

1713-25. do the same to the Messieurs de la Loire, the elder of whom had set out for the Illinois with another party of these savages, while the younger remained in their great village. But one of those who accompanied the former, warned him to be on his guard. He immediately spoke to all the others in private, and without revealing the name of his informant, he promised them a great reward, and gave them his word to keep their secret if they acknowledged the truth.

The Messrs.  
de la Loire  
escape.

All declared that at a point six leagues further on, where they would have to run close by the shore to avoid a very dangerous whirlpool, a party of one hundred and fifty of their tribe, armed with muskets, were lying in wait for them, commanded by a chief named le Barbu, and that he would infallibly be slain there. This avowal of eight men, all stating the same thing, induced la Loire to turn back; but as he had every reason to believe that there was a general conspiracy among the Natchez, he was filled with anxiety in regard to his brother.

Penicaut, who accompanied him, offered to rescue him from the great village of the Natchez, and adopted these steps to effect his design. The whole party having arrived about an hour and a half before nightfall at the Natchez landing, Penicaut went ashore alone, telling la Loire to wait for him till midnight, and that if he did not appear by that time, to give him up for dead; in which case his only course would be to push on. He then advanced towards the cabin of the younger la Loire, which was a league distant, carrying only his gun, powder-flask and a few balls.

As he approached the village, some Natchez, who perceived him, ran to tell la Loire that a Frenchman was coming; he came out to see who it was, and recognizing Pénicaut, asked tidings of his brother and the reason of his coming. Penicaut told him that he had fallen sick; but once in his cabin, he told him to send for the Great Chief of the Natchez, who came at once. Penicaut told him that six of the eight Natchez who had started with the Sieur de la Loire and him, to go to the Illinois, hav-