

## DOCUMENTS

## M. Le Maire on Louisiana

The readers of novels in the eighteenth century were quite delighted on the appearance of the amorous story of *Manon Lescaut*, which thereafter held its place as a world famous book. In its historical aspects the narrative touched the North American Empire of France and characterized or caricatured persons of import in French colonial affairs. The local and historical phase of the novel's appeal did not go unnoticed, but it was not until twenty years ago that a Father Le Maire was identified with the novel's "aumônier dans le nouvel orleans."<sup>1</sup> This identification by an historian was the occasion of a keen discussion of his deductions by a litterateur,<sup>2</sup> and it aroused some historical interest in the less romantic character of M. Le Maire, whose letter on Louisiana is published in the following pages. Lost under a fictitious name in a novel, Le Maire was in a way of being lost to history, his writings stowed away along with those of other Europeans who came, saw, and described America.

The Directors of the Paris *Séminaire des Missions Etrangères* in 1703 had secured exclusive right to send missionaries to Lower Louisiana, and M. Le Maire was one of the two priests sent.<sup>3</sup> From 1706 or 1707,<sup>4</sup> when he arrived in Louisiana, until his return to France he is often mentioned in official dispatches. He wrote several memoirs describing the colony and commenting on its prospects. The letter published below<sup>5</sup> is as far as is known

<sup>1</sup> Marc de Villiers du Terrage, *Histoire de la Fondation de la Nouvelle Orléans (1717-1722)*, Paris, 1917, 58.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. André Beaunier, "La véritable Manon Lescaut," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, XLVII, 1918, 697 ff., and Paul Hazard, *Etudes critiques sur Manon Lescaut*, Chicago, 1929, 106.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Jean Delanglez, *The French Jesuits in Lower Louisiana, 1700-1763*, Washington, D. C., and New Orleans, 1935, 38 ff.

<sup>4</sup> In the Archives du Service Hydrographique, Paris (hereafter quoted as ASH), 115xxxii, n. 4; and in the Archives de la Marine (hereafter quoted as AM), B 1, 33:35, the date 1706 is given; M. Le Maire himself in his memoir of 1717, Archives Nationales (AN), Mss. fr., 12105:6, speaks of "les observations que j'ai faites depuis onze ans que je suis dans ce pays." The first entry in the Mobile Cathedral Registers is dated June 19, 1707; the date of his arrival according to Penicaut, Margry, *Découvertes et Etablissements des Français . . .*, V, 470, is 1707.

<sup>5</sup> A short extract is published in Margry, VI, 184-186. The omission of the clause giving the boundary of Louisiana on the East makes the second paragraph of this extract unintelligible.

the first extant.<sup>6</sup> Others, undoubtedly, were written, for M. Le Maire was not the man to let seven years pass without sending information to France about the new colony. From this letter it appears that he had written in July, 1713, to M. de Valmont, and he had sent information about the boundaries of Louisiana to his uncle in Paris as early as 1711. An extract was made by Guillaume Delisle, the Royal Geographer.<sup>7</sup> Extracts from this first letter, which is translated below *in extenso*, were made by M. Bobé,<sup>8</sup> a priest of the Congregation of the Mission (Lazarist) and one of the chaplains of the Palace of Versailles, by Guillaume Delisle,<sup>9</sup> and by Claude Delisle,<sup>10</sup> each with a different purpose in view. M. Bobé wished M. Le Maire to be appointed official botanist, and consequently, he transcribed, rearranged, and 'edited' the passages in which the missionary spoke of the flora of Louisiana.<sup>11</sup> Guillaume Delisle's excerpt includes all geographical details; that made by Claude Delisle, the longest of the three, omitted all that was personal to Le Maire, as well as the comments on Crozat's monopoly and other details. On the other hand, Claude Delisle added comments of his own with regard to the conversion of the Indians.

The second extant memoir in the handwriting of Le Maire is dated March 7, 1717.<sup>12</sup> An extract half the length of the original was copied by Margry and was published by G. Devron in the *Comptes-rendus de l'Athénée Louisianais*, September and November, 1899. This report accompanied by a map was to be presented to the *Conseil Souverain de Marine*, while an auto-

<sup>6</sup> A copy is in the Ayer Collection of the Newberry Library, Chicago. Permission for publication was graciously granted by the trustees of this institution. The writer did not see the copy of M. Le Maire's letter of January 15, 1714, listed in Mrs. Surrey's Calendar under that date and which is in the Archives des Colonies (hereafter quoted as AC), C 13C, 2:109. From this entry and from the extract made of this letter by M. Bobé (cf. Waldo G. Leland, *Guide to Materials for American History in the Libraries and Archives of Paris*, Washington, D. C., 1932, Vol. I, *Libraries*, 272), now in the Bibliothèque du Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris, MS 948, photostat in the Library of Congress, it would seem that the copy in Chicago and that in Paris are copies of the same letter.

<sup>7</sup> ASH, 115x, n. 22 A.

<sup>8</sup> Bibliothèque du Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris, MS 948:1-6, 11 pp. M. Bobé was the addressee, from certain sentences of the letter itself, and the introduction to this excerpt, cf. ASH, 115x, n. 22 E.

<sup>9</sup> ASH, 115x, n. 22 B.

<sup>10</sup> ASH, 115xxxii, n. 4.

<sup>11</sup> M. Bobé's extract was very probably addressed to M. Raudot, "who has charge of all the colonies under M. de Pontchartrain," wrote Bobé to Delisle January 8, 1715, in *Historical Magazine*, III, 1859, 231; and cf. [1717], March 8, ASH, 115x, 26 B.

<sup>12</sup> Bibliothèque Nationale (hereafter cited as BN), Mss. fr., 12105:1-21.

graph copy was sent to the *Séminaire des Missions Etrangères*.<sup>13</sup> Le Maire's ideas about Louisiana, its boundaries, its products, its population, the commerce of the colony, and M. Crozat's monopoly suffered little change during the three years. One year later, uncertain whether his memoir had effectively reached the Council, he sent another "copy somewhat altered, and lengthened in a few places, which it seemed would be of greater interest to the Court and to scholars."<sup>14</sup> The alterations are slight, consisting mainly in rearrangement of context, including some paragraphs of his letter of 1714, and in developing his ideas about the legendary Sea of the West. His fourth memoir dated Dauphine Island, May 13, 1718, is entitled "Des Moeurs des Sauvages de la Louisiane."<sup>15</sup> It is merely an excerpt of that of 1717, made by Le Maire himself and dealing mainly with the customs of the Indians, although he thought it fitting to cast a few aspersions on the Spaniards and on the Jesuits. The latter's return to Louisiana had aroused his ire.

Besides writing lengthy reports, Le Maire drew maps that entitle him to a prominent place among the early cartographers of Lower Louisiana. It should be stated, however, that all which he personally saw of the colony is restricted to Mobile, Dauphine Island, and Pensacola. He had no wanderlust, and the lure of exploration tempted him little. But he gathered his information from travelers who had roamed the length and breadth of the Mississippi Valley, the Louisiana of his days.

His earliest map<sup>16</sup> is that of 1716, *Carte nouvelle de la Louisiane et Pays circonvoisins Dressée sur les lieux pour estre présentée a sa Majesté tres Chretienne, Par F. le Maire Prestre parisien et missionnaire apostolique*.<sup>17</sup> Another map of the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico, but without title, has the legend *Delineabat F. le Maire P. P. missionar[us] Apostolic[us]. anno 1716*.<sup>18</sup> The map of Guillaume Delisle of 1718 is clearly only a

<sup>13</sup> Letter of Bobé to Delisle, October 16, 1717, ASH, 115x, n. 26 F.

<sup>14</sup> AC, C 13C, 2:153-164v.

<sup>15</sup> ASH, 67, n. 4.

<sup>16</sup> Other maps had been sent earlier, cf. AC, C 13A, 4:205.

<sup>17</sup> BN, Ge 7883 (a facsimile of this manuscript map is in Henri Gravier, *La colonisation de la Louisiane à l'époque de Law, Octobre 1717—Janvier 1721*, Paris, 1904); the rough draft is in the Bibliothèque du Service Hydrographique, BSH, C 4044. The manuscript maps referred to were seen in the Karpinski Collection, the printed maps in the Ayer Collection, Newberry Library, Chicago. On this map, cf. R. Thomassy, *Géologie pratique de la Louisiane*, Nouvelle-Orléans and Paris, 1860, 210. These maps were received by the Navy Council in Paris, as the letter sent M. Le Maire, October 28, 1716, AC, B 38:326, shows.

<sup>18</sup> SHA, 138bis-1-6.

neat copy of these maps in all that pertains to the geography of the Gulf Coast.<sup>19</sup> An engraved and colored map accompanies the memoir of March 17, 1717.<sup>20</sup> This is a Nicolas De Fer map. This geographer published in 1715 a map entitled *La Rivière du Mississipi et ses environs*. It would seem that one of these maps was sent to Le Maire to make additions which were embodied in De Fer's map of 1718, entitled *Le Cours du Mississipi ou de St. Louis Fameuse Rivière de l'Amerique Septentrionale aux Environs de laquelle se trouve le Pais appelé Louisiane, dressée sur les Relations et Memoirs du Pere Hennepin et de Mrs de la Salle, Tonti, Laontan, Ioutel, des Hayes, Joliet, et le Maire etc.*<sup>21</sup>

If Le Maire was by far the best educated man in the colony, his character does not seem to have been as amiable as his learning was great. He was out of his element with the rough and tough pioneers of Fort Louis, Dauphine Island or Pensacola. A zealous, wealthy, energetic priest, M. Gervaise had persuaded Le Maire to go with him to Louisiana.<sup>22</sup> But M. Gervaise's uncle made use of his influence at Court to prevent his nephew from leaving France,<sup>23</sup> and hence M. Le Maire went alone. Bienville, then Commandant in the Colony, took a dislike to the missionary from the very beginning.<sup>24</sup> Except for officiating occasionally among the Apalachee, Le Maire remained in the French settlements. He was at Fort Louis—the first Mobile—for a while, and after the flood that forced the founding of Mobile on the site where the city now stands, he became the pastor of the Dauphine

<sup>19</sup> Delisle was grateful for Le Maire's map, ASH, 115x, n. 26 A. At the beginning of July, 1718, the geographer sent to Bobé for criticism the draft of the map he published the following month. Bobé returned suggestions as to how this map could be improved, ASH, 115x, n. 26 M. These suggestions consist in further details taken from Le Maire's memoir in AC, C 13C, 2:154. The remarks made by Bobé were not inserted in Delisle's map published in August, 1718, ASH, 115x, n. 26 N; they probably reached the geographer too late for making further changes, but some of these remarks are found on the *Carte Generale de la Louisiane ou du Miciscipi dressée sur plusieurs mémoires et dessinée par le Sr Vermalle cy-devant cornette de Dragons, 1717*, BSH, C 4044. The date is by another hand. On these various maps, cf. R. N. Hamilton, "The Early Cartography of the Missouri Valley," *American Historical Review*, XXXIX, 1933-1934, 655.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Leland, 39.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. De Fer's map of 1701, *Les Costes aux environs de la Rivière de Missisipi* . . . , SHA, C 4040, and the letter of Bobé to Delisle, 1718, January 4, ASH, 115x, n. 26 G.

