

BOOK XXII.

It is not easy to say what had hitherto prevented their affording the colonists settled in the different parts of Louisiana the spiritual succors so necessary to new settlements, even on the ground of sound policy. However, on my return from America in the commencement of the year 1723, I found the court and the Company equally surprised at the destitution in which I showed this rising colony to be in this essential point, and the Directors of the Company made it their most pressing duty to remedy this great disorder. They cast their eyes on the Capuchin Fathers, and having obtained several, distributed them in the quarters where there were the greatest number of French dwellings.¹

It was no less important to have missionaries among the Indians amid whom we were settled. We have seen that the salvation of these tribes was always the main object which our kings kept in view before all else, wherever they extended their dominion in the New World, and the experience of nearly two centuries had taught us that the surest means of binding the natives of the country to us,

1723.

Introduction of the Capuchin Fathers into Louisiana.

Missionaries to the Indians thought of.

¹ In 1724 Bienville received orders to return to France; Mr. de la Tour to take command till Mr. de Boisbriant, Governor ad interim, returned from Illinois. He embarked on the Bellona in 1725, but she sank in the Trou du Major; he then went in the Gironde. Before going, Bienville in March published the celebrated "Code Noir," or

"Black Code." See it in Gayarré, i., p. 203; Louisiana Hist. Coll., iii., p. 89. Bienville presented a memoir in his defence: Gayarré, i., p. 219; but was removed, as was his brother Chateaugué, King's Lieutenant, while Captain and Ensign de Noyan, his nephews, were cashiered and sent to France, p. 221.