

heartening to Mr. de la Sale. The nation on whom he reckoned most for the success of his enterprise was the Illinois, then very populous and occupying several posts which could be made convenient trading stations between Canada and the Mississippi. It was to secure these Indians that the Chevalier de Tonti had advanced on that side, and he had without difficulty succeeded in winning them to his interest; but, as he was very slightly attended, he could not save his new allies from receiving, almost under his eyes, a severe repulse at the hands of the Iroquois, who, failing to bring about a rupture between them and the French, wished, before declaring war on us, to put it out of their power to help us, surprised them, and cut to pieces a very great number.

La Sale then beheld himself in a most trying position; he had everything to fear at the hands of the Iroquois, whom he must expect to find everywhere in his path; the Ottawas were suspected, nor could he even trust to the French under his orders, some of whom, it is said, several times attempted his life. They did more: if we may credit what was published at the time, they frequently solicited his own allies to rise upon him, and, to persuade them, did not hesitate to affirm that he had plotted with the Iroquois to effect their total destruction.

While all this was going on he arrived among the Illinois, and soon perceived that they had somewhat changed towards him: he even believed himself on the point of having that whole nation upon him, when unable to depend on any of his own men. Nevertheless, he showed no fear; on the contrary, he never displayed greater firmness and resolution. By this he won their esteem; but he wished to inspire too much fear. This was always his great fault, and the main source of his misfortunes. Nor could he ever gain it over himself to be less dissembled, or to be more gracious towards those whom he needed

1679.

The  
Illinois are  
defeated  
by the  
Iroquois.

La Sale's  
firmness in  
his misfor-  
tunes.

<sup>1</sup> See Le Clercq, *Etablissement*, ii., pp. 157, 171.