

1700. May 2nd, 1699, that vessels are fitting out in England and Holland to go and settle Louisiana, on the work of the Recollect Father Louis Hennepin, who made a book on the subject and dedicated it to King William."

Proteusions  
of the  
English,  
their  
designs and  
attempts.

In a second letter, written a month after the former, the General informed the same minister that he had been assured that the King of Great Britain, in his inability to support the French refugees in England, had the previous autumn sent a considerable number in three ships to take possession of the Micissipi, and that twenty Englishmen from New York had started for the Illinois, pretending that all the country to the south belonged to them. In fact, in October 1698, three ships sailed from London for Louisiana, but put in at Carolina, whence, some time after, two of them, of 12 and 24 guns, continued their voyage.

They went to the western extremity of the Gulf of Mexico for the Micissipi, their maps placing that great river there. Not finding it, they sailed back eastwardly, hugging the shore till they at last discovered the object of their search. The smaller of the two entered the river, and was the one driven out by de Bienville. The other returned to the west and pushed on to the province of Panuco in New Spain. Thus the French colony of Louisiana, in its very cradle, was menaced by two powerful neighbors, equally jealous of the new settlement, namely the Spaniards, who could not suffer any interference with their possession of the Gulf of Mexico, so long regarded by them as their domain; and the English, whose proximity, enterprising character and vast pretensions rendered them still more formidable.

Beside the design formed by the English King of throwing on the Micissipi a large number of French refugees then in Carolina, and of whom that colony would be glad to be rid, after deriving great services from them, that prince also wished thereby to establish his right to that great river, which afforded him a convenient naval station in the Gulf of Mexico; but this should have induced the Spaniards to be less unfavorable to our settlement, which