

1716-36.

of a colony on sterile sands, unapproachable to anything but sloops; unable to defend the shipping or be defended by it; yet it was left there for five whole years.

Commence-
ment of
New
Orleans.

It was, nevertheless, this same year that the foundations were laid of the capital of Louisiana, under the name of New Orleans. Mr. de Bienville having come from Natchez to Maubile to salute the new Governor, told him that he had remarked on the banks of the river a site well fitted for a post, and Mr. de l'Epinaï entrusted him with its establishment; he gave him eight salt smugglers, just arrived from France, with carpenters, to build some houses there. He at the same time commanded Captain Blondel to relieve Mr. de Pailloux at Natchez, the latter officer receiving orders to join Mr. de Bienville and aid him in his enterprise, which was not carried out to any great extent at this time. Mr. de Pailloux was made Governor of the rising city. In my Journal I have noted the drawbacks of its situation.¹

A ship
enters the
Mississippi.

1718.

In the early part of the following year, they at last thought of sounding the mouth of the Mississippi, to see whether ships could enter with all their cargo on board, and sixteen feet of water were found on the bar. The Neptune,² just arrived from France, was at once sent there, and it ascended without any difficulty to New Orleans. It is astonishing, that after this experiment men did not open their eyes to the importance of making it at once the headquarters, and that so many thousand men were left to waste with misery and disease under the pretext that there were not batteaux enough to transport them to their destination, when the very ships that brought them from France might have landed them at New Orleans, and even nearer to their concessions.

¹ Pénicaut, Relation, ch. 19, § 7. For the founding of New Orleans, See Dumont, Mémoires Historiques sur la Louisiane, ii., p. 39-46; Le Page du Pratz, Histoire de la Louisiane; Charlevoix, Journal, p. 441; Louisiana Hist. Coll., iii., pp. 179-182. Bienville, in February, 1718,

left 50 carpenters and convicts to clear the ground and build. It was laid out later by la Tour, the engineer.

² Pénicaut, Relation, ch. 20, § 1. The Philippe and the Marie arrived also, but brought few settlers. Dumont, ii., p. 8.