

could give them less umbrage than the vicinity and immense power of the English, against whom we now act as a barrier for them.

1700.

On the other hand the French refugees, in whom English ill-treatment had perhaps revived love of country, would willingly have seized the opportunity to secure to their lawful prince the possession of that fine country, and one of them, who was on board the English vessel referred to, made no secret of it to Mr. de Bienville. He told him that every soul of them earnestly desired his Most Christian Majesty to permit them to settle under his protection in Louisiana, where he would always find them most faithful subjects; that on their side they asked only liberty of conscience; this granted, they would soon come in great numbers, and guarantee to render that great territory a most flourishing country in a few years.

The French refugees offer to settle the country.

This proposal was not to the taste of Louis XIV., who had decided not to suffer either in his kingdom, or in the colonies dependent on it, any religion but his own. After the death of that great prince, these same refugees renewed their offers to the Duke of Orleans, regent of the kingdom, who rejected them for the same reasons that influenced the King his uncle, as I learned at the very time from the late Marshal d'Étrées, who had strongly advocated that policy in Council.<sup>1</sup>

Their offer rejected.

The Spaniards did not act as openly as the English did against a settlement which gave them such umbrage; but they seem to have acted more adroitly to check its progress and prevent its being solidly planted. In fact, down to these last days they have succeeded, by the bait of a small and unprofitable trade, in retaining us between the Micissippi, which we have neglected to settle, and Pensacola, on a sandy hill, (Biloxi,) on an island (Dauphin) as worthless, and on a river (Maubile) which it was well enough to secure, but which should not have been made a great ob-

Conduct of the Spaniards in regard to Louisiana. French errors.

<sup>1</sup> This Huguenot proposal to settle in Louisiana was given to Bienville in writing by M. Secon, a French engineer on Barr's vessel, Bénard de la Harpe, Journal, p. 19, Sauvole's Journal, p. 238.