<sup>22</sup> Abbé (later Cardinal) Taschereau, *Histoire du Séminaire de Québec chez les Tamarois ou Illinois sur les Bords du Mississipi*, 21. A copy of this manuscript history is in the Archives of the Illinois Historical Survey, Urbana, Illinois, and another copy in the Dominion Archives, Ottawa, Canada.

<sup>23</sup> AM, B 2, 183:863.

<sup>24</sup> AC, C 13A, 2:110.

Island settlers.<sup>25</sup> There he remained until he went to Pensacola in the fall of 1712. He was back in the French settlements in August, 1715, for he signed the baptismal registers of Fort Louis on August 14. His return to the French settlements was very likely caused by the departure in February, 1715,<sup>26</sup> of M. Varlet in whose stead Le Maire then became Vicar-General of the Bishop of Quebec.<sup>27</sup>

When in 1712, Crozat took charge of the colony, he asked that Jesuit missionaries be sent.<sup>28</sup> Two Jesuits arrived in 1716 or 1717. They remained in Mobile because the construction of the forts where they were to serve as chaplains was delayed.<sup>29</sup> Owing to the tension existing between the Directors of the *Séminaire des Missions Etrangères* in Paris and the Jesuits in France over the Chinese rites controversy, the presence of the newly arrived missionaries was a thorn in the side of M. Le Maire. He wrote a bitter letter to France,<sup>30</sup> which confirms the contention that he "could be unjust in his enmities," as had been noted by Hubert, the *ordonnateur*, in a letter to the Council in Paris.<sup>31</sup>

The date of his return to France can only be surmised. He signed the baptismal registers in Mobile for the last time on November 2, 1719, and was in France in 1724.<sup>32</sup> From a note on one of his maps,<sup>33</sup> it appears that M. Le Maire was still alive in 1744.

JEAN DELANGLEZ

Copy of a letter written from Pensacola, January 15, 1714, by  
M. Le Maire, missionary in said country.

Pensacola, January 15, 1714

Sir,

Your letter was forwarded here from Dauphine Island; here, that is, to this fort of Pensacola about which you are asking me for some information. I have been here since September 14,

<sup>25</sup> AC, C 13A, 1:37; ASH, 67-2, n. 4.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. AC, D 2c, 51:18.

<sup>27</sup> AC, C 13C, 2:153; ASH, 67, n. 4.

<sup>28</sup> Delanglez, 48.

<sup>29</sup> Affaires Etrangères, Mémoires et Documents, *Amérique*, I, 83v.

<sup>30</sup> AN, K 1232, n. 4.

<sup>31</sup> AC, C 13A, 5:49.

<sup>32</sup> Mémoire sur l'établissement de la Mission des Tamarois de 1699 à 1724, 6. Archives du Séminaire (Laval University), Québec.

<sup>33</sup> BSH, C 4044.

1712.<sup>1</sup> I hoped my stay would last less than two months, but I am still here not knowing just when I shall be able to leave. I went through many sufferings, both external and internal. I am the acting pastor here. The charge is vacant owing to the murder of two religious whose death was the deserved punishment of the scandalous life they led.

If you happened to know M. de Valmont, who creates quite a stir in literary circles, and who has been tutor of the children of M. Dangeau, you might request him to show you what I wrote him from this place last July.

I would like to live up to the high opinion people gave you of me, but I fear I may not succeed, as this opinion is that of people who love me. I am the most insignificant laborer in the vineyard of the Lord. I was somewhat successful in Paris, and begot a goodly number of spiritual children to Jesus Christ, formed several of his spouses, etc., but here I find myself out of my native land, the most barren of fathers. If I did not know that God is often as much glorified, although in a different manner, by the barrenness of His ministers, as He is by their fecundity, I would be utterly disconsolate, but I leave this to be the subject of my groaning before the Lord, and I am coming to your questions, after thanking you for the news you were kind enough to give me.

To put some order in all the questions you ask me, I shall divide them into three classes. I shall answer first those questions which concern the venture of M. Crozat; then, those which deal with the nature of this country; and finally, I shall treat of the missions.

M. Crozat has been deceived, and in a way he hasn't.<sup>2</sup> He has been deceived if he imagined he would harvest before sowing, and if he based his hopes on trade with the Spaniards.<sup>3</sup> Such commerce is a chimera, especially since the peace with the English.<sup>4</sup> It can only be carried on furtively and by means of a shower of gold, which takes away all the profits. But he has not been deceived if he looked upon this country as a land which, with a little care, will produce one hundred for one. M. Crozat

<sup>1</sup> He made at least one visit to Mobile in the interval; he signed the baptismal register there on July 20, 1713.

<sup>2</sup> In June, 1713, M. Varlet, a missionary of the *Séminaire des Missions Etrangères*, arrived in Louisiana. In his letter to his brother, January 5, 1714, BN, Mss. fr., n. a., 5398:52, he stated that he had not faith at all in the success of the enterprise of Crozat.

<sup>3</sup> B. F. French, *Historical Collections of Louisiana*, New York, 1846-1853, part iii, 39. <sup>4</sup> The Peace of Utrecht, 1713.

should look for returns from the land itself, and not from foreigners. The inhabitants believe, with regard to commerce, that they have several reasons to be dissatisfied;<sup>5</sup> urged by the English, they threaten to set fire to the warehouse of the Company and to go over to the English,<sup>6</sup> who come and trade as far as the banks of the Mississippi.<sup>7</sup> M. Crozat must remedy this situation.

In order that M. Crozat might derive profits he should

1°) send a hundred families of peasants and farmers, partly to the Illinois country, and partly to Natchez. There is no need of building an elaborate fort, nor is there any need of officers or soldiers. All that is necessary is to arm those farmers, to give them powder, lead, provisions, and some merchandise to tide them over until the next harvest, which without fail will be a very abundant one, if they sow not the French, but the New Spain wheat.<sup>8</sup> This is a sort of reddish wheat; its grain is smaller than that of France, but is just as good and just as palatable. A few cows and a few sheep must be given to each family. To this effect, the ships coming here should be obliged to call at Havana for getting the cattle.<sup>9</sup> There is no need of stables or provender for either cows or sheep in this country, for hay can be made twice a year, and the sheep can be sheared twice.

2°) In the warehouse of the Company of Dauphine Island, there

<sup>5</sup> Cf. the memoir of Duclos to Pontchartrain, October 9, 1713, AC, C 13A, 3:226, 229-230, 248; this memoir is printed in Dunbar Rowland, *Mississippi Provincial Archives, French Dominion*, Vol. II, 79 ff.; and Charlevoix, *Histoire et Description Générale de la Nouvelle-France* . . . Paris, 1744, II, 416-417.

<sup>6</sup> Memoir of Duclos, October 9, 1713, AC, C 13A, 3:226-227.

<sup>7</sup> English traders had reached the Mississippi from Carolina and were trading with the Taensa and the Natchez before the end of the seventeenth century, confer: the letter of M. de Montigny to the Bishop of Quebec, dated "de la Louisiane," March 3, 1699, AN, K 1374, n. 82; and the letter of the same missionary to Delisle, May 6, 1699, ASH, 115x, n. 13; the letter of d'Iberville, February 26, 1700, AC, C 13A, 1:306, printed in Margry, IV, 360; an anonymous document dated May 28, 1701 [1700], BN., Mss. fr., 21690.

<sup>8</sup> Fogs prevented French wheat from reaching maturity, according to Dartaguet, AC, C 13A, 2:804, Tirvas de Gourville, *ibid.*, 738, Charlevoix, II, 415, III, 405, and others; but the first two writers added that wheat would grow well in the Wabash (Ohio) country. Bienville had said the same in 1711, AC, C 13A, 2:581. The attempts at wheat growing by a *donné* of the Jesuits in the Illinois country met with success, cf., Sister Mary Borgias Palm, "The First Illinois Wheat," *Mid-America*, XIII, 1930, 72-73. A few months before Le Maire wrote his letter, on October 26, 1713, Cadillac flatly denied that New Spain wheat had had better success on the Gulf Coast, AC, C 13A, 3:10-11. In March, 1714, excellent flour made of such wheat was brought from the Illinois settlements to Dauphine Island, ASH, 67-2, n. 4.

<sup>9</sup> Letter of the *ordonnateur* Hubert to the Navy Council in Paris, from Dauphine Island, October 26, 1717, AC, C 13A, 5:53-54.

should always be an abundance of suitable merchandise, which should be sold at a reasonable price.<sup>10</sup> Buffalo and roebuck hides, or other small pelts could be used as money to pay for this merchandise.

3°) The Company could even be paid in wheat, flour and vegetables, which could be sold with a good profit to the French in the Islands [West Indies],<sup>11</sup> or even to the Spaniards. Nothing could be easier than to transport this wheat and other merchandise in flat boats, from the Upper Mississippi to its mouth, which come down of themselves, so to speak, without expenses or charges.<sup>12</sup> But it would be necessary, on account of the reefs,<sup>13</sup> to have a small brigantine in Biloxi which is at the mouth of the Mississippi [?], to transport the wheat to Dauphine Island.

4°) The Company could grow tobacco,<sup>14</sup> which is here the best in America; the profits would be considerable.

5°) The Company could also grow indigo,<sup>15</sup> but to that effect

<sup>10</sup> Prices fixed by the Company were outrageous; Duclos to Pontchartrain, October 9, 1713, AC, C 13A, 3:217, 226-227; Deliberations of the Navy Council, AC, C 13A, 4:391-392.

