

Perrier pretends that what obliged de Loubois to rest satisfied with saving the prisoners still in the hands of the Indians, without attempting an assault, was, in the first place, because he could not depend upon his troops, especially after seeing them abandon the trench, as they did on the 22nd; in the second place, that the Choctaws were suspected of a design of betraying us; thirdly, that the enemy had spread the report that the Chickasaws and English were coming to their assistance. Meanwhile, on the 25th, the fort most closely invested¹ hoisted a flag. A Choctaw chief² at once advanced with a party of his men, to speak to the besieged. "Do you remember, or have you ever seen," said he, "that Indians ever kept the field in such numbers before a fort for two months? Judge by this our zeal for the French. Hence it is useless for you, a mere handful of men compared with us, to refuse any longer obstinately to give up the prisoners whom you hold, for if the French were to fire all their cannon, you would soon be in powder. For our part, know that we are resolved to keep you blockaded here till you submit to what is required of you, if we have to plant grain and settle here."

1730.

What saved
the
besieged.

Perrier assures us, in his letters, that in this parley, or in some other interview, the Natchez reproached the Choctaws in the presence of the French, with having themselves entered the general conspiracy, of which they gave all the particulars.³

The fact is, that these Indians hoisted their flag only to make known that they consented to give up the prisoners; but they at the same time declared that we must be satisfied with that, and before all else, the army with its cannon must withdraw to the bank of the river; if not that, they would burn all their prisoners. This last consideration determined de Loubois to do what was asked of him, yet without abandoning his design to prevent the

They give
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¹ Fort la Farine. D'Artaguet, p. 260.

³ Dispatch of March 18, 1730. Gayarré, i., pp. 250-3.

² Alibamon Mengo.