## CHAPTER XIII.

The Abuses already detailed, not the only source of Disorder and Disaffection in the Nation—France fiercely competes with England for the Sovereignty of the West—The advantageous position of the former firmly established in Canada and in the Mississippi Valley—Her magnificent Schemes, Finesse, and indomitable Energy—The English to be circumscribed, harassed, and, if possible, driven from the Continent—Upper Carolina exposed to French Emissaries, and menaced by encroaching French Settlements, &c.

The abuses arising in the Nation, from the indiscriminate granting of licenses, from the traffic in intoxicating liquors, and the pernicious influence of men, who falsely claimed to be missionaries of the Cross, though prevalent and lamentable enough, were not the only, nor the most exciting, sources of anarchy and disaffection. England had never been without formidable rivals in her efforts to possess the soil and dominion of North America.

The most powerful of these were the French, under the sagacious rule of Louis the Fourteenth; and never had France encountered her ancient rival on a more magnificent field, and never, in her history, had she displayed a more brilliant policy, or pushed her deep-laid schemes with greater energy. Firmly established in Canada and Louisiana, and rapidly connecting these extreme points by a chain of mili-

tary posts, stretching through the entire length of the Mississippi Valley, and in close commercial alliance with several of the most powerful tribes of the Continent, her triumph was apparently beyond peradventure, and not far distant.

The design of the French was to secure the possession of the great Valley, and having circumscribed the English colonists within their narrow belt along the Atlantic, when everything was ready for the blow, to fall upon them with the hordes of their savage confederates, and exterminate or drive them from the soil.

In an old map constructed previous to 1741, by M. De L'Isle, geographer to the French King, a definite line is traced, marking the eastern limit of France's assumed domain on the American Continent.* It is set out from a point near the City of Charleston, ran north-eastward to Cooper River, which it crossed some sixty miles from the ocean—passed the Santee one hundred miles from its mouth, turned north-westward along the eastern bank of that stream till it reached the Catawba; pursued this tributary into the Alleghany Mountains, followed their course around the head waters of the Potomac to the Susquehanna, crossing it at a point some sixty-five miles from the head of the Chesapeak Bay—ran thence up its eastern bank to the North Branch, and along that stream to the Mohawk, which it crossed some fifty miles above its junction with the

* See Map accompanying Cox's Carolina.

Hudson—thence to a point near the lower extremity of Lake Champlain, and along the channel of that water to the mouth of the Sorrelle, by which it passed, finally, to the River St. Lawrence.

The sandy strip of country lying between this imaginary, defiant line of frontier and the ocean, was all that was allowed England for her portion of the continent. France claimed and ran off for herself the lion's share—the rich, inexhaustible domain of the Mississippi Valley, and an illimitable territory stretching back into the unexplored regions of the West. Had her diplomacy, skill and military energy, won for her the permanent possession of all that she had thus marked out, hers would have been the boast, that the sun never shone upon a more magnificent, territorial empire, than that she had acquired and planted in America.

As early as 1682, her enterprising voyagers had re-discovered the Mississippi, and explored it from its sources to the Gulf of Mexico.* The first expedition set out from Quebec, in Canada, three years after the English had formed their settlement on the coast of Carolina. It was led by a courageous Jesuit priest, named Marquette. His company was composed of Joliet, an experienced Canadian fur trader, five other Frenchmen, and several Indian guides. Their mission was to find the Mississippi River, of which they had heard many vague, though

*The Mississippi had been discovered by the unfortunate Spaniard, De Soto, one hundred and forty years before.

wonderful accounts from the Indians, and from Canadian traders, whose enterprise had led them as far south-westward as the region of the great lakes. Having ascended Fox River to the head of navigation, from Lake Michigan, with their birch-bark canoes on their shoulders, the voyagers crossed the country to the Wisconsin River, on which they again launched their frail boats and floated down to the Mississippi. Marquette, once on the bosom of the great stream he had come in search of, descended as far as the mouth of the Arkansas, charmed with the delightful climate, and the grand natural scenery that every day presented new features of beauty and sublimity to his astonished gaze. He here made the acquaintance of the Chickasaw Indians, who informing him that the banks of the river from their country to the sea, were inhabited by hostile nations, he decided to proceed no farther, and turning about his canoes, paddled northward on the Mississippi, till discovering the mouth of the Illinois, he ascended that stream to its source, and again bearing their canoes across the portage to the spot where Chicago now stands, they once more embarked on Lake Michigan, and, shortly after, Joliet reported their interesting adventures and discoveries to the authorities in Quebec.

