

1731. relief, and on the 21st of October, Mr. de Loubois set out from New Orleans at the head of sixty men to reinforce him. He had advanced six leagues up Red River, and was only seven or eight days' march from the Natchitoches, when the Sieur Fontaine, sent by de Saint Denys to Perrier, informed him that the Natchez had been defeated; that the Natchitoches had at the outset wished to attack them, but being only forty against two hundred, they had been compelled to retire, and even abandon their village after losing four of their men; that the Natchez had seized the village, and intrenched themselves there; that then de Saint Denys, having received a reinforcement of Assinais and Attacapas, who were joined by some Spaniards, had attacked the enemy's intrenchments and killed eighty-two, including all their chiefs; that all the survivors had taken flight, and that the Natchitoches were in close pursuit.¹

Forces of
the Chickasaws.

So many losses, and especially the loss of the chiefs, reduced the Natchez to a mere tribal band; but there were enough left to harass the settlers of Louisiana, and to interrupt trade. Moreover, it was impossible to dissemble any longer with the Chickasaws, who were not long now in declaring themselves openly, which they had hitherto avoided doing. They numbered a thousand warriors, and eighty or a hundred Natchez might yet join them, to say nothing of the few remaining Corrois and Yazoos. This was enough to plunge the colony back into the panic from which it had not entirely recovered, and it beheld itself on the eve of sustaining a new war, to which its present forces did not promise a speedy termination.

Their
intrigue to
excite our
negroes to
revolt.

The Chickasaws, the fiercest and bravest of all the Louisiana Indians, after raising the mask as they had just done at the Tonicas, expected, of course, that we

¹ Diron d'Artaguet, June 24, 1731, says he had 14 Spaniards and 400 Assinais, he gives the French loss, two soldiers, one Spaniard, and many Indians; the Natchez loss, killed and prisoners, 74. Gayarré, i., p. 282. Dumont, ii., pp. 198-200. Le Page du Pratz, iii., p. 272.