

At first, Monsieur our Commandant, listening only to the dictates of his own courage, adopted the design of placing himself at the head of the troops, but it was represented to him that he ought not to quit *New Orleans*, where his presence was absolutely necessary, that there was danger of the *Tchactas* determining to fall upon the City, if it should be deprived of its troops; and the Negroes, to free themselves from slavery, might join them, as some had done with the *Natches*. Moreover he could feel perfectly easy with regard to the conduct of the troops, as Monsieur the Chevalier de Loubois, with whose experience and bravery he was well acquainted, had been appointed to command them.

While our little army was repairing to the *Tonikas*, seven hundred *Tchactas* mustered, and conducted by Monsieur le Sueur, marched toward the *Natches*. We were informed by a party of these people that the Savages were not at all on their guard, but passed all their nights in dancing. The *Tchactas* took them therefore by surprise, and made a descent on them on the 27th of January, at the break of day. In less than three hours they had delivered 59 persons, both women and children, with the Tailor and Carpenter, and 106 Negroes or Negro women with their children; they made 18 of the *Natches* prisoners and took 60 scalps. They would have taken more, if they had not been intent on freeing the slaves, as they had been directed. They had but two men killed and seven or eight wounded. They encamped with their prizes at the grant of Sainte Catherine, in a bare cattle-yard enclosed with stakes. The victory would have been complete if they had waited for the arrival of the French army, as had been agreed upon with their Deputies.