

Banishment of the Jesuits from Louisiana.

YOU write me, Monsieur, that you were surprised to learn of the arrival at Paris of Jesuits banished from Louisiana by a decree pronounced against them in that colony. You wish to know the reasons for this decree, and what followed its execution. I am familiar with the affair that interests you, and likewise with all that can in any way relate thereto. I lived for almost thirty years in Louisiana, and only departed thence at the beginning of this year.³⁶ I am persuaded that your curiosity has no other motives than your love for religion and for truth. In the recital which I am about to give you, I shall be careful to say nothing which will depart in the least from these two rules.

In the month of June, 1763, the Jesuits of New Orleans, the capital of Louisiana, were still between hope and fear as to their future fate. As early as the preceding year, they had seen their enemies distribute with a triumphant air, manuscript copies of the decree given by the Parliament of Paris, August 6, 1761. But people worthy of respect had calmed their fears. They were expecting a great deal from the information given in their favor, and, above all, from the petition addressed to the King by the bishops of France. They finally learned what they were to expect, at the arrival of the ship, which brought, with the news of peace, orders for their destruction.