

1730.

escape of the Natchez. On the 25th, the prisoners were given up to the Choctaws, and the army withdrew to the bluff on the riverside, having had during the whole siege only nine men killed and wounded.¹ On the night of the 28th-29th, the Natchez, having succeeded in outwitting the French who had been appointed to watch them, escaped, and this was perceived only when it was too late to pursue them.² Thus the sole fruit of this expedition was the rescue of the prisoners, who had next to be ransomed from the Choctaws,³ and the erection of a fort on the very spot to which they had retired. The Chevalier d'Artaguette,⁴ who had extremely distinguished himself in all the engagements, was left as commandant with a garrison, in order to secure the navigation of the river.

It is admitted that the soldiers acted very badly at the siege; that fifteen negroes, who were put under arms, fought like heroes, and that if all the others could have been armed and put in the place of the soldiers, they would have succeeded in storming the besieged works. The settlers, commanded by d'Arembourg and de Laye, also did very well.⁵ They cheerfully undertook all the labors, and whatever else was ordered. "These creoles," says Mr. Perrier, "will be good soldiers as soon as they are drilled. In fine, the Natchez were reduced to the last extremity; two days more and we should have seen them with their necks in the halter; but we were every moment on the point of being abandoned by the Choc-

¹ Perrier, in one of his letters, says we lost fifteen. *Charlevoix*. He says in the siege and in the detachments. See Gayarré, i., p. 250. Diron d'Artaguette, (Gayarré, i., p. 261,) says 8.

² Father le Petit, (Kip,) p. 298. Le Page du Pratz, who describes this siege, vol. iii., pp. 286-292, ridicules the idea of their escaping unperceived with their arms, household utensils, wives and children, and insinuates that the French gave them the opportunity.

³ They were obtained with great difficulty and at a very high ransom. Dumont, ii., p. 189. Le Page du Pratz, iii., pp. 293-4.

⁴ Dumont and Le Page du Pratz say the Baron de Creant, or Crenet.

⁵ Dumont's account of this siege is vague. *Memoires*, ii., pp. 181-8. Most of the families that escaped the massacre, settled at Pointe Coupée. *Ib.*, p. 192. The orphans were taken by the Ursuline nuns. Father le Petit, (Kip's *Jesuit Missions*), p. 301.