

his sons and his most beloved wife. At the end of three days, the scouts returned, announcing that the enemy were not at all on their guard ; but that San Matheo, and two small forts which they had added on either side of the river, were in very good condition. De Bray at the same time declared that the garrison of these three forts was four hundred men. This report showed de Gourgues that he could hope for success in the attempt only by surprise and secrecy ; and having appointed the Somme River,¹ for a general rendezvous of all the forces, they were all there at the day prescribed.

Preparation for the attack.

The Indians, after drinking their apalachine,² according to their custom, swore in their manner not to abandon the French, and they at once marched. They endured much, for it was the rainy season ; and although they made only two leagues the first day, the French were extremely fatigued. There were still two leagues to make to reach the first of the two forts covering San Matheo, and the Chevalier de Gourgues had taken nothing all day : yet as all depended on diligence, he took with him a guide and ten arquebusiers, and started to reconnoitre the fort, which he was resolved to attack the next morning ; but a small river, which it was necessary to cross, was so swollen by the rains and by the tide, which was still rising, that it was impossible for him to advance any further.

He accordingly returned to the camp quite dejected ; but an Indian³ having promised to lead him by an easier path, he again set out with all the French, ordering the Indians to strike through the woods, and meet him at day-break at the passage of the river. This order was punctually executed ; but the river was not yet fordable in any place, and so heavy a rain came on, that they had great

They march on the first fort.

¹ The manuscript already cited calls it *Saraba*.—*Charlevoix*. Terneau prints, Halimacani (p. 336). The Sarabay was a river further on (p. 339).

² See p. 139. This is the "black drink" of the Creeks. See Parkman's *Pioneers*, p. 149.

³ *Hilicopile*, an Indian king. *La Reprinse*, p. 340 ; *Basanier*, p. 212.