A brave, enterprising young Frenchman, named La Salle, happened at that time to be in Quebec, and heard the glowing accounts brought back by those voyagers of the Mississippi and the South west. He had been educated a Jesuit, and had come to America in search of fame and adventure. In-

spired by these discoveries, he conceived and resolved to execute the more daring exploit of exploring the Mississippi to its mouth. First, returning to France, in order to obtain a royal commission for his enterprise, with which he was also granted a monoply in the trade of buffalo skins, he sailed back to Canada, furnished with men and stores, and set out at once on this expedition by the way of the great lakes.*

Two years passed away, and La Salle was still on these waters purchasing furs and building forts. He had not, however, forgotten the main object of his voyage, and at length making his way to the Mississippi by the same route, doubtless, that had been pursued by Marquette, he there constructed a vessel better suited to the rough current of the Father of Waters, and was borne in safety to its mouth. Cox remarks, in his book on Carolina: "The River Meschacebe is so called by the inhabitants of the north; *cebe* meaning river, and *mescha*, great—the great river. The French, who learned it from them, pronounced the name corruptly, Mississippi. The correct name, "Meschacebe," it doth still retain among the savages during half its course. Afterwards, some call it Chucagua, others, Sassagoula and Malabanchia.

This history of the name, Mississippi, differs widely from that given us by the geographies in use.

Mooring his boat, and ascending a hillock in full view of the Gulf, he solemnly took possession of the

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* Pickett's History of Alabama.

country in the name of his King Louis XIV., and in honor of him, called it Louisiana.

La Salle having thus accomplished the great object of his enterprise, returned to the country of the Illinois, there garrisoned Fort St. Louis, and hastened back to Canada and to France, to give an account of his discoveries.

On the fortunate results of these expeditions of Marquette and La Salle, France chiefly founded her claims to the Mississippi Valley, and the regions of the West; and began, without delay, to make ample provision for adding to her right of discovery—the better right of actual occupancy. Her first attempt to colonize the Mississippi proved abortive; but not discouraged, after a few years she renewed it with complete success, under the celebrated pioneer brothers, Iberville and Bienville.

This was in the spring of 1699, and, in three years more, these enterprising leaders had not only effected a settlement at Biloxi, in the territory of the present State of Mississippi, but had erected a fort and warehouses on Mobile Bay—had established a chain of military posts, as far up as the present City of Natchez, and were already in amity and commerce with various Indian tribes.

Louisiana, as defined by France, stretched northward from the Gulf, beyond the sources of the Alleghany and Monongahela.

It was about this period that the English of Carolina first began to harass the French, by sending emissaries to plot against them among the Musco-

gees and Alabamas.* These warlike tribes were induced to take up the bloody hatchet against the French; and they soon became so formidable as to threaten the existence of the colony. Those active emissaries from Carolina were no others, doubtless, than traders, whose interest in the Indian peltry traffic, just then beginning to be lucrative, as well as their inherent hatred and opposition to the French, moved them to adopt any, even the most unscrupulous measures to distress and ruin them. It does not appear that the public authorities of Carolina were yet fully aroused to a sense of the dangers which threatened them from the designs and encroachments of the French.

From a very early period after the settlement on the Cooper and Ashley, adventurous traders, both from Carolina and Virginia, had penetrated among the populous Indian nations, whose towns lay in the territory of the present States of Mississippi and Alabama. "These fearless British traffickers conveyed upon the backs of pack-horses such goods as suited the Indians, from distant Charleston to the remote Chickasaw Nation, over creeks without bridges, rivers without ferries, and woods pathless and pregnant with many dangers." † "Before the removal from Old Charlestowne, on the western bank of the Ashley, the proprietors forbade all trade with the Indians for seven years, that the settlers might become more numerous and better able to defend

* Pickett's History of Alabama. † Pickett, Vol. i., page 218.

themselves." "At the close of the Westoe war, in 1681, many individuals had added to their traffic the purchase of captives; and the proprietors endeavored to check abuses of this kind in the trade and intercourse with the natives, by taking under their nominal protection all the Indians within four hundred miles of Charleston. In 1691, it became expedient to limit, by a heavy penalty, the extent of trade and traveling to the vicinity of the settlement; but private enterprise must soon have rendered the enactment nugatory; for Archdale relates, not many years after, that the colonists had extended their inland trade to the distance of one thousand miles."*

The commerce, however, of Carolinians with the tribes on the Mississippi and Alabama, was as yet desultory and irregular—no trading posts had been established—it was sustained by private enterprise, and regulated wholly by private interest. It was not until 1717, that the Legislature deemed it proper to interfere in a traffic so distant and precarious. In the winter of that year, the House of Commons enjoined it upon the Commissioners of Indian Trade, to consult with Alex. Mackey and James Alford, in order to ascertain the most eligible spot on which to erect a factory for the uses of the trade with the Creeks and Chickasaws.† Several head-men of the latter nation were at that time in Charleston, and the

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*Chalmers and Oldmixon Carr. Coll. Prof. W. J. Rivers's Topics of History.

† MS. Records in Secretary of State's Office.

question being referred to them, their reply was, that they had already intimated to the Governor their willingness to have a trading-house settled at the town of Coosa,* a place that could be easily furnished with goods by means of pack-horses from Savannah Town. It was decided at last, however, that the factory should be established at Talasse.† We have already remarked that, after the erection of this post, Colonel Hastings was withdrawn from the factory on Savannah, and made chief agent at the new house among the Creeks. It was at this time, that one Wm. McGilvery is mentioned as one of a party who had been employed to conduct twenty-three pack-horses from Charleston to the factory of the Creeks.

