

BOOK XIII.

THERE is no virtue that is not marred by some defect. 1684-90. This is the ordinary lot of humanity. What crowns our humiliation is that the greatest faults often attend the most eminent qualities, and that the jealousy the latter inspire almost always finds a specious pretext in the former to cover the baseness and injustice of that passion. It is for those set to govern men, to give light, so to issue from this labyrinth, to separate truth from the darkness with which passion would dim it, and so well to know those whom it employs, as to take due precaution against their bad qualities, while permitting them to employ those which are good.

This was the chief care of de Seignelay in regard to de la Sale, when it was proposed to accept his services. Though prejudiced against him by de la Barre's correspondence, he resolved to see him personally; and, after several interviews, he concluded that, even admitting the truth of part of the charges against him, de la Sale possessed talents which might make him useful to the State, and he gave him high marks of esteem. Encouraged by this favorable reception, de la Sale proposed to the minister the design which he had formed of reconnoitring by sea the mouth of the Micissippi, in order to open the way for French vessels, and found a settlement there. His project was approved, and he received orders to make his preparations.

In this he spent the whole winter; and, when the preparations were completed, de Seignelay handed him his

La Salle's
project pre-
sented to
Mr. de
Seignelay
and
approved.