<sup>11</sup> The commerce with the French West Indies collapsed about this time, cf. N. M. Surrey, *The Commerce of Louisiana*, New York, 1916, 369.

<sup>12</sup> "Transportation [of the products from the upper country] will cost little because it is only necessary to descend the Mississippi," Dartaguet to Pontchartrain, May 12, 1712, AC, C 13A, 2:804.

<sup>13</sup> The Jesuit Du Ru in his Journal (R. L. Butler's translation, Chicago, 1934, 4,) speaks of the mouth of the Mississippi as being "entirely fenced in with trunks of trees, petrified and as hard as rock." Dartaguet to Pontchartrain, May 12, 1712, AC, C 13A, 2:806, has: "The landing west of Massacre (Dauphin Island) is dangerous because of Chandeleur Island and the mouth of the Mississippi with its breakwaters far out to sea and a very low land covered with reeds." Cf. "Relation de la Louisiane ou Mississippi, écrite à une Dame, par un officier de marine," in *Relations de la Louisiane et du Fleuve Mississippi*, Amsterdam, 1720, 4.

<sup>14</sup> In 1711, Bienville wrote to Pontchartrain that he had been told that the quality of the tobacco grown in Louisiana, that is, on the Coast, was superior to that of Virginia, AC, C 13A, 2:581; in his first letter to Pontchartrain after his arrival, October 26, 1713, Cadillac said that tobacco grows rather well on the Coast, but that vermin prevents its being kept, and that far from exporting it, the settlers had to buy some from Havana and Santo Domingo, AC, C 13A, 3:11. The anonymous author of the annals published in the *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, VI, 1923, 548, merely states that the tobacco of Louisiana is of an excellent quality, but he does not specify where this tobacco is grown. Dumont, *Mémoires Historiques sur la Louisiane*, Paris, 1753, I, 34, asserts that the tobacco grown in the Natchez region is superior to that of Virginia and of Santo Domingo, and Le Page du Pratz, *Histoire de la Louisiane*, Paris, 1758, III, 360-361, 384, indicates in what this superiority consisted.

<sup>15</sup> Indigo grows naturally in Lower Louisiana, observed Le Page du Pratz, III, 354, and Tirvas de Gourville, AC, C 13A, 2:738; its quality is as good as that grown in the French West Indies, Le Page du Pratz, III, 384, and Charlevoix, III, 413. "It may possibly produce better than that made in our Islands of Jamaica," says Daniel Coxe, *Description of the English Province of Carolina, by the Spaniards call'd Florida, and by the French La Louisiane*, London, 1722, 86.

should furnish the settlers with negroes.<sup>16</sup> It is true that there could only be one cutting of indigo each year,<sup>17</sup> because of the winter, which is rather severe.

6°) A tannery for large hides and a tawing factory for the smaller pelts could be built here; the transport of these would thus be easier, and they would be less subject to vermin.

7°) A hat factory could be built at small cost.<sup>18</sup> The profits would be great, for the hats could be sold to the French in the Islands, and even to the Spaniards.

8°) Throughout Louisiana, there is a great quantity of white and red cedar, oak, pine, and other timberwood for ship building,<sup>19</sup> a profitable trade. The red cedars of this country are not quite as odoriferous as those of Brazil.

9°) There is no lack of places where sawmills could be built, and the boards which are much sought after and very dear in the French Islands, could be shipped there and even to foreigners.<sup>20</sup> They could even be shipped to France, where there is a shortage. The same is true of stave-wood, which is brought to France from foreign countries, from Norway, Sweden, Prussia, etc.

10°) The whole commerce of Carolina consists in tar. This can be made here very cheaply, and the profit would be considerable.

11°) Flax and hemp will grow very well in the Upper Mississippi.<sup>21</sup> They could be sent to France where there is a shortage of both, since they are imported from Russia and from other countries.

12°) The woods of the Lower Mississippi are full of mulberry

<sup>16</sup> The reason for this was because negroes had a special skill in treating the plant, Dumont, I, 44-45; Le Page du Pratz, III, 355 ff.; Bossu, *Nouveaux Voyages aux Indes Occidentales*, 2 vols., Paris, 1768, I, 179.

<sup>17</sup> Whereas there were four cuttings in the Islands, only three were possible in Louisiana, according to Le Page du Pratz, III, 384.

<sup>18</sup> Hatters had been brought from Vera Cruz at the end of the previous year, AC, C 13A, 3:356.

<sup>19</sup> The variety and abundance of timberwood is emphasized by all early writers. Cadillac, however, wrote to Pontchartrain that he doubted whether one hundred main masts for a fifty gun ship could be found in a radius of one hundred leagues. Much difficulty was experienced, he added, in finding on all Dauphine Island, a mizzen mast for the vessel of M. Crozat. AC, C 13A, 3:12.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. AC, C 13A, 2:544. There were two saw mills in Louisiana in 1716; for the lumber trade at that time cf. Surrey, 284.

<sup>21</sup> The Company of the Indies forbade hemp growing, AC, C 13A, 10:194 v.; the directors of this organization intending to monopolize this culture, AC, C 13A, 11:346 v. Hemp growing became allowed only after the retrocession of the colony to the King, Instructions of Louis XV to Bienville, February 2, 1732, AC, B 57:799 v.; Le Page du Pratz, II, 64, and Coxe, 92.

trees.<sup>22</sup> A silk factory<sup>23</sup> could be established if silkworms or their eggs were brought here<sup>24</sup> at the right time from France or New Spain.

13°) Wax and honey are gathered in great quantity on the Campeche coast, which is not far from Louisiana. Bees brought here will do marvelously well, for the flora of this country is nearly all odoriferous. The commerce of wax would be very profitable to the Company, and the hydromel would be useful to the inhabitants of the colony.

14°) This country has all the marks of a country where grapes will grow, from which very good wine could be made. The banks of all our rivers are lined with trees covered with vines. The stem of some vines is as thick as the thigh. These beautiful vines, with which the trees are laden, form in certain places delicious arbors. Care is all that is necessary for these vines to bear grapes just as good as those of France.<sup>25</sup> I remember how, six years ago, I cut a vine stem to get to the grapes out of my reach. The following year, this stem grew vine-shoots bearing grapes just as good as those of France.<sup>26</sup> It is especially in the Illinois country, in that of the Choctaw and of the Chickasaw that grapes as thick as those in France abound. The Jesuits in the Illinois country make Mass wine with these grapes.<sup>27</sup> I drank good wine made in Mobile of a sort of grape which does not grow in bunches, but one by one in small clusters, like prunes.<sup>28</sup> Thus the Company could make a great commerce of wine and brandy. The transport by sea to the French and English Islands, and even to the Spaniards would be very profitable.

<sup>22</sup> The mulberry trees of Louisiana had the advantage of immunity from disease, unlike those of France, it was stated, AC, C 13A, 1:403 v., and "Relation de la Louisianne ou Mississipi . . .," 29. Cadillac found fault with the leaves of the Louisiana mulberry trees, they were too hard, he wrote Crozat, for raising silkworms, AC, C 13A, 3:351 v.

<sup>23</sup> For years silk making was a frequent item in the official correspondence, AC, C 13A, 1:54-55, 2:367 v., 804, 3:36-37, etc., and the promotion of this industry was very much insisted upon by contemporary writers, Le Page du Pratz, III, 349, 367; "Relation de la Louisianne ou Mississipi . . .," 29; Coxe, 90-91, etc., but nothing ever came of it.

<sup>24</sup> According to Dumont, I, 58, an attempt at raising silkworms was made at the concession of Paris du Vernay. An earlier experiment is that of the *ordonnateur* Hubert, AC, C 13A, 1:54. <sup>25</sup> Cf. Coxe, 75.

<sup>26</sup> Dumont, I, 17-18, and Le Page du Pratz, II, 17, relate a similar happening.

<sup>27</sup> R. G. Thwaites, ed., *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, LXVI, 228.

<sup>28</sup> Dumont evidently described the same fruit when he wrote: "Au lieu de grappes, celle-ci (vigne) ne produit que des grains séparés les uns des autres, qui sont gros comme nos plus grosses cerises. . . Chaque grain ne renferme que trois pepins." I, 18.

This article about the Company has, against my will, brought confusion to the division of my letter. But I am glad to find an opportunity to bring together all the means that this Company can utilize to profit from its privileges; and this is apart from the mines, which, after trade with the Spaniards, might well have been the strongest motive that determined its establishment.<sup>29</sup> I shall speak about the mines in the next division.

The second point about which I intended to speak is the nature of Louisiana. By nature I mean three things: 1°) its area, its boundaries, its ports, climate and temperature; 2°) its plants, minerals and animals; 3°) its habitants, their customs, their religion.

This threefold matter is too vast for me ever to hope to do justice to it within the limits of a letter. But I can assure you that if I do not treat of all that you would wish me, at least, in what I shall treat, I shall be careful not to offend knowingly against truth, and this is saying not a little, it seems to me, for a person who is writing so far away. Let us begin. The northern boundary of Louisiana is at a place between Lake Erie and Lake Huron called Detroit, which has a government of its own.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Crozat in a memoir dated May 14, 1717, when the financier wanted to waive his costly privilege, made the following statement: "La principale de mes vues estoit la découverte des mines d'or et d'argent . . ." *Affaires Etrangères, Mémoires et Documents, Amérique*, I, 238 v.

