

1687-90.

Reflections
on Mr.
de la Sale's
conduct.

When it was seen what defeated his enterprise, nothing was easier than to profit by his faults to carry out the really solid part of his project: that is to say, to secure the whole course of the Micissipi; as it was of very great importance for us to have a settlement in that part of Florida, were it only to give us a cruising station in the Gulf of Mexico, and to strengthen the frontiers of New France in the direction of the English colonies. It was even as much to the interest of the Spaniards as of ourselves to put this barrier beyond insult, as they might well have foreseen that the English, masters of one part of ancient French Florida, to which they had given the name of Carolina, would not halt there; but, step by step, would push their settlements down to St. Augustine, as has really happened by the settlement of New Georgia; that thence to the Micissipi, nothing could long stop them; that it would then be easy for them to cross that great river, and give them much trouble in Old and New Mexico; whereas, if they found the French on the banks of the Micissipi, the jealousy of these two nations, naturally incompatible, would insure their safety.

But men's minds in France were still so preoccupied with the mines of Santa Barbara, that they long obstinately clung to the desire of realizing la Sale's chimera. They even flattered themselves, soon after his death, that they had succeeded by an intrigue, set on foot with the Count de Piñalossa. This resource failing—apparently because the Count raised his pretensions too high, and because there was no security on either side—the charm, it seems, vanished. Philip V. had ascended the Spanish throne, so

have sent some on, to find the Mississippi, as they would easily have done, and then brought up all his men from Fort St. Louis; but it is evident that he sent out no explorers, only went on, in a sort of grand heroic way, with no fixed purpose. To me, he seems a man prodigiously overrated; and that to actual incapacity, all his misfortunes are properly to be ascribed. He was, doubtless, a persuasive and alluring talker in setting forth his projects, though utterly incapable of carrying out even the simplest.