

1672. He wished to rule alone, and there was nothing that he left undone to remove those whom he feared to find in his way. His valor and ability were equal; no one could better assume over the nations whom he governed or with whom he had to treat, that ascendancy so necessary to retain them in duty and respect. When he chose, he gained the friendship of the French and their allies, and no general ever treated his enemies with greater hauteur and nobleness. His views for the aggrandizement of the colony were great and just, and it was not his fault if eyes were not opened to the advantage which France might derive from it; but his prejudices sometimes prevented the execution of the projects which depended on him. It is not easy to reconcile the regularity and even piety which he professed, with that acerbity and vindictiveness which he displayed against those he took umbrage at or did not like; and on one of the most important occasions of his life he gave ground to suppose that his ambition and the desire of preserving his authority had more power over him than zeal for the public good. The reason is, that there is no virtue but forgets itself, when a dominant passion is allowed to have sway. Count de Frontenac might have been a great prince, had heaven placed him on a throne; but he had faults dangerous in a subject who is not convinced that his glory consists in sacrificing every thing for the sake of his sovereign and the public good.¹

Discovery
of the
Mississippi.

Meanwhile Mr. Talon employed the short time he had still to spend in the colony in a manner well fitted to make him regretted. After having established the right of his royal master to the very extremity of the north, and far into the west, he undertook to make new discoveries. It was known in general by the reports of the Indians that there was in the west of New France, a great river, called Mechasippi by some, and Micissippi by others, which flowed neither north nor east;² hence no doubt was enter-

¹ Compare de la Potherie, *Histoire de l'Amérique Sept.*, iv., p. 110.

² For the earliest indications of the Mississippi, see *Relation*, 1660,