<sup>30</sup> A thorough study of the boundaries of French colonial Louisiana is that of the late Marc de Villiers du Terrage, "La Louisiane, Histoire de son nom et de ses frontières successives (1681-1819)," in *Journal de la Société des Américanistes de Paris* (hereafter quoted as JSAP), XXI, 1929, 1-74. De Villiers commenting on this passage of Le Maire's letter printed in Margry, VI, 184, says: "Louisiana never reached the Great Lakes, but its boundary was soon to be near them," *ibid.*, 46. However, Franquet de Chaville in his "Voyage a la Louisiane en 1720-1724," JSAP, IV, 1902, 139, asserts that Louisiana is bounded by the Lakes of Canada. The map which accompanies the study of de Villiers shows the northern boundary near Chicago. In a previous article, "La Louisiane de Chateaubriand," JSAP, Vol. XVI, 1922, 125, de Villiers had said that the northern limits of Louisiana were never higher than the Illinois country. We do not know what extent Le Maire gave to the 'Government of Detroit.' With regard to the northwestern boundary, de Villiers wrote that it was never known. JSAP, XXI, 1929, 48. [Valette Laudun?] in the *Journal d'un voyage à la Louisiane fait en 1720, Par M. . . , Capitaine de Vaisseau du Roi*, La Haye and Paris, 1768, 221, said that in the North, Louisiana is limited partly by Canada, "the rest has no boundaries." This was probably because the French geographers were told not to put boundaries on their maps, and to erase those which had been traced on their published maps, cf. the letters of Bobé to Delisle, January 8, 1715, in the *Historical Magazine*, Vol. III, 1859, 231, and May 27, 1718, in ASH, 115 x, n. 26 K. Dumont gives the Missouri River as the northern boundary of Louisiana, I, 281. De Villiers continued in JSAP, XXI, 1929, 48: "Father Hennepin and Philip Buache, the latter although a learned geographer, were the only ones to amuse themselves by showing on their maps the northern shores of Louisiana washed

From Detroit to the sea, the distance is about 700 leagues; I mean by water, for by land, as the crow flies, the distance is much less. In the South, Louisiana is bounded by the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, stretching in a general East-West direction for about 200 leagues, from the Perdido River in the East to the Madeleine [Guadalupe] River in the West.<sup>31</sup> The latter is a small river, called St. Bernard by the Spaniards, and St. Louis by the French. Hence it is neither the Rio Pánuco, nor the Rio del Norte.

Although more than seven years ago the Court gave order to set up posts with the arms of His Majesty at these two places I have just mentioned, it is very likely that this order had not been concerted with the King of Spain. This is clearly seen from the opposition of the Governor of Pensacola two years ago, when the Sieur de Bienville was making himself ready to go to set up those posts.<sup>32</sup> Inland, East or West, no boundaries have yet been set. It is, however, much easier to guess what our boundaries will be in the East, that is, toward Carolina, occupied by the English, than in the West where there are immense but unknown stretches of country.

People have gone up the Missouri for more than 400 leagues<sup>33</sup> without finding one Spanish settlement, and it is only after about 500 leagues travel that one hears about them from the savages

by the waters of the mysterious Arctic Sea, or by the waters of the legendary Sea of the West." The author of the "Relation de la Louisiane ou Mississippi . . ." 7, wrote that: "In the north Louisiana has perhaps no other boundary than the Arctic Pole."

<sup>31</sup> Le Maire asserts that there were two Madeleine Rivers, one farther away from the Mississippi; the one nearer is the *Maligne* spoken of by La Salle, the Spanish geographers read *Maligna* and the copyists *Magdalena*, cf. Le Maire's memoirs, BN, Mss. fr., 12105:2, AC, C-13C, 2:153 v., and ASH, 115 x, n. 22 E.

<sup>32</sup> The Governor of Pensacola had asserted that the east bank of the Mobile River belonged to his master, the King of Spain. The instructions of Louis XIV to Demuy were that he must not yield on this point, both banks belonging to the French, AC, B 29:248 v.-249. Three years later, in 1710, Pontchartrain wrote to Bienville to set up posts with the King's arms on the Perdido River, AC, B 32:40-40 v., the same thing was repeated in the King's instructions to Cadillac, *ibid.*, 59 v. In October, 1711, Bienville answered Pontchartrain that he would send men to set up those posts, and should the Governor of Pensacola object, he would tell him that it was to replace those which were there previously and which had been washed away by the flood. Le Maire wrote to his uncle, October 11, 1711: "The boundaries of this country have just been marked," ASH, 115 x, n. 22 A. It is probably on this occasion that the difficulties spoken of in the text arose.

<sup>33</sup> For the history of the exploration of the Missouri, cf. Marc de Villiers du Terrage, *La Découverte du Missouri et l'histoire du Fort d'Orléans, 1673-1728*, Paris, 1925, 35-40.

at war with the Spaniards. What one reads in La Hontan about the Western part of Louisiana is looked upon here as so many fairy tales.<sup>34</sup> We must wait until there are more Frenchmen in this part of Louisiana before we can explore what is still unknown in that part.

I am coming back to the Sea. Pensacola is on the coast, four leagues to the East of the Perdido River. It is a great stockade which the Spaniards thought fit to build at the time of the first voyages of M. d'Iberville. The garrison is 250 strong, all very bad soldiers,<sup>35</sup> who are in such ill-repute for courage among the savages that these sometimes come and dance within cannon or gun shot and carry away those who are unfortunate enough to be outside the fort. This fort is, so to speak, the 'land galleys' of New Spain.<sup>36</sup> Every ship from Mexico brings here those to whom the tribunals of New Spain have given a reprieve from the stake, the wheel, or the rope. This scum together with the garrison and the sad remnants of the Apalachee, decimated seven years ago by the Alibamons, make about 500 persons including the officers and the women. What you know under the name of Pensacola

<sup>34</sup> Le Maire is referring here to the supposed exploration by La Hontan of the Long River, *Voyages du Baron de la Hontan dans l'Amérique Septentrionale* . . . , Amsterdam, 1705, I, XVIe Lettre, 174 ff. M. Bobé, Le Maire's friend in Versailles, did not believe the Baron's voyage to be genuine, there were too many people in Canada who had never heard of that Long River, *Historical Magazine*, Vol. III, 1859, 231-232. Coxe, 63, still accepted the story. Charlevoix dealt with the veracity of La Hontan, I, *Liste des Auteurs*, lv. Among modern authors, Parkman in *La Salle and the Discovery of the Great West*, Boston, 1837, 458, rejects this account of the 'exploration' of the Long River as fanciful from beginning to end, cf. also Parkman's *Frontenac*, 105. But as La Hontan was not a friend of the Jesuits, he naturally becomes "un auteur . . . de bonne foi et de jugement sain" for Gravier, *Découvertes et Etablissements de Cavalier de la Salle* . . . , Rouen, 1870, 67. The best study in print on La Hontan is that of J.-Edmond Roy, "Le Baron de la Hontan," in *Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada for the Year 1894*, Ottawa, 1895, Vol. XII, 63-193. The voyage up the Long River is discussed at length, 129, the writer pointing out, 143, how La Hontan's conduct parallels that of another explorer, Hennepin, adds "nous sommes tentés de croire que les deux font la paire."

<sup>35</sup> The French at this period generally delighted in questioning the courage of the Spaniards; on the valor of the French soldiers at this time, cf. [Valette Laudun?], 259; and later, AC, C 13A, 5:276; 18:12; 21:52; Charles E., Gayarré, *Histoire de la Louisiane*, Nouvelle-Orléans, 1846-1847, I, 368, II, 62; Pierre Henrich, *La Louisiane sous la Compagnie des Indes, 1717-1731*, Paris, n. d., 87, 239, 281.

<sup>36</sup> "A poor Town containing about 40 Palmetto Houses, with a small stockadoed Fort of 12 or 14 guns, but of little moment; because all their soldiers, and the Majority of the Inhabitants, are *Forc'adoes* or *forc'd* People, having been malefactors in some Parts of Mexico, therefore are confin'd in that Place for a number of years, according to the Nature of their Crimes. In short they are not unlike our Felons, which are transported from the Jails in England to the Plantations," Coxe, 28.

is what the Spaniards call the Presidio de Santa María de Gálvez, or de Santo Carolo de Austria. As you see, I have fine parishioners. God, Who wanted me to work for their salvation, gave me the grace to understand Spanish in less than two months, and to be able to speak it in less than six in such a manner as to be able to perform all the functions of my ministry.

There is no lack of work, and I don't know how I have been able to carry on with health as poor as mine is and with food as bad as the usual fare here is; for, although I am eating<sup>37</sup> with the quartermaster and with the Governor, whose pay, leaving out the profit derived from his commerce, is double of that of our most important Province Governors in France. Nevertheless, I sometimes long for the share of the last brother of St. Lazare.

Since I am in this fort I have made a huge sundial to regulate the military drills. I have drawn a plan of the coast and of the fort, which have been sent to the King of Spain.<sup>38</sup> In between, during my leisure moments, as I had not my books here, I amused myself composing Latin hymns for all the Mysteries [of the life] of Our Lord, and for the feasts of the Blessed Virgin. The form I followed is that of certain odes of Horace that have not yet been used and to which I have adapted a melody that sounds harmonious enough. I was lucky to remember the rhythm of an Horatian archilochian well fit for the common melodies of the *Pange Lingua*, and the proses *Lauda Sion, O Filii, Veni Sancte Spiritus, Stabat Mater*. If I do not have them printed in Mexico, I shall send them to Paris, but they will be published anonymously. If I have time, I might send you a few extracts of this work. Excuse my digression. Mustn't everything be forgiven a poet?

About eight leagues west of the Perdido River is Mobile Bay; then comes Massacre or Dauphine Island. What I would have to say of this part of the country is so difficult to express clearly in writing that I have preferred to scribble a small plan which you will find enclosed.<sup>39</sup> I would have done the same for the rest of the country, but I have not my notes with me here. The port of Massacre, or Port Dauphin, is small, but good and safe, for it is protected from the sea winds by the Island Espagnolette, and from land winds by the great woods of Dauphine

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Thwaites, *The Jesuit Relations*, LXVI, 130.

<sup>38</sup> This map is in the Archivo General de Indias, 61-3-12, *Carta de la Costa de Pensacola desde Santa Rosa hasta Massacra, M. DCCXIII*.

<sup>39</sup> The copyist of this letter also traced the plan Le Maire refers to in the text.

Island. This harbor, small as it is, can shelter from 20 to 30 large vessels, and moreover, the outer roadstead is not bad. The port is the easiest thing in the world to fortify, for the ships must graze both islands, as it were, in order to enter it. We have no other ports properly so called along our Coast; perhaps some could be found if we looked for them.<sup>40</sup>

Nearer to the Mississippi, Ship Island has a good enough anchorage, but it is only a roadstead. The port of Pensacola can pass muster as the most beautiful after that of Havana, the greatest and the best of America,<sup>41</sup> so much so that the Spaniards who knew of this did not delay in occupying it when they saw the French come to settle this coast.

