

collect himself, and, having perceived Father Biard praying, started up in great agitation, and ran, and threw himself on his knees before the said Father; and, although he had never before spoken to him, said: "My Father, I pray you to confess me, I am a dead man." Father Biard got up to console him, seeing clearly that he was troubled; the whole body-guard likewise turned their eyes upon them, and each one looked about him to see if there was anything to fear. By chance or design, whichever it was, I know not, a certain madcap stepped forward and picked up, at two good paces from Merveille, a carbine, all loaded and primed, with the trigger down, and cried: "Oh, the traitor! He wanted [171] to get hold of this carbine and have a few shots from it." The Malouin answered that that could not be, because since his arrival he had always been in their hands; and so it was impossible for him to have prepared or even seen this carbine; and, if he had seen it, he was too far away to get hold of it without being prevented. But in spite of all he said, he, and three others of his men, who seemed to be the worst, were bound.

Merveille had his hands bound behind his back so tightly, that he could not rest, and he began to complain very pitifully. Father Biard taking pity on him, begged sieur de Biencourt to have the sufferer untied, whom he pledged man for man, alleging that, if they had any fears about the said Merveille, they might enclose him [172] in one of the Carthusian beds,⁴⁰ and that he would stay at the door to prevent his going out: that if any noise were heard the punishment therefor should fall upon him as well as upon the other. Sieur de Biencourt granted Father Biard's request, and Merveille was untied and con-