

BOOK XXI.

WHAT often befalls two classes of persons befell Louisiana. The one class, with acknowledged and superior merit, for some inexplicable reason, never succeed in obtaining their due meed of justice, or in displaying their talents, remaining useless and obscure, while possessing every requisite for attaining the highest reputation and rendering the most essential services to the state.

1700-25.

Various
opinions
as to
Louisiana.

The other class, from the fact that too favorable an opinion was formed of them at first, or an imaginary merit attributed to them instead of a real one, are rejected in spite of solid merit, being compelled to bear the penalty of the hasty judgments formed in regard to them. Unless I am much deceived, my readers will themselves apply this to the province with which I close my History.

We have seen that the Spaniards under Ferdinand de Soto had, at great expense, attempted to settle Florida; that their commander spent the whole last year of his life in exploring both banks of the Micissipi, called by his historian, Garcilaso de la Vega, the Cucagua; that neither he nor his successor, Moscoso, took any steps to found a colony; and that, for a long time after, men seemed to be ignorant in Spain that one of the greatest rivers in the world ran through Florida, watering a delightful country, with a healthy and temperate climate, the possession of which would secure to the Catholic King all the Gulf of Mexico.

The French, after discovering all the known course of this same river, seemed to pay scarcely any greater atten-