, to eat our dogs, and to carry our baggage across large tracts covered with reeds. In short, I never suffered so much in my life as in this journey to the Mississipy, which we reached on the 11th of July.

Finding where we were, and that we were only thirty leagues from the Coroas, we resolved to go there, although we had never set foot in that village. We arrived there on the evening of the 14th. We had not eaten for three days, as we could find no animal, on account of the great flood. I found at this village two of the Frenchmen who had abandoned me. The savages received me very well, and were concerned at the troubles which we had had, for during the week they did not cease to make good cheer for us, sending men every day to hunt and fish, and not sparing their chickens and turkeys. I set out on the 20th, and arrived on the 31st at the Akansas, where the fever fastened on me, which obliged me to stay there till the 11th of August, when I left that place, and it continued with me to the Islinois, where I arrived in the month of September.

I should not know how to describe the beauty of all the countries that I have mentioned, and, if I had worked them, I would say for what purposes they might be utilized. As for the Mississipy, it might produce every year peltries to the amount of 2,000 crowns, and abundance of lead and of timber for ships. Commerce in silk might be established there, and a port to harbor ships and form a base for the Gulf of Mexico. Pearls will be found, and even if wheat could not be had below, the upper river would furnish it, and one could furnish the islands[1] with what they need, such as lumber, vegetables, grain, and salt beef.

If I had not been in haste to compose this narrative, I might have put into it many details which would have pleased the reader, but the loss of my memoranda in my voyages brings it about that this narrative is not written as I should have wished.

HENRY DE TONTY.

[1] The French possessions in the West Indies.