Chapter 16

The Year 1714

M. Rogeon, a director, arrives in Louisiana—Treachery of the Natchez, who murder five Frenchmen—The author's daring undertaking—The French are avenged upon the Natchez—Fort built in their village and named Rosalie

AS EARLY as February of this year, the flûte named La Dauphine arrived at the Isle Dauphine roadstead, commanded by Captain Belanger. He brought M. Rogeon and his son. M. Rogeon came to be director, replacing M. Duri-gouin. Also on the ship was M. de Varène, an officer, and a great deal of merchandise and munitions. After his vessel was unloaded and he had received a packet of letters from

1 Pickett, too (History of Alabama, I, 229), gives Rogeon as the name of the director who replaced Crozet's director Dirigouin. A better spelling of the name may be Raujon, which appears in letters of both Duclos and Bienville written in 1716 (in Rowland and Sanders, MPA, III, 199) while Crozet still had his monopoly. By November, 1719, plans were made to send director Raujon back to France, with his accounts, in the protective custody of a ship's captain. Minutes of the Council of Commerce, Dauphin Island, November 14, 1719, ibid., III, 280–81.

2 M. de Varènè was a young nobleman who scandalized his family in France, and some people in Louisiana, by eloping either with a married woman or with a woman he had married secretly, if at all. Minutes of the Conseil de Marine for January 2, 1716, signed by Louis-Alexandre de Bourbon, Count de Toulouse, and Victor-Marie, Le Maréchal d'Estrees, contain the details of the story. Director Raujon, too, had got himself involved with this woman after helping the couple elope on the boat. When Sieur de La Varene [sic] went on to the Illinois Country, apparently to escape the scandal known on the coast (this is his complaint), Governor Cadillac saw to it that the slanders should follow him. (The Council Minutes are printed in MPA, II, 209–17.) By October, 1717, the young nobleman had either married or proved wedlock to the satisfaction of the Church at Mobile, for on October 3, [1717], was baptized Marie Jeanne, child of the Sieur de la Vareine (his autograph is devarene Apuril) and his wife Dame Anne Quentin—born in legitimate wedlock. (Mobile Baptismal Records.) There is only slight chance that the two men are not identical.
M. de la Mothe for the Company, Captain Belanger did not long delay in going back, taking M. Durigoûin with him.

A little later, M. de la Loire, the elder, came down from the Natchez to Mobile. On the way down, he had met a boat in which four Frenchmen were going up to the Illinois to engage in trading with the goods they had in their boat. When they got to the Natchez, these four Frenchmen hired four Natchez savages to help them take their boat as high as the Illinois, as the current on the Mississippi was very rapid at that time. They went together as high as Le Petit Gouffre. Here in the night the Natchez caught the four Frenchmen asleep, murdered them, and after stripping them threw them into the river. Later during the night they went back home to the Natchez, where they divided the goods that were in the boat and carried them into their huts.

I was at the Natchez at that time; and no matter what precautions they had taken, I did not fail to notice this, having seen in their huts some of the merchandise that those Frenchmen had brought in their boat. I reported it to young M. de la Loire, with whom his brother had left me to guard the merchandise in the warehouse the French had at the Natchez; but we pretended to know nothing about this. A little later, M. de la Loire, the elder, arrived from Mobile with three boats loaded with merchandise and fourteen Frenchmen. Also there was an officer named M. de Varène, who was having some goods of his own taken up to the Illinois. Before leaving Mobile, M.

---