In the summer of 1718, Andrew Patterson, George Douglass, Wm. Parrot, Daniel Kennard, and an Indian, Sanhoe, were ordered by the Board to go up under Lieutenant Joseph Chambers in a periago to Savannah Town; after which they were to proceed, with their goods on horses, without Chambers, to the factory of the Creeks. Chambers was a lieutenant under Charlesworth Glover, at the Savannah Fort.

Three years before, the indefatigable Bienville had ascended the Alabama River from Mobile, and established at Tuskegee the famous old Fort Toulouse, in the very heart of the formidable Creek Nation. He had previously made frequent representations to

* Spelt in the old record, Coosatees.

† Indian Books in Secretary of State's Office, Columbia.

his government of the necessity of planting a fortress and trading post on the Alabama, in order to repel the aggressive Carolinians.* The bravery and address of Bienville had made him exceedingly popular with the Indians. Indeed, there was much in the French character that peculiarly fitted them for the business of intriguing among savages: their sprightly vivacity, their easy manners, and indomitable courage and energy, were qualities irresistibly fascinating to all the tribes with whom they came in contact in America. The erection of Fort Toulouse in a position that gave Bienville not only command of the Creek Confederacy, but the opportunity of tampering effectually with the Cherokees and Catawbas on the very borders of the English settlements, was observed by the latter with the most unaccountable apathy. It was not yet, by twenty years, that the fierce struggle began between Carolina and French Louisiana, not so much for the privileges and profits of the Indian trade as for the very existence of Carolina.

It appears from the recorded testimony in relation to these events, little of which has ever been published, that such, for that length of time, was the feebleness of her policy, and remissness of her public officers, compared with the persevering energy and admirable sagacity of the French, that she was chiefly indebted for her ultimate triumph and safety to her own extraordinary and unflinching chivalry,

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* Pickett.

in the moment of trial, united with British valor in the field.

English writers, even of that day, did not hesitate to eulogize the skill and tact displayed by the French in America: "The French are a great, enterprising, polite nation, and fully sensible of the advantages of foreign colonies in reference to European trade; and use all manner of artifices to lull their neighbors asleep with fine speeches, and plausible pretenses, whilst they cunningly endeavor to compass their designs by degrees, even at the hazard of encroaching on their friends and allies, and depriving them of their territory in time of peace, and contrary to the most solemn treaties."*

Bienville was now well prepared to pay back to Carolina, with full interest, the intrigues and aggressions of 1703; and from this period, both French and Spanish emissaries, usually under the disguise of private inoffensive traders, began to frequent the Nation. Some of these, it has already been observed, were men of education and ability—a few of them Jesuits of rare learning and address—for Carolina was called upon in this exigency to contend not only against the power and skill of the French, but against secularized Popery and spiritual wickednesses from high places. The distinguished Jesuit *voyageurs*, whose exploits on the Mississippi have been described, were emissaries engaged in the prosecution of arduous enterprises, not for the aggrandizement of

* Cox's Carolina.

France only, but to win new and wider fields in which to disseminate the superstitions and mummery of Rome. Mr. Bancroft, when treating of the expedition of Father Marquette, closes an imposing period with this rhetorical flourish: "and France and Christianity stood in the Valley of the Mississippi;" when at that very moment, thousands of poor Huguenots, ruined and expatriated through the weakness and bigotry of Louis XIV., and the malice of intolerant priests, were crying to Heaven to avenge an *outraged* Christianity.

The same couriers who announced to Europe the successful exploration of the Mississippi, bore, after a short interval, the more astounding news that Louis had decreed the Edict of Revocation. The first centennial anniversary of the *Great Massacre* occurred while LaSalle was in the midst of his explorations; and though in the depths of the wilderness, and surrounded by savages, it is quite probable that the devout Jesuit did not fail to observe a day so sacred in the calendar of all true Papists with becoming ceremonies and respect.

"Facts are stubborn things," yet it is not seldom that, under beautiful figures of speech, they are found either perverted or wholly ignored. France and Romanism, very probably, stood in 1673, for the first time, in the Mississippi Valley; but it by no means follows with reason that the *genius* of Christianity accompanied them either in the person or inspirations of Father Marquette.

France, it appears, relied much upon Jesuit saga-

city to carry out her plans for harassing and circumventing the English; but bold, learned and indefatigable as they were, the latter, when once in the field, were scarcely inferior to them, even in their own boasted art of moulding savages to their purpose. And it may be inferred too, from the following confession found in a letter written by one Father Vivier, that they were not always so busy with their traffic, so practical and plodding, as not to find time to hurl an occasional bomb into the theological magazine of the holy brotherhood. "The English, as well as the French, trade among the Alabama Indians. You can easily imagine what an obstacle this presents to the *progress of religion;* for the *English are always ready to excite controversy.*" Indeed, humble traders as they were, in the secret employment of neither church nor state; but trafficking among the Indians with the sole view of building up their private fortunes, they were not all of them unlearned or destitute even of the polished weapons of scholarship.