

1720.

he had distinguished himself by some signal action or in some important service. Three days after his departure, two of the King's vessels, the Toulouse and the Henry, which had sailed from Toulon under the command of Messrs. de Valette¹ and de Cafaro, arrived in wretched plight at the roadstead off Dauphin Island. The Jesuit Father Laval, royal professor of hydrography at the port of Toulon, was on board, having come to make observations in Louysiana, and especially to fix the longitude of the mouth of the Micissippi;² but the pestilence having broken out on both vessels, Mr. de Cafaro died on the voyage;³ the chaplains were not able to attend the sick, who were very numerous; accordingly, that religious, feeling that science is only an accessory to a man of his profession, thought the duty of his ministry paramount to any good to be expected from his astronomical observations: he did not go to the Micissippi, although he was only fourteen leagues distant from it: he did not leave the crews, employing in his observations only the moments he stole from sleep. This conduct elicited high praise from the prince who presided in the Navy Council.⁴

De St. Denys at the Natchitoches.

Meanwhile, the Fort of the Natchitoches was always maintained, and some detachments of concessions had advanced in that direction, in hopes of acquiring wealth by trade with the Spaniards, a chimerical hope, which prevented their adopting surer methods of making a solid settlement elsewhere, and which finally ruined them. Towards the close of this year de Bienville received orders from court to send back Mr. de Saint Denys,⁵ whom the

¹ De Vallette Laudun, author of "Journal d'un Voyage fait en 1720." La Haye, 1768. Each of 66 guns. Laval, p. 1. La Harpe, p. 223, says July 1 arrived the Comte de Toulouse, 64, Capt. de Vatet, vice de Cafaro, and the St. Henri, 70, Capt. Domee.

² Father Anthony Laval published in 1728 his Voyage de la Louisiane, 4^o. Mariette, Paris.

³ De Vallette Laudun, p. 195. Ferdinand de Caffaro, brother of the

Marquis de Caffaro, (Barcia, p. 363,) died June 11. B. de la Harpe, p. 223.

⁴ Chateaugu  and other prisoners taken at Pensacola, were brought back to Mobile June 15. Ib. p. 224.

⁵ St. Denys had settled at Biloxi with his colonists and slaves, and had commanded the Indians in the late operations. He was made, in consequence, captain in the army and Governor of Fort Natchitoches. P nicaut, ch. 22.