The climate of this country is the most temperate in the world, that is, at some distance from the sea, for since the coast is very low, there is no end of marshes whose stagnant waters exhale vapors harmful to health. Along the coast, near the sea, the air is very pure; away from the coast the country is low and full of marshes, the air unhealthy<sup>42</sup> and this to a distance approximately 100 leagues inland; there, a country with a pleasing temperature and charming healthfulness is found. It is from the Huma on that good lands and endless plains begin; there, one has only to plough and sow. The instability of the weather is most extraordinary here, for in the middle of winter as soon as the South wind blows one must put on summer clothes, and sometimes on the same day if the wind turns to the North, Northeast or Northwest, change to winter clothes.<sup>43</sup> One thing surprised me and will also surprise you: the freezing spells here sometimes look like a brother of the freezing spells of France. This explains why orange-trees do not grow here<sup>44</sup> although they grow in Spain, in Portugal and even in our own Provence. I have at times pondered over this, and I think the reason is that the Sea is North of that part of Europe where orange-trees grow well, while the land is South, whereas here it is just the opposite.

<sup>40</sup> The need of other ports and the necessity of searching for them is also mentioned by Duclos, AC, C 13A, 3:281.

<sup>41</sup> "The Chief and indeed the Best [harbor] upon all the Coast of the Gulf of Mexico, is Pensicola . . ." Coxé, 28; [Valette Laudun?], 255, says it is the only port for men-of-war on the Gulf; cf. Franquet de Chaville, JSAP, IV, 1902, 123-124. The size and safety of the harbor is emphasized in the descriptive notes on maps made by the French after they took Pensacola in 1719, cf. SHA, 138-9-7; BN, Estampes Vd 19; especially that accompanying the *Plan de la Rade de Pensacole levé par Monsieur de Vienne*, BN, Estampes Vd ss.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Dumont's explanation, I, 8, and that in JSAP, IV, 1902, 141.

<sup>43</sup> Charlevoix, III, 453; Dumont, I, 9; Le Page du Pratz, I, 140.

<sup>44</sup> Dumont, I, 57; Le Page du Pratz, II, 22.

North winds come to us in full force; they would be milder if they blew over the water, where they would be tempered by other winds and by the movements of the sea. There is good ground to believe that this country was under the sea at one time as far as 150 leagues inland, because in the Arkansas country heaps of oyster shells have been found, and it is unlikely that men carried them there from the sea.

I am coming to the vegetable kingdom of this country: trees, shrubs, herbs, fruits, flowers, etc. All timberwood found in Europe is also found here, and we have a kind of oak not found in France. Inland, there are oaks with acorns as big as an egg. The Governor of Pensacola assured me that during a journey he made some 25 years ago from Mexico to St. Bernard Baye, he found acorns so big that their cups, after adding a stem, could be used as chocolate cups; and such was the use which the Count of Galvez, Viceroy of Mexico, to whom they were presented, made of them, and he sent half a dozen such cups to the late King of Spain.

We have laurels bearing great white flowers, somewhat like our lilies, of a very sweet fragrance;<sup>45</sup> their trunk is sometimes so strong that single piece top-gallant for ships of a tonnage of four or five tons can be made of them. The same is true of another tree called sassafras concerning which I shall have more to say later on. There is no lack of cherry trees, but they do not bear fruits on the coast; I do not know the reason for this since those in the Chickasaw country bear cherries. About one hundred leagues inland, the woods are full of strawberries. Apple and pear trees grow owing to the heat of this climate.<sup>46</sup> Mulberry trees are found everywhere in abundance; there are palm trees around Pensacola which bear what is called in the Islands copalm.<sup>47</sup> Medlar trees grow everywhere, their fruits are larger and better than those of France. The savages make rolls with the pulp, which stops the most hopeless cases of dysentery.<sup>48</sup> There are fruits here which are unknown in Europe, but these are few and rather insipid to the taste.

The sassafras mentioned above oozes a gum just as good as

<sup>45</sup> This is the *Laurier à Tulippes* of Le Page du Pratz, II, 34-36; Charlevoix, III, 409.

<sup>46</sup> Dumont, I, 57; Le Page du Pratz, II, 22.

<sup>47</sup> The yellowish, fragrant balsam yielded by the sweet gum tree. This balsam is supposed to cure dropsy, says Charlevoix, III, 435, it is little short of the panacea according to Le Page du Pratz, II, 28-29.

<sup>48</sup> Dumont, II, 5; such curative virtue is attributed by Charlevoix, III, 395-396, to the *Piakimine* (persimmon?).

the balm of Perú, and having all the same properties. Its root has a marvelous odor, and its decoction is a strong sudorific. The savages have no other remedy for syphilis, and they use it rather successfully against this disease.<sup>49</sup> New Spain lacks sassafras, and it is so much sought after that they would willingly pay an escalin for a pound of the wood or of the root of this tree to those who would load the ship which comes here from time to time from Vera Cruz.

There are wild prunes which are passable. I shall not repeat what I have already said about the vine, grapes, and wine when I spoke of the commerce which M. Crozat and his Company could do in Louisiana. The savages perform every day marvelous cures with the herbs that grow in this country.<sup>50</sup> They are of so many varieties and their properties are so diversified that one could write a book thicker than that of Dioscorides about them. It is a pity that a few botanists have not come here to search for these herbs. But for my other occupations, I would have made a study of them, and with the little of Natural History I know, I would not have wasted my time. I am sorry I have not the little book on the knowledge of plants by M. de Tournefort.<sup>51</sup> By the last ship I wrote to M. Isnard, successor of M. de Tournefort in the chair of Botany of the Royal Garden, telling him that I intended to send him a few plants to repair the damage done by the great winter of 1709, and I shall try to keep my word. But this is impossible in Pensacola, where to botanize is a question of life and death. Nobody dares to leave the fort, because of the risk of being caught by the savages at war with the Spaniards as I have already said when I spoke of Pensacola.<sup>52</sup> Finally, every kind of vegetable would grow here if we had good gardeners. Let us pass to the minerals.

There is no doubt that there are in the up country, especially toward the West, very rich gold, silver, and copper mines.<sup>53</sup> Very

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Charlevoix, III, 317, 365.

<sup>50</sup> One such cure is narrated by Le Page du Pratz, I, 209 ff.

<sup>51</sup> Le Maire probably refers to the *Elements de botanique, ou méthode pour connaître les plantes*, 3 vols., Paris, 1694, by Joseph Pitton de Tournefort.

<sup>52</sup> The author of the "Relation de la Louisiane ou Mississipi . . ." 19, states that nobody dares to go out of the fort for months at a time; cf. also Cadillac to Pontchartrain, AC, C 13A, 3:27.

<sup>53</sup> Search for mines was uppermost in the mind of the officials in France and in the mind of the colonists, cf. Jean Delanglez, 69, note 22. Occasionally writers put forward a mild plea that it might perhaps be better if the colonists bent their energies to the tilling of the soil, but they were crying in the desert, JSAP, IV, 1922, 142; Charlevoix, II, 447; Coxe, 95.

abundant copper mines<sup>54</sup> are already known. They will be a source of immense profit, since there is no copper in France except that which is brought from Sweden and other foreign countries.

In Louisiana there are lead mines<sup>55</sup> which will also be very profitable, because the lead can be sold to the savages of America and even to the French and to the Spaniards. All the lead in France comes from England, and it is brought from France to America. Our Louisiana mines would spare us this trouble and this expense, and if these mines are abundant, they will enable us to load our ships returning to France with lead. The lead brought here from the Illinois country is more than one third silver, as people who worked in the Mexican mines have attested to us, and under this lead, pure silver<sup>56</sup> will undoubtedly be found by digging deeper. There is also gold in Louisiana. We heard from savages of the Upper Missouri that there is in that section an Indian tribe where every year white men who come to trade load their horses with 'yellow iron,' as these savages say.<sup>57</sup> Now

<sup>54</sup> Dartaguet in his memoir to Pontchartrain, May 12, 1712, speaks of a copper mine found by Sieur de Mainville on the Ohio, AC, C 13A, 2:804; cf. the letter of Bienville to Pontchartrain, October 27, 1711, *ibid.*, 600. Cadillac disillusioned the minister the following year, such a mine was non-existent, but a Canadian who had been in New Spain had found another one on the River of the Peorias, AC, C 13A, 3:30-31. Copper is in abundance, says Coxe, 98, and "so fine that it is found in Plates, Bitts and Pieces very pure without Melting, of which considerable Quantities have been gathered on the surface of the Earth." Le Page du Pratz tells us that shortly after his arrival, near Biloxi, he just looked around and found two copper mines, I, 173. We are told that the second was one league and a half from the first, but we are not told where the first was.

<sup>55</sup> Coxe, 99, says lead is found in great quantity, and "the Oar affords sixty per cent." Le Page du Pratz discovered a lead mine, *Voyage dans les terres*, I, 256 ff.

<sup>56</sup> On this silver mine, cf. Charlevoix, III, 393; Le Page du Pratz, I, 331, [Valette Laudun?], 257, etc. This mine was known for a time as "la mine de la Mothe." It was to test this mine that Cadillac left in February, 1715, "without telling me where he was going," wrote Bienville to the Minister, AC, C 13A, 3:827. Le Maire did not think much of the prospecting trip of Cadillac, just a measly silver mine or two, when there are mines of pure gold lying around, BN, Mss. fr., 12105:4. To discover the mines of Louisiana is the *leit-motiv* of Cadillac's first letter to Pontchartrain after his arrival in Louisiana, October 26, 1713, AC, C 13A, 3:1-93, this quest became an obsession with the governor, cf. G. Gravier's Introduction to the *Relation du Voyage des Dames Religieuses Ursulines de Rouen à la Nouvelle-Orléans*, Paris, 1872, xxviii.

<sup>57</sup> These words of Le Maire are found in the upper left-hand corner of Delisle's map of 1718, and Vermalle's map of 1717, SHB, C 4044. De Villiers in *La Découverte du Missouri . . .*, 37, traced the origin and development of this "yellow iron" fiction. R. H. Hamilton, in "The Early Cartography of the Missouri Valley," *American Historical Review*, XXXIX, 658, says that "it was the Platte that the Spaniards crossed in their search for gold and not the Missouri."

these white men are undoubtedly Spaniards, and this yellow iron can only be gold, since it is the only metal which has naturally such a color. Copper is red when extracted from the mine, and the yellow color of certain kinds of copper, as everybody knows, is artificially obtained by mixing some foreign matter. We have then gold mines. I'll say more. The same chain of mountains where gold and silver are found in Mexico passes through Upper Louisiana, and I have no difficulty in believing that the veins of these mines of New Spain extend over here,<sup>58</sup> and if we look for them we shall find them. Moreover, in the upper reaches of the Mississippi, there are certain strips of earth, blackish, burned, almost without grass, or with thin and yellowish grass.<sup>59</sup> Here and there marcasites are found in the fields as well as sulphurous and hot springs. What are all these except so many indications, so many mouths telling us of the existence of mines around these places? All there is to be done now is to take the proper means to exploit them.

