

1687-90.

they resolved. After deliberating together on the means of success, they thought it the surest plan to go forward to meet him, murder all who opposed their design, and thus open a way for the parricide, which they meditated.¹

So strange a resolution could be inspired only by that blind despair, which hurries criminals into the abyss they have dug for themselves; but an incident which they could not have foreseen, placed in their hands the victim they sought. A river, which divided them from the camp, and which had swollen considerably after their passing it, detained them two days; and this delay, which at first seemed an obstacle, facilitated the execution of their design. De la Sale, surprised at not seeing his nephew return, nor the two men who accompanied him, resolved to go himself to obtain some tidings. It was remarked that, at the moment when he started, he seemed troubled, and asked, with a kind of uneasiness unusual in him, whether Moranget had not had a misunderstanding with some one.²

He then called Joutel, committed the control of the camp to him, instructing him to make the rounds from time to time, not to let any one stray off, and to light fires, so that the smoke might serve to bring him to his true course, in case, on his way back, he should lose it. He set out on the 20th, with Father Anastasius and an Indian.³ As he approached the spot where the assassins had halted, he perceived eagles flying quite near to it; this led him to think there was a carcass of some kind there, and he fired his gun. The conspirators, who had not perceived him, inferred that it was la Sale approaching, and prepared their arms.⁴

¹ Joutel, *Journal Historique*, p. 198. 199-200. Father Anastasius (*Le*

² Joutel, p. 199, says he asked whether Liotot, Hiens, and Duhaut had not shown discontent.

³ Father Anastasius (*Le Clercq, Etablissement, de la Foi*, ii., p. 338) says two Indians, and mentions the 20th as the date. Talon says only F. Anastasius.

⁴ Joutel, *Journal Historique*, pp. 199-200. Father Anastasius (*Le Clercq*, ii., pp. 338-9; Hennepin, p. 242) speaks of La Salle's pious conversation on the way, and of his sadness. He says that after going two leagues they found the bloody cravat of the lackey, saw the eagles, and perceived some of his people. He does not say he fired.