

1712-25.

on the Micissipi,¹ he built some houses for the Frenchmen whom he intended to station there ; he induced some other Indians to join the Natchitoches, assuring them that he would never forsake them, and he distributed among both, agricultural implements and seed to sow. He then selected twelve of the Frenchmen whom he had brought along, and some Indians, and leaving Red River, which is not navigable above the Island of the Natchitoches, took his route westward.

After twenty days' march he reached the Assinais,² neighbors of the Cenis, if they are not the Cenis themselves,³ and quite near the spot where de la Sale was killed. But the fact is, that these Indians did not recollect to have ever before seen Frenchmen, or know any other Europeans than some Spaniards, who went naked like themselves and lived miserably. The Assinais gave de Saint Denys guides, and he travelled one hundred and fifty leagues further to the southwest, before reaching the first Spanish settlements.

At last he found, on the banks of a great river, a fort which bore the name of San Juan Bautista, and Presidio del Norte. He was well received by the commandant, Don Pedro de Vilescas,⁴ who took him to his quarters, as well as Medard Jallot, his valet de chambre, surgeon, and Pénicaut, and assigned lodgings for the rest of his party. After some days' rest, Saint Denys began negotiations with Don Pedro ; he told him that he came in behalf of the Governor of Louisiana to propose opening a regulated trade with that colony, under such conditions as he should propose.

The Spanish commandant replied that he could do noth-

¹ The Declaracion makes it 40 leagues from Mobile to Fort St. Jean, 40 leagues from that to Red River, and then 80 leagues to Natchitoches.

² The Declaracion makes it 40 leagues.

³ Pénicaut, Relation, ch. xiv., § 4-5. The Assinais are the Cenis. See

ante vol. iv., p. 78. Bénard de la Harpe says he reached the Assinais Nov. 15.

⁴ Charlevoix here follows Pénicaut. Bénard de la Harpe, p. 129 and le Page du Pratz, ii., p. 12, call him Captain Don Diego Raimond. He was really Don Domingo Ramon.