1°) I contend that work on these mines can never be begun until a good number of people from France are sent to these quarters in order to take possession of the country where those mines are, and to defend themselves against the undertakings of those who would wish to dispossess us of them. That is what should be done.

2°) We must have three or four master miners who have worked in the mines of Mexico.

3°) We must have all that is necessary to open those mines, such as spades, pick-axes, and other implements.

4°) If the mine should be opened and flooded, we should have an engineer who would know how to drain it by means of good pumps or by some application of the science of hydrostatics.

We must not lack the workmen necessary to purify the metal, and we must have at hand the ingredients and drugs absolutely necessary to separate the metal from the ore, such as quicksilver and aqua-fortis. The latter can be made on the spot, for I have heard it said that saltpeter is found here.<sup>60</sup> With regard to

<sup>58</sup> The same statement is found in *Affaires Etrangères, Mémoires et Documents, Amérique*, I, 238 v., Margry, IV, 351, Dumont, I, 72, "Relation de la Louisianne ou Mississippi . . .," 30.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. De Villiers, *La Découverte du Missouri* . . ., 38.

<sup>60</sup> Franquet de Chaville, JSAP, IV, 1922, 141, Coxe, 96, Le Page du Pratz, I, 293, and III, 381-382, had each a different reason to believe that there was saltpeter in Louisiana. A report was sent to France in 1714 that two abundant mines of saltpeter had been discovered, with which very good powder could be made. Powder making was forbidden by the Navy Council, the delinquents were to be sent to the galleys, AC, C 13A, 3:665.

quicksilver, it will have to be imported from France until some is discovered.<sup>61</sup> We must not forget that mines require constant and persevering work; for often, when we think less of it, we are rewarded for all our pains. Suffice it then for this item. Let us speak now about the animal kingdom, and first of all of the noblest animal, of man.

All of the Indians of Louisiana are well built; they are reddish rather than olivaster; all have black hair and eyes; it is rare to see men with beards.<sup>62</sup> All the savages of these parts are light-headed, fickle, liars, thieves, traitors, and unfaithful to their word. They are great talkers, and great teasers, and so revengeful that they remember to the third and fourth generation injuries done to their great grandfathers.<sup>63</sup> They have not yet forgiven the Spaniards for what they heard Ferdinand de Soto did to their ancestors. Speaking in general, they do not lack wit, are clever, and they reason well enough.

The children are suckled until they are four or five years old.<sup>64</sup> Most mothers tie a small board on the head of their newly-born babies to flatten it;<sup>65</sup> this practice, however, is common only among the tribes near the sea.<sup>66</sup> More nations are polygamous than monogamous. Marriage among them does not deserve the name, so easily do they violate it. The men are very lewd, women ordinarily less so. I say ordinarily, because there are villages in which the women are very incontinent, but I have noticed that this only takes place among those tribes where the men are so unrestrained as to indulge in unnatural vices. Each village, lest the young people should go to the other nations, has a hut where women selected by the village chief are always at their dis-

<sup>61</sup> There was quicksilver in Louisiana says Coxe, 99: "This Country affords another profitable Commodity or Mineral, which is Quick-silver. We have knowledge of two Mines, one on the West, the other on the East of the Great River; and doubtless many more might be found if enquir'd after."

<sup>62</sup> Similar statements are found in "Relation de la Louisianne ou Mississippi . . .," 14, and Dumont, I, 136.

<sup>63</sup> "Liars, greedy, lazy, unreliable, fickle," JSAP, IV, 1902, 130; "Perfidious and unreliable," Dumont, I, 135, 182. The Louisiana Indians had made a different impression on earlier travellers, cf. letter of M. de Montigny to Delisle, May 6, 1699, ASH, 115 x, n. 13, and that of Tonty to his brother, March 4, 1700, ASH, 115 x, n. 14.

<sup>64</sup> Dumont, II, 270, has "until 6 or 7 years."

<sup>65</sup> "Relation de la Louisianne ou Mississippi . . .," 14, and Charlevoix, III, 323.

<sup>66</sup> The Choctaw were known as Flat-heads. Le Page du Pratz confesses he does not know the reason, III, 216, for the head of all the Indians of Louisiana is just as flat or nearly as flat as that of the Choctaw.

posal.<sup>67</sup> The women are not ugly,<sup>68</sup> and they are not such scolds as those of Europe. They never eat with their husbands from the moment they are pregnant until they stop suckling their children, which means a period of three or four years. During this time they have no intercourse with their husband, nor do they live with them during their menstruations. In the latter case, they do not even enter their husband's huts, for fear to pollute it.<sup>69</sup> This custom and several others, such as refraining from eating pork and other meats considered unclean in the Book of Leviticus, have always made me believe that these nations come from the East and perhaps descend from the Jews.<sup>70</sup> Some of their traditions have confirmed me in this belief, such as the respect nearly all have for snakes, the perpetual fire kept up by certain tribes, and the great number of children they sacrifice when this fire dies out. This might have had its origin in those cruel sacrifices to Moloch so much inveighed against by all the prophets. I have no doubt that one who knew Hebrew would find many analogous terms in the languages of this country.<sup>71</sup> But this I mention only in passing and with hesitation.

The pelts of animals supply the savages of Louisiana with clothes, and the flesh with food. Outside the hunting season, they eat corn or Turkey wheat, with which they make the sagamité or mush, a healthy and nourishing food but not very tasty. The women are only covered from the waist down to the knees with little skirt made of the inside membrane of certain barks.

I am so afraid to tell you what you already know that I omit many things which crowd the tip of my pen. I shall hazard saying a few more.

All their names have a meaning attached to them, and there are some names reserved to the chiefs. There are two kinds of chiefs, or two kinds of kinglets among our savages. Some are war chiefs; their courage plus the election by the tribe gives them this rank; the others are village chiefs; these only busy themselves with the internal government, but they can, neverthe-

<sup>67</sup> Charlevoix, III, 423.

<sup>68</sup> The Indian women, says the author of the "Relation de la Louisianne ou Mississippi . . .," 15, are "générallement laides."

<sup>69</sup> MS Relation de la Louisiane, 131, Ayer Collection, Newberry Library, Chicago.

<sup>70</sup> Charlevoix, III, 349, protested against those who saw similarity between all the customs of the Indians and those of the Jews; there are a few, he says, and that here mentioned by Le Maire is one of them.

<sup>71</sup> Le Maire would have been delighted with John Adair's *History of the American Indians*, London, 1775.

less, be looked upon as real chiefs. Their power is more stable than that of the other chiefs which only holds good in time of war. The respect which certain nations show their village chiefs reaches adoration.<sup>72</sup> Power is handed down from father to son. There are tribes, like that of the Choctaw, among whom the power, for lack of male children, is transmitted to the girls. With regard to this succession among the Natchez, it is the mother and not the father who is taken into consideration,<sup>73</sup> in order to keep more surely the government in the family of the first of their chiefs who, they say, was begotten of the Sun. I do not see that they are wrong in this.

The principal nations around us are located either on the Mobile River, or on the Mississippi, or between these two rivers. On the banks of the Mobile River, are the Apalachee, twenty families; the Chattas or Chateaux [Chatot],<sup>74</sup> ten families; the Taouchas [Tawasa], eight or nine families; the Mobilians, thirty families; the Thomes [Tohome], joined with a few Chattas, forty families.<sup>75</sup> Between the Mobile River and the Mississippi about one hundred leagues from Fort Louis toward the Northeast, are the Choctaw, divided into several villages. This nation numbers more than six thousand men.<sup>76</sup> Fifty leagues farther in the same direction are the two villages of the Chickasaw, who may number from six to seven hundred men.

To the east of the Mobile River at some seventy leagues from the old Fort Louis are the Alibamons, a tribe reduced almost to nothing. They are usually blamed for all the war expeditions made against Pensacola or against our allies; they are rather the instigators than the agents. They always act as guides for the Abihka and Conshac forces, their neighbors, against the Mobilians and the Thomes. The Abihka and Conshac are two powerful tribes who together may number about eight thousand men. They would be friendly with us but for the English among

<sup>72</sup> Dumont, I, 176; "Relation de la Louisianne ou Mississippi . . .," 21.

<sup>73</sup> Dumont, I, 179, and Le Page du Pratz, II, 295, explain the reason for this maternal succession.

<sup>74</sup> Le Page du Pratz, II, 212, gives forty huts for the *Chatôts*.

<sup>75</sup> They are not more numerous than the *Chatôts*, Le Page du Pratz, II, 213.

<sup>76</sup> Claude Delisle's copy has 600. Le Page du Pratz, II, 216, speaks of 25,000 Choctaw warriors. The census given by contemporary writers of this and of other tribes is so bewilderingly different, that one is at a loss to know whose figures to accept. Cf. John R. Swanton, *Indian Tribes of the Lower Mississippi Valley and the Adjacent Coast of the Gulf of Mexico*, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 43, Washington, D. C., 1911, and *id.*, *Early History of the Creek Indians and their Neighbors*, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 73, Washington, D. C., 1922.

them who have alienated those Indians from us. There is between the Choctaw and the Chickasaw a small remnant of the Sachoumas [Chakchiuma], of whom we make a shrewd use in order to know the plots concocted by the English among their allies against ours.

The first tribe met with at the mouth of the Mississippi is that of the Biloxi, who number no more than five or six families. Some sixty leagues farther up are the Huma, who had formerly a Jesuit as their missionary;<sup>77</sup> they are at least one hundred families. Forty leagues above the Huma are the Tunica, of whom a good number are Christians.<sup>78</sup> Between the Tunica and the Huma on both sides of the Mississippi are the Chitimacha, who formerly were found all along the River down to the sea, but who, since the cruel war waged against them by our allies to avenge the death of one of our missionaries, have no fixed settlements and roam about, now on the banks of the Mississippi, now on the coast.<sup>79</sup> There was another nation, formerly allied to the Chitimacha; lest it be involved in the war waged against these, that tribe has separated itself from them to 'village with' the Huma, as they express themselves in this country.

About two hundred leagues from the mouth of the Mississippi are the Natchez, numbering about six or seven hundred families and now ruled by a woman who, her subjects pretend, is a direct descendant of the Sun. It is the most civilized tribe of the whole Mississippi, and the only one where some trace of a religion can be found, for when the Huma and the Tunica moved their villages, they did not bother to re-erect the temples they had in their former villages. The Natchez have had their temple from time immemorial. It is a large hut or dome in the midst of which there is an altar on which burns perennial fire. There is a kind of sacristan, paid by the public, who keeps this fire burning; when it goes out, besides punishment for the negligent keeper,<sup>80</sup> there is mourning for the whole tribe. A deputation of the most important men goes to fetch some fire from the

<sup>77</sup> Father Paul Du Ru, and later, Father Joseph de Limoges.

<sup>78</sup> Charlevoix passed through the Tunica Village in 1721, he asserts that there was not one Indian of this tribe who was Christian, III, 431.

<sup>79</sup> This missionary was Jean François Buisson de St. Cosme, Delanglez, 63, note 88. According to Le Page du Pratz, I, 106, and II, 230-231, the Chitimacha Indians made peace with the French in 1719, when they handed over the man who had killed the missionary; Bienville, however, wrote in 1708, that a detachment of soldiers commanded by St. Denys had caught the murderer who was executed in Mobile, AC, C 13A, 2:100.

<sup>80</sup> Dumont, I, 158.

nearest tribe keeping a sacred flame. Formerly they went to get it from the Huma, but these have given up the practice, as I said before, and I do not know what the Natchez will do now if their sacred fire dies out.

About five years ago their queen died. They put to death a great number of men, women and children to attend her in the next world. Some Frenchmen, who happened to be there were not able to restrain their superstitious fury; all they could do was to baptize a few little children. I say a few, for seeing that under the pretext that the baptized ones went to another world than the one where the dead queen had gone, the parents kept on killing more and more little children. The French were forced to stop their pious duty in order to put an end to the massacre of these Innocents.

There are in this village men whose profession is prostitution. They are dressed as women and are excluded from all work commonly performed by men, and do all the work women do.<sup>81</sup> It is said that the women of this village, to avenge this insult and this outrage to nature, profess to be unfaithful to their husbands.

Lest you be surprised at the order in which I have enumerated the tribes, note that I have located these tribes differently from their location on the map of M. Delisle. You must know that these changes and migrations have taken place within the last four or five years.<sup>82</sup>

About one hundred leagues north of the Natchez, up the Mississippi, are found the Arkansas. This tribe was formerly powerful whereas now they are hardly more than three to four hundred men. One of our missionaries<sup>83</sup> was killed in this village by men of another tribe who had come to dwell near it.<sup>84</sup> Two hundred leagues from the Arkansas, or thereabouts, are the Illinois. The Missouri flows into the Mississippi near their village, but in such a manner that one can hardly say whether it is the Missouri that flows into the Mississippi, or the Mississippi into the Missouri, for the volume of their streams is about equal. I must warn you that the distances from here to all those tribes about

<sup>81</sup> [Valette Laudun?], 263, Bossu, II, 100, Bernard Romans, *A Concise Natural History of East and West Florida*, New York, 1775, 82-83.

<sup>82</sup> On the difficulties arising from these migrations, cf. Le Page du Pratz, II, 207.

<sup>83</sup> This missionary was M. Foucault, Delanglez, 33-34.

<sup>84</sup> Koroa Indians, letter of M. Davion to the Bishop of Quebec, Archives du Séminaire des Missions Étrangères, Paris, 344:68, a copy of this letter is in the Dominion Archives, Ottawa.

which I spoke is twice or even three times shorter by land, as the crow flies, than by way of the Mississippi. Its windings lengthen the way incredibly. We know, for instance, that when the Illinois come by land from their country in war expedition against the Chickasaw, they are not more than ten or twelve days on the way. The Illinois, also called the *Cats*, are divided into two great villages. The Jesuits have charge of one, and our Seminary has charge of the other. The latter has been without a missionary since the death of the one who was there, and we have not yet been able to replace him because of the wars. Do not ask me for more details about this, for I am too much pressed for time.

I must now speak of the irrational animals of this country. You are aware from the relations you have read what buffaloes, deers, bears, and bustards are, but it is well to undeceive you. Some do not pity us because they imagine that the hunting season lasts the whole year. This is not true, but rather, only a part of the year. From April until the end of September, one finds only here and there a few deer, so skinny that people do not even deign to kill them. The good season for hunting is the winter.<sup>85</sup> Then one is sometimes lucky enough to see those who were sent hunting come back laden with ducks, bustards, and teals, before the water put in the kettle on leaving begins to boil. At all other times, we must rely on the poultry house, or be satisfied with salted or smoked meat. Let us come back to our animals.

One does not hear the woods in these parts resound with the warbling of little birds as in France.<sup>86</sup> We see hardly any here. On the other hand we see what is not seen in France, that is, flights of the most beautiful parrots in the world. They are smaller than those of Perú, but they are more beautiful with red feathers in their tails and around their necks, a most pleasing sight.<sup>87</sup> When the winter has been more severe than usual, swans come down from the upper reaches of our rivers. Our streams are full of fish, but because the rivers are too deep we can hardly enjoy them, except in the country near the Mississippi that has many lakes where fish of all sorts are found in abundance. All along the coast fishing is plentiful; soles two feet long, one foot and a half broad, four to five inches thick, are caught.

<sup>85</sup> Letter of M. Varlet to his brother, January 5, 1714, BN, Mss. fr., n. a., 5398:51 v.; Dumont, I, 10.

<sup>86</sup> Le Page du Pratz, I, 240, speaks differently.

<sup>87</sup> Dumont, I, 87, and Charlevoix, III, 384.

I have seen one hauling of the drag-net fill a barrel of sardines; and I have seen here in Pensacola everybody dine on a single fish called 'devil' by the Spaniards. The banks of our rivers are strewn in summer with crocodiles or cayman that sometimes bite off the leg or the arm of swimmers.

Our woods are full of snakes, but only two kinds are to be feared, the black ones and the rattle-snakes. The film between the bark and the wood of certain black oaks, ground and applied on the wound, and drinking the juice of the film is an infallible remedy against the bite of either of these snakes.<sup>88</sup> I am not describing beavers, otters, wild cats. You know what all these are from the relations you have read. There are also wolves, lions, and tigers, but they are small and do little harm. We are beginning to have horses; they are those that ran away from the English in Carolina or from the Spaniards of the Upper Missouri. Some also came from the Osages and the Padouca.

Oysters are found in the marshes. They are so big that half a dozen is enough for a good meal. Very occasionally pearls are found in these oysters; such pearls however are so irregular, that, to speak like a jeweler, in Europe they would be sent back to pharmacists to be used for their *diamargariton*. Bezoar is found in the ventricle of roebucks, but it is far from having the fragrance and the virtue of that which comes from the East.

Excuse the disorder of this letter. I hasten to come to the missions, yet I am stopped by some questions you asked me and to which I have not yet answered. The first question concerns the number of Frenchmen here, and the second how houses are built in this country.

There are probably ten or twelve families in Dauphine Island, fifteen at Fort Louis,<sup>89</sup> five or six in the Illinois country, all of

<sup>88</sup> Dumont mentions another plant, a kind of bulbous root as remedy against the bite of the rattle-snake, I, 110; this herb, called *Oudla-Coudlogouille* by the natives, is described and a sketch of it is given by Le Page du Pratz, II, 60.

<sup>89</sup> In 1712, Dartaguet wrote that there were only 27 families, in lower Louisiana, of which only four families devoted themselves to the tilling of the land, AC, C 13A, 3:800. Charlevoix, II, 422, has 28 French families for that year. In 1713, for both Fort Louis and Dauphine Island, Duclos wrote that there were no more than 35 heads of family, AC, C 13A, 3:212, and Cadillac writing to Pontchartrain in October, says that on Dauphine Island "there are sixteen settlers both married and unmarried," AC, C 13A, 3:2, and to Crozat: "On Dauphine Island there are fourteen poor huts of stakes, a guardhouse and a prison, all covered with reeds," AC, C 13A, 4:390. Baron in his *mémoire* of 1714, ASH, 67-2, n. 4, gives 20 to 25 houses, 60 to 80 persons for Dauphine Island; one hundred houses [?] for Mobile, and about 150 persons including officers, soldiers, and civilians.

whom, except two or three, are wretchedly poor. The two companies of soldiers who are here are not included in this number, which is rather small for this vast and good country considering the length of time that went by since the French came here. Only three or four of the last batch of girls are married;<sup>90</sup> their husbands are soldiers who can not even support themselves. The Court and the Minister have been deceived by the lying reports about the wealth of our poor population.<sup>91</sup> The little money in circulation has come from Pensacola where the King of Spain sends nearly 24,000 piastres every year. But two years ago, a new Governor came to Pensacola. By means of a shop and a warehouse filled with all kinds of merchandise he has cut all the channels through which some part of this money could flow into our colony.<sup>92</sup> As an actual fact I am not sorry, for our inhabitants no longer relying on this will henceforth have to devote themselves to the tilling of the land which they have neglected until now.

Now for the manner in which the French build their houses in this country. All the houses are frame and one story high;<sup>93</sup> there is only one house which has two stories. The dwellings are comfortable enough. The walls are made of mud and white-washed outside and inside. The lime is made of oysters and other shells. Some of these houses have a solid brick foundation; all are two or three feet above the ground to protect the timber work from dampness; most have a gallery all around, and those which haven't are covered from top to bottom with lattices. The chimneys are suitable enough. Until now the fireplace only has been made of bricks. Nothing would prevent building brick flues, or having all the houses built of bricks as well as the fort itself, if a few brick-makers were sent from France. Brick clay<sup>94</sup> is as plentiful here as in Carolina, where all the houses are built of bricks.

In 1716, Duclos wrote that there were not more than forty inhabitants, AC, C 13A, 4:391.

<sup>90</sup> Cadillac to Crozat, October, 1713, said that eight of the girls who came on the *Baron de la Fauche* were still unmarried, AC, C 13A, 3:356. Twelve girls had come, AC, C 13A, 3:139.

<sup>91</sup> Dartaguet's memoir of 1712, AC, C 13A, 2:803; Duclos, AC, C 13A, 3:214; Cadillac, *ibid.*, 38.

<sup>92</sup> Duclos to Pontchartrain, October 25, 1713, AC, C 13A, 3:212-213, 216-217; Cadillac to Pontchartrain, October 26, 1713, *ibid.*, 81.

<sup>93</sup> All the houses of Dauphine Island are frame house and one story high, [Valette Laudun?], 241.

<sup>94</sup> The brick clay of Louisiana, said Cadillac, was worthless, AC, C 13A, 3:6.

Massacre or Dauphine Island is six or seven leagues long, and half a league wide; it is a little wider in the East where Port Dauphin is situated. The island is well situated, the soil is good, the air healthy. It lies parallel to the coast, only one league and a half away from it. The eastern portion of Dauphine Island is facing the west bank of the mouth of the Mobile River, about ten leagues away. Fort Louis de la Mobile is on the river of the same name, about nine leagues from its mouth. If it were not blocked by sand the biggest ships could enter the river and cast anchor at the foot of Fort Louis. They could go even ten leagues farther up where the old Fort Louis was, and which they abandoned to build the new Fort Louis nearer to the sea on more suitable ground. The latitude of new Fort Louis is 30°. It is warmer than in Provence, so that most of the trees remain green throughout the winter, here the most beautiful season of the year. The Mobile River even to the north of the Lake or Baye at its mouth is very wide, very deep, and abounds in fish.

All there remains for us to speak about is our missions. I must begin by saying something which will surprise you—we haven't yet any church in our main settlement.<sup>95</sup> God only knows the cause of this, whether it is due to poverty, indolence, or indifference about religion.<sup>96</sup>

We have had here as many as five missions, namely, one each among the Illinois, the Arkansas, the Natchez, the Tunica, and the Apalachee. The lack of funds, the cruel wars waged by the savages against each other, the massacre of two of our missionaries,<sup>97</sup> the death of a third, and a number of other things contributed to the desolation of our missions, and have reduced them—to speak candidly—to one, namely, that of the Apalachee of which I have charge, or better, of which I had charge before

<sup>95</sup> That is to say in Mobile, for there was a church on Dauphine Island, AC, C 13A, 1:49-49 v., 3:48, 126, and ASH, 67-2, n. 4; the second one which was built on the island, the first having been destroyed by the raiders of 1711. There was yet no church in Mobile when Le Maire wrote in 1717, BN, Mss. fr., 12105:12.

<sup>96</sup> Poverty is the reason wrote Duclos, in 1713, AC, C 13A, 3:125. Cadillac attributed it to indifference, Mass was being said in a small room, the inhabitants were not disposed to build one, "I think they would be delighted to have no church at all according to the statement of the priests and missionaries," AC, C 13A, 3:48.

<sup>97</sup> MM. Foucault and St. Cosme. Claude Delisle annotated his extract here, ASH, 115 xxxii, n. 4. The French should arbitrate between the various Indian nations at war; they should prevent the Iroquois and the Illinois from waging war to the Louisiana Indians; when the Indians will see beautiful churches as in Canada, when missionaries are stationed among them, the Indians will have more piety and conversions will be more lasting.

good order and charity, which, according to St. Paul demands that we first take care of the *domesticos fidei*, obliged me to come here to help the Spaniards in the extreme necessity to which they were reduced.

From France, they let us hope that they will think about our missions. May God grant it! But judging from the way things are going, I think that all the nations of this country will have disappeared before that help comes. It is a matter of amazement to see how death has mowed down whole tribes since the arrival of the French in these parts.<sup>98</sup> Of some tribes only the name remains, others are visibly disappearing. It would seem that God sent missionaries to this country as the justifiers of His Justice (if one may use such expression) rather than as His co-operators in the conversion of the natives. How sad it is for men who are somewhat zealous to see themselves destined to be the accusers of those for whom they would willingly shed their blood!

Three things render our missions difficult. First, a certain indolence, insensibility, and indifference of all our Indian nations toward that which pertains to religion, so that they are no less prompt to give up the faith as they are to adopt it. Secondly, the multiplicity of languages, so great that over a space of twenty leagues on the Mobile River, four different tongues are being spoken, learning any one of which would keep a man busy all his life.<sup>99</sup> The moral impossibility in which we find ourselves to find in these languages terms that express our most essential mysteries.<sup>100</sup> We do not know, for instance, how to express the word 'person' of the mystery of the Trinity. Missionaries of various Orders have until now explained this mystery in the following fashion: there is one Great Spirit, who is all at once, Father, Son Spirit, and Spirit Good, in which you see that the word 'spirit' is substitute for that of person, a manifest error. The

<sup>98</sup> Le Page du Pratz, II, 204, attributes the disappearance of the Indians to wars and epidemics; Charlevoix, III, 249, says it is not possible to know the real reason, whole nations, he adds, have disappeared during the last forty years, and those which remain are only the shadow of what they were at the time of La Salle.

<sup>99</sup> "On trouvera peut-être quelque langue-mère en Louisiane, comme on a trouvé l'Algonquine en Canada," commented Delisle, ASH, 115 xxxii, n. 4. According to Dumont, I, 181, there was a common language, a kind of lingua franca, the Mobilian language, when one knew it one could travel throughout the Province without an interpreter.

<sup>100</sup> "Languages must be learned for which there are no books, no rules; and it requires great labor to express the mysteries (of Religion) in such imperfect tongues as these. These languages are very numerous, very different from one another," M. Varlet to his brother, BN, Mss. fr., n. a., 5398:50 v.

concept of 'spirit' includes of itself that of substance, which is not the case for the word 'person.' I have said candidly what I thought about this, and I have set people thinking in preference to an attempt at bringing about some remedy. I am not saying this to condemn my confreres, and it would be wrong on my part to expect that they should find in thirty years expressions about which the Eastern and Western Church had not yet agreed in the fourth and fifth centuries. Finally, this cruel and general war between the Indians of Louisiana is a very great obstacle to our missions. The French are unable to make the shortest journey without running the risk of being killed by savages before these realize that they are French. While we were at war with the English of Carolina, these stirred up several nations against us and our allies, keeping us in a continual state of alarm. The English were making raids against the French as far as 200 leagues inland in the Choctaw or Flathead country, which is about two hundred leagues from Fort Louis. The Choctaw, the Chickasaw, and the Arkansas are the friends of the French. We shall see whether the alarms that the English caused us will cease now that we are at peace with them. After all this, I am sure that you are not expecting from me glowing accounts of numerous and miraculous conversions. I have baptized few Indians, and out of ten, it is rare that I was not sorry I baptized nine of them. There is nothing here to encourage the poor missionaries. They must live solely by faith. They have not even the consolation if they are killed of considering themselves dying for Jesus Christ. What those who put them to death have in view is not so much hatred of the faith that the missionaries preach as theft of the few external goods they may possess.<sup>101</sup> I wish this country would become settled, and in a way I don't. I wish it, because I do not know how missions can be established otherwise; on the other hand I do not wish it, on account of the scandal given by our Frenchmen in our young missions. There is perhaps no other mission in the world which demands more good qualities in the missionaries than the Louisiana missions. They must have more learning than people commonly imagine; they must be men of prayer; they must be young in order to be able to learn the languages; strong, to withstand the necessary work; firm, lest they be discouraged; mortified, in order to be chaste; for without this last virtue, nothing else can be expected but

<sup>101</sup> Charlevoix, III, 431.

the fatal loss of their souls, since they must necessarily deal with peoples, whose women are weak and impudent, where occasions are always present, and where the isolation warrants silence and impunity.

I tremble when I think of all this. Pray to the Lord, Sir, and urge as many good people as you can to pray that He may deign to have mercy on His vineyard in this country, that He may send laborers, and good ones, who by increasing the number of children of Mother Church may increase also Her joy. Pray also for me, the most insignificant of those who labor in His vineyard, that I may know whether the inclination I feel to go back to Paris, under the pretext that I shall be more useful there than here, is His voice or that of self-love. Several holy and learned priests assured me when I left that there was some temptation in thus going away from that city. I repeat it again, please ask in the Holy Sacrifice the necessary light that I do nothing against the will of God. I shall begin, on the 21 of this month my 39th year. I still feel strong enough to work. The step is slippery; with the help of your prayers help me to take it. Do not refuse them, I beg of you, to your most humble and most obedient servant.

(Signed) Le Maire, priest, Apostolic Missionary

## DOCUMENTS

### Tonti Letters

#### INTRODUCTION

Among the travelers who roamed the length and breadth of the Mississippi Valley in the last twenty years of the seventeenth century, it is doubtful whether any one's mileage can be compared with that of Henry de Tonti.<sup>1</sup> From the time of his landing at Quebec in the fall of 1678, until he died of the plague in Mobile, 1704, he was on the road. The journeys of Nicolas Perrot himself are less protracted, certainly less diversified than those of Tonti. It seems as though the Italian adventurer had not only an iron hand but an iron body. His travel book contains geographical names scattered over the United States and Canada, from Quebec to Hudson Bay, from Hudson Bay to the Gulf of Mexico. During a quarter of a century, French forts and settlements, Indian villages along the St. Lawrence, the Great Lakes, and the Mississippi River below the Illinois saw him. At one time or another he trod the ground of every state watered by the Mississippi, with the possible exception of Iowa and Minnesota. He went to Texas in 1690, explored Alabama in 1702, and was in New York, Ohio, and Michigan and possibly Pennsylvania.

Despite all his qualities, his courage, his stamina, Tonti was and remained a lieutenant. Here is probably the reason why there is no adequate study of his life and travels: "the glory of the master overshadows him who is only second in command."<sup>2</sup> A full La Salle bibliography would fill many pages, but one soon comes to the end of the list of articles, studies, books—including novels—purporting to narrate the Tonti epic. Yet first hand material is not lacking. Barring governors and intendants, there is hardly a personage in New France whose name appears more often in the official correspondence. Tonti left several memoirs, relations, and letters.<sup>3</sup> He either wrote the memoirs

<sup>1</sup> This spelling has been adopted after comparing many specimens of his signature, cf. Alvord, *The Illinois Country, 1673-1818*, Springfield, Ill., 1920, 80, n. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Sulte, "Les Tontys," in *Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, series I, XI, 1894, section 1, 3.

<sup>3</sup> Henry de Tonti had a brother in Canada, Alphonse, and another brother in France, whose Christian name has not been ascertained. Tonti is writing to the latter in the letters given below, and his dear brother is